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(HANSARD)

Friday, June 17, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 17, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from May 19, consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to stand to speak to Bill C-2 once again, and about some of the implications it will have when the bill moves forward.

It is great that we are in the House today debating the bill, because there are many things Canadians need to know about it, and that we as the official opposition have to bring to the attention of the government.

Today I want to start with the tax-free savings account. The current Liberal government has proposed a reduction in the maximum annual amounts Canadians can invest in these accounts. We know this is a tool that has been working for Canadians. Unfortunately, the government does not, on the false pretence that doubling the tax-free savings account only benefits the highest-earning Canadians, rather than just the middle class.

As we talk about this today, we are looking at all of these proposed middle-class tax hikes that we will be seeing for the middle class and for all Canadians.

Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. We probably know him as the member of Parliament for the “free the beer” campaign, another great campaign we have done.

I am here to talk about the tax-free savings account and the proposal of the Minister of Finance to move forward with the CPP contributions that the government will be inflicting on all Canadians, especially future generations.

The Liberals proposed middle-class tax cuts, reducing it to 20.5%. It really does sound good when they say they are cutting taxes for the

middle class. However, they are forgetting to tell Canadians about all the other things they are going to do. We heard the Minister of Environment in the House this week talking about the carbon tax. We have to recognize that they are going to say they will be reducing taxes for the middle class in order to create more opportunities, provide better savings, and more opportunities for families, but they are not talking about all of these other things they are also proposing.

I am a resident of Ontario. We are already going to see gas prices go up 4¢ a litre, because it was proposed by the Ontario Liberal government. Now we see our federal Liberal government also proposing a carbon tax, a CPP tax, and all these other things. Therefore, although they talk about a middle-class tax bracket at 20.5%, they are not letting all Canadians know that they are actually taxing us in other forms. It really is very unfortunate that they are saying one thing but doing another.

We are not decreasing the taxes when we have backdoor amendments changing the current tax system. For those people living in Ontario, where we see horrible job creation and much unemployment, much like Alberta with the non-support in our energy sector, not only are Canadians not going to have jobs, but they will be paying more, even at the gas pumps. They are going to be paying more in the grocery stores, because we see governments taxing Canadians, whether they are in Ontario, or anywhere in Canada. I have huge concerns about this.

We talked about the tax-free savings account, which is a vehicle for Canadians to save money. Our Conservative government increased it because we had Canadians saying this was a great vehicle for saving money. By introducing a new threshold for what they could save it gave them the opportunity. Many times, we will hear the government say people are not maximizing it. Now, what it is proposing is nannifying what we are doing in Canada by introducing Canada pension plan increases.

We have a vehicle that currently works, the tax-free savings account, which allows Canadians to save responsibly, and many Canadians are doing so. However, now the Minister of Finance will be touring later on this month, trying to get all of the provinces on board to increase our CPP contributions. We have to recognize that that is not only a vehicle for savings. At the same time, it is a huge burden on small businesses. Those small businesses were looking forward to a decrease in their small business tax. However, the government will not be fulfilling that promise either.

Government Orders

Therefore, what the government will be doing is taking the tax-free savings accounts, which allow Canadians to make the choice on how they want to save their money, and instead introducing a new tax on Canadians and employers through the Canada pension plan, as a nanny state tax.

• (1005)

What is this going to do? We know that when students come out of university, they have high debts. It is something that we should be aware of as Canadians. We are asking our students to go out there and get the proper education they need so that they can make sure they have a brilliant future. They come out of those schools with debt and when they get their first job, not only are they going to have to contribute to the CPP but they will have to double those contributions. We are looking at an additional \$3,000 out of their pockets to be put into the CPP.

As a parent, I have no problem because I believe that it is very important for people to save for their future. However, at the same time, what we are doing is having them save for retirement when they can take that money and put it into their student debt, put it into a tax-free savings account, or into the first-time homebuyers plan under the RRSPs and put that money toward their first home. What we have now done is taken away all of those opportunities for Canadians and, as a government, we are saying, “You must put it into the Canada pension plan.”

Although I think saving for retirement is very important, we have to recognize that this is the Canada pension plan. It does not help our current seniors, those seniors who we say are the most vulnerable. It will just be an additional tax. For those students who have come out of Carleton University with these enormous debts, we will see another tax on them. The opportunity for them to save their own money for what they choose is being removed by the current government. These are things that I am extremely concerned with.

The government has talked many times about deficit spending in its campaign promises. I want to talk about the middle class. The middle class we are talking about today will be that group of people, these young families who are currently the middle class, who will wind up with a huge debt. Whether it is the debt from the deficit or from the new CPP contributions or the debt they will have because we will be taking this carbon tax money, will we be using it properly? Those are some huge concerns I have.

I am very much an environmentally friendly person. However, I believe in the stewardship of our land. I think we need to ensure that we recognize that if we are taxing people, this money will actually reduce costs or, as the Liberals are saying, the man-made climate change, or will we just be taking that money and putting it into general revenues and pet projects. Unfortunately, I see the latter, the pet projects, truly being the focus of this climate change plan.

We have this new carbon tax that has now been introduced in the province of Ontario. We will see one at the federal level as well. Average Canadians, the people who will have to pay for this huge deficit in 2016, this line of credit or the 2016 budget, will just see huge debts that they will have to pay. That is a very large concern for me. As I said, I am parent and I have three children currently in post-secondary education. I recognize the costs of education. I am very fortunate to be able to assist with some of those expenses. Not all

families can do that. What we have done is once again crippled the middle class by introducing so many different factors in this.

Going back to the tax-free savings account, this is a vehicle, as we have said, and as the government has said many times, to maximize contributions. This party on this side, the official opposition, sees this is an excellent vehicle for people to save money. It gives them the opportunity to put in maximum contributions. Instead, we are rolling that back. We have different institutions and different organizations throughout Canada saying, “We appreciate that increase and we think that's what needs to be done.” Instead, we see a government that is planning on taxing Canadians—tax, tax, tax, and spend, spend, spend. As we go through this, the bottom line is that we are trying to tax ourselves to prosperity. That is not what we should do. We are taking all of this money from hard-working Canadians and we will be taxing them more and more.

Unfortunately, now that the Liberal government has come into office after it had its great campaign, all it is doing is crippling our middle class and our seniors, and it has only short-term plans. I hope that when the Liberals look at this they will recognize that we need to do better, and we can do better. I hope that they look at and review all of the documents that they have put forward.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for her speech, but I have to say that I am perplexed to hear a Conservative Party member speak against a bill that reduces the tax burden and cuts taxes for the middle class. With respect to the TFSA, obviously I do not know her constituents as well as I know the people of Gatineau, but I know that those of my constituents who earn middle-class incomes are much happier about what we are doing, which is putting money back in their pockets. Nine million Canadians, including a lot of people in Gatineau, are getting a tax cut instead of a TFSA that they cannot afford to put \$11,000 in every year. Can my colleague tell me if the people in her riding would rather have money in their pockets thanks to a middle-class tax cut or the opportunity to put money in a TFSA, which is not really an option for them given their income?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, the bottom line is, the Liberals are saying one thing and doing another. They are introducing a tax cut for our middle class at 20.5% and they are increasing a carbon tax. They are increasing a variety of other things. These are concerns I have, because it looks great on paper until we see all of the other pages talking about all the other taxes they will impose. Whether it is today or tomorrow, we know the government will tax us.

The bottom line is, we cannot spend our way to growth and we cannot tax our way to prosperity. That is exactly what the government is doing.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think my colleague did a very good job of pointing out that we have a policy choice. On the one hand, we can allow individuals to save more of their own money or on the other hand, we can have the government take that money and put it into this new, expanded pension concept the government has.

Government Orders

Maybe the member could talk a little bit more about the benefits of giving individuals choice and control over their own money versus giving government control of that money.

• (1015)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right, we want to give Canadians choices.

One of the biggest things we see with the CPP mandate that the Liberals are coming out with and will be announcing is that it will not only hurt small businesses, it will also reduce jobs, because businesses will not be able to afford to have more employees.

The tax-free savings account is a great vehicle to allow Canadians to save their money. They put the money they have earned into a vehicle so that when they need the money, it is available to them, whether it is purchasing their first time home, whether it is going on a vacation, if they can afford to do so, or whether it is saving for their children's future so that they can send them off to college or university, that money is there for them, and it is not under nanny state of this Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, we will have plenty of opportunities to debate the Canada pension plan. The Conservatives are making the same arguments they have been making since 1965. However, getting back to the debate and this bill, my colleague from Gatineau made two points. The first is that this will help the middle class, and the second is that nine million Canadians will benefit. I have news for him. If nine million people are benefiting, that means more than 17 million, maybe even 18 million, will get nothing at all from this tax cut, which, by the way, will apply only to people who earn at least \$23 per hour at full-time jobs. I would like my colleague to comment on this tax cut for what I would call the pseudo-middle class, because it seems that this government's definition of "middle class" is not what most people would consider the middle class.

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, It has been fantastic serving with the hon. member and learning from him as he speaks in the House.

I really do appreciate that question because my children are that middle class. My son, who is 22 years of age, will be moving into his own apartment this weekend, and I am very excited for him. However, when I look at his budget and show him how he has to move forward, he makes \$13.50 an hour, and he is not part of this middle-class tax cut, so mummy will be setting up his apartment and trying to help him out.

This is exactly a pseudo middle class. The Liberals are not helping those people who are most vulnerable. Canadian parents such as myself are trying to help them forward, because what the Liberals are saying they are doing for the most vulnerable is not happening.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this chamber on behalf of the constituents of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

I appreciate that we are at the eve of our rise, although it is neither your job, Madam Speaker, nor mine to say when that is. However, I

want to thank every member I have had the opportunity to work with in this chamber during this opening round before we rise for the summer and thank the pages and the table staff for their commitment to this country.

I am here to speak to Bill C-2. It is an important bill, because it lays out the philosophy of the current government. The Liberals believe that raising taxes on the highest bracket will benefit this country. It is perfectly all right for them to contend that. They won the election. However, it is also perfectly all right for us, as members of Her Majesty's opposition, and all opposition parties, and even their backbench, to question the government.

Oftentimes in our system, members of Parliament are more relegated to being an approval body in this chamber and are not necessarily directing policy. However, I think one of the strengths of our system is when governments of any stripe take the policies of their predecessors, evaluate them, and continue them, if they are good for Canada.

In the same spirit, I would also suggest that we must remember that a broken clock can be right twice a day, but once in Quebec, I believe, because they go by international time. However, even in opposition, we may strike on an idea whose time may have come. I would hope that the government and members of the governing party will listen and take that forward. This country is great because of continued work toward policies that support all Canadians.

With that in mind, I will raise a few points about what I think could be improved and what the government, or ministers themselves as they work with their deputies, maybe not through this legislation but through their deliberations on future legislation, might take into account.

I have had the great opportunity to work with some members of the finance committee by subbing in from time to time. It is a very good group. The members seem to have a good understanding of the bills before them, and they seem to get along quite well.

One of the interesting concepts we heard about in committee was from Dr. Jack Mintz. Dr. Mintz raised a concern that taxing at the highest bracket would put pressure on some people of higher means, who may say that they are going to move to a different province or offshore to another country. When we lose those entrepreneurs, because 60% of small business owners are in that bracket, we lose collectively. We lose their innovation, and sometimes their capital, because they may begin investing in other countries.

The current government has said that it will use evidenced-based decision-making. Evidence means that there is theoretical evidence provided through academia, governmental reports, or think-tank studies or through actually collecting the data and creating an inventory, so to speak, on whether a policy is in the long-term interest of this great country.

In regard to Bill C-2, Dr. Mintz made the suggestion that the Canada Revenue Agency has the ability to track whether someone in this higher income bracket, who the Liberals will be taxing at a higher rate, moves or migrates to other lower-cost jurisdictions to operate, such as my province of British Columbia.

Government Orders

I am sure that Premier Christy Clark would love me to take a moment to sell all the high points of locating to British Columbia to entrepreneurs, but I will not do that. I am not going to speak to the parochial interests of my home province. I refuse to. However, what I will say is that there could be interprovincial or offshore migration.

• (1020)

If CRA was to collect the information, we might be able to get a tale of the tape.

I realize that people move for all sorts of reasons, but economists will tell us that incentives matter and people do make decisions, particularly in the higher income brackets, to find places where they can maximize their capital and where they feel welcome.

As a starting point, this is something the government can do on behalf of all Canadians to ensure that its policies are to the benefit of the long-term interests of this great country. I hope the government will give that full consideration.

I will also step back and tell the House about a personal experience. I love this chamber. I love this country. However, one of the things about our politics that we could change would be to stop judging an idea because of the messenger. If a former minister of the previous government gets up and makes a suggestion based on his or her experience, or someone from some think tank who people believe has some sort of ideological background says that this is a good policy for Canada, we should listen and evaluate it. We should not simply dismiss it because we disagree with some sort of vaguely placed ideological position. Let us start judging policies by their merits, not by the people who espouse them.

There are many things this government is going to be looking at. Trade, for example, is going to be an extremely difficult file for the Liberals, because Canadians have different views. Ultimately, the government is going to have to look at the evidence, look at how our economy has grown over the past 30 years by becoming a free trading nation, and then evaluate how that helps all of us.

We all have a different reaction when we suffer a loss, whether it be an electoral loss or a personal loss. We face denial, then anger, sadness, and acceptance. I am getting close to the acceptance stage on many of the government's policies, but members on the other side continue to get up and criticize the opposition for having a different view. We need to embrace the views, respect the views, and not cut each other down.

That being said, I will go to the subject of tax-free savings accounts. My riding is made up of an older demographic. Broc Braconnier is a veteran and one of the volunteers on a volunteer tax group. This is a group of individuals that helps seniors, usually low-income seniors at risk, file their tax returns so they can get the benefits they so desperately need. He mentioned to me that the tax-free savings account offered seniors two important steps. First, if they sold a home and downsized, a lot of the money from the sale of that home could go into a tax-free savings account if it had not been used before. They could also draw income from that account at an accelerated rate, which could make them feel that they had the nest egg they worked for. The same applies to the RRIFs.

I would just say to members on the other side that it is perfectly legitimate for us to raise concerns about certain policies. I do not

mind being criticized, but let us talk about the ideas, and let us make sure that we are not skating around the area we like or the area we dislike. Policies are not so simple that they can be dismissed in one statement in this place.

• (1025)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us take the politics out of it and talk about the ideas.

I think it was economist Rhys Kesselman in 2001 who did the groundwork on the concept of the tax-free savings account that laid the track toward that particular measure. Even he suggested that the doubling that had been suggested by the previous government would really only advantage the very wealthy, the people who, logically, had the money to put in. At this time of high personal debt, having the extra money to put in becomes a little harder. Other people have said that only about 16% of Canadians actually max out at the current level. That is where we might tend to differ as to the best approach.

I want to talk about pensions. Over a period of time, international pressures and mobile capital have meant that people can move money and capital all over the world. We have lost a lot of good jobs. About 60% of Canadians in the private sector do not have company pension plans.

As we look to the future, I would like to ask the member what other measures he would suggest, other than beefing up the Canada pension plan or ignoring—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We only have five minutes for questions, and there are other parties who want to take part as well.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I will reply to the member's last question.

The PRPPs that allowed portable savings, fully portable among all provinces, is something that all finance ministers agreed with, I think about four or five years ago. Yet many provinces, our most populous provinces, such as Ontario, have not yet implemented that strategy. This was unanimous and would allow people to have their own pensions and allow a voluntary contribution by employers. That is important.

I would like to discuss some of the other concepts with the member at another time, but I appreciate the spirit in which he asked the question. This is the kind of debate people in our home constituencies expect of us.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola appealed for evidence-based policy and raised the concern that the rich might just leave in response to slightly higher income tax rates at the top end. Yet he presented no empirical evidence on this problem.

Government Orders

Luckily, a couple of weeks ago, Stanford University published a study entitled, “Millionaire Migration and the Taxation of the Elite”, which studied exactly that question south of the border. What it found was that millionaire migration is not an issue and that, in fact, the rate of interstate migration among millionaires was lower than it was among the general population.

I wonder if the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola could bring some actual evidence to bear on this question.

• (1030)

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, first, the report the gentleman cites is from the United States, and they have a much different tax system. In fact, academics have widely criticized the many loopholes that allow people to do that. If a person has the ability to use loopholes, there is going to be less migration.

I have to say that the previous government worked very hard to make sure that loopholes were taken out of the tax code here in Canada. Some tax relief was actually put in place for families, people with disabilities, and seniors. That is where the focus was.

I would point out that it was actually Dr. Jack Mintz, not me, who made this assertion at the finance committee. The University of Calgary School of Public Policy has put out a number of reports in this area.

I understand that the member has an ideological position, and that is not bad, but again, let us focus on Canada, let us hear from Canadian academics, and then let us have a discussion around those areas. I appreciate that I did not have evidence to table today. This speech was a little last minute, but if he has other suggestions as to how we can correspond on this, I would be open to that.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

It is good to be returning to the discussion on Bill C-2. As we all know in the House, this is a bill that received its first reading all the way back on December 9, 2015. We have had quite a session since then, and it is good to be returning to some old familiar ground.

Bill C-2 covers a few different areas. It is a bill that would amend a few different areas of the Income Tax Act. However, I am going to be limiting my comments to two areas in particular. The reason for that is they are the areas that are most relevant to the constituents in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, and I suspect to constituents of most members of Parliament in the House as well. One area is the changes the bill would make to our tax code, notably to the area that the Liberals define as the middle class; and the second area is the reduction of the TFSA contributions from what the previous Conservative government used to have at \$10,000 per year, down to a more reasonable level of \$5,500 per year.

As part of my introductory remarks, I also want to speak a bit about my history as a former constituency assistant. I had the honour of working seven years as a constituency assistant. In that time, Canada Revenue Agency casework was one of the top three cases that came across my desk. It was some of the top casework that I got to see. I had a very privileged position, because over seven years I had very privileged access to many members of my constituency and their tax returns. I got to see the full range of their incomes, the very

intricate details of their tax returns, and their relationship with the CRA because they essentially signed a contract with our office to give me unimpeded access to their tax returns and their tax history so that I could make some inquiries with the CRA on their behalf and try to solve the problems that they brought to the office.

One of the notable things that I saw during those seven years was the range of incomes. The range of incomes in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford would not be touched by the Liberals' tax measures. Incomes generally fell in a range of about \$25,000 per year and maybe up to a high end of \$50,000 to \$60,000, so that the people at the high end would get some benefit but not much.

The key point I am trying to make here is that most constituents in my riding and I suspect most people across Canada would not receive any benefit from this tax cut, yet the Liberals keep on selling to the Canadian public that this would be a middle-class tax break. That is absolutely false.

I spoke to the bill at second reading back in February, when I was still getting used to making speeches in this hon. House. One of the things that I really loved to bring up during that speech, and I brought it up again during our discussions on Bill C-15, was the fact that the median income in Canada according to Statistics Canada is \$31,000 a year. If we take the definition of median, which basically is the number separating the higher half of a data sample from the lower half, we could take \$31,000 a year as a reasonable definition of where the middle class is. However, the Liberals' so-called middle-class tax break would not even start to begin giving benefits until people reach an income of \$45,000 a year. They would max out when they get above \$90,000 and into \$100,000 a year.

To make it perfectly clear to everyone watching this debate, every member of Parliament in this chamber who earns \$170,000 a year, which is on the public record, would get the maximum tax break of \$670 per year, everyone. That is what the Liberals would do. They would give people in very high incomes a tax break, which frankly speaking we do not need. I do not know about everyone else in this chamber, but I was not elected to come to the House to give myself a tax break while the hard-working men and women of my riding get nothing. That was not what I was sent here to do. That is not the middle class that I came here to fight for.

• (1035)

The Liberals will say that it is okay because they are introducing the child benefit. It is a great concept, the child benefit. I will never, as a father of young children and knowing many constituents who have young children, argue against giving more money to the hard-working men and women of our country to help them raise their children.

Government Orders

However, I need to point out some evidence for everyone who is watching this debate. The Liberals' plan for the Canada child benefit will provide a maximum annual benefit of up to \$6,400 per child under the age of six. Compare that with the average cost of child care in B.C., which is \$14,000 per year. It is a drop in the bucket.

When I talk to families about the difficulties of child care, they say that more money would help but that what is really bugging them is the lack of affordable spaces and the lack of spaces overall. Furthermore, a lot of parents come up to me and say that their spouse works and they are a stay-at-home parent, and what would really get their family ahead is if they could actually hold two jobs. They cannot do that because the costs of child care are too high. They literally cannot afford to go and get a job.

That is what I hear. That is what I heard during the election. That is what I heard during seven years of working with constituents, right where the rubber meets the road, right at the constituency office.

I do not want any member of Parliament to tell me I do not know what I am speaking about, because I come here with evidence. I come here with testimony. I come here with seven years of experience of working with families. It is a shame that this Parliament is not doing anything to expand child care spaces in this country.

Furthermore, if we really wanted to give lower-income Canadians a leg up, we would pay attention to the wages they are receiving, and we would take this opportunity to show some leadership and institute a federally regulated minimum wage of \$15 an hour.

A lot of people will say that is only going to affect a small number of jobs. That does not matter. It is about showing federal leadership. It is about having the House of Commons lead the way so that we put ourselves in the morally correct position of saying that we did it first and we expect the provinces to follow. I do not know how families make it on \$11-an-hour wages. I simply do not. It is a miracle that they get by in the first place on those low wages.

I have spent a lot of time in my speech speaking about that particular tax change. It is a very passionate subject for me, as members can see. I do want to devote a little time on the TFSA, because that is one change in Bill C-2 that I agree with.

The Conservative government's plans in the previous Parliament to raise the limit to \$10,000 a year would have been a huge cost to our treasury in later years. Furthermore, I do not know many families who could max out at \$5,500 per year, let alone \$10,000. When a family is earning a median income of \$31,000 a year, how on Earth are they able to save \$10,000 per year extra, to sock away? It is simply not possible.

That is a policy that benefits the top income earners in this country. Leaving the limit at \$5,500 is perfectly reasonable, and it is something I can certainly support.

The costs with the TFSA increase to \$10,000 a year would have risen to \$132 billion by the year 2080. Conservatives like to portray themselves as the party of low taxes, and they like to really use the phrase "tax and spend". The point I am trying to make is that if we are taking that much money out of federal revenue by those later

years, that in itself is a tax on the programs that we use to support this society, to help low-income people get through.

If we are taking that kind of revenue out of the federal revenue stream, we are going to have to make cuts to federal programs. As much as we do not like to pay taxes, they are a part of living in our society and they are a part of building our infrastructure and building our supporting programs.

• (1040)

I will conclude by saying that we have been proposing some truly progressive things that could have made a real difference to low-income earners. I am sad to see that Bill C-2 did not live up to those standards and for that reason I will be voting against the bill at third reading.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to probe my colleague's comments about the minimum wage. He sees that a higher minimum wage would provide benefits. Many economists believe that a higher minimum wage leads to increased unemployment and it is not hard to understand intuitively why that would be. If the cost of something is increased, people will purchase less of it. If the cost of labour is increased, people will hire fewer people.

There are things the government could do that would help people in that same situation. It could raise the base exemption people can earn before paying tax, like we did. It could lower the lowest marginal tax rate, not the middle rate, which is also something that we did when we were in government.

Would the member not agree that those types of measures would have more of a benefit and less of an economic cost because they would not increase unemployment?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, certainly if we do raise the wages, that is something that businesses will have to bear, but the part that the member leaves out is that if we have low-income workers in a jurisdiction with more money in their pockets, they tend to spend it locally.

In fact, there are several examples in the United States, notably the city of Seattle, which experimented with minimum wages, and it has shown that rather than businesses going out of business, they are actually thriving.

I believe in putting more money into workers' pockets. There are studies that show they spend that money locally, which helps all of our local businesses thrive.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank and applaud my hon. colleague for his excellent speech.

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have provided huge tax giveaways to Canada's large corporations, whose tax rate went from 28% in 2000 to just 15% in 2012. Still, this has not created jobs and it has not stimulated the economy, and the Liberals promised to help small and medium-sized businesses, which are the real job creators in our communities, towns, and cities.

Government Orders

What does the member think of the Liberals' broken promise to support those who are the real job creators in our society, namely, small businesses?

• (1045)

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, my colleague raises a very important point about corporate tax rates because the other question the NDP has always received is how would members have paid for their platform. No one in the House except this party has looked seriously at how low corporate tax rates are, how they have been on a downward trend for a decade now, how we are the lowest in the OECD with an average lower than the United States, and yet there has not been a corresponding investment by those corporations.

In fact, none other than the former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney has referred to the corporate bank accounts that are filled to the brim with dead money. It is not being invested, so despite the low corporate tax rates we have, we have not seen the corresponding investment by the private sector.

All we are asking is that corporations pay their fair share in our society. Their rates go up a little bit more to make life easier on the rest of Canadians and I think the member makes a very fine point because the tax burden for too long has been on the real middle class and that is the one that the NDP is proud to support.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a quick question about the concept of increasing the CPP contributions. Hon. members on the other side call it a tax. Does the member agree with that characterization?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I most certainly do not. I have met with so many low-income seniors that I have lost count, so many who are struggling. The CPP is one pension plan that went through the 2008 financial crisis relatively unscathed. It is a strong plan. It needs enhancement and if we are to have a serious conversation about low-income seniors in this country, we need to start having it now. A retirement vehicle that has survived previous shocks is a solid investment for our future.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are here today debating a tax bill. I would begin by observing that our federal government is faced with a very serious revenue problem. The Conservative members of this House like to pat themselves on the back for the fact that federal tax revenues as a share of gross domestic product are at their lowest level in about half a century.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Erin Weir: They are free to applaud that, Madam Speaker.

Of, course, the flip side of that is that we do not have enough resources to fund important public services and necessary infrastructure. That is one of the main reasons we have a big federal deficit. It is important that if we want to live in a civilized society, we need to have ways of raising the revenue to pay for those services and those infrastructures that we depend on.

What has the government done in terms of generating that needed revenue?

Bill C-2 proposes an additional four percentage points of personal income tax on incomes over \$200,000 per year. That is definitely a positive initiative, but it is also a fairly minor initiative. It does not actually raise very much revenue. In fact, it does not even raise enough revenue to pay for the so-called middle-class tax cut that actually goes to what we might call the upper middle class. The maximum benefit is only to people earning more than \$90,000 a year. We have this kind of redistribution from the rich to the nearly rich, which is costing the treasury even more money.

We, in the NDP, have suggested that the government might look to the corporate sector as a source of additional revenues to pay for public services.

It is interesting. This morning, the *Toronto Star* and CBC have come out with a joint investigation that looks into the loss of revenue to offshore tax havens. It notes that all of these tax information exchange agreements that the former Conservative government was very keen to sign have actually made the problem worse.

The goal of these agreements was obviously to achieve greater transparency, to get more information about what was going on in tax havens. However, what the Conservatives did while they were in power was to put in place a policy whereby once a country had signed one of these tax information exchange agreements, there was no more enforcement. Canadian companies could just repatriate profits tax free from those jurisdictions. Far from curtailing offshore tax avoidance, this plethora of tax information exchange agreements has actually made the problem worse. I think that is a problem that we need to be addressing in this House.

I would also like to talk a bit about a specific case of offshore tax avoidance that I think really illustrates the problem.

Cameco is a company that mines uranium in Saskatchewan. In 1999, it signed a deal with its own subsidiary in Zug, Switzerland to sell that uranium to Switzerland at a fixed price of \$10 per pound. Switzerland was not the ultimate destination or user of that uranium. The subsidiary in Zug was just reselling it to other jurisdictions around the world at market prices. Of course, the market price of uranium is variable, but it has consistently been quite a bit more than \$10 a pound. It is currently around \$30 a pound. It was up to as high as \$140 a pound in 2007.

The only real effect of this arrangement was to transfer billions of dollars of profits from Canada to this Swiss tax haven. The Canada Revenue Agency has calculated that from 2003 through 2015, that cost the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan more than \$2 billion in lost tax revenue.

This is a huge scandal. It first came out in 2013. At that time, I was struck by the fact that Saskatchewan's Conservative MPs and one Liberal MP were totally silent on the matter. Fortunately, we now have some New Democratic MPs from the province who are going to speak up for tax fairness and raise issues like this.

• (1050)

It is very concerning that we have this company that is making huge profits off of Canadian resources and then transferring those profits out of the country, in a very brazen way, in order to avoid paying tax on it.

Government Orders

The good news is that the Canada Revenue Agency has started to pursue this matter. That is the way in which it came out publicly in 2013. However, the news that is a little more concerning is that there has been a real tradition of both Conservative and Liberal governments not actually following through on these cases, and instead signing these deals that let the tax cheats off the hook.

Part of the reason that I want to bring the Cameco case forward in this House is to put it on record, to make sure that the Government of Canada is actually going to follow up on this and not let the company get away with this scam.

I am not alone in this. Earlier this week, an organization called Canadians for Tax Fairness presented a petition signed by more than 36,000 people, calling on Cameco to make these tax payments. There are a lot of people who are concerned about this, and finally they have some Saskatchewan voices in Parliament speaking up for them.

I would also like to touch on the provincial side of this whole question. The tax base to which provincial taxes apply is actually defined by the Government of Canada. When you have a company like Cameco shifting taxable profits out of the country, it is not just the federal government that loses out; it is also the Government of Saskatchewan that is no longer able to collect the appropriate taxes on that money.

This is a pressing concern, because the Government of Saskatchewan is running a huge deficit right now. The Government of Saskatchewan really needs that money to maintain important public programs in our province. This is a critical issue. It has just come to light recently that the small “c” conservative government in Saskatchewan refused to present a budget prior to the recent provincial election because they wanted to conceal the fact that they were running this big deficit.

Now we know there is a huge deficit there, and we know how important it would be for the Province of Saskatchewan to be able to collect fair corporate taxes from the profits generated from our province's resources. It is not just about Cameco. This point is applicable to the whole question of offshore tax avoidance.

If the federal government were to do a better job of preventing this tax avoidance and tax evasion, and actually make sure that the correct amount of profit was subject to federal corporate income tax, that would also mean those profits could be subject to provincial corporate income tax.

I think almost all provincial governments are in deficit right now, and one of the best things this Parliament could do to help our provincial governments generate the revenues they need for health care, education, and social services would be to get our tax system in order. It wants to make sure that appropriate reporting is being done, so that not only do we have adequate revenues for the federal government, but so that our provincial counterparts can fund their operations in an appropriate way as well.

We are facing a huge revenue problem in this country. We have tax rates at historic lows, which are not sufficient to fund the important services and necessary infrastructure on which Canadians rely. Why is this happening? Obviously, one of the problems is that the general corporate tax rate has been cut. As my colleague pointed

out, that has led to a huge loss of revenue and has not produced investment in our economy.

The other issue is that whatever the tax rate, it is not actually being applied because of these offshore tax schemes, which were aggravated by the recent Conservative government, of which Cameco in Saskatchewan is a particularly egregious example. We need to focus on this problem and come up with concrete solutions to collect appropriate revenues.

• (1055)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the plan for those with over \$200,000 in income was supposed to be to raise votes not to raise revenue. Does the hon. member agree with that?

Mr. Erin Weir: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, I do believe that this modest tax increase for the very wealthiest Canadians is a good and desirable policy. It will raise some needed revenue, so I certainly think it makes sense.

Where I would agree with the member for Edmonton Manning is that it will not actually raise very much revenue. In fact, it will raise significantly less money than the Liberal government is going to give away through this so-called middle-class tax cut that does not actually go to the middle class.

Therefore, if we are serious about raising revenue, we need to look at the corporate side of the ledger and start reversing corporate tax cuts, as well as closing loopholes and dealing with these offshore tax havens.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for an excellent speech and, of course, his deep knowledge in this area of tax and revenue.

I wonder if the member could expand on his comments concerning the so-called middle-class tax cut. I wonder if he could expand on why the title does not actually match the measures that are being put forward by the government.

Mr. Erin Weir: Madam Speaker, on the Liberal side of the House, I think there might have been some confusion between a middle-class tax cut and the middle tax bracket.

What the government has done is to cut the middle bracket, which actually only applies to incomes in excess of \$45,000, and it goes all the way up to incomes of \$90,000. Therefore, to receive the maximum benefit from this supposed middle-class tax cut, one would need to be earning an income of more than \$90,000 a year, which I believe most Canadians would consider to be certainly the upper middle class. This is the reason I do not think that the title “middle-class tax cut” is very accurate.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I totally disagree with the member. This middle-class tax cut is going to provide tax relief to over nine million Canadians, hundreds of millions of dollars. We are talking about farmers, teachers, and all sorts of professions.

Why does the member and the NDP choose to disagree in allowing for Canada's middle class, those teachers, manufacturing workers, that hard-working middle class, to have a tax break?

Statements by Members

●(1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): A very brief answer from the member for Regina—Lewvan. However, the member will still have about a minute and a half the next time he speaks on this.

Mr. Erin Weir: Madam Speaker, if nine million Canadians are getting some benefit from the tax change, that means that 20-odd million Canadians are getting no benefit at all. Of course, many of those nine million Canadians are not receiving much benefit.

I look forward to debating this matter again after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC NATIONAL HOLIDAY

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in just a few days' time, we will be celebrating Quebec's national holiday.

Of course, there will be a great deal of pride and joie de vivre, but more importantly, we will also be celebrating our extended family of people who share the values of justice, equality, solidarity, secularism, and liberty.

The fireworks will be spectacular and reflect the colours of our shared identity, which is enriched by men and women from all over the world, all corners of the globe, who make Quebec a rich and prosperous place.

From Val-d'Or to Baie-Comeau, we will paint Quebec in blue and white, thereby solidifying the common foundation of the only francophone nation in North America. Above all, we will be thinking of the day when our flag, the fleur de lis, will fly high next to the flags of other nations.

Long live our diverse Quebec. Long live a Quebec made up of men and women from all over the world. We will have our country one day; it is just a matter of time.

* * *

[*English*]

LOBSTER FISHING

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Madam Speaker, May 31 marked the end of the annual six-month lobster fishing season in Lobster Fishing Area 34, located primarily in my riding of West Nova. This past season was one of the most successful ones in history, with roughly 55 million pounds of lobster caught off our shores, the best prices in about a decade, and increasing demand from emerging markets in Asia.

With LFA 34 being the largest and most lucrative lobster area on the continent, accounting for 40% of Canadian catches and 23% of all North American landings, a great lobster season is the lifeblood of so many rural communities in West Nova. I wish the roughly 5,000 fishers who participated in this year's season a wonderful summer as they prepare for the upcoming season starting in November.

I would invite all Canadians to come visit us in Atlantic Canada this summer, because there is nowhere else in the world to enjoy better lobster.

* * *

GORD MCILROY

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend Gord McIlroy, who passed away recently just short of his 91st birthday.

Gord enlisted in the RCAF at age 17, at the height of World War II, and was in active service between 1943 and 1945.

Gord and I spent many hours over drinks discussing every topic under the stars, but never his own wartime service. "Some guys just do not want to talk about what happened", he would say.

Gord was born and raised in Winnipeg, but he made up for it by moving to Edmonton after the war, where he settled with his family and flew with 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron. Always a troublemaker, Gord pranged a B-25 once while trying to fly between fence posts, fence posts that were just six feet off the ground, bear in mind.

Gord never stopped. At 65, he earned his bachelor's degree and, well into his 80s, his MBA. He always signed his emails, and Gord sent thousands and thousands of opinionated ones to the dismay of many recipients, as Gord, the bold, the sage, the seer, and that he was.

I thank Gord for his service to Canada. I will miss him.

* * *

GIRLS WORLD

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, recently I attended Girls World, an annual celebration of the United Sisters program based out of west Ottawa that was founded in 1994 by the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre.

This year's theme, "I Am Who I Am", was about identity, a key part of the program's mandate to empower young girls aged 10 to 15. During weekly sessions, girls, with their team leaders, learn and share about healthy self-esteem, confidence, and teamwork.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank the organizer, Faduma Yusuf, for inviting me to join in the celebration in our community and the Minister of Status of Women for joining us and taking the opportunity to inspire the young girls by telling them that they are leaders not only of the future, but also of the present. It is our job to ensure that these girls can achieve their full potential.

Statements by Members

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is a housing crisis in Burnaby, there is a housing crisis in Metro Vancouver, and, indeed, there is a housing crisis in many communities in British Columbia. The sad fact is that the government does not seem to care about it at all.

Housing prices are so high that young people are leaving greater Vancouver in droves, according to a recent study the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Seniors are worried about their future housing, especially those in rental housing who are on fixed incomes. Of course, what is starting to happen is that the housing crisis is so intense that local employers are very worried they will not be able to retain their current staff.

I know about these stresses. In the late 1970s, my family lost its home because of high interest rates. Not only did it shatter my family for that period of time, but actually a ripple effect through our entire lives.

I am very concerned about the impact these high housing prices will have on people.

* * *

● (1105)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am truly humbled and pleased to recognize my friend, teacher, mentor and one of Canada's sharpest legal minds, Barbara Jackman. In recognition of her important contributions to the law and human rights, Ms. Jackman will receive an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Ottawa this evening.

In 1985, in one of the first charter cases to go before the courts, Ms. Jackman successfully argued the Singh decision. In that case, the Supreme Court of Canada found that the right of fundamental justice, including the right to life, liberty, and security of the person, applied to everyone within our borders, including refugee claimants.

For four decades, Ms. Jackman has advocated either as counsel, intervenor or friend of the court on many seminal decisions. Former prime minister Pierre Trudeau enshrined the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1981. Yet it is the likes of Barbara Jackman who have given life to those important rights.

I would like to thank Barbara, who is visiting Parliament today, for her sacrifice and work in helping to make Canada a fairer and more just and humane society.

* * *

FIESTA WEEK

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, this Sunday kicks off the 42nd annual Fiesta Week celebrations in Oshawa. Oshawa will spend the next six days celebrating our amazing cultural diversity with traditional foods, dance and activities.

The vibrant cultural communities that make up Oshawa will proudly share their unique heritage with visitors from across the province. With 18 unique pavilions, Fiesta Week offers the

opportunity to experience some of the finest Polish, Ukrainian, Caribbean, African, Greek, Portuguese, German, Romanian, Italian, French, Serbian, Filipino, and Hungarian cuisine in Canada.

Over the past four-plus decades, Fiesta Week has proven to be one of the most popular summer events in Oshawa, as it appeals to every age, background, and cultural group. It is living proof that there is room for everyone to have fun in Oshawa.

I would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who have made Fiesta Week an annual success for more than 40 years. I encourage everyone to stop by Oshawa and check out pavilions during the 2016 Fiesta Week celebrations.

* * *

HOLLAND COLLEGE GRADUATES

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate this year's graduating class at Holland College, Prince Edward Island's community college. Its West Prince Campus opened in my riding in 2011, and it has quickly become a major asset to the community.

In particular, I want to congratulate Marshal McCue, a graduate of the electrical technology program. Marshal was born with Stickler syndrome, a genetic condition that severely limits his hearing and vision. He faced difficulties throughout his time at school.

To quote Marshal's own words, "My life experiences have ranged from being overly-protected to facing bullying and discrimination."

I have known Marshal and his family for all of his life, and have witnessed the care and patience of his parents, Barry and Gail, and his determination to succeed. He is a testament to the fact that we are not defined by our limitations, and that support and encouragement are equally as important as will and perseverance.

I congratulate Marshal and all 2016 Holland College graduates.

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SPRING FESTIVAL

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my Spring Festival motion was passed on June 1. Therefore, beginning in spring 2017, the Government of Canada will proclaim the first day of the Lunar Year as the beginning of the 15-day Spring Festival.

I thank all my colleagues, including the Minister of Canadian Heritage, for their unanimous support. Now we can really make a difference, something solid.

I would invite each of my colleagues to do something special in his or her own riding to celebrate Spring Festival 2017. If members organize or participate in a Spring Festival celebration, I can assure them that it will be well received by all Canadians, including Asian Canadians.

Next year marks Canada's 150th anniversary. Let us make it a great year for everyone. Let us spring into action.

• (1110)

HOCKEY

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, countless Canadians learned the great game of hockey on a homemade backyard rink. In my riding, one small rink has produced a future Hall of Famer.

Jumbo Joe Thornton of the San Jose Sharks is one of the best players in the NHL today, and I am proud to note that he hails from my wonderful community of Lynhurst.

From leading the Elgin Middlesex Chiefs and St. Thomas Junior Stars to many championships, he then earned the OHL and CHL Rookie of the Year award with the Soo Greyhounds.

Joe was selected first overall in the 1997 NHL entry draft by the Boston Bruins. In 2006, he won the Art Ross Trophy for leading the league in scoring, and was named the Hart Memorial Trophy winner as league MVP.

Joe's recent run for the Stanley Cup created a real buzz in my hometown. Although he and his teammates came up a bit short, on behalf of my family of Sharks fans and my entire riding, I would like to congratulate Joe and his family on a fantastic season. I am St. Thomas proud.

* * *

NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is National Public Service Week, with the theme "Proudly Serving Canadians".

I have had several meetings with public service unions, including PIPS, PSAC, and others, to discuss and better understand their issues. This kind of dialogue is critical to revitalizing our government's relationship with the federal public service.

Many of my personal friends, who are highly qualified, are public servants. I know they, and thousands of residents of Nepean and Ottawa, work very hard in delivering services to Canadians.

As the Prime Minister has said, public servants help us tackle the real challenges that we face as a country. They serve a vital role in our democracy, and are a source of pride and a model to other countries and governments. It is truly a privilege to work with our public servants every day.

* * *

PRIDE MONTH

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is Pride Month, and I am proud to represent a community that recently held a number of family-friendly events to celebrate. The week included a Trans Pride event held in my riding, which culminated with the youth organized Halton Pride picnic in Burlington.

Thanks to people like Beckham Ronaghan, youth coordinator for Positive Space Network, which organizes the annual event, along with its youth action committee members Sonali Patel, Taylor Carusi, MC Kowal, and my friend Tyler Wisner, this year's event again offered a safe place for Halton youth to celebrate who they are.

Statements by Members

Community groups set up displays and music filled the air as young and the young at heart joined in the celebration.

With young people like these inspiring not only their LGBTQ2 peers but the entire Halton community, I am hopeful they will help Oakville and Burlington continue to build a safe and inclusive community where love is stronger than hate.

* * *

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago I was proud to announce the #FreeTheBeer campaign, which calls upon our Liberal government to elevate the Comeau decision to the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification. This is a very important issue for the many Okanagan wineries, craft brewers and artisan distillers in my riding.

Unfortunately I was unable to get enough votes in this chamber to fast-track this initiative. If we can remove more interprovincial trade barriers, it will also benefit other producers and growers, such as the agricultural sector. Interprovincial trade barriers cost our Canadian economy billions per year in lost economic activity. This means lost jobs and lost opportunities.

On behalf of the citizens of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, I will continue to make the case to the government to elevate the Comeau decision to the Supreme Court and support our local economies. Stay tuned.

* * *

[Translation]

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today as part of brain injury awareness month to talk about raising awareness of the causes and effects of brain injuries across Canada.

People suffering from general brain injuries may experience greatly reduced awareness. These alterations generally result in physical, cognitive, and emotional deterioration.

The cause could be as simple as a sport injury or a cycling accident. Just imagine the impact of such an incident on family life, on mental health, and on an individual. Everyone is affected. There is no real cure. Prevention is the most viable solution for now.

I invite my colleagues to join the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities and me in raising awareness and helping key players make the right decisions.

Oral Questions

•(1115)

*[English]***BIRTHDAY WISHES**

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to wish a belated happy birthday to a Dene elder from English River First Nation in Patuanak, Saskatchewan. Mrs. Sarazine Aubichon-Ratt turned 104 years old. She was born on June 12, 1912.

Mrs. Aubichon-Ratt is a vibrant, active woman. She is healthy and still lives an independent life. She speaks Dene, Cree and French. She sings in Latin. She teaches syllabics in school. She is a terrific teacher.

RCMP members adopted her as their grandmother, and together they show the true meaning of community police. She plays a very important role in welcoming young RCMP members to the community.

Mrs. Aubichon-Ratt sends us a very simple but noteworthy message: live in harmony with one another.

I wish her good health and a long life.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are bent on piling more cost on hard-working Canadians at the very worst time.

Their plans for a job-killing, tax-grabbing carbon tax is just another example of yet another tax that will only hurt families, business owners, the middle class, people on fixed incomes, the working poor, rural and energy-based communities, and charities. The new Liberal carbon tax in Alberta will cost charities like the Calgary Food Bank tens of thousands of dollars in added costs when their non-profit budgets are already stretched thin.

We know that there can be no guarantee that a national carbon tax would be so-called revenue neutral or dedicated to initiatives for innovation and environmental stewardship. What taxes are ever revenue neutral?

The Liberals cannot fool Canadians. We know that a carbon tax at any level of government is simply a revenue generator to feed reckless spending and out of control deficits masquerading as environmental policy.

Canadians cannot afford another tax.

* * *

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in the traditional territories of the Algonquin people.

Next Tuesday is National Aboriginal Day. For 20 years, June 21 has provided an annual opportunity to celebrate the heritage, the diverse cultures, and the outstanding achievements of the first nations, Métis, and Inuit people of Canada.

[Translation]

Over the next week, many activities will take place across the country until June 21, National Aboriginal Day.

[English]

This is not just about reflecting on the past, but renewing the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous people on the basis of respect and genuine partnership.

[Translation]

All my colleagues received an invitation to the sunrise ceremony, which will be held from 4:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. at the Canadian Museum of History. There will also be a reception from noon to 2 p.m. at the Sir John A. Macdonald building, in room 200.

[English]

I urge all parliamentarians to attend.

*[Translation]**Meegwetch.***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, history has proven that the perpetrators of genocide are never satisfied with targeting local populations alone, so it is with ISIL whose followers have slaughtered civilians in Paris, Orlando, Canada, and almost 50 other places around the globe. It is not simply a problem for over there.

The Liberals have recognized in changing their minds that ISIL is committing genocide. Will they change their minds again and reverse the Prime Minister's naive decision to end the air combat mission against this genocidal death cult?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the House was right to decide that in order to be sure that atrocities are genocide, we need to follow the highest standards possible. That is why we acted after we had seen the report of the United Nations.

However, this is not the main point. The main point is that Canada is on the ground. We tripled our efforts to train the peshmerga to be sure that we will eradicate this terrible terrorist group and will rescue these populations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, now that the Liberals have changed their minds and declared ISIL atrocities a genocide, they have triggered article I of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which requires member countries like Canada to use force to stop the crime. Training alone will not stop genocide. We need to strike from the air while our allies fight on the ground.

Will the Liberal government respect the law, support our allies, and reinstate the air bombing campaign to stop this genocidal death cult?

Oral Questions

● (1120)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague is wrong. The fact that the United Nations has recognized the genocide of the Yazidis does not change at all our tremendous commitment to fight this terrorist group and to eradicate it.

That is precisely why we improved the mission of Canada in this region of the world. We have tripled our efforts for training. We have doubled our intelligence capacity and we are improving our programs for development to rescue these populations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the previous government demonstrated that we can simultaneously train our allies on the ground while we fight the enemy from the sky. That is precisely what we should be doing now to honour the convention on genocide.

However, the Liberal government has abandoned our allies in the Middle East in the fight against ISIL. Now our allies in NATO wonder if they will abandon our allies in Eastern Europe.

Will the Liberal government stand with our allies to protect eastern Europe against Russian aggression?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the premise of the question is wrong. In fact, our allies are very satisfied with the contribution of Canada to fighting ISIL.

It is an improvement compared with the past, since we have tripled our ability to train. We have doubled our ability to have intelligence capacity, and we have improved the support, not only for Iran and Iraq but also for Jordan and for Lebanon. We will be very strong at NATO with our allies for the east part of Europe.

Canada is back everywhere.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada has always supported its allies when they have been under attack, whether it was in World War I, World War II, or the Korean War.

At this time, our eastern European allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are worried about Russian aggression. They have asked us to deploy 1,000 soldiers to the region as part of a NATO force for their protection. It is shameful to see the Liberals abandon our allies in order not to undermine future peacekeeping missions.

Is it the Liberals' position that abandoning our allies is the right thing to do?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague's premise is completely false.

We are going to support our NATO allies, as we do our allies in Iraq and Syria and all around the world, and it is true that we will also strengthen our capacity to participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We will be present everywhere because Canada is back everywhere, including with NATO.

My colleague will be very pleased with our contribution to NATO. He will not say so for partisan reasons, but he will think it nonetheless.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals would rather save our resources for UN missions in Africa than defend our NATO allies who are concerned about Russian aggression.

While our brothers feel as though their very survival is threatened, Canada is making plans to win back a seat on the UN Security Council. That is shameful and the antithesis of what Canada is all about.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that Canada will deploy troops to support our allies?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to actively contributing to greater security and peace throughout the world.

NATO is Canada's key collective defence alliance and we take our commitment to our NATO allies very seriously. NATO allies have now agreed to increase the alliance presence in the Baltic states and in Poland to face the changed security environment in Europe. As a committed NATO ally, Canada is actively considering options to effectively contribute to this effort.

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PENSIONS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canadians are facing a retirement security crisis. The minister has been briefed on the fact that Canada spends significantly less on public pensions than other OECD countries. He has been briefed on the reality that young people today simply are not able to save enough for retirement.

When he meets with the provinces, will the minister make it crystal clear that the federal government believes CPP must be expanded so that Canadians can retire in dignity and security?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, every Canadian shares the goal of a secure retirement. That is why our Minister of Finance, in one of his first acts, met with provincial ministers of finance in order to look at CPP enhancement.

I am proud to say that under his leadership, on Monday, provincial ministers of finance will meet with him in order to ensure Canadians can retire in dignity. This government is going to pursue that policy because retiring in dignity is one of our priorities.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, vague answers about pensions are always worrisome.

Oral Questions

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance tried to reassure us. The problem is that he finished his answer by saying, "I hope to have something positive to report to this House in the coming days." No one can retire comfortably on hope.

Will the minister commit to end the meeting with the provinces with nothing less than an agreement to enhance the pension plan?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

My colleague should be pleased because our Minister of Finance is dealing with the pension problem in Canada. It would be pretentious to make assumptions about the outcome of the meeting.

This government is open and co-operative. We invited the provinces in December. The Minister of Finance will be meeting with his provincial counterparts in Vancouver on Monday. We will continue to work hard to ensure that all Canadians can retire with dignity.

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[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, actions speak louder than words, so we will see after that meeting.

The fact is that while Canadians struggle to make ends meet in retirement, wealthy corporations continue to profit from generous tax loopholes. Offshore tax agreements signed by the government are allowing companies to stash away money offshore instead of paying what they owe in Canada.

Why are the Liberals pursuing even more of these agreements, when they should know full well that their government is allowing profitable Canadian companies to evade paying their fair share of taxes?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government believes that all Canadians should pay their fair share of taxes in the jurisdiction in which they earned their revenue and profits, and the hon. member knows that.

The last agreement was signed by the previous government on June 15, 2015. International tax evasion and tax avoidance have been the subjects of discussions at the G7 and G20. We are going to continue to work with our partners to have co-operation internationally.

Let me remind the House that we invested \$444 million to give the tools, the system, and the technology to the CRA to combat tax—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, this government is combatting tax evasion with its eyes wide shut.

The Canada Revenue Agency is granting amnesty to fraudsters. The government is not doing anything to KPMG, the mastermind behind this tax evasion. The court cases keep getting delayed, and meanwhile the government is standing idly by.

All that is missing is an all-inclusive deal for the 1%. Funny, the Liberals promised to give back to the middle class, not the 1%.

Will there finally be a public investigation into KPMG? Will the government finally take tax evasion seriously?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The Liberal government made a commitment to combat tax evasion during the last election campaign. We have made historic investments in the Canada Revenue Agency, to the tune of \$444 million, to outfit the agency with the tools, technology, and teams it needs to conduct investigations and put an end to tax evasion and tax avoidance.

The agency will take action to combat these crimes, and we will build on this.

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[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, Liberals claim they are listening to Canadians, but all their actions point to arrogant Liberal political self-interest.

Changing the way we vote should not be about a committee of politicians, it should not be about the Prime Minister, and it should not be about the self-interest of political parties. It has to start being about what Canadians want.

Will they give each and every Canadian a direct say through a referendum, yes or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be here on this traditional Algonquin territory with my colleagues on this fine Friday.

I do believe that the member opposite and I agree that we need to listen to Canadians, that we need to hear from them. This is about them. This is their electoral system that we are trying to modernize. We will do that by leveraging the commitment and the options that the members in this House have to reach out to their constituents and bring their voices into this effort.

● (1130)

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, those are fine words, but it has to be more about the actions than the words, and we are not seeing it in the actions.

Liberals set up a committee that is made up of politicians, by politicians, and for politicians. That is all we keep hearing from them. We have actually seen them start to charge people entrance into their so-called open town halls.

A newsflash to the Liberals: this should not be about their self-interest; this should be about all Canadians and their interests.

Oral Questions

Will they give Canadians, each and every one of them, a direct say in a referendum, yes or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the parties in this House which have brought forward the names of the individuals they would like to see represented on the all-party committee, to reach out to Canadians, to hear from experts and academics, to hear from those who have come before us in this place, and also to reach out to our constituents to make sure their voices are heard.

I hope that the party opposite has had the time to put the names of its representatives forward.

I look forward to the committee beginning its work as early as next week.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I will quote a Liberal to the Liberals:

Our democracy belongs to its citizens, and it is the voters of this province that should decide how their representatives should be elected.

That was the Liberal minister for democratic renewal announcing, almost 10 years ago today, the Ontario referendum on changing the province's voting system.

After conducting a far more credible consultation process than that proposed by the Liberal government, those Liberals still had a referendum.

Why will these Liberals not hold a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I note that the member is wearing a plaid tie on this very important day, raising awareness about prostate cancer.

I would like to assure him that the efforts we are about to undertake to reach out to constituents across this great country will involve listening and will involve reflecting their wishes in this process.

I am counting on the member opposite to hear from his constituents especially, and to bring all voices, a range of diverse opinions, into this conversation.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will continue with the same referendum announcement from June 20, 2006:

The adoption of a new electoral system would represent a foundational change to Ontario's democracy. This is an important decision that would require the support of a solid majority of Ontarians....

Holding a referendum is what we do in Canada before we change how the people get to exercise their franchise.

When the Liberal cabinet finally proposes its new voting system in 2017, will the Liberals allow Canadians to make the final say in a referendum, yes or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if that is truly what the member opposite believes, where was this push for good process and referenda when his government pushed through the Fair Elections Act?

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Ontario Liberal government, 10 years ago, announced a

referendum on electoral reform. A quote from the committee at the time stated:

Legitimacy must also apply to the process by which electoral reform is achieved. [...] A key ingredient to that process will be measuring public support through a plebiscite or referendum....

Will the minister agree to hold a referendum on electoral reform to make the process legitimate, yes or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I believe this is the first time he has asked me a question in this House. I can assure him that in 2016, we will use all the tools and options available to us to ensure that the process is legitimate, that we hear from Canadians. We will not move forward with any reforms without the broad support of the people of this country.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Ontario Liberal minister who headed up the Ontario referendum process 10 years ago still supports having a referendum. She recently said that if we are going to totally change the election system, "I think it would have to be a referendum".

Will the Liberals hold a referendum on any changes to how Canadians vote, yes or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I can assure him that we are about to undertake a thorough conversation with Canadians, hearing from them what reforms they would like to see reflected in their electoral system.

Should we consider online voting? Should we consider mandatory voting? These are the among the questions that we need to ask Canadians.

I look forward to the work of all 338 members to reach our goal.

* * *

● (1135)

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, in a little more than nine months, the new formula for health transfers will come into force, and it will deprive the provinces of \$36 billion. During the election campaign, the Liberals said that they would renegotiate the transfers. Now is the time to take action.

The premiers of Quebec and Saskatchewan have even said publicly that this takes time and have called for an increase to the transfers.

When will the Liberals take this seriously? The future of our health care system is at stake.

[English]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

Oral Questions

With an aging population and challenging conditions facing all governments, our system must adapt so that it delivers better care and better outcomes at a cost that is affordable. In budget 2016, we increased the Canada health transfer to \$36.1 billion.

We will continue to build upon the success of most recent health ministers meeting in Vancouver, and ensure that our common priorities can be addressed while protecting the provinces and territories ability to deliver the best possible care.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, after hearing from over 20,000 people, it seems that the Liberals just do not like what they have heard about the TPP. The fact is, Canadians have delivered a message loud and clear: the TPP is a bad deal for Canada. It will kill jobs and damage our economy.

Our allies are already talking about getting a better deal. Why are not the Liberals? Will they now agree to go back to the table and negotiate a better deal for Canada?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, there are many people in Canada who are for the TPP, and there are many people in Canada who are against the TPP.

We have promised Canadians that we would consult them on the substance, we would analyze their arguments, and come to a decision that is the best decision for this country moving forward.

* * *

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, Liberals believe they are entitled to their entitlements. We know that a three-day trip to New York cost taxpayers over \$160,000. So far, we see \$35,000 spent on transportation, \$5,000 on tips and gratuities, a \$2,000 fuel surcharge, and someone even claimed a \$17 glass of juice.

How can Liberals continue to defend this type of out-of-control spending?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are talking about lunch in New York at a juice bar called Jamba Juice.

Since my colleague clearly has nothing important to ask during this very important question period, I have to assume that we are doing an excellent job.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, we recently learned that the Liberal government submitted a long line of expenditures for its trip to New York: \$35,000 for car rentals, more than \$5,000 in tips and gratuities, and \$17 on juice.

This is in addition to the other instances of excessive spending in the early stages of the Liberals' mandate, such as the vanity trip taken by the Minister of International Trade and the excessive renovations by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

When will they finally understand that this is not their money? When will they finally be responsible with Canadians' money?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I remind my colleague that I am the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie.

We are talking about lunch in New York at a juice bar called Jamba Juice. If my colleagues think it is worth using their precious question period time on this \$17 issue, I have to assume that we are doing an excellent job, esteemed colleagues.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, \$304 on floral arrangements to spice up a meeting room; over \$35,000 for cars; over \$2,000 on fuel surcharges; and over \$5,443 on tips. This is just the start of wasteful spending on the Liberal vanity trip to New York.

Why do the Liberals need to be reminded that this is taxpayers' money, and what size was that Jamba Juice?

• (1140)

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our delegation did extremely important work when we were in New York. Once again, my colleagues are fixating on one meal that a colleague picked up for me at a juice bar and that I ate on the run. It cost \$17.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members to please keep it down. When someone has the floor, it is customary to respect that.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things we hear advertised every summer is McDonald's dollar drink days, where any drink on the menu is just \$1.

Nonetheless, I was very surprised to hear that a member of the Minister of International Development's staff charged Canadian taxpayers \$17.77 for juice while in New York last March.

We all know that New York is a very expensive city, but can the minister explain how her staffer managed to spend that much money on juice, or is this just another example of Liberals entitled to their entitlements?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I invite my colleague to do a quick Google search. If he looks at the Jamba Juice menu, he will see that there is more than just juice available for a quick meal on the go in New York.

*Oral Questions***AIR TRANSPORTATION**

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, first it was Neuville and Mascouche. Now it is Saint-Cuthbert's turn to get an airport that it does not want. Residents, elected officials, and the UPA have all said no. Even the National Assembly was unanimous in saying no.

The Minister of Transport refuses to intervene, even though he knows that there is no social licence for the project. The process has been botched.

Will the minister listen to Saint-Cuthbert's elected officials and residents who are calling for a ministerial order? Will he put a stop to this project that nobody wants?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with regard to Saint-Cuthbert, I certainly encouraged the proponent to consult the neighbouring population. That is what the proponent has done. I will take a look at the results of those consultations.

Of course, I am also prepared to listen to the residents of Saint-Cuthbert. However, the member needs to be aware that the rules must be applied in certain situations. Right now, I want to see the results of the consultations.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Madam Speaker, this morning, Algonquin elders, supported by community members, are gathering on this Hill to remind parliamentarians of a sacred place near here.

The Algonquins have asked politicians at all levels to respect our rights regarding important matters that affect our community, and yet the Zibi development project continues ahead.

The government has committed to a new nation-to-nation relationship, so I would ask again, when will the government honour its promises and commitments to indigenous peoples, and move forward by supporting Bill C-262 to adopt and implement the UN declaration?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we do recognize and support the public's right to engage in peaceful protests.

It is our hope that the parties involved, including the Windmill Development Group, local municipalities, the Algonquins of Quebec, and the Algonquins of Ontario can work together to find a constructive, respectful, and positive way forward.

As always, we thank the member opposite for his ongoing work, not only in the riding, but on the development of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by making sure that it is implemented properly.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ahmed Hussen (York South—Weston, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya constitutes the world's largest refugee camp.

The Government of Kenya recently announced that it will close this camp, thereby breaching its international obligations to protect asylum seekers and refugees. This is not only inhumane, but it also puts people in danger who will often make positive contributions to economic growth.

The United Nations has stated clearly that the closure of this camp will be devastating and have asked that the decision be reconsidered. What is Canada's position on Kenya's decision to close the Dadaab refugee camp?

● (1145)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is very concerned about the Government of Kenya's decision to disband its department of refugee affairs and its intention to close the refugee camp at Dadaab. International refugee law and refugees' rights must be protected. All returns must be voluntary and conducted in accordance with domestic and international laws. Refugees need to be protected.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, Alberta's unemployment rate is the highest it has been in 20 years. Twenty-four thousand jobs were lost last month alone. Albertans are wondering how they are going to pay their bills. They are not buying \$17 juice.

Businesses from Fort Mac to Cardston, and everywhere in between, are struggling. However, the Liberals just continue to talk a big game, have done nothing but incite uncertainty, and delay critical job-creating projects. Will the Liberals finally stop interfering and start getting Albertans back to work?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we have said many times in the House, we feel for the residents of communities that are struggling with the downturn in commodity prices. Our government believes that major energy projects must be reviewed by a process that carries the confidence of Canadians.

In January, we announced plans to appoint temporary members to the NEB to carry out community and public engagement in relation to these projects. After 21 months, the National Energy Board will make a recommendation to the government and we will determine whether the project is in the overall Canadian public interest.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is really reassuring that they are concerned about Alberta, but last month over a five-day sale, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers in Alberta sold more than \$240 million in industrial equipment, a new all-time record.

Oral Questions

Over the past year, more than half a billion dollars in oil sands equipment has been sold, and the vast majority of that, along with the jobs that go with them, have left our country. Investment, equipment, and jobs are leaving Alberta. The Liberal government solution is a job-killing carbon tax. When will the Liberal government show some leadership, stand beside Canada's energy sector—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians know that reducing emissions will make our economy more competitive, not less. Governments in Canada and around the world are using carbon pricing mechanisms to address climate change. Transitioning to a low-carbon economy will stimulate growth, provide access to new markets, and create jobs.

Do not just take my word for it. The CEO of Suncor, Steve Williams said, “We think climate change is happening. We think a broad-based carbon price is the right answer”.

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AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, Bill C-10 is a complete sellout of the aerospace industry in Manitoba. However, the Liberals just seem to be shrugging off the damage it is doing. They are even ignoring the new Premier of Manitoba, and all of those people in Manitoba whose jobs are going to be lost.

My question is: Will even one Liberal member of Parliament, there are seven of them, stand up and speak on behalf of the aerospace industry and those important jobs in our province?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague could not be more wrong. We are focused on growing the economy of our country and creating jobs. That includes in the aerospace sector.

We know that the Government of Manitoba and Air Canada came to an agreement to create at least 150 jobs in the aerospace sector in Manitoba, starting in 2017. It is a good start, but if we want to go further than that, if we want to grow the economy in our country, including speaking with the people of Manitoba and the Government of Manitoba to help build their aerospace industry, that is what we are going to do.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been clear for the past eight months that the government has big plans: a plan to drive Canadians further into debt, a plan to create deficit after deficit, and a plan to raise Canadians' taxes with a carbon tax.

Do the Liberals have a plan to help entrepreneurs create more jobs? No. That is not something they have done in the past eight months.

Since this is very likely one of our last days in the House before the summer, can the government explain to us why it has no plan to create wealth and help our entrepreneurs create jobs in Canada?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. I would encourage him to read budget 2016 because the plan we created for Canadians targets growth.

We talked about historic investments and infrastructure, including an infrastructure investment of \$120 billion over 10 years. We made a plan for innovation that will result in 0.5% growth this year and 1% growth next year, as the parliamentary budget officer confirmed. Our plan will also create 100,000 jobs.

That is what a responsible government working for Canadians, the middle class, and Canadian industry looks like.

* * *

● (1150)

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is a housing crisis in British Columbia, and during the last election the Liberals promised to build more affordable housing. They promised to remove GST on new capital investments.

Since then, housing prices in Vancouver have grown by 30% in the last year alone, and the rental vacancy rate is under 1%. The housing crisis in B.C. and across Canada grows increasingly urgent, yet the Liberals broke their promise to provide much needed help. Cities like Vancouver and Burnaby need action now.

Why are the Liberals breaking their promise to remove the GST on new housing investments?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very aware of the challenge faced by hard-working families who call cities like Vancouver and Toronto home.

The very first action of the Minister of Finance, barely a month after being sworn in, was to take measures to address pockets of risk in markets like Vancouver and Toronto by increasing the minimum down payment of insured mortgages above \$500,000.

In budget 2016 we increased the amount that we will give to Statistics Canada to study the impact of foreign ownership—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

*Oral Questions***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, last year it was this Liberal Party that supported an NDP motion confirming Canada's solemn covenant with our veterans, but the Liberal government is betraying our veterans by breaking campaign promises on pensions, dragging injured veterans back into court, and shutting down vital long-term veterans care facilities.

The NDP, like Canadians, thinks veterans deserve our help through the service that they have done to our country, so why is the government continuing to shamefully fight our veterans in court? Why is it depriving veterans of the benefits they deserve?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his concern for veterans. This government made a significant commitment to veterans, and that commitment will be fulfilled. We have heard loud and clear from veterans that caring for veterans, including their families, whose service has left them ill or injured, should be our first priority.

We know that rebuilding relationships, rebuilding supports and service takes effort and commitment, and we will continue to invest the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

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HEALTH

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's organ donation rate is among the world's worst. Fewer than 25% have made a plan to donate. Given the opportunity to do the right thing, the Liberals instead chose to vote against a national organ donor registry.

Can they explain why they voted against saving the lives of thousands of Canadians?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada supports organ and tissue donation and transplantation and has an important role to play in protecting the health and safety of all Canadians. We recognize that improvement is needed in organ and tissue donation, and we will continue to collaborate with the provinces and territories and key stakeholders to address the changes that are required in the system. Work is under way on national donor registries, and the Government of Canada, along with provinces and territories, has invested over \$64 million since 2008.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members again to please allow whoever has the floor to speak, and not to yell across the way.

The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): You had the opportunity to take leadership and you did not.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that he has to address the questions to the Chair and not individual members.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, Liberals have to do better when it comes to supporting organ donation.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada and the Canadian National Transplant Research Program are just two of the organizations that expressed support for a national organ donor registry. Bill C-223 would have created this.

Can the Minister of Health tell this House why she thought a registry was unnecessary?

• (1155)

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada encourages all Canadians to consider organ and tissue donation and applauds the hon. member for bringing this issue to the needed attention.

We recognize that improvement is needed to the organ and tissue donation system in Canada. Collaborations with provinces and territories as well as consultations and engagement with key stakeholders are necessary to address the complexity of changes that are required in the system.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, both in the House and in committee, stated that only 77 employees are affected by the new Phoenix payroll system. We all know that this is false. Every one of us in the House have been barraged with calls from government employees unable to get their paycheques.

Why did the minister choose to repeatedly mislead the committee and the House about the seriousness of the Liberals' mismanagement?

[Translation]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our main concern is that all employees are paid what is owing to them on time. However, we are still receiving reports of problems with employees' pay. That is why the minister asked officials to set up a temporary payroll unit in Gatineau to support our payroll services centre in Miramichi. We are listening to the concerns and issues raised by our employees and the union and are committed to working—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

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SPORTS

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as you know, the start of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro is just a few weeks away. They are the landmark event of the summer. We are all looking forward to the kick-off and cannot wait to cheer on our athletes, the pride of Canada.

Oral Questions

Can the Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities update the House on what our athletes are doing to prepare for the games in Rio?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

I can report to the House today that Canada's Olympic and Paralympic athletes are ready to rise to the challenge, with the support of our national sports committees and organizations and our sports partners, as they focus on their final preparations.

Canadian Heritage is working with Global Affairs Canada, the Public Health Agency, the RCMP, and officials with the mission in Brazil in order to put the appropriate plans in place for another successful games.

I encourage all Canadians to support our athletes, who are a source of inspiration for everyone in this country.

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[English]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, millions of Canadians and countless viewers around the world watched and enjoyed the hit TV show *Border Security*. It is a show about the fine work our men and women of the Canada Border Services Agency conduct every day. It also had educational value, reminding our citizens about border policies and rules.

Now the show has been shut down because of yet another example of political correctness by the Liberals. When will the Liberals come to their senses and bring this hit TV show back?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must remind my colleague that everything that is in line with the Broadcasting Act, of course, is under the purview of the CRTC, which is independent from the government.

I would urge the member to contact the CRTC in order to express his view.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Once again, I would like to remind members of the official opposition. I know that it is a Friday, and I know that some people are hoping that maybe this might be the last day in the House; however, I think that we still owe respect. I want to make sure that there is no more heckling and that members keep their voices down so that we can hear the answers.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as many know, there is an allied veteran of the Norwegian navy in Halifax seeking long-term care.

We promised Canadians that we would repair the damaged relationship with our veterans. Can the government assure Nova

Scotia members of Parliament and this House that every measure is in place for this veteran and all veterans like him?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, not only do I want to thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester and all Nova Scotia MPs, I also want to thank all members of this House for their concern and advocacy for veterans.

I can confirm that Veterans Affairs works with all veterans, including allied veterans, to ensure they get the long-term care they need.

Veterans Affairs supports 6,000 veterans in 1,500 facilities right across the country, and we will continue to ensure all veterans get the care they need, regardless of where they live.

* * *

● (1200)

[Translation]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals say that they support net neutrality. With Bill 74, the Government of Quebec wants to censor the Internet. Quebec's department of finance said that the other provinces will follow their example. If that is true, then the federal government must take action before that happens.

Will the government defend Canadians' rights or Loto-Québec's monopoly?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. The Government of Canada supports the principle of a neutral and open Internet where Canadians can freely innovate, communicate, and consult the content they want in accordance with Canadian laws.

We are aware of these laws and are monitoring their enforcement closely. I thank my colleague for asking his question in French.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the government is boasting about spending millions of dollars on fighting tax evasion. However, not a cent is going toward dealing with the crux of the problem. Most of the money being diverted to tax havens is from banks and multinationals. We are talking about \$55 billion in unpaid taxes in five years, and there is nothing illegal about it because the regulations were quietly changed without the members here being consulted.

Why does the government keep avoiding the subject? Why does it never do anything about it? Is it because it is the lackey of Bay Street or because this scheme benefits some of the government's members and associates?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would remind my colleague that rhetoric will only get a person so far before action is needed.

The thing we have done in this country is invest \$44 million in the Canada Revenue Agency to do three things: provide tools, technology, and teams to deal with tax evasion in Canada. That is exactly what we are going to keep doing.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday we learned that Canada is the country that sells the most arms to the Middle East. Today, we learned that four Canadian financial institutions invested \$565 million in companies that manufacture cluster bombs, even though their use is prohibited by a United Nations treaty ratified by Canada.

Since the Minister of Foreign Affairs is always a stickler for rules, will he speak out against this situation instead of continuing to make Canada look like a banana republic?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada is very strong and very determined to ensure that these cluster munitions are well regulated by international law, and that applies to Canada as well. As always, that is what we will do with the utmost determination.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, the National Energy Board has launched its study of the energy east pipeline. It seems that it will be in English only because TransCanada is still refusing to translate its documents into French.

TransCanada wants to force a pipeline on Quebeckers, and the company has the arrogance to ensure that the study will not be conducted in French. Today, the board officially approved TransCanada's contempt for Quebeckers.

Will the government rein in the board?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we made it clear to TransCanada that it must ensure that documents pertaining to the energy east project are translated.

As things stand, I understand that the 32,000 pages of English documents have for the most part been translated, and we have made a point of ensuring that this translation will be completed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[English]***PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER**

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour, pursuant to section 38 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, to lay upon the table the report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016.

● (1205)

[Translation]

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

* * *

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2014 and 2015 reports on exports of military goods from Canada, the 2014 and 2015 annual reports to Parliament on the administration of the Export and Import Permits Act, and the Arms Trade Treaty, which was adopted on April 2, 2013, in New York.

[English]

An explanatory memorandum is included with this treaty.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

PRECLEARANCE ACT, 2016

Hon. Stéphane Dion (for the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-23, an act respecting the preclearance of persons and goods in Canada and the United States.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development entitled "Federal Sustainability for Future Generations - A Report Following an Assessment of the Federal Sustainable Development Act". This report has the unanimous consent of the committee and is the result of much consultation and co-operation.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

Routine Proceedings

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled “Sentenced to a Slow Demise: The Plight of Myanmar’s Rohingya Minority”, and the second report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled “Crimes against Religious, Ethnic and Other Groups in Syria and Iraq”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the first report.

* * *

COPYRIGHT ACT

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-299, an act to amend the Copyright Act (term of copyright).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London for seconding the legislation.

The bill would amend the Copyright Act. It would extend the term of copyright for authors of every original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic work from 50 to 70 years. This will be of great benefit to artists and creators of all types at a time when Canadians continue to show world leadership in the creative sectors.

The legislation would bring Canada in line with the international standard adopted by countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

These changes would continue to help our creative economic sector, which is an increasingly important part of our economy, in driving further economic growth and a better quality of life in Canada.

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

* * *

•(1210)

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-300, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act (Canada Health Transfer).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party and the Bloc Québécois made the same campaign promise. Today, I am proud to be seconded by the member for Repentigny so that someone in the House keeps that promise.

We are introducing this bill, which seeks to set the minimum increase in Canadian health transfers at 6% annually, so that the federal government’s reinvestment reaches 25% of the Quebec health care system’s total spending, after which a review could be planned to align increases in transfer payments with the system’s costs.

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

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, should you seek it I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following travel motions.

[*Translation*]

I move:

That, in relation to its studies on wild atlantic salmon in Eastern Canada and northern cod stock, seven members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to St. John’s, Port De Grave and Fogo, Newfoundland and Labrador; and to Miramichi, New Brunswick, in the Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

•(1215)

[*English*]

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its study on federal protected areas and conservation objectives, seven members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development be authorized to travel to Vancouver, Masset, Queen Charlotte, Sandspit, Victoria and Sydney, British Columbia; and to Calgary, Banff, Lake Louise, Jasper and Edmonton, Alberta, in the Summer-Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its study on Canada’s National Security Framework, seven members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security be authorized to travel to Vancouver, British Columbia; Calgary, Alberta; Toronto, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; and to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

FINANCE

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2017 budget, seven members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Kelowna, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; Regina, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Quebec, Québec; Toronto, Ontario; Fredericton, New Brunswick; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its studies on women, peace and security and on the Canadian government’s countries of focus for bilateral development assistance, seven members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development be authorized to travel to Guatemala City and Cobán, Guatemala; Bogotá and Villavicencio, Colombia, in the Summer-Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

Routine Proceedings

TAXATION

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its study of the next agricultural policy framework, seven members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food be authorized to travel to Vancouver and Chilliwack, British Columbia; Calgary, Alberta; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Toronto, Niagara Region and Guelph, Ontario; Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec and to Kentville, Nova Scotia, in the Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its study on the suicide among indigenous peoples and communities, seven members of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs be authorized to travel to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Nelson House and Thompson, Manitoba; Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay, Ontario; Iqaluit, Nunavut; Kuujuaq, Québec; Inuvik and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; Prince George and Vancouver, British Columbia; Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador; Sept-Îles (Uashat), Québec; and to Eskasoni, Nova Scotia, in the Fall 2016-Winter 2017, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its study on Canada Post, seven members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates be authorized to travel to Blainville and Montreal, Québec; Toronto, Kitchener, Windsor, Dryden and Sandy Lake, Ontario; Corner Brook and St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Bathurst, New Brunswick and to Lévis and Québec, Québec, in the Fall of 2016, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, it has been an honour and a pleasure. With all sincerity, I am going to miss this place. I hope that all of us enjoy our time back in our ridings should we not have a chance to speak again before the autumn.

* * *

PETITIONS

IRAN

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the Government of Canada to maintain the listing of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state supporter of terrorism, pursuant to section 6.1 of the State Immunity Act, for as long as the Iranian regime continues to sponsor terrorism.

HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is from residents in my riding of Burnaby South. It is calling on the federal government to add coverage for hospice palliative care as a medically essential service under the Canada Health Act. I have heard from many constituents that this issue is very serious, and I urge the government to take this matter seriously.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with regard to lump sum payments of long-term disability and registered disability savings grants. The petitioners call on the government to request that Revenue Canada automatically apply the T1198 form to the previous year's income taxes and show the true income amount for each tax year, as well as a number of other measures.

I ask the government to consider both of these petitions seriously.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by 519 people who oppose the energy east pipeline because they do not want Quebec to become an oil sands superhighway. They want the federal government to respect Quebec's environmental jurisdiction.

[English]

HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE

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

It is obviously something the petitioners truly believe is important to our health care providers.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 185 and 189.

*[Text]*Question No. 185—**Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to the Canadian seal hunt and sealing industry: (a) is the government involved in any programs or initiatives to combat the international misinformation campaigns against the hunt and, if so, (i) what are the details of any such programs or initiatives, (ii) what government departments are involved, (iii) what was the start date of each such involvement, (iv) what was the reason for termination and the end date of any such program or initiative that is not ongoing, (v) how much did the government spend on each such program or initiative, broken down by year and total amount spent to date; and (b) does the government have plans for any further involvement in such programs or initiatives?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, while the department does not have dedicated programming to specifically combat misinformation, it does undertake efforts to dispel myths and misinformation through three key areas.

Routine Proceedings

In response to part (a)(i), first, Fisheries and Oceans Canada's website includes a dedicated page to Canada's seal harvest. This page provides information on how the seal hunt is managed to be safe, sustainable, and humane. It also contains information on how the seal harvest is tightly regulated, closely monitored, and strictly enforced. Additionally, DFO responds to media requests on the seal harvest on a regular basis. All of this information contributes to combating misinformation about Canada's seal harvest.

DFO responds to media requests on the seal harvest on a regular basis. All of this information contributes to combatting misinformation about Canada's seal harvest. DFO also operates the certification and market access program for seals, CMAPS, which is intended to support efforts to establish tracking systems to certify indigenous seal products for export to the European Union, EU; build the capacity of indigenous communities to improve exporter readiness; and support the Canadian seal products industry's efforts to change the narrative on seal products and enable access to alternative markets to become more competitive over the long term. As such, the development of strategies and social media to address misinformation about the Canadian seal harvest is eligible for support under the CMAPS.

Regarding parts (a)(ii) and (a)(iii), CMAPS is a five-year, \$5.7 million program that was established in 2015 that is shared with the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

The CMAPS was officially approved in July 2015 and is set to expire at the end of the 2019-20 fiscal year.

The answer to part (a)(iv) of the question is nil.

Regarding part (a)(v), in 2015-16, the CMAPS provided \$183,350 in funding to Canadian seal products stakeholders for projects that include capacity building for Inuit communities and women in Nunavut and the development of a long-term strategy, which has communications to change the narrative around seal products and countering misinformation as one of its goals.

In response to part (b), a 2016-17 call for proposals is currently under way and DFO has yet to officially receive additional proposals at this time.

Question No. 189—**Mr. David Sweet:**

With regard to changes to government advertising policies, and as of April 22, 2016, what are the details of any changes made during the prior six-month period?

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

Mr. Speaker, the previous communications policy of the Government of Canada, which included policy requirements related to Government of Canada advertising, did not change during the six-month period up to and including April 22, 2016.

On May 12, 2016, the new policy on communications and federal identity and the directive on the management of communications came into effect. The new policy instruments include a number of new policy requirements related to advertising including a definition of "non-partisan communications" for all government communications. Furthermore, the policy now prohibits government programs and initiatives that require parliamentary approval from being advertised until approval has been received. The policy also states

that no advertising activities can take place 90 days before a fixed general federal election date.

All federal government advertising with a budget greater than \$500,000 is subject to a mandatory external review by Advertising Standards Canada, which will conduct a thorough assessment of proposed advertisements in line with the new policy and its definition of "non-partisan". These reviews will be published online.

Advertising Standards Canada will ensure that advertisements are objective, factual, and explanatory; free from political party slogans, images, identifiers, bias, designation, or affiliation; not using the primary colour associated with the governing party in a dominant way, unless an item is commonly depicted in that colour; devoid of any name, voice, or image of a minister, member of Parliament, or senator; and initiatives that require parliamentary approval or trade agreements that require ratification are not advertised until such approval has been received.

The government has asked the Office of the Auditor General to conduct an audit of this review mechanism and his office will determine its scope and timing.

* * *

[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. 186 to 188 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 186—**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:**

With regard to the strategy to deal with abandoned and derelict vessels by Transport Canada: (a) how many abandoned and derelict vessels are there in Canada; (b) for each of the vessels identified in (a), (i) what are their locations, (ii) how long have they been considered abandoned and derelict, (iii) what are the removal plans for each vessel, (iv) in which state of removal are each of the vessels, including but not limited to, assessing, removing or disposing, (v) what are the cost estimates for removal, (vi) what are the assessments on options available for carrying out the physical removal of the vessels, (vii) have the owners been identified, (viii) what has prevented the government from identifying the vessel owners, (ix) are they registered or licensed, and have the registrations or licenses been cancelled or suspended at any point, (x) are they a threat to navigation or to the marine environment; (c) how many abandoned and derelict vessels in Canada are 300 Gross Tons (GT) and over; (d) what would be the total estimated cost for the removal of all vessels in the derelict vessel inventory; (e) how many marine casualties have involved vessels that became shipwrecks in Canada's internal waters and territorial sea, broken down by year for each of the past ten years; (f) how many accidents and maritime casualties are caused by abandoned and derelict vessels, broken down by year for each of the past ten years; (g) what are the risk factors that could lead to a vessel becoming a shipwreck and how is Transport Canada preventing those risk factors; (h) how many "responds to incidents" did the Canadian Coast Guard complete on abandoned and derelict vessels, broken down by year for each of the past ten years, and for each of these incidents please indicate (i) the date, time, and location of the incident, (ii) a description of the incident, (iii) the names of the vessels involved, (iv) the actions that were taken, if any, with regard to the abandoned vessel, (v) the current status of the abandoned vessel, boat or wreck and whether or not the abandoned boat, wreck, or vessel were decommissioned or disposed of, (vi) the plans to decommission or dispose of the vessel, if any exist; (i) what are the reasons for which vessels in Canadian waters would either be unregistered or unlicensed, or for which the registration or license has been cancelled or suspended; (j) for the vessels identified in (a), how many of these vessels then continue to float at anchor or tied to a dock; (k) how many lawsuits have involved the owner of the vessel and have had the aim of recovering the money to cover the cost of removal of abandoned and derelict vessels; (l) what has the government's strategy been to date and what are the next steps for dealing with abandoned and derelict vessels, including (i) objectives, (ii) government departments and agencies involved in the strategy, (iii) other stakeholders; (m) what consultations has the government conducted and what are the next steps for future consultations with regard to abandoned and derelict vessels, broken down by (i) date and time, (ii) federal government participants, (iii) other participants, (iv) goal of the consultations, (v) method of inviting participants, (vi) length of time given for participation in the consultations; (n) has the government consulted with (i) municipalities, (ii) provinces and territories, (iii) First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, (iv) representatives of Canadian ship owners, (v) maritime lawyers, (vi) marine underwriters, (vii) shoreline property owners, (viii) the shellfish industry, (ix) the fishing industry, (x) the lobster industry, (xi) the tourism industry, (xii) First Nations and Indigenous People, (xiii) the Canadian Maritime Advisory; (o) if the answer to (n) is in the affirmative, what are the names of each person consulted; (p) has Transport Canada held any conversations with the Coast Guard regarding the possibility of making the Coast Guard responsible for abandoned and derelict vessels in Canadian water; (q) which options are examined by Transport Canada to address the issue of abandoned vessels and wrecks; (r) what did the department recommend with regard to Canadian membership to the International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks (IWR); (s) if the answer to (r) is in the affirmative, when did Transport Canada first make this recommendation; (t) does the strategy propose a manner in which to deal with the wrecks that were in existence prior to its coming into force; (u) how does Transport Canada plan to deal with existing abandoned and derelict vessels; (v) how would the IWR Convention address several of the limitations inherent in Canada's current legislative framework; (w) has there been any consideration as to the use the IWR Convention as the centrepiece for a new legislative regime; and (x) has the government considered regulatory frameworks from other jurisdictions, and if so, which ones?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 187—**Mr. David Sweet:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's Office, ministerial exempt staff, and Ministers, for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016, what is the total amount incurred for airline change fees, as well as the details of each change fee incurred including the date, amount, and reason for change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 188—**Mr. David Sweet:**

With regard to the renting of venues or properties for executive retreats or meetings outside of a government department, agency, or Crown corporation's own offices, for all government departments, agencies and Crown corporations, and for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what was the total cost of the rental of these venues, broken down by department, agency, and Crown corporation; (b) how many times were venues or properties contracted for or rented, broken down by department, agency and Crown corporation; and (c) in each case, (i) what was the name and location of the venue or property, (ii) what was the purpose of the venue or property rental, (iii) how many people attended the retreat or meeting, (iv) what was the overall cost of the rental of the venue?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1220)

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I believe that there were one and a half minutes left in questions and comments.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I have just been informed that technically, yes, that is correct. Normally it is at the discretion of the Speaker, but since it was brought up, we do not want to rob anyone of the opportunity to ask or answer a question.

In a minute and 30 seconds, if the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan wants to ask a very brief question, I am sure he will get a very brief answer from the member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always so enjoy asking questions of my friend from Regina—Lewvan.

We heard his perspective on economic policy, but I would encourage him to look not just at economic theory but at economic history. He is from Saskatchewan, and I am from Alberta. I think both of us suffer from provincial government envy, to some extent. For decades, under NDP governments in Saskatchewan that pursued policies that he advocates of bigger government and bigger spending, capital, and more importantly, people left Saskatchewan for Alberta, but now, under the Wall government, the exodus of young people from Saskatchewan has stopped.

Does the member not have to agree that the policies of free enterprise that are now being pursued in Saskatchewan are better and have led to more young people staying in Saskatchewan and being able to get employment there?

Government Orders

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): No, Mr. Speaker, I do not have to agree. In fact, I would note that there are many other differences between the two provinces.

For example, the Canadian oil industry really started out in Saskatchewan. It was the discovery of the huge reserve of oil at Leduc in 1947 that caused that industry to shift to Alberta. That was not about government policy; that was about geology.

Also, we see now that with the downturn in commodity prices, both Alberta and Saskatchewan have been hit with layoffs and cuts in investment, and the right-wing policies at the provincial level in Saskatchewan certainly have not saved our province.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to this particular bill one more time as this session of Parliament winds down.

Certainly we have had extensive debate on this particular bill. We have had committee of the whole, and we even had a session the other night with one of our colleagues presenting what I thought was one of the better speeches of this particular session, on *If I Had a Million Dollars*.

I will be a long way from being as entertaining as my colleague from Red Deer—Lacombe, but it is probably helpful to put on the record a number of things this budget would do, and more importantly, what this budget would not do.

First, we have to go back to the election of October 2015. Leading up to that election, our current Prime Minister, who was the Liberal leader at that time, was promising Canadians that we were going to go into debt just a bit, by about \$10 billion, to pay for infrastructure, which Canada needs. If this budget had in any way reflected that we were going to go into deficit to spend on infrastructure significantly, I believe that there would have been wider acceptance of this budget. However, to date, what we have seen in infrastructure spending is only about \$1 million on the office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

If what we are going to do with this budget is continue to spend money, and when we create jobs they will be public-sector jobs, that is hardly going to be a budget that will encourage growth in our economy.

As a member of Parliament from a province that has seen incredible growth, growth that is significantly reduced today, I can say that it is not government that makes things happen, and it is not government that creates jobs. It is the private sector. It is unfortunate that in this budget, the current government has taken it upon itself to feel as though it can take Canadians into debt for the next four years, at least, to the tune of about \$150 billion, to try to create jobs.

Clearly, it would be my view, and I believe that of most of my colleagues in my caucus, that if we were to work this hard creating a tax structure that created jobs, rather than the government trying to create those jobs, we would be far better off at the end of the four-year mandate. However, it is the current government that will have to answer for that at the end of four years.

Quite honestly, while I do not support this budget in any manner, I believe that it is this kind of budgeting that will ensure that after the next election, we will be rid of the current government and we will

have a Conservative government back that will allow the private sector to create jobs.

I want to take a few minutes to look at what this budget would and would not do. As I said, it is a budget that we were promised was going to rebuild Canada. As I say, besides the office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, we have not seen an awful lot of rebuilding in Canada yet.

Again, we have some promises out there. We have heard a lot of good talk. However, there are a lot of needs. When it comes to infrastructure and infrastructure spending, one of the things I am disappointed in is that the current government seems to be again shifting away from the P3 model. In fact, it is probably not using it at all. It is having public servants in Ottawa and elsewhere across the country deciding how best to spend these infrastructure dollars.

Let us be very clear that while this particular budget would take Canadians \$30 billion into deficit in this year alone, only \$10 billion would be spent on infrastructure over the next two years.

• (1225)

This budget has significantly increased public spending on programs. We have seen it in a number of areas. I am not even going to start to list them, because there are so many. It will create jobs, more public sector jobs, more people who will be working for government. That is not going to create economic growth.

I also want to talk a little about the so-called tax cut the Liberals have in this particular budget. We have heard the parliamentary secretary stand in his place in this Parliament on at least three or four dozen occasions to talk about this middle-income tax cut that is so significant to Canadians. This is how significant it is. It is \$1 a day for working Canadians.

I guess the member for Winnipeg North and the parliamentary secretary, because they fall into that middle-income category, feel as though the members of this Parliament should have a tax cut while low-income earners should not get anything, and high-income earners should pay that \$1 a day so that the member for Winnipeg North and the parliamentary secretary can have their coffee paid for every morning by the taxpayers of this country.

That tax cut was supposed to be revenue neutral. It took about 24 hours to change that. When the government finally introduced that objective in a motion in this House in December, we found out that the middle-income tax cut that was going to give Canadians \$1 a day was going to cost all Canadian taxpayers \$1 billion a year. That is hardly revenue neutral.

If we are going to start having tax cuts, they have to be meaningful tax cuts. This so-called middle-income tax cut is hardly meaningful.

At the same time, the government also took away from middle-income Canadians the ability to save in a significantly enhanced tax-free savings account. This is typical of the Liberals' policies: take on one hand, give back with the other, and then turn around and take what they gave back. The net difference is that taxpayers have less in their pockets than they would have had under a Conservative government.

Government Orders

I want to talk a little about retirement and about future plans the government has. Tax-free savings accounts are a way Canadians can save for retirement. What we have now is a Liberal government that has taken away that ability to save via tax-free savings accounts. We also have a Liberal government that is going to be meeting with the provinces on Monday. Let me make this very clear. It is meeting with a whole bunch of Liberal and socialist finance ministers.

We have a finance minister in Alberta who, frankly, is taking our province into much higher debt than the Liberals. It is hard to imagine that there could actually be a government that would go deeper into debt than the Liberals, but come to Alberta, and we will show people one.

Here we have the Minister of Finance meeting with his provincial counterparts on Monday to take more money out of the pockets of taxpayers and more money from small business taxpayers by way of increasing our Canada pension plan contributions.

I happen to sit on the finance committee. I see that my colleague from Gatineau is here today, and he also sits on the finance committee. He has heard the same evidence we have had presented at the finance committee that the number of low-income seniors is down to single digit percentage points.

The government is saying that we need to take more taxes from Canadians, and let us be clear: increased Canada pension plan contributions are a tax on small business and on working Canadians. This Minister of Finance is going to go to Vancouver on Monday and negotiate a deal with his provincial counterparts, almost all of whom are Liberals and socialists, to take more money away from taxpayers and small businesses to solve a problem that, frankly, does not exist.

• (1230)

If the Liberal government had kept the tax policies that were in place under the previous government, if it had left the TFSA alone, that would have allowed Canadians to save money on their own and not have a bigger bureaucracy take money allegedly to have more benefits for Canadians down the road.

In addition, we had an absolutely unthought-out position. Like so many promises that were made by the Liberals during the campaign, we had a Liberal leader running around the country, making a promise at every stop. There was one particular visit where he was not quite sure what to promise, so he said that the Liberals would drop the eligible age for benefits from 67 to 65. I do not think they really thought they would form government, but when they did, they had to try to keep all those promises. This was one promise they should have broken.

Of the litany of promises the government broke, it should have added that to the list of promises broken. There is no way we should be lowering the age from 67 to 65, some 10 years into the future, because that will cost Canadian taxpayers an extra \$11 billion a year. Let us just put that into perspective. That is 30% of the equivalent deficit that the government is putting us into right now. There is a campaign promise that should have been broken.

I would like to spend a few more minutes talking about some of the things the government could do, which could be important for my province of Alberta, for the neighbouring provinces of

Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and clearly for Newfoundland and Labrador. I would also venture to say that it is important for other Atlantic provinces. I know we have at least a couple of members in the House today from Atlantic Canada. I hope they will take up the challenge of putting pressure on the government to speed up the process and at least give an indication that it will take seriously the hearings that started yesterday on the energy east pipeline. We know that in 2019, if the government decides not to approve that energy east pipeline, members like the member for Saint John will not sitting in the House because they will be thrown out of office.

Liberals members from British Columbia are also going to have a very difficult time because the Kinder Morgan pipeline to the west coast is absolutely essential for our country.

If the government listens to that socialist mayor of Vancouver and does not listen to Liberal members from British Columbia, who should be advocating on behalf of the Kinder Morgan pipeline, a whole bunch more of them will not be back here in 2019.

I believe the government will make some bad decisions over the next couple of years. It has exhibited that in the first six months of being in office. If it continues to make those bad decision, I will look forward to 2019 when the government can be a Conservative government again, allowing the private sector to create jobs, not driving us into deficit, and not taking money out of the pockets of taxpayers and small businesses.

Let us also put on record that the government broke a promise to small business in Canada. It promised, like all parties in this Parliament did, to reduce the small business tax. It broke that promise. The finance minister came before the finance committee and clearly stated that this promise would not even be considered in the government's mandate.

I could go on for quite some time, but I will allow my friend, the member for Gatineau to ask me a question.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. As he mentioned, we are both members of the Standing Committee on Finance, and I appreciate his pragmatism and his experience as a parliamentarian both here and in Alberta.

I found his speech very intriguing. I always find it intriguing when a Conservative opposes a bill, our first bill, that cuts middle-class taxes. All of the Conservatives here seem to feel the same way. He gave all kinds of reasons for his stance, but it is always surprising to hear Conservatives speak out against tax cuts and New Democrats in favour of tax cuts. This is all very surprising.

What the member does not yet seem to understand, even though we were very clear about this during the election campaign, is that our decisions would be guided by what is good for the middle class. Whether the issue is retirement, parents, or people who work hard every day, like my constituents and, I would imagine, his constituents, we will make decisions that strengthen Canada's middle class.

Government Orders

I know my hon. colleague to be fair, equitable, and pragmatic. Will he therefore acknowledge that our decisions, our first bill, will benefit the middle class in Canada, in his riding, in my riding, everywhere?

[English]

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I and the hon. member for Gatineau are on the finance committee, and we have had a good working relationship over the past six months. I quite often do not agree with the member, but he is open to listening.

Therefore, while he is listening, I did not campaign in the election in 2015 to give myself a tax cut, and that is what the government has done. It has given every member over there a tax cut.

I would have campaigned on the ability to give all Canadians fairness when it came to a tax system. My fellow colleague on the finance committee is probably going to ask me about those Canadians who earn under \$45,000 a year, many of whom live in the member's riding I am sure. They get nothing from this budget.

● (1240)

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague from Calgary Signal Hill had a premonition and knew that I was going to rise and ask him a question. This actually gives me a chance to respond to a point the member for Gatineau just made.

It is not that we support additional tax cuts, but we are in favour of a real tax cut for the middle class, which is not what Bill C-2 proposes. We proposed a tax cut that would apply to annual income beginning at \$11,000, rather than \$45,000. That would cover 80% of Canadians, rather than just 9 million out of the 25 million or 28 million taxpayers in Canada right now. I just wanted to correct my colleague's comment.

However, I also have a question for my colleague from Calgary Signal Hill, since we disagree on some of the points in the bill. We agree with the Liberals that the TFSA limit should be lowered. We know that the Conservatives want a higher limit, set at \$10,000.

Then again, one thing my colleague and I do agree on is the definition of "middle class", which, seems to us, is not the same as the Liberals' definition. If we look at the tax cut that is set out in this bill, anyone who earns less than \$23 an hour will not benefit at all.

I would like my colleague to say a few words about what constitutes the definition of middle class and why the Liberals are trying to make political hay out of an issue that, according to their own interpretation, does not correspond whatsoever to reality?

[English]

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I have had some good debates at the finance committee on these issues.

As I said earlier, I did not campaign on a tax cut for myself or those who are in our income category. The member raised a good question. At the finance committee, we tried to ask the Minister of Finance to please explain to us what "middle class" meant.

I am quite offended by the term "middle class". When I hear a term like "middle class", I think about the class structure of Britain

of thousands of years ago. I like to refer to people in income groups. I do not think we have a middle class, a lower class or an upper class. We have an income class.

From day one, when the Prime Minister talked about the middle class, it offended me. I do not consider myself to be in a class system, and he has placed me there simply by the amount I earn.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued to hear the hon. member talk about what he would do if he were leading a campaign and the questions he would ask. There is a job opening there. Maybe he will get his chance.

The question on Kinder Morgan is a big one, especially in metro Vancouver. We recognize there is a huge divide between sentiments on the west coast and sentiments in Alberta.

How do we close the gap between clearly opposition on one side and the proponents on the other?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I would like to get really worked up about this. We talk about being a country. The Prime Minister has said that as Canadians we help each other. Yet when we have projects of a national nature, we have people playing politics with it, whether it is our friends from the Bloc Québécois who keep raising issues in the House about energy, or the mayor of Vancouver who comes to Ottawa to campaign against Kinder Morgan.

There are things that need to be pointed out in the House, and they need to be put on the record. As energy minister in Alberta a few years ago, I had an opportunity to tour the Kinder Morgan facility at Burnaby. One of the things that was mentioned to me was that the current pipeline from Alberta to British Columbia, to Burnaby, provided all of the fuel for all the vehicles that operated in the Lower Mainland. It is okay to ship Alberta oil to Vancouver to refine, to service the Lower Mainland, but all of a sudden, for Vancouver's mayor, it is not good enough that we can ship additional oil to export.

Why is that fair? How Canadian is that? It is good enough for us, but it is not good enough to sell.

● (1245)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two comments to begin with. As far as social classes are concerned, I think that we should agree on the fact that a class structure still exists. The member can come to Montreal and see that between Westmount and Hochelaga there is a clear class difference.

Government Orders

My colleague said that governments do not create jobs, the private sector does. I know that this is part of the Conservative creed, but we need to recognize that this is a rather simplistic cliché. There would be no workers who can read and write without schools; there would be no healthy workforce without hospitals; there would be no skilled workforce without our colleges and universities. The public sector and the private sector must work together, hand in hand, to grow our economy. When the Conservatives were in power, they handed out billions of dollars in tax giveaways to Canadian corporations without creating a single job. They did nothing to help small and medium-sized businesses, which is what the NDP was calling for. Are they going to ask the Liberals to accept the NDP's idea of lowering taxes for small and medium-sized businesses from 11% to 9%?

[English]

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I am happy the member understands it was not just an NDP proposal to reduce the small business tax. We clearly campaigned on that and so did the Liberals. The Liberals broke their promise, so it is one thing we probably share with the NDP.

Let me make sure the member is clear. There were 1.3 million net new jobs created during the Conservative government's administration. When the member says that health care and education jobs are all public sector jobs, he is wrong. Thousands of people work in the private sector. I do not believe there is a doctor in Quebec who works for the public health care system. He or she is a private businessperson.

It is wrong for New Democrats to say that we would not have any teachers or health care officials if we allowed the private sector to create the jobs.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Carleton, so I ask that members stick around, because I am going to give a speech, but he is going to give an excellent speech.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-2, to talk about the government's financial record and the challenges I see presented with its financial vision.

I come from Alberta. I am a proud Albertan, and I am proud to defend the people I represent. I am also proud of the people who have built our local economies within the communities I represent. They are the bedrock of the communities across the province of Alberta, across western Canada, and contribute so much to the economy of our nation from coast to coast.

One of the things I have noticed with the Liberal economic plan is that there seems to be no long-term perspective as to how it is going to create jobs and drive the economy. The Liberals talk a lot about things like creating jobs and providing opportunity for people to move from lower income to middle income. Of course, they do use the terms of class, which as my colleague from Calgary referenced, is probably offensive to a lot of people who are workers in our country. The concern I have is the Liberals keep talking a good game, but they have not demonstrated a plan that is coherent in any way. As a matter of fact, the bill we are debating today probably establishes for all of us that that is the case.

They talk about it being a tax cut for people who need it most. Of course, what we do note is that those who need it in our country most are actually not able to benefit from the provisions in the bill. Lower-income Canadians are not included. As a matter of fact, there is nothing in the bill that provides any assistance to lower-income Canadians.

There is also a major hit against senior citizens. Just this last week, we heard it said that the Liberals are looking at a plan to increase CPP contributions. As my colleague just referenced, this in fact would be a payroll tax. Not only does it establish a problem for those income earners who would have an additional amount of money taken off their paycheque, it would also mean that small business owners would have to pay additional taxes to help support a CPP increase.

Let us just think about this a little. A CPP increase today would not benefit seniors today. It would not benefit those people who are in their later years and who most desperately need support today. The hope is that if money is put aside today, seniors in decades to come would benefit from those increased contributions. That is a debate to be had, but let us be clear, this would benefit no senior who is a senior today. It also would not help those people who will become seniors and start drawing pensions in the next number of years. We are talking about a Liberal plan to start taxing small businesses, workers, and families today in the hopes that someday there may be a benefit to people down the road. It is not about seniors who are struggling today.

One provision that we as a government instituted was the tax-free savings account. Having looked at the evidence, what we note is the people who were most likely to use the full allocation of the tax-free savings accounts were low-income senior citizens, those people who were having to withdraw money from RIFs or different types of savings plans. The tax-free savings account was a vehicle that created all kinds of opportunities for senior citizens to manage their retirement money. It allowed senior citizens to put money in and withdraw money without any tax implications. They could manage it, and withdraw money as they needed, to address their needs. They could withdraw it if they had a medical emergency and all of a sudden needed to pull out some money for travel, or if they wanted to go on a vacation they were able to withdraw that money without having to take any kind of a penalty.

● (1250)

The Liberals have gone after senior citizens by cutting down the tax-free savings account at the same time that they are telling Canadians they are concerned about seniors, but they have no plan that would benefit seniors today or people who will become seniors in the next number of years.

I am also concerned about the Liberals' plan for families. I did reference the fact that I come from Alberta and I represent people who are in the resource sector, those who work hard every day, play by the rules, pay their taxes, and contribute to our communities. They have had some of the worst years of their lives over the last couple of years.

Government Orders

Obviously, all governments and all parties recognize that we in Parliament do not control the price of energy in the world. Regardless who is in power, there are going to be some troubles with regard to small and larger businesses and to those who are employed in the resource sector.

We know that the Liberal government can make it better or worse for those people who work in the energy sector. Let us be honest, Liberals have made it significantly worse, creating uncertainty in the marketplace, such that companies refuse to invest in Canada because they are uncertain about things like carbon taxes. They are uncertain whether they are going to be able to get products to market.

When the Liberals continue to place hurdles in the way of the development of the energy east pipeline and the TransCanada pipeline, when they continue to play politics with some of the most important nation building infrastructure, which will cost the taxpayer zero dollars as this is private sector investment, when the Liberals continue to create hurdles to see that infrastructure built, my constituents are hurt.

The reason they are hurt is because many of them are employed in the energy sector or have businesses that are secondary industries within the resource sector, that are looking toward the future. The companies are saying they are not going to invest in a place where there is so much uncertainty. The Liberals' announcements that they are going to create difficulty for pipelines to be built and their commitment to continue a job-killing carbon tax hurt.

There is a document that came out this morning from the Alberta government that is an assessment simply on the provincial portion of the carbon tax, not of the federal government's carbon tax that it promised, which will be in addition to any provincial carbon tax. The government's analysis itself says that it will cause 15,000 job losses, it will take \$4 billion out of the household income of Albertans, so not only is the government taxing them more, it is also going to reduce their income. If there is going to be \$4 billion taken out of the household income of Albertans with a provincial carbon tax, one can only imagine how much additional money will come out of household incomes of Albertans when the Liberals get their hands on a cash grab from the province of Alberta as well.

The Liberals' plan has been completely incoherent. We have established that. They have said they are going to support seniors, yet they are taking vehicles away for seniors to actually save. They have said they are going to help people move from lower income to higher income, yet they are taxing those families at every turn, creating disincentive for investment in provinces like Alberta and other provinces that depend on the energy sector. They are continuing to increase payroll taxes on those same small business owners, creating disincentive to create more jobs. The incoherence of the Liberal economic plan is not only challenging, it is actually creating such difficulty for people who live in communities like mine.

• (1255)

There is an urgency for the Liberals to change course. We would ask the Liberals to look at the facts and the evidence and start to respond to the needs of Albertans and all Canadians to ensure that we can build an economy that will prosper for generations to come.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as per usual, the Conservative view of economic reality is something to behold.

The member opposite spoke about the tax-free savings account and how good it was for Canadians. There certainly were some benefits.

One question that I have been asking members opposite for weeks now and one to which I still have never received an answer is this: Why the doubling of the tax-free savings account when only 7% of Canadians maximized it? The former finance minister himself said it would cost billions of taxpayer dollars by doubling it. He also said that the former prime minister's grandchildren could worry about that debt in the future.

I would ask the member opposite, why the doubling of the tax-free savings account? Canadians knew that it was targeted to the Conservative base and it was not fair. Why the doubling when 7% of Canadians maximized it?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, the member makes the point that 7% of Canadians were maxing out the TFSAs. Many more were coming close to the max and many others were using it as a tool to put in different amounts. Let us be clear. He called it a Conservative base but we are talking about low-income senior citizens. I am hopeful that they are our base, but let us think about this. The same people who max it out one year, 7%, will be different from the 7% the next year, it may be 10%, which might be different than the next 10%. Within three years perhaps 30% of Canadians will have maxed out their tax-free savings accounts.

The point is that this tool should be available when Canadians need it. Many people who need it are in their later years and are trying to manage their retirement savings money. They want to be able to access that money. The flexibility that that tool provides for senior citizens is one that we need to continue allowing them to use.

I am concerned that the hon. member is not just offended by the doubling of the tax-free savings account but he is now offended by the tax-free savings account altogether, which makes me wonder if it is the Liberals' plan to eliminate the tax-free savings account altogether.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the member's riding is like, but in my riding seniors who do not earn a lot of money and are on a fixed income cannot invest \$10,000 in a TFSA; they cannot even invest \$5,500.

In order to save money, people need to have enough to survive on. Many seniors are having trouble surviving. I would be very surprised if the member saw that in his riding.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking about what my feelings are. Many people's intuition might be similar to that of the member, but the evidence demonstrates that 60% of the people who were maxing out the tax-free savings account earned less than \$60,000 in that given year. I am not asking the hon. member just to believe me because I think that is the case, but the evidence demonstrates that, and it is not just my constituents but her constituents her as well. The evidence demonstrates that the vast majority of those who were maxing out the provisions were lower income Canadians.

Many of our constituents have probably used the tax-free savings account as a mechanism to move money, as they are withdrawing money from RRIFs. They might use that as a vehicle so that they have flexibility in their retirement years as to how they hold that money, how they earn interest on that money, and how they use that money.

The hon. member should call the Library of Parliament and ask if it has statistics on her particular constituency. I think she will be surprised by what she finds out.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our friends in the Liberal Party have been trumpeting the middle class in their rhetoric a lot lately. In fact, they included a fancy chart in their recent budget to talk about the incomes of middle-class people. In it they claim that for the last 40 years, the middle class has not had a real after-inflation raise.

I was surprised to hear that, because Conservatives had produced a lot of data to show that in the last decade alone, middle-class incomes had skyrocketed. How could both of these claims be true?

I looked at the underlying data that Finance Canada used to produce this chart in the Liberal budget. I found that when Liberals say that Canadians have had almost no middle-class income increase over the last four decades, they are telling the truth. When the Conservatives say that there has been a very large increase in middle-class incomes in the last 10 years, we are also telling the truth. How do we reconcile both of those things?

We can look at the chart. We can go back to 1976, the beginning point of this chart that the Liberals put in their recent budget. It demonstrates that, at that time, in inflation-adjusted dollars, Canadians were earning just over \$46,000 on average, and then suddenly, over the following six years, incomes plummeted by 6% after inflation.

That drop was the biggest of the last half-century, and it was presided over by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, whose policies of high taxes, spiralling debt, and taxpayer give-aways to large corporations sent our economy reeling. It caused a massive national recession and enormous job loss, particularly in western Canada, but caused a job-loss contagion that spread right across the country and led us to the biggest pay cut for the middle class in a half-century. It then took 30 years for incomes to recover to the level they had been back in 1976. It just so happens that recovery occurred under the previous Conservative prime minister.

What happened in the last 10 years then?

According to data right out of page 11 of the Liberal budget, incomes for middle-class Canadians rose by a staggering 11% after inflation, from \$44,700 to \$49,602, which is a \$5,000 after-inflation increase in median incomes. In fact, the pay increase that occurred under our most recent Conservative prime minister was larger than income growth under Prime Ministers Trudeau, Clark, Turner, Mulroney, Campbell, Chrétien, and Martin combined, again, according to data right out of the Liberal budget.

Let us break it down further. The government has said that it is a big champion of women in the workforce. In fact, the Prime Minister likes to brag that he is a "feminist". I would like to look at the data that his budget presents about incomes for women.

Anybody who does look at that data, which again is found on page 11 of the recent Liberal budget, will find that women enjoyed a \$5,234 pay increase after inflation during the most recent Conservative government. This is an increase of 14%. In other words, female incomes grew even faster than the average income during the last 10 years.

It is also worth noting that the annual rate of income increase for women during the most recent Conservative government was five times the rate it was during the first Trudeau government, and five times as fast as during the Chrétien and Martin governments.

• (1305)

In other words, women, middle-class women, had their biggest pay increase in a half-century under the most recent Conservative government, according to the Liberal budget.

Where do we go from here? Ironically, this budget, which contains this valuable information, seeks to repeat the exact same mistakes that caused Pierre Elliott Trudeau to tank the middle class four decades ago. It is unfortunate, but history does seem to repeat itself. This Prime Minister is enacting the same high-tax, big-debt, costly government strategy that his father did to destroy the middle class when he was in office not so long ago. We would think that the Liberals would learn. We would think that they would understand that trickle-down government harms the middle class even though it is particularly good for the wealthy and well connected.

We talk today about a budget that would make changes to the income tax system. Far from helping the middle class, if people earn \$150,000 as Liberal MPs, they would save almost \$700 in income tax as a result of changes in the bill before the House right now. If people earn \$45,000 a year, they would get absolutely nothing. The question of social justice can always be answered with the following two-part question: From whom, to whom?

The costs of the bill would be borne by people who earn \$45,000 a year and the maximum benefits would go to those earning \$150,000 a year. That is not social justice. That is not a defence of the middle class. That is a wealth transfer from the working poor to the wealthy and the well connected.

Government Orders

So it is so often the case when government gets big and expensive. Those who can afford the lobbyists to pressure government and the accountants and lawyers to gain the rules of government always do so much better when there is more government. That is what we are seeing today, a government that is on the side of the very rich, that is increasing the cost and the burden on the shoulders of the working poor, and that is reversing the very impressive middle-class gains that our country enjoyed over the last decade.

Now we hear speculation that the current government may give one billion middle-class tax dollars to Bombardier, a company of billionaire owners and millionaire executives. This is a company, in fact, that just paid \$8 million to one executive alone, while it was simultaneously asking middle-class taxpayers in Quebec and Canada to bail it out. This again would be a massive wealth transfer from the working poor and the middle class to the wealthy and well-connected, which is so common under left-of-centre governments like the current one. This is the insider economy or crony socialism at its very worst.

By contrast, our official opposition will continue to fight for working people who get up every day and put in a hard day's work in order to earn their incomes. We will continue to fight for those who want to save a bit more through their tax-free savings accounts, keep a bit more from their income tax bills, and hire a bit more through their small businesses. In so doing, we will champion the underdogs in Canada and fight for the people who are the backbone of this country.

• (1310)

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a very interesting speech. The hon. member spoke about social justice and wealth transfers. The people in the constituency I represent, Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, are very excited about the new Canada child benefit. It is more generous than the previous benefit. It is targeted to income; if people earn less money, they will get more money. Probably most important of all, it is tax free. The Canada child benefit will raise 300,000 children out of poverty. That is what I call a wealth transfer and a champion for social justice.

In addition to the Canada child benefit, we are launching Canada's largest ever infrastructure program, as part of the budget.

In addition, speaking of the middle class, and perhaps it was not this speaker but an earlier speaker who did not like to talk about class but income levels, Canadian citizens making between \$40,000 and \$90,000 will get a 7% tax cut. That is in the budget.

How can anybody be against a 7% tax cut for income earners between \$40,000 and \$90,000?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, if only it were true. In reality, the member's numbers are inaccurate. If someone earns \$44,000, they will get a zero per cent income tax cut from this budget. The very small tax relief that does exist really only peaks for people who earn over \$100,000. Even for them, it works out to about \$700 a year. A person needs to earn about as much as the hon. member does to enjoy that maximum tax relief under this budget. However, the working poor get exactly nothing, which is unfortunate because it reverses the trend of the previous government, according

to the parliamentary budget officer, the independent and non-partisan parliamentary budget officer.

The previous government cut taxes by about \$30 billion per year, and that tax relief was overwhelmingly in favour of lower- and modest-income earners. In fact, for many low-income and impoverished workers, the previous Conservative government cut their taxes by 100%; meaning that they do not pay anything at all. That helps them get over the welfare wall; that is to say, it ensures that work always pays more than welfare. We know that the best anti-poverty plan is a good job.

Now, we have a government that is going to impose new costs on the working poor, through a carbon tax that will make it more difficult to heat a home and drive to work, and through a payroll tax, which will mean that small businesses will have to lay off their most vulnerable workers. That is an attack on the poor, it is an attack on the working family, and we will, on this side of the House, fight it every day.

• (1315)

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about taxes today, with the cutting of the sports deduction, as well as the Canada pension plan prices going up. You mentioned charts being available.

I wonder if you might be able to comment as to how that is going to affect jobs and the economy?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just want to remind the hon. member that I will not be commenting on it. I am sure he meant the hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. The Liberals got rid of the children's fitness tax credit, they have cut back the tax-free savings accounts, and they are planning, now, to raise payroll taxes on small businesses and working people who earn less than \$50,000 a year. I think this will have a detrimental impact on low-income people trying to make a break and get ahead.

The tax-free savings account, by the way, has been mischaracterized by members of the Liberal Party and the NDP, who say that it is only for the rich. Again, Statistics Canada has demonstrated that 60% of those who maxed out their tax-free savings accounts earned less than \$60,000 a year. They are seniors who, typically, have sold their homes to downsize and want to reinvest the proceeds, or who have inherited money from a deceased spouse. They want to put that money where the government cannot get it, and who can blame them? That is the Canadian thing to do.

The tax-free savings account at \$10,000 allowed them to do that. The government has raised taxes on those people. We will, hopefully, try to convince it to change its mind on that.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill C-2, an act to amend the Income Tax Act.

Government Orders

We have talked a lot today already about some of the changes that are going to be coming forward with this. However, I would like to tell a personal story about why I feel that this is important to speak about today.

I remember vividly, in 2006, my wife and I were in a small southern Alberta town. I would say that we were a low to middle-income family. We had three children: one in hockey, one in volleyball, and one in dance. I remember when the children's fitness tax credit was first introduced by the Conservative government, and what a godsend that was to me and my family to be able to cover a substantial part of the costs for my children's activities.

Then, last year, when we put forward a plan to double the children's fitness tax credit from \$500 to \$1,000, I went to as many doors as possible in my riding to talk about this program with my constituents. It was incredible how many families, especially young parents, spoke to us about how important this program was to ensure they were able to keep their children healthy, active, and enjoying some of the activities.

There is a reason that programs such as KidSport, the United Way, and Boys and Girls Clubs are so popular. It is a reality that lower-income families have a difficult time being able to afford the costs of some programs.

The children's fitness tax credit was a program that impacted just about every single Canadian family with children. It was extremely disappointing to see that the Liberal government has eliminated that program. I have had profound feedback from residents in my Foothills riding who are extremely upset with that change.

We will hear from the members opposite that the reason they got rid of programs, like the children's fitness tax credit and the post-secondary school book tax credit, was that they were going to be more generous on the side of other programs and the middle-class tax cut. It was going to be revolutionary for Canadian families. This was going to be something that was a life-altering change for Canadian families.

However, let us put it in perspective. According to Finance Canada, the average impact to Canadian families with the middle-class tax cut is \$6.34 a week. That is less than \$1 a day. That is what the impact on the average Canadian family is going to be. The government is eliminating the children's fitness tax credit, the universal child care benefit, and those types of programs. I find it interesting that the Liberals find \$1 a day to be revolutionary. I am pretty positive that I can say for my family that \$1 a day is anything but revolutionary.

We were kind of joking a little in question period, but I found it interesting that the Minister of International Development was laughing at the fact that we were asking about \$17 for a glass of juice. We, on this side of the House, are here to protect the Canadian taxpayer. Every single dollar has an impact on their lives, their jobs, and their families. Paying \$17 for a glass of juice, or \$5,000 on tips and gratuities for two days, is certainly worth asking about. For Liberals to say that \$6.34 a week, less than \$1 a day, is somehow revolutionary and is going to lift up 9 million families out of poverty, or 9,000 children out of poverty, or whatever the number, is pretty coy.

The money will either have to be drawn from or reduced from the public services and the tax base. I would say that the spending plans of the Liberal government are risky at best. We have seen no concrete proof that these tax cuts, which the Liberals initially said during the election were going to be revenue neutral, are that in fact.

The tax breaks they introduced were going to be revenue neutral and revolutionary, but in fact are going to cost Canadians more than \$8 billion over the next six years. It is not really a tax cut at all, because they are going into very severe deficits to do these things. The amount of \$9 billion dollars over the next six years is not a tax cut in my estimation.

Again, as part of that election platform, the deficit was going to be around a \$10 billion mark. Now we are beyond that, three times beyond that. The four-year plan that the Liberals tabled as part of the budget in 2016 has absolutely no plan to get out of that massive deficit spin. It is a downward spiral. It is a massive deficit with absolutely no plan to get us out of it.

• (1320)

To have \$30 billion deficits year after year, and then laugh about overspending on trips to Washington, shows the arrogance of the Liberal government.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: New York.

Mr. John Barlow: New York, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. Thanks for that correction.

The Liberal government has said that it wants to cut the tax-free savings account, so again we are going to be talking today about the impact and what it truly means for Canadians. The tax-free savings account, I know from speaking to residents in Foothills in southern Alberta, was something many of them embraced. They felt that it was an outstanding opportunity for them to save. In fact, 11 million Canadians accessed the tax-free savings account.

Instead, the Liberal government has taken away another voluntary option for Canadians to save for whatever they feel is most important to them. It could be a house, children's education, or, yes, retirement. Instead, after reducing the tax-free savings account limit from \$10,000 down to its original \$5,500, the government would like to replace that with a mandatory CPP tax, which would be a tax of more than \$4,000 for the average Canadian worker, as well as an additional tax on small business owners. When Liberals say Canadians will have these benefits, if they do not have jobs, they will not pay any taxes. They will be more of a burden on the social system.

Liberals also want a job-killing carbon tax. We have talked about that several times this week. In Alberta, in the month of May alone, another 24,000 jobs were lost. There are 24,000 more Albertans out of work. The unemployment rate in Alberta is now 7.9%, the highest it has been since the national energy program was brought forward by the Liberals in the 1980s, with no relief in sight.

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In question period today, I talked about Ritchie Bros., one of the largest auction operations in Alberta, last month having what was supposed to be a two-day auction sale. It ended up being five days, and it sold more than \$240 million in industrial commercial equipment that went south to the United States. With the equipment that goes south to the United States, so do the jobs that go with that equipment, or they disappeared in Canada entirely.

Over the past year, half a billion dollars in oil sands equipment has been sold, and the vast majority of it has gone south of the border. On top of that, \$50 billion in investment has left Alberta. That shows the impact that Albertans are feeling right now. We expect the unemployment rate to exceed 8% over the next year. I do not think this is the time to be joking about that \$1-a-day middle-class tax cut, which actually only benefits those making over \$100,000, many who have now lost their jobs entirely, or to be joking about introducing a carbon tax, which would increase the cost of literally everything that an average Canadian is trying to pay.

The government wants to bring in a mandatory CPP tax, while taking away an option that Canadians have to make the choices that they feel are best for them, which is the tax-free savings account. I appreciate that it is still going to exist, but it is not going to have the limit that Conservatives had offered before.

Let us put that in perspective. Over the last six months, the Liberal government has talked about a middle-class tax cut, which is not really a tax cut at all because it is not revenue neutral. It is going to cost close to \$9 billion over the next six years. It wants to establish a mandatory CPP tax, which will impact Canadians and small business owners, our job creators, and now it is talking about a carbon tax. That is really a tax on top of a tax, because 80% of Canadian jurisdictions already have a carbon tax at the provincial level. Therefore, why would we add yet another tax on Canadians?

Putting it into perspective, over the Conservatives' 10 years in government, we reduced taxes more than 150 times. Canadians had the lowest tax burden they have had in 50 years. The average Canadian family was saving more than \$7,000 a year on their taxes. Those tax advantages will be gone almost entirely with a CPP tax, which would cost more than \$4,000 for the average Canadian.

I am sure we will hear the argument today from my colleagues on the other side that the tax-free savings account was simply just a tax haven for the wealthy. We also heard from my esteemed colleague from Carleton that is simply not the case.

• (1325)

People earning \$80,000 a year or less accounted for 80% of those who had a tax-free savings account, and of 60% of the individuals who contributed the maximum of \$5,500, the vast majority of them had annual earnings of less than \$60,000.

As a Canadian, I do not feel that \$60,000 a year is wealthy or anything close to wealth. That is just the average hard-working Canadian who is making certainly difficult decisions for whatever they feel is best for them and their families, whether it is a down payment on a house, saving for their children's education, or saving for their retirement.

I believe that reducing the tax-free savings account is a step backwards. I do not think it is something that will benefit Canadians.

This was a savings mechanism that was extremely flexible and allowed Canadians to make the choices they felt were best for them and their families.

I want to jump ahead a bit and talk again about what our Prime Minister said during the election. During the election, he said repeatedly that the \$3 billion tax cut for middle-class earners was for a \$3 billion increase on high-income earners. We said before that this simply is not the case. This will actually cost Canadians close to \$9 billion a year. That just shows that in six months, there has been broken promise after broken promise by the Liberal government. The Liberals are simply trying to regress some of the tax advantages and things we were able to change.

In conclusion, I would encourage all members of the House to vote against Bill C-2, because it reverses some of the great tax advantages that we were able to offer Canadians over the last few years, including the lowest tax burden on Canadians in 50 years.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): 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

• (1330)

[English]

LIFE MEANS LIFE ACT

The House resumed from May 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-229, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts (life sentences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-229, also known as the "life means life act".

I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the member for Calgary Signal Hill, for putting this important bill forward.

I think that most of us would agree that Canada is a peaceful and safe country. However, we must also acknowledge that there are some in our country who seek to do us harm. These individuals seek to harm others and make us feel unsafe in our homes, on our streets, and in our communities.

We judge people to be innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and that principle should never change. However, when someone is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of heinous crimes, such as brutal multiple murders, or murders so brutal that they upset us just to hear about them, then that person must be seriously punished for their actions. For too long in this country, those individuals convicted of heinous crimes are able to apply for release after serving just a portion of their sentence, instead of being locked up for the rest of their lives.

When we consider the finality of murder, the ending of someone's life, I think many would agree that it is too light a punishment. How is it fair that a person who murders a child, who ends a young life that is just beginning and is yet to experience the wonders of this world, has a chance to be set free when that child will never again walk the earth?

The sad reality is that in this country when a judge sends a murderer to prison for life, it really does not mean prison until the day the murderer dies. After having served some time, the murderer applies for parole, and the family of the victim goes through the nightmare all over again. Too often, the victim's family sits through a parole hearing and watches as the murderer gets released on some perverse rationale. The victim's family wonders if life in prison really means anything at all.

Bill C-229 would correct this injustice. In this bill, life would mean life. It would automatically sentence those convicted of certain heinous crimes to life sentences with no eligibility for parole, except for a chance to petition the minister directly after 35 years.

The bill would also give judges and juries more power to determine if a murderer represents a serious threat to society and if that murderer should be imprisoned without parole. A sentence of life without parole would punish the most serious crimes with the most serious penalty. It is proportionate sentence for the gravest crimes and consistent with the parity principle that like offenders committing like offences be treated similarly.

I know that some of my colleagues in other parties will object to this bill. They will say that it is harsh and unfair. They will say that it is born of crude and unenlightened thinking. However, this bill is consistent with established principles of sentencing, such as denunciation and retribution, which are very important when dealing with serious and violent crime.

Denunciation was described by then Chief Justice Lamer in the seminal sentencing decision of the Supreme Court in *R v. M.* He stated that:

The objective of denunciation mandates that a sentence should also communicate society's condemnation of that particular offender's conduct...In short, a sentence with a denunciatory element represents a symbolic, collective statement that the offender's conduct should be punished for encroaching on our society's basic code of values as enshrined within our substantive criminal law.

Those opposing this bill may say that it is wrong to lock someone up for life, because the person could be rehabilitated. To those people I say that no amount of rehabilitation can bring victims back to their families. Ending a life, particularly in an egregious and heinous way, should have as steep a penalty.

Let me be clear. Do we really think someone like Justin Bourque, who murdered three RCMP officers in Moncton could ever be rehabilitated? Do we think someone like Paul Bernardo could ever be rehabilitated, or that Clifford Olson could have been?

There are some in the House who will say yes, but I believe that Canadians will largely agree that some crimes should result in the murderer never again walking free. The victims of these murderers deserve nothing less, and the families of these victims deserve nothing less. Let us think of a mother and father of a murdered child;

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they will attend every parole hearing to see that the murderer who ended their son or daughter's life never walks free.

Sharon Rosenfeldt who helped found the organization Victims of Violence, after her son was killed by Clifford Olson stated, "When Clifford Olson murdered our son, we also received a life sentence...It was not the state that was abducted, raped and murdered, it was my son."

She describes the parole hearings as "undeniably traumatic", yet she had to go through three of these. She was said to have attended them every two years, except, thankfully, the monster that was Clifford Olson died in prison before the fourth hearing.

● (1335)

A 2009 study of families of the victims done by the parole board found the obvious. They do not want to go through the anguish of repeated parole hearings. Yet in 2010-11, 45% of victim presentations at the parole board hearings in Canada were the families against the murderers of their family members. Almost half of the parole hearings are dragging the families of the victims through this hell. These families deserve a lot better than this. We as a society are failing these families, and this has to end.

We must also think of society's safety. Parole Board of Canada statistics show 58 Canadians were murdered by convicted killers who were out on parole. Fifty-eight innocent Canadians were murdered by people who were previously convicted of murder, which our system simply let out of prison to kill again. Further statistics show that 3 out of every 100 paroled murderers are sent back to prison for committing violent offences, such as rape and kidnapping. Almost a full quarter of murderers paroled between 1994 and 2008 were sent back for reoffending.

We have forgotten the victims of these murderers and those who survive them, the families. With this bill, that would end. With this bill, imprisoned heinous murderers would stay in prison where they belong.

I am proud to stand and support Bill C-229 put forward by my colleague, the member for Calgary Signal Hill. It is time we say "life means life".

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-229, introduced by the member for Calgary Signal Hill. Let me be clear from the outset that we in the NDP oppose the bill.

Bill C-229 is based on a measure from the dying days of the last Parliament. This is not a bill that was on the agenda of the previous government during its 10 years on that side of the House. Instead it was introduced in the pre-election period at a flashy campaign style event. I am afraid it is a bill that is more about playing politics than making good policy. It is a costly and ineffective bill, one that runs against the grain of evidence and one that would continue with the very agenda that Canadians so decisively rejected last October.

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Bill C-229 would lengthen the custodial sentences for a number of the most severe offences. We should bear several things in mind.

We should remember that life sentences are already applied for the most serious offences and, indeed, are already mandatory for some. We should remember that the mechanisms, such as Parole Board assessments and dangerous and long-term offender designations, already keep the worst offenders behind bars if they continue to represent a threat to society.

When looking at offenders who do not continue to pose such a danger to society, we should remember that overwhelming evidence concludes that punitive sentences do not make communities safe. In fact, while failing to deter potential offenders, mandatory minimums actually increase the risk of future offences.

In short, the bill offers ineffective solutions to a problem that does not exist. As an editorial last year in the *National Post* put it:

It is hard to imagine this bill surviving constitutional scrutiny, it is so disproportionate, so lacking in evidence either of its necessity or effectiveness.

However, worse than that, the bill, as drafted, would introduce a truly bizarre concept in our judicial system, and that is a mechanism for cabinet to control the release of particular offenders. Canadians know these decisions should be made by professional assessment, not at political discretion. We believe the only responsible approach is for parole decisions to be based on careful assessment of risk that an offender poses to the community and to public safety. Today, these decisions are made by the Parole Board of Canada, an independent administrative tribunal free from political interference. That board is clear that its paramount consideration in all decisions is the safety of the public.

Again, it is important for Canadians to remember that a life sentence already means just that. Let me quote from the Parole Board of Canada:

Myth... A life sentence in Canada means that offenders only have to serve 25 years before they are released. Reality: A life sentence means life. Lifers will never again enjoy total freedom.

The Parole Board makes the realities of our current laws very clear. I applaud it for providing this information to all Canadians to clear up some of the misconceptions that surround these issues.

Let us be clear. Offenders serving life sentences can only be released from prison if granted parole after an assessment to confirm that they do not pose a risk to the community. Even if they are ever released, they remain under supervision and various restrictions for the rest of their life.

Again, to quote from the Parole Board, "Not all lifers will be granted parole. Some may never be released on parole because they continue to represent too great a risk to re-offend."

It is these individualized judgments that are crucial to keeping our communities safe. Removing them would also have a serious side effect.

• (1340)

The Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada has stated that lengthening incarceration periods or removing the possibility of even applying for parole can eliminate the incentive for rehabilitation and good behaviour, putting the safety of

correctional staff at risk. That makes sense. Prisoners who are serving life sentences know that they have virtually no chance of getting out. What possible incentive is there for them to correct their ways to try to make themselves better members of society?

There is too much to criticize in this bill, and unfortunately, too little time in which to do it. However, let me turn to what we should be doing to not only improve public safety but to increase transparency and public trust in our judicial system.

The Liberal government has promised a review of the changes to our criminal justice system over the last 10 years, including the much criticized increase in the use of minimum sentences. This process, which should be a priority for the government, must seek to increase the use of proven alternatives to custodial sentencing, where appropriate and to implement the recommendations of the Ashley Smith inquest with respect to solitary confinement. It must also take real action to reduce the overrepresentation of indigenous Canadians in the criminal justice system. That is a statistic that is an absolutely shameful mark on our country's affairs.

Those are the priorities Canadians expect us to address in this House. I would urge every colleague in this House to join with us in the NDP on this side of the House in rejecting this bill, which is simply a remnant of an agenda Canadians have rejected. Instead, I hope that the government will soon bring to this House its own proposals for positive reforms to our criminal justice system.

Canadians have been very patient, but these are urgent issues of justice and public safety, and they deserve to be treated as priorities.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in support of the life means life legislation as put forward by the hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

I would like to take a moment to talk a bit about something that happened in my riding of Foothills not long ago. Some good friends of mine, Debbie and Ed Sands, lost their daughter Amy Sands. Amy was murdered in Calgary. I saw what that incident did to the family. The court case went on for more than a year. Each and every time I spoke with Ed and Debbie after they attended the court hearings, I could hear the toll it took on the two of them and their family. Debbie Sands has just published a book called *A Moth to the Flame*. It is about her daughter and what transpired not only in her life but also unfortunately culminating in her murder. This has had a lasting impact on the Sands family and the Okotoks community as a whole.

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The life means life bill would protect families of victims so they would not have to relive their nightmares over and over again by continually going to parole hearings, whether it was every two years or five years, especially when there was faint hope that the perpetrator would ever be granted parole. Regardless of that, the system does not protect the victims. Unfortunately I am sure the Sands family will have to go through this process for decades.

I would like to also talk about the essence of the legislation.

By eliminating parole eligibility for high treason and for the most heinous murders, the criminal law amendments in the bill would ensure that the worst offenders would spend the rest of their lives in prison. The bill would help to protect Canadians because it would ensure that the most violent offenders would remain locked up for their entire natural lives.

As I said, for me one of the most important things about this legislation is that it would protect the victim's family. For example, let us consider Sharon Rosenfeldt, the mother of one of Clifford Olson's victims, who, along with her family, had to go to parole hearings every two years to hear Clifford Olson tell them why he should be released. They had to relive the trauma of losing their son every two years, over and over again.

The proposed life means life act also provides a more clear proportionality in sentencing between first and second degree murder. Through various acts of Parliament we have made some second degree murders fit under the same sentencing regime as first degree murder, including having 25 years without parole.

Let me use Robert Pickton as an example. He murdered several women on his British Columbia pig farm in a case that certainly garnered international attention. In the absence of proof of planning and deliberation, he was convicted of second degree murder but subjected by the court to a 25-year parole ineligibility period under section 745.4 of the Criminal Code.

The bar for first degree murder is understandably high, as it should be. To get a conviction requires the strongest possible proof on behalf of the state. The penalty therefore for those convicted should be equally as strong. Canadians often are surprised to learn that when a court of law gives a life sentence, it actually does not mean the person convicted goes to prison for life. Far from it in most cases.

Our colleagues across the floor will say that the life means life bill is unreasonable, that it is different than maybe other countries, especially western democracies, but I digress. That is just simply not the case. Bill C-C-229 would align Canada's criminal justice system with those of other parliamentary democracies, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.

The system in the United Kingdom is quite interesting, and I would like to share a bit about how that system works.

While we set minimum parole eligibility dates in Canada, England does it somewhat differently. In England, the court determines the seriousness of the murder and selects an appropriate time for parole eligibility. It usually starts with 15 years, but more serious murders will naturally go up to 25, 30 or even more, including an entire life before the individual is granted parole.

● (1345)

The court then considers aggravating and mitigating factors and adds to or subtracts from the 15-year starting point as warranted.

The English system has the ability to hand down life without any chance of parole for the most serious of crimes. The English law, similar to this bill, gives only the minister the ability to grant parole on compassionate grounds.

In England there are four categories of murder for which the sentences are exceptionally high. The first is multiple murders involving premeditation, abduction, or sexual or sadistic elements. The second is the murder of a child that involves abduction or sexual or sadistic elements. The third is murder to advance a political, religious, or ideological cause. The fourth category is murder by any offender previously convicted of murder.

As members can see, what is being proposed by my colleague is not unreasonable. In fact, I would argue that it is common sense. It is not just another Conservative get-tough-on-crime bill. This is something that one of the oldest democracies in the world, the United Kingdom, already has and has successfully implemented. Australia and New Zealand have as well, just to name a few examples. I make this point to outline the common sense in the life means life act brought forward by my colleague.

Again, if members listen to the comments from my colleagues opposite, they will argue that this is unreasonable or is in some way inhumane. My argument is simply that it is not. This would impact only the most heinous of crimes.

We have also heard from my colleagues across the floor that this would somehow have a substantial impact on the cost of our judicial system, especially our penitentiaries and jails. However, again, I want to stress the fact that the life means life law would only come into effect for the most heinous of crimes, so really, it would only be for a small number of criminals and criminal cases.

Still, the message we are sending is very important: when people commit a heinous crime, whether it is kidnapping or treason or an exceptionally vicious murder, life means life. When someone is given a life sentence under those circumstances, it means life in jail.

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I would like to now turn my attention away from a comparison of this bill to its counterparts in other countries and instead make a plea to my hon. colleagues. I ask those members across the way who are dead set against this bill to think for a moment about the victims' families. I ask that they think for a moment of those families whose loved ones have been taken away at the hands of a murderer, a murderer who planned those actions in cold blood. It was not about rage. It was not about spite. It was a hard, cold calculation.

I ask that members try to imagine, as a father, a mother, a sister, or a brother, losing a loved one or a child. Would members really want to relive that death over and over again at parole hearing after parole hearing? Would they really want the fear of the murderer being released back into a community hanging over their heads? Would they really want to believe that the person who murdered their loved one in the most heinous manner had any opportunities to be rehabilitated? I would argue that I do not think my colleagues on the other side would believe that. None of us would.

It is only fair, then, that we finally take a stand for the rights of victims and their families. It is only fair that when a heinous murder is committed, we realize the finality of that action and we respond in kind. It is only fair that we recognize the loss of family members, friends, and loved ones.

The life means life act would finally put victims and their surviving families ahead of the rights of the murderer. It would finally acknowledge that there are some among us who should never be allowed to walk freely among us again. Finally, this would mean that a life sentence would actually mean life in prison.

● (1350)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to support Bill C-229, introduced by my hon. colleague, the member for Calgary Signal Hill.

As members know, the bill is called the life means life act. It would deal with people who commit the most heinous crimes in Canada.

I would like to take a moment to put the bill into context. I would like to speak for a moment about the record this party, my party, the Conservative Party, is proud to have when it comes to criminal justice issues. The bill represents another step, another milestone, in our record as Conservatives.

We all too often hear that the criminal justice system is a revolving door for criminals. This is a metaphor.

As Conservatives, we have tried to improve and develop a record to change that, and I am very proud of that. We introduced legislation that ended the two-for-one credit. Just imagine, we were giving people a two-for-one credit while they were staying in jail. We ended the automatic statutory release for violent offenders. We targeted white-collar crimes and established mandatory minimum sentences. We ended the faint hope clause that allowed murderers to be released from jail.

We also ended discounts for multiple murders. Just imagine if a person committed three murders, the way the system was set up he could serve one sentence, working all three sentences in together. We changed that, which was good. Would anybody hire a person

knowing he was working for another firm at the same time and another firm at the same time and have him work for him? No.

These are just a few examples. The pattern is clear. When it comes to standing up for Canadians, our party, the Conservative Party, takes the best interests of the ordinary, law-abiding citizen to heart.

I would like to tell a little story. A number of years ago, when I was a young officer on patrol, I got a call to stop a red pickup truck that was travelling from Chase, B.C., to Kamloops. Inside, they said, there is an armed individual who had just committed murder.

Now I am going to go back one day from the day I am talking about. A person was released from the B.C. Penitentiary for a previous murder charge. He ended up going into Vancouver, somehow acquired a sawed-off .22 rifle and a packsack, and then got on the 401 and hitchhiked toward central British Columbia.

A young man and his girlfriend stopped and picked him up, in a pickup truck. They continued on for about four hours, until they got to Kamloops, where they thought he was going to get off, at which point, he pulled the .22 out of his satchel and said, "Keep driving". He forced the young man and the young lady to drive toward Chase, a community about one hour away. Imagine the fear in the eyes of those two people.

He then made the driver pull off to the side of the road, just a short distance off the Trans-Canada Highway, a distance short enough they could hear the traffic going by. They were pleading and he coldly, and I say very coldly, turned and shot the young man in the head. He then proceeded to rape the young woman several times throughout that afternoon and into the night. Then, in the morning, when he got tired, he beat her what he thought was to death. He then calmly walked back to the Trans-Canada Highway and started to hitchhike back into the interior of British Columbia.

● (1355)

Thank God a service station owner saw him get into another pickup truck, the red one I mentioned earlier. Thank God the young lady recovered and she was able to stumble from where she was to the service station and relate the heinous crime that had taken place.

That day, I was on a motorcycle, the only person on the highway, with no one to back me up, and there is a red pickup coming towards me. I pulled the pickup over. In those days I used to carry a sawed-off shotgun on my motorcycle. I had it loaded. I stopped the truck. There was no one around, just me, the pickup truck driver, and a passenger. The driver stopped the truck. I jumped on the hood and watched this guy on the right side of the truck look at me with cold eyes as he reached down and started to pull up his .22 to begin a gunfight.

Thank God within those moments I was pulling back on the triggers. He was going to have both barrels. However, the guy froze and we took him into custody with no problem.

Private Members' Business

We cannot rehabilitate a person like that. That man was cold, vicious, and loved to kill. We should think about that young man in the pickup truck: no more birthdays, no more anniversaries. Maybe he and that girl would have gotten married and had children. They would probably have had grandchildren by now if that did not happen. That young lady has had to go through trauma for so many years and will have to continue to do so. Society needs to be protected from people who commit the most heinous crimes.

I do not want to count how many murders I have investigated or been involved in. I have watched kids as young as 13 shoot their brother, or a family domestic fight where someone gets shot. I am not talking about those people. Those people could probably be rehabilitated, but there are people out there who are born killers. They want to kill. We need to protect the public from them. We have the ability to do that when we go to trial and the evidence comes out.

I will give the House another real quick story because I know I am running out of time.

A gentleman was released from a United States penitentiary. for murder, and found himself a girlfriend. From the evidence, they went to a motel room, bought a map of Canada, and threw a dart. It landed at Fort St. James, British Columbia. They then hitchhiked across Canada to Fort St. James for one motive: to kill people.

The first game was to start with the RCMP. They actually came to the RCMP detachment and stole the vessel from one of our members so they knew they would get us into a heated chase. There was a six-day search with them trying to get us and us getting them with the ultimate motive that they wanted to kill people. We tried to keep them away from the public, and we caught them alive. It took a great effort, but we brought them in. However, when the evidence was brought forward, their sole purpose for being there was to kill people. We fought, as RCMP officers, to keep them away from the public. We did. We ran them aground, we ran them dry, and we ran them tired.

The hon. member who brought the bill forward knows that some people cannot be rehabilitated. When that evidence comes out in the court trial, and it may be a jury or it may be a trial by judge alone, let us trust the people in those judicial opportunities to make that decision and place that person, guilty of a heinous crime, in jail for life so that no other person will be harmed later on.

• (1400)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate today on Bill C-229. For the reasons I will briefly outline, I will not be supporting this proposed legislation.

Bill C-229 aims to change the law concerning the amount of time an offender who has been sentenced to a life sentence would remain in prison. It proposes mandatory and discretionary sentences of life without parole for offenders who have been convicted of murder in certain circumstances.

Bill C-229 would make imprisonment without parole mandatory for high treason or for a planned and deliberate murder if committed during a sexual assault, kidnapping, terrorism offence, or where a victim is a police officer or corrections official, or if it is committed in a particularly brutal way.

Second, the bill would provide judges with the discretion to impose a life sentence and imprisonment without parole for any other first degree murder and for any second degree murder if the offender was previously convicted of murder or of an intentional killing under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act.

Finally, the bill would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide that an offender sentenced to life imprisonment without parole could apply for an executive release by the Governor in Council after having served 35 years in custody. If released by the Governor in Council, the offender would be subject to conditions similar to parole conditions, and the offender's sentence would continue to be administered under the jurisdiction of the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada. This means that if the offender committed another crime, he or she would go back to prison.

I am opposing Bill C-229 for two reasons. First, the amendments proposed are, in my view, unnecessary and would be unprecedented in Canadian law with respect to their harshness and treatment of offenders. Second, I am very concerned about the charter risks associated with this initiative.

To be clear, there is no disagreement that the most serious offenders, murderers, should be dealt with accordingly by criminal law. However, in my view, the law already does just that. It is important for all members to appreciate the current state of the law and what this means in practical terms for those convicted of murder.

The offence of murder is the most serious crime in Canadian law and is accordingly subject to the most serious punishment available in Canadian law. All murder convictions carry a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment. As is well known, someone convicted of first degree murder is ineligible for parole for 25 years. A person convicted of second degree murder is ineligible for parole for at least 10 years and up to 25 years. Once eligible, offenders may apply for parole, but that does not mean they will necessarily receive it.

A decision to release someone on parole is one taken by the Parole Board of Canada. The safety of the public is the foremost consideration in deciding whether to grant someone parole. Accordingly, in reality, the most serious offenders, who pose an ongoing risk to public safety, will never, under our current law, be released from custody. In fact, the majority of persons convicted of murder are never released from custody, and the few that are rarely reoffend.

The Parole Board of Canada reports that of those convicted of either first or second degree murder who were conditionally released on full parole between 1994 and 2014, only 4% were re-incarcerated for having committed a violent offence. To take but one example, the notorious serial killer Clifford Olsen died in prison, despite repeated applications for parole, after serving 30 years in custody.

Private Members' Business

Quite frankly, I see no gap in the current law such that Bill C-229 should be supported.

Moreover, I am also very concerned about the charter viability of the bill. The government has indicated repeatedly the importance of respecting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of ensuring that our work is consistent with it.

•(1405)

I believe that if we were to support this bill, we would not be respecting the charter, particularly an offender's sections 7 and 12 charter rights.

The proposed measures contained in Bill C-229 carry significant vulnerabilities in relation to section 7, the right to life, liberty, and security of the person, and section 12, the right not to be subject to cruel and unusual treatment or punishment, of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is due, in part, to the proposal in this bill for increased parole eligibility date for all offenders convicted of first-degree murder from 25 years to 35 years. Canadian legal principles do not contemplate the creation of a sentencing regime under which there would be absolutely no possibility of legal consideration, during an extended sentence, of the merits of an offender's continued incarceration.

Based on existing case law, it seems to me that the proposal to detain beyond 25 years would raise significant charter issues. As parliamentarians, we can be firm in our responses to serious criminal behaviour. We can take measures to improve the safety of our citizens and our communities. However, we must ensure that we do so in a manner that is fair and respects the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all Canadians.

The government is working to increase the safety and security for Canadians in many ways. Bill C-229 would not make our communities safer.

I am confident in the ability of the Parole Board of Canada to make appropriate decisions regarding which individuals may or may not be released from prison and what types of restrictions may be placed on their liberty.

The existing sentencing provisions for those convicted of murder and the related parole system reflects an appropriate balance that effectively prevents the most serious offenders from ever being released on parole. Life without parole for most offenders as proposed is unprecedented in Canadian law and would generate criticism and increased costs.

I am opposing Bill C-229 as it would not improve public safety and is not a bill that would achieve the objective of a justice system that Canadians can be proud of. I urge all members to join me in voting against this unnecessarily punitive legislation.

•(1410)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support my colleague's initiative about life means life sentencing. I would like to share with my colleagues why I support the life means life act.

I would like to read a victim impact statement of a friend of mine regarding the 2011 murder of my lifelong and childhood friend's sister, friends who I consider family. My friend Paula has not yet read her victim impact statement at sentencing, but will do so. She asked me to share this with the House. She states:

Dana Jane Turner has been my little sister since October 28, 1979. I have 4 other sisters and two brothers. I am the oldest of the 8 children and Dana is my second sibling. Paula, Leah, Dana, Brendan, Jessica, Russell, Cara and Sarah.

From the moment that Dana was missing I felt sick to my stomach. I had an all consuming feeling Dana was cold and outside and I had no idea where to look for her. My friends, family and I immediately started hanging missing persons' posters around Alberta and we all prayed for her safe return. I quickly became the liaison between the RCMP and my family relaying updates back and forth on a very regular basis. I made two appearances on the news hoping that someone would know something about where Dana was and that she would be brought home. I remember the morning in October when the RCMP called me at work to let me know they wanted to meet me face to face. I knew that I was going to be served the most terrible news of my life and that I would have to share this news with my Dad and family in Newfoundland. I wanted one more day to pretend that Dana was still alive, that life would go back to normal and we would not be here today. That was not the case.

To articulate the impact Dana's murder has had on my life is very overwhelming and almost impossible to put into words. I have written this statement over and over in my head for more than 4 years but have never been able to commit it to paper as the impacts are gut wrenchingly painful, constant and ever-changing. The emotional and physical impacts of losing my sister in this tragic manner has forced me to live a life I did not choose and I have become a person at times I don't even recognize as myself. I find it impossible to say that even one part of my life has not changed since Dana's murder.

Dana's death has left me often depressed, anxious, suspicious, scared and angry. Dana's murder required me doing things that I would never wish on anyone. I, along with the help of my parents and siblings had to go through Dana's belongings item by item, box by box, sorting through her clothes, baby memorabilia, mail, and personal belongings all of which made me feel like I was stealing and violating her privacy. I had to decide what items to keep for her children when they got older, and sold the rest at a garage sale almost giving it away like everything she had worked for her whole life was suddenly garbage. I made phone calls to and met with Dana's pastor and helped arrange her memorial. I had to print large photos of her to place on a table at the front of the church as there wasn't a body to put in a casket as her "remains" stayed with the medical examiner as evidence....About a year later, when Dana's remains were released to our family and we were able to have a funeral for my sister. I will always be haunted by the image of my father falling to the ground at her casket in a small room at the funeral home and there wasn't anything I could do to comfort him. I wanted to hold Dana's hand and say good-bye but when I felt in Dana's casket for her hand I wasn't able to find it in the vacuum sealed bag of bones that was placed under a satin sheet where an inflated pillow was where her head would have been.

Dana and I had a very close relationship. Most of my early childhood memories include Dana. As teens and young adults we enjoyed live music, singing in the car or just evenings in doing a puzzle. I was there when Dana had her first son Ethan, and was with Ethan making a pumpkin pie with blue whipping cream to bring to the hospital after Dana gave birth to her second son. Dana and I worked together for about 8 years just cubicles apart...Along with spending countless lunch hours and coffee breaks together we spent many evenings together with her children or I would take the boys for her to give her a much earned break. Dana was a single mother to 3 young boys and I often referred to her as my hero. I miss Dana every single second of every single day but I missed her the most for me when I was planning my wedding....I tied little ornamental angel wings around the stems of our bouquets and pretended she was with us....She was not able to stand up for me, dance with us, or toast my marriage...

After Dana's murder and after finding Dana's last will and testament I chose to fulfill her final wishes and raise her youngest two sons. Dana's oldest son will no longer grow up with his younger brothers. He is now living in New Brunswick with his father, step-mother and little sister.

Private Members' Business

● (1415)

Although I made the decision to parent the younger boys quickly, it was not one that I took lightly. I had to appear before a judge and ask for parental rights for two amazing and strong little boys. Without parental rights I was not able to do simple things like take the boys to the doctor, enrol them in school or counselling. I was not able to grieve the death of my sister as I had to engage in my new role. I had to do things most sisters would never have to do while grieving. I had to pack up my whole life into boxes, move across the country, take a year off work, try to manage Dana's estate, and learn to be a single parent to two all at the same time. I had to rely on my family for support at age 35 like I [have] never had [to do] before in my adult life. Dana's youngest son, only 2 at the time of her murder and clung to me like a koala bear for the first year we were together...[never] letting me out of his sight. Dana's middle son, 4 at the time was anxiously waiting for his Mom Dana to come home and was very confused as to why I was in his life as much as I was. I love being a mother to Dana's sons but there are many challenges with raising your murdered sisters' children that most mother's don't have to face. These little boys have questions that little boys should never have to ask like, "Where is my Mom?", "Why did my Mom die?", and "Why can we take a plane to Newfoundland to see Poppy but we can't take a plane to Heaven to see our Mom Dana?". Simple school projects like filling in a family tree become confusing for the boys and often leave them sad. I do my best to share with them memories of their Mom Dana but this usually ends with me trying my best to hold back [my] tears. I tell them she is always with them and they can see her in the sky. I let them know if they ever need her in the day that they can find her near the sun and if they need her at night she is watching over them with the moon. I will forever be saddened that they will never remember her touch, a lullaby she sang to them or her infectious laugh. The boys and I have placed many angels around the house and yard to remind us of their Mom Dana. I overheard a conversation the boys had while looking at the angel lawn ornaments in Walmart, trying to decide which one is their Mom Dana. I have taken the younger boys to visit Dana's gravesite many times. This past Christmas break I took her oldest son Ethan who was guided by his younger brothers directly to her tombstone. I stayed near the car trying not to cry and so proud of how strong they all are. My heart aches that she has missed out on so many wonderful milestones of their lives already and so many more to follow. I am doing my best to raise good boys that will grow up to be good men.

Because of Dana's murder I will also mourn the loss of my own identity. I was once an independent, carefree soul with a love for adventure. I had very close friends that I used to enjoy spending time with for many years. I no longer contact them as much as I used to, they all know I have changed as a person, and now that I am a parent I have even less in common with many of them than I did before. I often used to seek out social events and coordinate plans, activities or vacations before Dana died and now I struggle to even keep in touch. My friends will never see the fun and free-spirited person I used to be as that Paula no longer exists.

I do not know if that is true.

I feel isolated and lonely with my grief. I have found some solace in others that have lost a sibling or a loved one to homicide. Some days I am seeking support and some days I am strong enough to provide it. There are no words to explain how one feels after losing a sibling to murder. I have actively attended counselling since Dana was missing, not only for myself, but with my boys and my family. The boys will continue to have harder questions and I will do my best to have the age appropriate answers.... I mourn the loss of my family as it once was, although not perfect, it was ours and we were always there for each other. For the rest of our lives we will have family gatherings and holiday celebrations that were once joyous and are now overshadowed by sadness that Dana is not there. We were a giant puzzle and now a piece is missing. I will never see my Mom smile like she did when all of her children were together with her. I cannot remember the last time I heard her laugh. I have seen my Dad cry more than a daughter ever should have to see her Dad cry. My family is not the same without our Dana Jane.

My heart breaks to know that if anyone, especially Dana's children Google her name they will not find anything about who she really was. The internet is filled with stories about a very small window of Dana's life and how it was violently ended. Today and always for the rest of my life I will mourn the loss of my sister Dana Jane. [She]...was a mother, daughter, sister, co-worker and friend...[who] saw the good in people and was often able to see past the bad. [She]...loved everyone, even those that did not deserve her love and everyone loved Dana.

I have not calculated the financial impacts of Dana's murder...There have been [so many] expenses...[and] Although [they]...are plentiful I am glad to be the person that Dana trusted enough with her children.

The last four and a half years have been hell for my whole family. We have all been served a terrible life sentence of grief and loss...I am looking forward to my family not saving vacation days and money to spend here in Red Deer in the same room as my sister's killer but instead trying to find our new normal.

That was during the trial.

I am thankful to my colleague for putting forward an initiative to ensure that life means life.

● (1420)

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rising to participate in the debate today, one cannot argue with the reality that those impacted by crime is real. Are there lives affected and changed? Of course they are. Do they go back to normal? No, never. Everybody who is impacted by acts of crime are impacted for life and normal is never achieved again. That is a clear fact.

However, as a parliamentarian and as a former legislator, I often think of the times that we look to legislation to address numerous issues that sometimes we have no control over. It is from that perspective that I wish to speak.

I have been sitting in the House listening to very compelling stories given by members of the opposition. They gave a very real and very vivid descriptions. Unfortunately, in any of those situations, we cannot roll the clock back. We cannot change what happened. Those people are impacted, their lives turned upside down, and nothing we can do as parliamentarians can change that.

We experience as a society crime. We experience evil. As parliamentarians, we must look at how we will deal with this. Sometimes I feel we often look to present or change legislation and by doing this, we think we have done something that will prevent situations from happening in the future. If it were that simple, it would be a position that I would look at and consider supporting.

However, that is not the case. The very real stories we have heard today are situations that, regardless of the legislation that may be amended or changed, will not change the lives of those people impacted. We see a number of those across the country.

Instead, I would like to look at whether as a society have we done enough to ensure that what began as someone's life does not lead to one of crime or where they may go. From that, we have a lot to do as parliamentarians to ensure that the positions we take and the changes we make in society are always driven to ensure those people have the opportunities that we have on an ongoing basis.

● (1425)

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank everyone who participated in this debate, whether supportive of the bill or not. I certainly would, however, like to recognize my colleagues who in some cases poured their hearts out relative to why this kind of action is necessary.

Private Members' Business

It is obvious, through the previous remarks by the parliamentary secretary for justice and today's remarks by the parliamentary secretary for natural resources that the government will not be supporting the bill. Even though it is a private member's bill and generally private member's bills are subject to free votes, we have seen consistently in the House, as recently as two days ago with the organ donation bill, that the Liberals do not allow their members to have free votes on virtually anything, and they certainly are not going to let caucus vote on this particular bill in a free vote. I am resigned to that fact, even though we have significant views by people, including a number of my constituents, that this is the right way to go.

In both the presentations by the parliamentary secretaries, there was mention of a number of things, but they were very consistent. There was the concern that the bill would not survive the charter issue. We have just dealt in the House extensively with a particular piece of government legislation that has been criticized many times that it would not withstand a charter challenge, yet the government went forward with that particular legislation. On one hand, the Liberals hide behind the fact that this bill would not be charter compliant. On the other hand, they refuse to consider that of a bill that they bring forward. Instead, they say they will just take their chances on the Charter of Rights.

The other thing that I found quite disturbing by especially the two parliamentary secretaries was this. I do not recall any recognition of the victims in this particular case. In all of the speaking notes that both of them were delivering, there was—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): On a point of order, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the interruption of the member's speech.

At this point, there have been some consultations among the parties in the House, and if you seek it I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, at 2:30 p.m., the House not adjourn and instead be suspended until 3:30 p.m. or until a Minister rises on a point of order for the purpose of seeking unanimous consent to move a motion, whichever is earlier.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just want to remind the members that we are still proceeding.

The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill has the floor.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I believe what I was mentioning was the fact that in neither of the presentations by the parliamentary secretaries was there recognition of the victims of these particularly heinous crimes. What we have in all instances is victims having to go through that parole process time and time again.

One of the concerns that I have is that I know that the parliamentary secretary for justice, in his remarks, referenced the fact that this particular initiative is supported by neither the Elizabeth Fry Society nor the John Howard Society. From what I have seen of these two organizations, the bill is absolute evidence to me that this is on the right track.

One of the other things that was mentioned today by the parliamentary secretary for natural resources and I believe was also mentioned by the parliamentary secretary for justice was the fact that there would be increased costs associated with this. After sitting through the debates we have had on this particular budget that the current government brought forward, it seems to me that costs are the last thing that the government is concerned about.

They are hiding behind a bunch of weasel words in order to defeat what I believe is a bill for which the time has come. As has been mentioned by some of my colleagues, clearly the Liberals will oppose this because it is, in their words, another tough-on-crime initiative by the Conservatives. Yes, it is another initiative by the Conservatives to be tough on crime. However, it is time that the Liberal government stopped being soft on crime and allowed a free vote by its members to approve the bill.

• (1430)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 2:30 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired. Accordingly, the question is as follows.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 22, 2016, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 2:30 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House stands suspended until 3:30 p.m.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:30 p.m.)

• (1525)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 3:30 p.m.)

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations with the parties, and if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, September 19, 2016, provided that, for the purposes of any Standing Order, it shall be deemed to have been adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28 and be deemed to have sat on Monday, June 20, Tuesday, June 21, Wednesday, June 22, and Thursday, June 23, 2016; provided that, notwithstanding the Order of Tuesday, June 7, 2016, the deadline for filing the list of members to serve on the Special Committee on Electoral Reform be Thursday, June 23, 2016; that Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, be deemed read a third time and passed on division; and that the recorded divisions on motion M-43, on the motion for second reading of Bill C-221, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting), and on the motion for second reading of Bill C-229, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts (life sentences), be further deferred to Wednesday, September 21, 2016, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business.

Business of the House

• (1530)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. minister have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CITIZENSHIP ACT

(Bill C-6. On the Order: Government Orders:)

June 16, 2016—Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, be read the third time and passed—Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 3:30 p.m., pursuant to orders made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until Monday, September 19, 2016, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

I want to wish all members a great summer.

(The House adjourned at 3:30 p.m.)

APPENDIX

Address

of

The Honorable Barack Obama

President of the United States of America

to both Houses of Parliament

in the

House of Commons Chamber,

Ottawa

on Wednesday, June 29, 2016

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Mr. Barack Obama was welcomed by the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; by the Honourable George J. Furey, Speaker of the Senate; and by the Honourable Geoff Regan, Speaker of the House of Commons.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Speaker of the House of Commons): I call upon the right hon. Prime Minister.

[Translation]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Thank you, dear friends. It is wonderful to see you all today.

Mr. President, it is an honour to welcome you to Parliament. On behalf of all Canadians, welcome to our House.

Before we begin, I would like to ask everyone here today to join me in a moment of silence in memory of those killed and injured in yesterday's attack in Istanbul.

[A moment of silence observed]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. President, the House we sit in today has witnessed many extraordinary moments in history. It is where governments made the difficult decision to send young men and women to war, decisions that forever changed our country and the world. It was here, in 1922, that Agnes Macphail, our first female member of Parliament, showed generations of Canadian girls that, yes, they could.

Now, finally, this House gets to see a bromance up close. Thanks for making that possible, although I still think “dudeplomacy” is more accurate, but I'll get over it.

The truth is that while Barack and I are friends, it is a friendship that is far from unique.

[Translation]

Whether through family ties, friendships, and social media or through the \$2.4 billion worth of goods and services that cross the border every day, Canadians and Americans are connected in countless ways, so much so that President Kennedy's words to this House are as true today as ever: “What unites us is far greater than what divides us.”

Canadians and Americans are united in their pursuit of peace and prosperity. We all want real opportunities to succeed.

[English]

We understand that economic growth means most when it improves the lives of the people who work so hard to secure it, especially the middle class and those working hard to join it. We echo the values of President Roosevelt, who said, “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

Canadians and Americans are also united in our desire to leave to our children and grandchildren a better world, a safer, cleaner world than the one we inherited from our parents. That is an ambitious goal, but not one beyond our reach.

Today we made an important down payment on that cleaner future, with a new continental climate change strategy.

Finally, and at this moment critically, Canadians and Americans are united in our understanding that diversity is a source of strength, not weakness. Generation after generation, our countries have welcomed newcomers seeking liberty and the promise of a better life. Generation after generation, our identities and our economies have been enriched by these new perspectives, not threatened by them.

The North American idea that diversity is strength is our great gift to the world. No matter where you are from, nor the faith you profess, nor the colour of your skin, nor whom you love, you belong here. This is home.

Let us reaffirm today with our American cousins the spirit that, 153 years ago, Abraham Lincoln called, “the last best hope of earth”. Openness, diversity, inclusion, responsible self-government, freedom for all people—these ideas are as important today as they have ever been, and we will promote them together. On all these things, on economic opportunity, on the environment, on building a more inclusive and diverse society, Canadians and Americans agree.

[Translation]

People say that the President and I have a special relationship, but there is one thing they may not realize: we are inspired not by each other, but by the people whom we are privileged to serve. We are inspired by the mother who works overtime so that she can pay the rent, buy new clothes for her daughter, and save a little money to help her parents; by the retiree who gives his time to teach children about the importance of protecting wetlands; by communities that pull together in the wake of natural disaster; and by those who walk side by side and hand in hand, loudly and proudly proclaiming their right to love each other.

[English]

These are the kinds of stories I will think of when I consider President Obama's time in office.

History books will record the signature policies. What I will remember, what I hope we all will remember, are the lessons you taught us, not by executive order, but by example: the lesson that we are accountable to each other; that we are stronger together than we are apart; that we are more alike than we are different; and that there is a place in this world for a politics that is hopeful, hard-working, ambitious, and kind.

Mr. President, in your last State of the Union address, you said of the American people that they are clear-eyed, big-hearted, undaunted by challenge, and optimistic. I can think of no better way to describe their leader.

Barack, welcome to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama.

[*English*]

Mr. Barack Obama (President of the United States of America): Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Good evening.

[*English*]

Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, members of the House, members of the Senate, distinguished guests, and people of Canada, thank you for this extraordinary welcome, which tempts me to just shut up and leave because it can't get any better than this.

Obviously, I am grateful for the warm welcome. I am extraordinarily grateful for the close working relationship and friendship with your outstanding Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and his extraordinary wife, Sophie.

I think it is fair to say that much of this greeting is simply a reflection of the extraordinary alliance and deep friendship between Canadians and Americans.

Justin, thank you for your very kind words, and for the new energy and hope that your leadership has brought to your nation as well as to the alliance. My time in office may be nearing an end, but I know that Canada and the world will benefit from your leadership for years to come.

Canada was the very first country that I visited as President. It was in February. It was colder. I was younger. Michelle now refers to my hair as “the great white north”. On that visit I strolled around the ByWard Market—I tried a BeaverTail, which is better than it sounds—and I was struck then as I am again today by the warmth of Canadians.

I could not be more honoured to be joining you in this historic hall, this cathedral of freedom. We Americans can never say it enough: we could not ask for a better friend or ally than Canada. We could not. It is true, and we do not take it for granted. But that does not mean we do not have our differences.

As I understand it, one of the reasons the Queen chose this site for Parliament was that it was a safe distance from America's border, and I admit that in the War of 1812, American troops did some damage

to Toronto. I suspect there were some people up here who did not mind when the British returned the favour and burned down the White House.

In more recent times, however, the only forces crossing our borders are the armies of tourists and business people and families who are shopping and doing business and visiting loved ones. Our only battles take place on the hockey rink. Even there, there is an uneasy peace that is maintained. As Americans we, too, celebrate the life of Mr. Hockey himself, the late, great Gordie Howe, just as Canadians can salute American teams for winning more Stanley Cups in the NHL.

I told you I should have stopped after the applause.

In a world where too many borders are a source of conflict, our two countries are joined by the longest border of peace on earth. What makes our relationship so unique is not just proximity; it is our enduring commitment to a set of values, a spirit alluded to by Justin, that says that no matter who we are, where we come from, what our last names are, what faith we practise, here we can make of our lives what we will.

It was the grit of pioneers and prospectors who pushed west to cross a forbidding frontier, the dreams of generations—immigrants, refugees—who were welcomed to these shores, the hope of runaway slaves who went north on an underground railroad. “Deep in our history of struggle”, said Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Canada was the north star... The freedom road links us together.”

We are bound, as well, by the service of those who defended us at Flanders Fields, on the beaches of Normandy, in the skies of the Balkans, and more recently, in the mountains of Afghanistan and training bases in Iraq. Their sacrifice is reflected in the silent rows of Arlington and in the Peace Tower above us. Today we honour those who gave their lives for all of us.

We are linked together, as well, by the institutions we have built to keep the peace: the United Nations to advance our collective aspirations; a NATO alliance to ensure our security; NORAD, where Americans and Canadians stand watch side by side, and track Santa on Christmas Eve.

We are linked by a vast web of commerce that carries goods from one end of this continent to another. We are linked by the ties of friendship and family, in my case an outstanding brother-in-law from Burlington. I had to give Burlington a shout-out.

Our relationship is so remarkable precisely because it seems so unremarkable, which is why Americans often are surprised when our favourite American actor or singer turns out to be Canadian.

The point is, we see ourselves in each other, and our lives are richer for it. As President, I have deepened the ties between our countries, and because of the progress we have made in recent years, I can stand before you and say that the enduring partnership between Canada and the United States is as strong as it has ever been, and we are more closely aligned than ever before.

Yet we meet at a pivotal moment for our nations and for the globe. From this vibrant capital we can look upon a world that has benefited enormously from the international order that we helped build together, but we can see that same order increasingly strained by the accelerating forces of change.

The world is, by almost every measure, less violent than ever before, but it remains riven by old divisions and fresh hatreds. The world is more connected than ever before, but even as it spreads knowledge and the possibility of greater understanding between peoples, it also empowers terrorists who spread hatred and death, most recently in Orlando and Istanbul.

The world is more prosperous than ever before, but alongside globalization and technological wonders, we also see a rise in inequality and wage stagnation across the advanced economies, leaving too many workers and communities fearful of diminishing prospects, not just for themselves, but more importantly for their children. In the face of such rising uncertainty, it is not enough to look at aggregate growth rates, or stock prices, or the pace of digital innovation.

If the benefits of globalization accrue only to those at the very top, if our democracies seem incapable of assuring broad-based growth and opportunity for everyone, then people will push back out of anger or out of fear, and politicians, some sincere and some entirely cynical, will tap that anger and fear, harkening back to bygone days of order, predictability, and national glory, arguing that we must rebuild walls and disengage from a chaotic world or rid ourselves of the supposed ills brought on by immigrants, all in order to regain control of our lives.

We saw some of these currents at work this past week in the United Kingdom's referendum to leave the European Union. Despite some of the initial reactions, I am confident that the process can be managed in a prudent, orderly way. I expect that our friends on both sides of the Channel will develop a workable plan for how to move forward, and I am equally confident that the transatlantic values that we all share as liberal market-based democracies are deeper and stronger than any single event. While the circumstances of Brexit may be unique to the United Kingdom, the frustrations people felt are not.

The short-term fallout of Brexit can be sensibly managed, but the long-term trends of inequality, dislocation, and the resulting social division, those cannot be ignored. How we respond to the forces of globalization and technological change will determine the durability of an international order that ensures security and prosperity for future generations. Fortunately, the partnership between the United States and Canada shows the path we need to travel, for our history and our work together speak to a common set of values to build on, proven values, values that the Prime Minister spoke of in his introduction, values of pluralism and tolerance, rule of law, openness, global engagement in commerce and co-operation,

coupled with equal opportunity and an investment in our people at home.

As Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau once said, "A country, after all, is not something you build as the pharaohs built the pyramids, and then leave standing there to defy eternity. A country is something that is built every day out of certain basic shared values". What is true of countries is true of the world, and that is what I want to talk about today: how to strengthen our institutions to advance these commitments in a rapidly changing world.

Let me start with our shared economic vision. In all we do, our commitment to opportunity for all of our people has to be the centrepiece of our work. We are so fortunate because both of our countries are so well positioned to succeed in the 21st century. Our two nations know first-hand the awesome power of free markets and innovation. Canadians help run some of Silicon Valley's most innovative companies. Our students study at each other's world-class universities. We invest in research and development, and make decisions based on science and evidence. And it works. It is what has created these extraordinary economies of ours.

If the financial crisis and recent recession taught us anything, it is that economies do better when everyone has a chance to succeed. For a long time it was thought that countries had to choose between economic growth or economic inclusion, but it turns out that is a false choice. If a CEO makes more in a day than a typical employee makes in a year, that kind of inequality is not just bad for morale in the company, it turns out it is bad for the economy. That worker is not a very good customer for business.

If a young man in Ohio cannot pay his student loans, or a young woman in Ontario cannot pay her bills, that has ramifications for our economy. It tamps down the possibilities of growth. We need growth that is broad and lifts everybody up, including tax policies that do right by working families, and robust safety nets for those who fall on hard times.

As John Kenneth Galbraith once said, the common denominator of progress is our people. It is not numbers, it is not abstractions; it is how our people are doing.

Of course many who share this progressive, inclusive vision can be heard now arguing that investments in our people, protections for our workers, fair tax policies, these things are not enough. For them, globalization is inherently rigged towards the top 1%, and therefore what is needed is an end to trade agreements and various international institutions and arrangements that integrate national economies.

I understand that vision. I know why it is tempting. It seems that if we draw a line around our borders it will give us more control, particularly when the benefits of trade and economic integration are sometimes hard to see, or easy to take for granted, and very specific dislocations are obvious and real.

There is just one problem. Restricting trade or giving in to protectionism in this 21st century economy will not work. It will not work. Even if we want to, we cannot seal ourselves off from the rest of the world. The day after Brexit people looked around and said, “Oh, how is this going to work?”

The drag that economic weakness in Europe and China and in other countries is having on our own economies right now speaks to the degree to which we depend, our economies depend, and our jobs and our businesses depend on selling goods and services around the world.

Very few of our domestic industries can sever what is now truly a global supply chain. For those of us who truly believe that our economies have to work for everybody, the answer is not to try to pull back from our interconnected world; it is rather to engage with the rest of the world, to shape the rules so they are good for our workers and good for our businesses.

The experience between our two nations points the way. The United States and Canada have the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world, and we are stronger for it. It means a company in Quebec can create jobs in North Carolina, and a start-up in Toronto can attract investment from Texas.

The problem is that some economies in many of the fastest-growing regions of the world, particularly the Asia-Pacific region, do not always abide by the same rules. They impose unfair tariffs, or they suppress workers' rights, or they maintain low environmental standards that make it hard for our businesses to compete fairly.

With the trans-Pacific partnership, we have the ability to not only open up these markets to U.S. and Canadian products and to eliminate thousands of these unfair tariffs—which, by the way, we need to do, because they are already selling here under existing rules, but we are not selling as much as we should over there—but also to afford us the opportunity to increase protections for workers and the environment and to promote human rights, including with strong prohibitions against human trafficking and child labour.

In that way, our workers are competing on a level playing field, and our businesses are less prone to pursue a race to the bottom. When combined with increased investments in our own people's education, and skills and training, and infrastructure, and research and development, and connectivity, we can spur the kind of sustained growth that makes all of us better off, all of us.

The point is, we need to look forward, not look backward. More trade and more people-to-people ties can also help break down old divides.

I thank Canada for its indispensable role in hosting our negotiations with the Cuban government and for supporting our efforts to set aside half a century of failed policies to begin a new chapter with the Cuban people.

I know a lot of Canadians like going to Cuba, maybe because they have not had Americans crowding the streets and the beaches, but that is changing. As more Americans engage with the Cuban people, it will mean more economic opportunity and more hope for ordinary Cubans.

We also agree, as Americans and Canadians, that wealthy countries like ours cannot reach our full potential while others remain mired in poverty. That, too, is not going to change in this interconnected world. If there is poverty and disease and conflict in other parts of the world, it spills over, as much as we would like to pretend that we can block it out.

With our commitment to new sustainable development goals, we have the chance to end the outrage of extreme poverty. We can bring more electricity to Africa so that students can study at night and businesses can stay open. We can banish the scourge of malaria and Zika. We can realize our goal of the first AIDS-free generation. We can do that. It is within our grasp. We can help those who are working to replace corruption with transparent, accountable institutions that serve their people.

As leaders in global development, the United States and Canada understand that development is not charity. It is an investment in our future prosperity, because not only do such investments and policies help poor countries, they are going to create billions of customers for U.S. and Canadian products, and they will make less likely the spread of deadly epidemics to our shores and will stabilize parts of the world that threaten the security of our people.

In fact, both the United States and Canada believe our own security, and not just prosperity, is enhanced when we stand up for the rights of all nations and peoples to live in security and peace. Even as there are times when unilateral action is necessary to defend our people, we believe that, in a world where wars between great powers are far less likely but transnational threats like terrorism know no boundaries, our security is best advanced when nations work together.

We believe that disputes that do arise between nations should be, wherever possible, resolved peacefully with diplomacy, that international organizations should be supported, that multilateralism is not a dirty word, and certainly we are more secure when we stand united against terrorist networks and ideologies that have reached the very doorstep of this hall. We honour all those taken from us by violent extremists, including Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall.

With Canada's additional contributions, including training Iraqi forces, our coalition is on the offensive across Iraq, across Syria, and we will destroy the terrorist group ISIL. We will destroy it. We will continue helping local forces and sharing intelligence from Afghanistan to the Philippines so that we are pushing back comprehensively against terrorist networks. In contrast to the hatred and the nihilism of terrorists, we will work with partners around the world, including, particularly, Muslim communities, to offer a better vision and a path of development, opportunity, and tolerance, because they are and must be our partners in this effort.

Meanwhile, when nations violate international rules and norms, such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the United States and Canada stand united, along with our allies, in defence of our collective security. Doing so requires a range of tools, like economic sanctions, but it also requires that we keep our forces ready for 21st century missions and invest in new capabilities.

As your ally and as your friend, let me say that we will be more secure when every NATO member, including Canada, contributes its full share to our common security, because the Canadian Armed Forces are really good and if I can borrow a phrase, the world needs more Canada. NATO needs more Canada. We need you.

Just as we join together in our common defence, so must we work together diplomatically, particularly to avert war. Diplomacy results are rarely quick, but it turns out even the most intractable conflicts can be resolved. Here in our own hemisphere, just in the last few weeks, after half a century of war, Colombia is poised to achieve a historic peace. The nations of North America will be an important partner to Colombia going forward, including working to remove land mines.

Around the world, Canadian and American diplomats working together can make a difference. Even in Syria, where the agony and the suffering of the Syrian people tear at our hearts, our two nations continue to be leaders in humanitarian aid for the Syrian people. Although a true resolution of this conflict so far has eluded us, we know that the only solution to this civil war is a political solution so that the Syrian people can reclaim their country and live in peace, and Canadians and Americans are going to work as hard as we can to make that happen. I should add that here in the nation of Lester Pearson, we reaffirm our commitment to keep strengthening the peacekeeping that saves lives around the world.

There is one threat, however, that we cannot solve militarily, nor can we solve it alone, and that is the threat of climate change. Climate change is no longer an abstraction. It is not an issue we can put off for the future. It is happening now. It is happening here in our own countries.

The United States and Canada are both Arctic nations and last year when I became the first U.S. President to visit the Arctic, I could see the effects myself. Glaciers, like Canada's Athabasca Glacier, are melting at alarming rates. Tundra is burning. Permafrost is thawing. This is not a conspiracy. It is happening. Within a generation, Arctic sea ice may all but disappear in the summer.

Skeptics and cynics can insist on denying what is right in front of our eyes, but the Alaskan natives whom I met, whose ancestral villages are sliding into the sea, do not have that luxury. They know

climate change is real. They know it is not a hoax. From Bangladesh to the Pacific Islands, rising seas are swallowing land and forcing people from their homes. Around the world stronger storms and more intense droughts will create humanitarian crises and risk more conflict. This is not just a moral issue, and it is not just an economic issue, it is also an urgent matter of our national security.

For too long we have heard that confronting climate change means destroying our own economies. Let me just say that carbon emissions in the United States are back to where they were two decades ago, even as we have grown our economy dramatically over the same period. Alberta, the oil country of Canada, is working hard to reduce emissions while still promoting growth. If Canada can do it, and the United States can do it, the whole world can unleash economic growth and protect our planet. We can do this. We can do it. We can help lead the world to meet this threat.

Already, together in Paris, we achieved the most ambitious agreement in history to fight climate change. Now let us bring it into force this year. With our agreement with Mexico that we announced today, let us generate half the electricity on this continent from clean energy sources within a decade. That is achievable. Let us partner in the Arctic to help give its people the opportunity they deserve, while conserving the only home they know. Building on the idea that began in Montreal three decades ago, let us finally phase down dangerous HFC greenhouse gases.

This is the only planet we have and this may be the last shot we have to save it, and America and Canada are going to need to lead the way. We are going to have to lead the way.

Just as we are joined in our commitment to protecting the planet, we are also joined in our commitment to the dignity of every human being. We believe in the right of all people to participate in society. We believe in the right of all people to be treated equally, to have an equal shot at success. That is in our DNA; it is the basic premise of our democracies.

I think we can all agree that our democracies are far from perfect. They can be messy, and they can be slow. They can leave all sides of a debate unsatisfied.

Justin is just getting started. In case you had not figured that out, it is where this grey hair comes from.

More than any other system of government, democracy allows our most precious rights to find their fullest expression, enabling us, through the hard, painstaking work of citizenship, to continually make our countries better, to solve new challenges, to right past wrongs. Prime Minister, what a powerful message of reconciliation it was, here and around the world, when your government pledged a new relationship with Canada's first nations.

Democracy is not easy. It is hard. Living up to our ideals can be difficult, even in the best of times, and it can be harder when the future seems uncertain or when, in response to legitimate fears and frustrations, there are those who offer a politics of us versus them, a politics that scapegoats others: the immigrant, the refugee, someone who seems different from us. We have to call this mentality what it is: a threat to the values we profess, the values we seek to defend.

It is because we respect all people that the world looks to us as an example.

The colours of the rainbow flag have flown on Parliament Hill. They have lit up the White House. That is a testament to our progress but also to the work that remains to ensure equality for our fellow citizens who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

For our Muslim friends and neighbours, who run businesses and serve in our governments and in our armed forces, and are friends with our children, and play on our sports teams, we have to stand up against the slander and the hate levelled against those who look or worship differently. That is our obligation. That is who we are. That is what makes America special. That is what makes Canada special.

Here in Canada, a woman has already risen to the highest office in the land. In America, for the first time, a woman is the presumptive nominee of a major party, and perhaps, President. I have a bias on these issues, but our work will not be finished until all women in our countries are truly equal, paid equally, treated equally, given the same opportunities as men, when our girls have the same opportunities as our boys. That is who we need to be.

Let me say this, because I do not feel particularly politically correct on this issue, I do not believe that these are American values or Canadian values or western values. I believe and Justin believes, and I hope all of you believe, these are universal values. We must be bold in their defence at home and around the world and not shy away from speaking up on behalf of these values of pluralism, tolerance, and equality.

I fear sometimes that we are timid in defence of these values. That is why we will continue to stand up for those inalienable rights here in our own hemisphere, in places like Cuba and Venezuela, but also in more distant lands, for the rights of citizens in civil society to speak their mind and work for change, for the rights of journalists to report the truth, for the rights of people of all faiths to practise their religions freely. Those things are hard, but they are right. They are not always convenient, but they are true.

In the end, it is this respect for the dignity of all people, especially the most vulnerable among us, that perhaps, more than anything else, binds our two countries together. Being Canadian and being American is not about what we look like or where our families came from. It is about our commitment to a common creed and that is why, together, we must not waver in embracing our values, our best selves, and that includes our history as a nation of immigrants. We must continue to welcome people from around the world.

The vibrancy of our economies is enhanced by the addition of new striving immigrants. This is not just a matter of economics. When refugees escape barrel bombs and torture, and migrants cross deserts and seas seeking a better life, we cannot simply look the other way.

We certainly cannot label as possible terrorists vulnerable people who are fleeing terrorists.

We can insist that the process is orderly and we can insist that our security is preserved. Borders mean something, but at moments like this, we are called upon to see ourselves in others, because we were all once strangers. If you were not a stranger, your grandparents were strangers, your great-grandparents were strangers. They did not all have their papers ready. They fumbled with language, faced discrimination, had cultural norms that did not fit. At some point, somewhere, your family was an outsider. Therefore, the mothers, the fathers, the children we see today are us, and we cannot forsake them. As Americans and Canadians, we will continue to welcome refugees and we can ensure that we are doing so in a way that maintains our security. We can and we will do both.

We are increasing our support to Central America so that fewer families and children attempt the dangerous journey north. This fall, the United Nations will host a global summit on refugees, because, in the face of this crisis, more nations need to step up and meet our basic obligations to our fellow human beings. It will be difficult and budgets are tight. There are legitimate issues and not everybody is going to be helped, but we can try.

People of goodwill and compassion show us the way: Greek islanders pulling families to shore; Germans handing out sweets to migrants at railway stations; a synagogue in Virginia inviting Syrian refugees to dinner. Here in Canada the world has been inspired as Canadians across this country have opened up their hearts and their homes. We've watched citizens knitting toques to keep refugees warm in the winter, and we've seen your Prime Minister welcome new arrivals at the airport and extend the hand of friendship and say, "You're safe at home now".

We see the refugees who feel that they have a special duty to give back, and seize the opportunity of a new life, such as the girl who fled Afghanistan by donkey and camel and jet plane, and who remembers being greeted in this country by helping hands and the sound of robins singing today, and who serves in this chamber and in the cabinet because Canada is her home.

A country is not something you build as the pharaohs built the pyramids; a country is something that is built every day out of certain basic, shared values. How true that is. How blessed we are to have had people before us, day by day, brick by brick, build these extraordinary countries of ours. How fortunate, how privileged we are to have the opportunity to now, ourselves, build this world anew. What a blessing.

As we go forward together on that freedom road, let us stay true to the values that make us who we are: Canadians and Americans, allies and friends, now and forever.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

[*Applause*]

[*English*]

Hon. George Furey (Speaker of the Senate): Mr. President, Prime Minister, Madame Grégoire Trudeau, Mr. Speaker of the House of Commons, Excellencies, hon. senators, members of the House of Commons, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. President, it is a great honour to have you with us here today, and I would like to thank you for addressing this joint session of Parliament.

[*English*]

The obvious enthusiasm with which you have been received has already spoken far more eloquently than anything I might add about the admiration that we have for you.

As our two countries both seek to advance the same principles that you have already mentioned, we share the same hopes and dreams, not only for ourselves but for those of our brother nations as well. Because of this shared belief in upholding these principles, Canadians from across this great country have followed your presidency closely, and we have watched you face many challenges. Through it all you have persisted with calm, with reason, and with an unwavering clarity of purpose. The result has been an extraordinary legacy for the American people and for the whole of the international community.

The great American philosopher and war veteran Philip Hallie, when writing about the turmoil in the world, said that we are, each of us, living in the eye of a hurricane. The destructive and cruel power in the world, of both nature and of fellow human beings, is always nearby, swirling around us. But in the centre, in the eye of the hurricane, there can be peace and calm. Our job, individually and collectively, is to do our best to push out the borders of the eye of that storm, to expand the calm, to expand the reasonable and the good that is and can be in the world we live in.

Mr. President, in a world that has so often seemed riven by ways of anger and destruction, by unimaginable acts of violence and forces beyond our control, you have stood tall. You have stood tall for the power of reason over passion and principle over politics.

In your very own words, from *The Audacity of Hope*, you have cautioned us that “we will need to remind ourselves, despite all our

differences, just how much we share: common hopes, common dreams, and above all, a bond that will not break.”

In closing, Mr. President, on behalf of all of my parliamentary colleagues, and indeed on behalf of all Canadians, I thank you for the very inspiring words you shared with us today, for your years of leadership in the world, and most especially, for your very strong and enduring friendship with our great country, Canada.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

[*Applause*]

[*English*]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Speaker of the House of Commons): Mr. President, Prime Minister, Madame Grégoire Trudeau, Mr. Speaker of the Senate, Excellencies, hon. senators, members of the House of Commons, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. President, on behalf of everyone here, I thank you for your speech. We are so very pleased to see you in Ottawa again and to welcome you when the city is at its loveliest.

[*English*]

As you mentioned, sir, the last time you dropped by, in February of 2009, the weather was decidedly cooler, so all of Ottawa still remembers that you braved the cold to stop in at a nearby bakery to pick up some maple leaf cookies for your daughters.

Sir, you mentioned the few flecks of grey you have in your hair. When our newly minted Prime Minister Trudeau visited you last fall in Washington, you very kindly tried to prepare him for the greying effect of leadership, telling him, “if, in fact, you plan to keep your dark hair, then you have to start dyeing it early”. May I just say to you both, it could be worse.

There is an inscription embedded in granite on the International Friendship Monument that marks the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway and power project, dedicated by Queen Elizabeth II and U.S. Vice President Nixon near Prescott, Ontario, in 1959. It reads as follows:

This stone bears witness to the common purpose of two nations, whose frontiers are the frontiers of friendship, whose ways are the ways of freedom, and whose works are the works of peace.

[*Translation*]

It would take too long to list the many ways in which Canada and the United States are working together to help create better lives not only for their own people, but for all of humanity. However, over the years, several of our countries' leaders have commented on the close friendship that unites us.

[*English*]

Almost 40 years ago, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau remarked, in a speech to Congress, “The friendship between our two countries is so basic, so non-negotiable, that it has long since been regarded by others as the standard for enlightened international relations”.

When you last visited us, in 2009, sir, you echoed those sentiments, saying, “As neighbours, we are so closely linked that sometimes we may have a tendency to take our relationship for granted, but the very success of our friendship throughout history demands that we renew and deepen our cooperation here in the 21st century”. As a good neighbour, here you are again doing just that.

Mr. President, thank you for your visit, for your friendship, and for strengthening the enduring ties of family that bind our two nations together.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, goodbye, and have a safe trip home.

[*Applause*]

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