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Monday, November 14, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 14, 2016

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

•(1105)

[*English*]

INSTRUCTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC) moved:

That the Standing Committee on Health be instructed to examine the public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women and men, recognizing and respecting the provincial and territorial jurisdictions in this regard, and that the said Committee report its findings to the House no later than July 2017.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of my motion, Motion No. 47, which would instruct the Standing Committee on Health to study the public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women, and men.

I believe that this is an important issue. It is long overdue for consideration by this House. It is my hope that Motion No. 47 will lead to better protection for youth online, foster the healthy sexual development of youth, and combat violence against women and girls.

I want to say at the beginning of this debate that as a first-term MP, the impact of violent and sexually explicit material was not an issue I expected to bring forward when arriving here a year ago, nor was it on my radar. However, a number of organizations came to me from across my riding and across Canada and asked me to bring this matter forward.

As I started to examine the research and the information about the impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material, I was shocked by what I found.

Some members may be wondering why I do not use the term “pornography” in the motion. When most people think of the term “pornography”, they think of the nude pictures *Playboy* started publishing throughout the 1960s and onward. Today's pornography is much different. In fact, it is telling that only a year ago, *Playboy* announced that it would stop publishing nude pictures in its

magazine, because it was not profitable anymore. The market has shifted to much more explicit material, and the vast majority of it features violence and degradation.

I want to share a few statistics about sexually explicit material and the industry behind it.

In Canada, the average age of first exposure to sexually explicit material for boys is 12. Sexually explicit websites get more visitors each month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter combined, with PornHub, the largest free site, alone receiving over 21 billion visits in 2015. Thirty-five per cent of all Internet downloads are sexually explicit. Globally, this sexually explicit material is a \$97-billion industry. Almost 90% of mainstream sexually explicit content features violence against women. Sexually explicit material has become the primary source of information about sex and is a significant factor in influencing the sexual behaviours of children and adolescents.

Let that sink in for a moment. A \$97-billion industry that makes up 35% of all internet downloads, that is easily accessible with the click of a button, and that primarily features violence and the degradation of women, is the primary sexual educator of our youth, starting from the age of 12.

As a result, boys and girls are taught that violent and degrading sexual behaviour is acceptable and expected. This has an impact on the physical, mental, and emotional health of many young Canadians who will grow up to be fathers, mothers, doctors, teachers, and legislators.

As I researched more about this issue, it brought me back to the time, shortly after my daughter was born, when the heartbreaking story of Rehtaeh Parsons occurred, a situation I am sure all here today remember. At that time I remember asking myself, “What gave these boys the idea that it was okay to objectify and assault a heavily intoxicated young woman, and what gave them the idea that sharing the pictures of this event online was normal?” It was a story that moved me deeply at the time, seeing the impact this had on her, which ultimately led to her suicide. It was not until researching this issue that I began to make the connection between violent, sexually explicit material online and the way it is educating a generation of young people.

When I reached out to her mother, Leah Parsons, she expressed her concern about the impact of sexually explicit material, and she was one of the first to extend her support for Motion No. 47.

She writes:

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Easy access to messages and visuals online that condone violent pornographic templates for our youth is setting the stage for what is considered the “norm” when it comes to the treatment of females. If my daughter was treated as a human being and not as an object to conquer she would still be here today. Societal messages directly influence rape and violence towards women.

Forty years of academic research has revealed that exposure to sexually explicit material, especially material featuring violence, is harmful to the physical and mental health of individuals, especially adolescents.

For example, in 2016, a study of over 4,500 European teenagers aged 14 to 17, published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, found:

Boys' perpetration of sexual coercion and abuse was significantly associated with regular viewing of online pornography.

• (1110)

A 2012 meta-analysis of over 70 academic studies published in the journal of *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity* highlighted that consistent findings have emerged linking adolescent use of pornography that depicts violence with increased degrees of sexually aggressive behaviour. A Columbia University neurologist, Dr. Norman Doidge, in his book *The Brain that Changes Itself*, describes how sexually explicit material actually causes rewiring of neural circuits. He writes:

Sexual tastes are molded by an individual's experiences and their culture. These tastes are acquired and then wired into the brain. We are unable to distinguish our “second nature” from our “original nature” because our neuroplastic brains, once rewired, develop a new nature every bit as biological as our original.

The part of the brain he is referring to is the prefrontal cortex, the part of our brain that helps us make good and rational decisions, and there is a much more significant impact on youth because this part of the brain is not fully developed until the age of 25.

I could continue to cite study after study that reveals the impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material on youth, but I would quickly run out of time. Instead, I want to highlight another important aspect of this issue, which is protecting youth online.

Children's and adolescents' exposure to violent sexually explicit material is a form of child abuse. As I mentioned earlier, the average age of first exposure is 12, meaning that half of youth are exposed before age 12. Yet we take a hands-off approach instead of recognizing the exposure as child abuse. The renowned Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre put it this way:

The impact of exposure to pornography, sexual exploitation and the overall sexualization of children results in traumatic and detrimental outcomes for a child. It is our view that it is society's collective responsibility to protect children outweighing concerns about censorship.... Any exposure to adult or child pornographic images is abuse and children are detrimentally harmed and further victimized by these actions.

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection lists a number of ways that exposure to sexually explicit material can harm children, including increasing a child's risk of victimization, increasing a child's health risks, interfering with a child's healthy sexual development, and increasing a child's risk of problematic sexual behaviour against other children in an effort to experiment. I want to note that this last point is also confirmed by the Public Health Agency of Canada, which lists exposure to sexually explicit material as a contributing factor in sibling-on-sibling abuse.

I have spoken much about the impact of viewing violent and degrading sexually explicit material. Now I want to take a moment to highlight how easily accessible it is.

A new Canadian documentary on sexually explicit material that I co-hosted a screening of a few weeks ago showed how simple it was for a nine-year-old to access violent online sexual material by using rather innocent search terms. In fact, pornography companies specifically label this material to make it easier to find or be exposed to.

Another important factor in accessibility is its cost. The majority of sexually explicit material is free. No credit card is needed. No verification is required. No child safety measures are in place. In fact, part of the reason this material is so accessible and unregulated is that Parliament has not looked at the impact of sexually explicit material since 1985, before the invention of the Internet. The 1985 Fraser Committee report found that pre-Internet 1985 sexually explicit material had already perpetrated “lies about aspects of women's humanity and denies the validity of their aspirations to be treated as full and equal citizens”.

Some might be wondering why, if violent sexual content is so harmful, we are not seeing it in society. We are seeing it. Consider that as many as one in six girls and one in 12 boys are currently experiencing sexual abuse. Dr. Peter Silverstone, co-author of the new study from the University of Alberta, said,

When all types of sexual abuse are combined, including exposure to pornography or other sexual material, the number of children sexually abused is as high as 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys.

That is staggering, and it is shameful that we have done nothing about this for over 30 years.

I believe that this issue cuts across political lines. The Prime Minister has stated, “There's issues around pornography and its prevalence now and its accessibility, which is something that I'm really wrapping my head around as a father of kids who are approaching their teen years”.

• (1115)

Ms. Sophie Grégoire Trudeau has also raised this concern by saying, “The objectification of the female body, the normalization of pornography, and rape language and culture is destroying the self-esteem of our girls and is an insult to the spirit of our boys”. I particularly appreciate her concern about how this issue affects both boys and girls.

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I would also note that former NDP MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis and Conservative MP Joy Smith have similarly highlighted this as one of the top concerns for families across our nation. I am also grateful that Motion No. 47 has been jointly seconded by MPs from all five political parties in this Parliament. That is not a common experience and I want to extend my sincere thanks to each of these MPs who have officially extended their support.

I would also like to thank the member for Mount Royal for his discussions and insights. He is concerned about the infringement of civil liberties. To him, I would draw the analogy between the Internet and our road system. In Canada, we have freedom of movement. We have an extensive road system available to all Canadians. We may walk or ride bikes on roads anywhere in Canada, really without restriction. However, if we wish to use roads for particular things, such as transporting large items, licences or permits are required. Other things are also prohibited when it comes to road use. Speeding and racing are a couple of examples.

The Internet is public domain and we all need to be responsible with its use. If we could solve the issues of online sexual violence without passing a single new law, I would be overjoyed. My motion does not put forward any policy directives. We need to work together to end sexual violence everywhere. A good place to start is understanding what drives societal mindsets.

Civil liberties are immensely important to me. I know that the member for Mount Royal and I have in common a desire to defend civil liberties. I would also note that during his time as mayor of Côte-Saint-Luc, he and his council were viewed as one of the most innovative councils in Quebec. Therefore, I reach out to the member for Mount Royal and his entire caucus to work with us to ensure that civil liberties are maintained and that safety on the Internet is a reality.

Last and certainly not least, this motion has garnered strong support from coast to coast to coast, across a diverse array of over 40 organizations. From the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee in B.C. to the Newfoundland and Labrador Feminist and Allies, to the Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada, this is an issue that many care about deeply.

I am grateful for the support of Crossroads Resource Centre and Women's Shelter, and the Caribou Child & Youth Centre, which serve women and youth in my riding in northern Alberta.

As parents and policy-makers, we have a shared responsibility to see that young boys and girls grow up to develop positive attitudes on sexuality that foster dignity instead of objectification, and affection instead of coercion. That is a Canada that we all seek, and I hope that I have everyone's support for Motion No. 47.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is an incredibly important topic and I want to ask the member a question.

The Standing Committee on that Status of Women is doing a study on violence against young women and girls, which includes cybersexual violence and cyberbullying. Could the hon. member please explain how the health committee study would complement and add to that work, and in what ways that study would be different and create a fuller understanding?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I am aware that the status of women committee is doing a study on similar grounds. However, I would point out that whereas that committee is looking at how it happens, we already know that the Internet is full of this but need to know what impact it is having on the health of Canadians. That is significantly different in terms of scope.

I specifically targeted the health committee to study this, because I do not think it needs to be a justice or a status of women issue. There is also a vast array of impacts that affect men as well as women and children. That is why I suggest we need to look at other health impacts on the broad range of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this important issue because increasingly easy access is a menace.

My question is along the same lines as my colleague's.

This issue needs to be looked at in committee. As an action-oriented person who wants results fast, I wonder why my colleague did not take this motion directly to the Standing Committee on Health. That would have enabled us to minimize delays and get this study going much faster.

Several committees have an interest in this subject, but since the motion calls on the Standing Committee on Health, why did he not put it before the committee directly?

• (1120)

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, this is an important issue that requires the attention of all Canadians.

To put it on the radar, one of the things we are working on is to start a dialogue across the country with the motion. Putting it before the health committee directly would not spark that discussion across the country. That is why I have done it this way.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing up this very important topic.

As the chair of the status of women committee, I concur that we have heard lots of testimony on pornography being a really a significant issue in the formative behaviours of both young girls and young men.

I noticed there was a date of July 2017 in the motion, by which time the health committee would be required to report. Could the hon. member comment on that?

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Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, we definitely put July 2017 on the list. When I crafted the motion shortly after I was elected, nearly a year ago, I anticipated that July 2017 would allow a lot of time for the committee to get it done. However, I figured that I would be up for my first hour of debate back in March, which never happened, so I would be open to a friendly amendment on the date, if needed.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the excellent work and background research he has done on this issue.

As a father and grandfather, I find this to be a very troubling issue. It should be troubling to all Canadians, and particularly parliamentarians.

The motion instructs the committee to conduct a study. I wonder why my colleague would not simply have recommended a policy that we could adopt, rather than going to committee for study.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I did not put any particular policy in the motion because I felt that we needed to work together to come up with solutions that would work for everyone. I did not want to make this a partisan issue, so I put it together, thinking that we could do it at the committee level. We should all be able to support whatever comes out of that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the motion and I believe that members will find that Canadians as a whole appreciate and understand the severity of the issue before us today. The member made reference to individuals and groups who have been supportive of the motion. I would like to add that the government will also be supporting the motion and sees its merit.

This is an issue that is close to the hearts of many Canadians, and it does not matter from which region of the country. Given the severity of the problem, I suspect it would be a challenge to find any noteworthy public policy organization that would oppose a motion of this nature to try to come up with ways we can better deliver programs and services, or at the very least, to get a better understanding of this.

The motion would require the Standing Committee on Health to conduct a study on the health effects of the growing problem of online sexual abuse, particularly against women and children. As pointed out, the committee on the status of women is also doing a study, but one that is somewhat different from what the member is proposing. Therefore, as I indicated, we are comfortable in supporting the motion before us.

It is important to recognize that the subject of the proposed study is consistent with the commitments in the 2015 Speech from the Throne to provide greater security for Canadians. In fact, members will find that the government's agenda to develop and implement a federal strategy against gender-based violence is in the mandate letters of the Minister of Status of Women, Minister of Justice, Minister of Public Safety, and the President of the Treasury Board. As well, the government is committed to undertaking an independent national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

The motion is also in line with the focus in budget 2016 on building evidence-based policies. I would suggest this is an excellent way for us, as legislators, to look at policy options. It is one of the things that I believe will be a good path for us to hopefully come up with a better understanding for better policy direction by the government.

Through the national strategy for the protection of children from sexual exploitation on the Internet, our government is in fact working to enhance the tools required for prevention, investigation, and prosecution of those who prey on children online. The government is also investing in research and programs to prevent and respond to the trauma of family violence, including guidance for care providers and essential services in communities.

However, there is always room to do more, and as the Prime Minister has indicated, we can always do better. Motion No. 47 is a way to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the health effects of online violence and degrading, sexually explicit material.

The issue before us is not new, and every year the Internet becomes more and more accessible. However, when I was first elected many years ago, the Internet did not exist. If we look at the laws and the government programs and policies in place at the time, there was nothing that one could compare to this problem. We could cite these issues in the Criminal Code, but they fall short in addressing the severity of this issue.

Some of the most touching discussions I have had is with law enforcement agencies who have had to deal with the issue of child exploitation through pornographic material and other types of horrific acts, which are so accessible through the Internet today. It has had a very profound impact on society, and not for the better.

● (1125)

The Internet has been a blessing to society in many different ways, but there are some significant issues and drawbacks that have arisen that have really been detrimental to society. The issue of child pornography and information accessed through the Internet dealing with the abuse of women and young children is totally and completely unacceptable.

We as legislators need to do what we can to combat this. The violence taking place in society today can often be attributed to what has been witnessed, whether on the Internet or on TV. To say that we as legislators play no role would be abdicating our responsibilities in trying to provide for a better society.

In his remarks, the member referenced this as an industry that generates billions of dollars, with hundreds of millions of viewers. It is an industry that is, unfortunately, far too healthy. We need to look at ways we can prevent that industry not only from growing, because of the damage it has caused to society, but ways we can put in some limitations that would protect the interests of society as a whole, and in particular, those who have been victims of abuse, sexual or otherwise.

There are strong advocates, in particular women's advocacy groups and children's advocacy groups. We need to recognize that there are victims in both genders. As the member referenced, our Prime Minister's wife has been a very strong advocate on the sensitivities of this issue and the call for legislators to take action.

In the motion, the member makes reference to respecting other jurisdictions. I would interpret that by recognizing that not only do we here in Ottawa have a role to play, but also provincial legislatures, school boards, municipal governments, and many different stakeholders all have a role to play in this.

There will be a second hour of debate, and I believe the motion will ultimately go to committee for study. It is important that Canada as a nation, the government, and the House of Commons all have a role to play. It is one of leadership. The things that are talked about in the House and the studies that will come out of the standing committees, whether it is the Standing Committee on Health or the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the material that will be researched, and the drawing of witnesses from across Canada to participate would all ensure we come up with some good, solid recommendations that would ultimately make a difference.

I appreciate the member has put in a timeline of July, 2017. That is a responsible timeline. Some have suggested it could be earlier. We are providing a fairly clear direction here, allowing for the health committee to do its work in a timely fashion. I trust that many on the committee and many of the presenters will generate ideas that would hopefully assist us as legislators to demonstrate strong national leadership by bringing in some recommendations that would really make a difference.

We owe it to our children. We owe it to our society to improve the Internet. The Internet is a super fantastic thing, but there are some issues that need to be dealt with. This is just one of those issues, but one of the most significant, and it needs to be dealt with.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I was a little surprised when I read this motion. New Democrats will support Motion No. 47, but I do have some comments to share with the sponsor.

I really had to wonder why the member chose to present this kind of motion to the House. I would have expected such a motion to go directly to the Standing Committee on Health. Nevertheless, the member for Peace River—Westlock moved Motion No. 47 in the House, so now we must debate it.

I get how important this issue is, but if it truly matters to him, I think it would have been more efficient to put the motion before the committee so that it could have started its study sooner. In fact, this motion could have been put to a number of committees so they could study it in depth and figure out how to protect our children from this public health threat.

It has been more than 30 years since Parliament last debated pornography. Back then, there was no Internet, so that is why we need to talk about it again. I agree that we need some current data on the effects of violent pornography.

However, I want to see concerted action, not only at the Standing Committee on Health, but within a number of committees, so as to ensure that we take a comprehensive approach and act meaningfully. From my research I learned that many difficulties associated with pornography stem from the fact that no one seems to agree on how to define the term. According to the House of Commons website,

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criminal law does not refer to pornography but rather obscenity, except in an amendment made in 1993 on child pornography.

In 1988, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women proposed the following definition of pornography:

Pornography is the representation or description of violent or degrading behaviour or behaviour that causes or could cause death, when that behaviour is inflicted by one individual on another, or by that individual on themselves, represented or described for the express purpose of sexually stimulating or gratifying the spectator, reader, or listener; especially when such behaviour can be taken to be advocated or endorsed.

I am now quoting from the House of Commons website:

Notwithstanding the uncertainties of definition, many believe that material that depicts violence toward—or demeans—women is demonstrably harmful and should be controlled. There is, however, considerable divergence on the appropriate strategy.

The committee needs to study this. The quotation continues:

Harm is said to flow from pornography in two ways. First, it is theorized that there is a direct causal link between violent pornography and violence against women, so that such material can act as a “trigger” to aggression. Second, it is said that pornography contributes in a general way to myths about sexuality and about women that ultimately make violence and degradation more acceptable to society as a whole. According to this view, distinctions among types of pornography are invidious. Such material constitutes a continuum: consumers are desensitized or numbed by “soft” pornography, the wide distribution of which makes the allegedly more directly harmful “hard” pornography easier to accept and, indeed, encourages its production.

The NDP recognizes that the increasing ease of access to violent and sexual material online can be a problem for our society. The consequences of accessing such material to male sexuality, such as erectile dysfunction, pushes men to watch ever more violent pornographic videos. Likewise, watching violent pornographic material might lower women's self-esteem .

It has also been proven that individuals who watch such material could be more inclined to normalize sexual violence.

• (1135)

The new Democrats are very concerned about the public's increased access to violent and extreme pornographic content, which shows explicit scenes of degradation and sexual violence for the purpose of sexual arousal. Given the number of consumers of violent pornography, there is a growing risk of normalization that can result from constant exposure or dependence on violent pornography. There is the danger of progressive normalization of pornography, which would lead people to believe that moral coercion and physical violence is acceptable.

We must take action to ensure that violent and sexually explicit content is not readily accessible by children. We must do something about this. We believe that action must be taken and access to this type of content must be controlled on several levels and in a concerted manner. We want to protect our children from sexually explicit content that could impact their health.

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My research indicates that all studies of violent pornography contradict one another to a great extent. For example, according to the organization *Avenir de la culture*, a study conducted by one of the leading researchers in this field, Professor Neil M. Malamuth of the University of California in Los Angeles, entitled “Predicting Sexual Aggression: The Role of Pornography in the Context of General and Specific Risk Factors”, concludes that high pornography consumption added significantly to the prediction of sexual aggression.

There is a particularly high correlation between the frequent use of pornography and sexually aggressive behaviour among those who are already strongly predisposed to sexual aggression. In other words, among those at the highest predisposing risk level for sexual aggression, those who are very frequent pornography users have sexual aggression levels approximately four times higher than their counterparts who do not very frequently consume pornography.

However, the studies presented in *Contrepoints* show that European researchers did not come to the same conclusions. They did not find that users of what they classified as violent pornography were more aggressive than non-users.

I therefore believe that it is important that the committee conduct further research in this area. Whom are we to believe? I agree with the member that we need to do everything we can to protect our children against the destructive effects of violent Internet pornography.

That is why we need to ensure that the committee conducts a full study of this issue and proposes solutions and recommendations so that we, as parliamentarians, can do what is necessary and bring in legislation for everyone's well-being.

• (1140)

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is Monday morning and we are talking about sex in the House of Commons. Giddy-up, here we are.

The motion before us today asks the Standing Committee on Health to examine the public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women, and men.

Any human behaviour has its consequences, both positive and negative, and sex is no different, except that it is the most highly moralized behaviour that we have, particularly when it comes to female sexuality. For essentially the entire history of our species, female sexuality has been something to be feared, and sexual desire has been something to be suppressed and only used for purposes of reproduction, ownership, or shows of masculinity.

There have been two transformational changes in how we view sexuality that have happened in very recent history. First is the ability for women to manage their fertility. When legal and freely available, reproductive health options allow women to have access to them to bear some measure of control on whether and when they bear children.

This, in turn, has allowed women who have legal and widely available access to these options to gain higher levels of education

and to enter the workforce, and for society as a whole to challenge deeply entrenched norms attached to how we are expected to behave based on the sex we have been assigned at birth. I highly doubt that I would be standing here, an elected member of Parliament, giving a speech on sexuality in the legislative chamber of a G7 country if it were not for this fact. This has also allowed women to explore their sexuality without the inevitability of child rearing.

Talking about women as empowered sexual beings with desires is something that would have scared the living daylights out of many, as little as a generation ago, and it still drives policies and edicts written by religious police in other parts of the world.

At the same time, we have been transformed by the connectedness that the Internet has blessed us with. We can reach out to somebody around the world with a few flicks of our thumbs. We can collect and manipulate data sets that were incomprehensible as little as 20 years ago. We can understand and drive prosperity in ways that we only dared to dream about in the wildest science fiction movies.

The advent of the Internet, Wi-Fi, and smart phones has also brought pornography off the shelves of stores with blotted-out windows and made it available on demand, on our phones, right here, right now. Today's porn is not our grandfather's porn either. We know that extremely violent and degrading images have become mainstream.

The tectonic collision of these two truly transformational changes is why the motion has been brought forward to us today, and I strongly applaud my colleague for bringing it forward in a timely manner before the House.

As women have become more sexually empowered, the reality is that our laws have not kept pace with the speed and access at which violent and sexually degrading materials have become available online.

As my colleague who is presenting the motion mentioned earlier this morning, it has been 30 years—well before global connectivity changed—since Canada has reviewed laws and health impacts of these types of images. As legislators, we have an obligation to ensure our constituents are protected and safe. We as legislators need to better understand the needs of our community when it comes to the availability of these types of images, the impact they have, what legislative gaps exist, and how we should address them. That is why the motion is so important and should be supported today.

Because we all have our unique sexual preferences, we need to resist the urge to move the debate to polar extremes: pearl-clutching versus total disregard for the fact that violent and degrading sexual images do in fact have a significant impact on our community. For me, we as legislators need to address issues related to sexuality in the context of the following principles.

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The first is consent, with an understanding that sexual consent is something that should be enthusiastic and expressed by all partners, that it can be withdrawn at any point in time, and that there are situations in which consent cannot be granted. The second is safety: that we embrace and celebrate the promotion of safe sexual health. Third is pleasure and respect: that sex is something that should cause pleasure for all partners in the broad range of meanings and terms that we ascribe to that, and that partners engage in sex in the context of mutual respect.

My colleague's motion would allow us to review the impact of violent and sexually degrading images on our ability to protect our population in a sex-positive context, as well as a broad variety of other issues. Given that the government has committed to supporting the motion, some of the information that I would be keen to hear during the course of the study is the effect of violent and sexually degrading images on our ability to educate our children about safe sex, consent, and pleasure.

When I was in Copenhagen earlier this year for the Women Deliver conference, I had the opportunity to meet with a group called the pleasure project, and its reason for existence is to ensure that, when we talk about safe sex and the promotion of safe sex, it does not have to be clinical, saying safe sex is bad. They want to talk about sex as a positive thing.

• (1145)

When I look at the prevalence of degrading and sexually violent images on the Internet, I ask if those two principles can co-exist. That is something we should be talking about. I know my colleague has put respecting the jurisdiction of provincial legislatures in the motion, but when we have debates about sexual education, do we have the data we need on that topic?

The other concern I have and would love to look at is that these images essentially teach women that their only reason for existence in a sexual relationship is to be a vehicle of pleasure for a man in very violent and degrading situations. I would like to know what this means in terms of feminist theory and how it actually affects women's rights in terms of the shaping of their sexual identities.

I also recognize that this example is given in the context of the gender binary. I would like to know what these types of images mean in terms of fetishization and degradation of trans men and women.

We should also study, within the scope of this, the effect of this industry on the health and well-being of the actors in this industry. If any of my colleagues find themselves, as I often do, at 11 p.m. looking for something on Netflix, I encourage them to watch a very difficult documentary called *Hot Girls Wanted*. I know that some people in the pornography industry will say that it is not indicative of all of the industry, but I was shocked to see how young women are essentially lured into this industry and then used.

I would like to hear about how the industry brings actors into it, how they are treated, and whether or not this is something that is empowering for women, which I highly doubt. In fact I would be very happy to argue against that, because it is very degrading, and it is crazy that we have not looked at the effect of the industry on the protection of women and girls.

The other thing we could study as part of the motion is the ease and availability of these images of violence against women. My colleagues who have spoken to the motion already have talked about how, when these types of behaviours become normalized through the ease of availability of these types of images that we see today, there likely is a rise in violence against women. I would be very interested in knowing about how the ease of accessibility of these images actually increases violence against women—if it does, and I am sure it does—and then what the legislative gaps or programmatic gaps are that we as legislators have responsibility to deliver on.

It would also be very interesting to talk about the effect of these images on the development of sexual identity among all genders. I will give an example. I have an acquaintance who teaches elementary school, and I asked her where the kids are at these days. Her response was that she did not expect she would have to deal with talking about anal tearing with grade 6 girls when she started teaching, because these girls think, one, that it is sexually acceptable because boys have grown up watching this; two, that they cannot get pregnant doing it that way; and three, that it is something the boys want, so they should do it. I cannot imagine being confronted by a girl of that age telling me that she had been engaging in those behaviours without any sort of context on what that means, because her partner had been looking at these types of images that have been normalized within him.

My colleague from the NDP talked about a lot of different types of research out there and there is not a lot of conclusiveness, but I am hearing unanimity in the House that there is an understanding that this is a public health problem for this country and that a study would be very beneficial in terms of informing us on what sorts of legislative gaps we should be addressing, as well as programming that could be delivered.

• (1150)

My hope too is that the committee, once it finishes this, comes out with some concrete recommendation in terms of follow-up on further education.

My colleague also asked why we would table it here instead of in committee. Other motions have been presented in the House that talked about assigning a study to a committee, and they have been accepted here. This is an important motion and I strongly encourage all of my colleagues to support it.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 47, which calls on the Standing Committee on Health to study the public health effects of accessing and viewing online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women, and men.

Introduced by our colleague the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, Motion No. 47 calls on the Standing Committee on Health to conduct a study on an issue that is growing in prevalence and something we do not yet understand enough, the public health implications.

I would like to take a moment to share with the House the reasons why I believe it is extremely important to support the motion.

Private Members' Business

The availability and accessibility of violent and sexually degrading material online is increasing, as are the number of reports of child sexual abuse images in Canada. For example, in 2015, Cybertip.ca, Canada's national tip line established to report suspected cases of child sexual exploitation on the Internet, received 38,000 reports of child sexual abuses online. This was a dramatic increase of 342% over the numbers reported in 2011, just four years earlier.

Online sexual violence against children and women, or cyberviolence, is becoming more prevalent. New technologies enable offenders to create and share child sexual abuse and sexual violence in an anonymous way, thereby creating challenging conditions for investigation and victim identification.

Those victimized as subjects of these images are largely women and children. In Canada, nearly 81% of child sexual abuse images on the Internet in 2013-14 were of girls, 79% of whom were under the age of 12.

High-profile public cases such as those of Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons have raised public awareness of online sexual violence and degrading sexually explicit material and their health repercussions.

Despite the growing prevalence of this material and the ease with which it can be distributed and accessed, we do not have a good understanding of its public health implications. Studies suggest that there are long-term health consequences for victims and survivors of sexual abuse whose abuse was recorded and distributed. Studies also suggest health consequences for people who access and view this material online. Emerging studies show that the mental health of youth and children is especially affected by viewing such material. In Canada, for example, a 2016 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health study draws a correlation between the rise and use of social media and the decline of youth mental health, with girls being twice as likely as boys to experience psychological distress.

Recent studies conducted in the United States of adolescent girls and boys suggest that viewing violent and sexually explicit online images, especially pornography, influences gender norms and attitudes, which can lead to violent sexual behaviour. This emerging field of study suggests that accessing and viewing this material affects adolescents' social development, attachment, and interpersonal relationships. More study is needed to understand the impact on the adolescent brain. Adolescents may be disproportionately vulnerable to negative consequences of viewing sexually explicit material.

Internet pornography addiction is emerging as an issue. Research suggests that accessing and viewing this material is linked to deficits in cognitive control and delayed maturation, including impulsivity and affective challenges during teenage years.

The last major public study on sexually explicit material in Canada, as stated by members previously, was conducted more than 30 years ago in 1985 by the Fraser committee. That committee reported to Parliament that sexually explicit material had negative impacts on women's equality. Today the landscape has changed dramatically. Through the availability of technology, the Internet, and social media, more extreme materials have become available to more people, causing even more harm.

Addressing violence in any form requires the involvement of many sectors, and the health system has an important role to play in preventing and addressing violence.

In his annual report on the state of public health in Canada in 2016, "A Focus on Family Violence in Canada", Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Gregory Taylor, recognizes violence as a serious health issue that affects the physical and mental health of many Canadians. In his report, Dr. Taylor points out that the impacts of violence on health can be widespread and long-lasting. These impacts go way beyond physical injury to include a higher risk for mental health issues, premature death, and chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

• (1155)

In 2014, girls and women accounted for seven of every 10 reported cases of family violence. Violence against women is an extremely important public health issue in Canada and globally, and there is growing international consensus on the important role of the health system in addressing this violence.

Just this past spring, in May 2016, Canada supported the World Health Organization's global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system in addressing interpersonal violence. The global plan of action sets out roles for the health system in programming, leadership, service delivery, and providing information and evidence. Adoption of this plan by member states around the world demonstrates the shared understanding that violence against women and children, in all of its forms, needs to be understood as a public health issue.

While the provinces and territories are generally responsible for delivery of care in Canada, the Government of Canada has a leading role to play in addressing public health issues by developing and disseminating evidence and knowledge, providing national leadership, and promoting intergovernmental collaboration on health issues. For example, while the federal health portfolio does not have programs that address online violence, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research focus on violence prevention through research, surveillance, and health promotion programs for survivors of family violence.

Beyond the health portfolio, the committee's study could inform the government's agenda to develop and implement a federal strategy against gender-based violence, the government's commitment to undertake an independent national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and several ministers' mandate letter commitments to address gender-based violence. Our government is committed to evidence-based policy-making, which means that policies and programming on public health issues should continually be informed by a clear understanding of research and evidence.

Private Members' Business

A study by the Standing Committee on Health would provide an opportunity to hear from experts, researchers, and advocates for those affected by online violence and degrading sexually explicit material. Understanding the health effects of accessing and viewing violent and degrading sexually explicit online material and physical and sexual violence in Canada would help to inform future government policy development in this area. The study would also present to parliamentarians and Canadians the opportunity to learn more about a topic that is growing in prevalence, but for which the health implications remain unclear.

I am convinced that to support Motion No. 47 is to move in the right direction. I am inspired by the work done on gender-based violence, not only by federal departments and organizations, such as the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, but all of the advocacy groups across the country, especially those in support of Motion No. 47.

I would like to note that I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to this important issue and I encourage all of my hon. colleagues to support Motion No. 47 as it aligns with the current federal direction on gender-based violence. It is an opportunity to shed light on an extremely important topic and its health implications.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue will have just a few minutes before we proceed to government orders.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, since I will have to deliver my speech in two parts, I will begin by talking about how young men's health is affected by pornography, which has changed a lot over the years. In the second part of my speech, I will come back to how pornography affects how women and girls perceive sexuality and violence.

The overabundance of pornography available to young men has caused many of them to become addicted to it. Clinical exams of these young men reveal the classic signs of addiction. This problem is real and this addiction is such that those who have it truly need to seek help.

Unfortunately, these same people will often tend to also look for increasingly explicit material, which can cause changes in neural connections. Something that normally would not arouse someone sexually manages to do so over time, such as the association with violence, for example. That is one of the primary problems.

It has also been noted that an increasing number of young men are developing erectile dysfunction in real life, in a real sexual relationship. They are unable to get an erection because they are used to getting sexually aroused with other materials. This creates problems in their sexual health. They develop this problem in a normal relationship and then are less likely to try to have real relationships because of erectile dysfunction. They do not want to be asked why they have this problem at age 20, 22, or 25. They will isolate themselves and tend to watch even more pornography.

These are two health problems experienced by young men. These problems have been documented, discussed, and reported on. Those reports are available.

The other problems that exist really have to do with perceptions of sexuality and the effects they can cause. It is important to understand that the content available on the Internet goes a lot further than what was available 30 years ago. It is almost beyond imagination. Pornography also depicts scenes of criminal behaviour, including gang rape for example. There is a legitimate concern when it comes to the violent content that often depicts criminal activities.

When individuals are discovering their sexuality, trying to figure out what normal sexuality is, what is not normal, and what is completely fictitious, it is easy to become confused. This is especially true for adolescents who have probably never asked their friends, family, and teachers these kinds of questions. Unfortunately, many provinces stopped offering sex education as part of their curriculum for a period of time, so those conversations never happened, unlike my own experience, when some form of sex ed actually was offered at school.

As a result, some people never had a chance to ask those questions or discuss these matters in an appropriate setting. The only resource they could turn to for answers when trying to understand sexuality and how to have a healthy sex life was what was available on the Internet. It is fair to say that what is available on the Internet in no way resembles what really happens with the vast majority of couples in their sex lives.

This could lead to a completely distorted view of sexuality, which could in turn trivialize certain behaviours.

• (1205)

Content that provides a completely distorted view of sexuality may cause young people to think that what they are seeing is realistic and to adopt harmful sexual behaviours. What constitutes sexual consent can often be ambiguous. What is more, very few of these films depict safe sex practices, such as the use of condoms.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue will have four and a half minutes when this matter comes up for debate again.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***CANADA PENSION PLAN**

The House resumed from November 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act and the Income Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada pension plan, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act and the Income Tax Act.

Since being elected a little over a year ago, I have had many conversations with my constituents in Mississauga—Streetsville, ranging from security for seniors to things that concern youth. However, one of the more consistent concerns that has been brought to my attention is what our government is doing to help working-class Canadians who are looking to retire.

Many of my constituents have contacted my office and explained to me that even though they have been working hard their entire adult life, they are not confident they can safely retire. I know my constituents are not the only Canadians who have such concerns. All across the country, middle-class Canadians are working harder than ever, yet they are deeply concerned that they do not have enough money saved for a stable retirement.

More than one-quarter of Canadian families are nearing retirement and each year fewer and fewer Canadians have workplace pensions to fall back on. This leaves approximately 1.1 million families facing the intimidating risk of not having enough money saved to maintain their standard of living when they retire.

These Canadians fear that because of this, they will have to work for longer than they had planned and ultimately miss out on spending precious time with their families. As a result of this, a grandfather may not be able to take his grandchildren on a camping trip or may miss their sporting events because he could not get time off from work. A mother may have to cancel the road trip she was planning with her daughter for years, because she was called in for a last-minute shift. Ultimately, many Canadians will miss out on many important moments.

However, it is not just families nearing retirement that are concerned with this issue. Over the past year, I have met with any young Canadians who are just finishing school and are about to enter the workforce. They are concerned that with fewer jobs offering workplace pension plans, they will find it difficult to save enough of their earnings for a stable retirement.

It is no secret that Canadians are living longer lives. Although we should be grateful for this, longer life expectancies ultimately mean that the level of savings required to achieve a stable retirement is increased. With the population of my riding expecting to grow by 4% over the next 15 years and 6% over the next 25, there will only be more constituents with the same concerns if these issues are not addressed. However, I am confident that this bill addresses the concerns of my constituents and many Canadians across the country.

With all nine Canada pension plan participating provinces confirming their support, I know I am not the only person who has confidence in the bill.

Once it takes effect, Bill C-26 will increase the maximum Canada pension plan retirement benefit by roughly 50%. Currently, the maximum benefit is \$13,110. However, after this enhancement, the number will increase by roughly \$7,000 for a maximum benefit of \$20,000.

Bill C-26 would do two very crucial things. It would increase the amount of money Canadians would get from their pension from one-quarter of their earnings to one-third. This means that a hard-working Canadian making \$50,000 annually would receive \$16,000 annually in retirement. The bill would also increase the maximum income range covered by the Canada pension plan by 14% so that those who earn more will receive more in retirement.

We have heard from our colleagues that they are concerned that the cost of the bill would put a significant strain on taxpayers. To answer this, the government is ensuring that the changes in contributions will be phased-in slowly over seven years, which will give individuals and employers sufficient time to adjust to the minor increase. For low-income workers who may be concerned about the change in contributions, the legislation would provide an enhancement to the working income tax benefit designed to provide additional benefits that would offset the incremental Canada pension plan contribution.

Furthermore, it is important to note that contributions to the enhanced portion of the Canada pension plan will be deductible. Providing a tax deduction for new employee Canada pension plan contributions will avoid increasing the after-tax cost of savings for Canadians. For employers, employer contributions to the enhanced portion of the Canada pension plan will be deductible for income for tax purposes. For self-employed Canadians who contribute both the employer and employee share of the Canada pension plan, they will be able to deduct both the employee and employer share of contributions to the enhanced portion of the CPP.

● (1210)

Last week, I visited many local high schools and spent time speaking to hundreds of students. When discussing the proposed Canada pension plan enhancement, these young individuals overwhelmingly supported the legislation. They understood and supported the idea of small, incremental increases in contributions to ensure a secure and stable pension.

It is young people like the ones I met last week who will be inheriting the policies and programs we create today. The support of these young people should be a testament as to why all members in the House should support the bill. We, as members of Parliament, must think of them when debating legislation in the House. I am confident the bill will have a positive impact on the future of young Canadians, which is why I am proud to be speaking to the bill today.

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During my campaign last year, I had many young volunteers helping me. When I was elected, I promised to be their advocate in Ottawa. By standing here today to speak to the bill, a bill that would have a positive impact on their future, I know I am fulfilling that promise. The positive impact the bill can have is truly significant. The bill would ensure that every Canadian worker could retire with a safe and secure pension. Young Canadians entering the workforce could enter with confidence, knowing that legislation would be in place to ensure they would have enough saved when the time comes for them to retire.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned how he talked to his constituents and heard their concerns. We recognize some people have concerns, and we know who they are. They are elderly widows and people with lower incomes. However, the program being proposed by the government has no benefit for anyone for the next 40 years. Finance Canada has said that it would have very detrimental affects in the next 30 years. Also, when it does come into effect, it benefits only 8%. Therefore, why does the member think this is such a good plan?

• (1215)

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Madam Speaker, that is a very pejorative interpretation of what the bill intends to do. As I mentioned, I spoke to many high school students. I told them that we had an aging population that would need medical assistance, that would retire all at once and that they would have to foot the bill or incur the cost of that. They agreed we should prepare for that situation right now. It is prudent for our government to put these parameters in place so they will not have to incur those costs later on.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, exactly what you sell is what you get. He sold it that way. I tried to sell it—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member to address his comments and questions to the Chair.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I am looking at him, but I am speaking to you.

The question is, which is the most critical point, the effect on business. Businesses will take a tax on this. It will make them lose jobs eventually, and there will be a levy on business operations. Could the hon. member comment on that?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Madam Speaker, my colleague sold this as a tax. We see this as an investment. It is an investment in Canadians who have worked very hard to create our country that we enjoy today. It is an investment in future Canadians so they will not have to incur a larger cost due to an aging population.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question is about Canadians who need this help now, seniors who cannot afford to live, cannot afford their medication, cannot afford their rent because of unaffordable housing. This will not take place for 49 years.

The member says he cares about the people in his community who are suffering right now. What measures is the government taking to help seniors today?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Madam Speaker, the current situation is the impetus for what we are doing with CPP. However, we are reversing

the OAS back to age 65 and we have increased the guaranteed income supplement and its eligibility as well. We are taking actions to address the seniors who are retiring now. At the same time, we are preparing the next generation to help take care of the seniors who will be retiring then.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleagues have asked three excellent questions, but my question is more about something else. I heard the member say that he was enhancing the opportunities for youth as well. How can the Liberals do that when they are increasing taxes through a carbon tax and bringing about present taxes on them, as well as this tax of a Canada pension plan? It just does not add up to a prosperous future for the new generations as well as for our seniors.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Madam Speaker, I will paraphrase what one student said. He asked why we would put our heads in the sand and let them pay for not taking steps now. The member says that this is a tax. We see this as an investment. A lot of the youth I spoke to see it as an investment as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we resume debate, I notice there has been some body language that shows there are questions about how I am selecting speakers. I want to remind members that the Deputy Speaker raised this in the House before the House rose. Basically, when a specific party is doing the speech, it will be left up to the other parties to ask the questions unless nobody on the opposite side is asking questions. If there is nobody asking questions, then we will go back and forth on a rotating basis. I just want to reiterate that.

Time is generally afforded to members of the parties that are not associated with the member who has just spoken, but not to the exclusion of that party. We will also be attentive to members who are particularly present during the day and paying attention to the debate to ensure that as many members as possible can participate.

The final point that the Deputy Speaker gave was that when we start the time for questions and comments, we will take note of the number of members who rise to judge how we accord and allocate time for members. For example, if only one or two members stand up in the five minute period for questions and comments, we will certainly allow more time for those members accordingly.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saskatoon—University.

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●(1220)

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things I like to do when I address an issue is always lay out the philosophical principle grounds as to why I am addressing it and where my conclusions come from. One thing I have noted in this House, over the years, is members do a fairly excellent job of going through the details. However, when we are in this House, we are not just speaking to other members, explaining details, we are laying out our basic understanding to our constituents and to the broader Canadian public as to why we are voting for or against something. I always consider it very wise to lay out the basic principle as to why I will be voting on a piece of legislation in one particular way or another.

However, with respect to this particular legislation, the CPP tax hike, as we the Conservatives are noting Bill C-26, the reason I am particularly voting against it is that the government is taking away freedom and choice from Canadians. Let us be fairly clear with what the government is doing by raising the CPP premiums: it is taking away people's choice. This is not some money that is coming from somewhere else into people's accounts. It is not money falling from heaven like manna. It is people being forced to take the money, which they may very well need now, and to delay it for some future benefit some day, as the data and research shows for Canadians of my age and younger, at a very poor rate of return.

Let us go through the basic objections as to why the Liberal government's CPP hike would be bad for Canadians, would give them less freedom, and, in the final analysis, would not be good for our economy or people's individual lives.

The first point is that increases to the Canadian pension plan, hikes to the premiums, have not over the long term increased savings. The government is naturally going to argue, "Of course, this is forcing people to put money into the future that they will get back from the CPP when they retire", but the empirical data and research that has been done, in the past, shows that whenever we have hiked the rates on premiums the number one place where Canadians tend to take the money from, when the government takes it from them forcefully, is their savings. It is almost a 1:1 ratio.

That means every time there is a hike, the government requires more in contributions, be it directly from people's paycheques or indirectly, although it still comes from people, ultimately, under the guise of taking it from their employers' contribution share. What do Canadians do? They put less money into mutual funds; they put less money into RRSPs; and now, with the introduction of the tax-free savings account, we will see less investment and less savings there.

What is happening is not that Canadians are getting a larger sum of money for their retirement, but that the government is taking away options from Canadians, taking away flexibility, and putting money into a pension plan for them, which may or may not be in their best interest.

Canadians are at different points in their lives, with different interests.

I am married. I have a 20-month-old daughter. All members of the caucus who know me know I am very proud of her. My wife and I, rather than wanting to put more money toward our pension plans, are

looking to start a registered educational savings plan for our daughter. We hope some day she will grow up, graduate from high school, and go forward for further education. That is the priority for us. However, when the government begins to engage in things like the CPP hike, it takes away people's freedom to make those choices and, instead, decides for them, "This is where your savings need to go".

There is an issue right now with affordable housing across the country, and in Vancouver and Toronto in particular. One of the greatest places where people save money is in their real estate. It is very difficult for young people now to get a foot on the ladder. The argument is, "Well, these aren't great sums of money, but a dollar is a dollar, and every little bit makes it more difficult". To top it off, with the government's changes to mortgages, it continues to make it more difficult for young people who want to get on the housing ladder. The point is that by taking away people's freedoms, the government does not increase and encourage more savings for retirement, it just changes the vehicle for how it is done.

●(1225)

The second point is this. There might actually be some benefit to Canadians if the rate of return was that much greater. There was an interesting paper done by the Fraser Institute that analyzed, depending upon what year people were born, the actual rate of return, in real value, for the average Canadian. For people born after 1972, it is barely over 2%.

I am 42 years old and was born in 1974. For me, the rate of return on my retirement plan is absolutely lousy. For people from my grandpa's generation born before 1920, it was an absolutely fabulous rate of return. It was incredible. He lived to be 92 years old, he paid for approximately 10 years, and it was amazing.

However, this is the issue. For young Canadians going forward, an increase to the Canada pension plan is not great. It is a poor return on investment. If people put money in, say, a low-cost indexed fund or something like that, historically, it is shown to have greater returns that one can control. Let us say that, unfortunately, someone passes away early. Their heirs would receive extra benefits. The government's plan would instead provide weaker returns for younger Canadians. It is not helping people. It is deciding for Canadians when they need their savings, now or later, and at an inferior rate of return. That is the second point that the government needs to note.

What problem is the government addressing? Again, this needs to be dealt with. When we discuss retirement, we talk about replacement income. This really is not the issue when it comes to retirement income. The question is more one of whether Canadians are living in poverty at certain times in their lives. I am sure that when most hockey players quit playing in the NHL, they do not get retirement replacement income of 70% of their previous earnings. That is not the point. The question is whether their incomes will drop to a point where they will live in poverty. They have a choice. They have their bulk earning years and they can move things around. That is an extreme example.

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I found this statistic earlier today on the Fraser Institute's website, which is that only 3.7% of Canadian seniors live in poverty, whereas it is more than 10% for working-age Canadians 18 to 64. For young people trying to put money into their educations, which for many people is the best investment by far, it is going to be difficult. Again, the government is taking away people's flexibility and making decisions for them, so that, in the end, they will not have the best return on their investments for their lives.

Instead of concentrating on replacement income, retirement policies, from a federal government perspective, should zero in on people who have low incomes. Those are almost always people who have not contributed to the Canada pension plan, because they have not worked over the years or were self-employed and not able to save money.

As my time has just about expired, I will mention another point that can be discussed in questions and comments, which is the cost of CPP versus other low-cost options available for savings. What it comes down to is that we will lose our freedom. We lose our freedom when we allow the government make decisions for us.

Let me reiterate that this bill would not solve the problem for low-income seniors, which is the real problem in retirement. It would provide a poor rate of return for people who view it as an investment, and it would displace savings from one portion of life to another portion of life by taking away people's freedoms. I will be voting against this legislation because it is bad policy. It is bad policy for Canadians now and in the future.

• (1230)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I totally disagree with what the member said. It demonstrates just how out of touch the Conservative Party is with what Canadians value and want.

This bill is a reflection of what I would argue is a historical agreement of the federal government working with provincial and territorial governments that recognize they need to think about future generations. It is about having a vision and ensuring that the working population today is going to have the funds to buy the little extras when it comes time to retire.

Whether it is the New Democrats or the Green Party in the House, whether it is provincial governments of different stripes across this country, everyone, except the Conservatives, seems to support what is happening. My question to the member is this. Why does he feel the Conservative Party is so out of touch with what Canadians want, to the degree that it is going to vote against this legislation?

Mr. Brad Trost: Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party believes Canadians should decide what they want to do with their own money. They should have the freedom to do it. That is why we are the low-tax party and we believe taxes should only be implemented for absolute necessities. The government and the NDP seem to have the attitude that they know how to spend people's money better than people do themselves. There is a fundamental point of disagreement and we debate it every election.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things the member mentioned is to give people a choice. In the last 20 years we have done nothing to the Canada pension plan

and that is why we are in this mess. Nothing has been done. Obviously there was no money left for people to save or to put into RRSPs, but they can look forward to the future by investing in themselves as they are working and their life goes forward.

I know the hon. member has said to let the people decide for themselves, let the people decide where they want their income to be, but there is no income. We have to look after our future and if we do not do it now, because we have already learned from our mistakes, we must do it for the next generation.

Why has nothing been done in the last 20 years where the system has failed and yet the member still opposes the bill going into the future?

Mr. Brad Trost: Madam Speaker, in the 1970s, 20-some percent of seniors lived below the low-income cut-off line. That number has now dropped to 3.7%. As members have pointed out to the House, the previous decade was the most successful in Canadian history for bringing people above the low-income cut-off line, the real poverty line. The best anti-poverty program in the world, by far, historically is free enterprise. It has worked. We are talking about CPP, which is people's own money. Let people spend their money how they see fit.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Conservatives deny that there even is a retirement income crisis and they claim that the government has not made a clear case for CPP enhancement. The most recent figures show that 30% of single, elderly women live in poverty. This was a decrease over the last 30 years in the number of Canadian workers covered by workplace pension plans, and this is significant, it is a huge decline that has continued and it continued under the Conservative government. The pension gap and the crisis of Canadians being able to save less for their retirement worsened considerably under the Stephen Harper government.

Could my colleague explain to the House what lessons that party learned from those failures?

• (1235)

Mr. Brad Trost: Madam Speaker, overall poverty rates among seniors dropped under the Conservatives. CPP deals with people who already have jobs paying into it. For low-income people, we need to deal with the guaranteed income supplement. CPP only affects people who are working and contribute over many years.

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Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, let us take a moment and talk about what pensions really look like. In Canada, there is the concept that if we go to work every day and work hard, one day we will be able to retire with dignity. Canadians planning for retirement dream about what it will be like to finally not have to go to work every day and instead do things they enjoy, such as spending more time with their family, travelling, and volunteering. This is the dream of many Canadians.

Bill C-26 would be a positive step forward in enhancing CPP benefits. This bill, when fully implemented, would increase the current level of CPP benefits from 25% to 33%. Although this falls short of the NDP's long-standing proposal to double CPP benefits, Bill C-26 is a step in the right direction. It would improve retirement security for young Canadians today.

I want to give a huge thanks to the many organizations that have been working hard for this improvement over many years. Labour and retired-persons organizations have long called for an expansion, and we congratulate them for their hard-fought win.

New Democrats have also been long calling for dignity for our seniors, the very Canadians who have built our beautiful country, many of whom are struggling in their later years with very limited incomes. We have consistently fought for increases in CPP, OAS, and GIS and will continue to do so.

The CPP is the best retirement pension deal available to Canadians. The fund is widely considered to be well managed. As of June 2016, the CPP Investment Board manages over \$287.3 billion in investment assets for the Canada pension plan on behalf of 19 million Canadians, making it among the 10 largest sovereign wealth funds in the world. The CPP currently covers earnings up to a cap of \$54,900; and for earnings up to this cap it aims to replace 25% of income. Maximum pensions are at \$1,092 per month or \$13,100 per year. For many Canadians, this only covers their basic needs.

The extended CPP would be a separate new tier. This would be added on top of the existing CPP and do two things: taking the replacement rate up to 33%, and expanding the earnings cap to \$82,700. While the increase in Bill C-26 is welcome, New Democrats know that better is always possible and the government could have gone further with the percentage changes and still maintained a healthy CPP. The government could also have implemented the changes more quickly to help seniors right now. This bill could have done so much more for those who are struggling today. We need to see immediate action to help seniors and Canadians who would not see the benefits of these changes.

Retirement security is in crisis in Canada. We have fewer workplace pensions than ever, with six in 10 Canadians having no workplace pension. This means that 60% of Canadians rely on CPP, OAS, GIS, and personal savings. Most people know that seniors do not have a lot of disposable income and very few have significant savings to help. Many rely on their family to help supplement their needs and to provide them with security. Many are women who are widowed or do not have their own private pension to supplement them.

I remember a conversation I had with a widow in Amherstburg whose husband's workplace pension had been drastically slashed because the company, General Chemical, had left Canada and was now only paying a small portion of its promised pensions to retirees. She was now talking about selling her house that she had lived in her whole life because she could not live on CPP, OAS, and GIS alone.

There are many seniors in my riding who are struggling. We have a lack of affordable housing; rising costs of drugs; and increased costs of food, gas, and hydro. The list goes on and on. Seniors today are struggling, and there is so much that could be done today. The changes that are being proposed us would not take place for 40 years. Those who would see the biggest benefit from the proposed changes are millennials.

If we talk to millennials, we hear they are often not even able to imagine a future that includes a workplace pension. They are struggling to find secure employment and are often working multiple jobs to patch together a living. They do not even think about retirement because they are so focused on working to find a job.

● (1240)

My colleague from Churchill—Keewatinook Aski recently brought her precarious work tour to Windsor, where we met with millennials to talk about their issues. I was crushed to hear a young woman talk about the fact she never envisions having a family or owning a home because she cannot find work. She is certainly not saving for retirement, which shows the clear need for CPP changes for future generations.

What an incredible difference we have had in a generation. It is a sad reflection on our society that 20 years ago when I began working, I was able to find work easily in a unionized workplace that had a decent wage and a workplace pension, which meant that I could retire with security and dignity. Today these opportunities are few and far between. With the decline of workplace pensions we are heading into a future in which there will be no security in later life for Canadians.

We often hear of people talking about the concept of the Canadian dream, that if people work hard for 30 years they can retire with dignity. I continually hear from the other side of the House that if Canadians just work hard enough, they too can join the middle class. This narrative is not only misleading but also insulting. Many Canadians work extremely hard every single day, but for so many reasons they are not able to save enough for a decent standard of living, let alone for retirement. They do not even think about trying to join the middle class, because they are struggling to survive today.

We can go back a generation before that. My grandfather was on the bargaining team in his workplace after he came back from serving in the war. He worked at a place called Dominion Forge. When they negotiated a retirement benefit for a 30-year-and-out contract, he became the first person to retire under that contract once it was signed. Today, we are losing these pensions at an alarming rate in Canada.

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Today, our workplaces are creating divisions between new hires and long-term employees. They are pitting working people against each other. This new tier of workers is asked to accept lower wages and smaller pensions, if any pension at all. We see this in workplaces right across Canada. It is a trend that reinforces the growing problem of retirement insecurity.

When I started working 20 years ago, things were relatively good. People with a high school diploma could find a job, and many jobs paid well. People could get jobs with a pension and benefits. They knew they could start a family. Today, this is just a dream for so many Canadians. Young people are struggling to find these good jobs and do not imagine planning for retirement because they cannot even find a job today.

We have a serious problem in our country today with many seniors living in poverty. I am pleased to see that Bill C-26 would address future generations, which will certainly be necessary, because there are fewer young people today who have a job in the first place so they can put some type of personal savings away and, second, have some form of workplace pension.

What are we doing today for seniors in this country? We hear the government talk about the changes it has made to the GIS, which amount to under \$1,000 per year at the maximum amount people are receiving. Seniors in my riding who get that extra amount of money have not been elevated out of poverty. They are still suffering from the high costs of medication and still cannot find affordable rent. When some people in my riding found out that seniors were going to receive that money, they turned around and raised their rent. Seniors are not seeing any benefit of that bonus.

So much more could be done today. I look forward to seeing what future initiatives will come forward in the House that would help the retired person and seniors of today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, allow me to explain what is happening for seniors today.

In the last federal budget, our government committed to an increase of \$900 annually in the guaranteed income supplement for the poorest and most vulnerable of Canada's seniors. Our government has dramatically increased the guaranteed income supplement.

Another thing this government did within months of taking office was to reverse the decision of the Stephen Harper government to increase the age of retirement from 65 to 67 for OAS benefits.

We have also done other things.

Would the member not agree that the three most fundamental social programs for our seniors, as our seniors themselves perceive, are OAS, CPP, and the guaranteed income supplement, all three of which this Liberal government dealt with in its first year of governing? Does she not see that as a positive thing?

• (1245)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, it is always positive to see an increase in programs to help seniors. The \$900 the member is

speaking about is a far cry from a dramatic change for seniors. Over a year, this will be a small amount every month to help seniors.

Any amount of money is always welcome, but to say this dramatically changes the lives of our most vulnerable seniors is implicitly false. That is not the truth. I am sure that if the member opposite talked to seniors in his own riding, he would certainly hear the exact same thing I am hearing, that the money has now had the consequence of increasing costs in the community so that the seniors will not even see the benefit of it. There needs to be something more significant.

With regard to the CPP specifically, going to 33% is positive, but what the member opposite is not admitting is that this will only happen 49 years out. This does nothing for seniors today. There has long been a call to have CPP benefits doubled, which could easily be done. This is a very healthy fund and is very well managed in our country. It is viewed around the world as one of the best plans. However, we can give back, because there is money sitting inside there right now that is not going to good use. That money needs to be in the hands of seniors right now in Canada, and so there could be an increase beyond the 33%.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned immediate action. Can she comment on the fact there is no immediate action in the bill to help seniors?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I do agree that the bill takes no immediate action. Seniors are struggling. Right now they cannot bear the cost of medication and the cost of food. Seniors in my community are making difficult choices about whether they keep their lights on during certain times of the day, or potentially go on public transit or get into their car if they can afford gas for that.

The cost of living has gone up and the CPP has not kept pace with it. There is so much more that can be done for seniors right now. One of the things the government can do is to stop the cuts to health transfers to the provinces. This will have a direct impact on our seniors in our communities, because if they are not able to access services because the money is not coming from the federal government to the provinces, they will find themselves in more difficult situations.

In my riding and in Windsor, there has been an attempt to cut local services and to move them up the road to London, Ontario. We pushed back against that. If we see these cuts coming in health care, we will see more services being removed from our communities, and that would hurt seniors.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that this does not have an immediate positive effect on seniors, but indeed hurts them. It appears that the government does not have a plan to take care of seniors. It has ignored seniors. Would the member agree?

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Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Yes, Madam Speaker, the government does not have plan to address seniors now, today, who are struggling in our communities.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-26 this afternoon, as there is no question that the suggested changes to the CPP will have a significant impact on Canadians and our economy.

I have heard a repeating mantra from the government that people are struggling to save, yet Canadians' retirement system is one of the most envied in the world. Poverty among seniors has dropped significantly in recent years, and Canadians are saving more for retirement today than ever before. I agree that all Canadians should be able to retire with dignity: those now retired, those soon to retire, and young Canadians who are just beginning their journey in the workforce who will, before they know it, be where our seniors are today.

Despite these facts, there are definitely many seniors currently living in poverty and many working poor Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet. These are the individuals government should be focusing on. Our government should be implementing ways to help these individuals help themselves and should provide assistance when circumstances are such that retirement is difficult and the basic needs of life are out of reach.

The previous government expanded the guaranteed income supplement, and the current government did the same, increasing it by 10% in its first budget, which was a very good decision that I applaud.

When it comes to CPP contributions, I believe that the approach in Bill C-26 would cause more harm than good. Why? It is because it is not specific, when it could be, and so it would impact Canadians who have their savings plans already established and growing and would negatively impact Canadian businesses that actually fuel the economic growth our entrepreneurs, tradespeople, professionals, and labourers need to be successful.

We should be targeting voluntary additional individual contributions to CPP and not mandating that all Canadians participate further in a program that is complementary to the savings they choose to make as individuals. Canadians should be able to manage their own money. If they want to make additional individual contributions to the CPP, that could be done. As a small business owner, I know that it would be an easy move to add a request on a TD1 indicating how much more an employee would like attributed to his or her CPP contributions above and beyond the minimum. They could also use TFSAs, RRSPs, employer pensions, and other means of providing for their own retirement.

Small business owners are being penalized when they are forced to contribute more to CPP rather than being able to invest those funds in their businesses or other means of fund growth. Instead of stimulating the economy, they are being forced to contribute to a government program that takes away their right to manage their own investment of that income.

As well, we know that the CPP is unfair to single and divorced individuals. A constituent in my riding, who has been a certified financial planner for 20 years, indicated to me that 15% to 20% of

his clients fit this category. When they pass away, their estate receives a CPP death benefit of only \$2,500, because they have no spouse to receive the survivor benefit, yet they have faithfully made their CPP contributions over the years, and in the case of the self-employed, have made double contributions, which could have amounted to over \$100,000 in the past, and in the future to perhaps well over \$200,000.

Why would anyone wish to pay into a program that may never benefit them or their estate? This is unfair and is a form of discrimination. If I personally came up with a new pension plan today that asked clients to contribute \$2,500 to \$5,000 per year over their lifetimes, with the only guarantee on death, before drawing CPP, being \$2,500, I am quite certain that the authorities would call such a plan criminal in nature.

Another concern is that the offsetting tax credit the Liberals are suggesting to balance the additional monthly contributions for the working poor would only apply to a maximum annual income of approximately \$28,000 a year. For an individual, let alone a family living on a monthly income of \$2,400 a month before deductions, an increased CPP contribution will be a hardship they cannot afford.

In 2013, the total household net worth of Canadians was \$7.7 trillion, split almost equally between pension assets, real estate equity, and other assets. According to a study by McKinsey & Company, 83% of Canadian households are on track to maintain their current living standards in retirement. According to Statistics Canada, the share of Canadian seniors living on low incomes has dropped from 29% in 1970 to 3.7% today, which is among the lowest in the world.

According to Finance Canada's analysis, higher CPP premiums will reduce employment, reduce GDP, reduce business investment, reduce disposable income, and reduce private savings by 7%.

● (1250)

A paper released by the C.D. Howe Institute shows that the Liberals' CPP plan would not benefit low-income workers. Their premiums would go up, but their net increase in retirement benefits would remain low, since higher CPP payments would be offset by the clawback of GIS benefits.

Seventy per cent of employed Canadians oppose a CPP expansion if it means a wage freeze. Fewer than 20% of Canadians say they would opt to put more of their savings into the CPP, according to a survey by the CFIB.

Clearly, low-income workers and the working poor should be the focus of this government's argument that people are struggling to save. It should help those working hard to join the middle class through a voluntary CPP program instead of having an all-encompassing program that benefits the well employed, who already have strong retirement pensions and plans in which CPP payments are an added bonus.

I now quote Fred Vettese, chief actuary at Morneau Shepell and co-author with the Minister of Finance of *The Real Retirement*. This appeared in the *Financial Post* on June 5, 2016. He said:

Whatever the reason might be to expand the CPP, it is not to eliminate poverty. The poverty rate among seniors is now as close to zero as we can get. Yes, a little over five per cent of seniors today still have income below the poverty line

Charles Lammam and Hugh Macintyre, of the Fraser Institute, stated, in the *Financial Post*, on June 2, 2016:

Instead of expending political energy on debating CPP expansion in the misguided belief that many middle- and upper-income Canadians are not saving enough for retirement, the focus of public debate should be on how best to help financially vulnerable seniors.

Yves-Thomas Dorval, CEO of CPQ, said that he was worried about the new direction of the Canada Pension Plan and the impact on the Canadian economy. He said that if we want to encourage saving for retirement, a universal solution doesn't work. On the contrary, it is likely to have a negative impact on economic activity, jobs, and wages.

What impacts Canadians' ability to save is a slow economy, a loss of confidence in our economy, a loss of jobs, a loss of incentives, and increased taxes, all of which have a huge impact on the ability of young families to save.

I received a call from Brian, a constituent in my riding, who was emotional and distraught as he told me that the impact of an increase in CPP premiums, coupled with a carbon tax on everything, means that his wife will no longer be able to remain a stay-at-home mom, the way she wants to be, with their two small children. He was overwhelmed by the thought of his wife having no choice but to go to work, which will also increase their monthly costs, with child care, another vehicle, and all the additional expenses of a secondary income for their family.

The government is calling on Canadians to contribute more to the CPP, saying that Canadians do not know how to save enough, yet the Prime Minister has blown his modest deficit promise, borrowing three times more than he ever said he would. The Prime Minister has broken his promise to cut taxes for small businesses. The Prime Minister has broken his promise to make his tax plan revenue neutral. The Prime Minister has made children's sports, arts classes, students' textbooks, and tools for tradespeople more expensive. The Prime Minister has taken away the universal child care benefit, a plan that was easily implemented without a lot of red tape, that helped families and lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

Those with higher incomes paid the benefit back in taxes too. However, if that well-off family faced a downturn in the economy that ended its employment, like what we are seeing in our resource

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sector right now, for example, they could keep that benefit. Under the Liberal child benefit, those families will have to wait until next year to show their income loss before benefits are adjusted.

Some people truly are struggling to save, absolutely. That is why the government should be targeting voluntary additional income contributions to the CPP and should be focusing on helping those who are working hard to join the middle class and on seniors living in poverty right now, rather than blanketing all Canadians and all businesses, which are growing the economy, with a punitive program that limits their ability to save and invest.

● (1255)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is something I have emphasized in the past.

An hon. member: Not again.

● (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my colleague says “not again”. I can assure him that sometimes we have to repeat things a few times before they sink in on the other side.

I can assure members on the other side in the Conservative Party that they really have lost touch with Canadians in the manner in which they have chosen to vote on this piece of legislation. We are debating a historic agreement between the provinces and territories and the national government that recognized that we should be thinking about the future of workers in Canada. That is what this bill is all about.

So far this year, we have seen increases in the guaranteed income supplement. We were able to reverse Harper's eligibility from 67 to 65. Today what we are talking about is a bill that would see increases in pensions for future workers. We have provinces of different stripes and the NDP and the Green Party supporting this bill. Why does the member believe the Conservative Party is voting against something Canadians really want?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, we have heard this question so many times and have given such a solid answer to it, I think it is time to come up with another one.

The reality is that seniors in my riding, which has one of the oldest demographics in the country, recognize that our country needs an economy that is working so that people have the money they need to live their day-to-day lives and to invest in their own futures.

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I am saying to go ahead and let us offer this as an option to people who want to increase their CPP. In my own riding, I guarantee that seniors know that this would in no way help them right now. The member may like to talk to seniors in his own riding. It would not help the working class who are not earning enough to meet their daily needs right now. That is the responsibility of our government. It is not to interfere in how Canadians choose to save.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, right now in Courtenay—Alberni, we are seeing record numbers of seniors turning up at our food banks. The Port Alberni homeless shelter has never seen more seniors than in the last year, when it has doubled. When I went door knocking during the campaign, I met seniors who could not afford to buy medicine.

We are talking about a strategy so that we are not doing this 20, 30, 40, and 50 years down the road and are not repeating ourselves or making it worse. We need to come up with a solution. Right now we are talking about increasing the CPP so that people can have more in the future. It would be an investment, not an expense. This is about saving for the future. It would be an investment for employers.

I want to hear from the member what proposals she has to help those people who are showing up at the food banks and the homeless shelters and who cannot buy their own medicine today. How are we going to help those seniors today, and how are we going to prevent this from happening 40 and 50 years down the road?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, as we know, the number of seniors living in poverty has dramatically fallen to 3.7% of Canadians. Do they exist? Absolutely. I am very aware of that, as I said, in my own riding as well, where people are suffering extensively. Those are the ones who are saying that they need help right now. We should always be available as a government to help those people meet their needs on a day-to-day basis.

When we look to the future, what this country needs more than anything is an economy that sustains and is so solid that we have opportunities to take care of our own futures. We see in these exact stats that there are fewer and fewer seniors, 3.7%, who are living below the poverty line. They have many different options for the way they want to invest in their futures. I am one of those people who will be down the line, and believe me, it is important for Canadians to save for the future. We are doing a good job of that. We are one of the countries around the world that is seen as having a good approach to taking care of our own futures.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is the second time I rise in the House to talk about CPP. In the early days, when I came to the House, we talked about a CPP increase to ensure that it would be there for future generations. Regretfully, we are back here today talking about it again.

The government's signature fiscal platform seems to be taxes and taxes such as a carbon tax and now a CPP tax for the working class. Also, the Liberals took away the TFSA, again to get more revenue. It is an indirect tax. The government's fiscal platform is to go into deficit and it has no plan go back to being balanced, which would mean future taxes are coming too. We may even see a rise in the GST. I would not be surprised if the government does not try to balance its books somewhere down the road because that is what Canadians will be demanding. Therefore, it is amazing when I listen

to Canadians who are now concerned about the direction the government is taking.

Let us be very clear. We are talking now about the Canada pension plan and seniors. Indeed we have two platforms for seniors, which are the GIS and OAS. We should look at how we can increase those to help poor seniors. There is a very interesting proposal from my former colleague in the Senate, Hugh Segal. He talks about a guaranteed minimum income. His proposal is out there and it is going to be going on a trial basis. This is worth looking into the future to see if that is the way we should go to ensure everyone has a guaranteed minimum income that would take them out of poverty. There is no question that we should be looking at seniors' issues.

My wife ran a small business. I have said many times that anything we have had to do with the government keeps rising. That is one cost that a small business cannot control. A small business can do a lot of other innovative things to control expenses, but it definitely cannot control an expense related to the government. When CPP premiums are raised, it affects not only owners but also workers because it is a fifty-fifty contribution. We are taxing everyone. We are putting a burden on small businesses, which are the engine of economic growth. It will become extremely difficult to see how small businesses are going to survive. The only other option left for them would be to reduce their payroll, which would mean a loss of jobs.

We have discussed many ways in the House to tackle the retirement issue. One proposal that our government came out with was a pooled retirement pension plan. This would give people who did not have a defined pension plan, like the government or big organizations, the opportunity to have the independent ability to join a pension plan so they would have a pension when they retired. It is one of the best ways to help people who are not in a defined pension plan to retire in the future. I do not see why the government is not proposing that, which is already a law, as being a strong vehicle for a retirement pension. As has already been stated, the CPP is one of the tools that will provide that, but it is not the only tool.

● (1305)

Therefore, why do we want to take this route and shackle businesses and workers by taking money out of their pockets when we have innovative ideas floating around on how to address the retirement for our future younger generations and what is going on right now?

We should not come up with band-aid solutions and say that we will increase on one side, that we will give more money to seniors, but we will raise CPP premiums, taxing all Canadians. Rather, it is far more advantageous to see how we can raise the OAS and the GIS.

Let us not forget our veterans. They are also struggling. We need to look at their pension as well.

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The whole question would be with respect to the whole retirement regime in our country, which includes veterans, seniors, young Canadians, and how we can address that. I do not understand why the government is using a band-aid solution to address our retirement needs.

On the economic front, we know the government needs to create jobs. In my province right now the jobless rate is 10%. We need to address what is going on there, but we also need to create an environment in which people can open a business.

This is what I tell many of my constituents, and my colleagues sitting next to me agrees. In Alberta, we tell those who have lost their jobs in the oil patch to look at other opportunities. One of the best opportunities is to open a business. They should look at how they can open up a small business and look at the many innovative ways of going into small business. However, if we are going to put up these kinds of barriers, CPP raises and this thing, so they find it not profitable to open up a small business, then their chances of looking for a livelihood, of looking for more jobs is gone. We need to create an environment where the private sector, economic sector, is thriving. To do that, it is very simple. We need to ensure that the economic climate exists for them to grow.

Today the Prime Minister is talking about investments—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: My apologies, Madam Speaker, for my cellphone ringing.

Today, the Liberals are going to talk about investments. They are going to set up this investment bank because they believe investment in infrastructure is key.

Let me remind every Canadian that in 2008 the Conservative government, under Jim Flaherty and Stephen Harper, came out with the whole idea of spending in infrastructure to take us out of the recession. We did go into a short-term deficit, but we increased our spending in infrastructure, which took us out of the recession. This was done by G-20 countries, when George Bush came up with his plan to take the world economy out of recession.

Therefore, we had a plan for that. I am glad the Liberals are thinking of doing infrastructure—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: My cellphone is ringing again, Madam Speaker. I am sorry.

• (1310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we go to questions and comments, I just want to remind the member that what we have just experienced is the exact reason why we ask that members put their phones on silent mode. It may be funny at the time, but it is really not when we are talking about such serious legislation.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was the future calling, asking why the Conservatives were not there for us in expanding CPP.

My question is very simple. Does the member believe that the CPP should be expanded to prepare for the future or abolished? Or does he really think that the way it is now sustainable for long term?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we do that, I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton Manning to take that phone out to the lobby for now.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, as I stated, CPP is one of the vehicles of retirement, but it is not the only vehicle. This whole notion of abolishing it or doing whatever, it is one of these things, but it cannot be a burden on the businesses and it cannot be a burden on workers. That is what we should come up with. That is why we oppose this thing.

I stood in the House about 15 or 16 years ago discussing the same issue about the viability of CPP.

• (1315)

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have heard from many organizations, retirees, labour groups, citizens in my riding and across Canada. They want improvements to the Canada pension plan. I also heard from them say that they needed improvements for the existing pensioners now.

As we have heard in the House, some people think what has been done under GIS is adequate, but I do not think that. Many organizations saying this said the same thing in 2014 when the Conservatives had a consultation paper on target benefit pensions. The same people were saying that we should improve the Canada pension plan.

Does the member agree with these people, that Canadians want to improve Canada pension plan, or does he feel it is not necessary?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, we had consultations, out of which we came up with the pooled retirement pension plan to allow others to join a pension plan. The Canada pension plan is a unique pension plan. It was brought in to ensure that it was one way of retirement, but not the only way.

The problem with Canada pension plan is that the premiums are paid by the employers and the employees. If we raise it too much, it becomes a hindrance to the expansion of the economy. It becomes a hindrance to the expansion of small business, which is the engine of the economy.

We need to come up with a plan. I did mention for the member that there was an experiment going on now in Ontario, done by Senator Hugh Segal, to look at how we could have a fixed minimum income, which is one of the ways to look at it. We should be exploring other options to see how we can provide good retirement benefits for all.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have talked to the seniors living in poverty in Courtenay—Alberni who cannot afford to buy medicine, who are showing up at food banks and homeless shelters in record number.

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The Conservatives came up with a number, saying that 3% of seniors were living in poverty, that they did a great job of tackling poverty. However, in my riding, when we ask seniors if that is the case, that is not what we hear from them on the doorsteps. That is not what we see in the institutions that support people in poverty.

I want to hear from the member how we will help those people who are struggling in poverty. I want him to explain what we did wrong for those people and how we will not repeat that mistake. Seniors care about the future. They care about the next generation and they do not want this to happen to them too.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I have stated time after time that there are different ways to look at it. Yes, seniors are suffering and nobody denies that. However, there are ways to look at it, to address those seniors who are facing hardship. Not all seniors are facing it, but for those who are, CPP hopefully will address all seniors out there. Let us now look at other ways to address those seniors who urgently need help.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to tell a story today, a tale from history, which may be somewhat unfamiliar to those on the other side of the aisle, but I assure them that it is true.

Once upon a time, there was a country with a pioneer spirit. It grew from a small settlement in the Maritimes and the banks of the St. Lawrence and expanded until it stretched from sea to sea. It was filled with proud people, immigrants and first nations, who believed that there was no limit to what they could accomplish. They valued hard work and what they could achieve when they set their minds to it and worked together. They built a great nation, one that was to become the envy of the world.

This nation was built not only on hard work but on a common set of values. The people knew that one of the keys to success was planning for the future. They were careful with their money, saving a portion of their income for a rainy day and their retirement. They knew that they might at some point face adversity and need to use that rainy-day fund. They wanted at some point to be able to retire and enjoy well-earned retirement. Therefore, they put aside what they would need to deal with emergencies and a stable future.

When they did this, they were showing personal responsibility, knowing that they could not and should not depend on someone else to make such financial decisions for them. The people who made Canada great understood that they controlled their own destinies. They passed these values of common sense and thrift on from one generation to the next. They did not look to government to do what they should do for themselves. They knew that the individual is the person best suited to decide how to prepare for his or her own retirement, which is part of personal responsibility.

It seems that, somewhere along the way, the idea of personal responsibility, that core Canadian value, has been lost by some in this country. There is a group of Canadians—let us call them Liberals—who feel that individuals cannot be trusted to do what is in their own best interests. These so-called Liberals feel that it is their responsibility—indeed, their right—to dictate to others when and how they save for their future.

That is a true story we face with the bill before us. With this ill-considered attempt to raise premiums for the Canada pension plan,

the current Liberal government distrusts the ability of the Canadian people to plan for their own retirement. There is no other reason for this ill-conceived tax hike, which members opposite like to pretend is not a tax on Canadians.

They tell us that, over the next 40 years, CPP retirement benefits would rise from an income-replacement rate of 25% to 33% of employment earnings. To finance these benefits, the government would hike the CPP premium from 9.9% to 11.9%, which is about a 20% increase, starting in 2019. In addition, the yearly maximum pensionable earnings would rise to \$82,700 in 2025. Earnings between the current and future yearly maximum would be subject to an 8% premium. As a result, CPP premiums would rise by up to \$2,200 per year per worker split between the employer and the employee.

I have met with business owners in my riding on many occasions since this plan was first introduced. Just last week, I was told that they were unanimous in their opposition to this plan. They feel that it is like the Liberal carbon tax; it would limit their ability to make a living as the government piles tax upon tax.

This CPP tax hike would take money from the paycheques of hard-working Canadians, putting thousands of jobs at risk, and yet it would do nothing to help the seniors who need it. If the government feels that there is a problem for seniors today not having sufficient retirement funds, why is it bringing in legislation supposedly helping the future generation 40 years from now? Where is the help for Canadian seniors today?

Figures show that some households would be paying up to \$2,200 more per year if this ill-planned scheme is implemented. This means that it would be harder for new graduates to pay off their student loans or buy their first home.

• (1320)

It would be harder for families to save for vacations or their children's post-secondary education and harder for companies to create jobs and give workers raises. Make no mistake about it; not only would Canadian workers take home less in their paycheques, but Canadian businesses would also be taxed under this plan. If they have to give more money to the government, that means less that can be passed along to their employees.

Canada's retirement system is already the envy of the world. Poverty among seniors has dropped significantly in recent years, and Canadians are saving more for retirement today than ever before. Conservatives believe in reasonable, evidence-based policies to help Canadians retire with dignity, which is why the previous government expanded the guaranteed income supplement.

Government Orders

The Liberals clearly agree with this approach, since they increased the GIS by 10% in their first budget, but that is different from this plan to force people to save by having the government take more money from their paycheques. It shows a Liberal lack of trust in the ability of Canadians to manage their own money responsibly. Liberals always believe that they can do it better, that Canadian citizens cannot be trusted to handle their own finances. By contrast, the previous government helped Canadians save through the tax-free savings accounts and opportunities to make voluntary contributions to the CPP.

Conservatives believe Canadians should be able to manage their own money, and given the track record of the Liberal government, we believe Canadians cannot trust the Liberal government with their pensions. After all, they have not been able to keep the promises they made less than a year ago, let alone a decade from now, and who knows what their excuses will be in 40 years?

Finance Canada's analysis shows that higher CPP premiums would hurt the economy. They would reduce employment, the GDP, business investment, disposable income, and private savings. The Liberal government, when faced with that information, wants us to trust it and believe that what it is doing is for our own good. Liberal members do not seem to understand why we do not believe them.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 70% of small business owners disagree with the Liberal notion that the proposed CPP increase is modest and would have a limited impact on their businesses. They know it is going to hurt. A paper released by the C.D. Howe Institute shows that the Liberals' CPP plan would not benefit low-income workers. They would see their premiums go up, but their net increase in retirement benefits would remain low since higher CPP payments would be offset by clawbacks in GIS benefits.

Bill C-26 would take money from the pockets of hard-working Canadians, who are being given no choice in the matter. The benefits of this tax hike, Liberals tell us, would happen at some point in the far future. If that means less money in Canadians' pockets and fewer jobs because business taxes are too high, I guess they expect us to thank them for that, too.

I have said it before, but it bears repeating. If the government were truly serious about helping Canadians save for retirement, it would reinstate the TFSA contribution levels set by the Conservative government, treat Canadians like adults, and let them choose how to save their money. Instead, we are told that Liberals know best. History has already shown us that is not true.

• (1325)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Liberals do trust Canadians to do what is in their own best interests. Indeed, Canadians did what was in their own best interests when they elected a Liberal government to prepare the country for the future.

On a longer-term outlook, 40 years from now, if that is what it takes, as opposed to just the next election cycle, expanding the CPP, increasing the GIS, and restoring OAS eligibility to 65 years old are all ways we are doing that. Not all Canadians have the means to save for their retirement and they are not so detached from reality as to believe that hoping people have money to save will make it so. Not

everyone has money to manage. We, as a society, have a responsibility to do everything in our power and capacity to help our fellow citizens, and that is exactly what we are doing.

I will ask the member for Edmonton Manning this question. Does he believe the CPP program should exist at all? If so, how does he justify the cognitive dissonance of opposing this bill? If not, will he now tell Canadians that he believes we should scrap the CPP?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I do not buy packages. The CPP exists for a reason; it did a good job and is continuing to do a good job. Expanding it at this time, or at any time, with the rates proposed by the government, would impose taxes on businesses. As a result of that, we would lose jobs and opportunities, and our businesses would lose the competitive edge. All of these results have not been considered by the government in the calculations in proposing this legislation.

This legislation would hurt people more than it would benefit them. In 40 years from now, I am not sure how many of us would be around to witness that.

• (1330)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing the member for Edmonton Manning and I have in common is that we were both small business owners. We both know that small business owners care about their employees. They have a more intimate relationship with their employees than any other business sector, and as a result, they find it important to invest in those people in their business operations. Does the member not see this as an investment in the future of those employees to make sure they have a good retirement, to make sure they are taking care of their employees?

The Liberals made a promise to lower the small business tax from 11% to 9%. The member talked about the broken Liberal promise. If that promise had been honoured, would the member support this legislation that would enhance CPP and allow small businesses to invest that money in their employees, where it belongs?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I always enjoy my conversations with the hon. member. As he said, we both owned businesses.

If the member is calling this proposal an investment, then to be honest with him, it would be a bad investment. This would hurt people more than benefit them. Any business people or investment people in their right minds would not do it. If it is going to hurt people more, then why do it? Why take about \$2,200 away from each Canadian taxpayer? If we could scale it down, it would probably be somewhere between \$22 billion and \$30 billion a year. That is a huge amount of money. I do not see any investment happening in the long run.

Government Orders

The government has to lower the business tax to give opportunities to businesses. That has to be done, but it does not mean that we should take our own investment in return for that. Doing something good and then doing something bad is not the way to make it work, and to should not be the way.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I recall in the context of the work that the electoral reform committee is doing right now that the period in which Canada laid down its social safety net—the Canada pension plan, the unemployment insurance plan, our health care plan—was a productive era of the minority government of former prime minister Lester B. Pearson.

I support expanding the Canada pension plan. The money in the hands of our seniors, so they can avoid living in poverty in later years, gets spent locally.

Does the hon. member of the Conservative Party have any economic studies that suggest that there would not be a strong economic stimulus locally when we ensure seniors are not living in poverty?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I will answer the member's question as a business owner who knows the economy. I can assure my colleague that this would be a wrong investment. I have worked the numbers. I would be happy to work with the leader of the Green Party on this at some point.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, the bill deals with an expansion of the CPP for Canadians. This has been a long discussion. It was discussed at the provincial level. Our previous government suggested other alternatives. Then, when this government came in, it has been treating it as a primary piece of legislation.

It really comes down to a debate between ideologies. It is between those who think the government should be managing Canadians and taxpayers' money and should have the capacity to force Canadians into limited options when it comes to their retirement, or those who believe people should have the choice as to how they wish to invest their retirement income and should be able to manage their own money. Of course, on this side of the House, we believe that Canadians have enough of a sense of responsibility to manage their money. The Conservatives have taken the position over the years that we believe people have the ability to do that, and we have walked the walk. We walked the walk in both our tax policies and our positions on pension reform as well.

I am going to go through a few of the things we did when we were in government in terms of tax benefits, just to point out that we have been consistent. We increased the amount that Canadians can earn tax free. We believe that Canadians should be able to keep their money. They should be able to make choices about how they want to spend it. Consistent with that, we cut the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%, giving low-income Canadians in particular an opportunity to be tax free. We cut the GST from 7% to 5%. That tax cut had an impact on everyone across the country.

My colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands was just asking about seniors and whether they spend their money locally. We believe they do spend their money locally, but certainly the tax cuts that our government provided Canadians across the board made it more

possible for seniors to live out their lives keeping more of their own money. We did things for families, including creating and enhancing the monthly universal child care benefit.

There is a whole other area of improvements we made for pensioners and seniors as well. We did things like improve the rules for the registered retirement income funds to allow seniors to change the way they were moving their money from those investment funds. We increased the age credit amount by \$2,000, and doubled the \$2,000 maximum amount of income eligible for the pension income credit. We introduced pension income splitting, which was a big deal for pensioners across the country. When we talked to Canadians about this, they were very thankful for it and wanted us to extend it to others as well, which we were doing. This government has decided that is not important.

Probably the single most important thing we introduced was the tax-free savings account. It was interesting how quickly Canadians took to them. In fact, these were introduced in 2009-10, and by 2013, nearly 11 million individuals in Canada had a TFSA, and the total value of the assets held in them at that time was nearly \$20 billion. That is a pretty significant initiative. It is one Canadians obviously welcomed. They were willing to put their money into it. Everywhere I went, people were very happy with that. It was individuals with annual incomes of less than \$80,000 who accounted for more than 80% of those accounts, and three-quarters of those assets, by 2013. In spite of what the other parties have said about the TFSAs, these are not just for wealthy people. There were a lot of lower-income people with them too. A lot of seniors, actually, were maxing out their TFSAs because they believed it was a very good retirement vehicle for them. By the end of 2013, about two million people had contributed the maximum amount to their TFSAs and 46% of those individuals were seniors. It is really interesting to look at the reality of TFSAs compared to the illusion the other parties were trying to create about them. Over 70% of those folks who had maxed out their TFSAs were over 55.

Therefore, if we are here to talk about seniors and protecting seniors, that was a real way of doing it, and it was something that was going to be done in real time. The changes we are talking about today with what the Liberals are proposing are not going to impact folks who are middle-aged or seniors now. It is going to take decades for this supposed benefit the Liberals are bringing in to really impact the people who would take advantage of these extra CPP benefits.

• (1335)

There are a number of other things I mentioned. We did pension income splitting. We raised the pension income credit for older people as well. We raised the guaranteed income supplement so that pensioners could make up to \$3,500 from that, and the change to the age limit on RRSP to RRIF conversions was an important thing.

That brings us today to Bill C-26, an omnibus piece of legislation that is going to implement an agreement reached on June 20, 2016, between the provinces and the federal government. As noted before, Quebec does not participate directly in this, but it has its own plan. As a result of this legislation, CPP premiums are going to rise for workers and employers, by up to \$2,200 per worker, which would be split between workers and employers. Obviously, that will have an impact on employers' capacity to hire workers.

Government Orders

The tax hike would take at least \$100 a month directly from the paycheques of hard-working Canadians, an amount that will probably increase as time goes on. It puts thousands of jobs at risk. We have also had discussions on the planned increases in minimum wages in the provinces, which threaten low-income jobs, and this is one more threat that employers will have to deal with in trying to hire and keep people at work. Certainly this is not the time in Canada when we should deliberately be putting jobs at risk. It is not a strong, stable economy that we are dealing with right now. It certainly is not the economy we had two years ago. It is unfortunate, because it seems that every choice the government is making puts Canadians and their jobs more and more at risk.

If households are going to have to pay up to \$2,200 per year out of their salaries, it means that students in post-secondary education are going to have a much more difficult time to pay off their student loans. Families will face a challenge even on things like vacations. They will have a harder time funding post-secondary education as well. Certainly it will be harder for companies to create jobs and give workers raises. It is interesting that 70% of small and medium-sized enterprises see this as having a significant impact on their business. People are paying attention to it and understand that it will have an impact on them.

Furthermore, 90% of small business owners say they would certainly like to be consulted more by the government. They do not feel like they have had a chance to have their say. They do not feel like they have been listened to. It seems to be a topic I am hearing across the country, that the government is not capable of listening to people in spite of the multi-million consultations it seems to be having. It does not seem like it is talking to the average Canadian, because they do not feel like they are being heard. This is one more issue in which this shows its face.

As I mentioned earlier, this is going to take 40 years to be fully implemented, so none of the new benefits will go to people who are presently seniors. In our questions and answers, we have heard questions focused on present day seniors, whether they have low or medium incomes, but the reality is that these changes in Bill C-26 have nothing to do with people who are seniors right now because they will not experience any of these benefits. As I pointed out, that is quite in contrast to the tax-free savings accounts and the fact that people were able to manage their own money. They could put it into those vehicles and invest as they choose, and then benefit from that.

We believe that our system has been the envy of people around the world. One of the reasons people have been envious of it is that there has been some choice within the system. We believe on this side of the House that it does not hurt Canadians to have more choice, and that because they are saving more for retirement than they have ever done before, it is necessary for them to have those choices.

I am sorry to see that my time is winding up, but we are concerned that the bill the Liberals have introduced and are pushing through will reduce employment, impact GDP, and reduce business investment, and reduce the disposable income of Canadians. Over the long run, it is predicted that the bill would reduce private savings by up to 7%. It is unfortunate that more money is going to be taken from the pockets of Canadian workers. That affects them directly. It will put jobs in jeopardy and it will do nothing to impact today's seniors because it will take 40 years for it to be fully implemented.

● (1340)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, listening to Conservative after Conservative speak on this legislation, I better understand why Stephen Harper and the Conservative government resisted at all costs whenever a province or Canadian raised the issue of the importance of the CPP. The Conservative Party has, indeed, lost touch with what Canadians really value. The CPP is a fundamental social program that Canadians truly believe in. Only the Conservative Party, as a political entity seems to oppose the CPP.

My question for the Conservative Party and the member is this. Would the member kindly explain to Canadians why the Conservatives continue to resist any progressive move toward enhancing the CPP, especially when provinces from all regions of the country are saying it is good legislation? Why are the Conservatives' standing alone?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that when someone is speaking, we give them the respect that we want for ourselves when speaking in the House.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, fortunately for the member opposite, he does not usually have to worry about people interrupting him because it seems the higher the volume and the more the hyperbole he uses, the more accurate he thinks he is. Obviously, no one in the House opposes the CPP. That is just ridiculous. If he is going to take that kind of position, then he will end up in a situation where people will not treat what he has to say seriously. He needs to consider that. His exaggerated rhetoric does not do anything.

The reality is that the changes the Liberals are attempting to make would not affect seniors right now. The members opposite stand and say they are concerned about seniors and want to make changes that will impact them. Things like the tax-free savings account and the choices that Conservatives gave them actually impacted them, and they were very happy to have them. Liberals have rolled that back. They have cut the limit back to half.

Certainly, Conservatives support CPP. There was never a move to negatively affect CPP. We simply believe that Canadians need as many options as possible for their retirement savings.

● (1345)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we go to the next question, I want to remind members that we also do not chastise other members because of their passion while asking questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Government Orders

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the cost to small and medium-sized businesses that this bill would introduce. He mentioned that it would be about \$2,200, if I understood him correctly. That is the maximum contribution to get the maximum benefit, but most small and medium-sized businesses would not actually pay for that maximum premium.

Has the member done an analysis of what the average cost would be for small and medium-sized businesses, instead of exaggerating what the maximum is going to be?

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that he is chastising me. I was not exaggerating anything. The reality is that pensionable earnings are set at 9.9% of employees' levels right now and are going to go to 12%. He is right that \$2,200 is the maximum, but the reality is that every single employee in this country is going to pay more because of this legislation, and every single employer in this country is going to pay more because of this change in the CPP.

Conservatives believe that is not a good choice to be made for Canadians, that they should have other choices. We know we are at odds with the government because it believes that it can dictate to Canadians what it thinks is best for them. We believe it is best for people to make their choices, manage their own money, and that they will best save for their own retirements when they do that.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, a concern that my constituents have expressed to me is that while the government is taking away an additional \$1,000, or \$2,200 when we factor in the employer contribution, and is supposedly setting aside that money for Canadians' retirement, if an individual passes away before being able to access that benefit, that money does not get passed on to their heirs. It is simply an additional \$1,000 a year that has been taken away from them.

I would like the member to contrast that to some of the other retirement savings vehicles and how this will eliminate the ability of some Canadians to save and prevent them from passing on those savings.

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, we believe that it is important that families can support each other in their retirement incomes, retirement savings, and so we believe in those vehicles that allow people to do that. It is obvious that the other side has a real problem with that.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on the amendment to Bill C-26.

I had the opportunity to speak on Bill C-26 at second reading and will readily admit that my position on this ill-conceived bill has not changed. In fact, after spending a week in my riding, I am more convinced than ever that the bill needs to be scrapped.

I had the privilege of meeting with many constituents and holding a series of round tables with members from the chambers of commerce from the communities of Rosetown, Martensville, Warman, and Humboldt, just to name a few. Without fail, everyone spoke to what the impact of the CPP premiums increase would be on their businesses. Their responses were unanimous: this tax hike would hurt their businesses both indirectly and directly. Every single

attendee said that they will have to consider this payroll increase when they budget for staffing next year, and that overall employee compensation will be affected.

Since the bill was introduced, I have been hearing a lot of conceptually wrong statements and value judgements from the members on the other side.

For starters, Bill C-26 would not create new money for today's retirees or for low-income Canadians nearing retirement. The bill would increase CPP premiums from 9.9% to 12% and would increase the benefits that people receive once they retire by the amount of the increase.

The increases in benefits are only made possible due to the increased contributions that workers and their employers are being forced to make today. The CPP is a contribution program. The benefits received once a contributor retires are equal to what they contributed to the program plus whatever investment returns the CPP investment fund realized.

The CPP is not an income redistribution program. It was never designed to be. It does not support low-income seniors. Quite simply, what one puts in is what one hopefully will get out plus interest. This is why retired Canadians or folks who are nearing retirement will see no change to the benefits they can expect to receive.

The Liberals claim they are raising the CPP premium because my children's generation is not saving enough for their retirement. Undoubtedly, there are some Canadians who are not saving enough, but this is not a universal problem. This CPP increase would end up costing an individual more than if the Liberals increased the sales tax from 5% to 7%, which, given the fact that Canada is in the midst of the largest year-over-year peacetime increase in federal government spending, is becoming more and more likely.

When the CPP was first created in 1965, the contribution rate was set at 3.6%. Over time, governments have increased this rate by three and a half times to the 12% being proposed by the current government.

Because CPP contributions are made as a percentage of income up to a maximum each year, there is no need to increase contribution levels to account for inflation. The CPP Investment Board returns are sufficient to ensure that the fund grows at a faster rate than inflation. The chief actuary reviews the solvency of the CPP fund every three years, and the last report indicated that the program was fully funded for the next 75 years. Therefore, this increase in the contribution rate is not being done to ensure the fiscal health of the plan.

Of course, Canadians deserve to retire with the peace of mind that their retirement is fully funded, but that does not give the government free rein to collect a growing part of every Canadian's income. The CPP was never designed to be the only pillar of retirement. It was designed to be one of many.

Government Orders

Also, young Canadians are faced with many expenses, like their first home, first car, and starting a family. Should retirement income be considered more important than having 2% more of one's after-tax income to pay for today's necessities? It is absolutely reasonable for many young families to want to keep more of their income at a time when their living expenses are at their highest.

• (1350)

With this proposed CPP tax hike, the current Liberal government actually would be discouraging young people from saving by taking the small amount that they might have been able to put into a TFSA or an RRSP and taxing it away. We have heard the Liberals say that because of the child care benefit, they now have carte blanche to increase the taxes of families. However, it makes no sense to give some money back to families and then tax it again. All that ends up happening is the government forcefully becoming more involved in the day-to-day lives of Canadians.

I believe the CPP is important, but how much further can the contribution rate really be increased? What if, according to the government, in the future Canadians are still not putting enough aside to maintain their standard of living? How much more should contribution rates be increased? Will we see an increase to 14%, to 16%, or maybe even to 18%? What is the limit? I am confident that Lester B. Pearson never envisioned that the combined contribution rates for the CPP would grow to 12% and that government would seek to take over retirement planning for Canadians, but that is the road the Prime Minister and his finance minister are taking Canadians down.

Beyond the basic problem that this would be a tax hike when businesses and employees can least afford it, it would also contribute to an endless feedback loop. The more that government gets involved in managing retirements, the less people will feel the need to save for their own retirement; and then government will once again feel the need to get involved in forcing Canadians to save more, and on it goes.

For my colleagues on the other side, here is another reason to consider this as a tax hike. If contributors die before they are eligible to claim CPP benefits, the benefits that were accrued would not flow to their partner or their dependants. Unlike other retirement-saving options, CPP contributions are not money that contributors or their beneficiaries will necessarily get back.

In conclusion, on this side of the House we trust Canadians with the money they have earned. We believe they should keep their hard-earned money and make the decisions on how to save and invest for their future, not the government. That is why I will be voting in support of this amendment.

• (1355)

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member to clarify something. She mentioned that if a person who pays into the CPP through payroll deductions passes away, the benefit is lost. I would like the member to explain that. It is not lost. Either the member does not know the difference or she is trying to mislead the House. The benefit is turned over. I receive the CPP benefit for that very reason. It is called a survivor benefit. Survivors get 50% of what the owner of the plan was entitled to. Could the member please clarify that?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, of course we know that there is a death benefit that is paid out to the family. It is in the amount of \$2,500. While the member raises the point that there is a benefit that is paid to perhaps the surviving spouse, what we are talking about is the ability to receive 100% back of what contributors have paid into it, and the opportunity to make that decision for themselves. That is what we on this side of the House are speaking to when we talk about Canadians' right to choose how they will invest their hard-earned money.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, when it was proposed by the previous government under the former prime minister, Mr. Harper, to change the age of retirement, we talked about the expectations of taxpayers and workers who for all those years had been looking forward to retiring at 65. There was no consultation before that. I know it is history now, but I ask the hon. member if it troubled her at the time that there was a unilateral decision to postpone the CPP benefits that Canadians had a right to expect at age 65.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, of course in the last Parliament I was part of the party that was governing and that made that decision. At the time, we were taking a look at what was sustainable for seniors. Of course, we know that the current government has opted to roll that back.

But no, what we did in the previous Parliament was done in order to ensure the sustainability of the program. Again, what we are speaking to today is the opportunity for Canadians to make the choice to determine how they will invest their hard-earned money to ensure that they can afford the standard of living that they choose.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I meet seniors on the doorsteps in Courtenay—Alberni, they tell me that it was not enough, that we have not collected enough and people have not had an opportunity to save enough, and because of the increased cost of living, people cannot afford to pay for their much needed medicine. We are seeing record numbers of seniors at our food banks and in homeless shelters.

I ask the member, how can we mitigate this and help it from happening in the future if we do not invest in CPP? I see contributions to CPP as an investment in our pension fund. It is exactly that, not as an expense and not as a cost. Small business employers are matching and investing in CPP and EI to make sure employees get benefits when they are unemployed and have savings for their future and they can retire in dignity. We know that is not happening today.

Conservatives tell us that fewer than 3% of seniors are living in poverty. That is not what we are hearing from people on the doorsteps. We know that 30% of single senior females are living in poverty.

Can the member come up with some real solutions so we do not end up here again?

Statements by Members

●(1400)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I will make my answer very short. The member asked this question earlier in terms of the seniors he spoke to when he went door to door. The long phase-in period of Bill C-26 will do nothing to support those very people he was talking to today. Nobody will benefit from this for 40 years.

I am not sure why he is making the connection between Bill C-26 and the things he was hearing from seniors on the doorsteps today.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I request that the recorded division on the amendment to the amendment at second reading of Bill C-26 be deferred until the expiry of the time provided for oral questions tomorrow, November 15.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I request that you further defer the vote to the end of government orders tomorrow, November 15.

The Speaker: Therefore the vote is deferred until the end of government orders tomorrow.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

LEONARD COHEN

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Leonard Cohen's deep voice is now silent.

Montreal, Quebec, and the entire world are in mourning because Mr. Cohen did not belong just to Montrealers and Quebecers. He belonged to everyone.

Leonard Cohen's deep voice is now silent, but his words will continue to live on as a light in the darkness, the soundtrack to our joys and sorrows. One need only listen to *Sisters of Mercy*, *So Long Marianne*, *Waiting for the Miracle*, *Famous Blue Raincoat*, *Hallelujah*, or countless others to be transported to a deeper, sweeter, and more meaningful place.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Mr. Cohen's family, friends, and fans. We will all miss this man who tried in his way to be free.

* * *

●(1405)

[*English*]

SURREY YOUTH

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the amazing contributions of Surrey youth to the broader community.

Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of meeting many of these young people. Whether they are involved with organizations like Kids Play under the leadership of Kal Dosanjh, Arjan Bhullar and Kiran Toor, or are volunteering locally through their elementary and high schools, or are applying to different youth councils pushing for issues and advancing social causes, they are making an impact.

I want to commend the youth of Surrey and encourage them to continue to make the community a better place for all. Their efforts through the leadership of individuals such as Kal, Arjan and Kiran are recognized and very much appreciated by residents.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHRISTMAS IN RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to acknowledge the work of the organizing committee and the volunteers behind the 13th edition of Noël chez nous à Rivière-du-Loup.

Every year in early November, the town of Rivière-du-Loup becomes the Christmas capital of the world. There is a Christmas market featuring over 60 vendors under a tent in the very centre of town, a long parade of floats, fireworks, and many other events.

There are many winter markets in the area that promote local products. Last week, markets were held in Saint-Philippe-de-Néri, Sainte-Hélène and Sainte-Apolline-de-Patton. A winter market will take place on November 19 and 20 in Saint-Denis-De La Bouteillerie; from November 25 to 27 in La Pocatière; and on December 10 in Kamouraska.

Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup is understandably brimming with pride and Christmas joy. I would like to congratulate all the volunteers.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the end of World War II, West Vancouver approached the community to ask it for its ideas for commemorating and creating a war memorial. Groups formed and the winning submission read:

Statements by Members

A public library exemplifies the spirit and meaning of free democratic institutions. Its shelves are open to writers of all opinions. It is free from political influence. Its services are available to all classes of society and all economic, racial or religious groups. One of the first acts of the totalitarian states was to purge the libraries of all volumes expressing enlightened democratic principles. As a memorial to our fallen, we submit that a public library is uniquely suitable.

On November 11, 1950, the doors of the West Vancouver Memorial Library opened, a living monument and everlasting commemoration to veterans.

On behalf of librarians, library boards, friends of the library, and citizens across the country, we will remember them.

* * *

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks World Diabetes Day. November 14 is a significant date. It marks Frederick Banting's birthday, the Canadian who co-discovered insulin and changed the world for so many.

In my riding of North Island-Powell River and across Canada, some people with diabetes are forced to make hard decisions about their illness based on financial considerations. Financial support can be the critical factor that may prevent the development of potentially disabling complications.

Some of my constituents and their children with Type 1 diabetes may be eligible for the disability tax credit, and this can make a big difference. Sadly, there are still some discrepancies on how it is applied across Canada, and this needs to be fixed.

I am proud to have organized disability tax credit workshops in my riding. It is so rewarding to see constituents get meaningful results. I look forward to offering these workshops once again in the new year.

* * *

VETERANS

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a wonderful Remembrance Day event took place in my riding of Oakville last week, the 15th annual Veterans Appreciation Luncheon. The luncheon was started by Kristin Courtney whose father fought in the Normandy invasion and was on Juno Beach on D-Day. It began with eight local veterans.

Fifteen years later, this luncheon, still organized by Kristin, seated 720 people and included veterans from 42 long-term care centres from as far away as Toronto and Fort Erie. Kristin says that this is a labour of love. It is an honour to personally thank our veterans, to bring them together, and allow them to have the comradeship in arms they may not have the rest of the year.

This year, I was honoured to attend as a member of Parliament, lay a wreath, and to bring greetings from the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Working with Kristin, I will be sponsoring an e-petition "Veteran with a Capital V" so our veterans can be addressed appropriately.

I thank Kristin for her remarkable labour of love to our veterans.

● (1410)

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks World Diabetes Day, a global event created to raise awareness of the diabetes epidemic, which now affects over 415 million adults and their families around the world. Eleven million Canadians live with diabetes or pre-diabetes, and another Canadian is diagnosed every three minutes.

World Diabetes Day became an official United Nations world health day as governments recognized that diabetes, a non-infectious disease, poses a serious threat to world health.

World Diabetes Day is celebrated every year on November 14. The date was chosen because it marks the birthday of Canadian Sir Frederick G. Banting, who, along with Charles Best, is credited with the discovery of insulin in 1921.

This day is also symbolized by a blue circle, the global symbol of diabetes and signifies the unity of the global diabetes community.

I ask all Canadians to join me in the fight against diabetes and make every effort to foster a healthy Canada.

* * *

CULINARY INDUSTRY

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the culinary industry is an important and growing sector in Nova Scotia and in my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets.

Ironworks Distillery in Lunenburg won the award for Culinary Ambassador of the Year at the Taste of Nova Scotia awards. This recognition not only tips its hat to its innovative and high quality products, but also to the work and commitment of the business to helping other Nova Scotian businesses succeed.

Another Lunenburger, Amy Funk, won Server of the Year for her work at Lincoln Street Food. Hell Bay Brewing Company in Liverpool and Boxing Rock Brewing Company in Shelburne were both winners this month at the Atlantic Beer Awards.

On that note, I would like to invite any of my colleagues in the House to South Shore—St. Margarets any time to indulge in the great food and drink we have to offer.

Please join me in congratulating these businesses, and all small businesses, that work hard to show the world what Nova Scotia and Canada has to offer.

*Statements by Members***LEONARD COHEN**

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, Canada and the world lost renowned poet, songwriter, and artist, Leonard Cohen. He began his music career to expand the audience for his poetry, and evoked a broad range of emotions from his audience.

His arrival as an artist happened together with Canada's Centennial. Although he had already headed south in search of success elusive here, we think of him as part of the vibrant cultural scene in Montreal at that time, as all eyes were on Expo 67.

Cohen became part of the emotional embrace that captured what Canada was about: proud, dynamic, a history of strength through diverse backgrounds, and a country taking its place as a global leader in so many ways.

Leonard Cohen possessed a rare ability to draw inspiration from the flaws of humanity. The very unconventional singing voice he possessed represented the underdog and gave a sense that his words spoke to the unique experience and extraordinary potential of the ordinary person. In Leonard's words:

But let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie
Your eyes are soft with sorrow
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye.

* * *

PREMIER OF YUKON

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, early last week there was a momentous election with a changing of the guard. I am sure everyone will join me in heartfelt congratulations, to the new premier-elect of Yukon, Sandy Silver, and his colleagues in the new majority Liberal government.

This is remarkable in that in the last sitting of the Yukon Legislature, premier-elect Silver held the only Liberal seat. I believe this was partly a result of his remarkable team of knowledgeable candidates, his ongoing campaign for respect and decorum in the legislature, and his commitment to building a strong economy while protecting our environment.

The opposition parties have elected experienced members of the legislature, which bodes well for a very productive session, given premier-elect Silver's commitment to taking good ideas from all parties.

I congratulate all who put their names forward, win or lose, to improve our Yukon community. It is a very immense sacrifice for which all of us Yukoners are truly grateful.

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WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a proud city planner of nearly 25 years, I am delighted to report to the House that on November 8, the globe celebrated World Town Planning Day.

City planners devote themselves to building sustainable, livable, healthy, and resilient communities where people live, work, and play. No wonder then that city planning earned the number two slot

in *Canadian Business Magazine's* best 100 jobs in Canada list in 2016.

With shifting global populations, the spectre of climate change and sea level rise, alarming trends in public health and equitable housing, the work of planners has never been more important. In Canada, groups like the Council for Canadian Urbanism and the Canadian Institute of Planners, are leading this charge every day.

Allow me to congratulate my fellow city planners across the nation for their invaluable contributions to our Canadian communities. They are building a better Canada every day.

* * *

● (1415)

[*Translation*]

BERNARD CARIGNAN

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on August 22, 2015, one of my best friends, a former roommate, died in a cycling accident at the corner of Saint-Denis and Jean-Talon, in Montreal. His name was Bernard Carignan and he was 27 years old. He was a decent man, lived life to the fullest, and he was a brother, a son, a friend, and a hero.

His life came to an end when a car door was carelessly opened in front of him. His death could have been prevented with a very simple technique: the Dutch reach. Instead of opening the car door with your left hand, you use your right hand, which forces you to look for approaching cyclists in the rear-view mirror.

[*English*]

Every year in Canada, 7,500 cyclists are seriously injured or killed in the country, and some of these accidents are preventable through a simple technique called the "Dutch Reach". It is easy.

I encourage all Canadians and all members to practise all winter long so that when the summer comes, in this land, from coast to coast to coast, we do the Dutch reach.

* * *

NEW ZEALAND EARTHQUAKE

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Canadians, I extend our deepest condolences to the people of New Zealand, who over the weekend were victimized by yet another devastating earthquake. This earthquake registered a 7.8 on the Richter scale and triggered landslides and destroyed roads. At least two people were killed. Strong aftershocks continue to shake the country, rattling nerves, and leaving people in a state of fear.

Canada and New Zealand have a historic relationship based on mutual respect and shared values. New Zealand is an important like-minded partner for Canada on any number of issues, particularly with respect to trade, security, and defence. For this and many other reasons, Canada must and should extend any and all assistance to New Zealand in the aftermath of this disaster.

*Statements by Members***ADVENT OF GURU NANAK**

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *Vaha Guru Ji Ka Khalsa. Vahu Guru Ji Ki Fathe.*

Today in 1469, with the advent of Guru Nanak, the radiance of knowledge, pierced through this world. Nanak, the founder of Sikh way of life, decreed that truth is good. However, greater still, is truthful living.

In the 15th century, he proclaimed, “Why disrespect women, from whom even kings are born”, thereby claiming equal rights for women. With knowledge from the divine, he guided the world to accept diversity and look beyond differences. He opposed the caste system and other divisions among society. He started the system of langar, a free kitchen, based entirely on contributions, which serves over a million free meals daily in India alone.

Guru Nanak's teachings remain available to the world through the eternal holy book, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

I offer greetings to all Canadians on this most auspicious occasion.

* * *

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is Global Entrepreneurship Week. We know that entrepreneurs and small businesses are the cornerstone of our economy and that they help create jobs for Canadians from coast to coast.

[*English*]

Our government is committed to fostering a confident nation of innovators to support the growth of small businesses in Canada. I am very proud to stand today to recognize the work of Futurpreneur Canada.

Futurpreneur Canada is a not-for-profit that encourages entrepreneurship by providing young Canadians with financing and mentorship. It will be hosting some 300 activities across the country from coast to coast to coast. It will be connecting entrepreneurs with potential collaborators, mentors, and investors.

I am personally looking forward to attending a few global Entrepreneurship Week activities here in Ottawa, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I know I speak for all parliamentarians when I say we wish a speedy recovery to those injured by this earthquake, and condolences to the families of those who were lost.

I also want to thank the first responders for their tireless efforts to help those in need.

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LEONARD COHEN

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday I was at the Dorshei Emet synagogue in my riding. At the end of the service, the rabbi pulled out his guitar, and we all sang *Hallelujah* by Leonard Cohen.

The song brought tears to my eyes because I knew the same scene was being repeated in churches, synagogues, and at gatherings across Canada and across the world, because his music unites us all.

[*Translation*]

He recorded more than 14 studio albums in his 50-year career as a musician, and we will remember his poetic lyrics and his unique voice. He was a talented writer who published many books of poetry and works of fiction.

[*English*]

Although he became a citizen of the world and lived in many places, he was always a very proud Canadian and a quintessential Montrealer.

I know all members of the House will join me in offering their sincere sympathies to the family and friends of Leonard Cohen.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that may affect other rail communities like mine. Transcona's new Plessis underpass opened on October 31, 2015, making the daily commute easier for many people. However, for residents of Mission Gardens, the new underpass has had significant, unforeseen costs.

CN has used the underpass as a means to extend the operational area of the Transcona yards and is now building and staging trains behind the homes in Mission Gardens. Some residents have been in the area for 40 years and are for the first time experiencing diesel fumes in their living rooms, sleep deprivation from the noise, and damage to their homes from train vibrations.

Community residents are facing the prospect of having to fight for their homes against experienced, well-resourced CN lawyers. When there is a big power imbalance between two groups with competing interests, government should step in to make it fair.

I urge the government to require that CN restrict the reach of its yards to the east side of Plessis Road instead of forcing the residents of Mission Gardens to play David to CN's Goliath.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's decision to impose a carbon tax that will drive up the cost of home heating, gas at the pump, and even groceries was always a bad idea, but now it is even worse. The Americans have now taken a carbon tax off the table, which will give the U.S. a significant competitive advantage over Canadian businesses doing global work.

Why does the Prime Minister not understand that if he moves forward with his carbon tax, he is setting us up for failure and Canadian jobs will be lost?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking actions that Canadians demand with respect to a transition to a low carbon economy that will stimulate growth, provide access to new markets, and create jobs. With respect to what the member said in terms of the United States' policy, the Prime Minister said that Canada has no closer friend, partner, and ally than the United States, and we look forward to working with the new administration on global energy challenges and the environment.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. is our greatest ally and our largest customer, but it is also our biggest competitor. Now that the Americans are not moving ahead with a carbon tax, the Prime Minister's carbon tax has become a liability for Canadian businesses. The Prime Minister must accept that this is a new economic reality in North America.

Will the Prime Minister back down from his carbon tax, or is he comfortable losing Canadian jobs to the United States?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to have ratified the Paris accord. We are proud that our Minister of Environment and Climate Change is at COP22 in Morocco now. We also recognize that putting a price on pollution is good for the Canadian economy, that it will create jobs here in Canada, and that is what Canadians expect us to do. We look forward to working with the provinces and international partners to ensure that we have the most robust carbon pricing system in place.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before getting elected, the Prime Minister said he supported the Keystone XL pipeline, and now the new president-elect has stated his support for the Keystone pipeline as well.

Can the Prime Minister assure Canadians, particularly those who could get a job if this project goes ahead, that he is moving as fast as possible to move the Keystone pipeline ahead?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's relationship with the United States, as I said a moment ago, is one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. We will continue to

work with all of our continental partners to build a North American energy partnership for generations to come.

Specifically to the project mentioned by the member, it is the company that will decide whether to reapply for a U.S. presidential permit. The Canadian portion of the pipeline, as the member knows, was approved in 2010 and we look forward to working—

● (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since forming government, the Prime Minister has ignored unemployed energy workers, but now this opportunity has presented itself. If he champions the Keystone XL pipeline, which he said before the election that he supported, it could create thousands of jobs.

Will the Prime Minister move quickly to lend his public support to this pipeline, or will he continue to leave these unemployed energy workers wondering about their jobs?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government looks forward to working with the incoming administration on energy and many other related matters. We believe in developing a system that has the confidence of Canadians to bring resources to market in a sustainable way. The United States has its own process by which it determines whether energy projects serve their national interests. The proponent, in this case the company, will work with the incoming administration, and we look forward to working with that administration as well.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, NAFTA is our most important trade arrangement. It is worth thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in investment for Canada. We know that the new president-elect has concerns about NAFTA, but they are about Mexico not Canada. However, before he was even asked, our Prime Minister threw NAFTA back on the negotiating table and put our most important trade agreement at risk. Canada is now in a weaker position, and all that this has done is to create more uncertainty.

Why is the Prime Minister jumping the gun to open up NAFTA with the Americans?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we look forward to working very closely with the president-elect, his administration, and with the United States Congress in the years ahead, including on issues like investment, international peace, security, and trade. Our trading relationship with the United States is very important and we will have the interests of Canadians in mind all the way through.

*Oral Questions***PENSIONS**

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nearly four decades ago, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced reforms to the Canada pension plan to ensure that women were not penalized for time taken out of the workforce to raise kids. After styling himself as a feminist, the present Prime Minister chose not to include this important gender equality provision in the new CPP enhancement bill.

Will the government commit to fixing this oversight to ensure that women are not penalized when it comes to new CPP benefits?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for making it possible for me to say how proud we are in the House to be able to participate in this important debate on a historic agreement on enhancing the CPP, which is going to take thousands of Canadians out of poverty in the short term and hundreds of thousands of seniors out of income vulnerability in the longer term.

I look forward, as we all do, to listening to the views of all members of the House.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the minister will not commit to fixing this problem.

Women's Canada pension plan benefits are 30% lower on average. This is unacceptable and will get worse if the bill is not amended. In addition to costing women hundreds of dollars a year, it will reinforce gender inequality.

Will the government work with us to enhance retirement security for all Canadian women?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I thank my colleague for giving me an opportunity to tell the House just how proud we are.

I believe all members agree that we are participating in a historic process to enhance the Canada pension plan. Like all members of the House, I myself am participating in the debate, and I am pleased to see that the opposition and members across the aisle have views they want to express to further improve the Canada pension plan reform.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after the international trade minister ignored opposition to the TPP by both presidential candidates, U.S. officials have now confirmed that the deal is dead. Meanwhile, the trade minister has failed to get a deal on softwood lumber. The president-elect has also said he will renegotiate NAFTA. The minister's top priority must be to protect Canadian jobs.

With things changing so quickly, will the minister stand up for Canadians and fight to remove investor-state provisions that have cost Canada billions of dollars?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a trading nation and we are a trading government. When it comes to the TPP, the promise was to consult Canadians and that is what we are doing. Recently, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade held consultations on the TPP in the Northwest Territories and trade committee continues to hear from interested Canadians across the country.

I am proud of the work we are doing, listening to Canadians on this important issue, with our international trade minister.

* * *

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us make no mistake; the American election results bring many uncertainties.

In my riding and across the country, workers and families are worried about the fact that we still do not have a softwood lumber agreement with the United States. This could mean job losses and plant closures. This government has not reached a deal and has no plan B, nor has it proposed any loan guarantees for the industry.

In these even more uncertain times, with a new American administration, can we expect this government to take concrete action before surtaxes are imposed, yes or no?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

The fact is, the softwood lumber agreement expired under the previous government. As the Prime Minister has said, we look forward to working very closely with the new American administration. That being said, in the meantime, we are working with the current American administration to negotiate a softwood lumber deal. We will also make a significant contribution to those negotiations with producers, workers, the provinces, and the territories.

We have an excellent case to make, and we will continue working hard to reach a softwood lumber deal.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Liberals have been in power for a year already and they have done absolutely nothing about the softwood lumber issue.

The softwood lumber issue is a test of this government's leadership. We are talking about tens of thousands of jobs across Canada, mostly in the regions and not in big cities. We know how much contempt this government has for the regions.

When will the government show some leadership and negotiate a softwood lumber agreement that benefits all Canadians?

Oral Questions

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. We are working very hard on several levels to finalize a softwood lumber agreement. The minister has been in touch with her counterparts. We continue to work hard and are holding consultations. Last week, I went to Gaspé to listen to the concerns of producers and workers in this sector. We are still working on getting an agreement that will be good for Canada.

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DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians, especially those living in rural areas, are worried about another issue, and that is the dairy industry.

With regard to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, dairy producers are disappointed that compensation is lower than what they expected.

The government is not paying much attention to farmers. There was not one word about milk in the throne speech and there was absolutely nothing in the budget.

I see a member nodding. That is utterly false. The Liberals have done absolutely nothing for farmers. When will they finally step up to the plate and work on behalf of Canadian farmers?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague was listening last Thursday, he would have heard us indicate what we were going to do for dairy farmers. We are just starting what we are going to do. We inherited a lot of problems from the previous government, in the dairy industry, and we intend to fix it.

Last Thursday, we announced about \$350 million: \$250 million to innovate the dairy industry itself and \$100 million to make sure the dairy processors are on the cutting edge. This government is going to make sure that supply management in the dairy sector remains strong for many generations to come.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, president-elect Trump would love a carbon tax for Canada. Why would he not? Higher energy costs in this country would mean more factories and jobs would move to his country. We have already lost 58,000 good blue collar jobs in Canada since the current Prime Minister came to office a year ago, mostly because of high electricity prices.

Why are the Liberals making matters worse by taxing away good blue collar jobs?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has stated, Canada has no closer friend, partner, or ally than the United States, and we look forward to working closely with president-elect Trump, his administration, and the United States Congress over the coming years.

On climate, Canada has ratified the Paris agreement and is committed to its implementation. We will continue to move forward

with the international community on climate change and clean growth and with the provinces and territories to develop a pan-Canadian strategy.

● (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal carbon tax would create well-paying, blue collar, American jobs. U.S. competitors would have a huge advantage. Here at home, there are 58,000 fewer people employed in goods-producing sectors. These are miners; they are loggers; they are rig workers; they are factory workers. This new carbon tax would mean even more of them would lose their jobs to competitors south of the border.

Why is the government so determined to send Canadian jobs south?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that putting a price on carbon pollution would improve our response to economic challenges, would create good middle-class jobs here in Canada going forward, and would demonstrate the kind of leadership the entire world is looking for on climate action. We are taking real action on climate change because, as Canadians understand, a strong economy and environmental sustainability go hand in hand.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that president-elect Trump is not going to impose a carbon tax. Canadian farmers have led the way to responsible environmental stewardship, but the Liberal Prime Minister insists he is going to force a carbon tax on them anyway. Canada's agricultural sector is in danger of being put at a massive competitive disadvantage. The last thing farmers and rural Canadians need is a tax that increases the cost of everything and makes us uncompetitive.

When will the Liberals stop their carbon taxation fixation?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware, our government is committed to creating a cleaner environment and an innovative economy. Under the carbon pricing commitment made by our government, provinces can decide how to establish a carbon pricing system. We are proud to be a government that recognizes that an important driver of growth in the agricultural sector is science and research, and we will continue to support science and research.

Oral Questions

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. is Canada's most important export location. The Liberal carbon tax is nothing but a money grabbing scheme that would shackle Canadian agriculture and the economy, while doing nothing for the environment. The U.S. president-elect knows this. That is why he is not implementing a carbon tax in the United States.

Why is the Prime Minister bringing in a carbon tax that would kill Canadian farmers' ability to remain competitive?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware that, with the actions of this government, the agricultural sector will remain competitive, and get more competitive. We are interested in agriculture research, clean technology, and helping farmers better address climate change, improve their efficiencies, and become more competitive. That is exactly what will happen with the investments from this government.

* * *

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to break their promises. Their program to compensate dairy producers for losses caused by CETA falls short. Not only will the program last only five years, but it covers only half of the losses that producers will incur. Furthermore, producers will have to pay to participate in the program. I totally understand their disappointment.

Why bother with all these consultations if the government neither listens to producers nor considers their needs?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question and I know of her concern, but the fact of the matter is that we did consult and we did listen. That is why this package is in place.

I was very pleased to announce for this government a \$350-million package: \$250 million will make our dairy farmers more innovative, and \$100 million will make sure that our processing sector is on the cutting edge.

We are going to make sure that supply management remains strong. We said we would, and we are putting our money where our mouth is.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, eight cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister are appealing to some of the world's wealthiest investors, but these investors did not amass trillions of dollars by giving money away for infrastructure projects. They will be looking for a big return on their investment. For Canadians, this means user fees and privatization of our public infrastructure.

Why is the government pursuing a massive sell-off of our infrastructure to foreign investors, and why did the Liberals fail to mention this during the campaign?

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were elected on the promise of creating the largest infrastructure program in Canada's history, and that is what we are doing. We are working with the provinces, territories, municipalities, and the private sector in order to do even more. The infrastructure bank is one of the tools that our partners will use to build more infrastructure. There will not be fewer projects, there will be more.

* * *

● (1440)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Barack Obama said no to the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that would help get Canadian energy workers back to work, the Prime Minister, who claimed he was for the project, did nothing to fight for it. He was happy to see it die.

It turns out it is not dead yet. President-elect Trump has promised to approve Keystone XL within 100 days of taking office.

Will the Prime Minister get off the sidelines, get back into the game, and finally start fighting for this job-creating project?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's relationship with the United States always has been, and always will be, one of the country's most important ones. We will continue to work with our continental partners to build a North American energy partnership that will benefit all countries for years and generations to come.

Specific to this project, the company will decide whether or not to reapply for a U.S. presidential permit, as the Canadian portion of the pipeline, as the member well knows, was approved in 2010.

Our government looks forward to working with the incoming administration on this and other projects.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister took everyone and their dog to Washington for a lavish party with Barack Obama, he forgot to invite the natural resources minister to fight for Keystone XL. I guess there was not room in the delegation, what with all the Liberal bagmen and his family members filling all the spots.

However, now that president-elect Trump is promising to approve Keystone XL, will the natural resources minister be our guest and head down to Washington to fight for Keystone and finally do something for out-of-work energy workers?

Oral Questions

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes in developing resources sustainably through a process that carries the confidence of Canadians.

The United States, indeed, has its own process by which it determines whether energy projects serve its national interests.

The proponent, or the company in this case, must work with the incoming administration to get its project approved.

We look forward to working with the incoming administration on building a North American energy partnership that will benefit both countries for years to come.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to meet with dozens of my constituents who have been impacted by the economic downturn in Alberta. Again and again, two issues came up: they are very worried about a federally imposed carbon tax, and we need pipelines built to get Albertans back to work.

The U.S. president-elect has said he will not support a carbon tax but he will support the construction of new pipelines. Can the Liberals commit to keeping Canada competitive, to keeping Albertans working, and to ensuring that Keystone XL is approved?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of our core responsibilities as government is to help get our natural resources to market sustainably. The only way to do that is to restore trust in the way we evaluate our major resource projects. During the 2015 election, we committed to modernizing the National Energy Board, and we have just appointed a panel that will do just that.

In January, we announced our interim strategy, reviewing major resource projects to ensure meaningful consultations with indigenous people and nearby communities, and a clear assessment of potential greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite hundreds of thousands of Canadians being out of work, the response is a punishing new carbon tax and holding back approvals of job-creating pipeline projects. Food banks and social services in my constituency are seeing a record number of families looking to them for help.

When will the Liberal government stop appointing committees and start showing some leadership by saying no to an economy-killing carbon tax and yes to job-creating pipelines?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that many of the largest employers in Canada have pointed out that putting a price on carbon pollution is not political; it is just good business. It would give Canada an edge in building a clean-growth economy and make Canadian businesses more innovative and more competitive. This is why nearly 30 of the largest Canadian companies have come out strongly and actively in support of a price on carbon pollution. They include companies like Suncor, Enbridge, and Shell. They know that pricing pollution will bring new jobs and economic growth for middle-class Canadians.

• (1445)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the Minister of Foreign Affairs blocked a shipment of weapons to Thailand because of human rights concerns. Meanwhile, he continues to allow military equipment to be exported to Saudi Arabia despite that country's role in the war in Yemen and the fact that its human rights record is even worse than that of Thailand. The government is refusing to create a parliamentary committee to examine Canadian arms sales.

When will the government be transparent on this important issue?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, the three parties in the House agreed to honour the contract with Saudi Arabia. However, the foreign affairs minister has the authority to revoke export permits if the equipment is used inappropriately, and I am very careful about how I use that power in every case.

We will also have the opportunity to sign the Arms Trade Treaty. This treaty will soon be examined in committee, and I look forward to reading the committee's report in order to ensure more transparent and rigorous regulation of firearms throughout the world.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the summit of the 22nd United Nations climate change conference begins today in Marrakech, but there are many worrying signs that the international community may not be able to prevent catastrophic climate change. The Liberals have adopted Stephen Harper's weak emission reduction targets, and now the election of Donald Trump threatens to dismantle the entire Paris agreement.

What will the government do to protect the Paris agreement, and when will the government commit to strong targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is at COP22 right now to work constructively with the international community on the task of implementing the agreement that was achieved in Paris. Canada is a strong supporter of that agreement.

We have worked tirelessly since that time with provinces and territories to begin the process of developing a plan in Canada, which we will bring forward later this year, to ensure that Canada is doing its part to address climate change as part of the global community.

* * *

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CETA is great news for Canadian agriculture. The agreement will give our farmers access to the world's largest market. Our government understands the need to open up new export opportunities while protecting domestic interests.

As we prepare for the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement to come into force, can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell us how the government plans to help the dairy sector remain strong and competitive while helping producers and processors find new ways to innovate and boost efficiency?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable colleague from Shefford for his question and his help.

CETA will provide additional exports for agriculture of up to \$1.5 billion per year. As I indicated, last Thursday I was able to announce, on behalf of the government, a \$350-million package: \$250 million to make sure that our dairy farmers are innovative, and \$100 million to make sure that our processing sector is on the cutting edge.

These kinds of announcements show that this government will make sure that supply management and the dairy industry survive.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister insensitively announced, on Remembrance Day, a three-year deployment of Canadian troops to a number of unspecified African countries. The minister said, “These missions, all of them, have the level of risk where peacekeepers have been hurt, they have been killed”.

In Mali alone, 106 UN peacekeepers have been killed by terrorists. Why would the defence minister choose to announce on Remembrance Day that he is sending our troops to dangerous UN-led African missions?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work our Canadian Forces members have done throughout history, whether in UN peacekeeping missions or in combat missions abroad, whether it was in World War I or World War II. We can be very proud of the work that has been done in reducing conflict, and I will be very proud of the work our men and women will be doing in support of the United Nations' operations in reducing conflict around the world.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, Remembrance Day, the minister confirmed that he had committed Canada to a three-year deployment in Africa. Shame on him for making Remembrance Day a platform for that announcement. That shows a lack of respect for veterans.

All we know about the mission is how long it will last and that it will be dangerous. Hundreds of peacekeepers have died to keep a peace that does not even exist. We do not know where Canadian soldiers will be deployed, with whom they will work, or what the rules of engagement will be.

When will the Liberals be transparent with Canadians?

● (1450)

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we announced back in August, it is our government's intention to send up to 600 troops, \$450 million, over a three-year period. We can be very proud of their work.

At the ceremony I attended, there were former members, proudly wearing their blue berets, who had proudly served on previous missions.

We will be sending our members on missions to reduce conflict, and they are very proud of that work. We will make sure that they have a robust mandate, robust rules of engagement, and the appropriate equipment to carry out their mission.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Remembrance Day we should be remembering our veterans and those who have fallen, not announcing new missions.

Last month, the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Vance, said to the *Daily Gleaner* newspaper, “there is no...Africa mission.” Then on Remembrance Day, the defence minister shamefully announced, via the *Toronto Star*, that there was going to be not just one mission but many African missions. Then the defence minister's press secretary said that the minister “got a little bit ahead of where we are as a government”.

When it comes to the deployment of Canadian soldiers, who is calling the shots here? Is it the Chief of the Defence Staff? Is it the defence minister, or is it the defence minister's press secretary?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make it very clear. When it comes to sending our troops into harm's way, I do my due diligence in making sure that we have the right information when going into theatre, whether it has been Iraq, whether it has been with NATO, or whether it is any type of African mission.

We announced in August our intention, with a three-year commitment and up to \$450 million, of sending up to 600 troops. We are going to make sure that we have the right information before we make an appropriate decision. Then I look forward to sharing this with Canadians as well.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, commenting on the mission in Africa, the minister's press secretary confirmed that the three-year mission is one of the options on the table.

What are the other options? We know nothing about this mission, but we are about to send Canadian soldiers to one of the most dangerous theatres of operation in the world.

Might the government be as generous with the House as it is with the media and share with us the other options that are on the table?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I stated, I look forward to sharing all this information with the House and with Canadians.

Looking at reducing conflict around the world is extremely important. To do this, we have to do it right. We have to make sure that there is not just a military option but a whole-of-government approach, with diplomacy and development. We need to make sure that we get the facts. Once we get them and put all the facts together, we will make an appropriate announcement.

Rest assured, we do need to reduce conflict around the world so that we do not have to send our troops into harm's way constantly.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, far too many victims of assault and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces have been refused PTSD benefits. After the hell they have gone through, these victims want only two simple things from the government: first, for it to publish online what services are available; and second, for it to screen all members of the Canadian Armed Forces and provide information about the assistance available.

Will the government heed those simple requests?

[English]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her concern about Canadian Forces personnel.

We have work to do, and I am really pleased to see the addition of It's Just 700, which is a military sexual trauma advocacy group, to the Minister of Veterans Affairs' advisory groups, because we need to hear their voice.

We are opening that door, because there needs to be a dialogue, and we are committed to providing the kind of support that is needed.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality of sexual trauma in the military is public knowledge. Canadians know that sexual assault is wrong no matter where it is done and no matter who does it.

The women and men who have suffered while serving this country are asking for two simple measures: post online what help and services are available; and screen all exiting Canadian Forces members for post traumatic stress and inform them of the available assistance for military sexual trauma.

Will the government implement these simple requests?

● (1455)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for asking this question, because these are important questions that we all need to share.

Right now we have a website that is up and operating, so a list of services is there.

We know that we need to improve our outreach and the availability and accessibility of the website, and that is exactly what we are working on.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Charmaine Stick is a courageous band member from the Onion Lake Cree Nation. When she heard about financial trouble with the band, she demanded answers from her leadership. They refused. She went on a 13-day hunger strike. She is now going to court to force the disclosure of salaries, expenses, and financial statements.

Does the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs realize that by failing to enforce the First Nations Financial Transparency Act she is complicit in hiding this information?

Why is the minister forcing band members to go to court for basic information?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone, including first nations governments, wants increased transparency and accountability. However, we will only achieve this by working in full partnership with first nations leaders and organizations.

With regard to this situation, I have asked my department to look into it and report back to me.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Onion Lake is about to get worse. Charmaine reports that the leadership stopped development of dozens of new housing units, claiming that there was no money. How would they know? They do not have access to basic information. They have not seen the books.

This paternalistic approach of the minister is deplorable. The community members deserve to be empowered and know what is going on with their money.

When will the minister enforce the First Nations Financial Transparency Act and provide basic information that all other Canadians enjoy?

Oral Questions

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is additional information in that case that the member ought to know.

I will be happy to have that conversation with the member privately, because I think it is hugely important that we understand that what is put in place is very important in terms of transparency and accountability and that we develop a system that works for all bands.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's excuses to shut down the Vegreville immigration office do not add up. He claims that there is a strong business case, but there was no cost analysis, and that there will be a net gain of jobs. However, the hundreds of immediate and spinoff job losses will devastate the town and region.

The minister claims that everyone will get a job in Edmonton, but only permanent, full-time employees will be covered. More than half will not.

Will the minister immediately reverse this edict and keep these rural jobs in Vegreville?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do share the concerns of the people of Vegreville, but it has to be understood that the government inherited a completely broken immigration system, so our priority has to be to improve service, to reduce processing time, and to spend taxpayers' money wisely. In making the move from Vegreville to Edmonton, we are in fact increasing the total number of jobs in Alberta. All the employees in Vegreville, permanent and temporary, will be offered jobs in Edmonton. This is something that has to be done for efficiency—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a member of a Muslim community that has too often in the past not been part of the discussion when it comes to designing a national security framework. We are proud Canadians who want to keep the country we love safe and free.

Can the Minister of Public Safety please tell the House how he is ensuring that all communities are involved in the current national security review?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our national security consultations must be open and inclusive, and they are. I have met with Muslim Canadian organizations personally, and my parliamentary secretary met just last week with the South Asian community in the member's riding of Scarborough Centre. That process will continue. Meanwhile, our online consultation has attracted more than 10,000 submissions.

Canada is strengthened by its diversity, and it is in partnership with all Canadians that we are working to keep our country safe, and equally, to safeguard the rights and freedoms we all hold dear.

* * *

• (1500)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, against the advice of the public service, the Prime Minister lifted the visa requirement for Mexico. He did this without taking any steps to prevent a new rush of false asylum claims, as Canada experienced before the visa requirement was put in place.

Last week, his officials once again warned him that Canada might see a huge spike in false asylum claims, yet he remains committed to a rush lifting of this requirement.

The Prime Minister's first priority on this issue should be safeguarding the integrity of Canada's immigration system, but it clearly is not. Why?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this visa lift was brought about to strengthen our ties on a continental basis. It is well known that with the visa lifted there will be enhanced tourism traffic coming from Mexico, which will create many jobs and much income in the Canadian economy. We are monitoring the situation very closely, of course, but this project stands to bring major jobs and benefits to the country.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the previous Liberal government shelved pay equity legislation in 2005, and this Liberal government has further delayed it to late 2018. It is just not good enough. Women have waited 40 years and should not have to wait even longer. We are calling on the government to table proactive federal pay equity legislation by December 2016.

The Prime Minister has already indicated that it is 2016 and that gender parity is overdue, so what are they waiting for?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pay equity is an important issue for the government, and we are taking action. Equal pay for work of equal value is a human right, and we are very proud to be bringing forward pay equity after 12 years of inaction. Pay equity between men and women and the fair treatment of all workers in the workplace, regardless of gender, is critical for creating growth and a thriving middle class.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the north we have a high need for investment to supply suitable and affordable housing. I would like to ask the minister about the consultations he is doing on a national housing strategy, and more specifically, if there will be a northern housing strategy.

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from the Northwest Territories for his important work on behalf of his constituents.

Our national housing strategy will cover the entire housing continuum and will consider different regional needs, including the important needs of northern communities. Round tables and focus groups were organized in the north to give a strong voice to our northern communities. We are reviewing the important inputs received from the consultations and will release the highlights on November 22, which happens to be National Housing Day.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the health minister has announced that she is going to repeal the right of Canadians to have a say in the location of heroin injection sites. This means law enforcement, families, and different levels of government would no longer be consulted before sites are approved in their very own communities. We are beginning to see a trend. Liberals only consult when they know they are going to get the answers they want.

If the minister is so sure that communities want these sites in their backyards, why will she not guarantee them the right to say no?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting the health and safety of all Canadians through evidence-based policy. The evidence is absolutely clear: harm reduction is an important part of a comprehensive approach to drug control. The Minister of Health has directed the department that there should be no unnecessary barriers for communities that want to open supervised consumption sites; and we have also directed the department to review all options to assist with the opioid crisis, up to and including amendments to Bill C-2.

* * *

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we in Quebec are proud of those who make our specialty cheeses, which add to the unique nature of our regions.

However, Canada just negotiated the opening of our markets to nearly 18,000 tonnes of imported cheese, almost all of which will be specialty cheeses. A tidal wave of cheese is about to crash, and this government is offering our producers peanuts and hoping they will find something else to sell.

Will this government finally acknowledge the importance of Quebec specialty cheeses and fully compensate our producers, as promised?

• (1505)

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question, and as I indicated a number of times in the House today, we are going to make sure that our processing sector is innovative and ready

to deal with CETA when it comes into power. CETA is a very important trade deal. It will give the agricultural sector up to \$1.5 billion in export potential, but we will also make sure that our processors are innovative enough to supply the quality cheeses that will be available for export.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the same government that promised to resolve the diafiltered milk problem in 100 days is once again mocking us.

It is compromising the very heart of Quebec farming once again, for the benefit of industries in western Canada. Let us not kid ourselves; fine cheeses are a Quebec specialty, since we produce over 60% of Canada's total production. Quebec also makes up 40% of Canada's dairy industry.

Why is Quebec agriculture always the sector sacrificed in free trade?

Here is the real question: is letting Quebec's dairy producers starve yet another Canadian value?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated a number of times in the House today, we have shown it by where we put our money. I made an announcement on behalf of the government last Thursday of \$350 million to make sure that the dairy farmers and processors are in an innovative situation so they can deal and make sure that the supply management system supplies for many generations. We consulted with the farmers and processors, and now we implemented a program that will make sure the supply management system lasts for a long time in this country.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers thought they were masters in their own house. However, I have bad news for them: the federal government would like to remind us that we are not.

After Neuville and Saint-Cuthbert, Ottawa wants to impose a new recreational airport in Mascouche which will have no significant economic benefits and disregards Quebec laws. Does social licence mean anything to him?

Will the Minister of Transport finally accept that concerned citizens in the cities of Mascouche and Terrebonne, the Montreal metropolitan area, members of UPA and the National Assembly are opposed to the project, or will Ottawa unilaterally make this decision for us?

[English]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of our transportation network are the Minister of Transport's priorities. Last March, wanting to ensure that the implementation of a new aerodrome at Mascouche was secure and in the public interest, the minister issued a ministerial order to prevent the implementation of such an aerodrome until a public consultation was conducted by the aerodrome proponent. Following its evaluation, Transport Canada was satisfied with the conclusions contained in the proponent's report of the consultation.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled "The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa", done at Paris on October 14, 1994. An explanatory memorandum is included with this treaty.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 55 petitions.

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PETITIONS

SENIORS

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by a number of Canadian citizens.

The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the dramatic demographic shift in Canada. Today, there are more seniors in Canada than youth under the age of 15. One in six Canadians is a senior, and in 14 years, one in four Canadians will be a senior.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call upon Parliament to appoint a minister for seniors and to develop a national strategy for seniors.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, a petition from hundreds of Canada's wine producers, who are asking that the government remove the decades-old interim cellared in Canada exemption from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency requirement. This is very important in terms of promoting Canada's brand of quality internationally.

This petition is supported by small and large producers alike and has seen support across party lines for this particular change.

VETERANS

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege and honour today to present a petition from citizens of Canada, many from my riding of Don Valley West, who are calling upon the Government of Canada to create within the existing Sunnybrook veterans facility a centre for excellence for veterans care, including specialization in both physical and mental health, the latter including research and treatment for traumatic stress disorder and related issues for Canadian veterans, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP, and first responders.

This petition is the work of many citizens, and I am proud to be a part of this and to present it today.

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House to present dozens of petitions calling for the mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods.

The petitioners have long been calling for GMO labelling, but Health Canada's approval of the sale of genetically modified salmon has heightened their concern. That is why they are calling for the mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods so that people can make informed decisions about what they are eating.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present to the House today signed by residents of Burnaby and across the Lower Mainland.

The petitioners are opposed to the construction of Kinder Morgan's new bitumen-based, export-only crude oil pipeline from Edmonton to Burnaby. The petitioners draw to the House's attention that this pipeline is a danger to our local environment and is just a bad deal for British Columbia.

The government has been pushing for this pipeline, but I urge it to consider this petition before it makes its final decision.

Routine Proceedings

• (1515)

[Translation]

POVERTY

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we continue to receive petitions supporting Bill C-245, which I introduced to develop a poverty reduction strategy. I am therefore very proud again today to present more petitions in support of Bill C-245, which we will be voting on at second reading at the end of the month.

[English]

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first petition is from residents throughout my riding as well as Vancouver.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to revise the Criminal Code to recognize that crimes against animals should be treated as more than crimes against property and to strengthen the language to close loopholes that allow abusers to escape penalty.

I will not get into the reasons, but it is important to look at animal cruelty issues in the same light as the fact that those who would abuse animals are also known by the police to later abuse people.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is an e-petition that focuses on the global crisis of the extinction of shark species.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to limit the importation and sale of species of sharks and to put a reasonable limit on the number of sharks that can be imported into Canada.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House on behalf of citizens of Sault Ste. Marie who have asked that I table a petition so that they can be heard on the issue of the Algoma passenger train, which has not been operating for a year.

Seventy-five per cent of the properties are within proximity of a rail line, and now the properties are inaccessible. There are no alternate ways to access them except for industrial roads that are not maintained, so therefore are not safe. The petitioners talk about the economic downturn that the Algoma district has incurred since then. They also indicate the impact that this has had on first nations and access to their traditional territories.

The petitioners ask that the Minister of Transport put the Algoma passenger train back in service in order to ensure the mission of Transport Canada to serve the public interest through promotion of a safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible transportation system in Canada.

* * *

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: Questions Nos. 491, 494, 495, 499, 506, 511, 512, 517, and 518.

[Text]

Question No. 491—**Mr. David Sweet:**

With regard to the announcement made by the Minister of National Defence on August 26, 2016, that committed Canada to \$450 000 000 and 600 troops for peacekeeping missions: (a) what evidence was used to determine (i) the total financial commitment to these missions, (ii) the total number of troops for deployment in these missions; (b) what ongoing missions were considered for possible deployment of Canadian troops; (c) during the consultation process, which individuals were consulted, broken down by (i) Canadian Armed Forces personnel, (ii) representatives of foreign governments, (iii) representatives of international organizations; (d) how were the individuals and organizations identified in (c) consulted; (e) what criteria has been established to determine which peacekeeping missions the Canadian Armed Forces will provide resources to; (f) what safety requirements for troops have been established to determine whether or not the Canadian Armed Forces will participate in a peacekeeping mission; (g) what are the terms of engagement that Canadian Armed Forces will be under if they are threatened or attacked by hostile forces; (h) has Burundi been considered as a potential location for a Canadian peace keeping mission; (i) what are the details of the chain of command that will determine the mission or missions that will be supported by Canadian troops; and (j) what are the details of any estimated costs that could be incurred by the Department of National Defence to support the training and implementation of peacekeeping missions?

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the announcement made by the Minister of National Defence on August 26, 2016, no decision has been made on a deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces as part of United Nations peace support operations. The detailed information requested currently constitutes advice to ministers and is cabinet confidence.

The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces developed a variety of options for the government to consider for it to meet its commitment to renew Canada's commitment to United Nations peace support operations. The indicative incremental cost estimate was based on costing methodology and planning assumptions. The development of these options involved extensive consultation within the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, with foreign governments, and with international organizations. Individuals and organizations were consulted via email, in person, video teleconference, and telephone.

As is standard practice, force protection and risk-mitigation issues will be determined based on mission-specific threats. Rules of engagement are always mission-specific and are resolved through a combination of United Nations mandates and Canadian legal processes, and are approved by the Chief of the Defence Staff.

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 the information relates to national security, defence, and international affairs.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 494—Hon. Peter Kent:**

With regard to the trip to Sri Lanka taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in July, 2016: (a) who were the members of the Canadian delegation; (b) for each meeting attended by the Minister on the trip, what are the details, including, (i) date, (ii) attendees, (iii) location, (iv) topics discussed; and (c) what are the details of all costs associated with the trip, including the amount spent on (i) hotels, (ii) meals, (iii) air transportation, (iv) other transportation, (v) other expenses?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the members of the Canadian delegation were: (1) Mr. Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, (2) Mr. Julian Ovens, chief of staff to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, (3) Ms. Pascale Massot, political adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, (4) Ms. Chantal Gagnon, press attaché to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and (5) Mr. Frédéric Huot-Bolduc, visits officer, office of protocol, Global Affairs Canada.

With regard to (b), for information related to the trip to Sri Lanka taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in July 2016, please refer to the following documents: news release, “Minister Dion to visit Sri Lanka following successful visit to Lao People's Democratic Republic”, at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1104809>; news release, “Minister Dion concludes successful visit to Sri Lanka”, at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1105999>; and “Address by Minister Dion on the occasion of a joint press conference with Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs Samaraweera”, at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1105779>.

With regard to (c), hotel accommodation costs at the hotel Taj Samudra were covered by the Sri Lankan government for four members of the delegation. The Government of Canada covered accommodation expenses for one member of the delegation for a three night stay in the amount of \$510.70 Canadian. Meals cost \$333.62 Canadian, for 3 days. Air transportation cost \$28,279.28 Canadian. Other transportation costs were \$962.92 Canadian, and other expenses \$2,443.41 Canadian.

Question No. 495—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the appointment of Mary Jean McFall to the position of Chief of Staff to the Minister of Agriculture: (a) how many meetings has she had with representatives from any organization that represents chicken, egg, or poultry farmers; and (b) what are the details of those meetings, including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name of organization(s) represented, (iv) titles of attendees, (v) topics discussed?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), two meetings were held.

With regard to meeting no. 1, it was held on April 12, 2016, at 1341 Baseline Road, Ottawa, between the executive director of the Chicken Farmers of Canada, and the manager of trade and policy and the policy adviser in the minister's office, on the topic of spent fowl.

With regard to meeting no. 2, it was held on April 22, 2016, via telephone from 1341 Baseline Road, Ottawa, and the senior vice-president of government and industry relations, on the topic of agriculture and international trade.

Question No. 499—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to border crossing documentation, since October 19, 2015: what dollar amount is spent by the government for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility, broken down by country and crime, by (i) the Prime Minister, (ii) other

Ministers, (iii) ministerial exempt staff, (iv) the Prime Minister's staff, (v) public servants?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Public Safety Canada, PS, specific details of expenses related to dollar amounts spent by the government for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility are not uniquely captured in PS' financial system. Consequently, an extensive manual search would be required and this would not be possible to do within the given timeframe.

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, since October 19, 2015, the CBSA has not incurred any expenses for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility.

With regard to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, since October 19, 2015, CSIS has not incurred any expenses for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility.

With regard to the Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, specific details of expenses related to dollar amounts spent by the government for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility are not uniquely captured in CSC's financial system. Consequently, an extensive manual search would be required and this would not be possible to do within the given timeframe.

With regard to the Parole Board of Canada, PBC, since October 19, 2015, the PBC has not incurred any expenses for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility.

With regard to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, specific details of expenses related to dollar amounts spent by the government for the acquisition of waivers of ineligibility are not uniquely captured in the RCMP's financial system. Consequently, an extensive manual search would be required and this would not be possible to do within the given timeframe.

Question No. 506—Mr. Bernard Généreux:

With regard to expenditures for the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office, both in Langevin Block and in Centre Block, broken down by building, since April 12, 2016: (a) what is the total amount spent on renovations and furniture; (b) what is the amount spent on purchasing new furniture, broken down by item and cost; (c) what is the amount spent on re-upholstering pre-existing furniture, broken down by item and cost; and (d) what other expenditures have been made with regards to renovations and furniture, broken down by item and cost?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office does not have record of expenditures for the Prime Minister's Office or the Privy Council Office in Langevin Block or Centre Block from April 12, 2016, to September 26, 2016.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 511—M. Alain Rayes:**

With regard to the federal government involvement in civil litigation resulting from the Liberal sponsorship program under the previous Chrétien government: (a) what civil court cases or other legal proceedings are currently still ongoing; (b) for each case currently ongoing, what are the details including plaintiff, defendant, case number, and stage of proceedings; (c) are there any cases which were ongoing as of November 4, 2015 but are no longer ongoing; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the details of any such case including: (i) case name or number, (ii) plaintiff, (iii) defendant, (iv) outcome (verdict, agreement, or case was dropped), (v) if case was dropped, reason for dropping case, (vi) amount of money recovered from defendant, if applicable, (vii) date that the legal proceedings ceased to continue?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is the civil litigation relating to the sponsorship program that is ongoing and in which the government is involved.

With regard to Attorney General of Canada v. Pluridesign Inc. et al., the plaintiff is the Attorney General of Canada; the defendants are Luc Lemay, Jacques Corriveau, Joseph Charles Guité, Malcolm Media Inc., and Pluridesign Inc.; the Quebec superior court case number is 500-17-024768-056; and the case is subject to case management.

With regard to Malcolm Media Inc. v. Attorney General of Canada, the plaintiff is Malcolm Media Inc.; the defendant is the Attorney General of Canada; the Quebec superior court case number is 00-17-025654-057; and the judge overseeing case management of this case ordered that this case be joined to case number 500-17-024768-056.

No court cases or other legal proceedings relating to the sponsorship program that were ongoing and in which the government was involved on November 4, 2015, have ceased.

Question No. 512—Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:

With regard to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and fires which have occurred on Indian Band Reserves since 2010: (a) how many fires have occurred per year; (b) how many deaths have occurred; (c) how many individuals have been injured; (d) how much has been spent on fire fighting on reserves; and (e) how much has been spent on fire prevention on reserves?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (b), and (c), in 2010, a decision was taken to stop collecting data on fire incidents on reserve in order to reduce the reporting burden on first nations. The last dataset collected, analyzed, and published on fire incidents on reserve was for reference year 2010. Starting in 2011, changes were made to the reporting cycle, which included eliminating the tool by which first nations reported this information. The decision to cease data collection took time to implement. Although some communities may have submitted data up to the period of 2012-13, the information was neither analyzed nor published, and it is incomplete.

INAC will work with partner organizations, including the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada, on new options to address the fire data gaps on reserve.

All options to generate this data are on the table so we can ensure the right programs and policies are in place to keep first nations communities safe. With regard to (d) and (e), from 2010-11 to 2014-15, INAC has provided an average of \$27 million annually for fire protection services, including fire prevention and fire suppression.

As part of the support for fire protection, INAC also provides an average of \$255,600 annually to the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada to organize a number of fire prevention awareness and training initiatives throughout the year.

Question No. 517—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his role as Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Litigation Management: what are the dates, titles, subject matter, and file numbers of all briefings provided to the Minister?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this information is subject to cabinet confidence.

Question No. 518—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his role as Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Litigation Management: (a) are there any topics or issues that are, or have been, on the Committee's agenda for which the Minister has had to recuse himself; (b) how many times has the Minister had to recuse himself; (c) without revealing Cabinet confidences, what was the nature of the topic for each case he recused himself; (d) since November 4, 2015, has the government been, or is the government currently, involved in any litigation or other legal proceedings with J.D. Irving Ltd., and of its subsidiaries, or any other company owned by a member of the Irving family; and (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what are the details of any legal proceedings including (i) plaintiff, (ii) defendant, (iii) case number, (iv) details of verdict or resolution, if proceedings have concluded?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this information is subject to cabinet confidence. The minister proactively sought guidance from the independent Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and her advice is being followed. The minister will fully adhere to the screen established pursuant to her advice, as detailed on the commissioner's website. Any recusals will be reported to the commissioner as required.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 412; and the supplementary response to Questions Nos. 381, 390, 394, 396, 397, 407, 412, 414, 416, 417, 419, 420, 422, 424, 425, 427, 439, 440, 444, 446 to 453, 461, 464, 466, 467, 470, 471, 475, and 479 to 482, originally tabled on November 4, as well as to Questions Nos. 492, 493, 496 to 498, 500 to 505, 507 to 510, 513 to 516, and 519 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 381—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to vehicles purchased, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many vehicles have been purchased, broken down by make, including, (i) Porsche, (ii) Lexus, (iii) Mercedes, (iv) Tesla, (v) BMW, (vi) Lamborghini, (vii) Ferrari; (b) what was the date and purchase price of each of the vehicles identified in (a); (c) what was the year and model of each of the vehicles identified in (a); (d) were the vehicles identified in (a) new or used when purchased; (e) were there any vehicles purchased for a price in excess of \$50 000, or equivalent, not covered by parts (a)(i) through (a) (vii); and (f) if the response to (e) is affirmative, what is the make, model, purchase price, and date of purchase of each vehicle?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 390—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to clothing given by government departments or agencies for Ministers or their exempt staff, for each item: (a) what is the description of each item given; (b) what is the value of each item given; and (c) who was the recipient of each item?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 394—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to travel claims submitted by Ministers and their exempt staff, broken down by Minister's Office, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many times were hotel or other commercial accommodation expenses claimed where the total cost, including taxes and other hotel fees, was over \$500 per night, or over the equivalent of \$500 CAD per night, if the expense was in a foreign currency; and (b) for each expense in (a), (i) what was the title of the individual who incurred the expense, (ii) what were the dates of each stay, (iii) what was the name of the hotel or other commercial accommodation, (iv) how many nights were the hotel or accommodation used for, (v) what was the total amount spent on each stay?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 396—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to federally owned or operated restaurants, cafeterias, canteens, or other food service provider, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation or other government entity: (a) what is the location and description of each; (b) since January 1, 2016, have any of these establishments served non-Canadian beef or pork; (c) in each instance where non-Canadian beef or pork was used, why was Canadian beef or pork not used; and (d) what directives are in place regarding the use of Canadian beef or pork in the establishments referred to in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 397—Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to all government contracts awarded for public relation services, since November 4, 2015, and broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of these contracts including (i) date of contract, (ii) value of contract, (iii) vendor name, (iv) file number, (v) description of services provided, (vi) start and end dates of services provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 407—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to government advertising campaigns since November 4, 2015, and broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) what is the title or description of each campaign; (b) what is the time period over which the campaign took place, or is taking place; (c) how much is budgeted for each campaign; (d) how much was actually spent on each campaign; (e) how much was budgeted in traditional media for each campaign; (f) how much was budgeted for social media for each campaign; (g) which traditional media outlets were used for each campaign; and (h) which social media outlets or platforms were used for each campaign?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 412—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to spending on photographers or photography services since November 4, 2015, and broken down by department or agency: (a) how much has been spent; (b) what were the dates and duration of each photography contract; (c) what was the initial and final value of each contract; (d) what were the events or occasions which were meant to be photographed as a result of each contract; and (e) what were the locations where the photography work was performed for each contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 414—Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to the purchase of promotional products for handouts or giveaways at trade shows, conferences, and other events, broken down by department, agency, or crown corporation: (a) what products were purchased; (b) what quantity of each product were purchased; (c) how much was spent on each product; (d) at what events, or type of events, were the products distributed at; (e) what country was each product manufactured in; and (f) what is the relevant file number for each purchase?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 416—Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to China in August and September of 2016, excluding security and media: (a) who were the members of the delegation that visited China; (b) what were the titles of the delegation members; (c) how many of the delegation members were required to reimburse any expenses to the government; (d) what is the description and amounts of expenses reimbursed; (e) what was the total cost to taxpayers of the trip; (f) how much was spent on accommodation; (g) how much was spent on food; (h) how much was spent on other expenses, including a description of each expense; (i) what was the value of alcohol consumed on the Airbus flight to China; and (j) what was the value of the alcohol consumed on the Airbus flight from China?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 417—Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:

With regard to government procurement: (a) what are the details of all contracts for the provision of research or speechwriting services to Ministers since November 4, 2015, providing for each such contract (i) the start and end dates, (ii) contracting parties, (iii) file number, (iv) nature or description of the work; and (b) providing, in the case of a contract for speechwriting, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) audience or event at which the speech was, or was intended to be, delivered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 419—Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:

With regard to government expenditures on gala, concert or sporting event tickets since November 4, 2015: what was the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) ticket cost, (iv) title of persons using the tickets, (v) name or title of event for tickets purchased by, or billed to, any department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 420—Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:

With regard to materials prepared for Assistant Deputy Ministers from November 4, 2015, to present: for every briefing document prepared, (i) what is the date on the document, (ii) what is the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) what is the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 422—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to spending by departments, agencies and crown corporations, since November 4, 2015: what were the total costs of rentals and purchases of individual staging, lighting and audio equipment, and production and assorted technical costs for all government announcements and public events, broken down by (i) date of event; (ii) location; (iii) event description; (iv) vendor name; (v) goods or services provided by each vendor; (vi) contract value, including cost of each good or service, if known?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 424—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to the province of Saskatchewan, since December 11, 2015: what is the list of grants, loans, and contributions awarded by the government, broken down by (i) recipient, (ii) city, town, or other location description, (iii) amount, (iv) file numbers, (v) project description or summary?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 425—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to pictures and pieces of artwork in government buildings, since November 4, 2015, broken down by department and agency: (a) how many pictures, paintings, or pieces of artwork have been installed or put on display in government buildings, not including employees individual offices, cubicles, or other personal space; (b) what are the costs associated with each of such pictures, paintings, or pieces of artwork including, but not limited to cost of acquisition or rental of image/artwork, framing, mounting and installation; (c) how many pictures of the Liberal leader and current Prime Minister have been installed or put on display in government buildings; and (d) what are the costs and location associated with each picture listed in (c), including, but not limited to cost of image, framing, mounting, and installation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 427—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to privacy breaches since November 4, 2015, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) how many privacy breaches have occurred; and (b) for each privacy breach, (i) was it reported to the Privacy Commissioner, (ii) how many individuals were affected by each breach, (iii) what were the dates of the privacy breach, (iv) were the individual affected notified that their information may have been compromised, and if so, on what date and by what manner were they notified?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 439—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the disposition of government assets since November 4, 2015: (a) on how many occasions has the government repurchased or reacquired a lot which had been disposed of in accordance with the Treasury Board Directive on the Disposal of Surplus Materiel; and (b) for each occasion identified in (a), what was (i) the description or nature of the item or items which constituted the lot, (ii) the sale account number or other reference number, (iii) the date on which the sale closed, (iv) the price at which the item was disposed of to the buyer, (v) the price at which the item was repurchased from the buyer, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 440—Hon. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to government expenditures on media monitoring and all such contracts which have been in place on or since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all spending, broken down by each department and agency, including (i) the nature, (ii) the scope, (iii) the duration, (iv) the contract for media monitoring, (v) the names of the contracted services provided, (vi) the file numbers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 444—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to the backdrops and podiums used by the government for the announcements from November 4, 2015, to present, for each backdrop purchased and for each podium purchased or rented: (a) what was the date of purchase or rental; (b) when was the tender issued for the backdrop or podium; (c) when was the contract signed; (d) when was the backdrop or podium delivered; (e) what was the cost of the backdrop or podium; (f) was there an announcement for which the backdrop or podium was used, if so, for which ones; (g) which department paid for the backdrop or podium; and (h) when were the backdrops or podiums used, broken down by event and date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 446—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to Access to Information Requests filed between May 1, 2016, and August 19, 2016, broken down by department or agency: (a) how many requests were received; (b) of those requests in (a), in how many cases were the documents produced within the statutory thirty-day time limit; and (c) in how many cases was there an extension?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 447—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to government announcements by Ministers, or other government representatives acting on behalf of a Minister, broken down by department and agency, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all announcements which took place in locations which were not wheelchair accessible, including (i) date of announcement, (ii) location, (iii) title of related news release, (iv) Minister or other government representative who made the announcement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 448—Mr. David Yurdiga:

With regard to Access to Information Requests, broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) what contingency plans are in place for delivering documents requested through Access to Information in the event of a postal disruption, particularly for individuals living outside of the National Capital Region; (b) does the government have any plans to allow documents requested through Access to Information to be sent through email rather than through the mail; (c) for those departments and agencies which do not yet allow online filing of access to information requests, what contingency plans are in place to allow Canadians to submit access to information requests in the event of a postal service disruption; and (d) for those departments which do not yet allow online filing for access to information requests, what is the anticipated date for when such departments will begin accepting online requests?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 449—Mr. Gordon Brown:

With regard to any focus groups administered by the government between January 23, 2016, and January 27, 2016, inclusively, as well as any focus groups administered by the government on March 22, 2016: (a) what were the specific topics being assessed or analyzed by the focus groups; (b) what are all costs associated with putting on these focus groups, including venue rental, incentives for attendees, food and beverage, and travel expenses; (c) which government officials or Ministerial staff were in attendance at each focus group; and (d) for each of the focus groups conducted, what were the results or findings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 450—Mr. Gordon Brown:

With regard to classified or protected documents, since November 4, 2015, broken down department or agency: (a) how many instances have occurred where it was discovered that classified or protected documents were left or stored in a manner which did not meet the requirements of the security level of the documents; (b) how many of these instances occurred in the offices of ministerial exempt staff, including those of the staff of the Prime Minister, broken down by ministerial office; and (c) how many employees have lost their security clearance as a result of such infractions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 451—Mr. Gordon Brown:

With regard to briefings provided by departmental officials to Liberal Members of Parliament, other than Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries, since November 4, 2015, what are the details of these briefings, including (i) date, (ii) subject matter, (iii) location, (iv) titles of those in attendance?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 452—Mr. Gordon Brown:**

With regard to fees collected by government departments and agencies, since December 1, 2015: (a) what is the total amount collected by the government; (b) what is the monthly breakdown of fees collected, broken down by department or agency; and (c) what is the monthly breakdown of fees collected by specific fee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 453—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to chauffeured car and driver services, utilized by Ministerial staff including staff of the Prime Minister, broken down by department or agency, since November 4, 2015, and excluding trips where exempt staff were accompanying a Minister: (a) how many trips have been taken by ministerial exempt staff in a chauffeured vehicle owned or leased by a government department, agency, or other government entity; and (b) are there any policies in place regarding the personal usage of Ministerial vehicles by exempt staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 461—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) tariffs, since January 1, 2016: what are the actual or anticipated costs that each department, agency, and crown corporation has or will pay on an annual basis in SOCAN tariffs for (i) background music, (ii) telephone music on hold, as set out in Tariff Number 15 in Volume 15, Number 26 of the Canada Gazette published on June 25, 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 464—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to all polls and focus groups conducted by the government since November 4, 2015: for each contract, what is the (i) name of the vendor, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) topic of each poll or focus group, (iv) location of each poll or focus group, (v) internal file number, (vi) date and duration?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 466—Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to government advertising campaign in China since August 1, 2016: for each campaign, what is the (i) total amount spent, (ii) vendor, (iii) type of advertisement, (iv) internal file or tracking number, (v) dates and duration of ad campaign?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 467—Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to training provided for Ministers or their exempt staff since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all expenses, including (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) location, (iv) total amount, (v) contract file number, if applicable, (vi) any travel expenses associated with the training?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 470—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to government travel, since November 4, 2015: broken down by Minister's Office, (a) which Ministers or exempt staff have rented vehicles, including, but not limited to, "car and driver services", "limousine services" or "car services", within Canada or elsewhere; (b) for each use identified in (a), what was the (i) date of the rental, (ii) pickup location the rental, (iii) drop-off location of the rental, (iv) nature of the official business, including events attended, (v) cost of the rental, (vi) vehicle description, including type and model, if available, (vii) names of passengers, if known, (viii) name of vendor, (ix) duration of the rental; and (c) for each rental listed in (a), was a driver provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 471—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the use of taxi cabs and Uber by the government: broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation, (a) how much has been spent on taxi

cabs for government employees since December 1, 2015; (b) how much has been spent on Uber or other ride sharing companies for government employees since December 1, 2015; (c) how much has been spent on public transportation for government employees since December 1, 2015; (d) broken down by ministerial office, including the Prime Minister's Office, how much has the government spent on taxi cabs for ministerial exempt staff since December 1, 2015; (e) how much has the government spent on Uber or other ride sharing companies for ministerial exempt staff since December 1, 2015; and (f) how much has the government spent on public transportation for ministerial exempt staff since December 1, 2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 475—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to government telecommunications: what is the total amount of late-payment charges incurred in each month since December 2015 inclusive, in respect of cellular telephone service and service for all other wireless devices other than cellular telephones, broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) service provider?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 479—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to government-wide advertising activities, broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many advertisements have (i) been created in total, broken down by type (cinema, internet, out-of-home, print dailies, print magazine, weekly/community newspapers, radio, television, various social media platforms), (ii) been given an identification number, a name or a Media Authorization Number (ADV number); (b) what is the identification number, name or ADV number for each advertisement listed in (a)(ii); and (c) for the answers to each part of (a), what is (i) the length (seconds or minutes) of each radio advertisement, television advertisement, cinema advertisement, internet advertisement, (ii) the cost for the production or creation of each advertisement, (iii) the companies used to produce or create each advertisement, (iv) the number of times each advertisement has aired or been published, specifying the total number of times and the total length of time (seconds or minutes), broken down by month for each advertisement, (v) the total cost to air or publish each advertisement, broken down by month, (vi) the criteria used to select each of the advertisement placements, (vii) media outlets used to air or publish each advertisement, broken down by month, (viii) the total amount spent per outlet, broken down by month?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 480—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to harassment incidents since November 4, 2015, broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) how many harassment incident reports have been received; (b) how many individuals were the subject of complaints; (c) how many individuals were the subject of multiple complaints; (d) how many incidents resulted in formal disciplinary measures; (e) how many individuals faced disciplinary measures related to (d); (f) how many cases were subject to a formal investigation; (g) how many cases were investigated internally; (h) how many cases were investigated by external investigators hired by the government; and (i) how many cases were referred to the police?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 481—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to contract signed by the government with the firm MorneauShepell since November 4, 2015: for each contract, (a) what is the (i) value, (ii) description of the service provided, (iii) date and duration of the contract, (iv) internal tracking or file number; and (b) was the contract sole sourced? Q-4812 — 19 septembre 2016 — Mme Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London) — En ce qui concerne les contrats signés par le gouvernement avec la société MorneauShepell depuis le 4 novembre 2015 : a) pour chacun, quels sont (i) le montant, (ii) la description des services fournis, (iii) la date et la durée du contrat, (iv) le numéro de suivi interne ou de dossier; (b) pour chacun, y a-t-il eu un appel

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 482—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the purchase of carbon offset credits by the federal government, broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) what is the total amount purchased in carbon offsets since November 4, 2015; and (b) what are the details of each individual purchase including (i) price of each purchase, (ii) date of purchase, (iii) dates of travel, (iv) titles of individuals on trip, (v) origin and destination of each trip, (vi) amount of emissions purchase was meant to offset, (vii) name of vendor who received the carbon offset payment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 492—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); (j) what is the grade and score with which the reviews in (h) were assessed, if any exist, and was is the viability of these programs as it was originally determined; (k) what is the stated section of Budget 2016 under which each item identified in (g) fall, if any are applicable; and (l) what is the departmental mandate under which each of the items identified in (g) fall?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 493—Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:

With regard to the application of the Health Canada Food and Drug Regulations, Division 24: (a) is it prohibited from carrying the Nutrition Facts table; (b) is it exempt from labelling sugar grams; (c) what is the most recent date of approval for a product in accordance with the Division; (d) what is the most recent date of a food producer attempting to gain approval, in accordance with the Division; (e) what is the rationale for specifying that a protein source must be whey or casein; (f) what process exists to allow for a (i) vegan option, (ii) vegetarian option; (g) what is the amending process for the Division; (h) can exemptions to the Division be granted and, if so, what is the process for acquiring an exemption; (i) are formulated liquid diets prohibited from advertising; (j) what research is available about the use of mono- and di-saccharides vs. poly-saccharides; and (k) what research is available about the long-term use of commercially produced formulated liquid diets?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 496—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to government procurement and contracts for the provision of research or speechwriting services to Ministers since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of contracts, including (i) the start and end dates, (ii) contracting parties, (iii) file number, (iv) nature or description of the work (v) value of contract; and (b) in the case of a contract for speechwriting, what is the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) audience or event at which the speech was, or was intended to be, delivered, (iv) number of speeches to be written, (v) cost charged per speech?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 497—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 498—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to Ministers using photographs of government departmental or agency employees on their Twitter and Instagram accounts, broken down by photo, department, and agency, since November 4, 2015: (a) did the Ministers' receive consent from the government employees prior to posting their images on social media and, if so, in what form was the consent received; and (b) what is each department or agency's policy regarding the use of employees photographs for (i) official government use, (ii) political or partisan use?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 500—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to wireless and cellular services, since December 1, 2015, broken down by month, Minister's office, and user: (a) what is the total amount spent on wireless and cellular services for Ministers and their exempt staff, including all charges for usage, data, talk, text, long-distance, and roaming; and (b) for all amounts identified in (a), how many devices make up these amounts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 501—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to the Minister of International Trade and the negotiation of a softwood lumber agreement with the United States: (a) on what dates did the Minister formally or informally meet with United States trade representatives, any US counterpart or US stakeholder, (i) who was present for each of those meetings, (ii) where did those meetings take place; (b) on what dates did the Minister formally or informally meet with a Canadian stakeholder, (i) who was present for each of those meetings, (ii) where did those meetings take place; (c) how many iterations of formal offers has each country proposed to one another during the negotiations; (d) has either country indicated that they do not intend to propose further offers; and (e) how much funding has the Department of Global Affairs earmarked for litigation following potential U.S. duties placed on Canadian softwood lumber exports?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 502—Mr. Pierre Nantel:

With regard to consultations on the Department of Canadian Heritage's initiative Canadian Content in a Digital World, as of January 1, 2016: (a) whom did the Minister of Canadian Heritage meet and what were the details of those meetings, including, (i) the date of the meeting, (ii) the individuals in attendance, (iii) the organizations that these individuals represent, (iv) did the organization in question use the services of a public relations firm, (v) were the people in attendance registered with the Registry of Lobbyists; (b) whom did the Minister's exempt staff, including office staff, meet and what were the details of those meetings, including, (i) the date of the meeting, (ii) the individuals in attendance, (iii) the organizations that these individuals represent, (iv) did the organization in question use the services of a public relations firm, (v) were the people in attendance registered with the Registry of Lobbyists; (c) did the Minister and her exempt staff, including office staff, meet with representatives from public agencies, including, (i) CBC/Radio-Canada, (ii) Telefilm Canada, (iii) Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office, (iv) National Film Board of Canada, (v) Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, (vi) Canada Media Fund, (vii) Copyright Board of Canada, (viii) Canada Council for the Arts, (ix) Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, (x) Global Affairs Canada; and (d) with respect to the services provided by the third-party consulting firm Ipsos Public Affairs as part of the consultations, (i) how many employees of the third-party firm are assigned to provide services to the Department of Canadian Heritage, (ii) how much has the department spent on these services, (iii) was a competitive process held regarding these services, (iv) if so, who were the other bidders, (v) how long was the call for tenders posted publicly?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 503—Mr. Len Webber:**

With regard to credit cards issued to ministerial staff: what expenses were charged to a government credit card, and subsequently reimbursed by the card holder for the period of November 4, 2015, to September 23, 2016, including, (i) the name of the vendor and the place of purchase, (ii) the date of the purchase, (iii) the value of the purchase, (iv) the due date of the statement, (v) the date on which the card holder provided reimbursement in full, (vi) the name of the card holder, (vii) the job title of the card holder, (viii) the department or agency of the card holder, (ix) the confirmation if that card holder is still an active holder of a government credit card?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 504—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to credit cards issued to Ministers, Ministers of State, and Parliamentary Secretaries: what expenses were charged to a government credit card, and subsequently reimbursed by the card holder for the period of November 4, 2015, to September 23, 2016, including, (i) the name of the vendor and the place of purchase, (ii) the date of the purchase, (iii) the value of the purchase, (iv) the due date of the statement, (v) the date on which the card holder provided reimbursement in full, (vi) the name of the card holder, (vii) the official job title of the card holder, (viii) the confirmation if that card holder is still an active holder of a government credit card?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 505—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to the Facebook posting from the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary on September 22, 2016, which references personalized cash payout and incidentals, broken down by Minister's office, since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the amount paid out to Ministers and their exempt staff under this category; (b) how much has been paid out to each individual under this category; (c) what is the list of the expenses that are eligible to be claimed under this category; and (d) what is the detailed breakdown of each payout under this category?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 507—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to the Skills Link program: (a) what has been the program's total budget since 2013, inclusively, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) electoral district; (b) what is the program's total budget in each electoral district for 2016; and (c) what are the criteria for determining the amount allocated to the applicant organization?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 508—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to the "Kathryn Spirit," a derelict vessel in Beauharnois, Quebec: (a) what amounts have been spent per year by the government since 2011 for maintenance, related costs, abortive towing attempts or any other costs related to this vessel; (b) how many employees, broken down by department, have worked on this file since 2011, broken down by year; (c) what were the costs of the stabilization work during the summer of 2016, in general and including costs to deploy personnel, ground, naval and air assets of the various departments; (d) how many individuals, broken down by department, were deployed when the vessel listed heavily this summer and for how long; (e) what were the ground, air and naval assets used during this incident; and (f) what is the estimated reaction time between the moment a leak is detected near the "Kathryn Spirit," the arrival of Coast Guard personnel and the deployment of all protection measures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 509—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to services provided to the Prime Minister, including nanny and childcare services: are they considered to be a taxable benefit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 510—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the visit of the Chinese Premier to the Westin Hotel in Ottawa, in September 2016, including the installation of a privacy wall outside of the Hotel: (a)

on what date did the government become aware that the wall would be constructed; (b) in what manner was the government notified that the wall would be constructed; (c) who notified the government that the wall would be constructed; (d) what are the details regarding any communication the government has had with Chinese representatives regarding the wall; (e) did the National Capital Commission give the Westin permission for the construction of the wall; (f) did any other government department give the Westin permission for the construction of the wall; (g) did the Prime Minister or anyone from the PMO ever raise the issue of the wall with members of the Chinese government; (h) if the answer to (g) is affirmative, what are the details of such interactions including the dates and titles of individuals involved in the communication; (i) did the government pay any costs to the Westin Hotel associated with the visit of the Chinese delegation and, if so, what was the amount; (j) what is the breakdown of any costs associated with (i), including number of rooms, number of nights, and amounts spent on food and beverages?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 513—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With respect to the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario from 2010-2011 to 2016-2017 please provide: (a) the full list of projects applications and denials; and (b) the amount of funding already allocated before the year starts.

(Return tabled)

Question No. 514—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With respect to the First Nations Inuit Health Branch at Health Canada: (a) what was the number of requests for travel in 2016-2017 that were accepted and denied broken down by (i) escort for pregnant women, (ii) escort for children, (iii) travel to safe or interval houses, (iv) compassionate travel; (b) for every health facility on reserve, specify (i) the infrastructure grade, (ii) the need for repair, (iii) the ability to meet current demand, (iv) the ability to meet increased demand, (v) the age of the facility, (vi) the communities without a facility, (vii) the number of facilities expected to be replaced, repaired, or built broken down by year from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021, (viii) the priority list of these projects; and (c) specify for every aboriginal head start program sites on reserve (i) the infrastructure grade, (ii) the need for repair, (iii) the ability to meet current demand, (iv) the ability to meet increased demand, (v) the age of the facility, (vi) the communities without a facility, (vii) the number of facilities expected to be replaced, repaired, or built broken down by year from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021, (viii) the priority list of these projects.

(Return tabled)

Question No. 515—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With respect to third party managers and co-managers on Indian reserves, what is: (a) the full list of third party managers and co-managers broken down by band; (b) the length of time each band has been under a third party manager or co-manager; and (c) the full list of remuneration and expenses for each third party manager or co-manager?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 516—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to each of the following polls or focus groups referenced in the government's response to Q-339, what were the results, findings, and conclusions, broken down by poll or focus group conducted by (i) Environics for Finance Canada, (ii) Ekos Research Associates for Health Canada, (iii) Harris Decima for Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 519—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to the offices of the Minister of Small Business and Tourism and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and their staff: (a) what are the costs associated with all fit-up, renovation, information, technology, or furniture purchases; (b) what is the total cost, as well as an itemized breakdown of costs for all of the purchases and work described in the above Ministers' responses to Q-295; and (c) what is the itemized breakdown for all costs associated with the items described in parts (a) and (b) of the government's response to Q-295 from the following Ministers (i) Minister of Justice, (ii) Minister of National Defense, (iii) Minister of Status of Women?

Government Orders

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 2

The House resumed from November 2 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.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to start the debate today on Bill C-29.

Rather than getting into the technical tax elements of it, I would like to go on about my riding. People know from when I spoke about the budget previously how delighted I was at the number of things that were in it for the north. An unparalleled number of things were put in for my constituents. I could not even get to them all in a 10-minute speech and my colleagues were asking me what was left for their ridings. Nevertheless, I am very happy for everything that was received by my riding.

I will start with the huge increase to the northern allowance, from \$16.50 a day to a maximum of \$22 a day. This is a huge emphasis on the people of the north. We can see our northern strategy is based on helping the people of the north in a very high cost-of-living area, where poverty could easily occur. This is the type of support we need and it was wonderfully received, of course, by the people of the north.

Our two biggest sectors are mining and tourism. Mining is the biggest gross territorial product, basically, since the gold rush; and tourism is the biggest private sector employer.

In mining, we continued in the budget the mineral exploration tax credit and the flow-through share regime. These are very important, especially, for exploration companies. There may be only one or two hard rock mines operating, and they have a limited number of employees. Those mines have a product that they can get loans against and get financing against. Exploration companies really have no credit, they do not have buildings, they do not have product, and it is very hard for them to get financing.

The METC and the flow-through share regime are very important for them. I would certainly like to thank the Minister of Natural Resources for lobbying for this and the finance minister for putting it in place.

With respect to the tourism sector, my riding has the highest percentage of our gross territorial product related to tourism of any

province or territory so that a cut to tourism marketing in Canada would hurt my riding more than anywhere else. That is why I am delighted with the \$50-million increase to that this year.

With respect to infrastructure, once again, as everyone knows, the fact that the government planned to have the largest amount of infrastructure in history is music to the ears in our riding. First, we have kept the building Canada plan that was in place for 2014 to 2024, we have accelerated the approvals, and we added some categories such as recreation, which is very important to my communities. They really wanted to build recreation facilities out of that fund, and now they can.

At the same time, phase two of the new infrastructure funding is going on. We have already announced the entire amounts of money for projects for most of my communities for the next three years. A lot of them are based on water and waste-water improvements, which is very important infrastructure. The minister has done extensive consultation. When phase two starts, we will be able to get more money for our transit. We do have a transit system in Whitehorse and it has already received money.

The green infrastructure fund is very forward-thinking.

I have been saying for a couple of decades, and everyone I think now knows, that climate change is affecting the north more than anywhere else in the world. It was very perceptive to allow funds to be put in the budget for mitigation and for preparing infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change, which can be seen in the foundations of our buildings, under melting permafrost, and on our highways. Those funds will be welcomed.

Another thing is the social infrastructure. I visited some of the day cares that would like to expand the number of spots. That money will be very welcomed.

Then there is affordable housing and the national housing plan. I have been on the anti-poverty coalition for years. We hope that the infrastructure bank will work; I will talk about that a bit later. The AIDEA bank in Alaska is very successful in an economy like ours.

• (1525)

Finally, I would like to talk about the recently announced \$2 billion for rural and northern regions for roads and bridges, green infrastructure, and Internet connections. Earlier in the day today, the opposition brought up how important the regions are. This is a massive signal. It is the biggest amount of money for the region.

Government Orders

For all those reasons, I am very excited about the budget and its initiatives. However, I do not want to let the finance minister off that easily. I want to now morph into our wishes for the next budget, based on consultations I have had in the riding. Some of these things could already be funded under the various programs I have just mentioned.

First, homelessness and the national housing strategy is very important to the people who gave me input on the upcoming budget. Affordable housing for employers is very important. They hire people. They come to the north and cannot find affordable housing, so have to leave again.

There is the suggestion of the electrification of transport routes so electric vehicles can be used. Of course, in the cities they can plug in and recharge. Along the Alaska Highway, for instance, we could have that all electrified.

Another suggestion, which happens to also be eligible and already announced, is the retrofit of old buildings and higher standards for new buildings.

Renewable energy of course is something people in my riding want to invest in, and it is a big part of the government's plan. There is a way of storing energy in off-peak hours, so a storage mechanism is also important. Certainly, that is eligible, and there are keen proponents of that in my riding.

Also, local food production in the north, rather than shipping things thousands of miles, and funding for social enterprises are suggestions.

A redundant fibre is very important for us. The Yukon has one Internet line cable going in and every time a backhoe cuts a line it shuts everything down. We would like to make a loop through the Dempster Highway through Inuvik. In fact, part of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories also only access through our hub, or only have one route. This would put a redundancy in place for a lot of people in the north so they could have access similar to what we have. These would be eligible under these new infrastructure programs, and I hope their funding is included.

We have one area where a hydro line needs to be replaced. We could go to several mines that would otherwise use LNG, and they would then contribute to greenhouse gases.

The IT sector is flourishing in the north now, because we do not need to transport heavy things. It is all done over the lines. We certainly appreciate the support for that.

We want the mining supports that I talked about earlier to continue. We would like the tourism marketing supports to continue. We would like support for business incubators. Once businesses have started, in many ways they have a record and they can get financing. They have partners, but when they are first starting up the costs for mentoring and cheap infrastructure, just getting going, is a hard part in the life cycle of a small business. We would like to support that.

There is room to support IRAP. It has been an incredible program for the last three decades at least. It is very instrumental for innovation. We would like to continue with that.

I said about 20 years ago, we need research in the north, by the north, and for the north. We have great research up there. We would like that to continue.

Yukon College has a plan, with the other three northern colleges, to take adults who may not be literate and upgrade them to the next stage. It is about \$56 billion for the three colleges that cover half of northern Canada. That would be a great project to fund in the new budget.

● (1530)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his speech and for talking about investments in mitigating the impact of climate change in particular.

Right now, heavy rainfall has led to a state of emergency at the Tseshaht First Nation in Port Alberni. These flood warnings are expected to continue throughout the coming week.

We know that climate change has moved from a future threat to a present danger. Extreme weather events such as floods are increasing in frequency and in severity. The PBO predicts that storms, hurricanes, and floods linked to climate change will cost the federal disaster fund \$900 million annually over the coming five years. That compares to an average of just \$54 million a year for the period from 1970 to 1994.

The disaster financial assistance program operated by Public Safety Canada is heavily underfunded. Therefore, I would ask the member if he supports increased funding to mitigate climate change, to invest in a national flood strategy so that we have a plan, so that we can budget and pre-empt a lot of the costs that are going to be created by flooding in our communities.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. However, I think the member is preaching to the converted on this side. He might talk to his colleagues to the right.

For a long time, I have been supporting investment in mitigation, because, as I said earlier, it is hurting us more than anyone else. Therefore, I am certainly in support of this type of funding, and, in fact, even internationally. I tabled a bill about eight years ago for those people who had lost their country because of this type of disaster and had no place to live as their homes were inundated, and that would make them eligible for a category under immigration as refugees.

I certainly support the direction the member has suggested, but I do not know the technical details.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I think of the budget implementation bill, there are a lot of things that we could be talking about. However, one of the big policy announcements that was made early on upon taking government was the idea of having that extra tax on Canada's wealthiest, the 1%, and at the same time producing a tax benefit for Canada's middle class. This is something I expected all members of this House would support, but, unfortunately, that is not the case.

I wonder if the member would provide his thoughts in terms of how important it was to provide that tax break for Canada's middle class.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question, because it allows me say something else. As I said, I did not have time to get in a couple of other things from the budget that were so exciting for us, which were pan-Canadian.

First of all, of course, the middle-class tax credit goes to so many people in the north. It helps us more than anything else, because the cost of living is so much higher.

One of the reasons I got into Parliament was to fight poverty. We have increased money for low-income students, for the poorest of seniors in the OAS supplement, for women's shelters, and for services for veterans. There are also the categories for people in the housing strategy and poverty work, as well as money for the people who really need it, which is very important to me.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the BIA will not index the new Canada child benefit to inflation until 2020. The member spoke about his role in wanting to reduce poverty. I wonder whether he can comment on that, and if he would agree and urge the government to index it so that it would not fall behind with respect to inflation.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, yes, the child benefit is a sea change in Canada, it is huge. It is the biggest thing for my riding with thousands of new dollars for parents. I think it went way ahead, and would have covered indexing for a few years. The sooner indexing comes in, the better for me. I am happy when the government does put it in.

• (1535)

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in this debate. It gives me an opportunity to talk about a town hall I attended a week ago today. The town hall was at the University of Toronto's Scarborough Campus, UTSC, and was hosted by six Scarborough MPs: the members for Scarborough Southwest, Scarborough Centre, Scarborough—Agincourt, Scarborough North, Scarborough—Rouge Park, and myself, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood. It was a really good event. It was an opportunity to invite the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance to talk about the very subject we are discussing today.

As everyone can appreciate, this budget is of great interest to the people of Scarborough. In particular, as we know, Scarborough is the eastern cornerstone of the GTA. It has a population of 600,000 or 700,000 people and is very ably represented by all of its MPs.

The big message out of this town hall was transit, transit, transit. The reason it is transit is because this is a severely under-serviced area in the GTA.

The location where this town hall took place, as I said, was UTSC. UTSC is a community of scholars. At this point, there are 13,000 students, a mix of both graduates and undergraduates. It is going up to 15,000 in a couple of years, yet it can only be accessed by TTC buses. That is a very poor way of getting that volume of people on and off of the campus on a daily basis.

Principal Kidd introduced the evening by talking about this need, but also the larger needs of the campus, particularly with respect to infrastructure. He made the point, or maybe I made the point for him thereafter, that UTSC had been home to the top scholars at the University of Toronto for the last four years running. Think about that. This is a suburban campus in the eastern-most part of the GTA and for the last four years it has been home to the top scholars at the University of Toronto. This gives us a feel for the quality of education that one would receive on a campus like that.

In addition to UTSC, there is also Centennial College, which would probably have double the number students if we add in part-time and full-time students. We are talking in the order of 40,000-plus students coming and going in the eastern GTA, in Scarborough, from two of the top schools not only in Ontario but in all of Canada. Centennial College has received quite a number of awards recently for the quality of its scholarships and job training.

The point of the principal and of the people who attended the event, and the point of us in Scarborough, was that transit was the number one ask. That is entirely consistent with the direction this government is going. There is a consensus that governments need to invest not only to boost economic growth in the short term but to set the stage for long-term growth as well. That is exactly what the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister are doing today.

They are talking to some of the most savvy investors in the world, inviting them to give Canada a real look. In giving Canada a real look for potential investments in all kinds of infrastructure projects, we may actually be able to free up a serious amount of money so we can make the investments necessary to address what I and others have described as an infrastructure deficit.

• (1540)

The beauty of having a town hall such as this is that we get to hear what the people want. The worst thing in politics, and I know because you are a very successful politician, Mr. Speaker, is that 90% of politics is just showing up, listening to what people want. When we can have a useful and constructive dialogue such as we had last Monday night, we can then respond in a way that deals with fiscal realities, but also deals with the needs and wants of Canadians.

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This is why that town hall in particular, which was well attended, was very successful. We heard from a variety of interests. Naturally because we were on a university campus, the interests of students was of considerable concern. They particularly appreciated some of the relief that had been given to students in the last budget. Naturally, and not surprisingly, they are looking for more. Nevertheless when we hear what they have to say and they hear about other competing needs, they realize the government has a bit of a balancing act to stay fiscally sustainable but simultaneously that they may also be able to meet many needs right across the spectrum.

We are rather fortunate as a nation that we have some fiscal capacities. The discipline from the Chrétien-Martin years has stood us in good stead. We drove down the amount of the national debt. We had our debt-to-GDP ratios down to levels that were sustainable. Because of the work of Prime Ministers Martin and Chrétien, we are able to contemplate investments in the future.

I would like to say the same would be true of Mr. Harper's government, but I would note that the Conservative government added \$150 billion to the national debt. I would not say that totally constrains our fiscal capacities, but it does have some constraint. One wishes that some of the decisions around revenue depression and expenditures had been made differently, but we are where we are. It is still a position that is relatively good, and exceedingly good compared to many other nations.

Hence the sales job by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance gets a lot easier when they can say the debt-to-GDP ratio runs around 30% on an annual basis and is on track to maintain or reduce that slightly. That enables those who would be investing literally billions and billions of dollars in our country to have some confidence that the fiscal management of our nation is in good hands.

The final point I want to make is with respect to many middle-class Canadians feeling they are working a lot harder. This speaks to an alienation that we have seen reflected in other countries, but we are not immune from it. It is the distribution of the wealth in our country. There is a feeling of concern that some people are doing exceedingly well, referred to as the 1% and sometimes as the 1% of the 1%. In the efforts on the part of the government in the last budget and in this budget implementation bill to address that concern, there is a need to have some redistribution of wealth so all Canadians feel they have a stake in this nation.

We have seen populist uprising in a whole variety of nations. A lot of that is driven by the fact that some people feel they are getting left behind. Fairly, unfairly, rationally, or otherwise, that is the feeling. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance addressed that somewhat in the last budget. None of us are immune from that sense of alienation.

• (1545)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the good management of the Martin-Chrétien years. I need to remind him that was done by simply cutting \$25 billion from transfers to the provinces and municipalities. The municipalities are still suffering from those cuts.

Later on in his speech he said that the fiscal management of the government was in good hands. How can actually say that when we

realize that the interest costs alone between today and 2020 are rising by \$15 billion per year? The interest costs per year that we will pay on our deficit will be \$15 billion higher in 2020 than it is today. Yet he says that the fiscal management is in good hands.

Could he square that circle for me?

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has been here for quite a while. He would know that when Prime Minister Chrétien and then-finance minister Martin took over from the previous Conservative administration, the *New York Times* had designated Canada as an honorary member of the third world based upon its debt-to-GDP ratio, which was approaching, if not north of, 70%. Something major had to be done so there was some fiscal discipline imposed upon all levels of government.

I would take note that the relationship between the federal government and municipalities has substantially improved, primarily because we are now in a fiscal situation where we can.

On the interest costs, it is a Conservative double-think to prattle on about how the Conservatives think they are great fiscal managers when, out of the 10 budgets they presented, eight were deficit budgets and one was the biggest deficit budget in the history of our nation. They pretend they know something about fiscal responsibility. They added \$150 billion to the national debt, and the rest of us are paying for that.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when my colleague mentioned that he thought politics was only 90% showing up, I hope he misspoke. Clearly the people from Essex who elected me to be in the House expect more than just showing up. If that is what the Liberal government represents, the member opposite will have questions to be answered in his own riding.

He mentioned setting the stage, and that is true. However, the government is setting the stage for privatization, something it has no mandate to do, something the Liberals were not elected to do. There is a danger in this.

As we face trade deals like CETA coming forward, the TPP, the potential of reopening NAFTA, there is a danger in privatizing things that are in the public sphere because of investor state challenges that can brought against us for doing so.

In these trade agreements, there are clauses called “ratchet” and “standstill” that determine things that can be brought back and forth between public and private. There is a real danger that once it is privatized, these deals will make it nearly impossible for us to bring things public again.

Does the member understand that this is a threat to Canadian democracy?

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Hon. John McKay: I just take note, Mr. Speaker, that I have enjoyed some success in this place. I have gone through seven elections and this is my 19th year. When I offer my hon. colleague some advice, it is gratuitous. I appreciate that maybe it is not worth what is paid for it. However, I take note that Canadians like to be talked to. The strange concept is that they are asking us to talk to them because they are reasonable people and, by and large, they are. We return the telephone calls and answer the letters. When I say that 90% of the game is showing up at the events, that is actually fairly good advice, which I gratuitously offered to the hon. member.

As to trade deals, I have yet in 19 years to see a trade deal that the NDP could endorse—

Mr. Don. Davies: South Korea and Jordan.

Hon. John McKay: South Korea, son of a gun, we nailed one. I appreciate the clarification from the hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

As to privatization, there is good privatization and there is bad privatization. I will give an illustration of bad privatization. When I say transit, transit, transit, the 407, handled by the Conservative government of Ontario, was a bad privatization. It was a good privatization under the previous NDP government.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-29 and some of the budget provisions. I would like to put some things on the record and frame them in the context of what is happening in my riding.

Under Bill C-29 the child benefit will not be indexed. It is estimated that low-income families will lose roughly \$5,500 by 2020. If we consider the rising cost of living, low-income families will lose roughly \$500 in four years. It is sad that no one thought about the fact that the cost of living will continue to rise for families and that the child benefit was not indexed accordingly.

There are some things people fail to mention about the child benefit. For example, people keep saying the child benefit will help lift children out of poverty, but no one ever says that to be entitled to it we have to have an up-to-date tax file, as do our former spouse and our new spouse. If not, benefits will not be provided until the situation is rectified.

Some services are available only during tax season, which means that people can get help with their returns for the current year, but no help is available to them if they have not done their taxes for four years. Help is not available.

Every week, people come to my office to tell me that they have not received child benefit payments for months or years because they cannot get their Canada Revenue Agency file in order. They may be asked to produce documents proving that their child lives with them. In shared custody or access rights situations, among others, that can be extremely complicated. A parent with a two-year-old or a three-year-old who does not go to day care may have a hard time proving that the child actually lives with him or her. A friend has to declare that he or she knows the parent well and that the child lives with that parent.

Also, information provided by both parents has to match up. Is a former partner who does not receive the child benefit because he or she has access rights but not custody likely to get in touch with the Canada Revenue Agency in a hurry to sort things out? Sometimes the answer is no, and that can create very complex situations that result in some people being denied the child benefit for long periods of time.

My riding office has helped fix the situation for some people who have not been receiving any child benefits for years. They were sometimes owed \$20,000 in unpaid benefits from the federal government alone. That money could have helped them when they needed it. However, this is difficult to do because the appropriate services are not in place. People do not always think to contact their MP.

In the past, there was a Canada Revenue Agency service counter in Rouyn-Noranda, in my riding, but it is now closed. The government no longer provides direct services to people. The counter is still there and the office is still open because there are still investigators who work there, but people can no longer go to the CRA office to get help. People are being left with no resources. Often it is those most in need and with a lower level of education who are unable to resolve their situation and get access to the money they are entitled to.

This bill does nothing about the tax system, which most people find extremely complicated. How many people are owed tax refunds each year but do not get them because they do not realize they are entitled to them? These people do not have the money to pay someone to file their tax return for them. They do their best to do it themselves.

Every year, some of the money that is earmarked to help poor people remains in the government coffers because people do not know that they are entitled to it. However, the government is not doing anything to fix that situation.

• (1555)

Child benefits can in fact help lift people out of poverty, but for that to happen, parents need to have access to those benefits and be able to receive that money. If CRA does not offer services that enable people to access their money, we go around in circles, because people are not getting help.

Consider the example of a family of four children where the eldest has a different father than the other three. More information will be needed on that child, because the statements from the two former spouses will not match. The child benefits will be frozen not only for the child in question, but for all four children, even though there is no problem with the other three children's benefits. We want to make sure that people can get their money if there is a problem regarding the amounts.

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Also, the new calculation is done in July. This means that if any clarifications are needed, if there is a problem with the file, it will be frozen in July, right before kids go back to school, which is when parents need to spend a bunch of money on school supplies and clothes to make sure that their kids are ready for school. However, that is right when the family benefits would be frozen.

Often services are not accessible. A person tries calling and it may take three or four tries and three or four hours of waiting before they manage to get someone on the phone. People get discouraged. It takes months to correct the situation. For many people, the family allowance represents more than half their income.

I want to move on to something equally important and that is the infamous infrastructure bank, which is actually a privatization bank. The \$15 billion that was earmarked for government-funded, public infrastructure projects is being put in a bank, and foreign investors are being sought to fund the infrastructure projects. Obviously, if we are getting foreign funding from private investors, they are going to want a return on their investment. What these private investors want is to get money back in exchange for their investment.

In other words, how do they get a return on their investment when we are talking about roads, bridges, and other infrastructure such as water systems? By charging surcharges, tolls, and user fees. The Liberals never mentioned during the election campaign that they were considering using these fees and privatizing our public infrastructure network to help rebuild what we need built.

What is more, these projects and programs are designed for big cities. What are the chances that I will be able to attract a foreign investor who is willing to invest in a bridge in a small town in northern Abitibi—Témiscamingue? They are very slim.

In reality, the small municipalities and rural regions will be the ones that suffer. They will be completely forgotten in the Liberal government's infrastructure plan. That is a surprise because the Liberals never spoke about privatization. Meanwhile, these municipalities will continue to struggle to try to find solutions to keep their heads above water.

In many cases, the needs are great because all the villages in Abitibi—Témiscamingue were settled around the same time. As a result, the infrastructure was all built around the same time and will all need to be replaced at the same time. That time is now. Some municipalities have five or six bridges in their villages that need to be replaced. They do not have the money to do that. It is impossible for them. What will the municipalities tell people? Will they have to buy people's houses from them and tell them to go live elsewhere because they do not have the money to pay for infrastructure and the government is privatizing infrastructure and investing in Canada's big cities? The government has completely forgotten that people live a few kilometres north of the St. Lawrence River.

That is not what we should have to tell people. Canadians who live in rural regions contribute greatly to Canada's economy. They make sure the large corporations in the big cities have the resources they need. If the government does not support Canada's rural regions, it will destroy our country's economy.

I look forward to my colleagues' questions.

● (1600)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the concerns raised about small towns not having the borrowing capacity to participate in the infrastructure program are exactly why the campaign promise was fulfilled. We have moved to create an infrastructure bank that would give smaller communities, in groups, access to world markets, to borrow and to do things like build water plants, which cost an extraordinary amount of money, which small towns quite often do not have the capacity to build. It is not a program for privatization. It is specifically designed to give smaller communities access to world capital.

If this happens, would the member opposite not agree that the increased capacity to build cleaner water plants might result in the delivery of clean water to smaller communities at a rate they could afford, as opposed to previously, according to even her own admission, when they had no access to world capital because they were too small?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleague to venture outside his riding and travel a little. He would realize that sometimes there are 30, 40, or 50 kilometres between some small towns. These people cannot join forces to build a water filtration plant. The cost of the pipes alone would be more than the cost of building the other plant. What he is saying does not make sense.

Yes, sometimes municipalities can work together to obtain certain services, such as snowplowing. However, for other things, towns cannot work together. What the Liberal government is doing will not help these people in the least. It seems that he really does not understand what it is like for these small municipalities.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one issue that my colleague brought up was with regard to this particular budget. We have seen a significant amount of redistribution of wealth, if I can put it that way, including a substantial increase in taxes on Canada's wealthiest, a substantial decrease in taxes on Canada's middle class, a substantial increase in the Canada child benefit program, and a substantial increase in the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, not to mention the significant benefits given to students.

Given the fact that New Democrats are voting against the budget implementation bills, they are saying they oppose the budget. Can the member tell the House if she is aware of any budget prior to this one that provided so much redistribution of Canada's wealth, in which the greatest benefactors are the middle class or those aspiring to be part of it and, in many ways, some of the most vulnerable people in our society, literally lifting thousands of seniors and children out of poverty?

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[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is talking about the tax cut for the middle class. However, more than 50% of the people in my riding are not even part of the middle class and are not entitled to any tax reduction whatsoever.

Let us look at my situation, for example. My husband is not entitled to anything because he does not make the \$40,000 required to belong to the middle class. However, I do not make more than \$200,00 and therefore I can get the full tax reduction without any problem. The Liberals missed the boat.

We had suggested that they not apply the tax reduction to the second tax bracket, but to the first, so that everyone, including the poorest in our society, would get a tax reduction. They refused to do it. They do not realize that many people are still earning less than the \$45,000 that would make them eligible for a tax reduction.

• (1605)

[English]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about Bill C-26. In my speech, I intend to discuss how this bill is focused on the long term.

I would like to start by simply reminding the House of the stark difference in our approach. The previous government spent a decade seeing the provinces as hurdles or opponents. Negotiation was done one by one. It was negotiation through division. Our approach is different. It is collaborative.

Our Prime Minister and the cabinet of our government have been working with the provinces as partners. Earlier this year, Canada's finance ministers reached an historic agreement to make meaningful changes to the CPP. This is what a collaborative approach looks like.

First and foremost, we believe that every Canadian deserves a secure and dignified retirement after a lifetime of hard work. Today middle-class Canadians are working harder than ever, but many are worried that they will not put away enough money for retirement.

I think about my three kids, who are in their early twenties. They are all in school. They are hard-working and brilliant people. They did their homework, got good grades, and got into post-secondary education with few challenges because of their work ethic and thirst for knowledge. Even so, many of their generation and friends are in a tough place. They are not saving now, because they have to think about paying down their student debt, paying for car repairs, or saving for their first home, let alone the cost of weddings these days. There are a lot of big expenses—

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe that we are on Bill C-29, not Bill C-26. The member is speaking on a bill that was before the House previously.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I thank the member for bringing that up.

Often in the House members bring up different areas and make a roundabout way back to the topic at hand. Therefore, I will allow the hon. member to keep going. She has eight minutes left in her speech. I think it is appropriate that she be given a chance to show how she is going to relate it back to the topic at hand.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of big expenses looming in the face of young people these days.

I am proud of the work our government has done to help kids with the repayment of student loans. That makes a real difference for students once they graduate. However, there is still significant work to be done to get young people saving for the future. It needs to be part of the system. They need to have that money going into a reliable, secure place, where it will be there for them once they need it.

Financial experts have been saying for years that financial literacy is important for young people. I would like to commend the Ontario government for making financial literacy part of the high school curriculum and congratulate the Ontario Young Liberals on their work in putting that forward.

Each year, fewer and fewer Canadians have workplace pensions to fall back on. The private sector needs to do its part to support a strong pension system as well.

Seniors receiving CPP put that money back into the economy and into the brands and businesses in their communities.

We all must do our part, public and private, to make Canada a prosperous place for everyone and make meaningful changes to the CPP that will allow Canadians to retire with more money in their pockets.

We have been talking about the baby boomers and the generational shift under way for decades. We always knew that this massive portion of the population would retire, and we knew that we would have to take action to make the system sustainable for them and their children too.

The bill addresses those on their way to retirement by doing more to ensure that they have dignity, security, and stability.

The more than one-quarter of Canadian families nearing retirement, or 1.1 million families, who are facing a drop in their standard of living will be able to retire in dignity as a result of this enhancement.

The revisions in Bill C-26 are designed to help Canadians in every step of their lives: grandparents, parents, and children.

The deal will boost how much Canadians get in their pension from one-quarter of their earnings now to fully one-third. To make sure that these changes are affordable, we will phase them in slowly over seven years, from 2019 to 2025, so that the impact is small and gradual.

When I was going door to door in Brampton South in the last election, I met many seniors. I met seniors who were concerned about themselves but more concerned about their families' futures. They wanted to know if their grandchildren would have the chance to go through life with the same security that was there for them.

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That is why the bill is important to me. When we talk about evidence-based and long-term growth, I think of the effects for Canadians tomorrow and five years from now. In both these scenarios, Canadians will be better off.

At the core of our plan is investment. Investment in the future is what past generations did when they built transport corridors that moved countless goods and people every day. Investment in the future is what donors to universities and colleges have done for decades. It is about giving back so others can follow.

Investment in the future is what the government did in the post-war years after World War II in building a system that is envied around the world.

In Brampton, while most of my constituents were born in Canada, there are those of us who were not. We came to Canada with our eyes on the system of compassion and mutual support.

That is why investing in the Canada pension plan matters today more than ever. We cannot wait, as some of my colleagues across the aisle might suggest. If past generations had thought to wait and save their pennies instead of investing them in the Canada around us today, we would be less well off.

Every Canadian deserves a secure and dignified retirement after a lifetime of hard work. Through this enhancement, we have taken a powerful step to help make that happen.

This investment is in the people of Canada and the public system that makes us more equal and more united. That is why I will be voting for Bill C-26, and I encourage all my colleagues from all parties to do so as well.

• (1610)

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but ask whether the member who was speaking is going to be voting for Bill C-29, because that is actually what we are debating.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, even though it is Bill C-26, it is related to the budget, so I will answer according to that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague when she is talking about the importance of Canada's pension programs. We are talking about the CPP, which the member spoke so well about, but we also have the guaranteed income supplement. As she knows, the Government of Canada is substantially increasing the guaranteed income supplement. The government also reduced the age of retirement from 67 to 65. It is something the Conservatives raised from 65 to 67.

Given the member's obvious interest in the pension issue, I wonder if she could provide some comment on how important all three of those pension programs are: the OAS, the GIS, and the CPP.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, as we know, this is the Canada pension plan. It has an effect on Bill C-29. The Canada pension plan provides payments to beneficiaries who are hard-working Canadians. With over \$45 billion contributed last year, it will allow demand to increase. There is also a big impact on small businesses. Small businesses will grow, and if they grow, our economy will

grow, so of course, it impacts our economy. If our economy is lavish, then Canadians' lives are also going to be lavish.

• (1615)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the member ran in the last election for the Liberal Party and there were big promises made about investing in public infrastructure, was she aware at the time that \$15 billion of that money was actually going to be used as a pool to attract foreign investment that would then partially or wholly own that important public infrastructure the Liberals ran on a promise to build? If she was aware of that, where in the Liberal platform was that written down? Perhaps the member could enlighten the other members of this House.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, yes the Liberal Party had a big platform, and we made promises, and we are fulfilling the promises step by step.

Regarding the CPP, it is a universal system, one that is available to everyone who works. We need to be invested in that investment so people can retire to a dignified life. The CPP Investment Board is very strong, and its management ensures that the funds Canadians depend on in their retirement are secure. This is a type of investment that is required to be collected for future retirement. That is what we promised in our campaign, and we are going to fulfill that promise.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will try to get the debate this afternoon back to the bill that we are supposed to be debating, the budget implementation act, Bill C-29.

This is about the third or fourth time now that I have had the opportunity to speak to the budget since it was introduced by the finance minister in the spring, and it does not get any better when I speak to it as we go forward. The financial situation just seems to be getting worse. In fact, we are debating a budget implementation bill that has already been effectively ripped apart by the minister's economic statement here a couple of weeks ago. It is a budget that fails to create the jobs and the growth promised by the government. The finance minister stood up in the House and said that the modest little deficit that was promised in the election campaign is going to bloom to some \$30 billion and that the government is not going to give any indication as to when it can balance the budget again.

I will save the deputy government House leader from asking the question that he always asks when we make these relevant points, which is: Did the Conservatives not run a deficit at one point in time? The Conservative government did run a deficit because it was dealing with the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. However, the difference was that the Conservative government had a plan to get back to a balanced budget while the Liberal government has shown us it has no plan to get back to a balanced budget despite the fact that it was left with a balanced budget when it took office.

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Lately, I have not heard the government saying that it did not have a surplus when it took over. I have not heard that lately from my colleague from Vaughan. All he has talked about this afternoon is the infrastructure bank that was in the Liberal's election platform. Not a word was mentioned in their election platform about the infrastructure bank. When those members stand up here and start talking about fulfilling their election promise, we all know that is not the case.

This budget has failed to address what it actually set out to do. It was set out to go deeply into debt so that jobs could be created. About two weeks ago the September-October Statistics Canada job numbers came out and the top line looked pretty good. It talked about 44,000 net jobs having been created, but then some Liberal math kicks in, because despite the fact 44,000 net new jobs were created, the country lost 23,000 full-time jobs while creating 67,000 part-time jobs. The group that was hit the most is who the government always talks about, the so-called middle class. Working men between the ages of 25 and 54 have suffered 63,000 lost positions since the Liberals took office a year ago. That is shameful. The government is not fulfilling its promise for why it is going into debt. There is no plan to get out of debt. There is no indication that going into debt is actually working.

We hear a lot about infrastructure. The budget was supposed to create infrastructure projects. I asked the Minister of Finance when he appeared before the finance committee about this, because a Bloomberg report said that out of some 860 projects that had been approved, only one has actually broken ground.

● (1620)

During our constituency break last week the infrastructure minister was running around the country spending other people's money. I saw he was in Edmonton announcing a \$30 million flood mitigation program. I guess we will see how many jobs that flood mitigation program creates. It is ironic that it happened to be in Mill Woods, which, if we check, is the riding that this particular infrastructure minister represents. Not only is he spending taxpayers' money to redo his office, he is also spending taxpayer's money in his own back yard.

It reminds me a bit of the move that the immigration minister made, closing down the office in Vegreville, which happens to be, by the way, a Conservative-held riding and has been since the beginning of time. He moved it into a riding in the centre of Edmonton that a Liberal member happens to represent today. He will be a one-term member, because this is another effort by the Liberals to try to shore up their shaky ground in Alberta. Albertans are not going to be fooled again by this particular government.

Instead of the infrastructure minister running around the country handing out cheques that taxpayers are footing the bill for, he should be spending some time convincing his cabinet colleagues that there are other ways to create jobs in this country, indicated by one simple word: "pipelines". The Minister of Infrastructure and Communities should convince his cabinet colleagues. All of the studies that have been done around Kinder Morgan, and everyone else, have recommended that the Kinder Morgan pipeline be approved, and yet his cabinet is sitting on that decision.

If cabinet said tomorrow that it would approve Kinder Morgan's pipeline, it would create thousands of jobs, not only on the construction of the pipeline but in Alberta for revitalization. Many of the full-time positions that the Liberals have lost over the last year are in Alberta in that particular industry. It could also get the process under way for the energy east pipeline. Despite some of the musings about our friends from Quebec, located next to us, who shake their heads and smile when my colleague from Calgary Shepard talks about jobs lost in the industry, energy east could save some of those jobs. That is a project that absolutely needs to go ahead and the process to get it approved has to move quickly.

Of course, now we are left with the much improved possibility of Keystone being approved by the new president-elect, once he takes office in the United States. I know the Liberals worship the outgoing president, whom we saw here in the House when he visited, but I think a lot of the things that the liberal president of the United States implemented in the last few years will be undone pretty quickly, although it is hard to come up with many accomplishments of his in the last eight years, whatever they were.

I will conclude my remarks with a couple of comments. As I said, the Conservative government left the Liberal government with a surplus. It is not even denying that any more. This is a budget that is out of date before it even passes the House. The finance minister acknowledged that in his economic update. The election campaign promise about modest deficits has now ballooned into a runaway budget deficit, and for that reason, I would like to move the following subamendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding after the words "exemplified by" the following: "a stagnant economy".

● (1625)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The subamendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the aisle spent considerable time talking about the legacy that his party left. On that same note, the last time the Liberal government was in power for a sustained period was between the years 1996 and 2005. During that there was not a single trade deficit and there were nine straight fiscal surpluses. In the period after 2005, it left the Conservative opposition with a record \$13 billion surplus, which was completely eradicated within two years on the basis of a program of austerity and cuts, and that was two years before the great recession hit.

Canadians rejected that in 2015, thankfully. They rejected trickle-down economics, which does not work. The way we are going to get ourselves out of debt is by investing in the middle class.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marco Mendicino: So I wonder what my hon. colleague might say—

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Excuse me, the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence, I am having a hard time from some buzzing in my left ear. Could the hon. members maybe keep it down while the hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill answers the question, if they do not mind.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, if we go back and look at the record of the previous Liberal government, it ended up balancing that budget on the backs of the provinces. If we look at transfer payments to the provinces, these went down every year. I know that for a fact, because I was a minister in a provincial government in Alberta during that time. The Liberals were cutting transfer payments to the provinces on an annual basis. When the Conservatives took over, the Conservative government reinstated those transfer payments. Look what is happening with the health care transfer payments right now. We are seeing it happen all over again.

It is one thing to balance the budget on the backs of the provinces. It is another thing to balance the budget by watching the spending. That is exactly what the Conservative government did when it left these guys with a balanced budget a year ago.

• (1630)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my political career began in local government. During the 1990s, the Liberal government at that time did the same thing. It cut \$30 billion in transfer payments to local governments and the provinces. Instead of the federal government doing its fair share, the local governments had to increase taxes. The federal government did not directly but indirectly caused this massive tax increase across Canada in the 1990s.

I have also heard recently that Canadians are saying, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, it isn't going to happen again”. The government of the day has fooled Canadians and it is doing the same thing the government did in the 1990s. I would ask the member to comment on that. Is this another fool me twice?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, obviously, my answer to the other member's question was along the same lines as my colleague's question. However, the other thing the member alludes to is, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice and you'll pay the price”. We are seeing that.

If we recall, prior to our government's taking office, we had one of the largest scandals ever in government under the Chrétien-Martin Liberals. It was called the Quebec issue. What we are seeing now with all of these fundraisers, as a result of Kathleen Wynne's Liberal advisers now advising this government, is the same kind of scandal, which will bring down this government three years from now.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just ask members of the House who keep standing and saying that the infrastructure bank was not part of our campaign platform to please go online. It is still there. They should read the section on affordable housing. I would ask them to reflect on the words, “We will direct...the new Canada Infrastructure Bank to provide financing”. Is that good enough for them to admit that it was actually in our platform?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, if it were part of the platform, quite frankly, I have not spent any time looking at the Liberal platform because most of it is no longer relevant anyway.

If that were part of their election platform, why did they appoint this advisory committee they now are giving all the credit to when they had this in their platform originally? I challenge the member with that comment.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today and speak on the importance of Bill C-29, which seeks to implement key provisions of budget 2016.

It was seven months ago to the day that I rose in this place to address hon. members about the important impact that our budget would have on Canadians. Today, I am grateful to use the opportunity as a mid-term checkup to look back at what has been accomplished, how our budget has benefited my riding of St. Catharines and in fact all of Canada, and how it will continue to bring Canadians the real change we promised just over a year ago.

As I noted in my remarks on April 14, the shifting world economy resulted in many jobs lost in much of our heavy local manufacturing industry. Plants closed, thousands lost their jobs, and many more were forced to find new employment at significantly lower wages. These were unfortunate years to which I do not wish to see a return.

I also noted that there was light at the end of the tunnel. Little did I know at the time that our progressive and forward-looking budget would have such a positive impact for my riding and, in fact, for Canada.

I will start by discussing the centrepiece of our plan: the Canada child benefit. I cannot understate the significance and drastic impact that this benefit has had on families in St. Catharines.

St. Catharines is a perfect example of a middle-class community with a lot of individuals who are struggling. When we talk about the stagnating growth of the middle class, my community is an example of that. With the loss of jobs, we now look forward to regrowth.

The Canada child benefit provides nine out of 10 families across the country—and I believe that number to be higher in Niagara—with significant and much-needed assistance. It is a story I have told in this House before.

The first time I had an opportunity to rise in this place, I mentioned that 25% of the children in my riding lived below the poverty line. I received a call later that day from a poverty advocate who thanked me for speaking on the issue of child poverty, and mentioned that this number was a very conservative figure and was probably closer to one-third. In such a wealthy country, to have one-third of the children in my community living below the poverty line is unimaginable.

Government Orders

The Canada child benefit seeks to lift 300,000 children out of poverty, and independent analysis shows that it will; that is a 40% reduction. This really hit home again in July when my wife and I welcomed our first child. I should mention his name for the record of *Hansard*, Ethan. It really put into perspective the type of community I want to see for Ethan. Becoming a father strengthened my resolve to ensure that we do everything we can, so that each child in Niagara and across Canada has the same opportunities as my son.

As I mentioned, we said that the CCB would raise 300,000 children out of poverty, and I think we are safe to say that we are well on our way to delivering on that commitment. Giving families the financial assistance they need to get by is important, but more important is the need to provide jobs so that these families can continue to thrive.

I am proud of the work we have accomplished so far. Our commitment to building an innovative and forward-looking economy is the root of the success. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development has been diligently working to ensure that we continue to invest in key sectors of our economy, so that we deliver on our promises made in budget 2016.

The previous government spent 10 years focusing on natural resources, despite the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario, especially in southern Ontario. The telltale signs were ominous, and the shift was occurring not only in Niagara but across Canada and throughout the world.

I am proud of the commitment this government has made. One of the first announcements my colleague from Niagara Centre and I were able to make was on the creation of a foreign trade zone in Niagara. This was followed shortly thereafter by an incredible announcement for Niagara, the construction of a new factory, which has not happened in quite some time.

General Electric announced plans to build a \$260 million facility in Welland, Ontario, creating more than 220 jobs, plus all of the incredible construction jobs that will happen over the next two years. This is policy that has led to concrete action, which will lead to significant benefits across the Niagara region.

● (1635)

Beyond that, in focusing on an innovative economy, I am proud that the minister has also allocated funds to post-secondary institutions. The Niagara region and St. Catharines are home to Brock University and Niagara College. Both are renowned post-secondary institutions that draw students from across Canada and around the world.

Niagara College is seen as a leader in advanced manufacturing, boasting thousands of square feet in lab space to train students in a hands-on environment. These labs also provide services to local small and medium-sized enterprises, giving them access to research and development labs as well as allowing them to access the brightest minds of today and tomorrow. This gives students essential first-hand experience in the rapidly changing workforce and is a draw for business both in Canada and across the world.

Not far away and within sight of my house is Brock University, which boasts a world-class biomedical incubator. It houses research and lab space and places students and researchers on the cutting edge

of innovation. Like Niagara College, Brock leverages these labs and its students to help businesses across Ontario and Canada solve the problems of tomorrow.

I was proud, with the member for Niagara Centre, to be with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to announce \$22 million for these two institutions to continue forward on their plan for innovation. Also as part of that, we were excited to see improvements to Brock University's co-generation facility, which will reduce greenhouse gases; so this is not only investing in innovation at Brock University but investing in a greener future for residents of Niagara and Ontario. Though the federal government committed \$22 million to this project, it is a \$64 million project that will again get the skilled trades to work. It will get construction workers back to work in Niagara, which is so desperately needed.

Another incredible aspect of our commitment to Canadians is our \$20 billion investment in public transit. Niagara is a great place to live, but there are 12 municipalities within the Niagara peninsula, plus a regional government. Within that, there are eight transit commissions. For students at Brock University or Niagara College, which I just mentioned, who are looking to get around from one community to another, it can be a difficult experience. It is very difficult, and I have spoken to student union presidents at Brock University and Niagara College who told me about the challenges of trying to negotiate with so many different transit authorities. We have to get better in Niagara, and I am proud that the government has committed \$20 billion, so that we can come up with a plan to integrate our transit in Niagara. It is a key focus.

I have heard far too often from individuals trying to escape the cycle of poverty, wondering how they get to a job in Niagara Falls if they live in St. Catharines and the bus runs infrequently. How do they make it to a shift if the bus only runs at limited periods of time? We want to help people. Not only does improved public transit help make for a greener economy and a brighter future, but it helps individuals and will help them break that cycle of poverty, which is so important.

Furthermore, we have a government that deeply cares about our veterans and respects the service and sacrifice our active and former military personnel make. We have a government that is willing to invest in them, and we have seen that in the opening up of those nine Veterans Affairs offices that were closed by the previous government, showing our commitment for our sacred obligation.

This has been an incredible year and incredible opportunity, and I thank the people of St. Catharines for that opportunity. There is a lot of work that is left to be done to improve lives in St. Catharines and across the country, but this is an incredible start and I am looking forward to a brighter future.

Government Orders

•(1640)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his presentation on Bill C-29, budget implementation act, 2016, no. 2.

I want to reference something that was mentioned by earlier speakers about the infrastructure bank that is part of the commitment of the budget, \$15 billion, plus another \$20 billion of debt the Liberals want to fund this bank, for a total of about \$35 billion.

Today the Prime Minister is in Toronto meeting with lots of institutional investors, and he is trying to attract them to invest \$180 billion in Canada's crumbling infrastructure.

I do not argue whether that money is needed. We do have lots of infrastructure that needs upgrading, but when we attract private money to the tune of \$180 billion, those investors will want a premium of 7% to 8% on that money.

Currently our Canada savings bond rate is at 1%, 20-year municipal debentures can be had for 3%. Even if we increased our Canada savings bond rates up to 3%, the difference between 3% and what those institutional investors will want of 7% to 8% is 4% or 5% on \$180 billion. That is between \$7 billion and \$9 billion that will cost Canadians extra every single year to fund these infrastructure projects, and that is not included in your budget.

What are Canadians supposed to think of that extra \$7 billion or \$9 billion price tag that you are putting on to this?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sure the hon. member did not mean my budget. He meant to speak, through me, over to the government.

The hon. member for St. Catharines.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend brought up the fact that the Prime Minister is meeting with investors. I want to take this opportunity to highlight the work that not only the Prime Minister but many members of the cabinet have done over the past year.

I already mentioned General Electric, and even though provincial and municipal leaders put in a lot of work on the subject, the Prime Minister did meet with the head of General Electric to ensure and fight for a Canadian location, which will directly benefit Niagara and all of Canada.

We have heard positive announcements after meetings and consultations with Thomson Reuters, General Motors, and Amazon, so it has been an incredibly successful opportunity, and I look forward to seeing the results of this meeting with investors in Toronto.

•(1645)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-29 fails on a number of levels: the broken promise to small businesses of reducing taxes from 11% to 9%, nothing for daycare, nothing in terms of capping credit card fees. However, I want to talk specifically about privatization of infrastructure.

By definition, the private sector will expect a return on their investments, which will lead to fees for use of public infrastructure.

I would like to hear from the member. How does having fees on public infrastructure help middle-class families and those working to become middle class, and those families living in poverty?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, from previous governments we have seen privatizations gone wrong, and we can learn from that, but this is an excellent opportunity to attract investment for projects that need funding from the private sector.

There are certain institutions where individuals pay fees; for example, a hockey arena. If we can bring in private sector investors, fees are paid, whether it is to a municipality or partially to the private sector. Public-private partnerships are a reality of our current system, and it is important that the government work for the private sector to invest, so we have lasting commitment and lasting change to our municipalities, to fix our crumbling infrastructure across the board.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the areas where the infrastructure bank is mentioned specifically is in the affordable housing section of our platform, which was out well before the budget, at least a year ahead, and it talks about using private sector investments to drive forward public housing projects like Regent Park in Toronto, where people pay a user fee. It is called rent, and that is how it is financed in part by the people who use it.

I wonder if the member had any other ideas about how the infrastructure bank could further infrastructure, especially in smaller municipalities that might not have the capital capacity to participate, as the economic downturn has hurt some smaller communities in this country.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, that is a very difficult question to answer in 35 seconds, but I will just echo what my colleague mentioned in terms of affordable housing.

In Niagara we are facing a crunch, as so many other communities have seen. Right now, individuals looking for a single bedroom unit are waiting upwards of seven years.

If the infrastructure bank can assist with that, as the hon. member said, I am looking forward to seeing the benefits and helping individuals in the riding who need that help.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the bill. There has been a lot of talk during this debate about pipelines as it connects to the budget and to Bill C-29, the budget implementation act. I would like to continue this line of discussion.

Government Orders

I want to call the House's attention to a statement made by the Minister of Natural Resources recently in *The Globe and Mail* in which he said that the federal government would not require full, prior and informed consent from first nations when the government decided whether to allow Kinder Morgan to build a new crude oil pipeline through British Columbia. That is really important. For the minister to say that he does not require full, prior and informed consent from first nations is essentially breaking a pact and is going to lead to a lot of trouble.

The minister is adopting the same “ram it through reserves” approach that the Conservatives had in the last Parliament. This attitude threatens to undermine careful work undertaken by others to move ahead with other types of economic development in British Columbia through genuine co-management arrangements with first nations.

I am not sure if many folks in the Liberal Party are aware that across Canada, except for British Columbia, we have treaties with first nations and this has allowed different relationships to develop with first nations in other parts of the country. However, in British Columbia, most of the territory is not covered by treaties. This means we are unique in this sense and it is a very important distinction that is often lost on governments in this place.

When British Columbia was settled by Europeans, Governor Douglas started signing treaties for first nations but then abandoned this and essentially divided up first nations and territories and gave it to interested parties without consent. Those treaties were never developed, although we have had a couple in modern times. Still the vast majority of British Columbia is not covered by treaties and this is very important. Court case after court case, from the Supreme Court and lower courts, has said that in order to proceed with projects, there has to be full, prior and informed consent from first nations.

The Minister of Natural Resources seems to totally ignore this. Perhaps some people might forgive him because he is a rookie MP who is unfamiliar with British Columbia, but even the most basic research reveals the folly of his approach. The threat it is going to have not only to our communities but also the business communities that want to do other projects and the trust that we built with first nations through co-management is now under threat because of this “ram it through reserves” approach by the minister.

Court cases such as Delgamuukw and the Haida decisions, and other unanimous Supreme Court decisions, recognize and reinforce the inherent rights of first nations to determine what happens within their traditional territories. Again, the only way that these projects, or any project, can proceed in these territories is through informed consent.

The most fruitful way forward for resource development in British Columbia is through true co-management. It is weird for investment bankers to call an NDP member of Parliament, but that is exactly what has happened to me. They have read the comments from the natural resources minister and they want to know what is it up with the guy. They want to know whether he knows this will jeopardize the projects on which they are currently working.

Co-management moves beyond mere consent to full partnership, which requires a tremendous amount of trust and good faith government-to-government negotiations and bringing in mature private sector partners to make these deals work. We are seeing this in other projects in the province, but if the Minister of Natural Resources and his colleagues decide to ram through a pipeline and ignore the need for this consent, then they are looking for a pile of trouble.

The amateurism of the Minister of Natural Resources reminds me of when the newly elected B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell held an ill-advised and racist treaty negotiations referendum in 2002. In his arrogance, Premier Campbell clumsily attempted to use a populist measure to override inherent indigenous rights. This approach to resource development in British Columbia angered B.C. first nations. It was perhaps best captured by a flaming arrow landing in a canoe full of paper ballots. It deeply damaged indigenous and non-indigenous relations in our province.

● (1650)

Gordon Campbell was forced to do a humiliating policy pirouette, or a 360, when business leaders informed him his actions undermined their attempt to negotiate resource development agreements with first nations, and it increased business uncertainty and decreased their willingness to invest in mines, forestry, and energy projects.

At that point, Premier Campbell was also a rookie, just like the natural resources minister. He blundered through his first year or two in office and set back first nation indigenous-non-indigenous relations by years. Then the business community reeled the premier in and told him he had to change this.

Kinder Morgan is going to love it, but I think the government is going to get calls from other companies asking it what it is doing. They are going to tell it that it is making a huge mistake. For 50 jobs, which is what the job count will be in British Columbia, it will put in jeopardy all kinds of other projects, and that is a mistake.

Here we go again. The minister has decided he can push a pipeline through the territories of over 100 first nations, most of which do not have treaties with the Crown, and 15 reserves.

The minister has said that he does not need prior and informed consent to push a pipeline through 15 first nation reserves. What will that do to British Columbia? This is a massive problem and a massive mistake by the minister.

If the minister wants to get infrastructure built, this is not the way forward. In fact, he has to learn to treat British Columbia differently when it comes to dealing with indigenous people.

Government Orders

Here is how this project plays out in the minister's mind. Alberta gets its pipeline, Kinder Morgan gets approximately \$5 million per day in revenues, and the minister gets to gloat in Ottawa that he is better than the Conservatives in ramming through pipelines. However, this is what the minister is overlooking. British Columbia gets a mere 50 permanent jobs, according to the company, from this new pipeline. As well, it will have the joy of having to police thousands of temporary foreign workers admitted by the company that is going to build this pipeline, using steel from China.

This is a really bad deal for British Columbia. The arrogance of the government trying to push it through first nation territories without their consent is going to hamper other resource development and other development projects in our province.

The other thing we get with this pipeline is a hugely increased risk of land and water-based bitumen spills, with little or no capacity to clean them up. What British Columbians would be well aware of, although those folks from the government may not be, is that we just had a small spill in Bella Bella, which has not been cleaned up. This so-called world-class marine spill cleanup, or whatever it is, is about two guys in a rowboat. This is not world class. This is Ottawa sacrificing British Columbia for the ego of a minister.

By making this speech, people may not believe that I am pro-resource development person. Members can laugh at me if they want, but if we talk to any company in British Columbia, they know a bad deal when they see one, and they know this is a bad deal for British Columbia.

Businesspeople know only to take good deals. This is a bad deal for British Columbia. Again, the Conservatives and the Liberals can laugh at me, but British Columbians know this is a bad deal. Anybody who has looked at this knows it is a bad deal. A company makes \$5 million a day and British Columbia gets 50 jobs and has to clean up the spill is a bad deal. The worst part of it is that we are risking a very long process of building trust with first nations within in British Columbia.

Kinder Morgan gets its pipeline. We still have to develop resources. For a mining company that wants to deal with first nations and make a co-management agreement, this is going to be soured because the arrogant minister has said that the government does not need their consent to ram a pipeline through their reserves. It is idiocy. I am deeply ashamed to stand in the House and listen to the comments of the ministers.

The government really has to rethink this and ensure it treats British Columbia with the respect it deserves.

* * *

• (1655)

CANADA PENSION PLAN

BILL C-26—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform the House that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill

C-26, an act to amend the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act and the Income Tax Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

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BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 2

BILL C-29—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform the House that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-29, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

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 Essex, International Trade; the hon. member for Windsor West, Privacy; the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, Consumer Protection.

SECOND READING

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree in most part with what the member attempted to put on the record. It is inaccurate.

We have had a new attitude, knowing full well how important indigenous people are to our country. We take very seriously the nation-to-nation discussions that have taken place, both from the Department of Natural Resources to the Prime Minister's Office.

When we look at the NDP approach to resource development, many would argue that its attitude is to just leave the resources in the ground and do nothing with them. Our government has recognized the value and importance of our environment and economic development. Both can be done in a sustainable way.

Does the member not agree that when it comes to Canada's natural resources, where it can be done in an environmentally sound way, as we have been moving toward, that it only makes sense to better serve Canadians to move forward? Does the member not agree that there are situations where it is okay to have economic development?

Government Orders

• (1700)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, that is the bafflegab we get from the Liberals. They are on the precipice of making a decision with the minister saying that they do not need to meet the requirements that have been set down by the courts, in terms of consent from first nations, to put in their infrastructure projects. They can do whatever infrastructure projects they want, but they need consent to do it in British Columbia. They can ram projects through other parts of the country, but I am here to say that I stand up for British Columbia. I stand up for British Columbia first nations. I abide by Supreme Court rulings. The member should do the same.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Burnaby South for standing up for coastal British Columbians. The member understands how important social licence is in British Columbia. Where I come from, he knows in my community 25 years ago there was a plan to log 90% of Meares Island and a thousand people were arrested for standing up for what was important. We would have had a handful of jobs if we had logged Meares Island. Instead we have \$100 million annual economy in Clayoquot Sound. We know it is important to us.

Perhaps the member could talk about what the impact might be of running a pipeline and increased tanker traffic on the economy of British Columbia should we have a spill. How many jobs would be at risk?

The member knows as well that we need consultation and accommodation from first nations so we can have true reconciliation, not just talking reconciliation and not acting it. These are fundamental principles. Perhaps the member could talk about why these fundamental principles are important for gaining social licence in British Columbia.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the member was head of the chamber of commerce in his community, which again shows something that is true, that the NDP understands business.

The Liberal side of the House only understands how to accommodate foreign oil companies running pipelines through first nations reserves without consent. That is a big problem, and they are going to hear from British Columbians.

The company itself has said that it would only provide 50 permanent jobs to British Columbians. However, the company has said in its National Energy Board application that we can get more jobs because local people can clean up the spills that the pipeline makes. It is right in its application. It is insulting. The project is insulting. Frankly, the government's approach to negotiating these projects is very insulting.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the House today and to speak on the issue of the implementation of the budgetary plan that this government is attempting to provide to the House, to make sure that Canadians have the best opportunities possible.

I want to draw the House's attention today to an article I read in *The Toronto Star*, which is actually quite important for this House to hear. It was about the incidence of child poverty in urban centres across the country. It looked at a relative rating of each of the cities

in Canada, in regard to the number of children living in poverty in their homes.

I want to preface this by talking about how pleased I am with the government's cornerstone part of this budget, which is attempting to raise children out of poverty by increasing the Canada child benefit. I believe it is the largest, single most important piece of public policy to change the social nature and fabric of Canada.

Today in the paper it was reported that a group of leading institutions and agencies that address child poverty have looked at Toronto, the city I represent: 27% of children in that city live with a family income level that is below sustainable. That compares to other cities in Canada like Montreal, which is just below at 25%, Winnipeg at 24%, down to Edmonton and Calgary, which are doing quite a bit better than Toronto.

The article reports on two young women: Zara, who lives in Thorncliffe Park; and Sarah, who lives in Leaside. These are sibling neighbourhoods in Don Valley West. Leaside has the lowest rate of child poverty in the city of Toronto at just over 5%, whereas Thorncliffe Park has 58% child poverty. The nature of this is stunning.

Our party has been very clear on our agenda of ensuring that the middle class is raised up and that people aspiring to get to the middle class are also raised up.

I want to focus my attention today on those who are aspiring to join the middle class. One of my main agenda items is that, as we look at 2016, 2017, and 2018, we actually have a very aggressive platform to not only help the middle class, but to ensure that those who are in poverty, and in particular those children who are facing the kinds of struggles that some of us have known ourselves but others have only known about, have every chance and every opportunity.

Salma Jabeen is a resident in my riding. Her four-year-old daughter would like to have tae kwon do and gymnastics lessons, and to have the kinds of toys that she sees other children have. Salma's husband is a security guard, and on their income they simply cannot afford the kinds of things that other children in Canada have come to expect.

Equally, Sarah Jordan, who lives just across the valley in Leaside, recognizes that she is a privileged Canadian. I am very proud to say that she and her sister Claire have united together to form Sarah and Claire's Food Drive. They are looking at a way to partner these neighbourhoods to ensure that we in Canada have a way of distributing our resources to make sure that people have a fair start, that children have the best advantage in life.

Government Orders

Last Sunday the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence and I hosted a town hall on next year's budget. I cannot express how very proud I was, and what a great privilege it was for me to commend our Minister of Finance for his tremendous efforts toward lifting children out of poverty. The Canada child benefit is going to lift literally hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. This is tax-free income going into families' households. It will make a difference. Parents will be able to pay the rent. They will be able to provide groceries, and to provide those special things that children want, such as lessons and activities, which not only sustain but enrich their lives. It will make sure Canada is the country we want it to be.

What I see in today's article is that those who have more also want to live in a country where all have more to benefit from, and more access to those things that are beneficial to their lives. As we implement this budget, there is an opportunity for Canadians to say they want the very best quality of life for every Canadian.

• (1705)

We want to make sure that Canadians who have been here six days, six weeks, six months, six years, 60 years, or for generations, or first nations who have built this country, can all share equally in the resources and the opportunities that we have. The cornerstone parts of this budget, looking at the way we live together, the covenants that we have as Canadians, are going to ensure that Canada is built upon the sense that we have of taking care of each other.

However, the report that came out today is disturbing. I think it should be on the mind of every member of the House of Commons that each of us has a responsibility to look beyond those who we might know individually on our own personal level, and look to those in our community who are hiding in places of poverty that we simply do not get to often enough. I think that when we open up our minds to that, we have the chance to actually make a difference in our world. I am very proud to support the budget and the implementation acts that will make sure that it comes into being, because it is the opportunity for us as Canadians to make sure that our country is built on those foundations.

Of course, my first concern are for the children in my riding, that child poverty is reduced; that we actually have targets, that we actually can say that at the end of the day we have made a difference so that there are children who are getting post-secondary education, getting the careers they want, and that they have enough food to eat to succeed well in school. I think this budget is doing that.

However, I will be a little critical of my own government, because I think it has put the emphasis only on the middle class without actually celebrating what this budget is doing for those who are beneath the middle class, and we have not lost sight of those people. In our communities there are people who are being left behind. Therefore, we are ensuring that we have better employment insurance, that we have old age security, that Canada pensions are stronger and better, that we bring the age of retirement back down to 65 from 67, that we encourage infrastructure spending that will create more jobs to make sure that people are employed, and that we have a foundation upon which to build. This is what this budget is about.

This budget, at its heart, is a people budget. It is people centred, and it is going to make a difference in the lives of people we care about, every one of us in this House.

I do not think that we have a monopoly on social care and social conscience on this side of the House. I have seen that exhibited by members in all parties across the aisle. I have heard their stories and I think that this budget is worthy of their support. They should have a chance to look at this budget so that every member of this House has an opportunity to say that it is a budget that is changing the nature of Canada. It is well funded. It has targeted investments. It is going to invest in infrastructure that is going to make a difference. It is going to help people get to work as we invest in transit and roadways. It is going to ensure that our country is being built on that strong foundation. It will make a difference in the lives of every Canadian.

Therefore, I encourage those on the other side of the House to take the time to read the budget. They will have the sense that this budget is changing the way Canadians covenant with each other to build the economy and make sure that we can share in it equitably.

I am proud to offer my support for the budget. I think that Canada is a richer country, because we are able to share with each other. As newcomers make their way in this country, we have a sense that they will contribute to the economy, but we have to give them a chance.

The Minister of Finance has done a brilliant job of consulting. He is continuing to listen and he will continue to offer the kind of leadership that Canadians are looking for.

I thank members, and I anticipate their support for this budget.

• (1710)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about this budget as being people centred. Well, the budget forgets a lot of people. I will start with the middle-class tax break.

This line in the budget benefits one-third of Canadians. Two-third of Canadians, 17.9 million Canadians, do not get a break. Those people who do not get a break are those people the member talked about who are not in the middle class but want to join the middle class. Anybody who earns \$23 an hour or less who works full time gets nothing. The people who benefit the most earn between \$50 and \$100 an hour, or those who earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year. How is this helping those who are not in the middle class join the middle class?

I want the member to explain why two-thirds of Canadians who are working are not getting the benefit of the middle-class tax break, because that needs to be explained to Canadians. They want answers.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, the member for Courtenay—Alberni has raised an important issue but he is missing an important part of the budget and that is the Canada child benefit. I spent most of my time speaking on this.

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Our government has had a focused and intentional reduction of marginal tax rates for the middle class. We have increased the tax rates on the wealthiest Canadians, and I am proud that we have done that. I look at taxes as my opportunity to share what I have and as a wealthier Canadian, I think that our rates should be higher. The income tax on the middle class was simply too high and the income tax on Canadians earning the lowest income was probably about right. Many of them pay very little income tax because they are able to deduct a number of things. Our government had a targeted income tax cut that will ensure that we have financial stability in our economy and that we can pay for things like the Canada child benefit that makes a difference in people's lives day to day so they can buy groceries.

● (1715)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if it is the contention of the member for Don Valley West that the child benefit offsets the lack of a tax cut for those making \$45,000 or less a year so therefore we should not mind that it is not those people who receive the benefit of a tax break, then why will he not support indexing that benefit right away? As nominal salaries go up, that income tax cut for those making over \$45,000 is going to increase in value. As inflation goes up over the period that the benefit is not indexed, which does not kick in until 2020, the value of the child benefit is going to go down thereby creating further disparity, not less.

Why will the member not support indexing that benefit today and not four years from now?

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, this shows again that New Democrats are Liberals in a hurry and I understand that. However, I quite agree with the prudent and careful nature of the finance minister in putting in indexing in 2020, which is just a few years away, to look at the impact of this.

This is a government that is evidence-based. We are going to look at the impact of that direct tax-free Canada child benefit that has never been done even by a New Democratic Party government in any province in any kind of aggressive way. We have put real money into the pockets of real people to make a real difference today. By 2020, we will have had time to evaluate that and understand both the macro and micro-economic contingencies that are going on. We will be prudent. We are careful and mindful of the public purse. As we do that, members can rest assured that our first interest is the welfare of Canadians, particularly the welfare of children in this country. We will be lifting them out of poverty and by 2020, we will have indexing.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-29, the budget implementation act of 2016, no. 2.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague, the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, for leading Canada's official opposition on the finance portfolio. I would also like to take the time to thank my colleagues who have spoken about this important topic for their informative speeches on this important bill, which we, on this side of the House, think would negatively affect Canadians from coast to coast.

This bill, which I will expand on further during my speech, would continue the unsustainable and fiscally irresponsible spending of the current Liberal government. This bill, as we know, would ruin Canada's chances of returning to a balanced budget in the foreseeable future, despite the Liberals promising that during the election. We know this because much of this new spending is structural, which means locked in and permanent.

As everyday Canadians know, one cannot live outside one's means, and that is exactly what the current government is doing. It is living on its credit card for the foreseeable future. At some point, the bill needs to be paid. How is the government going to pay it? Which programs is it going to cut? What taxes is it going to raise?

I would like to echo a statement by my hon. colleague, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, who said, "I am pleased and honoured, but also humbled, to speak on behalf of all my official opposition colleagues and on behalf of all Canadians who were literally duped by the Liberal Party a year ago".

The Liberals promised to help middle-income Canadians, and as we have seen, their plan, unfortunately, has not worked. I have had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with people all across my riding, and I continue to look forward to meeting and speaking with many more. To this day, the majority of people I have spoken with have said that their highest priority is the economy, specifically jobs. Unfortunately, my time is limited, but I would like to continue to go on about the issues I have with this budget and the direction the government is taking.

Take a look at where we were about a year ago. Under the previous Conservative government, we embarked on a plan of targeted spending and lowering taxes in all areas that ensured long-term growth and prosperity for individual Canadians. As a result, what Canadians had was the lowest tax burden in over 50 years. It also led to a \$2.9 billion surplus, a surplus the Liberals have spent, and we now have a deficit of about \$30 billion. We also recently found out that the Liberals are borrowing an extra \$32 billion over the next five years, with no reason to believe we will get better results. Add the increase to the CPP, then the carbon tax, and we can see why Canadians are concerned.

However, this is not just about a simple tax increase and deficit spending. This is about the fundamental Liberal belief in a high-tax, high-spending agenda and in a government deciding how to spend Canadians' money, rather than Canadians themselves. I cannot stress enough the different view I have compared to my colleagues across the floor. Unlike my colleagues on the other side, I believe that the best way to encourage job creation and growth is to lower taxes and give Canadians the opportunity to spend their money as they see fit, because the more options we give Canadians, the more choices they will make based on their individual situations, and that is crucial.

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One year later, where are we? The Bank of Canadian, the parliamentary budget officer, the International Monetary Fund, and the OECD have confirmed that the Liberal government's economic forecast must be downgraded. It is clear that the high-tax, high-spending agenda is not working. We have also learned that in the past year, the Liberal government has yet to create one single full-time job. Instead of working to create favourable conditions to create jobs, the Liberals decided to raise taxes on Canadians and businesses knowing that this will have a detrimental effect on the economy. There were 350,000 manufacturing jobs lost over the last decade in Ontario alone because of failing Liberal promises and policies. Ontario used to be the economic engine of Canada. Now it is a shell of its former self, the most indebted sub-sovereign nation in the world, with double the debt of California and one-third the population. That is not the path we want to go down here in Canada, but it is happening.

As we know, many families across the country are getting by. These people are living paycheque to paycheque. They need help now. They need jobs now. They need support, not new taxes. The government should be giving Canadians the choice of how to spend their own money.

● (1720)

The money that will be taken from Canadians could be used to help people pay their rent, help pay for their groceries, school field trips, down payments on houses, and family vacations. How Canadians choose to spend their own money is not the concern of government, and government needs to get out of the pockets of Canadians.

Members opposite may argue that they are increasing spending to help families, children, and middle-income Canadians. The Liberal plan would actually result in higher costs right across the board, wiping out, and then some, its so-called tax cuts thanks to a carbon tax and an increase in CPP contributions. Canadians are struggling to see how they are going to prosper. Look at what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said. It is very worried about this new tax hike. A massive number of businesses say they are going to freeze any potential pay raises. They are going to freeze any potential hiring. What would that do? How would people have the chance to get jobs, put down payments on homes, and live the Canadian dream? It cannot be done.

What about our youth? We have heard members opposite say all day that they want to promote youth, but if there are no jobs for them, how will they have a future? If they cannot start businesses because Canada is not a place where people would even think about doing business because it is not competitive, why would they want to stay here, make a future for themselves, have a home base, and maybe start families?

I am sure all sides of the House will agree on supporting children. The Conservatives had the universal child care benefit, which I was very supportive of, but Bill C-29 confirms that the government would index this child benefit to inflation, beginning in January 2020, something it forgot to do. The parliamentary budget officer has now estimated that indexing and enriching the CPP will cost \$42.5 billion over the next five years, an expense the government has not budgeted for.

Where does the government plan to find this extra \$42 billion? Is it going to raise taxes? What programs will it cut? Canadian families cannot afford another tax hike. Businesses cannot afford another tax hike. We keep squeezing them and squeezing them more.

This bill would repeal the employment insurance reforms the previous Conservative government introduced in 2013, measures that were designed to help unemployed Canadians get back to work. The changes were designed to make EI more efficient, to focus on job creation, to eliminate disincentives for people to work, and to support unemployed Canadians by helping match workers with jobs. We believe that employment insurance is a temporary support that helps people overcome difficult situations, not a tool to be used permanently. The best cure for unemployment remains job creation.

As I mentioned previously, this bill is just a small piece of the Liberal agenda and shows how fiscally irresponsible the government is. To get a broader understanding of the Liberal economic plan, we can also look at the changes to CPP and now the carbon tax. The CPP tax hike will end up costing some households up to \$2,200 more per year. Of course, that is on the high end, but it is still a difference. It will take money from the paycheques of hard-working Canadians, put thousands of jobs at risk, and do absolutely nothing to help seniors who need the help right now.

The new carbon tax promised by the Liberal government is going to be a massive new tax on consumers, the equivalent of 11.5¢ per litre of gasoline. Imposing a new punishing tax while holding back approval on job-creating pipeline projects shows how misplaced the government's priorities are.

The Liberal plan is very concerning. Canadians know that governments cannot spend their way to prosperity. If that were the case, Ontario would be the economic engine of Canada. It is clearly not, and there is a reason for that. It is because Liberal tax-and-spend policies do not work. When we take more money out of people's pockets, they have less to spend on the priorities that benefit their own.

The previous government had a record of creating jobs. During the worst economic downturn since the great recession, Canada had the best job creation and economic growth among the G7. Conservatives reduced taxes to their lowest point in 50 years, typically saving a family of four about \$7,000 per year. We had targeted temporary spending on stimulus.

● (1725)

When the economy crashed, we put money into infrastructure, including over \$200 million in direct infrastructure spending in Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock since 2008. That has created libraries, arenas, and refurbished roads and bridges. We are very proud of that record.

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However, as the deficit continues to grow, we see no signs of a slowing of Liberal spending, and yet as we said before, not one single job has been created.

I look forward to questions from my hon. colleagues.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to my friend and colleague from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, he may have finally convinced the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, but for me taxes are not about spending people's money, but about sharing common costs.

It is not about being taxpayers, but about being citizenry. Elections are about deciding our priorities in broad strokes and what those common costs are. We exist as a legislative body to decide on those finer details, thus this budget.

Does my friend and colleague believe, as he has hinted, that tax cuts are the only possible way to grow the economy? If so, if we eliminated taxes altogether, would we then as a country become infinitely prosperous? It is simple calculus, according to his pitch. In a limit formula according to Conservatives, as taxes approach zero, prosperity is infinite. Does he really believe in trickle-down economics?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the work of my friend across the way on the procedure and House affairs committee. I do appreciate the back and forth we are having.

I could also ask if raising taxes to 100% would cause prosperity, because we can see what is going on.

I think what we need to have are reasonable taxes and to keep taxes lower. Stop gouging our job creators and wealth creators in our communities. As I have said many times, when we put the people who put the help wanted signs in windows out of business and they go away, they are not coming back. What is left? Blight. How do we have a successful economy, putting people to work, creating wealth, paying taxes if the businesses are not there?

We continue this debate and we have talked about what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business continues to say, which is that these tax increases are worrisome to Canadian small businesses, from coast to coast to coast.

• (1730)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, allow me to give a bit of an answer to the statement. When the Government of Canada gives hundreds of millions of dollars in tax relief to Canada's middle class, that means there will be that much more disposable income. The healthier the middle class is in Canada, the healthier our economy will be. In other words, the budget is putting money in the pockets of Canada's middle class and those aspiring to become a part of it.

With that increase in disposable income, they will be out buying things and consuming products. In other words, those small businesses that are looking for help and putting up the help wanted signs that the member is referring to will be receiving more customers.

If we ask the small businesses in my community what they want first and foremost, it is more customers. This budget is delivering more customers to our small businesses.

Would the member not agree that small businesses in Canada want more customers?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Under their tax plan, Madam Speaker, I am not sure there will be many businesses left.

In my riding, and I think also in the riding of the member for Winnipeg North, the average income is not extremely high. Anyone making less than \$45,000 gets absolutely zero from their tax plan.

In Haliburton county, two organizations have been set up to provide assistance to those who cannot pay their heating bills because hydro is way too expensive. The government keeps reaching into the pockets of Canadians and taking more and more money away. We have heat banks trying to give these people the ability to stay warm during the winter, and their income tax cuts are giving those under \$44,000 absolutely zero. The ones who benefit the most make anywhere from about \$140,000 to \$200,000. That is not helping the middle class.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House today, after listening to the debate, to underscore a few facts about where this country is heading.

Just a year ago, the Liberals promised they could spend their way to prosperity. If hard-working Canadians trusted them to borrow just a modest sum, they said they could create more jobs and put more money into Canadians' pockets. Canadians are still waiting. By most measures, they are worse off than they were a year ago. The economy is stagnant, despite a big spending budget. The Bank of Canada, the IMF, and the OECD have all downgraded their forecasts for Canada this year and next.

What about the promised jobs? At 7%, the unemployment rate is exactly where it was when the Liberals entered office. Good jobs are in short supply. The vast majority of new jobs created under the Liberals have been part time, which helps explain why weekly earnings for the average worker have not budged. Meanwhile, the cost of living goes up, it is harder for Canadians to afford a new home or a home at all, and new federal rules announced this month mean fewer will be able to get a mortgage.

What do we hear? We hear excuses. The Liberals are full of excuses. The global economy is weaker than they thought. No one would have predicted the Alberta wild fires. Their much-touted infrastructure projects are just around the corner; we will see. It could be said that they are trying to win the triple crown. That is, managing to generate the lowest economic growth, the biggest deficits, and the highest taxes.

I come from a part of the country that is largely heavy manufacturing. It is blue-collar heritage in my community through building farm implements over the years. Having a small business of my own in the community for 25 years, I have watched over the years the transition of jobs in the manufacturing sector leave over the last 30 years or so. Why do these jobs leave? In many cases there are numerous factors, but earlier in the debate today I listened to people saying that taxes are somehow a common cost in society. If we buy the argument that somehow there is a level of common cost, that by the way, we the government will determine what that is, we will not only bleed the manufacturing jobs we have, we will bleed pretty much all the good-paying jobs in the country to other places, such as south of the border. The U.S. is going through a huge transition with a new administration coming. It will be reducing its corporate taxes to the lowest rate possible. It will be providing incentives, as it does today, to attract companies to go over the border. In my part of Canada, which is Ontario, we already see a certain degree of exodus of businesses that rely heavily on energy costs.

Let me give an example. A manufacturer in my community employs approximately 400 people. I recently met with them for the purpose of discussing future expansion in Canada or the U.S., where they have two of their plants in Michigan and one in Ohio. Their decision for the expansion and the possible relocation of the Canadian operation is based on the cost of their business. It is pretty darn simple. If electricity is costing twice what it costs in Michigan or Ohio, or any other jurisdiction for that matter, they are going to ask what is the long term for the cost of electricity. Do we foresee it going down and being competitive?

● (1735)

However, on the taxation level, the common cost that some people have talked about in the House today, such that we have a government that believes the theory that if we all pay our share then everything will be better, if that share is set at a much higher rate than other jurisdictions, then we lose our jobs. We lose those 400 jobs. Frankly, when I looked at the books, which were opened up to me, it is absolutely scary to think that the costs have risen as high as they have for that business.

If a carbon tax comes in at the level the current government has said it will, they have factored it out, per employee, \$9,000 a year. The reason is that this is a heavy manufacturing forging plant, which forges huge metal pieces for the oil and gas industry, as well as dam gates and other products like that.

When I talk to business people like this, I ask myself what will happen. Do we have to have special rules and exceptions for them? Do we have to provide some kind of special exemptions for these types of manufacturers in that category?

Once we start going down that road, as some governments have tried, it ends in destruction, because we would be picking winners and losers. We would basically be getting on what some people have called the corporate welfare cycle, saying we know we are charging a lot but we will make it up over here and give exceptions over there. It does not work. It is a false economy.

As I talk about the budget and see what the government of the day is proposing, it brings up enormous concern, not only for the type of heavy, large manufacturers that populate different communities in

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this country, such as mine, but also for the medium-sized business and the small business person.

If we talk to small business people and ask what major thing is holding them back from growing their business—and many people find themselves in small business at certain points in time—the answer I get, generally speaking, is red tape, which is number one, and taxation levels. Many of the taxation levels are hidden taxes, such as the increase to CPP that the current government is going forward with.

We do not really realize how fine the line is until we are there in the shoes of the business people, the family, the mom and pop shops. We do not realize how fine a line it is for them to operate in terms of their margins. I know that a lot of people from outside the business world, when they look at these businesses, think that they are making all kinds of money. However, the truth is that it is a very fine line on which many of these companies work.

I want to bring up the alternative to this kind of thinking of a level of taxation that is the ideal common cost that everyone needs to pay and point out what we did when we were in government, and I will close on this. During the worst economic downturn since the great recession, Canada had the best job creation and economic growth record among G7 countries. We reduced taxes to their lowest point in 50 years, with a typical family saving almost \$7,000 a year, and we balanced budgets.

● (1740)

After running a targeted stimulus program that created maximum benefits and approximately 200,000 jobs, we kept our promise to balance the budget, and we left the Liberals with a surplus. That is the truth of what our record is, and I am thankful today to be standing here—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the only thing rich about the Conservatives' legacy is the their description of it.

The member for Brantford—Brant started his speech by rejecting the premise that taxes are how we share our common costs and that government is how we manage those common costs. I wonder if the member for Brantford—Brant could explain to us what purpose he sees government having if not to manage common costs and common services.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Madam Speaker, that is not a difficult question to answer. Members of Parliament were brought here for the single purpose of making this country better, for the single purpose of making individual lives better in this country.

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When we get into thinking that if somehow through a magical number of common costs or taxation we could somehow redistribute that, life would be better for all Canadians, then we are being misled. Life gets better for individuals when we get out of their lives, when government steps out of the way and lets them make their own decisions as much as possible, and lets them use their God-given talents to follow their dreams in their own way in this society under a free economic system. If the government tells them they have to conform to the standard that everybody shares at an equal level, then it is heading in the wrong direction.

• (1745)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned small business quite a few times in his speech in the House today and my question to the hon. member has to do with small business.

Small businesses are the backbone of my community of Essex, and they make up the majority of businesses that exist there. They are the employers. They are doing incredible work in our communities, and yet in the budget we do not see the promise that really was made by all parties during the campaign last year to reduce small business taxes. This would certainly help small businesses in my community of Essex and across Canada, and yet again we do not see it in this economic update. We do not see that break coming for small businesses in our communities.

Would the member agree that we need to support small businesses and provide that tax relief immediately?

Mr. Phil McColeman: The quick answer is yes, and thank you for that question. The reality is that promises were made in the last election by the Liberals, and you just brought up one of them. Everybody knows, and it is spoken—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member will address the chair.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Madam Speaker, everyone knows that the great percentage of new jobs and well-paying jobs comes from small business expansion and exists at a rate of about 80% of all businesses. To the extent that the government provides them with the tax relief that was planned and promised by the government in the last election—a broken promise—and to the extent that a small business person can plan.... When we were in government, we were going to go forward with it. The Liberals took that policy over and said it would do that and then reneged on it. That takes an opportunity out of the plan by every small business to grow, and possibly in some cases—because as I mentioned in my speech, there is a fine line in small business in terms of success and margin—that business would have to take away any expansion opportunities and with the added costs that the government is throwing on top of that, it gets onerous on small business people. The government is killing many well-paying jobs that could have been created.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on behalf of my great riding of Saint John—Rothesay, it is a pleasure to stand and speak to Bill C-29 and what it means to my riding and province and all of Canada.

Before I do, just very briefly, today is World Diabetes Day and I do want to pay tribute to my father, Malcolm Percy Long, who was one of the longest-living insulin-dependent diabetics in New

Brunswick. He was diagnosed at 19 years of age and lived to be 78 years old. That was an amazing feat back in that day, to live that long being insulin dependent. Certainly my thoughts are with him today and this evening.

I want to talk about Bill C-29 and what it means to the riding of Saint John—Rothesay. The best way I can do that is to talk about my riding and what it is about. Saint John—Rothesay is a riding of great wealth, great business success. It is an industrial riding. It is a unionized riding with a very strong union base. But it is also a riding with many people in great need. I do not like to get up, as I often do from this chair, and talk about the fact that my riding of Saint John—Rothesay leads the country in child poverty, that it is at the top of the country in the number of babies born addicted per capita, that it has low literacy rates and the lowest incomes for single females. The list goes on and on of some of the challenges we face in Saint John—Rothesay.

That was really one of the reasons I wanted to leave my fun, safe world of Sea Dogs major junior hockey and get into politics. When I started my run for office and went door to door in my riding, it became very apparent that over the past 10 years, although they had a lot of respect for different philosophies and governments trying different things, many people in my riding felt they had been forgotten. At door after door in priority neighbourhoods in Crescent Valley, in the old north end on Victoria Street, in the lower west side off of Duke Street and Rodney Street, people told me they were in dire need of some support from government.

One of the things I am most proud of, and which several members on my side have spoken about over the past few hours, is how our government's budget has given hope to Canadians. It has given a handout to Canadians and working families. It started with a tax break for the middle class. What I am most proud of is its transformational program, the Canada child benefit.

Single parents came to me. Families living in need came to me. They said they did not understand how the UCCB that the Conservative government supported—along with the NDP, much to my shock and surprise—gave the same amount in family benefits to those who made \$200,000 and those who earned \$15,000 or \$20,000. People could not understand how that could happen. Instead of looking at need, the UCCB actually supported having kids, so the more kids people had the more they benefited. Their actual net income did not matter.

The Canada child benefit was designed to help those who needed it the most. Yes, we can argue that it replaced this or it replaced that, but try going to priority neighbourhoods and knocking on the doors of those families. In fact, last week it was great to be back in Saint John—Rothesay for a constituency week.

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● (1750)

I took a young single mother out to dinner. She had two young children. I asked her what the difference was between the Canada child benefit and the UCCB. It was over \$240 a month, tax-free, in her pocket. She said that the \$240, even though it may not sound like a lot, availed her of the chance to buy a small used car. Because of that she can get to work. Because of that she can take her kids to hockey, and that is transformational. The program will change lives. We know the statistics. It is better for nine out of 10 Canadian families. It will pull 300,000 children out of poverty, and I am particularly proud that our government is the government that put this transformational program through.

Other things that are very beneficial in the budget, not just to my riding but to all Canadians, is the focus on increased infrastructure spending. David Dodge has said that over the past 10 years Canada has been in an infrastructure deficit. Not enough was being spent on that. Sure, the former government had some infrastructure expenditures, but there was no targeted program to aggressively go after spending on infrastructure for the assets that needed it most. Our bridges are crumbling. Our roads are crumbling. Our government is targeting green infrastructure, social infrastructure, and cultural infrastructure. In my riding I was very pleased to announce \$6 million for 12 new buses for Saint John Transit. That is a direct result of the infrastructure money that our government has put forth. It is very positive for the community and will create jobs and, most importantly, update our aging infrastructure.

I have already talked about the tax cuts for the middle class. It is a start. It is not everything, but it is a start. It will put more money back in the pockets of families. Those middle-class families are the ones that spend and will help get our economy going.

I believe that what we have done as a government with our budget and our focus will help reinvigorate our economy. I do not think there is any question that we did have two recessions over the past 10 years, and yes, with respect, I know that the Conservatives talk about their balanced budget, but we all know how that balanced budget occurred. It was by throwing in a surplus from the EI fund, a rainy day fund, and GM stocks, and so on to create budget surplus. That is deception, but Canadians saw through it and I believe they made the right choice to vote for a progressive government that will invest in Canadians, invest in infrastructure, and invest in families. We will be proven correct over the next 10 years, which will show that we were the government that stimulated the economy, gave hope to Canadians, and turned our government around.

In my riding we consulted with our businesses, with community leaders, stakeholders, and all forms of my constituents as recently as last month. They are very hopeful that the increase in infrastructure spending will be stimulative. They are starting to see the benefits of that in Saint John. The Port of Saint John, between three levels of government, has invested over \$200 million to reinvigorate itself. That will create jobs, opportunity, and I believe we are on the right track.

To close, I am particularly proud of the transformational Canada child benefit, which will change the lives of thousands of families across this country. It is something I believe this Parliament is going to be very proud of in the years to come.

● (1755)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saint John—Rothesay for his very well-written and well-delivered speech. I also want to commend him for his passion in looking after child poverty in his constituency. It is very admirable.

There is one point I would like to correct, and then I will ask a question. He indicated that there was no fairness in the universal child care benefit of the previous Conservative government. I suggest that the fairness is actually very similar to what the Liberals have rolled out in their Canada child benefit, because as individuals received the universal child care benefit, they were taxed at the same rate as their income tax. That was the fairness of it. Higher-earning people gave a portion of that money back, and people with low incomes kept all of the benefit. That was the fairness in the system.

A person could qualify for \$533 a month per child tax free under the Canada child benefit. Is that perhaps too generous?

Mr. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, I do not think it is. I am passionate about it. One only needs to go to priority neighbourhoods. The priority neighbourhood I went to, in particular, was Crescent Valley, where upwards of 50% to 60% of children and families are living in poverty. They do not have enough money to heat their houses and eat and are making decisions on a daily basis. I think we got it just right.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, during the election, the Liberals made a number of promises to Canadians. One promise was that their tax increase on the wealthiest Canadians would pay for the tax cut for middle-class Canadians. It turned out that this is not the case. It is off by about \$1 billion. They promised a tax cut for the middle class, and when they brought in that budgetary measure, it turned out that almost 50% of Canadians actually experienced no benefit from that tax cut whatsoever.

The Prime Minister is now backtracking on his claim to bring in electoral reform.

There are a number of legitimate concerns Canadians have.

One thing that was very clear was that the Liberals promised Canadians that if they were elected, they would build public infrastructure and invest tens of billions of dollars to build necessary public infrastructure. I think that was a positive promise.

What they did not tell Canadians was that once in office, the Liberals would consider selling off public assets, like airports, or privatizing roads. I would ask my hon. colleague if he told the people in his riding during his campaign that if he was elected, he would be part of a government that would sell off publicly owned assets that make money for taxpayers.

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• (1800)

Mr. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, what I told people in Saint John—Rothesay is that we were prepared, as a government, to have strategic programs of infrastructure investment to re-stimulate the economy. People in my riding, a unionized industrial riding, were shocked and puzzled by the NDP approach in their campaign. They ran on balanced budgets and austerity, yet now that we are in the House of Commons, they are saying that we are not spending enough. It is such a mixed message. My constituents and residents across Canada were confused. The New Democrats went so far right that I do not think anyone really knew what they stood for anymore.

To answer the member's question, I believe that my riding, in particular, was very proud of the infrastructure spending. They are pleased and are seeing tangible, real benefits from that spending.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-29, which seeks to implement the series of budgetary measures and tax changes announced in budget 2016, tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016.

First, I would like to thank the Canadians who are watching at home right now, particularly those from my beautiful riding of Beauport—Limoilou.

It is rather ironic that I am rising in the House today to speak to Bill C-29. Two weeks before the House adjourned for the week of Remembrance Day and we returned to our respective ridings, I tried to see if I could participate in this debate, but I was not able to get a time slot. I was quite disappointed, but this week, I am able to debate this bill during a very special week for Canadian businesses and the entire world, Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Under the leadership of my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, our finance critic, and through the arguments that the Conservative Party has been presenting over the past two weeks concerning Bill C-29, we have been able to see that many aspects of this bill are harmful to our small and medium-sized businesses.

Last week in my riding, I visited over 100 companies. I usually try going door to door to see my constituents at least two evenings per week. This time I visited businesses. Why? Because I am organizing a business reception for Thursday evening, not only to mark Global Entrepreneurship Week, but also to speak with small business owners in my riding, to find out exactly what they think of the Liberal government's budget, and to hear what they are most concerned about right now.

I would like to remind the House that these are our businesses. Canada has over 1.16 million small and medium-sized businesses that employ nearly 10.5 million people. It is therefore safe to say that small businesses are definitely important job creators and wealth creators for our Canadian nation.

Here is something interesting. I googled “Global Entrepreneurship Week” today, and one of the first hits was a statement from Canada's Prime Minister. His statement said:

The Government of Canada is committed to helping Canadian entrepreneurs grow their businesses and thrive—here at home and abroad.

I find it ironic that the Prime Minister made that statement today to mark Global Entrepreneurship Week. It is entirely appropriate and de rigueur, but I am not so sure his actions are consistent with today's statement.

For example, the government introduced measures that hurt small and medium-sized businesses, including those in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou. Those measures will be implemented by Bill C-29. He brought in the Liberal carbon tax and hiked Canada pension plan costs, though that does not affect Quebec as much as it does the other nine provinces. He broke his promise to cut the small and medium-sized business tax rate. The way I see it, that is probably the worst thing the Prime Minister has done to small businesses. He made that promise during the election campaign, as did the Conservatives and New Democrats. His decision to break that promise boggles the mind. He got rid of several tax credits, which I will talk about later. To top it off, two weeks ago, the minister announced plans to abolish several more yet-to-be-determined tax credits. We do not know yet which ones, but I hope we will find out soon.

Let us talk about Bill C-29 and why it is disappointing. It is disappointing because it is the next phase of the Liberal government's plan, which is clearly not working.

• (1805)

Let us not forget what the original idea was behind this plan that was developed a year ago following the federal election. The idea was to create jobs by investing heavily in infrastructure. When we look at the facts, including those presented by the parliamentary budget officer, we see that only \$3.8 billion of the \$25-billion deficit will be invested in infrastructure and not a single job has been created so far. The plan is not working. That is the only real conclusion we can come to.

Bill C-29 is disappointing because of the uncertainty. The minister is unable to say when there will be a return to balanced budgets. The economic update talks about a \$25-billion deficit and the only reason it is not \$30 billion is because the government used the \$6-billion contingency fund it had created barely six months before to bring the total down.

Rudy Le Cours from *La Presse* calls the disappearance of this \$6-billion contingency fund a shell game. Even Gérald Fillion from Radio-Canada, whom I follow religiously, says the government fiddled with the numbers to make the deficit appear smaller. Radio-Canada seems to support what the Conservative Party is saying in this debate, which is rather extraordinary. What is more, not a single job has been created in Canada in a year. On the contrary, we are losing jobs and the unemployment rate keeps going up.

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The Canada child benefit is the brainchild of a bunch of amateurs, while our program was viable and gave Canadian families money they could use. The Liberals not only abolished existing programs, but their new program is not revenue neutral. It will cost more than \$4.3 billion over the course of its second year and \$3.4 billion this year. Since they forgot to index it, they are going to have to find an extra \$42.5 billion by 2020.

Bill C-29 is a reflection of our national accounts. It is a reflection of a government's exactness and strength. Through Bill C-29, this Liberal government is showing us several things. First, it is showing us that it is unable to calculate a balance sheet properly, as evidenced by the fact that the government forgot to index the Canada child benefit. Second, as the bill tells us, the government is not being careful with taxpayers' money because it promised a deficit of \$10 billion per year but is now planning to run a deficit of \$30 billion per year, and it does not have a specific date for returning to a balanced budget. Third, the government did not invest taxpayers' money properly and did not create jobs to help grow the economy. Finally, and this is my favourite point, this bill shows that this government is simply arrogant because it did not want to correct its mistakes and change its plan, even though it is not working at all.

Bill C-29 represents one broken promise after another. Breaking promises is becoming standard practice for this government. That is shameful because it is causing organizations and individuals in Canada to become ever more cynical.

This government broke its promise to run a modest deficit by borrowing three times more than necessary. It did not even need to borrow the \$10 billion because we are not in a recession. It broke its promise to lower the tax rate for small and medium-sized businesses and its promise to offer a revenue-neutral fiscal plan. Take, for example, the infamous tax cut for low-income Canadians that my Liberal colleagues have been bragging about since early this afternoon. This tax cut will not help low-income Canadians because it does not apply to those who earn less than \$45,000 a year. Instead, it will help Canadians with an annual income between \$140,000 and \$170,000. The NDP and the Conservative Party both raised that point.

Once again, what I dislike about this government is its arrogance. It is selling Canadians a dream, making wild claims about the wealthiest 1% having a monopoly, and inventing tax cuts in flamboyant speeches. I am therefore very disappointed with Bill C-29.

• (1810)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for his speech. I would like to ask him a fairly simple question. He talked about the Canada child benefit in a negative way. He said that it is terrible because it is not going to help every family.

If I recall correctly, the Conservative program handed out \$160 a month to billionaires. Did that make sense?

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, I will answer the question asked by my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle. I am beginning to know the names of my colleagues' ridings, which is a good sign.

Since the election, I have knocked on 30,000 doors in my riding. The comment I hear most about the government's child benefit is that the \$2,000 or \$3,000 paid out to people with two or three children lets them buy a few bottles of wine or bigger steaks.

They laugh when they say that because they know that they or their children will be stuck with the bill in five or ten years. Mothers have told me that they put this money in a bank account that only their children can access because they will have to pay for the deficit caused by this benefit.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was surprised to learn that privatization was an integral part of the Liberal's infrastructure strategy. Can my dear colleague tell us whether he was surprised by that?

Does he understand the differences between a strategy financed solely by public funds and one that receives significant funding from the private sector?

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which reflects the NDP approach, and that is very good.

I do not know if it will be more private than public because I have not really looked into the matter. However, it is symptomatic of another problem that is clear to everyone on this side of the aisle: the Liberals have spent so much that, to roll out their infrastructure plan, which is supposed to be their priority, they have to look for money in places other than the public treasury. To me, that is what we are seeing here.

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I believe integrity is important to Canadians. When we make a projection or promises, we try to follow through on them.

Could the member comment on the record of the present Liberal government in its first year, in terms of its integrity, bad management, and looking at its balanced budget?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I do not like having to say this in the House, but unfortunately the government has no integrity whatsoever. It breaks all of its promises.

Take electoral reform. The Prime Minister of Canada recently said that electoral reform might not be a priority because Canadians wanted reform while the Right Hon. Stephen Harper was in office. Now that we are in wonderland and the Liberal government is in charge, the Prime Minister has decided on his own that reform might not be such a great idea after all.

In answer to my colleague's question, I would say that the government has no integrity.

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[English]

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government was elected because Canadians wanted a change from a government stuck in the ways of the past. Canadians wanted a government that was bold enough to look to the future and embrace a new vision for Canada.

The need for a new vision, a forward-thinking plan for the future that embraces innovation and places Canada on the international stage in the realm of science and technology, is a concept that has been embraced in my riding of Kitchener Centre. As a part of the Kitchener—Waterloo region, our potential for growth and prosperity was stymied by a lack of attention that the previous government paid to science, research, and innovation. Thankfully, our government has put us back on the right path, one that will support industry and growth while fostering knowledge and innovation.

I know that there will be some on the other side of the House who will argue that they did not ignore science or research. Well, my background is in science, and this background in an evidence-based field means that I like to have the hard facts in front of me. Let us talk about some facts.

In 2012, the Canadian government invested less in research and development, \$28.8 billion U.S., than the government did in 2004 when it invested \$22.7 billion. That approach did not make a lot of sense. In order for Canada to maintain its position as a world leader in research and development, growth and investment are essential. Doing our part by investing in research and development is an obvious path to ensure growth and prosperity.

There is a metric that is used to quantify how a country is doing with its investments in R and D called GERD, or gross domestic expenditure on research and development. Simply put, GERD is the amount of money a country spends on research and development. Unfortunately, if we look at how Canada compares to other countries, we are not doing so well on this front. In fact, in 2012, Canada fell from its spot in the top 10 to 12th in terms of real spending for research and development, which is not a great performance to be sure.

However, as in many other cases, the raw spending only tells half the story. In order to compare Canada's spending on R and D to that of other countries, it is far more useful to use GERD as a percentage of GDP. This is a commonly used measure internationally as an indicator of the country's degree of R and D intensity. In my opinion, it conveys how important R and D can be to a country and to an economy. Unfortunately, we do not perform well on this front either.

According to the OECD, the OECD average ratio of GERD to GDP in 2013 was 2.36, with Israel, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, and Finland leading the world. Calling Canada laggard is being generous. Looking at the ranked list of countries, we do not even make the top 20.

In 2013, Canada's ratio of R and D spending as a percentage of GDP was 1.69, down from 1.79 in 2012. Among G7 countries, Canada ranked fifth in 2013 and its ratio of GERD to GDP was lower than the United States, which was 2.73. It is difficult to imagine how Canada could be competitive on the world stage if we were to continue falling behind in R and D spending.

A *Globe and Mail* piece in 2013 noted that "...in one vital area where governments really can make a difference—innovation—Ottawa's commitment has been inconsistent and its investments wanting". I think that quote really sums up the previous government's lack of interest in prioritizing science, research, and innovation.

We know that when government chooses to make a difference by investing in innovation, we can create good middle-class jobs, develop the technology of the future, and create a more competitive Canada. I am sorry to say that the previous government failed to take advantage of Canada's potential in this area.

However, I am pleased to say that we are committed to turning this around. This is why I am so proud to see that our government is developing an innovation agenda that we firmly believe will position Canada as a world leader in turning ideas into solutions, science into technologies, skills into jobs, and start-up companies into global successes. Our budget recognizes the importance of research, development, and innovation.

I would like to take a few moments to talk about some of the highlights of our budget that are demonstrative of just how committed to this advancement of science, innovation, and technology we really are.

First, our government is investing \$2 billion over three years in strategic infrastructure at post-secondary institutions. I cannot say just how vital this is.

• (1820)

If we want to be able to perform world-leading research we need to have world-leading facilities. With this investment, not only would our students be able to work in some of the best facilities, but we would also have the opportunity to make our facilities some of the most environmentally friendly ones in the world. Imagine the best minds conducting cutting-edge research at some of the most up-to-date modern sites available.

My region is home to many excellent post-secondary institutions. While we often talk about the value and importance of post-secondary education, there is much less focus on the details behind post-secondary education. Tuition rates have risen sharply over the last decade, with little relief for students. That is why measures like increasing the amounts available under the Canada student grants program are so vital to ensuring the continued success of our students. We need to do our best to make sure that education remains accessible to as many students as possible and that we continue to back our desire for increased access to post-secondary education with concrete actions to make that possible.

Canada has some world-leading research facilities. It is essential that we fund them properly so they are able to do their work properly. Our government is investing \$30 million in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research; \$30 million in the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council; \$16 million in the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; and \$19 million in the research support fund to support the indirect costs borne by post-secondary institutions in undertaking federally sponsored research.

In addition, our government is providing an additional \$46 million to the granting councils. These councils, namely, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, support and promote high-quality research in a vast array of areas. We must do our part to support them.

As someone with a background in science, I was stunned when the previous government cut funding to the Experimental Lakes Region in northern Ontario. What really surprised me, however, was how public the opposition to that was. Who would have thought that cutting funding for such a program would galvanize the public the way it did? Not only has the government restored funding to the Experimental Lakes Area, but we have also increased our funding for ocean and freshwater science, including monitoring and research activities.

Science is important to our government, and it is not just Canadians that will benefit from our renewed focus on data and evidence. People across the world will benefit from the research we conduct here at home.

Speaking of evidence-based policy, our government made it a priority to restore the mandatory long form census. The data collected by the census is essential for planning and spending purposes. Not only did we restore it, but Canadians responded extremely enthusiastically to its return. We made international headlines when in our eagerness to complete the census, we crashed the website. Now that is something we can be proud of.

As an MP from the Kitchener—Waterloo region, I was thrilled to see that the Perimeter Institute received \$50 million. For those who do not know, the Perimeter Institute is a world-leading facility in the field of theoretical physics. The finance minister got it right when he said that the Kitchener—Waterloo region is home to some of the most brilliant, innovative minds and companies in the world.

I am excited to see the developments that come from this funding. We are working hard to lay the foundation so that our researchers, thinkers, and dreamers will be able to see their projects carried through to fruition. Our future is so bright, and we have such potential that is waiting to be tapped, harnessed, and encouraged. I am confident that while we have had some fantastic achievements in the past, they are nothing compared to what we will see in the future.

I would like to commend the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for their commitment to championing a research and innovation agenda, one that I am sure will serve Canadians well, now and into the future.

• (1825)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are parts of the member's speech that I totally agree

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with. Waterloo region is home to some of the best post-secondary education and research facilities in the world. I could not disagree with him on that at all.

I am wondering if he is up front with his constituents that the government is adding \$15 billion per year in deficit spending, a load that we will be responsible for. Just the interest costs alone are going up by \$15 billion a year between today and 2020.

Which generation does my colleague think will be able to pay off this huge Liberal debt?

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, neighbour, and someone who always looks out for me and always gives me advice. Therefore, I would like to give him a little advice today.

Economically we know right now in the world we have zero lower bound interest rate. When we look at the 10-year government bond rate, whether it is in the United States at 2%, or in Germany at 0.5%, or in Japan at 0.2%, we know the inflation targets right now are less than 1%. This is absolutely the best time in our history, in the history of the world probably, where investment in infrastructure is so important, whether it is public infrastructure, public transit infrastructure, social infrastructure, or environmental infrastructure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member just eloquently explained why we must invest in infrastructure. That is something we agree on.

What we do not support is the plan to privatize our public infrastructure. That is exactly what the government is proposing to do with the infrastructure bank. Today, no less than eight ministers and the Prime Minister were asked to attend a meeting of multibillionaires in Toronto. The purpose of the meeting was to explain how they were going to charge us twice, once by taxing us and the second time by charging tolls to finance our public infrastructure.

It is all well and good to speak of who campaigned to the left or to the right. However, can my colleague now admit that after all the big progressive promises to invest in public infrastructure, they will dare to go even further than the Conservatives by selling off our public infrastructure and making taxpayers pay twice rather than once?

[*English*]

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, this is the best time in our history to invest in infrastructure, and we have a very bold and ambitious agenda. When there is a bold and ambitious agenda, we have to keep an open and broad mind about everything. I am quite confident the government will be responsible and ambitious in its approach. I hope my hon. friend will work with us to ensure we create the right infrastructure for all Canadians.

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Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are some parts in my colleague's speech with which I could also agree. As the first female engineer in the House of Commons, I was happy to collaborate with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to come up with a better plan for science for Canada. However, in the rest of the budget, did you miss the part that says you promised a \$10 billion budget—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member to address her questions and comments to the Chair.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: You are absolutely right, Madam Speaker. Having promised a \$10 billion deficit, the government is now pushing its way past \$30 billion and out of the 87 infrastructure projects that were approved, most of which were in the pipeline with our government. Only a handful are actually in the ground. The Liberals missed the construction season. There is no plan. What would the member say about that?

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, we were elected on real change and real change means thinking outside the box and being innovative. I congratulate the hon. member on being the first female engineer in the House. I am the first pharmacist in the House. Scientifically through innovation, through infrastructure, I know that what we are doing right now is going to be historic and it is going to work for all Canadians.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have always believed that the single most important investment a nation can ever make is in learning. If we want to compete and thrive in the future, we need the smartest workforce on the planet.

Could the member take a few minutes to expand on some of these? In the budget, for example, we increased the grants for college and university students, and for kids going into the trades. We have doubled the summer employment program for jobs. He comes from a community which is strongly steeped in college and university traditions. Could he take a second—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We are running out of time at this point, so if we want him to answer, we will give him that chance right now.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre, a very brief response, please.

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, my hon. friend is absolutely right. The next generation of Canadians will need the right tools. As he mentioned, the Canada summer jobs grant was doubled. We have invested \$2 billion over the next three years in post-secondary institutions. We have also tried to ensure we have invested in infrastructure, public transit, and in other areas which will help the next generation of Canadians.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, in my previous question I mentioned the Canadian Nurses Association visiting the trade committee and warning us that the investor-state dispute settlement provisions in the TPP and other agreements like CETA could block Canada from ever implementing pharmacare. The evidence is clear about these dangerous provisions.

There is growing resistance around the globe to the investor-state provisions that are part of trade agreements. These provisions allow foreign corporations to sue the federal government for legislation or regulation that protects things like public health. What the Canadian Nurses Association mentioned is a real threat. The ISDS or ICS, which we see in CETA, could make Canada a target for trying to legislate a pharmacare program.

Why do we need a secret tribunal where we can be sued when we have a progressive court system in Canada?

This is the same provision that we have in Chapter 11 of NAFTA, under which we have the distinction of being the most sued country. We have intimate experience with these cases and it has been negative. Why would we sign another agreement with these provisions?

CETA and TPP also include provisions to extend patents for name brand pharmaceuticals, which would delay the entry of generic alternatives, thereby driving up the cost of prescription drugs. The cost of medication is something that affects the health outcomes of everyone: seniors, youth, families, and communities. When people cannot afford their medication, they face tough choices like taking a full dose of medication or paying their hydro bill. If I were to ask the people of Essex if they wanted the government to take measures to make medication more affordable in Canada, they would all answer yes.

If we all agree that we need a form of pharmacare in Canada, then why would we sign a trade deal with a provision that would allow us to be sued for doing so? Does the minister feel this is in the best interests of Canadians?

Will the minister finally stand up for the interests of Canadians and reject this provision in all trade deals?

Adjournment Proceedings

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind hon. members that our government understands how important trade is to economic growth, as well as to a strong and prosperous middle class.

Canada's economic well-being is built on global trade. In fact, trade opens markets to Canadian goods and services, helps Canada's businesses expand, promotes innovation, strengthens our economy, and provides Canadians with trade opportunities around the world.

The government knows that it is essential to consult Canadians on the trans-Pacific partnership, the TPP. We promised Canadians that we would consult them in an open and transparent manner on the results of this agreement. That is what we are doing and what we will continue to do.

The government is taking note of the opinions and positions expressed during the consultations. It is clear that the TPP is looked upon favourably by Canadian businesses and industrial associations that are geared to export. Most of them consider the TPP to be an important opportunity to diversify Canadian trade and give Canadian exports more access to foreign markets.

However, other groups raised concerns, including a whole range of stakeholders in health care, who said they were concerned about the potential financial impact of certain requirements regarding pharmaceuticals. Furthermore, in addition to some 250 consultations with over 500 stakeholders across the country, town halls were organized in order to engage over 1,000 members of the general public.

Last week I was in the Northwest Territories specifically for the TPP consultations with a wide range of groups, including indigenous groups. Many other Canadians interested in this matter engaged directly to share their point of view, particularly through the TPP consultation website created by the government.

A broad cross-section of Canadians have been involved in these consultations. This includes provincial representatives, female entrepreneurs, innovation firms, farmers, the forestry and wood products sector, the fish and seafood sector, indigenous groups, environmental groups, small and medium-sized enterprises, labour unions, auto workers, auto parts manufacturers, port authorities, civil society organizations, academics, students, business leaders, and citizens.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade is currently conducting its own study on the impact of the TPP. The government will continue to support those efforts. We encourage Canadians to continue to share their opinions as we continue to assess Canada's potential participation in the TPP.

• (1835)

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, in the previous Parliament, multiple Conservative MPs, including the then minister of trade, assured parliamentarians that CETA does not hinder Canada's ability to regulate and legislate in areas such as the environment, culture, safety, health, and conservation. If that is the case, why did

the trade minister renegotiate CETA's ISDS measures? She makes the same claims today about ICS that the Conservatives made about ISDS. It all rings a little hollow, so which is it?

The Liberals like to have it both ways, but at the end of the day, there is nothing progressive about their trade agenda. It is just like the Conservatives'. Now that the Liberals have moved from opposition to government, gone are their concerns about the impact of trade deals on prescription drugs and on governments' abilities to regulate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her questions and comments.

Canada is a trading nation and its economic growth is directly linked to international trade. Our government strongly supports free trade as a way to open new markets to Canadian goods and services, grow Canadian businesses, and create well-paying jobs for the middle class.

The different opinions that we have heard on the TPP show how important it is for the government to hold an open and transparent dialogue with Canadians on its possible participation in the TPP. No TPP countries have ratified the agreement yet. The Government of Canada has committed to consulting all Canadians, and it will continue to keep that promise.

• (1840)

[*English*]

PRIVACY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise here today to talk about cybersecurity. It is a question that I asked in the House of Commons with regard to a number of incidents that have taken place. Most specifically in that time frame, the University of Calgary paid a lump sum of \$20,000 for a potential breach and BlackBerry came public and showed that it shared personal private emails with law enforcement agencies outside of Canada. I asked the public safety minister at that time what the Liberals were doing to protect Canadian privacy. The response was astounding. It was that they would leave it essentially to the courts.

The good thing is that there has been precedent-taking pressure on the government, and it actually did have a Security and Prosperity in the Digital Age consultation that took place on cybersecurity. The reality is that it is a sleeper issue that is significant in the Canadian economy relating to privacy, data sharing, and also a number of different economic issues that are at play.

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It is not just personal privacy that is at play here. It is also, most important, very much a fluctuating element of the economy that is going to be discussed in the future. It is quite significant for even investment considerations. There were 178 million personal records exposed by data breaches in 2015, so we have almost 200 million data breaches there, and the cost from the breaches is rising from basically \$400 billion in 2015 to \$2.1 trillion by 2019 according to an estimate by Lloyds and Juniper Research on the global issues of cybersecurity. We are talking about a trillion-dollar issue for the global economy right now, and 43% of those data breaches were caused internally so we know there are also practices in the workplace that are very serious that need to be looked at.

There are a number of examples that I can point to that are very important to the data breaches, and then there is no reciprocity back to the consumer, back to the private citizen, back to the employer, and to the agency that is serious enough right now. Today, there is an exposure that the web-dating site FriendFinder actually had 400 million user accounts or 20 years of customer data leaked most recently. There was also an issue at the University of Ottawa where a ransom was paid for the potential exposure of data there. WikiLeaks notably is another issue most recently being claimed as part of the American electoral system. Ashley Madison, another dating site, was breached causing lots of concern over some individuals. Then we have LinkedIn as well, which had 167 million accounts that were attacked.

What we have asked for is specific updating of Canadian laws as we move more to the digital age. It is important. When we look at personal commerce, our personal email exchanges, and we look at the use of services, there is going to be some expectation of trust and privacy and protection by the user.

Consider the seriousness with which the Liberals should be taking this issue. We pay for the devices we use, we pay for the services we are using, and we pay for the external type of activity that goes through our service provider. We should be provided with at least the opportunity of protection of services. BlackBerry, for example, exposing people's personal information and at the same time not respecting their rights as a consumer is one thing; then there are privacy acts altogether.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Picard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question regarding Canada's privacy laws and the challenges faced by law enforcement in an era where communications technologies are changing rapidly. As the hon. member knows, these are important issues.

On the one hand, our law enforcement and national security agencies need to be able to collect information and evidence to investigate crimes and protect our national security. At the same time, we must ensure that the authorities that we give these agencies are consistent with our values and our rights and freedoms as set out in the charter.

As well, it is vitally important that the government work with the private sector to ensure that organizations take appropriate steps to protect the information that they receive from Canadians.

That is why the government has launched two sets of consultations. The first set of consultations on cybersecurity was launched on August 16. As hon. members know, the cybersecurity landscape is constantly evolving, and our government is committed to ensuring that Canada is an innovative leader in cybersecurity while also keeping Canadians safe online.

We heard from thousands of Canadians on the cyber security threat and how we can capitalize on the advantages of new technologies and the digital economy. That consultation wrapped up recently, and Public Safety is analyzing the many submissions.

• (1845)

[English]

The second set of consultations on national security was launched by both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness on September 8. These consultations are an invaluable opportunity to engage Canadians on Canada's national security framework. They are an important step toward fulfilling this government's commitment to review Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015.

As part of the consultations on national security, we have invited Canadians to provide feedback on a number of different issues, including how best to ensure that our law enforcement and national security agencies have the tools they need to protect Canadians while simultaneously ensuring that Canadians' rights, including privacy rights, are protected.

We are also inviting Canadians to provide their thoughts on how we can ensure that our national security agencies are accountable to Canadians, and a range of other issues.

We have already begun to make important changes in this regard with the introduction of Bill C-22, the national security and intelligence committee of parliamentarians act. If passed, Bill C-22 would, for the first time, enable parliamentarians to meaningfully review the activities of our national security agencies.

The Government of Canada has two fundamental duties: to protect the safety and security of Canadians, and to uphold the Constitution to ensure that our laws respect the rights and personal freedoms we enjoy in this country.

I look forward to a diverse and vigorous debate on these issues. I hope that hon. members of this House will join Canadians in participating in these important consultations.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand here as a New Democrat. New Democrats have often brought truth to the powers that be, whether on climate change, on rights, or on a number of different things that have taken place in this chamber, and moved a number of causes. Cybersecurity, privacy rights, personal rights, and of course user rights are very important for our future.

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I am not pleased to hear the response, in the sense that we know Bill C-51 has exposed so many Canadians to personal privacy data breach. Most recently, journalists have been spied on in our country, so we need this issue very sincerely looked at immediately. It needs to protect personal privacy and it needs to make sure there will be accountability to the government resources and those that expose or use the data.

Most important, it is part of our individual collective freedom in a civil society that we actually have the rights and our information protected at all times.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard: Madam Speaker, the government has two fundamental duties—to protect the safety and security of Canadians and to uphold the Constitution while ensuring that our laws respect the rights and personal freedoms we enjoy in this country. Our government is committed to working with Canadians and the members of this House to ensure that we achieve this dual objective.

That is why we have launched the consultations on cybersecurity and national security. We hope that members of this House will join Canadians in participating in this unprecedented and long-overdue national discussion.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have lost track of how many times I have risen in the House since I was first elected to debate this issue of great importance to our business men and women. I am talking about credit card merchant fees. I am delighted that the government seems to have appointed me the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance for the evening. His riding is next to mine. We can well imagine how proud the Mauricie region would be of its representatives if an answer that actually solves the problem for once were given in response to a simple, clear, and easy-to-understand question. No pressure, but I am expecting my colleague's best effort.

I will repeat the question that was asked in June. I was somewhat disappointed in the answer even though the question was very clear.

When will the government finally take action and cap credit card fees for our SMEs?

I will put the significance of this situation in context. In the last Parliament, the NDP moved a motion on exactly the same subject. Our motion had two very clear objectives. The first was to limit transaction fees and the second was to allow merchants to disclose to the consumer the transaction costs relating to the different credit cards in order to allow the consumer to make informed choices.

At the time, the Liberals indicated that they were entirely in favour of the motion. Allow me to quote the former member for York West who is now the hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek, who said:

A voluntary code, authored by the Conservatives, was an inadequate attempt to ease concerns sparked by the entry of Visa and MasterCard into the debit and credit market. The Liberal caucus rightly feared that without enforcement tools, any code of conduct for debit and credit card companies would miss the mark.

I will mention just three little rules that are found in almost every contract between these two major credit card companies and every retailer, which clearly show how our retailers are shortchanged.

There is the obligation to honour all kinds of credit cards. If you accept Visa, you must accept all Visa cards, regardless of the charges associated with each of these cards. Retailers are not allowed to charge additional fees for loyalty cards or to influence the consumer or inform them of the fees that the retailer has to swallow.

In the most recent bill, Bill C-29, which we are currently debating, once again there is nothing about capping credit card fees.

The Liberals have been in power for more than a year and even though they criticized the voluntary code and the measures implemented by the Conservatives, we are still at square one.

Therefore, I will ask the question again with the hope that I will get a better answer: when will the government finally take action to cap credit card fees for our small business owners?

● (1850)

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to salute my colleague from Trois-Rivières. It is quite rare that two colleagues can have an almost private dialogue in the House of Commons. The Mauricie region is very well represented here this evening, of course; so, I salute the member, and he will be pleased to hear that I have a simple response to his simple question: we have already taken action.

The member raised an issue that is very important to small and medium-sized businesses and to everyone involved in bank transactions, and we have already taken action.

I will give my speech in both official languages, because this issue affects not only Mauricie and Quebec, but the entire country. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, I have had the opportunity and the privilege to meet many stakeholders from the business community, specifically to fully understand the situation. I am confident that the member for Trois-Rivières will be able to rest easy tonight knowing that we have given him a clear answer, because we have already taken action.

As I said, the government is making smart, necessary investments that will strengthen and support the middle class and those working hard to join it. As part of that support, we are guaranteeing a fair and open competitive marketplace for merchants and consumers across the country.

Trust in the soundness and smooth operation of the financial industry is crucial to ensuring that the economy runs smoothly for middle-class Canadians. On this side of the House, our primary objective is to always work for consumers, for Canada's middle class. Canadians expect their government to review and monitor the financial sector so that it remains stable, efficient, and attuned to their changing needs.

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[English]

To that end, one of the steps the government has taken is on credit card fees. We heard from Canadians, and we acted. In November 2014, Visa and MasterCard made separate and voluntary commitments to reduce their fees, which are known in the industry as interchange fees. Interchange fees influence the cost of credit card acceptance for merchants.

Earlier this year, the government received independent audit findings that both Visa and MasterCard have met their respective commitments. This includes the reduction of interchange fees for small and medium-sized enterprises and charities. That is what small businesses expect of us, and that is what we have done.

To ensure that there is, in fact, adequate competition and transparency for Canadian businesses and consumers when it comes to the fees incurred when using credit cards, the government announced in September that it will conduct a further assessment of the fees set by credit card networks and will review the effects of the fee reductions.

Nearly two years ago, Visa and MasterCard separately committed to voluntarily reduce their credit card interchange fees. Their respective undertakings were to reduce their interchange fees to an average annual effective rate of 1.5% in each of the next five years. Those voluntary commitments took effect in April 2015.

• (1855)

[Translation]

In answer to my colleague from Trois-Rivières, I would say that we have already taken action. We announced that we are going to conduct a more in-depth study in order to better understand the ecosystem and then act accordingly. Canadian consumers will be our priority in whatever action we take. That is our goal. Every time we examine a measure, we assess whether it is in the best interests of Canadians. We will continue to do that.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Madam Speaker, “study” and “ecosystem” are two words that we have been hearing out of the mouth of every government representative for almost a year now. It seems there is no end to the consultations, but action is not forthcoming.

I am sad to announce to my colleagues that I will be once again leaving the House feeling somewhat disappointed by my colleague's answer.

Last June, I asked a question because Walmart, which is not an SME, was threatening to stop accepting Visa cards in its stores. As we speak, in Alberta for instance, that policy has already begun to be implemented. Representatives of small businesses, SMEs, and convenience stores are lining up outside my riding office to tell me that the measures that the parliamentary secretary is telling us about are having no positive effects on their day-to-day operations.

When will the government adopt a legislative measure similar to the ones that exist in Australia or the European Union, where rates are capped at about 0.5% rather than 1.5%?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I am certain that my colleague will go to bed a little happier this evening because he understands that the first thing that one must do is listen to the representatives. That is exactly what we are doing. We are listening to the retailers and those who are part of that ecosystem. We are listening in order to better respond.

When my colleague from Trois-Rivières goes to bed tonight, he will think about that. He will say to himself that the people who were consulted were very pleased that we took the time to really understand these measures. As my colleague from Trois-Rivières mentioned, some measures have been implemented by other countries, but their impact on consumers was different.

I can guarantee that people from the industry, small business people, and the representatives of national and provincial associations that represent small business people are pleased that we are taking the time to better understand things in order to act in the best interests of Canadians.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:59 p.m.)

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