



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 070 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, June 10, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 10, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 1

The House resumed from June 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to participate in the debate on the Liberal government's budget on behalf of the 100,000 people I represent in Lakeland.

I am here in this House today because of the farmers, energy workers, small business owners, public servants, and hard-working families across Lakeland who put their trust in me on October 19. People in Lakeland are facing adversity head on, struggling against job losses, the downturn in the energy sector, and helping their neighbours, friends, and families whose lives have been forever impacted by the raging wildfires in northern Alberta.

As they continue to build and to rebuild their communities and to pursue their dreams, I am committed to making sure their voices are heard on government decisions that matter to them, and particularly on how their hard-earned tax dollars are spent.

The people of Lakeland believe in a free market economy where Canadian workers are rewarded for their efforts, where entrepreneurs, inventors, investors, and hard workers can provide jobs and prosperity for their communities, and where self-reliance, personal responsibility, and generosity bolster incredible community spirit that supports charities and cares for the vulnerable.

In fact, 73% of my constituents voted for fiscally responsible leadership that values every dollar that belongs to the Canadian taxpayer. They know that, as the member for Carleton mentioned last week, a free market economy is the greatest poverty-fighting machine ever invented.

Like all of my Conservative colleagues who are privileged to serve the people who sent us here, my focus will always be on

everyday Canadians, like the middle class the Liberal government purports to care about. Our focus is on everyday Canadians, without trust funds, and without friends and family in high places, people who go to work and run businesses to earn the money that they dutifully hand over to the government, trusting that their best interests will be taken into consideration and that their money will be spent wisely and with careful discretion and due diligence.

The government needs to fund priorities, to put needs before wants, and to remember that it cannot spend on everything, just like Canadians plan and prioritize with their families, businesses, and their personal budgets every day.

When Liberal politicians cut child care benefits, when they disallow families to split their income, and when they limit their ability to save for their futures, and then they use taxpayers' dollars to pay for their own nannies, their own personal domestic support, when these politicians use tax dollars for their families to go on trips, for swanky new furniture, paintings, and art, on office renos, while Canadians and their neighbours, their families, and their friends are losing their jobs and limiting their budgets to ensure they can pay their bills and their taxes, that is when Canadians lose faith in politicians. No wonder why. When that happens, we MPs are failing our responsibility to Canadians.

I am talking about all of the Albertans still working, and of all those who have lost their jobs in almost unprecedented numbers, and of the millions of Ontarians who must strictly budget to ensure they can pay their bills every month, and rural Ontarians and those on fixed incomes who limit groceries or go to food banks because of skyrocketing hydro rates courtesy of big out-of-touch government and bad public policy.

I am referring to Maritimers, where my family is from, who once worked in the oil sands, who are now back at home without a job and with few prospects while governments block opportunities for responsible natural resources development that would provide jobs and benefits for all communities and all provinces.

These are the people I think about every day, and these are the people I am standing to support today, as I speak about the government's fiscal fiction budget, as my colleague from Calgary Shepard has called it.

Government Orders

Let us start with the fundamentals. Any government expenditure takes money from someone and gives it to someone else. The Liberal budget includes excessive untargeted spending that will end up hurting businesses, families, and hard-working Canadians in the form of future tax increases in order to fund government handouts.

It has tried to pass this off as standing up for the middle class, but I think Canadians see through the smoke and mirrors, and see it for what it really is. I know Canadians in Lakeland do.

The government is simply redistributing wealth. The worst part of this, of course, is that what the Liberals are really doing is taking money from people who need it most. As an example, they have alluded to a potential carbon tax in their budget. The Liberals have not provided details yet, and like so many other things the government is doing, of course we are uncertain but we know one thing for sure.

Ultimately it is Canadians, families, consumers, business owners, the middle class, people on fixed incomes, the working poor, and charities, who are going to pay the high costs and increased prices of all goods and services, the guaranteed result of yet another tax. This particular tax will disproportionately target and harm rural and energy-based communities.

Canadian governments collect \$17 billion annually from revenue generated by oil and gas workers to fund programs and services and provide benefits that increase the standard of living of all Canadians. Piling on more costs, especially during such challenging times, will only make things so much worse. It is a cold-hearted cash grab Canadians just cannot afford.

There can also be no guarantee that a national carbon tax would be so-called revenue neutral. What taxes are ever revenue neutral? Or dedicated to initiatives aimed at innovation and environmental stewardship. The carbon tax is just a revenue generator for government to feed reckless spending and out of control deficits masquerading as environmental policy.

Such a tax shift was rejected by Canadians in the 2008 election, something the member for Calgary Heritage reminded me recently. The Liberals are also sending hundreds of millions of Canadians' tax dollars to other countries instead of focusing on the priorities of Canadians and on the services they need and value.

Let us not forget the 700,000 middle-class small business owners who were counting on the promised lower small business tax rate of 9%. They are Canada's leading job creators, employing hundreds of thousands of Canadians, contributing to the economies of communities big and small, from coast to coast to coast. Because of the Liberals' broken promise, they are going to take \$2 billion away from these hard-working business owners over the next four years. That is a lot of money that cannot be used to grow their businesses, to start up new ones, to hire people, and to increase wages.

Meanwhile, the Liberals are still pondering a government bailout of a multibillion-dollar company while denying the expansion of an airport that would have effectively boosted that company without any taxpayers' dollars. Why does this big government insist on making things so complicated when the answers are often so obvious?

I am not sure Canadians really anticipated the government would blow through their money so quickly. It is not the government's money, it is Canadians' money. They certainly did not anticipate a deficit ballooning to \$30 billion and they did not anticipate it because that is not what the Liberals said they would do.

Of course, we know that this exorbitant deficit is a result of choices and not of circumstances. It is because of spending, given that the former Conservative government left a healthy surplus when the Liberals took office.

Canadians know that spending more money, increasing and introducing new taxes, and continuously hindering a key sector on which our economy relies will lead to an ongoing spiral of deficits and debt.

Who is going to pay for all of this? My friend, Michelle's brand new baby daughter, the young women in high school with Girls Inc. I met this week, the young guys apprenticing to start a career or upgrading their skills to get jobs in a different sector in Lakeland. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be paying off the tab, setting them up for fiscal failure before they even begin.

Because of decisions today, future governments will have less money for programs and services today's young Canadians deserve. It is irresponsible and it is wrong.

The government does not seem to get that hiking taxes does not create jobs. Governments that go down this path get stuck in a permanent cycle of taxing, borrowing, and spending.

Research has found that a negative relationship exists between government debt and economic growth. It impacts real lives. This will come as no surprise to my Conservative colleagues. According to a 2016 study on the cost of government debt, when government debt expands, it can cause long-term interest rates to rise, which in turn increases the cost of private sector borrowing. Higher borrowing costs can then discourage private capital investment, the key driver to long-term economic growth and jobs.

Government debt also results in significant interest payments, similar to paying mortgages or vehicle loans resulting in less money for priorities that directly impact Canadians' lives, like reducing the tax burden or paying for health care, education, and social services.

Take Ontario, which has the largest subnational sovereign debt in the world. Ontario spends nearly \$1 billion per month on debt repayment. Imagine what governments of every level could do with the billions of dollars they are spending on debt servicing from broad-based tax relief to funding core programs and services.

I assure Lakeland and all Canadians who are growing increasingly concerned about their bank accounts and their prosperity that my Conservative colleagues and I will continue to stand up for the hard-working taxpayers and communities from Prince Rupert to Bonnyville, from Lloydminster to Charlottetown and everywhere in between. We will continue to be the voice of hard-working people who actually earn their own money and work tirelessly to provide for their families.

• (1010)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her passionate speech on our budget and about the economy. I listened with great interest to her speech, but one thing that was glaringly missing in the speech was those living in poverty, those living in need, and Canadians who need help, and Canadians who feel forgotten by the government over the last 10 years.

My question for the member is this. Tell me one thing the Conservatives have done over the last 10 years, particularly the last four years, to help those—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite I am sure does not need help from my colleague opposite.

Could she tell me a specific program the Conservatives initiated over the last four years to help those people living in poverty?

• (1015)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I think the member was not actually listening to my comments because almost all of my comments were about low-income, working poor, charities, and people who are vulnerable and need support the most and the fact that high taxes causes lost jobs and takes away the ability of communities, charities, provinces, and municipalities to support vulnerable, low-income, and poor people.

The government took 400,000 seniors off the tax rolls entirely and lowered the tax rates for all Canadians and all businesses to the lowest rate in nearly 60 years and created 1.2 million net new jobs, even after the recession, putting Canada in the strongest position of all the G7 countries, with the wealthiest middle class in the world.

The whole point is that lowering taxes, limiting government, focusing government spending on priorities, and putting needs before wants ensures that we can provide—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for bringing forward her concerns from her riding.

I find it very disturbing to hear members of the government talking a lot about how they are helping the middle class, helping those to join the middle class. When we look at their tax break for the middle class, we find out that two-thirds of Canadians do not benefit. Anybody who is earning \$23 an hour or less will not benefit.

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Those who need help to join the middle class are not getting the help they need.

We also know that the government made a promise to small business to reduce taxes from 11% to 9%. Those are the businesses that need a lift so they can grow.

I want to hear from the member how the member feels about the promises from the government and talking about how it is helping those join the middle class, helping those in poverty. Maybe the member could elaborate a bit more.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the promised lower small business tax rate partly because I have heard from so many businesses and entrepreneurs in my communities in Lakeland who, between provincial policy that is increasing taxes and increasing their costs and the federal failure to continue on its promise to lower the small tax rate, are getting squeezed from all levels. Ultimately, that means they cannot expand their businesses, they cannot invest in new ones, they cannot raise wages or benefits. These are businesses that have been in communities for generations. All sides are being squeezed while money is taken away from them so they cannot continue to be Canada's leading job creators.

Another thing that we have just heard about recently is the astronomical costs, the tens of thousands of dollars a year, that Calgary food banks and Calgary homeless shelters will have to pay because of the provincial government's new carbon tax.

We cannot keep nickel-and-diming job creators and—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has done a great job pointing out the Liberal hypocrisy on the subject of social justice and helping our most vulnerable.

Under the previous Conservative government, we raised the personal exemption to allow people to earn more tax free; literally, lifting hundreds of thousands of aspiring working-class people off the tax rolls altogether.

Jim Flaherty brought in the working income tax credit, which accelerated earned income to ensure that working always pays more than welfare. We lowered the poverty rate to its lowest level since the poverty rate was recorded. It was at 8.8% the last time it was recorded, under the Conservative government, which is half the level it was 20 years earlier, under the previous Liberals.

I wonder if the member would comment on the Liberal tax plan, which gives about \$1,000 in tax relief to a Liberal MP earning \$150,000 a year and gives exactly zero to a working person earning \$45,000 a year?

Government Orders

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague, the member for Carleton, always does an excellent job exposing the cavernous gap between what the Liberals say they want to do and what they actually do, and how it harms the very people who they often purport to care about the most.

In fact, in free developed countries around the world, we do not have to take a politician's word on this. It is true that people are able to pursue their dreams, build their lives, and pursue opportunities in free-market-based economies with limited government. That is the true way to lift people out of poverty and to allow people to provide for their families and for their communities.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

[*English*]

We learned this morning of the death of one of Canada's great icons, Gordie Howe. He is someone I have admired and most Canadians have admired. I want to extend my condolences to his family and to all those who felt strongly about that man.

[*Translation*]

We are at third reading, and pretty much everything there is to say about this budget has been said. We debated elements of this budget at length during the campaign. There was some back-and-forth here in the House. As a member of the Standing Committee on Finance, I worked with my colleagues to expand my knowledge of the issues and investments in the budget. Today, I would like to sum up by talking about the impact this will have on my riding, Gatineau.

The people of Gatineau work hard. It is an honour to represent them. Many people work for the federal public service or for companies, institutions, and organizations connected to the federal government. We also have teachers and health care workers, who contribute to the well-being of our children and seniors every day. These are people who work hard to help build Canada by being involved in or working for the federal government or by providing services to people in the federal government.

These are people who needed to be recognized not only for their efforts, but also for their diversity. The previous government created programs here and there to target this or that group, but it never managed to recognize the diversity and simplicity of the uniquely Canadian unit called the family. A family can consist of a single mother or same-sex partners. There can be situations that are sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, what families all have in common is that they work hard and want the best for their children. They also want their government to acknowledge that they need a little help and recognition for what they are doing for the future of Canadian society.

It cannot be emphasized enough that the Canada child benefit will revolutionize social policy in Canada. It guarantees that 300,000 young Canadians, including many in my riding, Gatineau, and the Outaouais region of Quebec, will no longer be living in poverty. As we said during the election campaign, this will help 300,000 children, including 80,000 in Quebec, who would fill the Olympic

stadium, and 220,000 or more in the rest of Canada. It is a real revolution.

As for the others, nine out of 10 families will get a little help that will allow them to invest in the skates that might make their child the next Gordie Howe, for example. They will be able to invest in music lessons, in the necessities of life, or perhaps in little treats, like an ice cream after soccer practice.

Gatineau is home to many young families who are helping build this country. These are the people who will benefit from this extra money, and that is why our message of change during the election campaign resonated with them so much.

• (1025)

It resonated because Canada recognized that a family is a family, whether we are married or single parents, whether we are living in a tough situation or in a conventional one. Raising a child is one of the most rewarding and significant responsibilities that Canadians with the good fortune of having children will face.

There are also investments in education, which often go unmentioned.

[*English*]

A strong economy depends on having a steady supply of qualified and motivated labour to enter the workforce. We often say, and it has become a cliché, that it is an investment in the future to invest in education and post-secondary education. However, there are difficult demographics that Quebec faces. In Atlantic Canada there is a difficult demographic situation. Right across the country employers have told us that the challenges of the future will be challenges that post-secondary education can partially solve. It is important that this government tell students that it is going to make their lives easier as well, just as we are for parents.

[*Translation*]

In budget 2016, the government decided to make young Canadians a priority in order to give them a better future. Post-secondary education will be more affordable for students from low-income families, and it will be easier to pay back student debt.

Canadian student grants will be increased, which will help students cover the cost of their studies while limiting their debt ratio. Flat-rate student contributions will make it easier for post-secondary students to work and gain all-important work experience without worrying about a reduction in their financial assistance.

Finally, of course, students will be asked to pay back their student loans only if they are able to and if they are earning \$25,000 a year. As everyone knows, summer jobs are very important for training students. That is where students can save money. I am pleased to see that we have doubled our investments in summer jobs. In Gatineau, we went from \$229,000 last summer, under the previous government, to \$730,000 this summer. I am very proud and very happy to be able to offer attractive job opportunities in Gatineau.

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I will close my speech by saying that investing in people, investing in families, and investing in the next generation is an essential part of the budget. The government is looking to the future and decided to campaign on these priorities and table a budget in the House that focuses on these investments.

Gatineau, like many of the communities represented here, is in great need of infrastructure money. Gatineau's infrastructure deficit is \$1.3 billion. We are going to continue our efforts to ensure that Gatineau gets its fair share of future-oriented infrastructure investments. Thanks to our human and infrastructure capital, the national capital region and the rest of Canada will be able to face the economic challenges of the future. Canadians will see the wonderful changes that will be brought about by the great long-term plan that begins with budget 2016.

• (1030)

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the hon. member's tribute to Gordie Howe, who was one of the greatest hockey players of all time.

I am concerned about young people who want to rise up and become the next Gordie Howe. I wonder if the member could comment on why his government eliminated the child health benefit. For a middle-class family trying to get three or four kids into hockey, in some cases, could mean \$5,000. Why did the government eliminate that?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, we can take programs that are aimed at reasonably small pockets of Canadian society, put them together, add money to them, and say to a single mother, who could not share her income with someone else prior to today, "We can help you with piano lessons, we can help you with hockey skates and all of these things, but the biggest thing we can help you with is making sure that your children are well-nourished and ready to learn, and 300,000 of those children or more will be elevated above the poverty level". I think that is where a responsible government has to put its priorities.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated what the member said about supporting families and young people. However, I can say that in the riding I represent, which is very rural, with many remote communities, we have challenges. Seniors are facing particular challenges accessing health care and staying in their homes as long as they possibly can. How can the member justify not following through on his commitment to have home care so that people can stay home longer? Having it mentioned vaguely in a conversation is not having it in the budget. It needs to be a budget line. Why is it not?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have complete confidence in our Minister of Health, who is working with the provincial health ministers on a new health accord that will allow us to address the challenge of home care.

I was part of a government in New Brunswick that implemented the first real provincial home care system, the New Brunswick extra-mural program. I am therefore extremely familiar with the issue of home care and the challenge it poses.

I am delighted to know that in 2016, this government also recognizes the need to develop a coordinated home care plan.

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have seen what 10 years of trickle-down economics, regressive taxation, and regressive economic policies have gotten our country. We saw that the NDP ran an election campaign basically based on austerity and balanced budgets, which was not realistic.

One thing that was very clear to me going door to door during the campaign with respect to our seniors was that they were forgotten. This is certainly a group that needs support. I would ask my colleague what the Liberal Party will do in this budget for those seniors who need help.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from Saint John—Rothesay, I have noticed the number of seniors who are still living in poverty. I know that for all of us on this side of the House, it was with great pride that we saw included in this budget the increase of 10% in the guaranteed income supplement and the age for eligibility for OAS brought back from 67 to 65. The work continues in terms of making sure that the pension system, which Paul Martin saved, which Lester Pearson put in place, and which is the envy of the world, stays in place and reassures Canadians for generations to come.

• (1035)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I just want to thank my hon. Liberal colleague for splitting his time with me, although we will probably take some different approaches on our views on Bill C-15.

Bill C-15, the budget implementation bill, is, as I have heard some Liberal members of Parliament say, where the rubber meets the road for a government's budgetary policy. The NDP has examined some aspects of Bill C-15, and we do agree that there are some positive measures that the NDP has fought for, so we will acknowledge that there are some good things in the bill. However, it is nowhere near what the Liberals promised and it is not what is necessary to strengthen our economy and combat inequality.

For example, one of the major things that I campaigned on and on which I received feedback from my constituents was child care spaces. It is one thing to increase the child benefit, but when families are struggling to even find spaces or they have wait-lists that go on longer than a year, that will not really help two-income families try to find that space so that one parent can have the freedom to find work.

The other major glaring omission is with employment insurance. There was a real opportunity in the bill to make some profound changes to the Employment Insurance Act, to how it operates for Canadians on an equal basis from coast to coast to coast, and that is what was lacking.

In conclusion to my introduction, we will be opposing Bill C-15 because of its content, but also because of the fact that it is an omnibus bill.

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The Liberal government has studied a few Conservative tactics from the previous government. The bill has been rushed through. We have had time allocation. The committee meetings that were held were also rushed. We have an act that spans 179 pages. It changes over 30 different statutes that fall under nine different ministries. There are a few things that we argued should have been split off to give proper study, but the committee, when it was studying Bill C-15, had six meetings. Only two had witnesses and the amendments that were proposed by the opposition were all rejected.

The Liberals make a big deal about how they reach across the aisle and they want the opposition to work with them, but when over 35 amendments are proposed by the opposition and all of them are rejected by the Liberals, I do not see that as working together.

It brings to mind the quote from the movie, *Jerry Maguire*, "Help me help you". If the Liberals want the opposition to truly work with them, then I think some deference has to be paid to the propositions we are putting forward and not have them rejected out of hand. Those are a few of the reasons.

In terms of the time to adequately review the different components of the legislation, when the Liberals were in opposition and on the campaign trail, I remember they talked about how undemocratic omnibus bills were. They said during the campaign that they would not resort to legislative tricks to avoid the scrutiny of their bills. I think we will see the history of the previous six months shows completely the opposite.

The Liberals promised to change the Standing Orders of the House to bring an end to this undemocratic process of omnibus bills. I just truly feel that if we are to study an omnibus bill that is changing a few different pieces of legislation, it has to be given the proper time and scrutiny. I believe all Canadians and expert witnesses deserve to have their say in things like this.

I will devote a little time to just going over a few of the good things, with the caveat that there will be a few criticisms as well. The NDP proposed in the last Parliament that we would remove taxes on feminine hygiene products because that costs women \$36 million a year, so we are happy to see that mentioned in the bill.

• (1040)

We are also happy to see the Liberals recommit to returning the old age security and GIS eligibility back to age 65. I heard my previous Liberal colleague talk about the GIS and what a wonderful thing it was that it would be increased by 10%. Let me provide a bit more of a factual basis to that claim.

The guaranteed income supplement is going to be increased for people in the income range of \$4,600 to \$8,400. A person with an income of \$4,600 per year or less would get an increase of \$947 per year, which is less than \$100 per month. GIS benefits will be phased out completely at \$8,400. Rather than increasing the GIS by 10% across the board for every senior who is eligible for it, the Liberals are targeting a narrow bandwidth. It is important to illustrate that fact because it gets lost in all of the hyperbole about how great the Liberal government is and how it is helping our low-income seniors. We must always read the fine print.

I am also happy to see that the government has committed to enhancing the Canada pension plan. This pension model survived

the recession very well. It is a model for the world to see how well managed a pension plan can be. Our interest is in making sure that every worker who pays into the CPP can retire with an adequate income.

One of the biggest broken promises comes with respect to small businesses. Page 10 of the Liberal fiscal plan in the 2015 election specifically mentioned that the Liberals were going to reduce the small business tax rate to 9% from the current 11%. Not going ahead with this reduction is going to cost the small business sector \$2.2 billion. It is going to cost \$125 million in the next fiscal year, \$475 million in the year after that, \$770 million by 2019-20, and \$825 million by 2021. This is according to both the finance ministry and the parliamentary budget officer.

What am I supposed to tell entrepreneurs in my riding, when I tell them there will be personal income tax cuts that mean income earners in my range will get a reduction but they will not see that? Furthermore, small business owners usually pay themselves a small amount of money to keep their business afloat so they are going to get hit twice. Their business rate is not going to be reduced and their personal income tax rates are not going to be affected. That is a shameful broken promise.

Bill C-15 swallows what was Bill C-12, which dealt with veterans. We were happy to see the changes in Bill C-12 because we agreed with them, but we believe that Bill C-12 should have been made a stand-alone bill so that we could have proposed different changes to make it better. Swallowing Bill C-12 into Bill C-15 creates an omnibus bill and avoids proper scrutiny. The Liberal government's record with veterans right now is absolutely shameful. It has broken a solemn promise that was made during the campaign. The Liberals agreed during the election campaign that the government has a sacred obligation, a social covenant, and now they are taking veterans to court. I would like to see the government take some firm action and stand up for our veterans for once and not use them as campaign props to get votes.

In terms of employment insurance, I suggested to the Minister of Employment that one of the great things the Liberals could do would be to set up the employment insurance fund as a stand-alone fund so that it would be protected from raiding by future governments. Right now, those premiums, which are paid by workers in the event that they might end up unemployed one day, simply get raided as a cash cow. It would set something meaningful up for workers if we put that up as a stand-alone fund. Again the Liberals have taken no significant action on that and we still have an employment insurance system where six out of 10 Canadians will not qualify.

Government Orders

To help my Liberal colleagues understand why we oppose the legislation, it is always helpful to read quotes that Liberals have given in the past. The current Minister of Public Services and Procurement and the member of Parliament for Bonaville—Burin—Trinity said something in 2014 that really sums it up. She said:

...there is so much contained in this omnibus budget bill that it really does not give parliamentarians the opportunity they need to act on behalf of the people they represent. We do not get to scrutinize the legislation.... At the end of the day, we end up voting on a bill that we have had little time to digest.

I could not have said it better myself.

● (1045)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his impassioned speech about Bill C-15 and our budget.

The party opposite at times confuses me, because what I hear now from the party opposite is that we need to spend more on this and more on that, we did not spend enough on this, and we did not spend enough on that. However, the NDP campaign was run on austerity, budget cutbacks, and budget controls. I certainly saw, going door to door during the election campaign, that voters were absolutely confused as to where NDP members actually stood. Some said they went so far right they were actually left.

I am not sure where they were, but my question to my colleague is this. Could he please explain the \$15-a-day day care policy that the party opposite put forth, and how the NDP was actually going to implement that when there were already provinces that said they were not going to agree to it?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to answer that question.

Of course, that was going to be a conversation that we had with the provinces. As to how we would pay for our program, what the member lacks in understanding is that the \$15-a-day child care program would allow more parents to enter the workforce, which would broaden the tax base. It is very simple economics.

The other thing is in terms of how we paid for our budget as a whole. The Liberals have refused to touch the corporate tax rate. They have refused to tackle tax loopholes. As a result, we are stuck in this trickle-down economics. There is so much dead money sloshing around in corporate bank accounts, which is something that has been explained by Mark Carney, the former governor of the Bank of Canada. The Liberals did nothing on that.

They are not helping the job creators of Canada, the small businesses, and they are not touching corporate tax rates. As a result, we get a \$30-billion deficit, because I do not think the proper areas of fiscal management have been looked at.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech.

When he was talking about broken promises, I started to reflect on all the broken promises: not holding the deficit to \$10 billion, the cost-neutral middle-class income tax, the home delivery.

I wonder if the member could comment on which broken promises he is most disappointed in.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I might have to request an additional 10-minute speech to go through that list.

I have always had a very strong connection with the veterans in my riding, and I think that broken promise in the court system was a big one.

In terms of the real reforms on employment insurance, I think this budget was a very real opportunity to get something meaningful done by making sure that there was a common threshold, no matter what part of Canada a person lived in, and also that we had a fund that was protected very much in the way that the Canada pension plan is. This would have ensured governments against future unemployment shocks, and it would have given all workers peace of mind, knowing that there is a dedicated fund that would always be there for them and which would not disappear into the consolidated revenue fund.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when we ask ourselves who serves our country, there are people from my region, blue-collar people, who went to Afghanistan and who served in Croatia and Bosnia. They came back, and there was a trust that they would be treated with respect.

When I see how the Prime Minister used the veterans as props, and made all manner of promises on their pensions, but then turned his back on them and is fighting them in court, I find it unconscionable. For the families that I represent who are being denied their basic pensions and the services that they are entitled to, because they were used as an election prop, I find that simply unconscionable.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague what he thinks about the breach of faith with the veterans in our country.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, when solemn promises like that are broken, it gives all MPs a bad name, because people start saying that they just cannot trust politicians; they put their faith in them but promises gets broken.

In our previous constituency week, I sat down with a veteran who had been in Afghanistan. This poor man was quivering with rage and tears, because he firmly believed the Liberals were going to honour that promise, but then they ended up taking veterans to court.

I think it is just a despicable 180-degree turn, and I hope the government finds it within itself to reverse that, and gives instructions to the government lawyers to stop this shameful practice of taking our veterans to court.

● (1050)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Edmonton Riverbend.

It is said that if one wants to bring constructive criticism, one should make a sandwich; say something positive, then bring the criticism, then finish off with something else positive. That is what I will try to do today. I will make a budget 2016 sandwich.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

As the science critic, I will begin by pointing out an extremely positive aspect of the budget. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and I met earlier in the session and, together, we decided that it would be a good idea to develop a Canadian science strategy that both sides of the House could support. That is what we did.

As members can see in this budget, we kept the granting council, which supports quality applied research in co-operation with universities, industries, and governments. Increased funding was granted in order to enhance Canada's innovation skills.

[English]

Built upon the strong supports of our previous government, budget 2016 would now provide the granting council program for NSERC, CIHR, and SSHRC for research investment with an additional \$141 million in annual resources.

I am also very pleased that our previous Conservative government's knowledge infrastructure fund has been retained as the post-secondary investment fund. Targeted investments aimed at our post-secondary institutions will promote Canadian research and discoveries for generations to come.

[Translation]

Similarly, we restored targeted basic research methods. As a result, Canada has made considerable gains in genomics and particle physics, several areas of medical research, and big data.

In other areas, at the global level, we are working on maintaining our international ventures. We also recognize that we need to support the commercialization of Canadian technologies to create more jobs in Canada. Therefore, \$100 million was included in the budget to that end. That is very positive.

[English]

However, not everything in the budget is positive. The Liberal government has promised deficits nearing \$30 billion this year, and more than \$100 billion over the next four years. On top of this, the Liberal government seems to have no clear plan on how to pay it back or to balance its budgets in the future. This will cause Canadians to have a deficit of \$10 billion annually just to pay back the interest on the money borrowed by the Liberal government. No family would put in place a budget that would put it into debt forever. It is just not wise.

I am also not pleased about the fact that tax cuts to the Canadian middle class will cost the country more than \$1.7 billion every year. It was supposed to be cost neutral. Can the government not do basic math?

The same goes for small businesses. Budget 2016 would stop the previous government's lowering of taxes on small businesses. The Liberals promised to cut the tax rate to 9%, but they have broken this promise, which would now cost these same small businesses upward of \$2 billion in extra taxes annually.

[Translation]

Next, we will look at infrastructure funding, which was supposed to keep the recession at bay while creating jobs. However, less money is available this year than was promised.

[English]

My riding of Sarnia—Lambton has a project for the creation of an oversized load corridor. In discussions with the Minister of Infrastructure and his team, I was assured there would be a fund for trade corridors that this project would fit very well into. For \$12 million, this project would create up to 3,000 well-paying jobs in southern Ontario. However, no funding was made available in the budget and therefore no jobs were created for the project. In fact, overall in the budget, the government predicts it will only change the unemployment rate by 0.3% over four years. Seriously? This, for \$113 billion?

• (1055)

I would now like to speak about the climate change direction in the budget.

The reality today is that Canada makes up less than 2% of the world's carbon footprint. We could totally eliminate our footprint in Canada, and it would have no fact and evidence based temperature result on the planet. Therefore, our approach should be to leverage our carbon emissions reduction technologies to the substantive contributors like China, the U.S., and India, which make up 40% of the footprint. This budget, with an attempt to layer on additional carbon tax, would drive jobs out of Canada to other regions, but would not help the planet. It would just move the carbon footprint somewhere else.

An example of this from my riding is a project currently being considered, worth billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. With two levels of carbon tax, this project is uncompetitive here and will go to the U.S. gulf coast. The carbon footprint is the same for the planet, but we lose thousands of jobs. This is what will happen across the fossil-fuel business without a better plan. While we lose job opportunities like this one, \$2.65 billion is being spent in a foreign fund to benefit other nations like China and India, which are substantive contributors to the global carbon footprint and which are still building coal facilities. This is not an approach that would help the planet, help Canadians, or help Canada.

[Translation]

I am also concerned about how much money we give to other countries, in light of the fact that there are people in need in Canada.

At present, more than \$5 billion of taxpayers' money is sent abroad for various programs. At the same time, we have homeless veterans and seniors who cannot make ends meet after having worked all their lives. Fort McMurray is still burning and hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

We need to help Canadians and realize that we cannot be as generous as we once were given our current financial situation.

[*English*]

Let us move past these issues into another area of concern for the Canadian public: national security and defence. One of the most important jobs for any government is to protect its citizenry. Now more than ever we need more defence, not less defence. Cutting \$3.7 billion from the defence budget is absolutely reckless, as I heard at the town hall meeting I held on this issue in my riding, where I consulted broadly with people. Much-needed ships for the navy as well as equipment for the air force have been put on hold with no explanation or expectation given for future timelines of availability. We need to ensure the men and women who protect our country are well-equipped, and we need to ensure our borders remain secure.

Now, I come to the final part of the budget 2016 sandwich.

Having just spoken about defence, I do appreciate any increase in benefits for veterans. There is much more to be done, and we need to ensure veterans are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

I also would like to speak about seniors. My riding has an aging demographic, so I am pleased to see an increase in the guaranteed income supplement. It may only be \$18 a week, but seniors on a fixed income need all the help they can get. I still think we need to do more. I am glad that the income splitting for pensioners was retained, but I would like to have seen the tax-free savings account limit expanded. Many seniors use this to preserve their savings and increase their flexibility in retirement.

Finally, with an ever-growing number of individuals of all ages experiencing chronic and terminal conditions across Canada, and in light of the assisted-dying legislation, I was happy to hear the Minister of Health say that there were \$3 billion in this budget for home and palliative care. That said, I could not find the actual words palliative care in the budget. However, I trust that since this has been repeated by the minister in the House on numerous occasions, and the Liberal Party recently made a resolution on palliative care, I believe there is support for this on all sides of the House.

That is why I have introduced my private member's bill, Bill C-277, on palliative care. Good palliative care covers a wide range of services such as acute hospital care, hospice care, home care, crisis care, and spiritual and psychological counselling. Those who have access to good palliative care choose to live as well as they can for as long as they can. Now is the time to get this in place for the 70% of Canadians who do not have access to this service. I am pleased with this commitment. It is a good start.

I am happy to see more summer jobs for youth as well.

To summarize the budget sandwich, thumbs up on science, thumbs down on fiscal responsibility; thumbs down on the approach to infrastructure, climate change and defence; and thumbs up for moving in the direction of good for seniors, veterans, palliative care, and youth.

• (1100)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Samia—Lambton will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House next returns to debate on the question.

[*English*]

CANADA AM

Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):

In keeping with the spirit of the show I co-hosted for 10 years, I am going to wing it. I do not have a teleprompter. You will be my floor director. You will give me a count, Mr. Speaker, and I will know to go to commercial break.

Canada AM was an institution in our country for 43 years. It brought us all into a national conversation, which I know many people in this place enjoyed, and certainly many who have stopped me on the street the past week enjoyed. It came to a very abrupt end last week, when the hosts, producers, and the crew were abruptly told they have one more show to do. It will be sorely missed. It brought much of our country together in common cause.

I am very proud of my time there. If it pushed any agendas, the agendas that were pushed were breaking the barriers and stigma to mental health and talking more about indigenous politics in our country.

For Bev, Marcie, Jeff, the crew, the producers, to all of them, thanks very much on behalf of me and millions of Canadians that they brought together. Now, over to Bev.

* * *

DAY AT THE RANGE

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, over 60 parliamentarians from the Conservative, Liberal, and NDP caucuses, and staff joined me and my outdoor parliamentary caucus co-chair, the member for Labrador, for the fifth annual “Day at the Range”.

Organized by my office and the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, the Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada, and the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association, the morning provided the opportunity to learn more about hunting and shooting sports. Personally rewarding for me was to see members who had never picked up firearms shoot for the first time and leave with a big smile. For those of us who are more experienced, it was a way to renew our commitment to protecting our Canadian outdoor heritage.

Statements by Members

On behalf of the outdoor parliamentary caucus, I want to thank Tony Bernardo, Phil Morlock, as well as Linda from the Stittsville Shooting Ranges, for helping make this event such a great success.

* * *

[Translation]

LOUIS FABRICIUS LANZON

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of the mayor of Lac-Saint-Paul in Laurentides—Labelle.

Louis Fabricius Lanzon was a retired nuclear engineer of Maltese descent. He was a kind man with a real zest for life. He became mayor in 2013 and truly cared about his fellow citizens. I met him for the first time a few months later, and we quickly became friends.

Recently, I had the pleasure of dining with him and his wife, Marie-Claire Meilleur, at their home. That evening, Louis gave me the idea of using turmeric powder, along with salt and pepper, as a basic spice, and he explained the geothermal heating system he had just designed in his home.

He passed away on Wednesday at the age of 78. He will be missed by the entire community and everyone who knew him. I want to offer my sincere condolences to the member for Labrador and her husband, Joseph. Louis recently became our colleague's father-in-law.

[English]

We are going to miss Louis.

* * *

PERSONAL INCOME TAX

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, I attended the Canadian Economics Association's annual conference at the University of Ottawa, where we heard from leading professors, including Mike Veall and Michael Wolfson.

They recently co-authored a paper entitled “Piercing the Veil – Private Corporations and the Income of the Affluent”, raising concerns that many of our wealthiest citizens were using Canadian-controlled private corporations to avoid paying personal tax. While rules for professional corporations are set provincially, the tax treatment of these structures is a federal decision.

The House must ensure that everyone pays their fair share of tax. Therefore, I ask the Standing Committee on Finance to undertake a study of measures to ensure that high-income professionals do not use incorporation to avoid personal income tax.

* * *

• (1105)

ROY ATKINSON

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Roy Atkinson, who recently passed away. Roy was an advocate, farm leader, and visionary. His tireless work to promote social and economic change taught generations to believe in a cause with courage and conviction. He fought fearlessly on behalf of Canadian farmers.

Serving in key leadership roles, including founding president of the National Farmers Union, Roy brought farmers together from coast to coast. Ahead of his time, he established leadership positions for youth and women, laying the foundations for future equality. He helped pave the way for Canada's medicare system, serving as a “grassroots general” in Saskatchewan's fight for universal medicare. He served on the Canadian Wheat Board advisory co-op boards and the Economic Council of Canada.

Fittingly, Roy was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame and awarded with Canada's highest honour, the Order of Canada. Farming with his wife Bette for 52 years, he leaves a legacy of activism, commitment, determination, and integrity.

I wish the best to his children.

* * *

PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with my fellow parliamentarians that since being introduced in the House of Commons on May 30, my private member's Bill C-277, An Act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada, has gained support across the nation.

The Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians, and care centres such as St. Joseph's Hospice in Sarnia and the West Island Palliative Care Residence in Montreal are among several prominent groups to endorse Bill C-277.

Given the non-partisan and important nature of the legislation in question, I once again call upon all members in the House to support Bill C-277 to ensure that we are doing our part to help all Canadians live as well as they can for as long as they can.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL CROSSING AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is International Level Crossing Awareness Day, and I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of rail safety. Too many people are killed or injured near railways. Last year, 45 deaths and 36 serious injuries were reported in Canada.

The 2016 budget includes \$143 million to tackle this problem. Part of that money is for the grade crossing improvement program.

In connection with that program, I had the honour of announcing \$11 million for LED signage at level crossings. While these investments are essential, apparently the leading cause of accidents is the behaviour of other users near rail facilities. That makes public awareness top priority.

Statements by Members

That is why I invite all Canadians to come to the beautiful riding of La Prairie to visit Exporail, the only museum in the country that specializes in railroads, and its new family exhibit on rail safety.

* * *

[English]

WOODROFFE HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about a group of students at Woodroffe High School who are working to make their school eco-certified through a project called Tiger Woodz pure paper bricks.

[Translation]

Led by Samuel Gauzas, students in the general learning program use recycled paper and water supplied by the school to make bricks that sell for two for \$5. The program offers students with special needs the opportunity to develop practical skills and get hands-on experience working with green materials that would not otherwise be used, thereby reducing the amount of waste that has to be recycled.

[English]

I am inspired by these students in this program, who are contributing to their school community and to a healthy environment through this entrepreneurial program. I am so pleased to see the business savvy of these students and their teacher.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three municipalities in my riding, namely Saint-Basile, Pont-Rouge, and Saint-Ubalde, are still waiting for their refugee family to arrive.

As I mentioned yesterday, the photo of three members of the family is on the fridge in Saint-Ubalde. Clothes for the little baby who was supposed to be four months old when he arrived, will have to be replaced. Last Sunday, I was at the church in Pont-Rouge and a photo of the refugee family is on the lectern near the altar.

People across Canada have been getting ready for several months. They have collected money and worked very hard to welcome new refugee families. They are still waiting and do not have an arrival date. That is disrespectful.

What I take away from yesterday's reply by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is that the government is overwhelmed because of Canadians' dedication and generosity. That is not a problem, quite the opposite.

Is there one charitable member of this government who is respectful of the people in our regions, who have been working so hard to be more welcoming? Could the government have more empathy and take action to ensure that the refugees our communities are taking in arrive this summer?

● (1110)

YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise today to pay tribute to Yannick Nézet-Séguin, an acclaimed Canadian music director, who on June 2, 2016, was appointed music director of New York's prestigious Metropolitan Opera.

Music director of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra since 2008, and the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2012, Mr. Nézet-Séguin is adding to his impressive list of accomplishments an engagement with the famed Metropolitan Opera in New York, one of the most distinguished opera companies in the world.

He has been widely recognized and honoured for his talent and his contribution to the music world. For instance, he was appointed artistic director of the 2014-15 Opus Awards Gala and named 2016 artist of the year by *Musical America* magazine. He was also made an officer of the Ordre national du Québec in 2015 and a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2012.

I invite all Canadians to explore his work and celebrate his success.

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[English]

ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is often said that when we succeed, we stand on the shoulders of others.

Yesterday was truly a great day for my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood and for our nation. The new Rouge National Urban Park is the culmination of a 40-year citizens movement.

At the risk of not naming everyone who should be named, Lois James, Jim Robb, Gloria Reszler, Kevin O'Connor, Richard Reesor, Alan Wells, and Professor Bruce Kidd are just a few, a very few, of the dedicated citizens who have worked tirelessly over the years to make this park a reality.

However, it also would not be possible without the work of elected officials, both past and present, such as Derek Lee, Pauline Browes, David Crombie, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, Councillor Glenn De BaereMaeker, Minister Brad Duguid and his staff, and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and her staff.

The result of this citizens movement is that the Rouge national park will be a citizens gift to Canada, one that members can look back on as a significant contribution to the well-being of our nation.

*Statements by Members***KIDNEY MARCH**

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring attention to the Kidney March taking place later this September through Kananaskis country. It is a three-day, 100-kilometre walk that helps raise funds and allows the Kidney Foundation of Canada to contribute funding for research, organ transplant programs, and services for those with chronic kidney conditions.

I am a two-time Kidney Marcher, and I plan to march again this year for those suffering from kidney disease.

The number of Canadians being treated for kidney failure has tripled over the past 20 years. Each day an average of 16 people are told that their kidneys have failed. Among the people on the waiting list for an organ transplant, about 80% need a kidney. A kidney is among the many organs that can be donated by a living person.

An estimated 2.6 million Canadians have kidney disease or are at risk. Members of my family, including my wife and my two oldest kids, are affected.

The Kidney March is one way to put kidney disease on the map in a big way. I encourage all Canadians to join me this September for a march against kidney disease in beautiful Kananaskis country.

* * *

CANADA LEARNING BOND

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to students graduating this week, and a special shout-out to Vancouver Island University grads in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

For many Canadians living in poverty, though, affordable education is increasingly inaccessible. However, studies show that compared to a child with no savings at all, a child from a low-income family with as little as \$500 saved is four times more likely to get an education. The Canada learning bond is designed to give such hope—\$2,000 worth—yet the take-up has been very low.

I am proud that Vancouver Island University has a full-time person dedicated to signing up low-income families and children in care. VIU goes to community centres and helps navigate the paperwork.

I challenge my colleagues and universities across the country to follow VIU's lead. Let us help enrol students in the Canada learning bond. Let us help give real hope for access to education and jobs and give real hope for a better life.

* * *

• (1115)

GORDIE HOWE

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we lost a legend: Mr. Hockey, Gordie Howe.

Howe was born in Floral, Saskatchewan. He grew up in our city of Saskatoon. He went to school at King George. He was a regular playing shinny on many of the outdoor rinks in our city. He was a marvellous athlete, not only for hockey but for baseball also, as he

was often seen in the summer playing at Cairns Field, right across the street from where his mom and dad lived.

He broke into the NHL and was deployed in the mid-forties. He played 25 marvellous seasons with the Red Wings. He led the NHL in scoring six times, was a 23-time all star, was the most valuable player in three different decades, plus in five decades starting in the forties and ending in the eighties.

Gordie got his wish. He got his wish that he could play on the same team with his two sons, Mark and Marty, in the World Hockey Association. That meant everything to him.

Today his hat trick is still referred to; if a player has a goal, an assist, and a fight, it is a Gordie Howe hat trick.

A statue outside our rink in Saskatoon has—

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, we are already over.

The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

* * *

GORDIE HOWE

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sadly I also rise to honour the passing of a true Canadian legend, Mr. Hockey, our beloved Gordie Howe.

We could stand here for hours talking about his accomplishments and his love of the game. His career spanned more than six different decades, and he retired as the leading all-time scorer in the NHL.

Mr. Elbows played as a lefty and as a righty and was always tough. We are talking about a player who, after a fractured skull, returned the next season and scored 86 points.

After trying to retire in 1971, Gordie was lured back to the game with the opportunity to play with his two sons. He is still the oldest NHLer ever to play the game, and in an interview, Howe eloquently stated how he wanted to be eulogized: “The third period is finally over. I hope they have a good hockey team in heaven”.

As long as there is hockey, he will never be gone. Here is to Mr. Hockey.

* * *

CANADIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon, the House is going to have the opportunity to debate Bill C-210.

This is a bill dealing with Canada's national anthem. We are hopeful that all members will recognize the importance of this, specifically in regard to the member for Ottawa—Vanier, who has put in a yeoman's effort to raise what is a very important issue for the House of Commons. We are hopeful that we will be able to see the bill come to a vote today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, on behalf of my party, I want to offer our most sincere condolences to the family of the great Canadian Gordie Howe.

We can never say it enough, but to sit here in the House of Commons is a great privilege for all 338 of us Canadians. We have this privilege because we received a mandate from the Canadian public. That is why we as Conservatives feel so strongly that any potential change to the Canada Elections Act on the right to vote, should be done through a referendum. As the prestigious and very distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs put it so well, it is unavoidable.

Will the government finally understand that we must hold a referendum if we are going to change the voting system?

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take seriously our job as parliamentarians and the noble responsibility that Canadians have bestowed upon us. Therefore, our government is looking forward to the work of the special committee to conduct a study on electoral reforms, to reach out to Canadians, to reach out to experts, to consult with members of this House, and to hold town hall meetings in our ridings. I am asking our colleagues in the House of Commons to engage in this process, not to presume the outcome yet, and to let us work together to ensure that Canadians support our electoral reforms.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best way to get that support is through a referendum. The Liberals know that, but they are just too embarrassed to say it.

Another reality that we have come face to face with is the fact that this government has no plan to create jobs, but unfortunately, it has a plan to jeopardize jobs. I am talking about Canada's aerospace industry and the fighter jets.

Today in the *Ottawa Citizen*, the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada said that cancelling the fighter jet contracts will result in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in investments, as well as high-tech jobs. Good jobs in Montreal and across the country are in jeopardy.

When will the government take these questions seriously and finally give Canadians the facts?

[English]

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to add my voice to the memorandum with respect to the loss of Gordie Howe. For those of us of a certain age and generation he brought great joy to all fans,

Oral Questions

except of course Maple Leaf fans, but then that was kind of a universal sentiment.

I just wanted to point out to the honourable member that the Government of Canada has not withdrawn from the joint strike fighter program. It continues to make these payments under the memorandum of understanding, and those decisions will continue.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in the House, we had a very important debate about the genocide that ISIS is committing against the people of the world. During that debate, the Liberal member for Pierrefonds—Dollard said, “we should not rush to judgment”. Nineteen young women were burned alive, journalists are being beheaded on YouTube, and the U.S. Secretary of State has said that this is a genocide. Does he still think that we are rushing to judgment?

When will the Liberals finally face up to the reality that this is indeed a genocide? When will they admit it?

[English]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we strongly condemn the atrocities by the so-called Islamic State. Official recognition of genocide is to be done by a credible judicial process following a proper international investigation. That is why we have called upon the UN Security Council to investigate this. The UN Secretary-General's special adviser on the prevention of genocide agrees with this. We feel that our UN, U.K., and U.S. allies have all said this needs a proper, formal investigation.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, defence experts agree that the Liberals made a promise that was impossible to keep when it comes to replacing Canada's aging fighter jets. Not only have the Liberals broken this promise, they are doing so with great costs to taxpayers, as our air force will have to run a mixed fleet. Unlike Australia, Canada does not need a stop-gap solution. The defence minister claims the CF-18 life extension project will continue. Given that reality, why are the Liberals moving forward with a band-aid solution to a non-existent problem?

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to getting the best possible equipment at the best possible price for our men and women in uniform. Today, we are risk-managing a gap between our NORAD commitments and our NATO commitments, in part because we inherited a bit of a mess from the previous government. No decision has been made on the replacement of the CF-18s. All commentary to the contrary is merely rumour and speculation.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given the investments in the CF-18 life extension program made by the previous government, defence experts agree that there is no immediate need to run a mixed fighter jet fleet in the interim.

Retired General George Petrolekas of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute said he does not see the value of an interim purchase. He asks, why not just go straight to the competition right now?

It is a good question. Why is the government putting politics ahead of our armed forces? Why not go to the competition right now?

• (1125)

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the consequence of the previous government's so-called life extension program is that we only have at this point 20 CF-18s ready to fly through to 2025.

That is an unacceptable risk that has to be managed by the Minister of National Defence, and so he is only taking what needs to be taken in the circumstances, which is the responsible decision to keep our capability up to its necessary level in order to meet our commitments.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is a doctor, so I am sure she can confirm to this House that breast screening, mammograms, biopsies are normal, everyday medical procedures, yet we have documents to show that her bureaucrats are interfering with doctor-ordered mammograms to deny these services to indigenous women. They are cancelling audiology tests for indigenous children.

There is not a single member of this House who would put up with such interference for their own families, so why does the government think that it is okay to treat the health of indigenous women and children in such a disrespectful and negligent manner?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada is committed to providing medically necessary services to first nations and Inuit clients through the non-insured health benefits program. The NIHB program covers over \$1 billion in health benefits for first nations and Inuit every year.

Nearly 99% of pharmacy claims and 90% of the dental claims were approved, and more than 90% of the pharmacy claims were approved instantly at the point of the sale.

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PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, indigenous women deserve answers, not reading from a website.

The Prime Minister promised to do politics differently, and on Bill C-14 he said that he would accept good faith amendments. Instead, the Prime Minister has disrespected Canada's top legal experts, flouted court rulings in Alberta and Ontario, and rejected good faith amendments every step of the way.

Given the seriousness of the situation, Canadians deserve better. Will the Liberals finally stop putting politics ahead of policy, stop trying to ram through an unconstitutional bill, and work with us to fix Bill C-14 so that it will be a charter-compliant bill that respects the rights of Canadians and respects the Supreme Court of this country?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe that we have struck the right balance in Bill C-14 between protecting the vulnerable and the conscience rights of health care professionals, and also providing access to medical assistance in dying and protecting personal autonomy.

There is a diversity of opinion as to whether the bill goes too far or not far enough. There is not unanimity with respect to its constitutionality. There is a delicate careful balance that has been struck. We believe it is the best solution for Canada at this time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to get things straight and brave the storm. The amendment passed in the Senate would bring the bill in line with the Supreme Court's decision.

As experts and the Alberta Court of Appeal have said, without this amendment, Bill C-14 does not pass the charter test and will once again be challenged in court. We need to do things right with a bill that is so important to Canadians.

Will the government act responsibly and amend Bill C-14?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe that this bill is the best approach to guarantee that dying patients' rights are respected and to ensure that vulnerable people and the conscience rights of health care professionals are protected.

An amendment that removes the reasonably foreseeable criterion will jeopardize the delicate careful balance we have struck in Bill C-14.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-14 violates Canadians' rights, and it is truly appalling to see this government making excuses.

The Prime Minister promised to do things differently, to make decisions based on facts, and to listen to experts. Instead, he chose to play politics, limit debate in the House, and refuse to work with the opposition on an issue as important as medical assistance in dying.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he is doing the exact same thing as the former Conservative government?

Oral Questions

• (1130)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe that this bill is the best approach to guarantee that the rights of dying patients are respected and to ensure that vulnerable people and the conscience rights of health care professionals are protected.

This is the balance we were trying to strike, and this is the balance we achieved. This is the best approach for Canada, at this point in time.

* * *

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote an editorial from the *Toronto Star*. It states, “democratic reform should be pursued by democratic means”. It continues, “the reform process proposed by the government is insufficiently democratic, given its vast implications for our democracy”. The *Star* continues, “the best route to legitimate reform is a referendum”.

The *Star* is right, so will the Liberals give Canadians a referendum on a new voting system?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the House have been democratically elected. The special committee consists of members of the House who have been democratically elected by their constituents.

We are taking this job seriously. We are calling on our colleagues on all sides of the House to join us, to participate in the committee process, consult with their constituents, and consult experts. Let us work together on finding the best outcome for Canadians.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course Conservative members will be participating in the committee process that is starting up, but that is not the question. After that process is over, after the cabinet has designed a new system in a room where only Liberals are present, we want to know if Canadians will get the chance to vote in a referendum.

The *Toronto Star* says that the Liberals' refusal to hold a referendum is unfortunate. That is their word. It calls the Liberal plan for town halls “hardly the best way to gauge 'broad buy-in' by voters”. The *Star* concludes that it is “ludicrous to suggest town halls as a substitute” for a referendum.

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us not prematurely assume what the outcome of the committee work is going to be. Let us work together. Our government has extended a hand to every party in the House to work together to consult with Canadians through various means, through town halls, social media, one-on-one consultations, and speaking with experts. Let us get our work done. We will not proceed without the broad support of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us not prematurely assume the outcome, but at the same time, the

Prime Minister already told us that he rejects the current electoral system and would rather see preferential voting. That is quite the comment.

The minister took seven months to strike a committee, one just like all the other committees, without consulting the opposition parties. A month later, aided and abetted by the NDP, she completely changed the structure of the committee. Now she would have us believe that in five months, at the height of summer, in the midst of barbecues and pool parties, we will be able to meet with all Canadians.

Will the minister set her ego aside, listen to all of the experts, the analysts, and the people, and let Canadians have their say in a referendum?

[English]

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition members have been asking us to change the makeup of the committee. We listened to their concerns. We extended a hand. We changed the structure of the committee.

We are asking for all members of the House to work together with us on making sure that we come up with the best reforms for our electoral system. We will not proceed until we consult with Canadians, consult with experts, and have the broad support of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition was not consulted. This was all done behind closed doors with the NDP. Members on this side of the House were never consulted.

The minister keeps saying that 60% of the population called for a new electoral system. I am not sure what math class she was in, but I would like to give her the real numbers: 39.5% of the people voted for the Liberal Party. Nobody in the House is going to convince me that 39.5% of the population voted for all 219 resolutions, only one of which had anything to do with the electoral reform in the Liberals' election platform. They have to stop making things up.

When will the minister listen to the people, analysts, journalists, and political commentators who are not happy about how the members on that side of the House are doing things?

[English]

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party was not the only party that ran on electoral reform, so perhaps the hon. member could redo his math.

Let me stress what I just said earlier. We are looking forward to the special committee work. We will be consulting with experts. We will be consulting with Canadians. We will be consulting with members of the House. We will not proceed until we have the broad support of Canadians.

• (1135)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just love their committees.

Oral Questions

The point is that Canadians do not buy the minister's claims that a bunch of politicians on a committee should change how Canadians vote for their elected representatives. It is obvious that for their own political interests, the Liberals want to rig changes to the fundamental way our democratic system works.

Canadians demand a referendum. Why will the Liberals not give Canadians a direct say and hold a referendum?

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says she does not trust politicians. I wonder if she put that as a slogan in her last campaign when she asked her constituents to vote for her.

We take our responsibility as a solemn and serious responsibility. Canadians elected us to do some serious work. We call on all members of the House to join us on committee and work with us to ensure we come up with the best electoral reform to our system.

We will not proceed until we have the support of Canadians.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 73% of voters in Lakeland sent me here to represent them, the same percentage of Canadians who want a referendum.

The 2015 election had the highest voter turnout across Canada in over three decades. However, even that pales in comparison to the huge turnout at the last national referendum. Canadians are engaged. The minister somehow expects Canadians to believe that an invite only committee of politicians consulting and scrolling through Twitter constitutes Canadians having a direct say. It is ridiculous.

Will the minister stop telling Canadians that Liberals know best and let them decide?

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member's constituents trust her to do the serious work on their behalf. That is what Canadians sent us here to do.

We are working together. We are extending a hand to opposition members to work together with us on striking a study and consulting with experts and Canadians. Let us work together to find the best outcome for Canadians.

Let me repeat this. We will not proceed without the broad support of Canadians.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for thousands of years salmon has been the foundation and main food source for the people of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. Over the last 10 years, their basic rights to catch and sell fish in their traditional territory have been upheld by the B.C. Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of Canada. Yet after promising not to fight first nations in court, the Liberals are refusing to honour their rights.

What is the legal basis for the federal government continuing opposition to the rights of the Nuu-chah-nulth people?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the case that has been presented here. We recognize

the rights of indigenous people across the country. Our government is leading the way in full consultation and working together with indigenous people. We are going to continue to do that.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, northern shrimp stocks in Newfoundland and Labrador are floundering. The provincial government has asked the new Minister of Fisheries to use the last-in, first-out policy to give big corporations the lion's share of what is left, cutting out inshore fishermen.

We in the NDP believe that those closest to the resource should benefit. Adjacency, historical dependence, and sustainability should be more important than politics.

Will the Liberals eliminate the last-in, first-out policy and help Newfoundland's inshore fishery and coastal communities survive?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the importance of the shrimp fishery and those who depend on it.

The ministerial advisory panel is an independent committee that provides advice to the minister on the last in, first out policy. The panel has begun its public consultations, which will end with a meeting in Halifax on June 10.

The panel meetings have been very well attended. Until the report is published later in June, the last in, first out policy is suspended.

We are waiting for the report in order to make a decision.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Minister of Foreign Affairs refuses to call the actions of ISIS genocide. Instead, he wrote a stern letter to the UN. Meanwhile, all of our closest allies have already made this important distinction. Shamefully, the parliamentary secretary thinks that somehow we are rushing our judgment.

Why are the Liberals letting thousands get slaughtered, while they wait for the United Nations to dictate our foreign policy?

Oral Questions

● (1140)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that we are doing more to fight ISIL and more to secure a lasting and stable future for the region than the party of the member opposite has ever done.

On February 8, we released our three year strategy to address the ongoing crisis in Syria. I signed the MLU between Jordan and Canada for a \$1.6 billion investment in this effort.

We are an active member of the anti-ISIL coalition. We have been invited to join the international Syria support group as well as the humanitarian task force and cease fire task force.

Canada is entirely committed to the fight against ISIL.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives passed the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act. Just yesterday, the Ontario Superior Court gave victims of Iranian state-sponsored terrorism \$13 million of Iranian assets held in Canada. Yet at the same time, the Liberals are cozying up to the Iranian regime. This is happening while Iran has thrown Canadian Iranian Professor Hoodfar behind bars for no reason.

Why are the Liberals cozying up to Iran when it continues to prove it will not change?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have repeated often our commitment to re-engage cautiously with Iran in a step-by-step manner. Canada's severing of ties with Iran helped no one. It did not help Canada, it did not help the people of Iran, it did not help our allies such as Israel, and it certainly did not help for global security.

It was fortunate that at the end of the 1970s, when we faced that terrible hostage situation in Tehran, Canada had an embassy there. May we learn from the past.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, this is another example of the Liberal government's mismanagement. Canada cannot be governed through selfies, and it especially cannot be governed without a firm grasp of the diplomatic issues.

Why does this government refuse to admit that the massacres perpetrated by ISIS against the Christian, Yazidi, and Shia Muslim minorities can only be called one thing: genocide?

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we strongly condemn the atrocities committed by the so-called Islamic state.

Official recognition of genocide is a serious matter. There is no one in the House who takes that term loosely whatsoever. We are being proactive, working as responsible, reliable partners in the international community, to work with the UN Security Council to ensure that the atrocities committed by the Islamic state are held to account.

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that Canada have a presence in major NATO initiatives.

Following Russia's aggression in Ukraine and its territorial claims in the Arctic, NATO is calling for unity among nations in order to respond to any potential request for intervention.

Will the minister commit to showing leadership in response to NATO, or is he going to ignore the facts, as he is doing with the CF-18 issue?

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the hon. member that we have in fact received a request. We do honour all of our NATO commitments as and when they come due. We have a considerable number of military people over in that part of the world, and this request is being actively reviewed as we speak.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is flying blind when it comes to military aircraft procurement. The only way to ensure that we get the right plane at the best price is through an open competition. The Liberals promised that in the election, but now seem set to buy Super Hornets through a sole-source deal.

Yesterday at committee, senior defence officials confirmed that an open competition would be feasible and appropriate for fighter aircraft. Why has the government not started a transparent process to replace the CF-18s?

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the minister has been saying for the entire week, we are trying to manage the capability gap, and no decisions have been made. Therefore, the question is based upon gossip and rumour, and wherever else the hon. member gets his source of information. At this point, no decision has been taken.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 12 years after the task force on pay equity tabled its final report, Canadian women are still waiting for action. Witnesses who testified to this year's Special Committee on Pay Equity could not have been more clear: justice delayed is justice denied.

Women cannot and should not wait any longer. This is a matter of justice, equality, and good economic policy. Will the minister commit to tabling proactive pay equity legislation in the House before the end of 2016?

Oral Questions

●(1145)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes in gender equality and in eliminating the gender wage gap. Pay equity is one part of that solution. We are committed to supporting women's full participation in the economic, social, and democratic life of our country. It is simply unacceptable that Canada ranks 80th in the world for gender wage equality by the World Economic Forum.

We thank the committee for its tremendously important work. We are going to review the recommendations very carefully. I look forward to working with my colleague on this important issue to ensure women reach equality.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Toronto has recently seen a troubling increase in violent crime, and residents, including my constituents, are concerned about the impact of gang violence on their communities.

Mayor John Tory has asked the federal and provincial governments for help to end this violence. I am aware he has recently spoken to the Minister of Public Safety to discuss how all levels of government can work together to address this.

Would the minister please tell the House what he is doing to address the mayor's concerns?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Don Valley West and our entire GTA caucus for the hard work they are doing to enhance the safety of their communities.

Yesterday I did have the opportunity to have a constructive conversation with Mayor Tory about gang violence and how all levels of government could transcend jurisdictional issues and work together in innovative ways.

In addition to enforcement measures and border controls, this government is investing heavily upstream in stronger, healthier communities, more summer jobs, access to education, housing, transit, and social infrastructure. This means more opportunity for young people in Toronto and across Canada.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us review the Liberals' actual record for indigenous people.

In spite of a ruling from the Human Rights Tribunal, they have put children in jeopardy by not implementing Jordan's Principle. Three months and friendship centres are still waiting for operating funds, and apparently there is no interest in resolving long-standing land claims.

Now we hear the northern Manitoba Dene, who were almost at the finish line, are now back at the starting point. Why will the minister not commit to sit down with the Dene and resolve the north of 60 land claim?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the House that we do take the issues around first nations, Inuit, and Métis communities in our country very seriously. We have made historic investments to right the wrongs in the treatment of indigenous people. We are going to continue to do so.

We know many children and family services on reserve must be overhauled, and we are working to do that. We know there needs to be more work done around the urban aboriginal planning with friendship centres, and we are doing that. We know there needs to be more infrastructure investments in these communities, and, yes, we are doing that.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Dene nation's land claim does not even seem to be on the radar of the Liberals. They have been working for decades on this land claim. Under our Conservative government, just before the election, we were in the final stages of negotiating a deal.

Why has this land claim gone completely backward under the Liberals? Will the minister commit to meeting personally with the chief negotiator and moving this land claim forward?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a goal to move land claims forward in the country en masse. Many land claims have been left unsettled for a very long time, leaving indigenous communities without the means to manage and move forward in the way that they want to.

Our government has made that commitment to indigenous people. We will work with all groups in our country to help them resolve land claims, to help them move forward, and to help them have a better life in a country we love.

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AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it is not only with first nations in Manitoba, but the aerospace industry in Manitoba is also being ignored.

The provincial legislature has passed a motion opposing the Liberals' Bill C-10, including Liberals from the province. Premier Pallister has raised their concerns about losing jobs in this important industry directly with the Prime Minister. These concerns have been completely ignored.

Why has not even one of the seven Liberal MPs from Manitoba stood up for the aerospace industry in our province?

Oral Questions

• (1150)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on growing the economy and creating jobs across the country.

The Government of Manitoba and Air Canada signed an agreement to cease their legal action in return for at least 150 good quality aerospace jobs. This is an excellent start, but certainly not the end.

We need to bring net new aerospace jobs to Winnipeg in the long run. We remain committed to working with Manitobans to do just that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the agreement has not been signed. Bill C-10 was introduced this week at second reading in the Senate on behalf of the Liberal government by independent senator André Pratte, who was just appointed by the Prime Minister.

The government deliberately misled the senator. The senator said in the red chamber that the Government of Manitoba had an agreement with Air Canada, which justified the quick passage of Bill C-10. The Minister of Transport's stubbornness is jeopardizing hundreds of jobs in Manitoba and Quebec.

Out of respect for all parliamentarians and all senators, when will the Minister of Transport open his eyes, do the right thing, and acknowledge that he was wrong with Bill C-10?

[*English*]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to modernizing the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

The announcement of Air Canada's intention to discontinue the litigation involving Quebec and Manitoba creates an opportunity to modernize the act. This would continue to reinforce our expectation that Air Canada has aircraft maintenance undertaken in Quebec, Manitoba, and Ontario.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last month in New York, the Liberals promised to fully implement and adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The TRC's call to action number 43 calls on the government to do the same.

Here is the good news. Bill C-262 would implement both that promise and that call to action.

The question becomes very simple. Will the Liberals support my bill or will that become just another broken promise?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for all the work he has done around the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are committed to the United Nations declaration. This is why we have changed our official position at the UN. It is why our

minister has presented a new case for Canada and has offered our full support.

We also realize in our broader commitment to indigenous people in this country that we want to advance reconciliation. We want to do so in collaboration and in working together with indigenous people. Therefore, consultation is always a requirement.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government spent over \$2.3 million to renovate Canadian military bases to serve as temporary lodgings for Syrian refugees, but they were never used, because at the last minute, the government changed course and decided to house the refugees in hotels at the cost of over \$14 million. Those renovated military bases are now sitting empty.

Will the government at least salvage something good from this wasteful mismanagement and use the renovated military bases as temporary shelters for the homeless?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the hon. member is missing the forest for the trees.

The good news is that those military bases were set up as a contingency. The fact that we did not need them meant that the government saved tens of millions of dollars. We were scheduled to spend \$319 million, but we actually spent \$136 million less than was predicted. Therefore, we saved a lot of money—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week the Alberta NDP government unleashed its carbon tax, and the Liberal carbon tax is right around the corner. These job-killing carbon taxes will make it harder for the middle class to afford to heat their homes and have food for their tables or sports for their kids.

When will the Liberals start letting Canadians keep more money in their pockets and stop threatening hard-working families with yet another carbon tax?

• (1155)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the party opposite, we understand that the environment and the economy go together.

Oral Questions

I was very pleased to be in Paris at the climate change conference with opposition members, indigenous leaders, businesses, youth, and NGOs working together. We understand that putting a price on carbon is pricing pollution. It makes great economic sense. It was endorsed by the Mining Association of Canada as the most efficient way to reduce emissions and foster innovation.

We are going to take steps to tackle climate change for the future of our country and for the next generation.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the Liberals are already spending their way well into a huge deficit. At the same time, many Canadian families who rely on natural resource jobs struggle to make ends meet.

Most in my riding are patiently waiting for a positive decision by the Liberals on Pacific Northwest LNG, a decision that would address the growing Liberal deficit by providing billions in revenue.

Why do the Liberals continue to delay a project that will be good for jobs, good for the environment, and good for our economy?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe that we need to make decisions based on science, evidence, and facts. That is what we are doing in this case. The proponent brought significant new information that raises concerns, including on the impact on salmon. We are working with the proponent to see if we can resolve these issues. We are hopeful we can. We believe the environment and the economy go together, but we are not going to step down on science.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, honeybee health is essential to a strong agricultural sector in Canada. The National Bee Diagnostic Centre in Beaverlodge has done great work in providing bee diagnostics and promoting bee health. Since the founding of this important institution, the demand for their services from beekeepers across the country has grown exponentially and they have nearly outgrown their current facilities.

Will the minister commit today to work with the National Bee Diagnostic Centre to ensure that they can expand and continue their important work and research on bee health?

[Translation]

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

Honeybee health makes an essential contribution to the success of many agricultural sectors. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is working with the industry and its provincial partners on research into bee health and viability. The department has also funded projects to improve the competitiveness of the bee industry.

I am excited by the idea of working with our partners to find ways to improve bee health.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the government announced a significant investment in St. Joseph's Oratory, a national shrine in Montreal and the work of Brother André. This contribution comes from amounts remaining in the building Canada fund.

Can the minister give us an update on infrastructure investments in Quebec?

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a good question from my colleague from Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs.

I am pleased to tell him that investments in Quebec are going very well. In the past month alone, we have announced investments of \$55 million in Quebec. This morning, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Families are in Quebec City to announce a \$10-million contribution to Théâtre Le Diamant, a project by the great artist Robert Lepage.

We are not stopping there. We will continue to work with the Quebec government to strengthen cities and communities.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Arnold Viarsen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives took action in combatting modern-day slavery. We introduced minimum sentences for child traffickers, provided funding for survivors of human trafficking, trained law enforcement, and most importantly, launched a national action plan to combat human trafficking in 2012. There is no mention of human trafficking in the Liberal platform, in the throne speech, in the mandate letters, or in budget 2016.

Human traffickers have a plan. Do the Liberals have a plan to end human trafficking?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, the problem of human trafficking is a scourge on our society. This is part and parcel of the comprehensive Criminal Code review that we are undergoing to ensure that the tools we have in the criminal justice system are adequate and efficient in addressing this very serious problem.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, chemicals are an integral part of everyday life, essential to our economy, our communities, and our homes. While chemical substances provide benefits, they may also have harmful effects on human health and the environment if not properly managed.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change update the House on Canada's chemicals management plan?

• (1200)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the chemicals management plan is Canada's comprehensive and integrated strategy for identifying and taking action on potentially harmful substances. I was very pleased to announce with my colleague, the Minister of Health, \$491.8 million over the next five years to continue delivering on Canada's world-leading chemicals management plan. These funds will be used to complete the next phase of this essential program, which helps reduce the risk posed by chemicals to Canadians and the environment. We owe it to future generations.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in March 2011, Shaughn Wittman was serving in Afghanistan when an explosion blew him from a rooftop, damaging his back. Since then, he has tried everything, from physiotherapy to acupuncture to painkillers, but the pain still persists and his condition has worsened. He has dealt with Veterans Affairs now for months, trying to get his pension readjusted, but to no avail. I have brought this case to the attention of the minister on numerous occasions, but still no action has been taken.

Why is the minister turning his back on veterans like Shaughn Wittman?

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is often difficult to hear about veterans who believe they are not getting the services they need.

What we have done is that when a veteran believes his claim has been incorrectly assessed, we have set up an independent review process, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. This has two levels of appeal and we provide the member with a lawyer to properly go through that.

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[*Translation*]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to the Prime Minister, Canada is not a banana republic. That remains to be seen.

Take the diafiltered milk issue as an example. A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Commerce said, "We have made clear to the Canadian government that we expect that they will not take any action to disrupt current U.S. exports of dairy products." That is interesting, because that is exactly what the government is doing: nothing.

In order to please the Americans, the government is deliberately dragging its feet on the issue, when it would actually be quite simple to resolve.

What is the name of this country, again? Is it Canada or Santa Banana?

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

This is the government that set up supply management, and it is the government that will continue defending it. As we promised, in recent weeks, we have consulted and listened to all the industry stakeholders in order to come up with a sustainable, long-term strategy.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the contradictions keep piling up in the Quebec National Assembly about the possible anomalies in the sale of RONA.

In April, I asked the Minister of Economic Development to put the deal on hold until there was more information about this sale. However, the minister rushed to give his approval just hours after the Competition Bureau did.

So as not to muzzle scientists, the Prime Minister promised that all studies would be made public.

Will this government promise to disclose the studies that led it to the conclusion that the sale of RONA was good for the country?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign investments are a major economic driver for Canada. That is why the minister approved the application by Lowe's to acquire RONA.

Lowe's made firm commitments to Canada. These commitments are legally binding, including those to set up the headquarters of its Canadian companies in Boucherville, to keep Canadians in senior management positions, and to maintain a high level of jobs in its businesses in Canada. It is a good deal.

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MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has launched consultations on redefining Canada's international aid in order to improve assistance for the most vulnerable. That is fine, but to do that, we must not be part of the problem.

Routine Proceedings

Canadian mining companies working abroad are sometimes ruthless. On May 6, 2009, in a majority vote, the House adopted a Liberal motion calling for, among other things, the creation of an independent ombudsman to look into their activities abroad.

When will the government make the creation of this position a priority?

• (1205)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her very important question about an issue that is very important to us.

The minister is consulting our colleagues in other countries, including Peru, Chile, and Mexico, to talk constructively about Canadian mining companies. We have met with the corporate social responsibility counsellor to find ways to strengthen his role.

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[*English*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-1001, an act to authorize La Capitale Financial Security Insurance Company to apply to be continued as a body corporate under the laws of the Province of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

This bill is deemed to have been read a first time and ordered for second reading at the next sitting of the House.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

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 13 petitions.

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PETITIONS

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition from Fair Vote Canada. The petition calls upon the House of Commons to immediately undertake public consultations across Canada to amend the Canada Elections Act to ensure that voters can cast an equal and effective ballot in order to be presented fairly in Parliament, regardless of political belief or place of residence. Almost 130 Canadians have lent their names to this petition.

As the special committee on electoral reform begins its inquiry to identify and conduct a study of viable alternative voting systems, I hope it keeps this petition in mind.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the community coming together to rally to save Crab Park, I rise to table a petition containing 1,458 names.

The petition highlights the fact that the Vancouver East community has fought long and hard for the creation of Crab Park, including a 75-day occupation of crown land by Don Larson, founder of the Crab—Water for Life Society, in 1984. Crab Park is also a sacred space, as it is home to the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls memorial.

Now Crab Park is under threat. This time the Port of Vancouver is proposing to expand Centerm terminal by infilling seven acres of the harbour. The community is concerned about the impact on the environment; the increase in traffic by water, land, and rail; the increase in cargo traffic, including hazardous cargo; the lack of an emergency preparedness plan; the increase in noise; and much more.

With the change granted to the port by the Conservative government, the port can now access and approve its own projects.

The community is calling for the re-establishment of a vigorous, independent environmental assessment process. It wants a full review of the port authority. It wants to restore accountability by the port, and it wants a minister to stop the westward expansion of Centerm terminal.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many constituents of Winnipeg North asking the House to identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so that provincial and territorial governments will be entitled to funds, under the Canada health transfer system, to be used to provide accessible and available hospice palliative care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces and territories.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by people from a number of different constituencies, although many of them are from my own, on the issue of electoral reform.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House the fact that whenever the electoral system is being changed in a Canadian province, or has been proposed, there has been a referendum on the proposed change. They point out that in New Zealand in the 1990s and in the United Kingdom in the early 2000s, when electoral reform was proposed, a referendum was held on the proposals. They encourage us to do the very same thing.

Routine Proceedings

●(1210)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 123, 129-131, 138, 144, 146, 151, 158, 163, 170, 173-175, 177, and 180.

[Text]

Question No. 123—**Mr. Ron Liepert:**

With regard to each meeting of the Treasury Board during the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what was the date of the meeting; (b) where did the meeting occur; (c) who was in attendance; and (d) what was the agenda of the meeting?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, with regard to each meeting of the Treasury Board during the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) when the House of Commons is in session, the Treasury Board usually sits on Thursday.

In response to part (b) of the question, the information requested is a confidence of the Queen's Privy Council and cannot be provided.

Regarding part (c), the committee members are the President of the Treasury Board, chair; the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, vice-chair; the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Health; the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development; and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Alternate members are the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and the Minister of Democratic Institutions.

In response to part (d), the information requested is a confidence of the Queen's Privy Council and cannot be provided.

Question No. 129—**Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to the Department of Finance's estimates relating to the impact of oil prices on government revenues: (a) what information is available on how these estimates are calculated; and (b) does the government make any projections using incremental price increases, and, if so, does the government use \$2 increments from \$2 to \$160 per barrel?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, in Canada, natural resources are owned by the provinces. As such, although royalties are a sizable revenue source for provincial governments, the federal government receives virtually no revenues from resource royalties. Instead, at the federal level, oil and gas extraction impacts federal revenues in three ways.

First is corporate profits and corporate income tax, CIT. When oil prices fall, profits in the industry fall and losses can be experienced. Losses can affect past tax years as firms are able to carry back these losses against taxable income from the prior three years. Firms are also able to carry forward their losses and use them to reduce taxes in future years when oil prices and profits have returned to higher levels.

Second is wages and salaries and personal income tax, PIT. Individuals employed in the oil and gas sector may experience reduced hours or layoffs when firms reduce production and/or expenses. As a result, PIT and GST revenues could also decrease.

Third is other impacts. As a result of layoffs in the sector, federal expenses related to employment insurance benefits may also increase. In addition, lower profits can lead to lower dividend payments, further reducing personal and non-resident income taxes.

Given that the fiscal impacts are indirect, estimating the impact of changes in oil prices on federal government revenues is not a straightforward exercise. The fiscal impacts depend on interrelated factors and will vary depending on the cause of the change in prices as well as the response of individual firms in the sector. For example, if lower prices arise as a result of increased supply, as is currently the case, then the impact on Canada's economy, and thus federal revenues, would be negative but more limited. This is because demand for oil would be maintained, and may even increase in response to lower prices, such that the same quantity of oil would be sold, albeit at a lower price. If lower prices arise as a result of weaker global demand, then the impact on the economy and federal revenue would be significantly larger. This is because both the price and quantity of oil sold would decline.

The size of the decline in oil prices, and the level from which they fall, or rise, is also important. For example, small price declines from high levels would have little implication for production and investment, while large price declines, which may render certain operations uneconomical, could result in lower production, layoffs, and the cancellation of investment. This would obviously have a bigger impact on federal revenues.

At the aggregate level, the federal government has communicated the changes in federal revenues and expenses from changes in the economic outlook, including changes in the price of oil, in recent budgets and updates.

In response to part (b), no, the government does not make projections using \$2 increments from \$2 to \$160 per barrel.

Question No. 130—**Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to the changes to Old Age Security (OAS) announced in Budget 2016: what are the details of any research conducted into the (i) impact on government revenues, (ii) impact on the costs and sustainability of the OAS program, (iii) anticipated costs of reversing these changes?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2016 announced three changes to the old age security program:

an increase to the guaranteed income supplement top-up of \$947 annually for the most vulnerable single seniors, starting in July 2016;

Routine Proceedings

the cancellation of the provisions in the Old Age Security Act that increase the age of eligibility for OAS benefits from 65 to 67; and

the extension of the provision that currently allows couples who receive the GIS and who have to live apart for reasons beyond their control to receive higher benefits based on their individual incomes, to couples receiving the GIS and allowance benefits. The costs of each measure are as follows.

The chief actuary estimates the cost of the increase to the GIS top-up for single seniors to be \$478 million in 2016-17, rising to \$669 million in 2017-18, the first full year of implementation.

The chief actuary estimates that cancelling the increase to the age of eligibility will increase OAS program expenditures by \$11.5 billion, or 0.34% of gross domestic product in 2029-30, the first year in full implementation.

The increase in the age of eligibility for OAS benefits was scheduled to begin in 2023, with full implementation in 2029. This estimate includes the cost of the increase to the GIS.

However, the net cost to the government will be lower. The Department of Finance estimates that, in 2029-30, revenues from federal income tax from the OAS pension would rise by an estimated \$988 million, and additional revenue from the OAS recovery tax would amount to \$584 million, for a total of \$1.6 billion.

Furthermore, as an offset to the savings associated with the 2012 changes in the age of eligibility, the previous government had committed to compensate provincial/territorial governments for social assistance payments for low-income seniors who would no longer be eligible for OAS benefits at age 65. In addition, federal income support for veterans and aboriginal peoples would have been extended to age 67. These costs had not been estimated.

The Old Age Security Act currently contains a provision that allows couples who are GIS recipients to receive benefits at the higher single rate if the couple is living apart for reasons beyond their control, such as where one spouse lives in a nursing home. Budget 2016 proposes to extend the provision to couples who receive the GIS and allowance benefits. The cost of this measure is estimated at \$1 million for 2016-17 and \$3 million per year ongoing.

Question No. 131—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to projections calculated by the Department of Finance on the costs of servicing government debt over the next 50 years, has the Department calculated the costs associated with servicing the deficit projected in Budget 2016, and, if so, (i) how were these calculations made, (ii) what interest rates were used for the purposes of these calculations?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance has not conducted long-term projections, greater than five years, on the cost of servicing the government's total stock of interest-bearing debt since the publication of budget 2016, but intends to do so as part of its next fiscal sustainability report, which is typically published in the fall.

The projection of public debt charges up to fiscal year 2020-21, published in budget 2016, includes the debt servicing costs of the entirety of the government's actual and projected stock of interest-bearing debt. When calculating this projection, the Department of

Finance does not attempt to distinguish between the debt charges associated with deficits incurred in particular years and those associated with the underlying stock.

Question No. 138—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) how many funding applications have been submitted; (b) how many funding applications have yet to be processed; (c) how many funding applications have been approved for funding; (d) how many funding applications have been rejected for funding; and (e) what is the total funding amount that has been provided to approved applicants?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), 794 funding applications were submitted to the agency.

With regard to (b), of the applications submitted, 352 had yet to be processed on April 22, 2016.

With regard to (c), 436 funding applications were approved.

With regard to (d), six funding applications were rejected.

With regard to (e), the total funding amount provided to approved applicants is \$90.6 million

Question No. 144—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to the government's policy on seeking clemency for Canadians sentenced to death abroad: (a) under what circumstances will the government seek clemency; (b) when was the current policy adopted; (c) who proposed the current policy; and (d) how was it adopted?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the Government of Canada will seek clemency in all cases of Canadians facing the death penalty abroad.

With regard to (b), (c) and (d), the Minister of Foreign Affairs proposed the current policy and, after consultation with the Minister of Justice, announced the policy on February 15, 2016. For more information, please see www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communications/2016/02/15a.aspx

Question No. 146—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to Temporary Resident Permits (TRP) and Temporary Work Permits (TWP), for the period from November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) how many TRP have been issued for individuals suspected to be victims of human trafficking; (b) how many TRP have been renewed for individuals suspected to be victims of human trafficking; (c) how many TWP have been issued to individuals who are exotic dancers; and (d) how many TWP have been renewed for individuals who are exotic dancers?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada issued 12 temporary resident permits, or TRPs, to individuals suspected to be victims of human trafficking.

With regard to (b), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not renew any subsequent TRPs for individuals suspected to be victims of human trafficking.

With regard to (c), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not issue any temporary work permits, or TWPs, to individuals who are exotic dancers.

With regard to (d), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not renew any TWPs for individuals who are exotic dancers.

Question No. 151—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the Disability Tax Credit (DTC): (a) what are all the medical conditions that successfully qualified for DTC in the 2015-2016 fiscal year; (b) what is the refusal rate of DTC applications submitted by persons diagnosed with phenylketonuria in the 2015-2016 fiscal year; (c) what is the criteria for denying a DTC application for a person diagnosed with phenylketonuria; (d) what is the number of appeals filed for rejected DTC applications related to phenylketonuria since the beginning of the 2015-2016 fiscal year; (e) what is the average DTC amount claimed for expenses related to phenylketonuria; and (f) what are the measures undertaken by the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure its workers have a good understanding of the medical conditions they are reviewing as part of DTC applications?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the disability tax credit, DTC, is a non-refundable tax credit that helps persons with disabilities, or their supporting persons, reduce the amount of income tax they may have to pay. To qualify, an individual must have a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions, as defined in the Income Tax Act and as certified by a medical practitioner.

More detailed information is available in the CRA publication Tax measures for persons with disabilities - Disability-Related Information 2015, RC4064(E) Rev. 15, which is available on the CRA website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4064/rc4064-15e.pdf.

With regard to parts (a) and (b), eligibility for the disability tax credit is not based on a medical condition or diagnosis, rather on the effects of the impairment on a person's ability to perform the basic activities or daily living, or whether the person is blind or requires life-sustaining therapy. For this reason, the CRA does not collect this information.

With regard to part (c), the CRA determines eligibility for the DTC based on the criteria set out in section 118.3 of the Income Tax Act. These criteria are not based on a medical condition or diagnosis, but rather on the effects of the impairment on a person's ability to perform the basic activities of daily living, or whether the person is blind or requires life-sustaining therapy.

To be eligible, a medical practitioner must certify that a person has a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions and describe its effects on one of the basic activities of daily living, or provide information indicating the individual is blind or meets the criteria for life-sustaining therapy.

Applications for the DTC are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. A person with the same medical condition as another may not experience the same effects. In addition, there may be other factors that contribute to the severity of impairment, such as other medical conditions or circumstances.

With regard to part (d), the information being requested, by diagnosis, is not captured by the CRA as there is no requirement to do so under the ITA.

With regard to part (e), the average amount for expenses related to phenylketonuria is not captured by the CRA.

With regard to part (f), CRA assessors receive extensive training to make eligibility determinations in accordance with the legislation set out in section 118.3 of the Income Tax Act and by consulting with registered nurses, or RNs, employed by the CRA, who serve as resources for all of the tax centres. When required, the RNs will also contact the medical practitioners who have certified the forms for additional information.

CRA assessors all refer to the procedures manual, and quality reviews of eligibility determinations are conducted on a continuous basis to ensure consistency in the administration of the DTC program.

Question No. 158—**Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to the government's planned advertising campaign for Budget 2016, for every instance of an advertisement: (a) what is the medium of the ad; (b) where did or will the ad appear, including but not limited to, location, television station, radio station, publication; (c) what is the duration or size of the ad; (d) when was the ad displayed or when will it be displayed; and (e) what is the cost of the ad?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance has not purchased any advertising for budget 2016.

Question No. 163—**Mr. David Anderson:**

With regard to the details of any consultations undertaken or advice received by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, his office, or his Department, for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016, regarding a royal regime for farmer saved seed under the Plant Breeders Rights Act: for each consultation, (i) what was the date, (ii) which people were present, (iii) were there any recorded positions on this issue taken at this meeting?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, including the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency, did not conduct any consultations with respect to a royalty regime for farmer saved seed under the Plant Breeders' Rights Act between November 4, 2015, and April 22, 2016.

Question No. 170—**Mr. Robert Sopuck:**

With regard to the disposition of government assets, for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) on how many occasions has the government repurchased or reacquired a lot which had been disposed of in accordance with the Treasury Board Directive on the Disposal of Surplus Materiel; and (b) for each occasion identified in (a), what was (i) the description or nature of the item or items which constituted the lot, (ii) the sale account number or other reference number, (iii) the date on which the sale closed, (iv) the price at which the item was disposed of to the buyer, (v) the price at which the item was repurchased from the buyer?

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, PSPC has not repurchased or reacquired a lot that has been disposed of in accordance with the Treasury Board directive on the disposal of surplus materiel in the period indicated.

Question No. 173—**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:**

With regard to the Safe Food for Canadians Act, Bill S-11, 41st Parliament, First session, what is the status of the implementation of regulations related to this Act?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while developing the new regulatory framework for food safety, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has undertaken extensive engagement with stakeholders.

The CFIA hosted two large forums, the Food Forum in June 2013 and the Healthy and Safe Food Forum in June 2014, along with extensive webinars and opportunities for written input to gather stakeholder feedback on proposals for the next regulatory framework.

In 2015, the CFIA released a revised proposal to solicit further feedback and undertook in-depth engagement with micro and small businesses to better understand the potential burden for these businesses and what they would need to comply with the proposed regulations. The comment period on the preliminary draft text closed on July 31, 2015.

Four years of engagement and analysis with more than 15,500 stakeholders has resulted in over 500 written submissions on the proposed safe food for Canadians regulations. The CFIA has undertaken detailed review of this extensive feedback and is preparing the regulatory package.

Under the regulatory process, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rtrap-parfa/gfrpg-gperf/gfrpg-gperf02-eng.asp, the next opportunity to engage on the draft regulations will occur when the regulatory text is published in the Canada Gazette, part I in late fall 2016.

Question No. 174—**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:**

With regard to the findings of scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with respect to sugar: (a) what scientific evidence exists regarding the biological difference between naturally occurring sugar and added sugar in food; (b) what ability does the Department have to detect the difference between naturally occurring sugar and added sugar through standard food testing methods; (c) is the Department aware of any health benefits of a labelling requirement for added sugar on consumer food products, and, if so, what are they; and (d) and is the Department aware of any potential problems that may be encountered in requiring separate labelling for added sugar on consumer food products, and if so, what are they?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to helping Canadians make better food choices for themselves and their families. This includes taking action to improve food labels to ensure that Canadians have the information they need to help them make more informed and healthier choices, including more information on sugars.

With regard to (a), the scientific evidence related to sugar metabolism indicates that there is no biological difference between naturally occurring and added sugar. All sugars present in food are digested and absorbed as one of three monosaccharides, glucose, fructose, and galactose, whether they naturally occur in foods, such as fructose in an apple, or are added to foods, such as fructose in a fruit-flavoured beverage.

With regard to (b), it is not possible to distinguish naturally occurring from added sugars in a food product using standard analytical methods.

With regard to (c), a healthy eating pattern, such as that recommended by Canada's food guide, leaves limited room for added sugars in the diet. To help Canadians make informed food choices regarding their consumption of sugars, Health Canada proposed two new measures for the labelling of sugars as part of its proposed regulatory amendments to nutrition labelling regulations, published in Canada Gazette, part I, in June 2015.

First, Health Canada proposed that the nutrition facts table include a declaration of the % daily value, DV, for total sugars, based on a DV of 100 grams, to help consumers identify if there is a little sugar, which is 5% DV or less, or a lot of sugar, which is 15% DV or more, in their food.

Second, Health Canada proposed to group sugar-based ingredients, such as molasses, honey, and brown sugar, under the common name "sugars" in the ingredients list. Grouping sugar-based ingredients together provides a clearer indication of the amount of sugars in the food product relative to other ingredients, as ingredients are listed in descending order of their amount in the product.

This would raise awareness of both the sources and the contribution of all sugars, added or naturally occurring, to the total composition of the foods to the consumer.

With regard to (d), analytical methods cannot distinguish between naturally occurring and added sugars, making it a challenge for the verification of information on the nutrition facts table should there be a requirement to declare added sugars. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which is responsible for enforcing the regulations, would therefore have to rely on record-keeping to verify compliance with the requirement to declare the amount of added sugars.

Question No. 175—**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:**

With regard to the log books for personal use of ministerial executive vehicles, for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what is the total number of entries for each executive vehicle, broken down by vehicle; (b) what are the dates, time, and length for each entry; (c) what is the trip description, if any, of each entry; (d) what is the identification, if available, of the family member or member of the household that was the driver for each entry; and (e) what is the total number of kilometres travelled for personal use?

Routine Proceedings

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) through (e) of the question, the Privy Council Office has no information to provide regarding the log books for the personal use of ministerial executive vehicles for the period of November 4, 2015 to April 22, 2016. When processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, therefore certain information has been withheld on the grounds that it constitutes personal information.

Question No. 177—**Bob Saroya:**

With regard to any consultations by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, his staff, or officials at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, concerning amendments to the regulations concerning the humane transport of animals, from November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: for each consultation, identify (i) the persons and organizations consulted, (ii) the government officials present, (iii) the date of the consultation, (iv) the positions presented by those consulted?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between November 3, 2015 and April 22, 2016, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency provided updates to stakeholder groups on the proposal to amend the health of animals regulations regarding humane transportation; however, no consultations took place.

The CFIA has been consulting with stakeholders about the regulatory proposal since 2006. Stakeholders included national industry umbrella organizations, livestock and poultry transporters, and retail organizations, as well as animal welfare and animal rights groups. The CFIA carried out a pre-consultation with targeted groups in 2013, and followed up with two economic questionnaires to over 1,100 individual stakeholders in 2014.

In addition, the CFIA continues to gather data from specific industry groups to validate the cost-benefit analysis portion of the regulatory impact analysis statement.

The proposed amendments will be pre-published in the Canada Gazette, part I, in fall 2016 as outlined in the CFIA forward regulatory plan 2016-18, available at www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/acts-and-regulations/forward-regulatory-plan/2016-2018/eng/1429123874172/1429123874922. This will provide all stakeholders with another opportunity to comment.

Question No. 180—**Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to court cases between the government and Aboriginal communities and organizations, as of April 22, 2016: (a) how many court cases is the government currently engaged in with First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities or organizations as either an appellant, respondent or intervenor, and what are these cases; (b) how many court cases is the government currently engaged in with First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities or organizations in which the government is the respondent; (c) how much is the government paying to engage in court cases with First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities or organizations as either an appellant, respondent or intervenor, broken down by (i) year, (ii) case; and (d) how many lawyers does the Department of Justice employ to work on Aboriginal court cases?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this request poses challenges that cannot be overcome.

The information required is not readily available. It would require extensive consultations with all government departments. Each department's inventory would have to be manually searched, and

files dealing with aboriginal claims separated. The large number of files involved make this unfeasible.

Justice lawyers are not assigned to work solely on the types of cases addressed by the question so an accurate response to part (d) is not possible.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 126, 127, and 140 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for return and be tabled immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 126—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to the sale of marijuana products, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many licensed dealers have been approved by Health Canada to sell marijuana for medical purposes; (b) how many inspections of licensed dealers have been completed; (c) have there been any changes to the number of inspectors available for this work; (d) have there been any changes to the amount of funding available for this work; (e) how much marijuana has been reported lost, stolen, or wasted from all licensed dealers; (f) how many licensed dealers have been authorized to sell products other than dried marijuana; (g) how many inspections have taken place for the dealers identified in (f); (h) have any reviews taken place to ensure that edible products have not increased risks to children, and, if so, were any recommendations made; (i) how many reports of adverse drug reactions have been received by Health Canada or licensed dealers, and what were the health impacts; (j) what measures have been taken to address illegal advertising by marijuana compassion clubs and other unauthorized dealers; and (k) has Health Canada initiated or asked for a legal opinion for whether or not the government restricts the sale of various forms of marijuana and, if so, which forms of marijuana are available for sale and which are not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 127—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to supervised injection sites approved or in process of application since November 4, 2015: (a) how many supervised injection sites did the government receive applications for in (i) total across Canada, (ii) Toronto, (iii) Ottawa, (iv) Montreal, (v) other municipalities; (b) has the government followed the Respect for Communities Act in this plan; (c) when planning the establishment of supervised injection sites in Canada, (i) has the government consulted with communities, neighborhoods, local stakeholders, elected officials of the municipalities, and local police services; (ii) exercised the authority within the Respect for Communities Act to publicly post applications for any existing and future supervised injection site exemptions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act; and (d) how many times did the Minister request amendments to the application in order to improve health and safety controls?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 140—**M. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to Minister's permits issued by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: how many were issued, including for each, (i) the date the permit was issued, (ii) the circumstances for the issuance of the permit, (iii) the reason the permit was required, (iv) the justification for issuing the permit?

Government Orders

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands on June 6 respecting her ability to participate in the committee proceedings relating to government bills.

The member alleges that motions adopted in committee have impeded her ability to fully represent her constituents and to fully do her job. In her intervention, the member acknowledges that committees of the House have adopted motions to allow independent members to move amendments to government bills.

On June 9, 2015, the Speaker ruled on a closely related matter raised by this same member, and I quote:

I also know that committees have shown great flexibility in the past, not only about deadlines, but more generally in how they consider amendments in clause-by-clause. In fact, one such example of that flexibility is the very process that committees adopted, allowing members of non-recognized parties to have their amendments considered in committee.

Moreover, on May 7, 2014, the Speaker ruled on a point of order raised by this same member about her ability to move amendments and to speak to them in committee.

The Speaker ruled, and I quote:

It is evident that the committee chose to handle its consideration of [the bill] in a particular way. A motion setting out the process to be followed was proposed, debated, and ultimately agreed to. [...] Such decisions are the exclusive responsibility of the committee. I do not believe that it is for the Chair to second-guess how committees choose to manage their business.

These rulings speak directly to the matter raised by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I support the member's right to air her grievances in the House. However, I do not support or agree with her assertion that by having committees adopt a process to allow and include members from non-recognized parties in the amendment of government bills, this somehow interferes with her ability to discharge her parliamentary functions. I suggest that it accomplishes the opposite.

The precedents are clear on this issue, and therefore I submit that this matter does not meet the test of a *prima facie* question of privilege.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his additional comments on the question of privilege.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up the question, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton had five minutes remaining in the period for questions and comments on her earlier remarks. Therefore, we will go to that now.

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

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of quick questions on the member's excellent discussion of sandwiches and the culinary arts.

She gave five thumbs up and five thumbs down on the budget. On balance, I would say that the member should be supporting the budget in principle. I am wondering if she could comment a little more on those five thumbs up and how wonderful it is for the future of our country.

● (1215)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly I want to give a big thumbs up. The minister of science and I worked very hard to come up with a science strategy that is very good for Canada. It emphasizes the good things that were in place under the previous government, and alongside additional fundamental research that is very focused on where Canada can lead addresses issues where we are weak in commercialization. I could definitely spend the whole five minutes saying good things about that.

However, the reason I cannot support this budget is the fiscal irresponsibility of the current government. Saying that it is going to hold the deficit at \$10 billion, then going to \$30 billion, and then going to \$113 billion and never balancing it again is unwise. It leaves us in a position where we will be forever paying \$10 billion of interest on the debt we have accrued. That is a legacy for future generations that I certainly would not want to saddle them with. If it were going to create jobs, which I think was the whole point, that would be a different discussion. However, changing the unemployment rate by 0.3% is sad in the extreme for \$113 billion.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my region is resource based. We are in a resource-based economy, and all the royalties go to Queen's Park or Ottawa, so we have to rely on coming to the government and asking for economic development projects as though we are somehow begging them. We look at FedNor, which plays a crucial role in economic diversification, in creating jobs, and in creating sustainability through the boom times and the bust times.

Government Orders

We see with the government that there is no commitment to moving forward with FedNor. It will not make it a stand-alone agency so that it can do its job.

I want to ask my hon. colleague what she thinks about a government vision that continually ignores regional development in other areas of the country.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I feel that with the current Liberal government, the fossil fuel area is under siege. It is not just that we have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in this area. Now the carbon taxes that are coming to this industry will make us uncompetitive.

We need to keep in mind, if we want to be fact- and evidence-based, which the government is always saying it wants to be, that our whole footprint in Canada is 2% of the global footprint. We can eliminate our whole footprint, and it will not matter to the temperature in the world. We will continue to have all the same problems.

That is not to say that we should not do something. We have great carbon emission reduction technologies. We need to be leveraging those, and we need to be putting things in place in concert with our neighbours.

As the U.S. starts to move into an area where perhaps they will do carbon pricing, then we should look at it. However, if we put it in place here, it will actually drive the jobs outside of Canada and drive the carbon footprint elsewhere. It really does not help the situation.

I share the member's concern that the whole fossil fuel, natural resource sector is really under siege by this government, and I will continue to aggressively speak out against any move to further curb it.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comparison to a sandwich, with good news and some tough stuff in the middle, but I want to ask my colleague some questions about the party opposite's philosophy with respect to the UCCB compared to our party's Canada child benefit. We want to be progressive. We want to give money to those families that need it the most, as opposed to the UCCB, which was basically one price for everyone.

I wonder if the member opposite could comment on the Canada child benefit and whether she thinks it should be included with the good things in the budget.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, as someone who was a youth leader for over 30 years and a camp director, any time we are doing something good for children, I am happy about it.

We can argue about what the approach is. The previous government was putting together not just the universal child care benefit but also a series of tax credits to allow children to take advantage of fitness programs, art programs, and education and tuition support.

If I look at the whole list of what the previous government did versus the whole list of what has come out in this budget, I think families will find that children are short. They will not have the money to get involved in activities. They will not have the same money to devote to them, so I am concerned about the new budget.

● (1220)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is truly a privilege to speak yet again to budget 2016.

I question where to begin because quite frankly there have been some changes since I last stood and spoke to the budget. The biggest change centres around the impact the budget has on Edmonton.

When I stood here months ago, I talked about budget and EI, and the impact it would have on Edmonton families. It was largely an area that was forgotten by the Prime Minister and his ministers. As a result, we became extremely critical. We stood up for Edmonton and fought hard for the EI changes. Along with a number of my colleagues in the House, the member for Edmonton West, the member for Edmonton Griesbach, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, we fought hard for Edmonton. We have as yet heard nothing from the Liberal members. We heard nothing from the member for Edmonton Mill Woods, or the member for Edmonton Centre. We were actually joined by the Alberta NDP in fighting for these changes. That was a strange moment in our political history.

The Prime Minister showed up in Edmonton. We were all expecting him to say that the Liberals had made a mistake, that this was a terrible oversight. We expected him to apologize and say that Edmonton was now included. However, he did not say a word. He then came back to Edmonton and toured Fort McMurray. Again, there was not a word. It was not until a Friday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. when a press release was sent out to say that Edmonton would now be included. Although I applaud him for those changes, it just shows a continual lack of understanding about the impacts the budget has on western Canada.

The Liberals like trump that they have a mandate to govern because on October 19, 2015, they won the election. They do not say the percentage on which they won the election. It was not even close to 50%.

However, during the election, among the promises the Liberals made to my constituents, to Canadians, was that they would ensure it would be just a \$10 billion deficit. They told us not to worry, that they had this. They said that they would not balance the budget this time because they were going to go into deficit. Canadians said that they understood this and that they would consider voting for the Liberals. They may or may not have cast their vote on that pure fact alone.

However, the deficit is now \$29.4 billion. This is a drastic change. We all did debates. I sat with the Liberal candidate, and he trumped that this as something the Liberals had right. He said that the deficit would be \$10 billion, and that was it. Eventually they would balance the budget. Then to my shock and dismay, I remember sitting in the chamber on budget day, reading about the \$29.4 billion deficit.

Government Orders

I cannot fathom how a number of members on the opposite side can now face those same constituents. They knocked on their doors, went to the community town halls, talked to businesses. To change this six months later seems politically unwise. These constituents are not going to go away. These are the same people they will have to face three and a half years from now. These people are going to remember things like this. They are going to remember that the Liberals promised a small deficit, that they would take care of it. However, the deficit has now been increased to almost \$30 billion. I would not want to be a Liberal candidate in the next election, and I pledge not to be a Liberal candidate.

● (1225)

In addition, unemployment in western Canada has hit numbers that we have not seen in decades. In a lot of the conversations I had with Liberal MPs and cabinet ministers, I was truly hopeful there would be a jobs plan to get these people back to work. Spoiler alert, it did not happen. However, this not only was another broken promise, but it was something we drastically needed.

Politics aside, we need something to spur the economy. We need growth in western Canada. We have continual announcements of policies that do nothing but hurt the growth in western Canada. The government's positions on pipeline and on carbon tax do nothing but drive away the businesses within western Canada.

Fort McMurray just went through an incredible natural disaster. That will have impacts on the sector for decades. However, the people have yet to see any movement from the Liberal government to support the area. The Prime Minister flew in on his fancy jet and toured the area, shaking his head in dismay. I appreciate the fact that he finally got there. It took him a couple of weeks. Yet there is no plan for how we are to continue to encourage growth in Fort McMurray.

For members from the opposite side who have not been there, Fort McMurray is an area that not only drives our economy, the environmental standards in Fort McMurray are higher than anywhere else in the world. One can tour the bison farms of Syncrude.

The reclamation happening in Fort McMurray is not something about which we should be embarrassed. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change should stand time and again and trumpet how important Fort McMurray is to our economy, to our country, to Canadians, and to our future generations. The Prime Minister's lack of regard for the people of Fort McMurray has been nothing but hurtful to us in Alberta and hurtful to Canadians who rely on the sector. If I were to advise the Liberals, it would be to change the message to "Help support Fort McMurray with us". Defeating motions that support pipelines and not standing up for the jobs and the sectors of Fort McMurray only hurts us in the long term. It hurts future generations.

The \$30 billion deficit in this budget will have to be paid back. This is not just suddenly money that has appeared. This is borrowed money that we will have to pay back. We need the sectors in Fort McMurray. We need the oil and gas sector. We need them to support this \$30 billion deficit.

I cannot fathom why members on the opposite side have not quite grasped this. Perhaps it is because not many of them are from

Alberta. That means it is even more incumbent on the four members who were elected from Alberta. When the four Alberta Liberal members stood and voted against a pipeline, I do not know to which constituents they were talking. I was talking to a lot of their constituents, and they said that they needed support for this. However, those members continually vote against stuff that really has an impact on Alberta's future and the economy within Alberta.

The promises made during the campaign are not reflected in this budget. The promises that the Liberal members, at least from Alberta, made on their campaign trails are certainly not reflected in this budget. I certainly do not intend to support the budget. Members of the Liberal Party, especially the members from Alberta, should be embarrassed to campaign on in the next election.

● (1230)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with a number of the member's assertions.

Albertans know that the Prime Minister truly cares about what is taking place in Alberta. This government has put a process in place to see future pipelines get done, something the former government failed to do. The former Conservative government did not get one inch of pipeline built to tidewater in over 10 years.

Our government understands the importance of jobs. We want to see Fort McMurray recover. We want to see the entire province of Alberta and the Saskatchewan region recover from what has been a hard year for them as a result of oil prices and the Fort McMurray disaster.

Albertans know this government and the Prime Minister are there for them, will continue to be there for them and will be led by our backbenchers.

Why is the Conservative Party going to vote against middle-class tax breaks that would benefit many individuals in the province of Alberta, whether they be farmers or in any other occupation?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, this seems like a bit of déjà vu. Every time I stand in the House to speak to the budget, I get the same question from that member, as do other members on this side, Yet what have the Liberals done? What have they done for Fort McMurray? We have yet to hear anything from that side. They have voted against a pipeline. The member for Saint John—Rothesay voted against a pipeline, yet on the campaign trail he trumped support for the energy east pipeline.

I would remind the hon. member of the motion we had before the House early in this session. It explicitly asked for support for the energy east pipeline. It did not ask for the approval it. It asked for support. Every Alberta member on the Liberal side voted against that, and they should be ashamed.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to border my colleague's riding. I am also proud to have constituents in my riding who elected the member to the provincial legislature.

Government Orders

I have to agree with my colleague about the disappointing performance of our Liberal colleagues from Alberta. We heard the Liberal member for Edmonton Centre say that a 35% increase in unemployment in Edmonton was not dramatic enough. We heard the member for Calgary Centre tell 100,000 unemployed that it was refreshing to be unemployed and that it was refreshing to vote against the energy east pipeline. We heard the member for Edmonton Mill Woods, who is the Minister of Infrastructure, undercut Alberta by 15% per capita for the infrastructure investment.

I would like the member to comment on perhaps some of these transgressions against our—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Edmonton—Riverbend.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour being the House with my colleague. We have known each other for a long time. We have done a lot of Conservative-minded things together over the years.

My colleague raised an excellent point about the Liberal members from Alberta. They have done nothing to support our economy back home in Alberta. They may enjoy their fancy new offices here, particularly the Minister of Infrastructure. I have not yet seen his office, but it sounds quite beautiful. I hope he invites me some time, but perhaps after this he will not.

We see this massive deficit and then we see poor judgment by members on the other side, such as an \$800,000 office. That makes our job easy on this side of the House, particularly when Albertans are struggling. Instances like that show a complete lack of disregard for taxpayer money, a complete lack of disregard for taxpayers who elected the member to office. It is disgraceful. Those members should be ashamed that this is what he has done with his funds.

• (1235)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for budget 2016 and the hope that it offers to families in my riding of Burnaby North—Seymour, as well as Canadians right across the country.

This budget reflects an unprecedented dialogue that happened in our communities over the previous two years. Even before the start of the last election, the Liberal platform had already been shaped by millions of discussions held in coffee shops, community centres, and on the doorsteps of our constituents from coast to coast to coast.

Canadians understood that after weathering two recessions, a youth unemployment rate of 13.1%, and the slowest economic growth our country has seen in 80 years, it was time to make a change. Canadians asked for a government that would work to restore hope and to reward hard work. With this budget, we present Canadians with an ambitious plan for the future, and for a strong and empowered middle class.

I started my own dialogue with the good people of Burnaby and North Vancouver when I started my door-knocking campaign in March 2014. From these conversations, I learned that Canadians

overwhelmingly believe in fairness, and that the benefits of a strong and growing economy should be accessible to all Canadians who work hard to make it happen.

Now, almost 27 months after starting these conversations, budget 2016 delivers on these core Canadian values by giving more help to those who need it and less to those who do not. Our first action as a new government was to pass a progressive middle-class tax cut that reduced taxes for middle-income earners by 7%. This budget provides further help by enacting the new Canada child benefit. Taken together, these two measures will put more money in the hands of more than nine out of 10 families in Burnaby and North Vancouver.

This is good news, because Canada is stronger when families have the resources to build wealth and invest in their future. Investing in the future is a strong theme throughout the budget and is demonstrated by the government's historic investments in both infrastructure and an ambitious innovation agenda.

This includes billions of dollars for public transit, transportation infrastructure, and green infrastructure, projects that will not only stimulate growth and create jobs today, but will make Canadians more productive and help build a higher quality of life for tomorrow.

These investments will also complement our continued dialogue and leadership on carbon pricing, an essential tool to help Canada move towards a more sustainable energy future. In British Columbia, we have already seen how a revenue-neutral carbon pricing plan can help to balance our need to both grow our economy and protect the environment.

In the long term, our environment is not just something that needs to be protected, it is an economic driver and a source of competitive advantage. This is an important point, because this budget is not just about improving the lives of Canadians today. It is about making decisions that will benefit Canadians 25, 50, and 100 years into the future. In fact, there is no better example of this than how, at its heart, this budget invests in our people.

Investing in Canadians is a part of this budget that matters to me personally. I grew up in a working-class family, where going to college or university was not expected. It was never even discussed at the dinner table. My father was a janitor. My mother was a stay-at-home mom. However, despite little resources, I never felt poor. I knew from a very young age that if I worked hard enough, I could have the same opportunities as everyone else, and I could build a better future for myself and for my family. The only reason that I am here today in the House with the great honour and privilege to represent the good citizens of Burnaby and North Vancouver is because I grew up in a country that invested in families like mine.

Now it is our duty to make sure that our kids and our grandkids have the same opportunities to succeed. As the Prime Minister has rightly noted, young Canadians are not just leaders of tomorrow; they are the leaders of today.

Government Orders

I am inspired by the level of political and community involvement I see when I visit the schools in my riding. Students from Alpha Secondary, Burnaby North, Westridge Elementary, and Seycove Secondary are hopeful of their future and want to help in the effort to build stronger communities and pathways to success, both for themselves but also for future generations.

Budget 2016 helps in this effort by making post-secondary education more affordable for students, and providing critical opportunities for young Canadians to gain valuable work experience. Across the country, more young people than ever before, over 77,000, will receive work experience through the expanded Canada summer jobs program. In my riding, nearly 250 students will be going to work this summer as a result of this program.

• (1240)

Whether it is as instructors for the learn-to-sail program in Deep Cove or as leaders for the award-winning young filmmakers camp in Burnaby, students are gaining the skills and experience they need to succeed in today's economy.

However, there is still much room for improvement. For example, only 38% of indigenous youth living on reserve have completed high school. If we compare this to the 87% rate for non-indigenous youth, it is clear that we still have a significant amount of work to do. This is why we have made a historic \$8.4-billion investment in the future of indigenous people, and a significant portion of this funding will go toward improving education outcomes for first nations children right across the country.

The riding I represent includes the unceded traditional homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh people, representatives of which were in the House just this week. In meetings that I have had with Chief Maureen Thomas of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and others, I am impressed by the leadership they have shown on issues like education, economic development, and the environment.

For instance, the nation's day care centre not only provides a valuable service to the community, but it is expected to run almost entirely on solar power. It is a great example of how advancements in technology and science can help Canada meet its economic goals while building a more sustainable future.

It is no secret that science and innovation are drivers of inclusive and sustainable growth. In fact, most economies throughout history share two common traits. The first is a strong and empowered middle class, where the majority of citizens benefit from economic growth and are able to invest in their futures and the futures of their families. The second is an economy that is driven by innovation and technological advancement.

As the parliamentary secretary for science, and as an entrepreneur myself, I am inspired and encouraged by our government's investment in science and in the innovation agenda.

A further \$95-million investment in the national granting councils will help Canada restore its leadership in scientific discovery and research. Through the post-secondary education strategic investment fund, we will invest a further \$2 billion in our nation's research facilities, alongside a further \$800-million investment in incubators and accelerators. This funding will attract the best and brightest to Canada by offering access to cutting-edge tools, equipment, and

facilities. It will also allow us to leverage our significant investment in research and development to ensure that we commercialize new technologies and nurture the development of new high-growth and high-impact enterprises.

As an educator, and now as an elected official, I believe we have a moral obligation to arm our young people with the tools of entrepreneurship and innovation. It is an investment that is required to ensure Canada's leadership in the global economy.

In our riding, we are lucky to have a university that is quickly establishing itself as a global leader in this field. Not only has Simon Fraser University been recognized as Canada's finest comprehensive university for several years now, it has adopted a bold action plan to embed innovation into all aspects of the university, known as SFU innovates. The university-wide initiative will ensure that all faculty and students, from mathematicians to anthropologists, will have access to the critical skills of innovation and entrepreneurship. These are skills that will leverage many of the investments that are being made in this budget.

As a new MP, I have also been trying to find ways that we can innovate within Parliament so that we can better serve our constituents. I started by saying how proud I was that this budget was created by engaging with Canadians. We need to make sure that we continue to do this.

I am happy to inform my colleagues on both sides of the House that for the first time, high-quality video conferencing is now possible from our parliamentary offices for members of the House. Knowing that we, as MPs, have to spend almost half of our time away from ridings, this project has been a priority for me to ensure that these valuable conversations and consultations with our constituents can continue, both on this budget and on other issues that are important to individual ridings.

For example, I have been holding ongoing consultations with constituents regarding the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline. As the MP for Burnaby North—Seymour, I am committed to representing the voices of my constituents on this important issue. As the newly appointed ministerial panel begins to meet, we will be able to complement our community forums, meetings, and doorstep conversations with digital conversations and town halls.

I remember my wife, Ravi, and I reflecting on the last election. Having had 18 all-candidate debates and almost two years of door knocking, a common theme was that Canadians were feeling hopeful again and were excited to work hard to secure their futures. Overwhelmingly, people told me that they wanted a government that was going to invest, not just to better our lives today but for future generations.

This budget is about investing in all of us, in our futures, in Canada's future, and in our place in the world. It is for these reasons that I stand here to support budget 2016.

Government Orders

• (1245)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too am a huge advocate for the Canada summer jobs program. As a parent, I believe it is very important for students to have jobs so that they learn transferable skills, such as serving in a restaurant and applying that in their own lives. All customer-service skills and other skills are true assets, and I agree with that.

Unfortunately, I am going to speak more about what happened in my riding. For the Canada summer jobs program, the number has gone up to over \$700,000. Also, when I look at other ridings, some small businesses received \$70,000 in grant money for students. I will advocate all of the time when it is necessary for students to have these transferable skills, but I am wondering what the member opposite thinks when a private company receives \$70,000. How is that company going to compete with another company?

Is it in our best interest to make sure there are great jobs for students that are going to continue or is it in our interest just to give \$70,000 to one company and make it more competitive than another company?

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to talk about my experience with the Canada jobs program. This is one of the few programs in Canada where members of Parliament actually have a say in what goes on and who gets the money in that program. I became aware when I was going through the list of private and non-profit organizations that were applying for this that it might have been a while since they had heard from their members of Parliament.

Not only did I go through the whole list and look at everybody who was using the program or asking for funds when I made my selections, but after the selections were made and the recipients were informed, we called every single one and invited them to share with us how they were planning to use the students and what kind of experience they were going to provide. In fact, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister for Youth is also planning to invite all of the students in the program to come to a barbecue, so they can share their experiences and talk about the different skills they are learning in the field.

The fact is that there was a 13.1% youth unemployment rate. We need to make sure we invest in young people and ensure that they get the skills they need.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about young people and aboriginal communities' economic generation. He talked about the future of Canada. During the campaign, the member actually made a commitment to his constituents that Kinder Morgan would be under a renewed environmental assessment process. Of course, his government has failed to deliver on that.

My question is this. Will he stand with the three nations, the Musqueam, the Squamish, and the Tsleil-Waututh nations, along with Mayor Derek Corrigan and the mayor of Vancouver, and say no to Kinder Morgan?

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, during the last election, I made a very specific promise, a promise to ensure that the National Energy Board process was redone to make sure that it was fair, objective, and based on science. That is exactly the process that Natural

Resources Canada is undertaking presently and over the next two-year period.

In the interim, a transitory process is being used for existing pipeline projects like Kinder Morgan and the energy east pipeline. I have encouraged, through town halls in my riding, all members of my community on both sides of this issue to engage with me and this new panel to make sure their voices and concerns are heard, so that their opinions, thoughts, and feelings on this matter can be shared with this government before it makes its decision.

• (1250)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I went door to door in my campaign, what screamed out to me were that those living in poverty, seniors, veterans, and other groups, were forgotten by the previous government.

My question to my colleague is this. The Canada child benefit will be transformational. How does he see that transforming child poverty in his riding?

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, I had a very similar experience. There were all-candidate meetings at senior homes across the riding. We had issues that arose from various veterans groups. In fact, every issue described in that question was mirrored and similar questions were asked in my riding of Burnaby North—Seymour.

With regard to the Canada child benefit, we actually went beyond the talking points and looked into the Statistics Canada data. We found that even more than nine out of 10 people in Burnaby and North Vancouver will benefit from it. Therefore, I am very excited to be able to say that there is a disproportionate benefit in my riding.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate on Bill C-15. I want to focus my remarks today on the provision that introduces the new Canada child benefit. This legislation is about building a more caring and compassionate society and it is about giving all Canadian families a chance to build a better life for themselves and their children.

The new Canada child benefit was one of our most important campaign commitments. I am very proud that we are now turning that promise into reality. The bill will put real money into the pockets of Canadian families who need and deserve our support to raise their children.

As a single mother myself who raised two boys, I know the difficult financial realities of raising a family alone. When I was first separated from the father of my two children who were then under six years old, my gross salary was \$35,000 per year and I also received about \$6,000 annually from child support. I was fortunate to have what many other parents who are in this situation do not have, a stable job, access to benefits, and the ability to borrow money.

As a result, my boys were fed well, had access to medication when necessary, and were able to take part in limited activities with support from P.R.O. Kids, a not-for-profit organization initiated in Thunder Bay that offers non-judgmental support for low-income parents to ensure their children can participate in an extracurricular activity that is otherwise out of reach.

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However, it was still very difficult to make ends meet and I often turned to credit to pay for the extras that I saw as essential investments in my boys' development. Many families do not have the ability to pay for child care or to give their children opportunities to learn or grow.

Had the Canada child benefit been in place when I was in those early difficult years, I would have received an extra \$11,300 tax-free per year, meaning more opportunities for my children and the ability to live without the crippling anxiety of carrying a high debt load. In fact, I may have been able to save a bit for their education, something that is far out of reach for many low-income families.

We know that our communities are better when they are stronger, safer, and more inclusive. We want people to have the ability to raise happy and healthy families and the Canada child benefit will allow many more families to do just that. Nine out of 10 families will receive more money every month with the new benefit than they receive now and the ones who will be receiving less are those fortunate families who are on the higher end of the income scale.

Families earning less than \$30,000 per year will receive the maximum benefit and the maximum benefit is substantial. It is \$6,400 per year for each child under age six and up to \$5,400 per year for each child ages six to 17. It replaces the Canada tax benefit and the universal child care benefit. The payment is tax-free. Parents do not have to report it on their tax returns as part of their income and it is much more generous. Families benefiting will see an average increase in benefits of almost \$2,300 in the 2016-17 benefit year. It is also a much simpler system. One payment each and every month starting in July this year, just a few weeks from now.

We have also eliminated the children's art tax credit and the child fitness tax credit. These tax credits only benefit those higher-income families who can afford to spend the money on extracurricular activities for their children. Lower-income families often cannot and do not benefit from those tax credits.

In fact, my family was one that was not able to use those credits to their fullest potential simply because I just did not have the money to pay for the activities up front. Now, with the introduction of the Canada child benefit, low- and middle-income families will have the extra income they need to allow their children to participate in these and many other activities or use it for whatever needs best suit their family. That could include child care, nutritious food, or even a medication that may not be covered by any health plan.

The best news is that the new Canada child benefit will lift upwards of 300,000 children out of poverty by 2017. We also recognize that it costs more to care for a child with a severe disability. That is why we will continue to pay an additional \$2,730 per year over and above the regular child tax benefit for every child eligible for the disability tax credit.

I can say that this government also understands that struggle. We understand that low- and middle-income families, in particular, need to be the focus of much of our effort in government.

• (1255)

We want to lift as many people as possible into the middle class. At the same time, we want to continue to strengthen the middle class itself, and that is why the Minister of Finance introduced the middle-

class tax cut. It lowers taxes for low- and middle-income Canadians and asks the very wealthy to pay a bit more. It is a basic question of fairness and allowing every individual to live up to their full potential. It is also very good economics. Good social policy is good fiscal policy. A strong middle class means a strong economy.

The new Canada child benefit is also about inclusion. It is about bringing people into the mainstream, helping take people out of poverty, giving them hope for the future, and providing the supportive tools that they need to help them build a better life.

As the Minister of Status of Women, I know that a disproportionate number of low-income households are headed by women, and many of these working women face particular challenges in raising their families. The harsh reality is that women are still not treated as full equals in the workplace. On average, they are still paid less than men.

An even harsher truth is that women are much more likely to be the victims of domestic and sexual violence than men, so needless to say, we have a lot more work to do. We cannot accept the status quo. We need to focus on finding answers and putting the solutions in place, just as we are doing with the new Canada child benefit.

How can we accept that women should be paid less than men for work of the same value? How can we accept that women are disproportionately the victims of violence? How can we accept that children in low- and middle-income families should be deprived of basic food, shelter, and clothing just because their parents are not rich enough?

With the new Canada child benefit, we are taking the kind of direct action that will make a positive change in the lives of hundreds of thousands of families across this country, this year, next year, and for many years to come. That is something we should all be proud of.

In my career before politics, I worked with many individuals, women and men, who faced severe challenges such as substance abuse, poverty, homelessness, violence, and mental health issues. In fact, it was the desire to make systemic change through good policy that drove me to seek election. I knew that by ensuring that people struggling to join the middle class have the support to do so, we could see long-lasting change for citizens and communities for generations to come.

When we ensure that those who need a hand up get the support they need, the result is healthier children and families, and ultimately a stronger Canada.

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When parents who are struggling to raise healthy children have an economic boost, it creates a healthier future for all of us. Indeed, good social policy is good fiscal policy, because when children are supported to succeed, they do better in school and avoid many problems that result from inequality.

The new Canada child benefit provides non-judgmental financial support, and it will help give many thousands of individuals the support they need to thrive. Children who have enough to eat can take part in community activities, have a safe place to live, and have a much better chance of success in school, and therefore, in society at large.

We want every child in Canada to grow up healthy and strong and contribute their talents and their skills to making our society even more inclusive and strong.

I believe, as the Prime Minister has said, in Canada, better is always possible, and it is. The Canada child benefit will make our country a much better place for tens if not hundreds of thousands of families and children.

I sincerely hope that all of us in the House will give the legislation the enthusiastic support that I truly believe it deserves. It is time to give families hope for a better future and it is time to let Canadian children know that we are committed to helping them succeed.

I was fortunate as a single parent to be able to increasingly earn more, leading to more possibilities for my boys as I gained the capacity to ensure their success through full participation and access to post-secondary education. Now they are both doing very well with very optimistic futures. I have no doubt they will contribute to their communities and country in meaningful ways, and I want the same opportunities for all children across Canada. I want all Canadian children to have an equal footing to reach their potential.

It is time to invest in our future through making sure that all Canadian children are supported to thrive. In fact, this investment is one that will pay dividends for generations to come.

• (1300)

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's emphasis on people on the lower end of the spectrum, having grown up in a family that was generally beneath the poverty line. Having once not had money for my rent, I had to sleep in a car for a month, so I very much appreciate where the hon. member is coming from.

One of the interesting things I noticed when she was talking about the new child benefits was that the underlying philosophy behind it is giving money directly to parents, something which, when I first got here, was a matter of debate for the House: do we give money directly to parents, or do we set up a day care or other great social welfare program across the country?

Does the hon. member not concede that giving money directly to parents, as the Conservatives did and now the Liberals seem to be saying, is actually the best way to help families with children who have particular needs?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's openness about the struggles of his upbringing.

I believe that it is always a blend. I believe that there is a role for the state to play in ensuring that essential services are there for Canadians, things like universal health care, access to education, and support for people who need those supports. However, I also believe that we live in a country where we honour the capacity of parents to make the best choices for their families. That is why I support the Canada child benefit. As I illustrated in my narrative, this is an initiative that would have helped me tremendously in the raising of my children. It took me three decades to get out of debt after raising them and providing for them in the best way I possibly could. That is time I could have spent building up for my own retirement and taking the necessary steps to save for their success in their future careers.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister plays a very important role, because she is the only voice in cabinet for northern Ontario. However, I did not hear any mention of northern Ontario, or in particular, the hammering that has happened economically in Thunder Bay.

I am looking at today's unemployment figures, and I am looking at the government's calculation for what regions deserve to be given the extended EI benefits. Thunder Bay is one of those regions that should have gotten them, yet we saw no action from the current government. In fact, when it was Edmonton, southern Saskatchewan, and southern interior B.C. that were pushing for extended EI benefits, it was opposition MPs, NDP MPs, who pushed for that.

Other regions of northern Ontario are eligible for the EI extension, but Thunder Bay needs it. It meets the criteria. The Prime Minister has said he is refusing to add any other regions. Why has this minister not stood up for Thunder Bay and said that the unemployed workers of Thunder Bay deserve the same rights that other Canadians in similar regions are receiving? She is at the cabinet table. She should be speaking up for the people of northern Ontario.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, of course northern Ontario has suffered a prolonged and protracted recession, which is why northern Ontario, except for Thunder Bay, has been included in the EI extension.

I am very proud of the fact that I speak loudly and clearly for northern Ontario. As a matter of fact, one of the privileges I had recently was to be beside our Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development as he announced over \$2 million to a first nations company that is investing in solar-generated power, giving a much-needed economic boost to those six first nations that are part of this conglomerate, but also to our region.

When we invest in things like small business, when we invest in innovation, and when we invest in our communities, we will see a thriving economy return to northern Ontario.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the major problems in my colleague's riding, as in my own and in many of Canada's vast regions, is that high-speed Internet is almost non-existent.

Connectivity levels in my riding are completely unacceptable. They were unacceptable even in 2000, and now it is 2016.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the budget measure to invest \$500 million in the Internet. Is she proud of that? How does she see that going forward?

• (1305)

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his reminder of the importance of broadband and how it has been such a detriment to not have expansive broadband in rural and remote communities. I agree with him that this is an essential component of success and innovation in the north.

I regret that the member who asked me the previous question is not able to hear my response. In fact, this is an indication of that commitment to northern Ontario and other rural and remote regions across the country so they can actually join the economic success of Canada through the essential tools that drive business forward.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Signal Hill.

The government has been talking a lot about the middle class lately. In fact, it put a chart in the budget to make a point about the relative incomes of middle-class people in order to make an illustration of their incomes and how they have been affected by the last 40 years. The Liberals' chart on page 11 demonstrates incomes for middle-class people over the last four decades and they have made the claim that middle-class people have had almost no raise in four decades.

I thought, "That can't be possible", because all the data that I studied from the last decade alone had demonstrated that incomes had gone up, and gone up dramatically. I filed an ATIP request and asked the finance department to provide me with the underlying data that it used to produce this chart showing that middle-class incomes are roughly where they were 40 years ago.

Is it possible that the budget, which shows no increase in middle-class incomes over the last four decades, and previous Conservative claims that show incomes have risen dramatically in the last 10 years, alone, could both be true?

The reality is they are. Liberals who say there have been no increases in middle-class incomes over four decades are basically right, and Conservatives who say middle-class incomes went up dramatically in the last decade alone are also right.

How is that possible?

I drilled down into the data and I got from Finance Canada the data used in the Liberal budget. Here is what I found.

If we look back to 1976, which is the starting point of this Liberal chart in the budget, we find that the median income for a Canadian

was \$46,300. That was under the first Prime Minister Trudeau, but in the following seven years, they dropped by \$2,800, down to \$43,500. It then took 30 years to recover the incomes lost during the Trudeau era. It was not until 2007 when incomes would return to \$46,400.

Just to recap, in 1976, incomes were \$46,300. They plummeted during the Trudeau government, until 1983. It then took decades to recover the lost income that was suffered as a result of those policies. This data comes right out of the Liberal budget and it shows the damage to middle-class incomes that resulted from the policies of spiralling debt, rising taxes, and handouts to big corporations.

What do we have now? Spiralling debt, rising taxes, and handouts to big corporations. The very policies that led to the income declines witnessed in the Liberal budget chart are now being repeated by the son of Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

However, I wanted to study the chart a little further to find out what it would tell us about the most recent Conservative prime minister who just left office last November. According to the Liberal budget, in inflation-adjusted dollars, median incomes grew from \$44,700 when he took office, to \$49,602 in the year that he left office. That is an increase of \$5,000, or 11%, after inflation.

• (1310)

Again, this is according to Liberal budget data. That is the largest increase in median incomes in 40 years. In fact, incomes under our recent Conservative prime minister grew more than under prime ministers Trudeau, Clark, Turner, Mulroney, Campbell, Chrétien, and Martin combined, according to the Liberal budget data.

Among whom did this increase occur? The biggest increase happened for women. Women in the workforce, working on average 30 hours or more per week, saw their incomes go up, after inflation, by \$5,234 during the leadership of the previous Conservative prime minister. That is a 14% increase in income after inflation.

My colleagues across the way will say that this is just a long-term demographic trend and it is nothing unusual. In fact, it is true that female incomes have risen under all governments in the last 40 years. However, none comes even close to the increases that occurred during the leadership of the previous Conservative prime minister. In fact, the growth rate for women's median income was five times higher under the most recent Conservative prime minister than it was under Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and also five times higher than it was under prime ministers Chrétien and Martin.

This is data that comes out of the Liberal budget. To see it, one can go to page 11 and find the reality of middle-income growth and how it was successfully increased by the previous government.

I will be overlaying the Liberal budget chart with a very helpful chronological reminder of which prime ministers were in office when the incomes were earned. In so doing, we will see which governments have done best to produce results for median income people.

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How did this happen? During the previous Conservative government, we introduced a number of key tax reductions designed specifically to help the less fortunate and the middle class. According to a report conducted by the independent, non-partisan parliamentary budget officer, Conservative tax reductions amounted to just over \$30 billion a year. According to the PBO, these tax reductions were disproportionately targeted at low and middle-income families. They included the registered disability savings plan, which Jim Flaherty set up to help families give financial independence to their disabled children; the tax-free savings accounts to help people, who did not have a lot of money to buy real estate or RRSPs, save tax-free into the future, with two-thirds of those who maxed out their TFSAs making less than \$60,000 a year.

We raised the personal exemption to take hundreds of thousands of low-income aspiring workers off the tax rolls so they could keep more of what they earned. We brought in the working income tax credit, which accelerated earned income so people were always better off when they worked than when they were on welfare. We scaled back unnecessary bureaucratic spending. We reduced the size of government as a share of the economy to its lowest level in half a century, which lifted the burden of expensive government off the shoulders of the working poor.

I am proud to say that according to the most recent data, when our Conservative government was in power, the poverty rate had dropped to its lowest level since it was recorded. This was a government that moved people into the middle class and moved the middle class up.

• (1315)

That is why we will continue to fight for the people who work hard, pay their taxes, and play by the rules, those who are not part of the insider economy and who do not get bailouts and handouts, because they cannot afford the lobbyists to acquire those bailouts and handouts.

We will be on the side of the underdogs, as we have always been. As the data have shown, we have helped them move up, and we will continue to fight so that they have a fair chance to do so in the future.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for breaking down the truth about the numbers and the stats we are hearing from the Liberal government.

Maybe the member could talk a bit about some of the Liberal promises. They promised to help the middle class. The tax break for the middle class would benefit only those who earn the most, those who earn over \$100,000 a year. Parliamentarians would get the highest tax break. Those who earn less than \$45,000 a year, earn less than \$23 an hour and work full-time, would get absolutely nothing from the promise by the government to help the middle class or to help people join the middle class.

Maybe the member could talk a bit about how he feels about the proposal by the Liberal government to help the middle class.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that Liberal elites, wealthy elites, not just Liberal elites, will do very well under the Liberal tax plan. For example, a member of Parliament earning \$150,000 a year would get about \$1,000 in tax relief. A

working class, blue collar person earning \$45,000 a year would get absolutely nothing from the changes the Liberals are bringing in. A senior who has just downsized and has sold a home so that the real estate wealth can be turned into income would find that the amount of money that can be put into a tax-free savings account has dropped from \$10,000 to \$5,000 a year, which means that low-income seniors who were relying on an increased tax-free income to pay their bills will have less of it to do so with.

This is a budget designed for the wealthy elite and the rich, despite the rhetoric we hear from across the way. I thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to say so.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to change the topic a bit. We heard previously some Liberals talking about broadband Internet across the country. I wonder if my colleague could comment on the fact that the Liberals seem to be pushing broadband as a universal right in their most recent budget but have broken their promise to provide palliative care. They promised \$3 billion for the delivery of broadband as a universal right but are ignoring people who are in desperate need of palliative care.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting contrast, and I thank the member for asking about broadband.

Recently Telus Communications came up with a very innovative idea to expand Internet to low-income people by simply putting a slip in the twice annual child benefit mail-out. On that slip would be a pass code that low-income families could use to sign up online and receive Internet for only \$10 a month. There would be no extra cost to taxpayers, because that mail-out already goes in the system and CRA already has the data on who is low income. Telus would be prepared to cover the cost of giving this ultra-low-cost Internet to families who need it most. Rogers has a similar proposal for a program, I might add.

I am now waiting for the Liberals to agree with this zero-cost solution that would help children who would otherwise not have access to the Internet to do their homework. They would get that chance from a corporate enterprise that is willing to offer it to them for such a low price.

I encourage members of the Liberal government to come onside with this proposal so that we can expand the availability of Internet to young people who desperately need it to succeed with their homework and other projects.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his very clear presentation.

I know he did not address any indigenous issues, but he was part of a government and sat around the cabinet table. I would like to hear his views on the Liberal approach to indigenous issues, and I want to know whether he sees much of a difference.

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Let me give an example. The budget has earmarked \$500 million for indigenous housing. If we divide that by the number of communities, it gives about \$300,000 a year to each community. One house in the northern part of my riding costs about \$300,000.

I would like to know if he sees much of a difference between the Liberal approach to indigenous issues and the previous government's approach.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I know that he is very passionate about this topic. I appreciate his work on this file.

When we were in government, we improved the quality of life of indigenous people. We also gave indigenous people the right to know how their money was being spent. We proposed a bill on financial transparency. This is one of the best ways to improve the situation in indigenous communities. It is a matter of giving them the right to know where their money is going.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the final speaker on the bill, which has plodded along through the process in the House. I thought I would recap for members of the House how we have gotten to where we are today, describe what the process has been throughout, and then conclude by making a few comments about the bill itself.

The bill was concocted without the input of Canadians. Typically, in a budget process, Canadians are consulted about what they would like in the budget, but we had a situation, after the October 19 campaign, where, I would say, due to the ineptness of the government in early December, the government House leader was unable to strike a finance committee. We all knew who was on the finance committee, but unfortunately, the government could not get the committee struck in early December. Therefore, members of the finance committee sat around for about six weeks without actually consulting Canadians.

By the time the government managed to get approval to strike the finance committee, the committee heard some 92 witnesses over a period of about a week or a week and a half. However, we also knew in early February when we heard those witnesses that the budget had probably already gone or was very close to heading to the printer.

One thing this budget has clearly lacked is the input of everyday Canadians through consultation. With all due respect, I think the finance minister had a great deal of difficulty pulling together this budget, because he was hamstrung with the fact that so many promises had been made in the campaign. He was stuck with trying to put together a budget based on a bunch of promises in which, quite frankly, the dollars did not add up.

It also included a number of broken promises. A promise was given in the election campaign, whereby the Liberal leader of the day, now the Prime Minister, promised that the budget would have no more than a \$10-billion deficit. We all know that promise was broken very quickly. We are not sure yet if \$30 billion is the final number for the deficit. During the short period of time since the budget was introduced, as an example, there was a horrible situation in Alberta with the fires. As a result of that, the federal government is going to be on the hook for some significant costs associated with

the wildfires in Alberta, so I think the deficit could go well past the \$30 billion.

While it was not a broken promise, it was a promise that I personally would have liked to see the finance minister break, and that was the ill-conceived decision to reverse former finance minister Flaherty's decision to increase, some 10 years into the future, the eligibility age for OAS to 67 from 65. This particular decision was not based on any particular science or data, which, of course, the Liberal government keeps saying it prides itself on. It was based on a back-of-the-napkin campaign promise made by the Prime Minister and it is one that I wish the federal government had not followed through on.

• (1325)

As I said earlier, this is a budget that I do not believe the Minister of Finance felt good about presenting. I know how that feels, as someone who has had to present a budget based on some campaign promises made simply to get elected.

I see the benches of the government are starting to fill up as is the press gallery. I do not think they are filling up to listen to my speech, so I will sit down and let the House proceed on to the business of the day.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Calgary was a very distinguished member of the provincial cabinet at one time in my home province. I remember the good old days when Alberta was at the forefront of economics. Are the policies of the day in Alberta today reflective of the policies we will see federally? Are we in for the same tough times across our country as we currently have in Alberta?

Mr. Ron Liepert: I would concur, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45 the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 13, at the hour of daily adjournment.

Private Members' Business

•(1330)

[*Translation*]

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ANTHEM ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-210, an act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The mover of the motion to amend and the member who gave notice have indicated to the Chair that they do not want to proceed with the motion. As a result, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.) (via text-to-speech software) moved that Bill C-210, an act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender), be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (via text-to-speech software) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this bill has afforded us an opportunity to reflect on a number of questions.

The first is a question of ownership. To whom do our national symbols and icons belong? Do they belong to Canadians, as an expression of their heritage and popular will or do those symbols belong to politicians, for us to impose our world view on Canadians?

The second is a question of legitimacy and respect for Canadians. Do they have a place in any discussion about the symbols that are part of our shared heritage?

Where I stand on this is clear. Our symbols, like the national anthem, belong to Canadians. They do not belong to us as politicians. We may have a role to play to lead the discussion, but these symbols are not our playthings.

Traditionally, our symbols come from Canadians, from the people. The maple leaf and the beaver were symbols of this country long

before politicians chose to put their legal imprint on them. Lacrosse and hockey were our national sports well before this House of Commons decided to pass a resolution or a motion to say they were. Of course, the national anthem had gained popular favour well before the politicians finally got around to making it official in 1980. That is why the second question, that of legitimacy in our actions, depends on allowing Canadians the control and the primary place in any discussion about their symbols. If a change in the national anthem is what Canadians want, that will be demonstrated by them clearly through a robust public discussion. However, no such robust public discussion has taken place here.

Instead, the Liberal Party has gone to great lengths to shut Canadians out of this discussion, particularly at the committee stage. In fact, only one member of the Canadian public, one person out of 36 million, was allowed the opportunity to participate in this debate, and even his dissent was suppressed prematurely. In the haste to ram this bill through committee, the people being shut out of the debate are the people of Canada, to whom this anthem belongs.

This week in the House we heard these words, "On our side of the House, it is all about listening to and respecting Canadians".

Those words were spoken this past Tuesday, in this House, by the Liberal leader, but they were not spoken with respect to this bill. Rather, the way in which this bill has been rammed through committee by the Liberal Party demonstrates how empty that declaration is. Listening to and respecting Canadians has not happened here.

In their haste to jam this bill through, the Liberals on the heritage committee broke the rules no less than four times. Breaking the rules was the means to achieve the objective of blocking Canadians from making their views on the national anthem heard.

The rules for private members' bills provide 60 sitting days to consider a bill, including hearing witnesses. This can be extended by another 30 days. In this particular case, the Liberals allowed the bill to be at committee for only one meeting, which began only 14 hours after the bill was voted on at second reading in the House.

The Liberals even attempted to expressly block any and all witnesses. When the law clerks indicated that this could not be done, they conceded a brief one hour for witnesses. Needless to say, Canadians were given no opportunity or invitation to make their voices heard. The process was about suppressing not only dissenting views but any discussion at all. Some potential witnesses had indicated a desire to have their views heard. However, with only hours' notice, not surprisingly, they could not make it to Ottawa to do so.

One such witness was Stephen W. Simpson, the grandson of Robert Stanley Weir, the original composer of the English version of *O Canada*. Mr. Simpson's contribution to the study of the bill would have been valuable. However, his spouse was ill in hospital, which prevented him from appearing before the committee on only hours' notice. The Liberal members determined that he would not be accommodated, despite his personal circumstances.

Private Members' Business

The one witness who was able to scramble to appear before committee, the very knowledgeable and capable historian Dr. Chris Champion, was scheduled to address the committee and answer questions for one hour. In a stunning display of contempt for any dissent, his evidence was shut down prematurely by a Liberal motion to stop hearing evidence just two-thirds of the way through his allotted time. Even that had to be shut down.

However, in his evidence he did have an opportunity to comment on the process. He said:

I think what is happening here is quick and dirty. How many Canadians really know it's happening is, I think, a legitimate question. It's going through so precipitately that I doubt very many people are aware of or really understand the change.

“On our side of the House, it is all about listening to and respecting Canadians”, so proclaimed the Liberal leader. These are such hollow words.

• (1335)

Ultimately the voices of many who wished to speak to this bill were not heard, and they were effectively told that their voices did not matter.

Although this may seem to some to be a simple matter of procedure or formality, the fact remains that this is the national anthem of all Canadians. Despite the actions of those who would say otherwise, the voices of the overwhelming majority of Canadians who do not support this change do matter. If this were not the case, if there were indeed an overwhelming majority in favour, proponents of the change would have nothing to fear from a robust public discussion. It did not happen.

Even now, most Canadians would be unaware that Parliament is even debating changing the national anthem. For those who are aware, many are incredulous that such a change could even be considered. However, their voices have not been given any consideration.

Many in this House will know that in 2010, I was part of a Conservative government that proposed to change the national anthem to the original lyrics “thou dost in us command”. I was originally in favour of this proposition, believing that it would be appropriate in an effort to restore it to its historical tradition.

That proposal was made as it should have been, in a very public, very high-profile manner, through the Speech from the Throne, which signalled to Canadians that such a change was being considered. In doing so, we provided Canadians with the opportunity to respond to this proposal in a manner that allowed their voices to be heard. They were engaged, involved, and consulted on an issue that was important to them.

Respond they did. The ensuing negative response to the proposal was overwhelming. Canadians from all across the country, of all different political stripes, made it very clear that they were against changing the national anthem. Therefore, it was not changed, for it would not be appropriate for Parliament to take a national symbol, an integral aspect of the shared identity of Canadians, and change it without consideration for the very Canadians to whom that anthem belongs.

The exercise, that experience of listening to Canadians, obviously profoundly affected my view of the issue and how we should deal with it as political leaders.

How many today can honestly say that they have had an opportunity to consult broadly with their constituents on this issue?

On July 1, members of this House will attend celebrations commemorating the Confederation of Canada. When it comes time to sing the national anthem, how many communities will turn to their representative in Parliament and say, “Why was this changed? Why were we not consulted? Why did nobody tell us?”

Even more will simply go on and sing the anthem as they have always done, for their pride in their country and its symbols is not affected by a top-down order from politicians. Most will sing the old words simply because nobody ever told them that a change was in the works.

This House has an obligation to act with legitimacy and integrity. The manner in which this bill was rammed through committee, with the rules that exist to protect debate trampled, lacked legitimacy.

We have a great responsibility to represent Canadians appropriately. While it may be within our powers to modify the anthem as we see fit, we should refrain from doing so indiscriminately, especially if the proposed change is not supported or endorsed by Canadians. The national anthem is not some malleable plaything for politicians. It belongs to all Canadians, not just the politicians.

Let me take this opportunity to give voice to just a few of those Canadians who had their voices shut out.

Janet said, “I think our national anthem should be understood in historical context and allow the artist's words to stay.”

Phyl said, “Leave it as it is. Once changes are made, they never stop and you can never please all.”

Assam said, “The Canadian National Anthem *O Canada* should not be changed or altered in any way. It is a part of our history and our history should not be changed.”

Those are views that matter, whether members agree or disagree. When it comes to national symbols, when it comes to the things that make us what we are, historically we have taken them from the people, not given them to the people. At the very least, if we seek to change that which the people have given us, we deserve to hear from those people and not lock them out of that discussion. That is what has happened in the process with this bill.

• (1340)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me begin my debate by congratulating the member for Ottawa—Vanier for his perseverance in bringing the bill forward. It is my understanding that this is the second time that he has brought this forward. I think we are very close to realizing his dream of ensuring that the House of Commons brings forward words that reflect all communities, that include all communities, for that is what the symbolism of this change is all about.

The member for York—Simcoe talked about history and I want to touch on the history of the national anthem a bit. The national anthem, as we know, was written a long time ago before we were born and the English version was written in 1908 by Robert Stanley Weir. Since that time, as many members in the House will know, there have been several changes. Changes were made in 1913, 1914, and 1916. To the fact about change, it happens. Why is there change? Change is important because we need to reflect the society of today.

In 1908, Robert Stanley Weir actually had it right when he first wrote the national anthem because the original verse of that anthem is gender neutral. The words were, “True patriot love thou dost in us command.” That somehow was changed and no one really knows the reason why it was changed, and then it became, “True patriot love in all thy sons command.”

It seems we have come full circle with the amendment that we are debating, brought forward by the member for Ottawa—Vanier, so that it is truly inclusive of all Canadians.

The wording is important because the proposal says that we will now replace the words, “True patriot love in all thy sons command” with “True patriot love in all of us command”. That is a reflection of all Canadians and it lets everyone know, whether man, woman, or however one self-defines their gender, that we are all part of Canada, and that will be reflected in our national anthem, *O Canada*.

I want to thank the member for his perseverance. I have not worked with the member until this sitting of the legislature as I am a newly elected member, but I know that he is one of the longest standing members in the House and is well respected from all sides as well.

Let me close with this. He has done something that I truly admire because I admire many politicians. Svend Robinson, the former MP, and the member who is my predecessor, Libby Davies, who was the member for Vancouver East, they also tried to move this change and were not successful. I admire them greatly, but this member is doing what appears to me the unimaginable; that is, to be able to do something that Svend Robinson could not do, to do something that Libby Davies could not achieve.

Congratulations to him and I thank him so much.

• (1345)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me first say how much I respect my hon. colleague who has moved the bill. I have been here for a very long time, and he has been here longer than I. Throughout the whole tenure of my term here in Parliament, which is over 10 years now, we have always had respectful dialogue, and I will do my best to keep my dialogue in regard to his bill, which seeks to change the national anthem, as respectful as I can.

I am speaking on behalf of a massive amount of constituents that I have heard from in my constituency who are finally becoming aware that this change would even happen.

I became aware of this as the member of Parliament for Wetaskiwin back in a Speech from the Throne, which my colleague had mentioned earlier. Ironically, at a time when the economy and

Private Members' Business

keeping our streets and communities safe are important ever-pressing issues, the proposed change that was highlighted in the Speech from the Throne elicited such a response from my constituents that it let me know overwhelmingly that this is not a change that the people that I represent welcome.

That is our role as parliamentarians. Our role is not to take some other personal considerations into effect. Our role as representatives is to represent the will of the people that we were elected to represent. We should always be considerate of that first and foremost.

I have looked at a number of articles about this particular issue that have been printed in regional or national media. It always refers to, usually, colleagues from my side of the House speaking to this particular issue as they are reflecting the will of their constituents, yet when we hear from members of Parliament from other particular points of view, they are talking about how we need to pass the bill from a perspective of a personal attachment to a situation that a member of the House is going through. However grave that actually might be, it should never be a rationale for how we make decisions or determinations in the House.

We should always seek to do what is best and in the best interests of all Canadians and what the will of the people who sent us here to do our job actually is. I have not heard a lot of that debate on what the representatives who are voting in favour of the legislation are actually hearing from their constituents. I hear emotional arguments, but I never hear what the constituents of the folks who are voting in favour of this legislative change actually have to say.

I have been here a long time. As a matter of fact, my private member's bill in the last Parliament sought to make a change that would have affected a few hundred thousand, maybe one million workers, Bill C-525, and I was accused voraciously of doing this through the back door, taking a back-door sneaky approach to change some legislation when my bill went through the entire process. The process took over a year for it to happen. The committees at both the Senate and the House of Commons heard from dozens of witnesses and interested parties. It went through the private member's process.

I am not questioning the member's ability to bring forward a legislative change. I respect member's rights and privileges in the House. He has every right to move a legislative change as he sees fit. I do not dispute the fact that he has the right to do this. However, the process has been gerrymandered from the outset.

The bill was passed in the chamber on, I believe, June 1. It went to the committee on June 2. One witness was heard from for 45 minutes. The chair of the committee made an appeal to the members of the committee based on the medical health condition of the sponsor of the bill, and the bill was subsequently sent back to the House the very next day.

Private Members' Business

I have never seen a private member's bill move so quickly through the House without regard for due process, which is very concerning to me. If that is the process of how legislation is going to be adopted and changed, I can hardly wait to see what the Liberals are going to do with the changes they are going to be proposing when it comes to democratic reform, because if that is the MO, then we have a lot to be worried about.

Before I finish, I just want to read what one person, who was not able to get her particular point of view, either in a written submission or directly to the committee, taken into consideration. I will read this letter into the record.

It says, "To Whom it May Concern, I am writing you as a young concerned Canadian. I just finished reading a news article about [a Liberal MP's] Bill C-210, which calls for the lyrics of our national anthem changed to be 'gender neutral'. I am absolutely appalled that this is even being given thought, let alone consideration. I would first off like to state very clearly that I am not writing to you...out of any closed-mindedness [or malicious intent]. I am a full supporter of equality and inclusiveness 100% but I draw the line at the proposed lyric change in *O Canada*, and here is why:

"True patriot love in all thy sons command. True North strong and free! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee'

"That block of lyrics is in reference to our sons at the front during the world wars. Yes, I am well aware that there were many nursing sisters at the front as well, but the reality is that our sons by far outnumbered our daughters at the front.

• (1350)

"Let's not forget the 1917 MSA conscription during the First World War after we lost the entire Newfoundland Regiment on the first day of the battle of the Somme. We lost our SONS in less than an hour, the regiment was all but wiped out. To change those lyrics is not only a slap in the face to all who serve now, but to our grandfathers and great grandfathers who so bravely marched on into battle for the freedom we enjoy today. It's a direct spit at the memories, stories and legacies those men left behind."

The author of this letter is clearly indicating what we all know and feel in our hearts, that the national anthem, as it was changed, was done so to respect a time in history. It is not meant to be gender biased in any way, shape, or form. It is a historical anthem. It was our nation's founding moment. Many historians would argue that when our sons, mostly sons, who were fighting in the wars at that particular time made an assault on Vimy Ridge, they earned our right to participate internationally. Some would say it was the birth of our nation.

She goes on to say in this letter, "The final line in the block of lyrics actually renders the statement gender neutral", and she says "I say this because we as a nation do stand on guard for "thee". "We" is the part that means "all of us".

She argues that the previous line that talks about "in all thy sons command" refers to a part of our history. The part that "we stand on guard for thee" is the gender neutral language, which encompasses all of us and charges all of us with the diligence to look after, protect, and preserve our nation.

This is a good enough reason for me, based on the fact that many of my constituents have already told me how they feel about this and the fact that the bill, regrettably, and I do understand the circumstances, does not seem to have been given due process in this place at all. I am going to have to vote against the legislation.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today. I believe it is likely I will be closing this debate, and a momentous one it is.

These are not perfunctory. We often issue our best wishes to fellow members in this House for various things, but to my hon. colleague, let me say from the bottom of my heart, we pray for a miracle and we wish him our best. Even though I will not be voting for his legislation, I do think he will have the satisfaction of seeing it pass the House of Commons at least, if not the Senate as well.

A fair number of my colleagues have stated, and I will not restate to any great degree, the issues we have with the process of this. We understand the reasons and are somewhat sympathetic. One of the things we must understand is that we hold this office on behalf of Canadians, and therefore we have the duty to speak on their behalf, to speak for all viewpoints in this country, the viewpoints that we represent in this House. That is the reason I am rising here today.

There are many reasons that have been stated as to why we should not support this legislation. They include attachment to symbols, the history, the possibility that "thy sons command" was a reference, looking forward to possibly some military engagements our country would have been involved in, going forward.

However, for me, the reason that I will be opposing this legislation is a very simple one. If I vote for this legislation and the rationale has been made that it is discriminatory, I would then be accepting that Canada had been, in its words, discriminatory for the last roughly 100 years.

It is my understanding that the reason the lyrics were changed, and the grandson of the author was going to change it, was not for any particular great issue, etc., but for poetic reasons, to make things much more easier to flow, to go forward. It is what poets do.

We think of how the French version of our anthem talks about bearing a cross, carrying a sword, flowers on the head. Canada is not a person, but poetic language also includes that. This is effectively a Victorian poem. The language used is period language, and that is one thing that I think needs to be understood, and was understood clearly by the people at the time. Symbolism allows us a little more flexibility.

The second thing, and this one puzzles and surprises me, and perhaps because the way I was educated was a little different, is that people cannot understand or recognize that historically the word "sons" in English has not necessarily been a term used purely to refer to the male gender. There are many illustrations and the historian who testified at committee pointed this out. It is a term that is often used for the broader encompassment of all people. The author referenced the sons of Jacob, a phrase that is used in various poetic songs and other things of that nature coming from the King James version of the Bible and other periods.

I do understand Shakespearean language. King James language is not as common now as it used to be, but that is the intent, that is the understanding of the language going in. I think we actually do owe a certain degree of respect to the people who have understood that it was inclusive of everyone, going forward.

If I thought this was discriminatory, excluding half of our population, I could support that. I think there are some changes that need to be made from time to time to various symbols to understand and to broaden. I do not see this change bringing my daughter, my wife, my mother in, because I saw them brought in under the old terms.

It is for those reasons, along with some of the reasons my colleague has stated, that I will be choosing to vote no on this piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again, God's blessing to my colleague.

● (1355)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian and as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-210, an act to amend the National Anthem Act.

I listened to the debate and I am very pleased to add my thoughts to those of my honourable colleagues.

[*English*]

However, before I do that, I want to thank and honour the work of the member of Parliament for Ottawa—Vanier for his 20-plus years in the chamber, for his work on behalf of Franco-Canadians, and for his work on behalf of Parliament and all Canadians. I know that he can hear us, and I know that he knows we are with him, and so are Canadians. He is the best combination of a brother and an uncle I have ever met in my life for someone who is not a family member.

I know that this debate has raged, and I know that it is an important debate, but I want to get to the substantive issues. We are talking about making our national anthem gender neutral. The issue is whether the English lyrics “in all thy sons command” should be

amended to “in all of us command” to reflect the original gender neutral 1908 version.

I, and many others in the House and across the country, believe that this change is fundamental. We reject the assertion that changing this is simple pandering to a political base. This is in fact taking it to its original base and making it appropriate for all Canadians. How else am I going to explain to my 12-year-old niece, Skylar, that we in the House on Wednesdays, and Canadians from coast to coast to coast, continue to sing a version of the Canadian anthem that is discriminatory to her gender and to 51% of Canadians?

The debate is about bringing our national anthem into the 21st century. It is 2016. This is about gender neutrality. This is about the future. What else could be more Canadian?

● (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 15, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:04 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, June 13 at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:04 p.m.)

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