



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, May 11, 2016**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CÔTE SAINT-LUC SENIOR MEN'S CLUB

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we are joined by over 125 residents of my riding. Of course, they have not arrived yet.

The Côte Saint-Luc Senior Men's Club is the largest senior men's organization in Quebec. With over 520 members, it plays a huge role in the life of our community. Whether through its breakfast meetings, current events group, golf days, or bowling leagues, it keeps its members young and vibrant. They take care of each other and are a social network beyond compare.

The club was originally started when our World War II vets were retiring and looking for other ways to give back. Today's members continue that tradition by participating in organizations like Volunteer Citizens on Patrol and assisting our Legion with its poppy campaign.

I wish I could be welcoming president Syd Kronish, past presidents Sid Margles and Peter Sternberg, and an entire group of proud Côte Saint Lucers and Canadians to Ottawa.

I was honoured to work closely with the club for many years as mayor and will continue to do so as an MP. May they go from strength to strength.

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### VOLUNTEERISM

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize Rebecca Runions, a very talented young violinist who travelled to New York

City over the weekend and performed at the world famous Carnegie Hall, as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the state university of New York.

Rebecca's musical interest began at the young age of four. She has since mastered her craft, performing on stage in Washington DC, Houston, Texas, on the Battlefield in Gettysburg, and right here in Ottawa.

Although Rebecca is currently completing her post-secondary education in Potsdam, she is well known for volunteering her talents at home. Over the years, she has helped raise funds for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Cornwall Community Hospital, the Canadian Cancer Society, and the Cornwall Hospice, just to name a few.

Rebecca and her parents, Lisa and David Runions, are excellent examples of dedicated community volunteers in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. I am fortunate to know Rebecca and her family, and I would like to wish her much success in her bright future ahead.

\* \* \*

### SCIENCE FICTION

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 15 years ago today, with Arthur Dent well established in his new life, Ford Prefect returned to this mostly harmless place for Douglas Adams. Marvin the paranoid android was, of course, left behind.

Anyone who has read *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is aware that planet Earth is little more than a computer, built on the orders of mice, to determine the answer to life, the universe, and everything.

While I must wrap up this statement, brought to some of us by our resident babelfish, before it is destroyed to make way for a hyper-partisan bypass, it is a great honour to know that all of our colleagues, brought together here today by the infinite improbability drive, will forevermore have our names listed together on a plaque.

The plaque will be here in Centre Block marked, without ever having determined the question, with the answer to life, the universe, and everything, the number of our Parliament, 42.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**MILE END COMMUNITY MISSION**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, Reverend John Beach and a group of dedicated volunteers made a dream come true when they started a storefront community organization to help all marginalized people in Mile End.

[English]

Reverend Roslyn MacGregor took over the Mile-End Mission in 1995 and grew that seed into the community tree which it has become. Ros saw to it that half of the board of directors were members who use the mission's services. She understood that inclusiveness was the only way to build true community.

[Translation]

Today, Lou Hachey watches over the mission. It does much more than provide hot meals, bags of groceries, support, and professional legal advice. The Mile End Community Mission makes the community a better place.

[English]

Today, I want to say thanks, on behalf of the many people they help, to the folks of the Mile-End Mission and wish them many more years of service.

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**STAN PETTIT**

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Niagara region has lost a true leader. His Worship Stan Pettit, the former mayor of the township of Wainfleet here in the province of Ontario for 28 years and a champion for his community, passed away suddenly.

Our thoughts are with Shirley, Stan's wife, as she and our entire community mourn Stan's passing, while also celebrating the full and inspiring life he had led.

His passion and commitment to his constituents ensured that the township of Wainfleet was well represented, especially at Niagara regional council.

Stan's passion was to build a sustainable and prosperous community, one which provided opportunities for younger generations to stay and live in Niagara. This vision drove him and motivated all of those who worked with him on a daily basis.

I stand here today to thank His Worship, Mayor Stan Pettit, for everything he did for his community and the Niagara region. We live in a better place because of him and his contributions will be everlasting.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

[Translation]

**2016 LEUCAN SHAVED HEAD CHALLENGE**

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, have you noticed my new haircut? As you can see, I am as bald as can be.

Today, I participated in the 2016 Leucan Shaved Head Challenge. I did so of my own free will, but Canadian children with cancer do not have a choice. They do not ask to lose their hair to cancer treatment.

I would like to thank my leader, my colleagues, and all members of the House who will open their wallets to help me achieve my goal in the shaved head challenge. I invite all of my fellow members, everyone else in the House, and you, Mr. Speaker, to meet me after question period in the foyer of the House to support my efforts with a donation. Every little bit counts.

Tomorrow, in my hometown of La Pocatière, more people will do the same to show support for families coping with childhood cancer. Children are our most precious treasure. This year, I got involved as a father, grandfather, and parliamentarian, and I thank the entire community for supporting me.

\* \* \*

[English]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a dream.

[Translation]

My dream is a Parliament in which all parliamentarians are bilingual or working on becoming bilingual. There are currently about 100 members in the House who are quite comfortable communicating in both official languages.

There are another 136 members who are currently taking language training. Let us find a way to allow members who are not currently taking language training to access it as easily as possible. We are so proud of our languages. Not only do they characterize us, but they also strengthen and enrich us. This dream is definitely attainable if all hon. members are willing to participate and make the effort. What a great goal that would be for Canada's 150th birthday.

[English]

As chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, I wish that this dream comes true.

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**MUSEUMS**

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, museums in Canada and around the world will celebrate International Museum Day on May 18. It also happens to be the day that I met my wife 27 years ago.

This year's theme is museums and cultural landscapes. In a country like ours, where our rich natural heritage is such an important part of our culture and historical events that have shaped us, this is particularly appropriate.

In Richmond Hill, the Museum of the Streets is a new kind of museum experience, taking away the four walls of the traditional museum and opening up the heritage of the town for all to see.

This always open and free journey of discovery, where one is the tour guide through the streets, is showcasing all the obvious, and sometimes the not-so-obvious, signposts to our fascinating past.

I encourage all Canadians to visit the Museum of the Streets in Richmond Hill and all other wonderful institutions, and take advantage of all that they can offer.

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#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about a real life hero and his family. His name is Tim Michalchuk, a determined, spirited, and unwavering individual.

Tim's partner, Shannon, was diagnosed with MS over five years ago and recently suffered a relapse. To help raise awareness and to save Shannon, Tim set out on foot from Prince George on April 2 to walk a million steps to stop MS.

On April 30, Tim arrived in Vancouver and completed that journey. He capped it off with a wedding proposal, and she said yes.

However, just one day after arriving home, Tim and his family lost their home to a fire. While his family is safe, they lost everything.

I think I speak for all members of this House in offering condolences to Tim and his family.

Having met Tim on his journey, I know it is that same fighting spirit that will help Tim and his family persevere during this very difficult time.

We are so proud of Tim. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

#### CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Harry Greenwood is the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year.

Harry is a former Royal Canadian Navy Seaman, decorated World War II veteran, and recipient of France's Legion of Honour medal.

He sent me a photo once, shaking the former prime minister's hand saying, "I don't think he's going to vote for you".

Harry is a Scotsman who lived in Hamilton and dedicated himself to the labour movement and Mohawk College before moving to West Vancouver.

I met him when he was 75 through his service on the library board, the harmony arts festival, the seniors centre, and of course, the Royal Canadian Legion.

When he accepted his award, he dedicated it to all the volunteers. At 91, he lives by example.

It is a privilege to learn from Harry, to call him my friend, and to recognize his service to Canada in the House of Commons.

#### Statements by Members

#### ENGINEERING AWARD

**Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to inform the House that Dr. Don Mavinic of the University of British Columbia's department of engineering and a resident of my riding of North Vancouver is this year's recipient of the prestigious Gold Medal Award from Engineers Canada. The Gold Medal Award bestows distinction on outstanding engineers and recognizes exceptional achievements in their chosen fields.

Don is an internationally renowned expert in waste-water treatment technology. He has previously received international acclaim for leading the development of a cost-effective system to recover phosphates from municipal waste-water systems, which has been subsequently adopted by cities around North America.

Waste-water treatment systems and technology are critical to the well-being of our communities and to the health of our environment. Don's work has created tremendous environmental benefits while concurrently demonstrating how clean technology innovation can be a driver of economic opportunity and growth.

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#### SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I was honoured to attend the induction ceremony for 10 new inductees into the Owen Sound Sports Hall of Fame.

Owen Sound is truly a hotbed for talented hockey, lacrosse, and fastball players, and this year's inductees are a testament to this. Athletes Curtis Sanford, Marilyn McComb, Jeff MacDougald, Don MacLeod and Jim "Chipper" McCrea made for an impressive group of inductees this year.

The class of 2016 also included Brian Seaman under the Builder category.

Special merit inductees included Peter Raynsford, Robert Aitken, and Mr. John Garvey who umpired for more than 70 years.

Finally, the 1977 King Farms fastball team was also inducted. In 1977 the King Farms team defeated Sault Ste. Marie to win the OASA all-Ontario championship.

I extend my congratulations to each of this year's inductees and thank them for the many years of sporting memories.

\* \* \*

#### NATIONAL MINING WEEK

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the MP for Nickel Belt and greater Sudbury, a region that has built a strong and vibrant place for mining innovation and research, I am pleased to recognize the 20th anniversary of National Mining Week.

Our government is committed to ensuring that mining remains a source of economic growth, with 375,000 workers and being the largest employer of indigenous people in Canada.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Budget 2016 includes measures such as extending the mineral exploration tax credit and investing in projects that support mining research. With greater emphasis on innovation and a sound regulatory process that has the confidence of Canadians, the mining industry has a bright future.

I ask all hon. members to join me in recognizing the importance of the mining industry.

*[English]*

Imagine a world without minerals.

Let us celebrate our innovative, talented, hard-working miners all across Canada.

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**NATIONAL NURSING WEEK**

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are rightfully proud of our health care system which has become a defining feature of our country and our identity. Much of what we celebrate, in large part, nurses deliver. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the north where doctors are a scarce resource and communities lean on nurses and nurse practitioners to get so much of the job done.

As our population ages, the role nurses play will become more vital to our national well-being.

We can keep that in mind as we mark National Nursing Week, which includes International Nurses Day and commemorates Florence Nightingale's birthday on May 12.

While many of our fantastic nurses are men, it is no secret that a great many more are women. It is these nurses who help us through some of our most difficult and vulnerable times, playing so many roles, from caregiver, to confidant, to counsellor.

The slogan for National Nursing Week is "Nurses: With you every step of the way". One only has to encounter our health system in a time of need to learn how true that is.

• (1420)

*[Translation]*

Thank you to all nurses.

\* \* \*

*[English]***CYSTIC FIBROSIS**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was moved to see my colleagues in the House wearing yellow roses in recognition of Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month. CF is a disease that affects over 4,000 Canadians. Currently, there is no cure for this disease, but for individuals with advanced CF, transplantation can be an important step in their treatment.

The importance of organ donation and transplantation was brought very close to home for my family this past February when my beautiful niece Jillian received a life-saving double-lung

transplant. Words cannot express the gratitude we feel to the family that donated the lungs of their loved one.

I encourage all Canadians to continue supporting the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as it searches for a cure, and consider becoming a registered organ donor. People's decision, whether signing their own donor cards or talking about this with their families, may save a life.

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**NATIONAL NURSING WEEK**

**Ms. Kamal Khara (Brampton West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as an oncology nurse, I am proud to commemorate National Nursing Week and International Nurses Day on May 12.

Upon reflection of my own personal experiences, I will share a poem I have written in recognition of all dedicated nurses:

We are there for you, on your darkest night.  
To make sure your next has more light.  
Four-Oh-Six thousand from coast-to-coast our numbers stand.  
With pride, the care of Canadians lies in our hands.  
Extended shifts, short on resources, we do not quiver.  
Safe and effective care, we are honoured to deliver.  
When you are ill, do not fright, we are here to stay.  
And we will hold your hand, every step of the way.

**ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***FORT MCMURRAY**

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have spent the last few days in northern Alberta meeting with first responders and evacuees and volunteers, and I can tell the House that there is a deep sense of gratitude for the compassion and the support and the donations that have come in from across the country.

The faster we get this community up and running, the better for our entire economy. I know the Prime Minister has created a committee, but I also want to know if he can please fast-track infrastructure funding so that we can get Fort McMurray back to work as soon as possible.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her extraordinary work and leadership while she was on the ground meeting with firefighters and evacuees. I, too, look forward to meeting with many of these unsung heroes and so many of the evacuees when I get out on Friday to survey the challenges that we all face together.

That is why, as the member highlighted, we are going to be putting together an ad hoc cabinet committee to bring to bear the efforts of the entire government. From infrastructure to health to emergency management, the committee will bring a broad range of issues together to help rebuild and create once again a strong future, so the people of Fort McMurray can continue to build a great future for all Canadians.

### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of committees, this morning the Liberals stacked the deck and announced a committee that would give them complete control over changes to our voting system. That is not right. When the rules of democracy are being changed, everyone should have a say.

Does the Prime Minister have so little faith in Canadians that he thinks Liberals can change what every vote means in this country without taking it to the people in a referendum?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I find it a bit rich coming from the party that brought in the unfair elections act without any consultations to try to stack the deck in its favour.

Canadians heard loudly and clearly that we made the commitment that this was going to be the last election held under the first-past-the-post system, and we are committed to doing that. Canadians also chose to support us with a majority and are expecting us to deliver on the promises that we gave.

• (1425)

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what is the Prime Minister so afraid of? If his plan is so great, then why does he not take it to the people?

[Translation]

When you change the rules of the game, everyone should have a say. Canadians are capable of making their own decision.

Why does the Prime Minister have no faith in Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have a lot of faith in Canadians. That is why we were very clear during the election campaign when we said that this would be the last election under first past the post.

We will consult all Canadians about a better electoral system and a stronger democracy that better reflects their concerns. Our government will therefore be in line with their priorities, as we are.

[English]

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in today's press conference, the Minister of Democratic Institutions said, "A referendum is one of a number of tools that can be used to engage Canadians", and the House leader said that it's premature to decide whether or not to hold a referendum.

They might want to speak to the Prime Minister, whose position since last June and up to about two minutes ago was that a referendum is unacceptable because, I assume, the government is not guaranteed to win. Heaven forbid.

Here is the question: Is it premature to commit to a referendum because the Prime Minister will only make that commitment if he knows he is guaranteed to win?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservatives suddenly discovered how important it is to engage with and listen to Canadians is a bit silly at this point.

The fact is we are committed to engaging with Canadians right across the country. We are focused, as we made the clear

### Oral Questions

commitment to do during the election campaign, on making sure that this election will be the last one held under first past the post. We are confident that Canadians are going to be able to work with us to create the right electoral system that will serve this country well in the coming years.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister is committed to making it the last election under first past the post whether Canadians want that or not. He is not prepared to allow the country to speak.

At today's press conference, the minister stated that committing to a referendum too early, as opposed to at all, would be like putting the cart before the horse, to which one of the reporters in the room responded that deciding that the 2015 election was the last under first past the post before coming up with an alternative is the real act of putting the cart before the horse.

There is every possibility the proposed new voting system would be less fair, less open, and less popular than the status quo. Therefore, it should have to defeat the status quo in a referendum—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we made it very clear in the last election that if we were elected, we would ensure this would be the last election under first past the post. It was not our compelling argument that convinced Canadians; it was what the last government did with its majority that convinced Canadians this must be the last election under first past the post.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as we have just seen, the Liberals have repeated time and time again that the current electoral system is "unfair" and that it produces false majorities, that is until they got elected.

The facts are that over 60% of Canadians did not vote for the Liberal Party. The Prime Minister seemed to acknowledge the problem, but then he stacked the committee so Liberals could, alone, impose the next voting system on everyone.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his undemocratic decision and allow for a fully representative committee, where each member has the right to vote? Is that not the essence of democracy?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the essence of democracy is that we put forward a very clear plan to ensure that this was the last election—

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

**The Speaker:** Members will come to order. We know this is a partisan place. It is supposed to be adversarial, and that is fine. There are going to be strong arguments on both sides, and that is good, however, let us listen to them, please.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians voted overwhelmingly for change in the last election. We proposed real change that would make this the last election under first past the post.

Our committee is actually the first committee to pull together members from every party. We are going to work seriously and focus in a way that will bring forward a better alternative for Canadians. We trust Canadians in their capacity to get the governments they elect. If you choose—

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

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what part of this does the Prime Minister not understand? Members from two of those committees are being denied the right to vote. He has to change that.

[*Translation*]

Canadians have a hard time believing that the process is not rigged. The government will have a majority on the committee, and we know that the Liberal Party has already decided on the so-called preferential voting system, which is to the party's advantage.

Can the Prime Minister reassure Canadians and guarantee that his government will not act unilaterally without the support of all the other parties?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were very clear during the election campaign that we would replace first past the post.

We were clear. That was the last election under this type of system, and we will change it. Canadians gave us a majority. We will use this majority to make it harder to elect a government that does not represent the views and perspectives of all Canadians. That is what Canadians expect, and that is what I will do.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, people expect parliamentarians to be an example of democracy.

Last month, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said in the House that he would block export permits for Saudi Arabia “if the military equipment is ever used to violate human rights”.

The videos speak for themselves: Saudi Arabia is using this type of equipment to crush civilians.

I have a straightforward question for the Prime Minister. Does he think that this video depicts actions that violate human rights, yes or no?

[*English*]

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have said from the very beginning that the Canadian government, led by me, will not cancel a contract signed by a previous government.

Indeed, the leader of the New Democratic Party has pointed out that we do not cancel a commercial contract retroactively. It is just not done. The NDP member for London—Fanshawe said, “I said

very distinctly, in no way wishy-washy, that this is a signed contract and that we are going to be honouring the contract.”

We are keeping the promise we made to Canadians since well before the election campaign.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the export permits that the Liberals signed after the election campaign.

After the United Nations reports on human rights in January, and after today's video, the government has no excuse to continue with this arms sale to Saudi Arabia so it can crush civilians with that type of equipment.

There is now evidence and we want to know if this really is the first piece of evidence the Prime Minister has seen of Saudi Arabia abusing human rights with armoured vehicles. We have trouble believing that no one in the government knew this before it appeared in *The Globe and Mail*.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, the member opposite was very clear during the election campaign that he understood how important it was for Canada to hold up to its word. We need to be able to project upon the world that when Canada agrees to something, it sticks to its word. He pretended to understand that in the election campaign. He pretended to understand that whenever he visited London. The fact is that he is throwing his own words out the window, because we need to ensure that we are respected on the world stage by keeping our word.

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**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Liberal government's words do not match its actions. The Minister of Democratic Institutions claims that she wants to put partisan interests aside and that it is truly not about a skewed partisan interest. Except, all decisions on electoral reform will be made by six Liberals who form the majority on the committee. She also said that the ultimate decision on what system would be proposed would be made by cabinet.

If this really is not about partisan interests, why not allow all Canadians to have a direct say on electoral reform?

• (1435)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a good day for Canadian democracy. Today we delivered on our commitment to establish an all-party parliamentary committee to study and bring forward recommendations to bring our electoral system into the 21st century.

We have taken a unique approach and we have shown leadership by including all parties, the Bloc, the Green Party, the NDP, and the Conservatives, around this table. I will add that this is the only committee that has all parties at the table. I look forward to the collaborative approach we will all take.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it will only be a good day for democracy when the Liberals commit to a referendum.



*Oral Questions*

The Minister of Democratic Institutions claims that all voices should be heard and treated with respect on electoral reform. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister insists that he will change the system without the permission of Canadians. He is against a referendum because he knows the people will not support his undemocratic changes.

If the government truly cares about what each and every Canadian has to say, why is it so afraid to hold a referendum?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great day for Canadian democracy. We committed to establishing a committee that would ensure there would be 338 town halls conducted across our great nation. The onus is upon us all, as members of the House, to ensure that the voices of those who do not currently have a say in politics are heard.

We need to have a conversation about ways to engage young people, women, new Canadians, seniors, those with disabilities and exceptionalities, and indigenous persons into this conversation. That is the debate.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Every now and then, members may hear something from other members they do not like. However, in this place, we want to show respect for this institution, the Canadians who sent us here. We want to recognize that we have young people in the galleries. Let us listen, please.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Liberals feel that the very system that elected them is illegitimate, then they cannot claim to have a mandate to make such a fundamental change to our voting system. Now they are setting up a committee that is designed to give them the answer that is best for them, and they have given themselves a majority on the committee as they attempt to bring in changes that will solely benefit them.

If the Liberals think the system that elected them is illegitimate, why are the Liberals giving themselves a majority on the committee?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is out of a great deal of respect for the people who put us here and for these democratic institutions that we have committed to reforming the existing system and to modernize it by bringing it into the 21st century.

It is out of a great deal of respect that we have committed to reaching out to all Canadians across this diverse nation and ensuring that those who do not normally participate in the electoral process, such as young people, women, indigenous persons, many seniors, and those with disabilities and exceptionalities, are included in this conversation.

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is arrogance that the Liberals are giving themselves a majority on the committee when 60% of Canadians voted against them.

The minister keeps claiming that she believes Canadians should be consulted, but she refuses to hold the ultimate consultation, a referendum. The only way to ensure the Liberals are not allowed to rig a process to give themselves the outcome they want is to have the Canadian people have the final say.

Will the minister commit to placing the final decision in the hands of Canadians, through a referendum, or is she also too enamoured with basic dictatorships like China?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I come to this place with a great deal of humility and appreciation for these democratic institutions that so many across this globe would give anything to have.

We have committed to consulting with Canadians. Canadians will have the first say and the final say. I would really appreciate it if members in the House—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Members will come to order. I know there are strong views, but we take turns and we hear from each side, and there will be strong statements from each side. We want to listen, and I am having trouble hearing the answers, so let us listen.

The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions has the floor.

• (1440)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Mr. Speaker, I am having trouble hearing myself, so while we are having a conversation about respect for democratic institutions, let us have a conversation about respect and decorum in this place.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is a sad day for democracy, whether the minister will admit it or not.

This is just the first day of the discussion on the Liberal's democratic reform, and it is already clear that the Liberals have no interest in really listening to Canadians. I am giving them the chance to prove otherwise.

Since the Liberals want to change the rules of democracy, can they commit today, in the House, to do the right thing and consult all Canadians via a referendum?

[*English*]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great day for Canadian democracy. It is a bad day for parties and politics that aim to divide Canadians and pit neighbour against neighbour.

Our approach will be a principled approach. Our approach will be an inclusive approach. Our approach will be one based on respect for Canadians and the need to hear from those whose voices are often silenced.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would not call it an inclusive approach when the Liberals do not plan on giving everyone the opportunity to express themselves.

I can assure the House that all of us on this side will continue to defend the idea of a referendum because we think that it is essential. However, that is not the only thing that Canadians should be concerned about.

*Oral Questions*

The government initiated this process without consulting the opposition parties. The Prime Minister even apologized to the House for claiming otherwise.

Does the minister believe that 10 MPs are in a better position than the Canadian public to change the very foundations of our democracy?

[English]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that it may be comforting for some to stay in the past, in the 21st century there are many other tools and ways to engage Canadians in important conversations, like one about democratic institutions.

We are confident that the individuals around the committee table will put their narrow partisan interests aside and serve the Canadians who have put us here.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals say that reconciliation with the indigenous peoples is one of their top priorities.

However, today, the Department of Justice is in court to fight against a survivor of the St. Anne's Indian Residential School, whose history is nothing short of revolting. Allegedly, the federal government deliberately hid documents proving the abuse that the victim suffered. The victim was denied compensation for lack of evidence.

How does the minister justify opposing this survivor's right to a new hearing?

[English]

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to fairness in the independent assessment process. We have seen the negotiation that was just settled in Newfoundland and Labrador with residential school survivors. We are prepared to co-operate and ensure that all the necessary information is provided in legal proceedings. We have consented to many of the claimants' requests and parliamentary beliefs, such as those requests that had been outlined in the past.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to be different and offer reconciliation. That rings hollow to the survivors of St. Anne's residential school who are fighting for their rights in provincial court again. They put on the record that the justice department suppressed police evidence. It protected the name of a serial predator. Then it had the cases thrown out on bogus technicalities.

Surely, the justice minister knows that suppressing police evidence is not reconciliation. It is not even legal. Will she call off the dogs, stop defending the predators, and stand up once and for all for the victims of the indescribable abuse at that institution?

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows that the Government of Canada is committed to

achieving full reconciliation with former students. We have seen that this week with the ruling in Newfoundland and Labrador and the negotiated settlement. The member also knows that we have complied with all of Justice Perell's orders regarding documents related to St. Anne's.

We have met all of the timelines, including an updated narrative that is at least 1,200 pages that has been submitted, and the member knows that.

\* \* \*

● (1445)

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister went to Washington for the state dinner, he put together his personal entourage of 44 people, which included his mom, his in-laws, the Liberal Party president, and the chief Liberal bagman, but one name noticeably missing from the invite list was the name of the natural resources minister.

Why did the Prime Minister give preferential access to Liberal hacks over his own ministries?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have said in the House Commons, and the Prime Minister has said a number of times, that this was a historic visit for Canada.

The other side of the House is struggling with how a guest list at a state dinner is drawn up. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? It is because the last time that there was a state dinner was 1997. That is why we think that this honour afforded Canada, and the progress made on substantive files that are important to Canadians, border security, pre-clearance, climate change, energy, are a testimony to this important relationship that we value so much.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that the Liberals are not being open and transparent about their trip to Washington. The more we know, the more concerned we get. We now know that it cost almost \$13,000 for just three ministers and their staff to go on this junket, but the numbers keep changing. Last week, they claimed it was \$25,000 for 44 people, and no one believes that number.

Can the Liberals be honest with taxpayers and tell them what the actual total cost of this trip was?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some confusion on the other side. On the one hand, he wants us to include other ministers and other individuals and, at the same time, he says that those expenses are unreasonable.

What we have said is that the expenses for the trip to Washington were disclosed proactively. Our government has led with open and transparent disclosure of expenses, and every single one of those expenses was justified because of the substantive and important progress made during that visit to improve the lives of Canadians and strengthen this critical bilateral relationship.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we knew that the Liberal Party of Canada put its own interests ahead of Canadians'.

Again, the composition of the delegation that accompanied the Prime Minister to Washington is problematic.

Why was the president of the Liberal Party of Canada on that trip? Has she become a representative of this government?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way might not understand how guest lists for state dinners at the White House are drawn.

The last time Canada was given this honour was in 1997. Our visit was a historic one, and a great deal of progress was made on files and issues that affect the lives of Canadians, including climate change, border security, and energy.

We are extremely proud of the Canadian presence in Washington.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the past few hours, we have learned that the trip to Washington for just three ministers and two employees cost almost \$13,000.

However, last week, the government mentioned a figure of \$25,000 for 44 people. This Liberal government has no moral compass.

Will the Liberals come clean and tell Canadian taxpayers how much this trip cost?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact that my colleague keeps repeating exaggerated claims does not make them true.

We are an open and transparent government. We proactively disclosed our ministers' complete travel expenses, including the expenses for the Washington trip, which was an economic mission that was extremely important for Canada.

Although my colleagues opposite may not like the long list of what was accomplished on that trip, we are proud of the Canadian delegation and what it accomplished.

\* \* \*

•(1450)

[*English*]

## HEALTH

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, opioid overdoses are a growing epidemic across the country. Hundreds of people are dying. British Columbia has declared a public health emergency, yet the Minister of Health abandoned regulations requiring tamper-resistant forms of these powerful

## Oral Questions

prescription drugs. She claims that they will not solve the problem because they only apply to a single narcotic.

However, the solution is obvious: make the entire class of opioids, including fentanyl, tamper-proof, as the U.S. is doing.

Why will the minister not do so and save lives?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite has raised a very important matter, and that is the matter of prescription drug abuse in this country. It is something with which I have the deepest concern. I am pleased to work with my colleagues, including those in British Columbia, who have particularly led the way on this file.

It will require a comprehensive approach, one that includes prescriber guidelines, one that includes patient information, one that includes treatment, and one that includes prevention.

We will address all matters of evidence to make sure that we have the best way forward, and a comprehensive plan.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecers have been paying ancillary fees for insured services for years, which is contrary to the Canada Health Act, and the federal government has done nothing about it.

Quebec's auditor general released a report yesterday stating that ancillary fees are now out of control. The poorest Quebecers are paying the price for this two-tier health system. The minister keeps saying that she is talking to her Quebec counterpart and that she believes in the Canada Health Act.

When will she actually enforce it?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question.

As I have said, we fully subscribe to the principles of the Canada Health Act, which is designed to ensure that all Canadians have reasonable access to all necessary medical and hospital services based on need, not ability to pay.

I am committed to working with all my Canadian partners to strengthen our universal public health care system while upholding the principles of the Canada Health Act.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## SCIENCE

**Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Science.

The Science Odyssey is 10 days of discovery and innovation, from Friday, May 6 to May 15. It is an opportunity to discover the richness of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in Canada.

What is the Government of Canada doing to encourage all Canadians to learn about and to engage with scientific research, and to seriously consider a career in science?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, a scientist himself, for that important question.

I am working to promote a culture where young people and the public are excited about science. Last week, I announced the winners of NSERC's PromoScience program, awarded to groups that promote science throughout the year. This week, I have hosted Space Day and Coding Day, to bring the joy of science to parliamentarians.

I encourage all members to check out science.gc.ca for a Science Odyssey event in their community.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in January, the Minister of Agriculture hired a failed Liberal candidate with a vested interest in his department to be his chief of staff. At the time, it was clear that her massive fortune presented a clear conflict of interest, but the minister insisted otherwise.

Now the Ethics Commissioner has ruled that a conflict of interest does exist, and the chief of staff must recuse herself of most major files in the minister's department.

If she cannot talk about agriculture, and if she cannot talk about trade, what is she still doing there?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure my honourable colleague, this House, and Canadians that my chief of staff has completed all the requirements of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and will be abiding by all guidelines set forward. This includes a conflict of interest screen which has been established and will be followed.

My chief of staff is an outstanding member of her community and has a deep commitment to agriculture.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that was the same talking points that he gave to me on January 25, but we found out just recently from the Ethics Commissioner that her new ruling requires that his chief of staff not engage with the TPP, not have any involvement with regard to the egg industry, and have nothing to do with the supply management system.

I ask the minister, given the commissioner's clear ruling, can the minister guarantee that since day one in his office, she has had absolutely zero to do with any of these crucial files?

• (1455)

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again I can assure my honourable colleague that my chief of staff has completed all the guidelines required by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and she will follow the guidelines.

Does my honourable colleague indicate that all we want to work in agriculture are people who know nothing about agriculture?

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. We now have a Minister of Agriculture, and his chief of staff cannot talk about eggs, cannot talk about supply

management, and cannot even talk about the trans-Pacific partnership.

If she has been involved in any of these files in the last six months, it is a conflict of interest.

That is what we knew from the beginning. The minister refused to listen to us. How can the minister assure farmers and processors that his chief of staff has not been using this job for personal gain?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and I am surprised that he would indicate that such a competent lady would be in this role. I am truly disappointed.

My colleague understands that the Ethics Commissioner has ruled, and all the guidelines submitted by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner will be followed.

Again, does he just want somebody in agriculture who knows nothing about agriculture? I think not.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that he is criticizing the Ethics Commissioner for making the comment about what she can do and what she cannot, because the Minister of Agriculture hired his chief of staff, a major stakeholder in one of the largest egg producers and processing companies in Canada. Now she is prohibited from supporting supply management, the egg industry, and any trade issues, particularly around the trans-Pacific partnership.

Why did he leave supply management and free trade in the hands of an individual who is not allowed to talk about them?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think my honourable colleague wants to be careful about what my chief of staff is and is not involved in. She has a career of her own.

However, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has set guidelines. I have indicated quite clearly to this House a number of times, she will follow the guidelines.

\* \* \*

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week, Pauktuutit called on the federal government to ensure the upcoming inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls meets Inuit concerns.

Funding is needed to support the participation of indigenous peoples, including access to healing and support services, and action is needed now to prevent violence. There is no need to wait until the end of the inquiry in order to act.

Will the government listen and provide full support for the full participation of indigenous women, and will it act now to prevent violence?

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we would certainly like to thank Pauktuutit and IKT for their input into this process.

*Oral Questions*

Missing and murdered indigenous women has been a priority for us since we have taken government. We are committed to seeing this inquiry through.

We are determined to work with all of those who have been impacted to ensure that this inquiry has the outcomes that are necessary for healing, and for reconciliation for so many women, children, and families across our country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**DAIRY INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, everyone seems to understand the need for urgent action on the diafiltered milk issue except the Liberal government.

Yesterday Agropur announced that it would stop using diafiltered milk, and dairy farmers have once again criticized the government for its failure to act. The Liberal government should be ashamed. The minister called it an emotional issue for farmers. It is an economic issue, because farmers are losing millions of dollars.

When will the Liberal government finally take action and when will the Minister of Agriculture start doing his job?

• (1500)

[English]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my honourable colleague's question and concern.

The Liberal Party implemented supply management and will defend supply management.

We recognize that this is an important issue for dairy farmers, and we are working to reach a long-term solution that will work for all of the dairy sector across this nation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**VETERANS**

**Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals announced that a monument would be established in Ottawa to commemorate trade unions.

Unfortunately, we are still waiting for a monument to honour our veterans of the Afghanistan War. Clearly, even though some of our soldiers gave their lives for Canada, the Liberals simply cannot give priority to a tribute in their honour.

Why does this government have the political will to go ahead with certain monuments, when it is clearly incapable of honouring our 40,000 veterans of the Afghanistan War?

[English]

**Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that commemoration is important to this government. We will continue to honour those who have served from Vimy Ridge to Juno Beach, through peacekeeping efforts in the seventies, eighties,

and nineties, from the Gulf War to the Afghan theatre, in a dignified fashion.

We are working closely with the ministry of heritage to see this project through, and rest assured it will be done.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, protecting the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families must be a priority for every government.

Last week the media tagged along on General Vance's tour to Iraq and had some face time with special operations forces. The problem is that the media published the faces of the soldiers it met. When this happened under our government, we took full responsibility and fixed the mistake.

I have a simple question. Will the defence minister own up to this error and ensure the identity of our troops is protected?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the safety of our Canadian Armed Forces personnel and the security of our operations are of primary concern. The Canadian Armed Forces thoroughly assess and implement appropriate measures to ensure safety and security of their troops.

The members who were recently profiled were preselected and approved by Canadian Armed Forces leadership.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, General Vance described the Prime Minister's decision to triple Canada's ground troops in Iraq while withdrawing Canadian air support as an overall riskier mission.

The images published in the media last week could expose Canadian special forces members and their families to even greater risks. When I was the parliamentary secretary and this happened under the previous Conservative government, I stood in the House, took responsibility, and we fixed the problem.

Will the parliamentary secretary admit that allowing these photos to be published was a mistake and take the necessary actions to protect and ensure the safety of our troops and their families?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I recollect, the hon. member standing in the House in a previous Parliament was because his government wanted some photo ops. We have fixed that system.

Accordingly, the members who were recently profiled were approved by Canadian Armed Forces leadership. It had nothing to do with the Minister of National Defence.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, budget 2016 provides funding for electric vehicles as well as alternative fuels infrastructure. These initiatives will allow for more low-carbon-emitting vehicles and will benefit both our economy and our environment.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources tell the House about the support our government is providing during the transition to transportation options—

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

[English]

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, clean technologies are a central part of our clean growth plan to transition to the economy of tomorrow.

Yesterday we announced that funding proposals are now being accepted under two new electric vehicle and alternative fuel infrastructure initiatives. As part of budget 2016, this \$62-million program will put more low-carbon vehicles on the road, which will decrease emissions.

By investing in electric vehicle technology, we will be showing national leadership on climate change while our economy grows.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs said that Canada's resource sector was being put on notice.

There have been fustian words and mixed messages coming from the Liberal front bench regarding what indigenous free, prior, and informed consent actually means.

Will the Liberals clarify for Canadians if implementing the UN declaration gives a veto over critical infrastructure projects?

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated before, and as the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs has said, we do not see a strong working relationship with indigenous people as an impediment to resource development of any kind in this country.

In fact, Mr. Perry Bellegarde, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, has already said that veto is not utilized in free, prior, and informed consent in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I think collaboration and working together is the way forward, and that is the path we are on.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the Federal Court banned fish farms in B.C. from

using diseased Atlantic salmon in open-net pens. The risks to wild salmon were, and still are, unacceptable. However, the Conservatives, on behalf of a foreign-owned company, appealed the court's decision. Not only is the Liberal government continuing this appeal, shockingly, it is fast-tracking the efforts to overturn the ruling.

Why is the government continuing with this Conservative approach, fighting the court ruling, and putting B.C. wild salmon at risk?

**Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to know that this is an issue that has been recently brought to my attention.

I have had discussions with the Minister of Justice on this. I would like to inform the member that I plan to meet with her to discuss this further in the near future.

\* \* \*

**INVICTUS GAMES**

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and I met with our wounded soldiers in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge Park as they were training for this year's Invictus Games. As members may be aware, the Scarborough Pan Am centre will co-host the 2017 Invictus Games.

Can the minister advise us as to how the government will be supporting our soldiers and our veterans in representing Canada?

**Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park for his question, and the care and compassion he shows to veterans each and every day.

The Invictus Games are a great opportunity for our injured soldiers to take part in competition, as well as to rebuild their lives with camaraderie. It was a great honour to be in Toronto with the Prime Minister and Prince Harry where we saw our injured soldiers head off to Orlando, where they did us proud.

I am also proud to announce that we are supporting the 2017 Invictus Games to the tune of \$10 million.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 21 years ago, the Liberals and Jean Chrétien closed Royal Military College Saint-Jean, which they felt was no longer needed. The former Conservative government remedied the situation by reopening the institution in 2008 and promising to reinstate university studies.

When asked about this last Saturday in Montreal, the Minister of National Defence was evasive.

Can the minister confirm that he plans to reinstate university studies at Royal Military College Saint-Jean in Quebec?

[*English*]

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will know, the minister has initiated an entire defence review process in which we have invited all members to engage.

Clearly, the issue of the reopening of the Saint-Jean college is of utmost importance to the minister and to my colleague from Saint-Jean, who has tirelessly promoted this reopening. I hope that all members do engage in the defence review process, and certainly that would be one of the serious considerations.

\* \* \*

• (1510)

#### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister.

For the recently announced public engagement and consultation process on electoral reform to have any legitimacy, I completely agree with the hon. minister that we must all, on all sides of this place, set partisanship aside.

Therefore, can the Prime Minister give this place his word that the Liberal members of Parliament on that committee will be free to vote in the interest of Canadian democracy, and not merely for partisan advantage?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we made the commitment in the last election to ensure that this was the last election to be held under first past the post. We are keeping that promise with a process that reflects our shared values of fairness, inclusiveness, gender equity, openness, and mutual respect.

On the issue of committee members, I can assure the Leader of the Green Party that I will no more control the Liberal members on that committee than she will control the Green member on that committee.

\* \* \*

#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Dato' Sri Azalina Othman Said, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I also draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Hon. Brian Gallant, Premier of New Brunswick.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, a great deal was said about accomplishments during oral question period today. In the interest of transparency and openness, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to table the Debates of the House of Commons of April 22, 2015.

#### *Routine Proceedings*

[*English*]

This is about the tabling of the agreement on land—

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** Apparently, we do not have unanimous consent in the House. I imagine that the member is not particularly surprised by that.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to Orders of the Day.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion 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 yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 53*)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin

*Government Orders*

Damoff	DeCoursey	Bergen	Bernier
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Berthold	Bezan
Di Iorio	Dion	Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Drouin	Dubourg	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Duclos	Duguid	Boudrias	Boulerice
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Easter	Ehsassi	Brosseau	Brown
El-Khoury	Ellis	Calkins	Cannings
Erskine-Smith	Eyolfson	Caron	Carrie
Fergus	Fillmore	Chong	Choquette
Finnigan	Fisher	Christopherson	Clarke
Fonseca	Foote	Clement	Cooper
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)	Cullen	Davies
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland	Deltell	Diotte
Fry	Gameau	Doherty	Donnelly
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones	Dreeschen	Dubé
Goodale	Gould	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Duvall
Graham	Grewal	Egliniski	Falk
Hajdu	Hardie	Fast	Fortin
Harvey	Hehr	Gallant	Garrison
Holland	Housefather	Généreux	Genius
Hussen	Hutchings	Gill	Gladu
Iacono	Joly	Godin	Gourde
Jones	Jordan	Hardcastle	Harder
Jowhari	Kang	Hughes	Jeneroux
Khalid	Khera	Johns	Jolibois
Lametti	Lamoureux	Julian	Kelly
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc	Kenney	Kent
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Kitchen	Kmiec
Lemieux	Leslie	Kwan	Lake
Levitt	Lightbound	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Lockhart	Long	Leitch	Lobb
Longfield	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	MacKenzie	Maguire
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)		Malcolmson	Masse (Windsor West)
May (Cambridge)		Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCallum	McCrimmon	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McGuinty	McKay	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Mulcair	Nater
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès	Nicholson	Nuttall
Medicino	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	Obhrai	O'Toole
Soeurs)		Paul-Hus	Paupé
Monsef	Morneau	Plamondon	Poilievre
Morrissey	Murray	Quach	Raitt
Nassif	Nault	Rankin	Rayes
O'Connell	Oliphant	Reid	Rempel
Oliver	O'Regan	Richards	Saganash
Ouellette	Paradis	Sansoucy	Saroya
Peschisolido	Petitpas Taylor	Scheer	Schmale
Philpott	Picard	Shields	Shipley
Poissant	Qualtrough	Sopuck	Sorenson
Ratansi	Rioux	Stanton	Ste-Marie
Robillard	Rodriguez	Stetski	Stewart
Romanado	Rota	Strahl	Stubbs
Rudd	Ruimy	Sweet	Thériault
Rusnak	Sahota	Tilson	Trost
Samson	Sangha	Trudel	Van Loan
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Viersen	Wagantall
Schiefke	Schulte	Warawa	Warkentin
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PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT

BILL C-7—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:



*Government Orders*

That in relation to Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and other Acts and to provide for certain other measures, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before this House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further amendment or debate.

**The Speaker:** There will now be a 30-minute period for questions. I would ask members who wish to ask questions during this period to stand so the Chair has an idea of how many members wish to take part in this session.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a bill of critical importance before us, and again we see the Liberals, who protested so adamantly in the last Parliament to give any time allocation whatsoever, really beating any record that was ever set by the previous government in terms of their lack of respect for important debate.

What we have here is important legislation, and we have changes to important legislation that need thorough reflection. There was the component, I believe it was clauses 41 and 42, that was removed that talked about how the compensation would be provided.

Most important, we need to have time to really reflect on the democratic process of having open and transparent voting or card checks versus what most provinces do, which is they have secret ballots. That was something that was missed in the amendments. I think it is critical, and we need to spend a lot of time in this Parliament reflecting on that particular issue.

**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that our government inherited a situation of considerable urgency when we formed government in November. In fact, we inherited a situation where the Supreme Court decision had put a deadline of January. We sought an extension to May, a four-month extension at that time. Again, it was the previous government that allowed a situation to develop where there was significant urgency. The Supreme Court decision was that RCMP members ought to have the right for collective bargaining. This legislation provides that. Beyond that, we have had 10 hours of debate and 34 members of Parliament have participated in that debate. Further to that, unlike the Conservative government previously, we actually accepted legislative changes made by a committee to this legislation.

• (1600)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to start by expressing my disappointment at the way the government has come to use time allocation so routinely when we've hardly even been in this place for six months. The government's arguments about the time constraint because of the Supreme Court ruling are troubling to me because a tight timeline is not an excuse to pass a bad law. Government members in committee had ample opportunity to make this a better law. They chose not to, and because of that, we need extra time in this House to make it a better law. That was a choice of government members on the committee, not a choice

of those in opposition who now want the opportunity to try to improve this bill before it goes forward.

About the deadline, the fact is that if this bill passes in its current form, we will not be meeting the deadline anyway, because the instruction of the Supreme Court was to confer real collective bargaining rights to RCMP members by May 16. This bill in its current form does not do that, so we are going to miss the deadline anyway by passing this bill.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, it is of real urgency that we pass this bill. The hon. member is right that the deadline is May 16, after which the Public Service Labour Relations Act will apply to the RCMP. There will be a lot of confusion around this. That act was never designed to apply to the RCMP, and part of this legislation is, in fact, to adapt it to do so. To have our national police force operating under that kind of uncertainty and ambiguity from a labour relations perspective is very bad. It is bad from a public safety perspective. We are doing the right thing.

Again, the hon. member is fairly new to this House. I welcome him. He is working hard as a member of Parliament. I enjoy working with him. However, the fact is that we as a government accepted legislative changes from the committee. If he had been here in the last Parliament, he would have seen that the Conservatives never would have accepted legislative changes made by a committee.

We are engaging committees respectfully. Under us, committees are not branch plants of ministers' offices.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister referring to the amendments made at committee. It was a Conservative-led initiative to strike clauses 40 and 42 from Bill C-7, which would have created an uneven regime of health and occupational safety for our members of the RCMP from coast to coast. I do recognize the government removed that after being urged by the Conservatives.

What troubles me greatly is this. I know that the minister and members of his caucus, particularly in provinces served by the RCMP, are hearing from rank and file members who are still upset about Bill C-7. They do not understand certain ramifications of it. Yet we are seeing the Liberals limit debate on this important bill, which impacts the RCMP, in a way that goes against what the Liberals were suggesting when they were in opposition. We have a closure motion being brought forward on a day they announced a committee to modernize our democracy. The irony is shocking. The Minister of Democratic Institutions lectured us here today on modernizing our democracy, and now this minister is getting up and suppressing debate on a bill that will impact the lives of thousands of RCMP members across the country. He has not allowed their voices to be heard in this House. He should stand now and apologize to those members across the country for closing down the debate and not taking them into consideration in the debate in this House. Will he stand and apologize to those members?

*Government Orders*

•(1605)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I have considerable respect for the hon. member. I have known him a long time. However, he ought to realize that the urgency of the situation was created by his government in failing to act more expediently in response to the Supreme Court decision. We as a government inherited a situation that needed to be addressed. We requested an extension, and were granted a four-month extension, and we acted after that. We engaged Parliament. We engaged the committee process. In fact, we accepted a legislative change from the committee because we respect the role that all members of Parliament from all parties play in committees in terms of their role in crafting legislation. That is in stark contrast to his previous Conservative government's approach to the management of committees and the passing of legislation. However, that does not obviate the need to act and to act expediently when our national police force and its labour relations are under considerable uncertainty post-May 16. We have a responsibility to act, and as a government we take that seriously.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given that the Supreme Court ruled that the current RCMP labour relations regime is unconstitutional, and given that the government has moved to respect the Supreme Court ruling, could the President of the Treasury Board outline the steps the government has taken to meet the Supreme Court's wishes so that there will be collective bargaining for the RCMP members and reservists?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, this bill does give the RCMP the rights to collective bargaining. It does reflect a consultation process that was conducted under the previous government.

RCMP across Canada participated in a consultation process. This bill not only complies with the Supreme Court decision but seeks to reflect broadly the views of the rank and file RCMP members for whom we have tremendous respect.

As a government, we respect the decision of the Supreme Court. We have moved this legislation to meet the demands of the Supreme Court, to ensure that the RCMP are given collective bargaining rights. That is what this bill actually achieves.

When there was a legislative change proposed by the committee, we accepted that. The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and I made it very clear when we met with the committee that we would work with the committee and accept reasonable legislative changes, as long as we could still move forward and comply with the Supreme Court decision.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has predicated its entire decision to legislate unionization of the RCMP on a Supreme Court decision, and has relied on the labour relations model that was established by Justice Ivan Rand, the author of the famous Rand formula.

I presume the President of the Treasury Board supports the Rand formula. He nodded, so I take that as a yes.

The formula comes from a ruling in the late 1940s, in which the justice said:

...unguarded power cannot be trusted and the maintenance of social balance demands that the use or exercise of power be subject to controls. Politically this resides in alert public opinion and the secret ballot.

Mr. Justice Ivan Rand understood the essential nature of a secret ballot for democratic decision-making. Why will the government not extend that right to RCMP members?

•(1610)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I thought, coming from the hon. member, he would be quoting Ayn Rand.

In any case, the previous government, as part of its war on organized labour, brought in Bill C-525, which further toxified and rendered sulphuric relations with organized labour, and not just within the public service but with organized labour across Canada.

We committed in opposition, in our platform, and as a government and we followed through in terms of bringing forward legislation to repeal the provisions of Bill C-525. We believe that was the right approach.

As a government, we followed through on our commitments to reverse what the Conservatives did in terms of Bill C-525. As such, we would not impose on the RCMP an approach in terms of labour relations that is distinct from what every other union in Canada operates under.

We disagree fundamentally with the way the Conservatives approached this issue, in terms of Bill C-525. It is also important to realize that Bill C-7 actually gives a choice between a card check or a secret ballot.

However, we are not going to impose that on Canada's unions, on Canada's labour movement, which was an error that the previous government made. Again, it further toxified relations with organized labour. We disagreed with it then, and we followed through on our commitment to change that. To impose on the RCMP a regime that is different from what every other union in Canada operates under would make no sense.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the hockey world, people often say that the Montreal Canadiens' record of five back-to-back Stanley Cup wins will never be equalled. I thought the same thing about the Conservative record of 100 gag orders, but quite frankly, the Liberal government is well on its way to tying that record or even breaking it. It is shameful.

People in this place often have a short memory. I would like to quote the member for Winnipeg North, who is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. He said:

[*English*]

The government, by once again relying on a time allocation motion to get its agenda passed, speaks of incompetence. It speaks of a genuine lack of respect for parliamentary procedure and ultimately for Canadians.

In this case, we can argue it is for the RCMP as well.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

I am trying to understand something. We are talking about the content of the bill. The Liberals' tactics do not end with time allocation. The minister is telling us that it does not matter, because the bill has been amended. That is simply smoke and mirrors, given that the amendments were Liberal amendments. They were put forward by Liberal members, not opposition members.

Once again, we are seeing the same tactics that the Conservatives used, even though they claimed to listen to members. That is true, but only if their political stripes are the right colour.

Does the President of the Treasury Board not find this rather embarrassing?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my colleague's question.

Once again, it is very important to recognize that we inherited a very urgent situation. In a ruling, the Supreme Court recognized the right of RCMP members to collective bargaining. It recognized this and gave us an extension until May 16 of this year. It is very important that we take action, and that is exactly what we have done. We have shown great respect for Parliament and the committee's work. We have accepted the contributions and the amendments to our bill made by the committee.

[*English*]

Our colleague from the Conservative Party has actually taken credit for the change, so I would suggest that the New Democrats and Conservatives get this straightened out. The New Democrats are saying that we have not accepted anything from opposition. We have the Conservatives taking credit for it. If there is squabbling amongst themselves, it makes our situation very difficult in trying to adjudicate who is telling the truth on this.

I can say that regardless of the source, if something did not compromise our response to comply with the Supreme Court, we were open, as we were in terms of taking out the GECA changes. We can deal with those potentially in the future and have a more fulsome debate on that. However, we have a strict timeline to respect. We take that seriously. We inherited this situation from the previous government. We have needed to act, and we have acted.

• (1615)

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the public safety committee decided to remove the GECA provisions, clauses 40 and 42. We have heard from RCMP members from across the country that they are happy that Parliament and the government heard their calls.

I would like to ask the hon. President of the Treasury Board why the government was okay with removing these clauses.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** First, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Public Safety and I met with the committee, we made it clear that we would take the work and the input of the committee seriously. We respect Parliament, and we respect the important work done by committees.

The removal of these provisions does not compromise the legislation in terms of complying with the Supreme Court decision. In the fullness of time, we can have a discussion around this, and

perhaps we will do that. There were some concerns expressed in terms of the GECA provisions. We heard those concerns and accepted the removal of those provisions from the act. We think that demonstrates a lot of good faith in terms of respect for Parliament and respect for committees.

There is a lot of good work done at committees, and frankly the functioning of committees can be far less partisan than what goes on in the House, particularly in question period. I can say this as someone who has spent a lot of time working on committees over the years. We have a lot of new members of Parliament. The work that members of Parliament do on committees is valuable and important. This government understands that and intends to harness the creativity and wisdom and hard work of all members of Parliament, from all parties, on committees as we move forward.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I heard from my colleague that there was consultation. However, I am hearing from RCMP officers, not only in my community, which is the largest detachment in the country, but right across this country, that the RCMP members have not been consulted.

I would like the hon. member to tell this House how these members were consulted, because he said that they were, especially when the Liberals are shutting down debate at this point.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, the consultation was extensive. The hon. member was not a member of the previous Conservative government, but the consultation actually took place under the previous government. It was an extensive survey of RCMP members.

The bill does seek to reflect that, and it is important. The areas where there were concerns raised was around the GECA provision. We accepted legislative changes from committee.

The reality is, we have a responsibility to act, with a May 16 deadline. We do not feel comfortable with the uncertainty and ambiguity that will exist until we have a new law in place that respects the Supreme Court decision. It is not in our national interests, nor in the interests of public safety, to have our national police force, the RCMP, under this kind of uncertainty.

All members of Parliament in this House have a collective responsibility to act on something this important with a Supreme Court decision looming, and we did that.

• (1620)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is nonsense that a Supreme Court deadline should dictate the suppression of democracy in this place with the use of closure.

It is deeply ironic to hear Conservative members attacking the government for using closure, but attack it we must, because closure is anti-democratic. The fact that those people in government used it a hundred times in four years is appalling, but that does not give the new Liberal government licence to suppress democratic debate in this House, through the fiction that there will be some sort of chaos across the land if RCMP officers are suddenly allowed to collectively bargain in the absence of this legislation.

There is no harm done in public policy if we miss the deadline, but there is harm done in suppressing debate.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is entitled to her opinion. I always listen to her interventions with great interest, and sometimes she is right.

I disagree with her on this. I actually do think that uncertainty and the absence of a clear legislative response to the Supreme Court after May 16 is not a good situation in terms of our national police force. We do have a responsibility to act, to provide certainty in terms of the labour regime under which our national police force will be governed.

We take that seriously. Of course, we recognize the collective bargaining rights of RCMP, and we support and understand the Supreme Court's decision. I would think the hon. member would understand that as well. The legislation that we have now, the Public Service Labour Relations Act, does not in its current form really fit or suit the RCMP. Effectively, there will be conflicts between the RCMP regime and our existing Public Service Labour Relations Act. We do not think that is in the interests of the RCMP and the interests of public safety. We have had to act. In the process, we have actually accepted legislative changes made at committee.

We have and will continue to do our utmost to engage Parliament and engage committees meaningfully, as we craft legislation and move it forward in this House.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find the remarks of the hon. President of the Treasury Board interesting, because on one hand he says we do not want to impose something different on the RCMP than other unions have, and that was in response to the official opposition proposal and, on the other hand, he just stood up and said, "I want to impose something different on the RCMP than the Public Service Labour Relations Act."

What the Liberals have done in this bill, of course, is to take some things out of collective bargaining that are quite normal for all unions to bargain, including police unions. Every other existing police union bargains on the things that have been excluded.

Obviously, we need more debate here, so that we can make it clear to the Liberals that in fact they are trying to establish something different and much more limited, by taking things like harassment out of collective bargaining, restricting the rights of the RCMP, and perhaps even causing another court case.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the issue of harassment. Our government, our Prime Minister, and our Minister of Public Safety have been absolutely clear on this. There is zero tolerance for harassment in the public service. There is zero tolerance for harassment in the RCMP and the military. Our message and our actions have been clear on that front.

Beyond that, the RCMP is currently dealing with some of these issues now, and that is absolutely important.

This is about a basic right for people to work in a workplace that is not a toxic workplace where they are subject to harassment. That is a basic right. We, as a government, understand the importance of that.

I can assure the hon. member that our Prime Minister, our Minister of Public Safety, our entire government, are committed to ensuring that the RCMP is a place where sexual harassment is not tolerated in

any way, shape, or form. I assure the hon. member, we are absolutely committed to that.

• (1625)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could have a comment from the hon. member on the relationship between Parliament as it exists now with the Supreme Court, compared to what it was in the 41st Parliament, and how we are trying to improve things.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I remember a justice minister in the previous government publicly quarrelling with a chief judge of the Supreme Court of Canada.

The party opposite, and particularly its genesis in the Reform Party, the Conservatives, when they were in office, made no bones of the fact that they were not big fans of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms occurred under the Conservative government, and it did virtually nothing to celebrate. The Conservatives were busy finding the Franklin expedition, or the War of 1812. In fairness, that government did recognize certain things.

However, the fact is that we as Canadians, and this is not a partisan issue, ought to be justifiably proud of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the court system under which we are governed. The previous government did not understand or appreciate that. There was a values disconnect between the previous government and Canadians on the charter issue and the understanding of the importance of the courts.

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is breathtaking that in fewer than five legislative days, the government has delivered a series of body blows, bruising the democratic process in the House.

First it imposed closure on Bill C-14 before a full two-thirds of the official opposition had a chance to speak to a piece of proposed legislation that is clearly deficient and would not meet the direction of the Supreme Court. It is not being materially improved in committee.

Today the government stacked a committee on electoral reform and renewed its pledge to deny Canadians the democratic right to vote in a referendum on such an important and fundamental process in our democracy.

Now the minister is seeking to justify closure on this legislation, on the importance of the secret ballot, by saying that 34 members of the House have spoken in debate. That is less than 10% of House membership.

I am wondering if the minister realizes what an appalling track record his government has set in such a brief period of time.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier of a toxic workplace. There are potential health and safety risks, near toxic levels of hypocrisy, coming from the Conservatives in attacking us, when we have to respond to a Supreme Court of Canada decision, with a deadline looming of May 16.

The reason we are in this position is because the Conservatives dragged their feet as a government and did not act expediently. As such, it put us in a difficult position where we were forced to seek an extension from the Supreme Court for four months, and within which we have acted.

The Conservatives used time allocation on a consistent basis. The leader of the Green Party cited that earlier. The Conservatives used it indiscriminately. It did not take the Supreme Court deadline for the Conservatives to do this.

We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that we respond to the Supreme Court decision and that we provide certainty in terms of the labour relations under which our national police force is governed.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; and the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, International Trade.

• (1630)

[English]

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Call in the members.

• (1710)

[Translation]

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

## Government Orders

(Division No. 54)

### YEAS

#### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
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Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
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Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
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Long	Longfield
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Sahota	Sarai
Sangha	Schieffe
Scarpaleggia	Serré
Schulte	Shanahan
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McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Moore  
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Nuttall  
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Davies  
Diotte  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Duvall  
Falk  
Fortin  
Garrison  
Genuis  
Gladu  
Gourde  
Harder  
Jeneroux  
Jolibois  
Kelly  
Kent  
Kmiec  
Lake  
Laverdière  
Lobb  
MacGregor  
Maguire  
Masse (Windsor West)  
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)  
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Nicholson  
Obhrai  
Paul-Hus  
Plamondon  
Quach  
Rayes  
Rempel  
Saganash  
Saroya  
Schmale  
Shiple  
Sorenson  
Ste-Marie  
Stewart  
Stubbs  
Thériault  
Trost  
Van Loan  
Wagantall  
Warkentin  
Waugh  
Weir

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from May 9 consideration of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and other Acts and to provide for certain other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

[*English*]

Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Willowdale.

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise today to speak to Bill C-7 and our government's response to the Supreme Court of Canada's decision.

I would like to thank all of the members who have contributed to this important debate. I particularly would like to thank the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security for their hard work on this file, as well as the President of the Treasury Board for introducing this very timely legislation.

Two months ago, a horrific event took place when an assailant approached the armed forces recruiting detachment in my riding of Willowdale and injured two members of our armed forces. Along with local police, the leadership, professionalism, and expertise of the RCMP were instrumental in resolving the situation.

Our government is proudly committed to supporting the brave men and women of the RCMP, and I believe that the bill demonstrates our unwavering support for one of Canada's proudest institutions.

Last week, members of the House contributed to the debate surrounding Bill C-14, another important piece of legislation catalyzed by a Supreme Court decision. I am proud, once again, that our government is heeding a Supreme Court decision in an appropriate and balanced manner.

As my hon. colleague from the riding of Montarville stated on Monday:

In its decision that found the previous labour-relations regime unconstitutional, the Supreme Court determined that the staff relations representative program, which was imposed upon RCMP members, violated their charter rights because it did not allow members any option for representation, nor did it provide an effective mechanism for dispute resolution.

Fundamentally, the proposed legislation would provide RCMP members and reservists with a process to choose their representatives, as well as the process by which they may independently and collectively pursue their workplace interests and objectives. Doing so would allow the RCMP to more effectively negotiate in regard to arbitration, unfair labour practices and grievances, and many other issues.

*Government Orders*

Recognizing that the RCMP is part of the federal government, Bill C-7 would extend to members exclusions that already apply to most other public servants, such as staffing, pensions, organization of work, and assignment of duties. The RCMP had previously been excluded from collective bargaining rights available to public service employees. The labour relations regulations did not provide a forum to address wage issues, lacked independence, and generally provided RCMP members with limited collective bargaining options.

Bill C-7, therefore, would not only ensure the constitutionality of our laws, but finally bring the RCMP within a recognize bargaining framework from which they have too long been excluded. Bill C-7 would align the RCMP's labour relations regime with that of other federal public servants, the provisions of which have been in place for over 40 years. In fact, the RCMP is the only police force in Canada without a collective agreement. The government has committed to working closely with our provincial and territorial partners, and the bill would bring RCMP labour relations in line with the standards in place at other levels of government.

We believe that strong internal regimes already exist to deal with the aspects of the collective bargaining process not explicitly dealt with by Bill C-7. For example, the RCMP pension advisory committee serves to administer, design, and fund member pension benefits. Labour-management relations committees are in place to deal with workplace conduct issues. Occupational health and safety committees help ensure the safety of RCMP employees. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and subsequent regulations establish internal recourse procedures, while the Public Service Labour Relations Act provides a regulatory framework for more technical matters.

We believe, therefore, that Bill C-7 would be a strong addition to the existing regimes governing the RCMP and its members, including internal policies and practices. Bill C-7 recognizes the important role of the RCMP as Canada's national force for ensuring the safety and security of Canadians.

Our government is committed to listening and engaging with Canadian on the issues that matter to them most. As with all legislation introduced by our government, Bill C-7 has benefited from in-depth consultations with those most likely to be impacted.

• (1715)

The consultation process was led by an independent third party, Mr. Alain Jolicœur, who engaged extensively with not only the RCMP but with labour groups and other provincial and territorial partners to ensure that the proposed legislation is well rounded and pragmatic. I am proud to report that more than 9,000 regular members completed the survey and over 650 people participated in town hall sessions.

In a recent survey of RCMP members conducted by the independent consultant during the summer of 2015, most respondents expressed their support for the type of framework that has been put forward for the consideration of the House. We feel that the legislation responds appropriately to the Supreme Court's decision, recognizing the primacy of public safety and the crucial role the RCMP provides.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, the member knows that there are

certainly aspects of the legislation that Conservatives agree with, but we do not understand why the government would deny the right to vote in a secret ballot on certification to the hard-working members of the RCMP. These are people who put their lives on the line to defend our democracy.

Does the member not believe that they should have the same rights in the process of certification to vote by secret ballot that Canadians, in fact, enjoy when they elect their members of Parliament?

• (1720)

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi:** Mr. Speaker, that is obviously a very valid concern. As we know, this particular legislation was adopted after very extensive consultations. There were consultations with labour groups. There were consultations with members, and what was produced is something that reflects all of the priorities and elements that were suggested to us.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. friend.

He mentioned earlier, and so did some of his colleagues, concern for RCMP members. Less than one-third responded to this survey and a very small percentage, actually, went to the town hall meetings. Do you think it's fair in your assumption that you did not give members of Parliament, whether it is your side—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I would remind the hon. member to speak through the Speaker and not directly across the aisle.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Mr. Speaker, does the member think it is appropriate that members from all sides of the House were only given two days, after the release of the report, to go back and maybe talk to some of the RCMP members in their ridings to get feedback from them, since it was so important to the Liberal government to get that information initially?

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to reiterate the reality that there were very extensive consultations. There were consultations with various levels of government, there were consultations with members of the RCMP, and from all of the information that I have been provided and had an opportunity to review, the majority actually voted in favour of the provisions that the member will find in the proposed bill.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is worthy of note that not only had there been many hours of debate in the chamber on it, but even once it went to the committee stage there were a great number of presentations and most importantly there was a sense of co-operation, from what I understand, and the legislation was even amended in some fashion. That speaks volumes about the way we approach committees, that if there are some ideas on which consensus can be built, they will be successful. I understand that even though they were government amendments, they were initiatives that were suggested by the official opposition, in particular.

*Government Orders*

I am wondering if the member wants to comment on the fact that there is a Supreme Court deadline that we have to operate under, which is one of the reasons we are at the stage we are today, and that there was not only consultation but the government had an open process going through the system, which was demonstrated even at the committee stage.

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely this was an issue that came before the Supreme Court. In deciding on the proposed legislation, there was a thorough examination of the decision rendered by the Supreme Court. In addition to that, to ensure that the members of the RCMP were well served, there were extensive consultations with an assortment of other groups, and most significantly with members of the RCMP.

Having said that, we appreciate full well that the Supreme Court had provided us with a window, a very tight time frame, within which we had to respond and come up with a balanced piece of legislation.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I want to sincerely thank the members of the Nanaimo detachment of the RCMP for the work they do every day in our community to keep us safe. There are 151 sworn members of the RCMP who form the ranks in Nanaimo. They join over 18,000 members from across the country. It is important to remember when we are talking about the bill that it does not just affect 151 people in my riding. It does not just affect 18,000 officers across the country. It affects families, spouses, grandparents, children, their classmates, and our entire community.

I am going to take a moment to say how proud I am of the work that the RCMP members do in Nanaimo. They have a fantastic bike patrol unit. They are really the eyes and ears on the ground in our community. They work municipal traffic. They have a criminal intelligence unit and a K-9 dog unit. They work hard on victim services. When we do homelessness counts in our community, they know every citizen who is living rough. They know where they are. They keep track of them. They are very good people. They are part of the fabric of our community. They host open houses to show the public what is happening behind the scenes. They fundraise for victim services. They proudly attend community events in our riding, such as the marine festival parade, and they ensure that roads remain safe during Ladysmith's Christmas light-up festival.

With that backdrop of our community, collective bargaining is about respect. It is about fostering respect for workers and their rights, creating a safe working environment, and rewarding workers for their dedication and growth. It allows employees to have a voice and enables employers to listen. The cornerstone of collective bargaining is respect. It is that simple; it is respect.

Collective bargaining is a right that is enjoyed by a vast majority of federal workers, and those rights generally allow workers to be part of the conversation about staffing levels, deployment and relocation, and sexual harassment, except for the RCMP.

Janelle Canning-Lue and her husband recently wrote to me about Bill C-7. They are both serving members of the RCMP, and they have collectively served in 12 posts in four divisions. They say that they view Bill C-7 as a slap in the face. She says that instead of empowering them, it legislates the takeaway of fundamental rights of

negotiation in the areas of officer safety and working conditions. She is not wrong to feel that way. The negotiation of officer safety is a right that every other police association in the country is granted. So much for respect.

The RCMP members and the NDP support and recognize that meaningful collective bargaining should extend well beyond the issue of pay and benefits alone. There must be a mechanism in the bill to support improved workplace safety, and to finding a resolution to the unresolved issue of sexual harassment complaints by members of the RCMP. The extent of sexual harassment problems in the force has been extensively documented, and has been widely covered in the media. Just yesterday, a senior member of RCMP management was charged with sexual harassment. This followed a class-action lawsuit of 400 RCMP members on sexual harassment in the force. How especially troubling and appalling it is that this was explicitly excluded from the bill. It is a great failure.

Rural officers in particular have concerns around the unresolved issues with respect to workplace safety. I think of the terrible tragedies in Mayerthorpe and Moncton, where there was terrible loss of life of RCMP members, and there are remaining issues as to the extent to which they were protected. These men and women stand up for us and we should stand up for them.

Another failure of the bill is around uniforms. The prevention of bargaining with management about the selection, function, maintenance, and replacement of uniform pieces does not make sense. RCMP members are using this equipment daily. The bill will restrict them from using their front-line knowledge about the safest and most efficient pieces of equipment. That kind of inside knowledge could be invaluable and could save time, money, and most importantly lives.

● (1725)

Second, employee transfers should not be removed from the bargaining process. Transfers should be a part of the conversation that takes into account workers' input to ensure they are being fairly administered.

A transfer can be a life-changing event for officers, their families, and our communities. In Canada, we have many remote areas with very high costs of living. We have very isolated communities as well. Some of these communities have a real lack of access to basic necessities, like affordable, safe child care. Therefore, members need to be involved in those decisions. They need to have that be a matter for collective bargaining.



*Government Orders*

Corporal Clover Johns in Nanaimo wrote to me saying that the removal of the restrictions on transfers and equipment would not hamper RCMP operations, but in fact would likely improve them, allowing more harmonious problem-solving, strong employer-employee relations, and higher member morale. Working together to solve problems creates strong employer-employee relations and higher member morale. That is respect, and that is what collective bargaining should look like.

The motto of the RCMP is *Maintien Le Droit*, or Maintain the Rights. Bill C-7 would provide less rights for members of the RCMP than other police.

Unfortunately, the government has failed to adopt the amendments that the NDP put forward at committee. These were reasonable amendments, such as allowing workplace safety and sexual harassment concerns to become matters for collective bargaining and arbitration between RCMP members and management. We should hear those concerns, and we should act upon them. Enabling meaningful collective bargaining will not only benefit the members and their institution, but it will benefit all Canadians.

The government's bill excludes everything from collective bargaining, except pay and benefits. I expressed great concern about this during the debate before second reading. Yet, I voted in favour at that stage with the optimism that these amendments could be made at committee.

I heard most witnesses at committee express great concern about what was left out of this collective bargaining agreement. The government failed to expand collective bargaining by agreeing to the amendments that the NDP proposed at committee. In our view, this means the bill fails to live up to the court's direction. Now the government has just voted to shut down debate on this important bill.

The government could have chosen to make a bad bill better. It could have done that at committee, but closing down debate today is the final process failure. Shutting down debate does not help meet the court deadline. Shutting down debate just reinforces the failure of process on this. The government has already failed to meet the court ruling, really, because it failed to write legislation that would give RCMP members access to true collective bargaining.

Today, I will vote in favour of the report stage amendments proposed by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. They do not go as far as the amendments that the NDP proposed at committee, but they are our last chance to repair this flawed bill, given the government's refusal to truly extend the right to collective bargaining to RCMP members.

If the amendments are not approved today by the government and by the House, I will vote against the bill.

Finally, Corporal Clover Johns from Nanaimo reminds me that members of the House have what RCMP members do not. We hold the power to listen and to voice their concerns when they were not afforded an opportunity to do so. We have the power to enact just laws that enhance the national police force, to treat its members fairly, and advance public safety in Canada.

We should do that today, and we should guarantee members of the police in Canada equitable, open, and harmonious labour practices.

● (1730)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member a question about the secret ballot.

The NDP has expressed the concern in the past that secret ballots somehow can lead to intimidation. I have never really understood how that is possible. However, particularly when we are talking about a public sector organization, the RCMP, would the NDP support the idea of ensuring that RCMP officers have access to a secret ballot? If not, why not? What is the problem with a secret ballot in this context when we use secret ballots to elect our members of Parliament?

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I hear a broken record, Madam Speaker. I am absolutely proud to live in a community that is so well-served by the RCMP. Every day we see how well its members stand up for us. I will stand up for them and with them with great gratitude for their work. I urge every member of the House to offer RCMP members across the country the respect they give to us. We should work together to support them.

● (1735)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, two members approached me about some items they would have liked to have seen included. When I asked about this, there was mention of large consultation. I was also told that the template was similar to that in other police forces, about which I would not know. There are mechanisms in the RCMP to deal with the concerns of members, although I was told by one member that those mechanisms did not work.

Could the member comment on any of those alternatives?

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Madam Speaker, the points do not line up with what I heard from members in my riding. I received a lot of mail on this. They uniformly expressed their concern with the process and with the content. They felt they had been discriminated against all these years and that it had taken a court case with a strong ruling to identify that they were not being treated in a manner equivalent to other federal workers and other police officers.

They continue to express their great disappointment with this bill and they urge us to vote against it. They would rather deal with the courts than have inadequate legislation.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the important work my friend from Nanaimo—Ladysmith has done as the NDP status of women critic.

Looking at the bill through the lens of her critic portfolio, what kind of message does it send to the strong women in the RCMP that harassment has been kept from the bargaining process? I am curious as to her thoughts on that.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Madam Speaker, this is a circular question and something that is so important to the country moving forward.

Members on the status of women committee, who have been working on the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls file and gender-based violence, are concerned about the under-reporting of gender-based or sexual crimes. We are afraid it has to do with a lack of trust in our national police force. If RCMP members themselves are unable to freely complain and have their complaints about sexual harassment dealt with and adjudicated in the same way as any other labour force, then how can we expect the more vulnerable members of our communities to have faith in the police force? Our country has to grapple with this key issue. We have a lot of work to do in this area.

Our police need to be empowered. Our members need to be empowered. That in turn may well create more faith in the system and may empower the most vulnerable members of our society who are repeatedly victimized.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 43

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to respond to the specific points raised on April 18 by the House leader of the NDP regarding Motion No. 43.

The NDP House leader referenced Standing Order 68(4) and O'Brien and Bosc, at page 722, to make his argument that only ministers could instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill.

Standing Order 68(4) is the standing order that sets out a procedure that allows a minister to consider a motion under government orders that instructs a committee to prepare and bring in a bill.

The NDP House leader argued that because there was a mechanism for ministers to do this, a private member could not. I would agree with the NDP House leader that a private member could not move a motion of instruction under government orders, and that is a given, but to make the case that a private member under no condition can instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill is a false argument.

The reference he made to O'Brien and Bosc on page 722 states:

A committee may be instructed to prepare and bring in a bill or a committee may be appointed for that specific purpose. Motions to this effect may be moved only by a Minister.

That statement is accompanied by footnote 65 that references Standing Order 68(4). We already know that Standing Order 68(4) is a provision exclusively for the use of ministers. The O'Brien and Bosc reference is there to explain that only a minister can propose a motion under government orders to instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill pursuant to Standing Order 68(4).

Motion No. 43 does not reference Standing Order 68(4). It does not concern itself in any way what a minister can and cannot do during government orders or whenever. It concerns itself with an instruction to a committee by a private member during private

members' business and then sets out a procedure to make it happen. In part it reads:

...and, that the tabling of a report pursuant to this order shall be an order to bring in a bill based thereon; and when the Member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, in proposing a motion for first reading of a bill, states that the bill is in response to the recommendations contained in a report pursuant to this order, the second reading and subsequent stages of the bill shall be considered under Private Members' Business and the bill shall be placed immediately at the bottom of the Order of Precedence of Private Members' Business as a votable item in the name of the Member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Footnote 65 from O'Brien and Bosc also references a time when there was a standing order setting out procedures for private members to instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill, but it was removed because it was seldom used. Therefore, now we no longer have a mechanism in our permanent rules to allow private members to instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill. That does not mean that we cannot create one. There is no impediment to a private member proposing standing order changes to the House, whether they are permanent, sessional, and/or special and specific to one item.

If you are looking for an example, Madam Speaker, I refer you to the motion from the last Parliament that proposed:

That Standing Order 11(2) be replaced with the following: The Speaker or the Chair of Committees of the Whole, after having called the attention of the House, or of the Committee, to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance, or repetition, including during responses to oral questions, may direct the Member to discontinue his or her intervention, and if then the Member still continues to speak, the Speaker shall name the Member or, if in Committee of the Whole, the Chair shall report the Member to the House.

Who proposed that? The NDP House leader. Just because Motion No. 43 is exclusive to a specific item and proposes a temporary mechanism to allow a private member to instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill does not make it any different from a motion proposing to permanently change the specific procedure of the House as the NDP proposed in the 41st Parliament.

We are, after all, masters of our own procedures, provided we do not go beyond anything conferred upon us by the constitution. Motion No. 43 clearly does not violate the constitution. It is a good idea with a workable process that is within the scope of the authority of the House and that of a private member.

● (1740)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Thank you very much for the additional information. Certainly it will be taken under advisement as the Speaker of the House will be weighing in on this, preparing his report to bring to the House in response to the questions that were put forth.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and other Acts and to provide for certain other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise and address what is a very important piece of legislation. As we said, virtually from the onset, we need to recognize that this legislation before us today is a direct result of a Supreme Court of Canada decision which needs to be respected.

The good news about this legislation is that it would recognize the fine work that members of the RCMP have conducted over the many years of its existence. I suspect that if we were to canvass the House, there would be unanimous agreement in terms of the manner in which the RCMP has provided its services over the many years.

What this legislation would do at its very core is allow for the establishment of the bargaining process, something which many different police organizations in the country already have today. Many look at it as something that is long overdue.

We recognize the valuable contribution that our Supreme Court has made in pushing the issue forward. I believe it is a credit to the government today, and particularly our Prime Minister, for recognizing how important it is to comply with the Supreme Court decision by bringing forward the legislation that we have today.

It is also very important for us to recognize that this legislation, and going through the process, was acknowledged as something that was not only important through second reading but also that we have amendments that were accepted at the committee stage, many of which were encouraged and supported by the opposition.

At the end of the day, we now have a situation due to deadlines where we have to try to move the bill through the House, given the very limited and precious time that we have to debate important issues such as this.

I know we have some questions that need to be put. I appreciate being allowed to say a few words.

• (1745)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2 and 3.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Call in the members.

• (1825)

[*English*]

*And the Clerk having announced the results of the vote:*

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that the member for Beloeil—Chambly entered the House after you had finished reading the motion, so I do not believe that his vote should be counted.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly is much smarter than I am. I am sure he knew exactly what he was voting on. However, there have been different interpretations over the years.

[*English*]

I think it would be important for you to clarify, particularly given the number of votes we are having because of the closure motions from the government, exactly when a member's vote would no longer count. At what point is the cutoff?

**The Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their interventions on this. The rule is that members have to be in their seats, and by the way, stay in their seats until they vote, when the Speaker starts reading the motion. The important thing is that members hear what they are voting on, the whole thing. Therefore, members have to be in the chamber when the Speaker starts reading the motion.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your wisdom. In this case, I was indeed late, so my vote will not count this time.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

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

(*Division No. 55*)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Aubin	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brosseau
Cannings	Caron
Choquette	Christopherson
Cullen	Davies
Donnelly	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall	Fortin
Garrison	Gill
Hardcastle	Hughes
Johns	Jolibois
Julian	Kwan
MacGregor	Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	Moore
Mulcair	Pauzé

*Government Orders*

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Saganash  
Ste-Marie  
Stewart  
Trudel

McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McCrimmon  
McKay  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendicino  
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)  
Monsef  
Morneau  
Murray  
Nater  
Nicholson  
Obhrai  
Oliphant  
O'Regan  
Ouellette  
Paul-Hus  
Petitpas Taylor  
Picard  
Qualtrough  
Ratansi  
Reid  
Richards  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Rudd  
Rusnak  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schmale  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Shields  
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
Sikand  
Sohi  
Sorbara  
Spengemann  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Tan  
Tilson  
Trudeau  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Virani  
Warawa  
Watts  
Webber  
Wilkinson  
Wong  
Young

McColeman  
McGuinty  
McKenna  
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Mendès  
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)  
Morrissey  
Nassif  
Nault  
Nuttall  
O'Connell  
Oliver  
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Rempel  
Rioux  
Rodriguez  
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Sahota  
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Saroya  
Schieffe  
Schulte  
Sgro  
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Sopuck  
Sorenson  
Stanton  
Stubbs  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Trost  
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**NAYS****Members**

Aboultaif  
Aldag  
Alleslev  
Amos  
Anderson  
Arseneault  
Ayoub  
Bagnell  
Barlow  
Beech  
Bernier  
Bezan  
Bittle  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Boissonnault  
Brassard  
Brisson  
Caesar-Chavannes  
Carr  
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)  
Chagger  
Chen  
Clarke  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
DeCoursey  
Dhaliwal  
Di Iorio  
Diotte  
Dreeschen  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Dzerowicz  
Eglinski  
El-Khoury  
Erskine-Smith  
Falk  
Fergus  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fragiskatos  
Fraser (Central Nova)  
Fry  
Gallant  
Généreux  
Gerretsen  
Godin  
Goodale  
Gourde  
Grewal  
Harder  
Harper  
Hehr  
Housefather  
Hutchings  
Jeneroux  
Jones  
Jowhari  
Kelly  
Khalid  
Kitchen  
Lake  
Lamoureux  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Leslie  
Lighthouse  
Lockhart  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Maloney  
May (Cambridge)

Albrecht  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Anandasangaree  
Arnold  
Arya  
Badawey  
Bains  
Baylis  
Bergen  
Berthold  
Bibeau  
Blair  
Block  
Bossio  
Bratina  
Brown  
Calkins  
Carrie  
Casey (Charlottetown)  
Champagne  
Chong  
Cooper  
Cuzner  
Damoff  
Deltell  
Dhillon  
Dion  
Doherty  
Drouin  
Duclos  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Easter  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Eyolfson  
Fast  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Foote  
Fraser (West Nova)  
Freeland  
Fuhr  
Garneau  
Genius  
Gladu  
Goldsmith-Jones  
Gould  
Graham  
Hajdu  
Hardie  
Harvey  
Holland  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Joly  
Jordan  
Kang  
Kent  
Khera  
Kmieć  
Lametti  
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Lebouthillier  
Lemieux  
Levitt  
Lobb  
Long  
Lukowski  
MacKenzie  
Maguire  
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)  
McCallum

Morrissey  
Nassif  
Nault  
Nuttall  
O'Connell  
Oliver  
O'Toole  
Paradis  
Peschisolido  
Philpott  
Poilievre  
Raitt  
Rayes  
Rempel  
Rioux  
Rodriguez  
Rota  
Ruimy  
Sahota  
Sangha  
Saroya  
Schieffe  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Shipley  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sopuck  
Sorenson  
Stanton  
Stubbs  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Trost  
Van Loan  
Vandenbeld  
Viersen  
Wagantall  
Warkentin  
Waugh  
Whalen  
Wilson-Raybould  
Wrzesnewskyj  
Zahid— 250

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 1 lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 2 and 3 lost.

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**Hon. Andrew Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it, you would find consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this one, with Liberal members voting yeas.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote and will be voting no.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote, but will be voting no this time, with the addition of the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, we agree and will be voting in favour of the motion.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote, but I will be voting no.

[*English*]

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

*(Division No. 56)*

**YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boudrias	Bratina
Brisson	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Footte	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Gill	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux

Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum
McCrimmon	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Pauzé
Peschisolido	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Plamondon	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Thériault
Trudeau	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 177	

**NAYS**

Members

Abouttaif	Albrecht
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Benson
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brosseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeschen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Duvall
Egliniski	Falk
Fast	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Harper	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmieciak
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire

*Private Members' Business*

Malcolmson	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Mulcair
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Quach
Raitt	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Trudel	Van Loan
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong— 123	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It being 6:33 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT**

**Mr. Ahmed Hussen (York South—Weston, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-227, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House to speak to Canadians about my private member's bill, Bill C-227, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act, community benefit.

Before I begin, I would like to thank the residents of York South—Weston for giving me the confidence and the opportunity to be in the House of Commons to present this legislation.

Since I drew an early slot in the private members' lottery, I consulted widely, and I heard extensively from various stakeholders. I felt a special responsibility to put forward legislation that would greatly benefit all Canadians.

Bill C-227 would amend section 20 of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act to include a provision that would give the Minister of Public Services and Procurement the flexibility to require bidders on federal construction, maintenance and repair contracts to include information on the community benefits that the project would provide.

Community benefits are essentially the social or economic benefits that result from a development project above and beyond the project itself. These include but are not limited to local job creation, paid training, apprenticeships, affordable housing, or any other benefit that the community identifies.

What are community benefits agreements? These are agreements between an infrastructure developer and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement that are developed after input from local community groups. CBAs are a new approach and a very important tool in empowering local communities to partner with developers in order to respond to local challenges. Essentially, CBAs maximize the local economic impact of publicly-funded development projects, producing quality jobs, training, and contributing to a responsible growth and development, and a healthier environment.

For example, my riding of York South—Weston has a section of the Eglinton LRT project, a project that has embraced a community-benefits approach, and is a great example of how a public works project can benefit a community above and beyond the project itself.

I will now present case studies. Before I do that, according to a joint report from the Mowat Centre and the Atkinson Foundation, the Government of Canada, the province of Ontario, and the city of Toronto alone have spent \$23.5 billion per year procuring goods and services, including construction. Imagine how communities would thrive if even a portion of that expenditure had CBAs tied to it. We would have more local jobs produced and more opportunities for local businesses because big construction contracts would be chopped down to bite-size pieces. We would have more paid training and apprenticeships, and unions would have new blood inserted into their membership.

I held a round table in my riding of York South—Weston in the city of Toronto with the federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. We had over 20 stakeholders participate. The message was clear. They wanted the Government of Canada to leverage spending on federal projects by increasing the local economic impact of these projects. They wanted community benefits to result from these projects above and beyond the project itself. They wanted federal leadership to result from this.

Community benefits agreements are not new. They have been used for years in the United States and in many other parts of the world.

There are great examples also of community benefits agreements working in our country. These also highlight how they could work here.

Social networks and indigenous communities in Canada have signed community benefits agreements for various projects, including the 2010 Olympic Winter Games' Southeast False Creek Olympic Village, where a community benefits agreement was formed to create opportunities in the areas of training, and the acquisition of goods and services.

*Private Members' Business*

The second example is the Waneta expansion project. The Columbia Power Corporation signed a community benefits agreement with the Ktunaxa Nation Council for the Waneta expansion project in British Columbia, which included provisions for assistance to the community in small hydro development.

● (1835)

Finally, the Eglinton crosstown LRT project is set to provide benefits to disadvantaged communities through equitable hiring practices, training, apprenticeships, local suppliers, and social procurement opportunities, where possible. In addition to this, other provinces such as Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Manitoba are either exploring or have already implemented a formal community benefit agreement.

Since 2001, just south of the border in Los Angeles, one of the first successful pioneers of community benefit agreements, organizations have negotiated CBAs that range from living wage requirements to investments in parks and recreation.

In the United Kingdom in 2012, the Public Services (Social Value) Act was passed to promote social benefits through public sector procurement. According to this act a commissioning authority must consider how the purchase might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area, so that everyone can get a slice of the development pie.

All of these case studies show very clearly that there is a growing realization that community benefit agreements are essential to public development projects.

Experience also shows that CBAs can bring historically marginalized or excluded groups into the construction industry. Women, for example, represent more than 50% of the population but just 2.6% of the construction industry labour force. Youth from underprivileged communities, veterans, and indigenous groups can also benefit from community benefit agreements and become more involved in the construction industry.

There are groups already addressing this issue and I will give three examples. The Hammer Heads program in the greater Toronto area is a skill and employment-based training program with the construction industry that provides youth from under-resourced and under-privileged communities with access to apprenticeship career opportunities. Helmets to Hardhats is a Canada-wide program that is designed to provide opportunities to anyone who has or is serving in the Canadian Forces.

Finally, "I'm Eglinton" is a pre-apprenticeship program in my riding of York South—Weston for Ontario Works recipients interested in a career in the construction and building trades industries. The program aims to provide participants with knowledge about the building trades and to expose them to working in the building trades and construction fields. By gaining real-life experience, networking with industry members, and gaining a secure foothold in the construction industry the community benefits in addition to these individuals.

My Bill C-227 would also allow for measures to ensure there is implementation of the community benefit agreements that are signed by developers and that there is also a measurement of outcomes.

If Bill C-227 is passed, it would empower the Minister of Public Services and Procurement to require bidders on government-funded projects to explain the community benefits that would result from these projects. The bill would also enable the minister to require these developers to provide an assessment as to whether the project has indeed provided community benefits. The bill would also require the minister to report back to Parliament at the end of every fiscal year to demonstrate what community benefits were delivered from the CBAs that were signed.

Community benefit agreements are inline with our government's priorities, such as procurement modernization. In addition to this, the largest province in the country, Ontario, has already set a precedent for community benefits. Ontario has successfully made community benefit agreements in the context of infrastructure planning and investment.

In conclusion, the community benefit agreements that would emanate from Bill C-227 are particularly suited to my riding and many other communities that would benefit greatly from local and increased economic impact from federal building projects.

Many communities in the U.S. and Canada have already had many projects with a CBA component but they have done this without a legislative framework. However, this is an idea that has passed the test in practical terms and in many communities. It has delivered.

● (1840)

My bill is about bringing CBAs into the federal realm, so that we can allow the Government of Canada to exercise leadership on community benefit agreements and take its benefits to all communities across Canada. If passed, we would have an amazing opportunity in which the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada would have CBA enshrined in law. This would create a model for the rest of the country. It is also about ensuring that future federal projects involving the construction, maintenance, or repair of federal projects would result in community benefits for millions of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

I am asking my colleagues on all sides of the House for their support for my private member's bill, Bill C-227, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit), so that we can have a community benefit approach enshrined in federal law. I welcome any amendments that my colleagues will bring forward at the committee stage.

● (1845)

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments. I will not be supporting this bill.

I do have one specific question. The member made quite a bold statement that he had consulted extensively. I would like to know the range of that consultation. Were the key industry associations across Canada consulted, the ones whose members would be most impacted, for example, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, and I.E. Canada?

*Private Members' Business*

Were these organizations that represent small and medium-sized businesses, and that would have to bear the burden of this additional red tape, consulted, and what was their response?

**Mr. Ahmed Hussien:** Madam Speaker, that is an important question. The consultation process with my bill is ongoing. I have consulted extensively with various groups, including Canada's building trades union, the carpenters union, and many other groups, foundations, and academic groups. They have told me clearly that this is an overdue measure, something the federal government should move on.

I intend to continue the consultation process. We are only at the first hour of debate at second reading. We have more time to consult. I commit to the hon. member that I will continue that process to ensure we hear from all sides.

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, certainly, New Democrats also support the concept of community benefit agreements. However, we are concerned that simultaneously the Liberal government is plowing ahead with trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership that restrict procurement preferences at the subnational level.

Is the member for York South—Weston confident that the community benefit agreements that he envisions would survive Liberal trade policy?

**Mr. Ahmed Hussien:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his support of the bill, as well as for his question.

The issue of procurement is important. My government has committed to modernizing the procurement process. In terms of Bill C-227, a similar piece of legislation in Ontario, Bill 6, has survived trade agreements.

I intend to continue to consult with Canadians. My understanding is that Bill C-227 would be enshrined in federal law if it passes. It would enable the federal minister to use a community benefits approach when a project requires it because not every project will have a community benefits outcome. There are projects that will not produce many benefits, but there are certainly some that will require community benefit support.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague for what is an extraordinary bill and one that would have the potential to transform infrastructure projects into not just good strong economic development but good strong community development.

Is the member aware that the Toronto region board of trade has endorsed just such a policy as good economic policy, good economic development to get youth unemployment tackled in major reasons, as has the greater Vancouver board of trade and the board of trade of Metropolitan Montreal?

Is the member also aware that the TPP actually allows for local procurement under one of its clauses to protect the ability for national and subnational governments to ensure that marginalized communities get jobs as part of any new trade agreement?

**Mr. Ahmed Hussien:** Madam Speaker, it is certainly the aim of my bill to ensure that, through this piece of legislation, we can empower the Minister of Public Services and Procurement to address

the long-standing demand by communities to tackle youth unemployment and to consider other communities that are neglected or under-represented in the construction industry. That is why the organizations named by my colleague are supporting a community benefits approach.

• (1850)

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for York South—Weston, for his speech and presentation, and I would like to commend him for introducing his private member's bill, which is an important milestone in the life of a parliamentarian.

As he pointed out in his speech, this is one of the first series of bills being debated, so he had little time to draft it. As a result, I want to raise a few points during my speech today.

[English]

Maybe just to remind members, this bill is adding the notion of community benefit along with the already provided capacity to the minister by narrowing the definition of “community benefit” in the public works and government services department. It would expect the bidders to be fulfilling some additional requirements regarding community benefit, if the minister wishes to obtain this information before handing out the contract. It would expect that the minister could ask for a study to the contracted parties so that they can precisely scale of the community benefit generated by the project. There would be an additional step of a report to Parliament after each exercise that would evaluate if the work, repairs, or maintenance generated any community benefit.

Before I comment any further on the bill, I would like to comment on a poll that was done when we talked to businesses in this country. Basically, it says that companies felt that there is too much red tape in Canada already. Sixty-nine per cent of businesses in this country find that there is too much red tape and that it is not helping to create jobs, create wealth, or create a lively community. I think, in particular, of farmers who have to deal with red tape exactly in the middle of their high season.

It is very important, as parliamentarians, when we are tabling new legislation, although well intended—and I do not doubt in any way the intention of the member to increase the benefit of the activity of the government—to make sure that we are not adding an extra layer of administrative tasks to those who are actually responding to the need of the government.

[Translation]

Our party, the Conservative Party, certainly supports transparency within the government and in the federal contracting process. We believe that community interests must be served. We know that, naturally, when contracts are awarded in a region, there are automatically benefits to the economy. It is also important to support local workers. We believe in a neutral, rational contracting process that is advantageous to taxpayers.



*Private Members' Business*

That is my concern about Bill C-227 as introduced. It is a sort of double-edged sword, since it would give the minister discretionary authority in the contracting process. When we consider the tens of thousands of contracts that are awarded every year by Public Services and Procurement Canada, this will create a lot of red tape, which I think is completely unnecessary.

Paragraph 7(1)(a) of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act explains the framework and the various duties or functions of the minister, pursuant to the act. It states that the minister must “[increase] the efficiency and economy of the federal public administration and...[enhance] integrity and efficiency in the contracting process”.

Under these proposals, as we have seen and as I have mentioned, the minister would be able to ask bidders to submit additional reports and would be able to issue a report to Parliament. This translates into many different administrative tasks. It is another step for the bidder, but it also means additional tasks for our public officials, tasks that are unnecessary.

● (1855)

Therefore, in the interest of small and medium-sized businesses, we believe this is unnecessary. I invite my colleague to consider some of the initiatives in place to reduce red tape. Examples from the Government of New Brunswick and others from Quebec come to mind.

My colleague mentioned the Helmets to Hardhats Canada program, an initiative that was led by veterans themselves to facilitate veterans' integration into civil society. He could have mentioned a number of other initiatives that our government brought in to reduce red tape for veterans, including the veterans independence program. We also simplified the process for that program.

Veterans no longer have any paperwork to fill out for that program. In the past, they had to fill out forms and include invoices, whether it was for housekeeping, snow removal or window cleaning, and it all had to be reviewed by officials. There were over 100,000 transactions of that nature. We simplified the process so there would be only two payments, thereby making things easier for veterans.

Officials can now spend their time on more important tasks than reviewing housekeeping, snow removal and window cleaning invoices. Taxpayers also come out further ahead, as do veterans, most of whom are aging, we have to admit, and who benefit from the veterans independence program, also known as the VIP program.

I also want to applaud the fact that Public Works and Government Services Canada has already produced recommendations in response to the Red Tape Reduction Commission's work, which started in 2011. Led by the minister, the member for Beauce, our government consulted businesses across the country with a view to boosting efficiency and figuring out how best to reduce red tape and spare businesses from getting bogged down in bureaucratic processes.

Of the many recommendations, Public Works and Government Services Canada adopted two that zeroed in on improving the procurement process. In response to one of the recommendations in the Red Tape Reduction Commission's report, Public Works and Government Services Canada improved the famous MERX

database. People who work for Public Works and Government Services Canada know it well.

PWGSC improved the procurement process by adopting a smart procurement approach that leverages digital technology to provide tools and information that enhance service delivery while cutting costs and reducing the operational burden for clients, suppliers, and procurement staff. That is my first example.

The department continued to create electronic tools for its clients, which helped the government to become more efficient and improve its services. That measure is related to another measure, the open bidding service. It was recommended that the program be improved and that is what PWGSC did. The government electronic tendering service was improved. There is now one-stop access to information on the federal government's procurement activities.

The people watching at home, whether they be entrepreneurs or suppliers, can go to the MERX website to see all of the federal government's procurement and leasing needs and determine whether they can meet those needs. This bill pertains mainly to property development projects.

The MERX website has become the Government of Canada's official website for tendering opportunities. This site provides one-stop access to information on the federal government's procurement activities. It contains useful information and it is easy to access.

Now, it is important for the government to simplify its processes and become more efficient by removing red tape rather than creating more.

We believe that today's bill will create red tape and concentrate powers in the minister's hands. Given the large number of transactions that are conducted, I worry that this bill will merely serve to create more red tape. That is why we cannot support this bill today.

● (1900)

Once again, we need to remember that if our companies have to deal with red tape, they will not be able to remain competitive. As a result, in order to create healthy communities, we need to reduce red tape. We do not intend to support this bill at this time.

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin on a point of consensus. I believe all members of the House support investment in infrastructure. We sometimes differ on how those funds are allocated. For example, in the recent federal budget, transit funding was allocated based on ridership, which is probably a good deal for a city like Toronto that has a very well-developed transit system, but it does not do much to help a city like Regina that needs funding to extend its transit system.

Looking at the province of Saskatchewan as a whole, we will receive less than 1% of the transit funding from the budget, even though we comprise more than 3% of Canada's population.

Another area on which we sometimes differ is the conditions that government applies to infrastructure investment. The previous Conservative government required projects to be organized as public-private partnerships in order to receive federal funding. One of the problems with that is that public-private partnerships effectively involve paying a private business to borrow money at a higher interest rate than the government itself could access.

I was very active in the referendum campaign in Regina to keep our new waste water treatment plant public. However, the city privatized this facility because it needed to be a P3 in order to receive federal funding.

During the campaign, I talked about removing this restriction from federal infrastructure funding. I am very pleased that the federal government has now promised to do exactly that. We should be deciding on a case-by-case basis what financing model makes the most sense for which infrastructure projects. We should not have the government arbitrarily saying that they have to be P3s.

I am happy to work with the government to implement that change, but I am also disappointed that the government has increased funding to PPP Canada, because that money, by definition, will only be available to projects that organize themselves as P3s.

Another type of condition that we could talk about for infrastructure funding is domestic or local procurement. If one of the goals of infrastructure spending is to boost the Canadian economy, then it certainly makes sense to buy domestic inputs and to hire Canadian workers.

I would recognize community benefit agreements as being one way of ensuring that public infrastructure spending translates into local jobs and local training opportunities.

The New Democrats definitely support the basic principle behind the bill. However, it is also important to talk about some of the bill's limitations.

As was explained by the member for York South—Weston, the bill would allow the minister to negotiate community benefit agreements, but it would not commit the government to do anything. It is also important to note that this is being put forward as a private member's bill rather than as government legislation.

I am sure the member for York South—Weston is putting forward the bill in good faith, but let us also recognize that the Liberals have

more history of talking about community benefit agreements without actually doing very much.

The member for York South—Weston talked about a Metrolinx project at the Eglinton LRT that included a community benefit agreement. I would like to talk about another Metrolinx project. This was the construction of the Union Pearson Express. Let us remember, Metrolinx is a crown corporation of the provincial Liberal government. In building this hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Union Pearson Express upgrades, it refused to create apprenticeships and almost none of the workers were hired locally. Therefore, there is a big difference between talking about community benefit agreements and actually implementing them.

Another limitation of the bill is that the government is simultaneously pushing ahead with trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership that will restrict subnational procurement. I have already asked whether the government is confident that community benefit agreements will not be challenged under the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

● (1905)

I think we heard two answers to this point in the debate. One was that the analogous Ontario legislation so far has survived trade challenges, but obviously it has not been in place under the TPP, so it is hard to know whether it will survive that agreement. The other answer we heard is that the TPP includes some sort of a carve-out for minority hiring, and that is not overly surprising given that the United States is involved in the agreement and does have some of those requirements itself. However, it is not clear to me that this exemption is really going to be effective in allowing all of the community benefit agreements that we have talked about during the course of this debate. I think there is a real risk that Liberal trade policy is going to contradict the spirit if not the letter of the bill.

I would also like to take a moment to respond to some of the points made by the Conservatives in this debate.

I was very impressed by the number of times the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis used the term “red tape”. I do not know if he set a record for this Parliament, but it was quite a performance and I salute him for that. However, I do not think that just calling something red tape is necessarily a good argument. Let me be clear, the bill would not apply requirements to private construction projects. What it is saying is that if a company wants to bid on a government infrastructure project, some of the contractual requirements could involve hiring local workers, providing local training, and those sorts of things. Therefore, I really do not think that it makes a lot sense to call that red tape any more than we call any other type of requirement written into a contract red tape.

The other argument we heard from the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, which I found maybe a little bit contradictory, was that the former Conservative government had done a lot of good things to mandate the hiring of veterans as apprentices. It sounded to me like that was maybe an example of a community benefit-type agreement that worked, and certainly not something we would want to dismiss as being red tape.

In summary, I am going to vote for the bill, but I am skeptical as to how many community benefit agreements it will actually produce. To the extent that it does produce community benefit agreements, I am skeptical that they will survive Liberal trade policy.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to support Bill C-227, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit).

To put this bill in context, I would like to take a moment to describe the department governed by that act. Public Service and Procurement Canada serves as a vital foundation for the Canadian government. With the help of over 12,000 hard-working employees across Canada, the department acts as the government's principal treasurer, accountant, and real property manager.

The department's efforts ensure that the government buys what it needs and guarantees that resources are in place for the future. This includes big ticket items, such as military procurement and large information technology systems, as well as other goods and services, such as office supplies, fuel, and translation services.

In total, PSPC manages about \$15 billion on behalf of other government departments and agencies. This amounts to over 80% of total federal government procurement.

Not only does this government department buy much of the goods and services for the Government of Canada, we also seek to make these purchases beneficial to communities and businesses across the country. For example, of the \$15 billion in procurement the department manages each year, around 40% goes to Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises.

Canada's unprecedented, multi-billion dollar national shipbuilding strategy is also giving rise to accomplishments beyond procurement. In addition to re-establishing a world-class shipbuilding industry, the national shipbuilding strategy is growing our economy, creating jobs for Canadians, and generating apprenticeship programs for indigenous communities and women.

This bill is yet another example of our efforts to make government procurement work for all Canadians. The principles that underpin this private member's bill and its intended objectives are laudable and deserve further study in committee.

I would like to congratulate the member for York South—Weston for his work on this private member's bill. When he introduced the bill, he stated that he would like to empower communities to make development work for them. I think this is something every member of this House can support.

Bill C-227 seeks to amend section 20 of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act to include a provision stating:

The Minister may, before awarding a contract for the construction, maintenance or repair of public works, federal real property or federal immovables, require bidders on the proposal to provide information on the community benefits that the project will provide.

The bill also requires that:

A contracting party shall, upon request by the Minister, provide the Minister with an assessment as to whether the project has provided community benefits.

### *Private Members' Business*

The Minister must table an annual report in Parliament assessing whether construction, maintenance, or repair projects have provided community benefit.

Other jurisdictions are starting to move toward an approach that considers community benefits in the context of infrastructure investment. Such approaches generally involve the use of community benefits agreements, which are formal agreements between a real estate agent or infrastructure developer, and a coalition that reflects and represents people who are affected by a large development project.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Community benefit agreements are not in any way a new concept. They have been used for years in the United States, and they were used in the construction of the athletes' village for the Vancouver Olympics.

Last year, Ontario was the first province to include community benefits in provincial infrastructure projects under the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015.

If Bill C-277 is referred to committee, it would be advisable for the committee to examine the experiences of these jurisdictions in more detail and identify the lessons learned that could be applied to federal endeavours in Canada.

When he introduced the bill, the member for York South—Weston also said that community benefit agreements “create community wealth, quality jobs, training, responsible growth, and a healthier environment”.

Once again, these are objectives that every member of the House of Commons should support.

In fact, our government is already taking steps to achieve these objectives. To strengthen the middle class and ensure more inclusive growth for more Canadians, budget 2016 is making historic investments in infrastructure and innovation.

According to the budget, “investing in infrastructure is not just about creating good jobs and economic growth. It's also about building communities that Canadians are proud to call home.”

[*English*]

The mandate letter for the Minister of Public Services and Procurement requires that the minister, “Modernize procurement practices so that they are simpler, less administratively burdensome, deploy modern comptrollership, and include practices that support our economic policy goals, including green and social procurement.”

To achieve these objectives the Department of Public Services and Procurement Canada is working to simplify its contracts, templates, and business processes. This will make it easier for clients to buy the goods and services they need to deliver their programs to Canadians and for suppliers to sell to the government.

*Private Members' Business*

The department is acquiring and implementing a new web-based e-procurement solution, which will move the Government of Canada procurement function to an e-business model. This will leverage the best practices of the industry, which will reduce cost and process burden for government departments and agencies, and for suppliers.

Taken together, these initiatives will modernize the Government of Canada procurement function, foster competition, and allow procurement to advance social and green policies for the benefit of Canadians. With this private member's bill, we are taking another step to ensure procurement is socially conscious and community-focused.

• (1915)

[*Translation*]

To come back to the content of Bill C-227, the bill should be sent to committee, because several parts of it warrant closer attention.

First of all, we need to determine whether the scope of the bill will allow for its own objectives to be fully achieved. For instance, amending section 20 of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act, in accordance with Bill C-227, would require that community benefits be taken into account for projects led by Public Services and Procurement Canada, whether on its own behalf or on behalf of another department.

Accordingly, the overall impact of the amendments would be limited, because approximately 30% of the federal government's real property is managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada.

Second, we need to look closely at any potential impact the bill could have on international trade agreements. International agreements often impose certain restrictions regarding the requirements that member nations can include in their bid solicitation process. The intentions of Bill C-227 are laudable. Let us send it to committee so that it can be examined in greater detail.

[*English*]

We want procurement to work for all Canadians and the bill would help us do just that.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the bill.

I think we should start by understanding what Bill C-227 would actually do.

It is a classic case of the Liberal government getting its backbenchers to do its dirty work, because we know that the government has already betrayed small businesses in Canada by not reducing the tax rate down to 9%, and the bill before us would impose additional burdens on our small businesses across Canada. Therefore, the Liberals have a private member, one of their backbenchers, bring forward the bill. It provides the Liberal government with plausible deniability. The bill gets passed here in the House, and they blame the House for it rather than themselves. We know what is up.

Essentially, Bill C-227 would allow the minister to require bidders on federal projects to provide information on the community benefits that a federal project would deliver. We have no idea what benefits

would be sufficient, which, of course, introduces greater uncertainty into the bidding process.

However, it is not just information that the minister would be able to require. The bill would also empower the minister to demand bidders provide a formal assessment as to whether community benefits have indeed been provided.

Who would conduct this assessment? Is it the minister at his or her discretion? Is it some independent party? What is the threshold or standard that must be met? Is there a value of contract that would be captured? We do not know. Would bidders compete with each other on who could best meet the community-benefit test, or is it whether the appropriate balance between community benefit and value for money has been met? Who makes that decision?

Bill C-227 would turn what is usually an objective process, which is value for money, in other words, getting a project, product, or service at the best price and the best quality, and turns it into a largely subjective determination by the minister. This is another example of a Liberal government overreaching and interfering in matters it should stay out of.

Last week, I spoke to Motion No. 45, which was another Liberal initiative that essentially interfered in the ability of municipalities to do contracting. Now the federal government wants to force every municipality to run every single infrastructure project over \$500,000 through an assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions that will be caused both upstream and downstream. Again, it is a horrific cost to municipalities. There are 4,000 of them across Canada, multiply that by two or three projects a year, and think of how much money that is going to cost municipalities across the country.

This is all about layering red tape upon red tape upon red tape, and undermining and underappreciating the value of small businesses to our economy.

As I mentioned, the Liberals have already hammered Canadian small businesses by breaking their promise to lower the small business tax rate to 9%. That was a very clear broken promise. That decision alone is going to cost our businesses somewhere in the order of \$2.2 billion over the next five years, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs across this country. Now they are hammering them with even more government red tape, increasing the cost of doing business, and further discouraging smaller businesses from bidding on government contracts.

The bottom line is that Bill C-227 would hurt small businesses. It would add a massive amount of additional regulation on top of the ones that already exist. It would dissuade small businesses from bidding on government contracts, and it would require small businesses to assess matters other than price and quality, which, of course, will drive up the cost of government and drive up the cost to taxpayers in this country.

Of course, these companies, if they are going to bid, are going to have to build in these additional risk considerations into the price that they bid. We are talking about additional costs to taxpayers across this country.

Then there are, of course, the additional powers that would be given to the minister under the bill. Bill C-227 would expand the minister's discretionary power and allow the minister to unnecessarily politicize the contracting process.

There is no clarity as to when an assessment would be required. It could be in the middle of the contract, after the contract had been let, or maybe after the bids have been received. There is no clarity in the bill at all. It is very broad in scope. It is highly ambiguous. It is vague. It leaves everybody here in the House, the contracting community, the sub-trades, and the workers in the dark.

● (1920)

I asked a question of the proponent of the bill earlier on. Given the fact that he claimed he had broadly consulted on the bill, had he at the very least consulted with the key business organizations across the country that represent small business? I am talking about the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, the Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters. The member said that he had consulted with unions across the country. Really. Why not with the businesses themselves that actually pay that price? He said that he had consulted with academics. What about consulting with the very Canadians who would be most impacted by the bill?

The bottom line is this. The bill would do a few things. It would impose an increased burden on our companies. It would impose additional costs on them and uncertainty for small businesses that have already been betrayed by the Liberal government. The bill would also replace what in the past was a clear process, value for money, ensuring we get the best quality at the very best price, with a process that would be unpredictable and highly subjective and dependent upon the discretion of the minister and his or her officials.

In his speech, the sponsor highlighted all of the things the bill intended to achieve. It is clear to anyone who heard the speech that this is about social engineering at significant cost to the taxpayer. The bill would drive up costs to taxpayers to try to achieve some social engineering goals that the Liberal government suggests may be reasonable objectives.

The best response we should have when businesses are contracting with the federal government is to ensure that they understand what the rules are, ensuring Canadian taxpayers get the best value for money.

Then of course the proponent referred to Ontario, of all places, as being the role model of these community benefit agreements. A Liberal government in the province of Ontario has mismanaged the economy so much and has driven that province into such debt that today it has the highest sub-federal cost, the highest sub-federal debt not only within Canada, not only within North America, but in the entire world. Is that a role model we should be following? Absolutely not.

No one should be surprised that the bill is coming from the Liberal side of the House. We can also be certain that Liberals' will find new ways of increasing costs to taxpayers, interfering with the private sector, and clearly giving themselves more and more power over time. On that basis alone we should reject the bill.

### *Private Members' Business*

I ask the Liberal government, the Liberal members of the House, the NDP members who have highlighted significant shortcomings of the bill, to reconsider their support of the bill, let business do what it does best, which is provide contracts, services, products of the very best quality and at the very best price. By doing so, we would be serving the taxpayers of our country.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to a bill that has to do with community benefit. Community benefit is extremely important to small rural communities.

Some members come from ridings similar to mine, ridings covering a lot of land, often with a hundred or so small municipalities. When the federal government chooses to invest locally, hire local companies and workers, or purchase materials locally, it can make all the difference for these communities, especially those that are fighting their decline every day. Many of those communities have lost infrastructure over the years. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to focus on as much community benefit as possible.

Although I support the principle of my colleague's bill, I think that some points could be improved or clarified. That is why I want to share my thoughts with him. If he chooses to present amendments to his bill in committee to improve it, he will have some possible solutions to make it more effective.

I want to emphasize that when it comes to community benefits the bill says:

The Minister may, before awarding a contract for the construction, maintenance or repair of public works, federal real property or federal immovables, require bidders on the proposal to provide information on the community benefits that the project will provide.

Note that it says "may". It is not mandatory. The circumstances are not defined. One of the problems I see with the bill is that it is not clear on whether the bidder is required to provide such information. It depends on what side of the bed the minister wakes up that morning. If he gets up on the left side, he will require that information, but if he gets up on the right side he will say it is not necessary. That is a problem. If we do not define the criteria describing the circumstances under which it would be appropriate to require the information, then we have a big problem. Then we end up with another bill that gives more power to the minister and we do not want that.

When stable, reliable, well-known criteria are adopted, we avoid the problem of wondering why one project had a community benefits analysis and another project did not. That is one of the first problems I see with this bill.

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Once an analysis is underway and the minister has asked about the community benefits, we have no idea how that information will be used. Is it just a potential piece of information for the minister or his team at Public Works and Government Services? Will this really add points on the project evaluation grid? That is a problem. The minister is asking for something without any real criteria on which to base the request. What is more, we do not know whether the information requested will actually be considered when the time comes to determine which project to choose. It is a problem.

This is about more transparency for governments, but in the end, disclosing why they want to know about community benefits or why not is discretionary. Choosing to factor something into the analysis or not is discretionary. We have to consider that. I think it is interesting, but I would not want people asking for that information for basically no good reason. If, ultimately, community benefits are not factored into the decision to approve or reject a proposal, then why bother asking for that information initially when it only complicates things?

The member opposite really should explain that better if he wants to improve his bill.

Furthermore, there is no way to know if there is any obligation to keep these promises. Unless someone makes an access to information request about potential community benefits for each project according to various bidders, there is no way of knowing. However, since these are private bids, I am not even sure whether that information can even be obtained under the Access to Information Act. There is no obligation to disclose whether promises were duly kept.

• (1930)

Imagine that a number of companies have analyzed the benefits that their project would generate and that one company is chosen. Under the bill, the minister could ask for a report in order to find out whether the work generated community benefits. That report would have to be tabled in Parliament before the end of the fiscal year. However, we would not know whether the community benefits that were created actually correspond to the list of potential benefits that was submitted. We would not know whether the bidder was actually meeting its obligations in terms of community benefits. We would not know whether the bidder conducted a serious analysis of the potential community benefits or whether it merely exaggerated the community benefits a bit to increase its chances of being awarded the contract. That could also be a problem.

I believe that, when we ask about the potential community benefits, we need to ensure that we closely monitor the situation and that commitments are kept. Community benefits have an important impact on the economy, particularly in small communities. When there is a major construction project, the small restaurants and services nearby often reap the benefits. We also need to be able to maintain a certain expertise and fully understand the regional characteristics related to the project.

The problem I see with this bill is that the various parts are not connected. It is not a continuous process. Bidders are asked about community benefit, but once the project is complete, no one makes sure that this benefit truly exists. Furthermore, the minister is not

required to ask about community benefit once the project is complete.

The same is true of the report to Parliament. There is a problem with continuity, from the bidding stage to the results stage.

I hope that my colleague has taken note of my comments, since they can help him improve his bill when it is sent to committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue will have two minutes to finish her speech when the House next considers this matter.

[*English*]

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

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is good to stand in the House today to address a question I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs on March 9 regarding the imprisonment and the health conditions of Nadiya Savchenko.

It is fitting that we are having this discussion today, because it is Nadiya's 35th birthday. I would like to wish her a happy birthday, but I know that it is definitely not a joyous occasion for her to be wrongfully charged and convicted as she has been by the Russian government.

As members know, Nadiya is a member of parliament in Ukraine. She was captured in the fighting that has been taking place in eastern Ukraine, in Donbass. She was a member of the army. She is a pilot. She flies fighter jets and bombers, and attack helicopters, but she was actually on the ground when she was abducted by Russian forces and illegally taken across the line in complete contravention of the Geneva Convention.

It is important to note that during her imprisonment for the past two years, she has gone on numerous hunger strikes. While she was in court she was on a dry hunger strike to protest the sham of what has happened to her.

I have been calling upon the Government of Canada and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take a very aggressive stand with Russia. I have only seen one statement that has come from the Minister of Foreign Affairs on this issue, and that was on March 8, when Nadiya was in very rough shape from a health standpoint because of the hunger strike.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The new government always talks about how it is going to have a more working relationship with Russia than we did as the previous Conservative government. However, we have not seen its words to Russia match the rhetoric that we hear from Russia on things like Ukraine and the case of Nadiya Savchenko.

It is also important when dealing with Russia that we come across as very strong in our rhetoric because President Putin seems to be provoked by weakness. Unfortunately, we hear statements coming from the Minister of Foreign Affairs that he appeals to Russia to act compassionately and immediately when dealing with Nadiya Savchenko. What I want to hear, and I think what the Ukrainian community needs to hear from the government, is stronger language than that. It has to demand it.

At the same time, when the government is demanding the release of Nadiya Savchenko and the overturning of this kangaroo court decision to convict her for 22 years in jail back on March 22, is the government is going to have a conversation with the Kremlin, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs needs to pick up the phone, call foreign minister Lavrov in Russia and demand that Nadiya be released.

We are seeing the right things coming from President Poroshenko in Ukraine in working to get a prisoner exchange so that Nadiya can finally go home and assume her seat in the Verkhovna Rada, the parliament of Ukraine.

● (1935)

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for keeping this in the forefront.

We have been following developments in the case of Ms. Nadiya Savchenko closely and with great concern. She is a brave young woman. She serves not only as a pilot in Ukraine's armed forces but also as a member of both Ukraine's parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

She has been unlawfully detained in Russia since June 2014. It is her 35th birthday today in a Russian prison. We are hopeful that this will be the last birthday she spends detained illegally in Russia.

Canada has repeatedly emphasized that Ms. Savchenko's transfer to Russia was illegal, the charges against her politically motivated, and her treatment during her detention is a matter of grave concern. We have denounced the unjust conviction and harsh sentence brought against her, and have drawn attention to the fact that the court process was marked by irregularities from the very beginning.

We have done so both bilaterally and within the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Alongside our international partners, we have also ensured that Canadian diplomats were present, in person, to monitor and report on key stages of Ms. Savchenko's trial in Russia.

Canada has also regularly expressed its concerns over Ms. Savchenko's health during her detention, including in the statement that was referenced, issued by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on March 8. We have urged Russia to act compassionately by immediately releasing her and returning her to friends, family, and colleagues in Ukraine.

We were pleased to lend our voice to the international #free-savchenko campaign. We will continue to call upon Russia to free Ms. Savchenko until such time as she is released.

The circumstances of Ms. Savchenko's transfer to and detention in Russia have brought into bold relief the brazenness of Russia's actions in Ukraine, which have breached international law, and undermined fundamental trust between Russia and the West.

Canada has made it clear that Russia's actions in Ukraine are unacceptable. In response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its ongoing support to insurgents in the Donbass region, we have imposed a broad range of sanctions against individuals and entities implicated in Russia's violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We remain firm that sanctions will not be lifted until Russia has fully implemented its Minsk commitments. We remain ready to implement further measures as required, in tandem with our international partners.

I was at a women in parliaments conference in Jordan last week. Many women parliamentarians commented on their gratitude for Canada's strong stand for Ukraine.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined during his visit to Kiev earlier this year, this government is unwavering in its support for Ukraine in the face of Russian actions aimed at undermining its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in Ukraine's efforts to build a secure, stable and prosperous country.

● (1940)

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, when we look at what is happening in Ukraine and the position the Government of Canada has taken, we must ensure that the government of today knows that it is riding on the coattails of the previous Conservative government for the hard-work that we did in supporting Ukraine during this very difficult time.

Therefore, we are urging the Government of Canada to continue on that path. That includes ensuring that we not only maintain sanctions, and I am glad to hear that the member mentioned that, but also have the right wording in dealing with Russia in the Nadiya Savchenko case.

Ms. Savchenko was convicted for a crime she never committed. The two murders that she was charged with actually occurred a couple of hours after she was already abducted. We know that these are trumped up charges and the Geneva Convention has been violated.

I call upon the government to demand that the Russian government return Nadiya Savchenko immediately to her family and friends, so that she can pursue her career as a politician in Ukraine.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Madam Speaker, I am happy to build on the work that the previous government did in support of Ukraine. There is no question about that.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We are following the developments in the case of Ms. Savchenko closely and have seized every opportunity to call upon Russia to release Ms. Savchenko and return her to Ukraine. Members have seen that demonstrated by our further sanctions.

It is interesting that we are being asked to talk to Russia. That aligns with our foreign policy view of engagement which we feel we are in a stronger position on than the previous government.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am calling on the Liberal government to repeal the cessation provisions of Bill C-31, Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act.

Bill C-31 came into force on December 15, 2012, and it is retroactive. Cessation applications are being brought against permanent residents because it is alleged that refugees have re-availed themselves of protection by temporarily travelling back to their country of origin. No matter that the conditions of the country of origin have changed, no matter that they are going back to see a dying relative for one last time, no matter that the law did not exist at the time of travel, people are at risk of losing their permanent resident status.

This law effectively created a two-tier system for permanent residents: those who could travel back to their countries of origin without repercussions and those who could not. This is to say that refugees who gained their permanent resident status legitimately could lose their PR status for returning to their country of origin for a visit. No other permanent residents face this risk. These permanent residents are fully integrated and settled into Canadian society, gainfully employed, have Canadian-born children, and are contributing to Canada. To be clear, cessation cases do not involve fraud or misrepresentation.

Let me share with members the story of the Esfand family. Mrs. Bahareh Esfand and her first daughter were classified as refugees under the principle of family unity. They originally came to Canada under the government's sponsor refugee resettlement program because her husband was found to be at risk in Iran. Since their arrival in Canada, Mrs. Esfand gave birth to her second daughter in Canada. The Esfand family is now a well-established, self-supporting family of four, who have called Canada home for the last 10 years.

When Mrs. Esfand applied for her citizenship, it triggered the cessation process, and the government is trying to revoke her status here. It is alleged that because she returned to Iran to see her family, she should cease to be a refugee, lose her permanent resident status, and be ineligible for citizenship.

Even though Mrs. Esfand's husband and her two children are Canadian citizens, CIC has frozen her 2011 citizenship application and is trying to revoke all her status in Canada. If it is successful, she will be removed from Canada, away from her children and husband, and deemed as a foreign national with no status in Canada. She has been fighting against this and is now defending the third court case filed against her by CIC. She has also been forced to file her own case to lift the freeze on her citizenship application.

Surely, any reasonable person can see the absurdity of this. By the way, Mrs. Esfand was not a refugee at risk in the first place, only her husband was, and she came under family unity.

Her case is just one among many. Through FOI, an internal document show that an annual target of a minimum of 875 vacation or cessation cases has been set for CBSA to execute. As a result, refugees are being investigated, their PR status ceased, and cases are ending up in court. This even applies to those who come from countries where there is a moratorium on removals and those who are still at risk if returned. This just makes no sense.

As we know, in real life, people travel to visit a sick or dying family member or for other legitimate reasons. To top it all off, the investigations for some of these families are triggered when they apply for citizenship. Now we are hearing reports that people are afraid to apply for citizenship. How much of taxpayer money is being wasted on cessation cases? How many officials are working on cessation cases instead of processing the backlogs of family reunification cases? How many cases has the government targeted? How many people have been deported? These are the questions that people are asking.

• (1945)

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver East for raising this important issue in the House and for her continued advocacy on the part of immigration issues as the opposition critic.

This is an important debate on cessation issues in the former Bill C-31 enacted by the previous government, and the impact it has on permanent residents.

The hon. member for Vancouver East has asked a very important question, and has raised this previously with our government. In fact, the government is in absolute agreement with the hon. member for Vancouver East on the need to review this very important piece of legislation and its impact since it was enacted under the former Bill C-31.

We have, in this country, a long and proud tradition of providing protection to those in need. We have one of the fairest and most generous immigration and asylum systems in the world. Our immigration laws are applied impartially, they are based on facts, and they are meant to accord with due process.

The authority of the independent and quasi-judicial IRB, the Immigration and Refugee Board, to determine whether an individual's refugee protection has ceased is not itself a new provision. It actually predates the 2012 asylum system reforms. As well, it is important to specify that the authority to revoke permanent resident status, including the permanent resident status of a refugee, also existed before Bill C-31.



However, what is very troubling about Bill C-31 is that under the 2012 reforms enacted by the previous government, cessation of protected person status was added as grounds for losing one's permanent resident status. That effectively meant it was double-barrelled. That meant that both protected person status and permanent resident status now end simultaneously once a refugee in Canada has demonstrated that they are no longer in need of protection.

The minister, himself, has said in the House that he agrees that the legislation, which has been identified by the member for Vancouver East, is part of a long legacy of matters inherited from the previous government that our government desperately wants to review, and will review.

As members know, we are not at liberty to discuss particulars of a specific case due to privacy considerations, but the minister has expressed public sympathy with the point the hon. member is raising. I can assure the House that the government is reviewing policies and legislation introduced in recent years with a view to developing proposals to improve them.

In a relatively short time, and I will demonstrate to the House a number of measures we have taken in short order to address the legislative initiatives of the previous government that were very problematic.

For example, in terms of the government's respect for the rulings of the Federal Court, the Federal Court had found in December 2011 that the policy requiring the removal of face coverings to take the oath of citizenship was unlawful. We agree with that decision; the previous government did not. We dropped the appeal of that decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. That is the case of *Ishaq v. Canada*.

Another example of us being more than willing retract and retrench on legislation by the previous government is rescinding the legislation that came in under Bill C-24. We have introduced amendments to the Citizenship Act that members of the House will be familiar with. Bill C-6 makes it easier for applicants to meet citizenship requirements and helps encourage their sense of belonging and connection to Canada. It also eliminates the two classes of citizenship that were perpetuated by the previous government, which we stood fundamentally against and campaigned against.

Another example of our government's review of existing procedures that help to promote greater openness and better processing is our response regarding Haitian and Zimbabwean nationals. On February 4 of this year, the Government of Canada announced that Haitian and Zimbabwean nationals in this country would be provided another six months to apply for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds—

● (1950)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have to resume. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Madam Speaker, there are laws that are fair and just, and there are laws that are not.

The cessation provisions contained in Bill C-31 is an example of an unjust and absurd law. This law discriminates against refugees by effectively setting up a two-tier system for permanent residents. The

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way the Conservatives decided to target refugees in this unreasonable and punitive manner is simply un-Canadian.

Canadians welcome refugees to our country. The time has come for Canada to start a new chapter on the world stage. It is time to repeal the cessation provisions of C-31. This was a law that the former Conservatives brought in. The NDP voted against Bill C-31, and so did the Liberals.

I have a private member's bill to repeal the cessation provisions, drafted and all ready to go. Nothing would make me happier than to have the government take my bill and turn it into a government bill.

I urge the government to take immediate action on this urgent situation.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, our government is very committed to addressing this issue. We are looking at that as part of an overall assessment of the immigration and refugee system in terms of amendments that need to be made to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, speeding up processing time, producing more fairness within the system itself.

Cessation is a problem. Bill C-31 is a problem. I look forward to continuing this discussion with the member for Vancouver East. I look forward to seeing the content of her private member's bill.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we know, especially in my community of London, Ontario, that we have experienced devastating losses as a result of globalization, corporate greed, and simple lack of will on the part of Liberal and Conservative governments to protect our manufacturing sector.

When factories move offshore with not so much as a “sorry to see you go” from government, the residual effects on our communities are devastating. Governments have the capacity to resist or at least mitigate these effects by making progressive choices, and by exercising sovereignty over our natural and human resources.

Without scrutiny, trade agreements such as the TPP have the potential to bargain away programs, services, products and even the values that we as Canadians hold. Our experience with NAFTA should be a lesson to all of us. According to the CCPA, the impact of NAFTA has been devastating. It says:

The agreement has destroyed more jobs than it has created, depressed wages, [increased] poverty and inequality, eroded social programs, undermined democracy, [weakened] governments, and greatly increased the rights and power of corporations, investors, and property holders.

The study goes on to conclude that the promises of free trade to increase productivity, investment, employment and prosperity were either greatly exaggerated or remain unrealized.

Corporate Canada argued that social programs would need to be cut for Canada to remain competitive under NAFTA, the most stark example of which is what has happened to our employment insurance plan.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

There is evidence that companies have attempted to use the threat of investor-state charges under NAFTA's chapter 11 clause to discourage governments from considering legislation in the best public interest. It is shameful. Lobbyists have more power than citizens with their own government.

Since signing NAFTA, Canada's ability to navigate international trade disputes has diminished. Remember softwood lumber? Although agricultural exports have almost tripled, net farm income has fallen by 24%. Social inequality has increased in Canada, not decreased, and while there are other contributing factors, NAFTA has contributed to this unacceptable reality.

In the last election campaign, the Liberals promised full scrutiny before signing the trans-Pacific partnership. They have done a complete about-face on that promise; imagine promising full scrutiny after the agreement was signed. It sounds like a case of closing the barn door after the horse has escaped.

I am aware that the Standing Committee on International Trade has launched a public consultation process on the TPP, but my question is this. How effective is the voice of Canadians who bring their concerns about this deal to committee when the deal is already signed, sealed and delivered? This consultation amounts to nothing more than lip service.

The New Democrats and progressive Canadians are concerned that the TPP will have negative impacts on the auto industry, the dairy industry, on supply management, on our ability to provide affordable pharmacare, and on intellectual property rights.

Mayors of 20 Ontario communities oppose the deal. It is outrageous that this government did not analyze the impacts of the TPP before signing on the dotted line, especially when we know the deal could have serious consequences for Canadians: tens of thousands of jobs lost, higher drug costs, stifled innovation, and rising inequality.

Where is the scrutiny? Where is the transparent and open review of the TPP that the government promised?

• (2000)

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the Minister of International Trade and I have said before, because of the way in which the agreement was negotiated, in secret, and the way in which it was thrown upon us during the election campaign, we signed the agreement precisely to give us the time to study the agreement, and we are doing precisely that.

As the Minister of International Trade has said before, the government is currently assessing impacts and conducting an economic study of the TPP. More important, the minister took the engagement to make all assessments and studies public once completed. The government is also reviewing economic analyses of think tanks, academics, and other organizations to help inform the government's view of the TPP. Yes, we have signed it, but ratification is the final stage and we have not made a final decision to ratify.

As the hon. member knows, the TPP was negotiated in secret by the previous government. Our government is therefore focused on

consulting with Canadians, a key commitment of the government, and we will analyze the full potential impacts of the TPP. In this context, comments regarding ISDS and IP and other critiques that have been raised are being given serious consideration.

Since November, the Government of Canada has held over 250 consultations in different formats, such as round tables and town halls, with over 400 different domestic stakeholders. This has included all provinces and territories, businesses and industry associations, civil society, think tanks, academics, and labour unions. In parallel, the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade is currently studying the TPP and holding its own consultations with Canadians across the country. Those who have views to share are also encouraged to submit written comments to the committee for their consideration.

In our consultations, we have heard varying views of the TPP from different sectors. This is precisely the point of consulting Canadians. For instance, over the past nine months, the government has heard from a range of stakeholders with interests in different areas of intellectual property who have expressed views on the TPP intellectual property outcomes. As a knowledge-based economy, Canadians employ innovative ideas and creative thinking that become the products, technologies, and services that change the way we live. Intellectual property framework is an important element of any knowledge-based economy, and Canada's long-standing approach with respect to intellectual property has been to strike a balance between creators and users.

When it comes to the TPP, the government has also heard views about the potential impact on health care costs in connection with patents for pharmaceutical products. The Minister of International Trade will continue with consultations in line with her mandate letter and work with her colleagues on that question. The Government of Canada is committed to follow through on these commitments.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, with this government it is a matter of taking contracts, signing them, and then reading them. Smoke and mirrors disguised as sunny ways will not change the fact that the TPP would not serve Canadians. It is not in the best interests of anyone but the richest and the most powerful. I believe we are capable of better. I believe that we all thrive in an equitable society where everyone has equal access to nutritious food, a safe home, education, decent work and a fair wage, clean air, fresh water, health care, child care, pharmacare, and a secure retirement.

New Democrats believe it is possible to create a Canada whose economy is sustainable, just, and fair, while remaining competitive on the world stage. Our trade agreements should reflect those values. In the inspirational words of Arundhati Roy, "Another world is not only possible..."—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member because that is a great book.

As a trading nation, Canada's economic growth is directly linked to international trade. This government supports free trade as a way to open markets to Canadian goods and services, grow Canadian businesses, and create well-paying middle-class jobs, the kind of jobs that exist or should exist in London—Fanshawe.

The government has committed to bring forward the TPP to a debate and a discussion here in this House to hear from all members

of Parliament representing the people of Canada. The fact is we have committed to open consultations. It is a promise we made during the election campaign and one that we are seeing through.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The motion that the House do now adjourn is 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 8:02 p.m.)

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