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(HANSARD)

Friday, June 16, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 16, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)
[English]

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise before the House to speak to Bill C-49, which proposes concrete measures to respond to several concerns of Canadians regarding transportation. We can agree here on the importance of a transportation system that is safe and secure, green, innovative, and integrated; that contributes to our trade and the economic growth of our cities and communities; and that creates a cleaner environment for our children, not to mention the well-being of Canadians.

On this last point, I want to focus for a moment on one of the important aspects of this bill: the protection of our rights as air passengers. As everyone knows, air transportation has become more widely available and accessible by the public due to a relative decrease in price for this mode of transportation. Canadian travellers are concerned about the value of the tickets they buy, their comfort, and the availability of flights. They are also concerned about how they are treated as consumers by airline companies. This was highlighted in recent media reports about certain airlines.

In contrast, the context in which airline companies operate imposes significant costs associated with safety and security, both in the air and on the ground. Increased availability in the airline industry has contributed to making our aviation system more complex, with both the growing number of passengers transported and the amount of air traffic, which may result in delays for passengers. Air carriers are faced with a relative decrease in their performance, not only because of sustained competition but because of pressure from consumers for lower airfares. Comfort and luxury, once offered to passengers on airplanes, have given way to new

practices that are leading airline companies to offer a multitude of à-la-carte services to passengers to remain viable. For example, companies no longer hesitate to make their passengers pay for the size or weight of their baggage, seat selection, and drinks or meals during flights. Carriers have also resorted to overbooking to maximize their revenue. The advent of ultra-low-cost carriers in the airline industry, such as Ryanair or easyJet, has also pushed traditional airlines to re-examine their original business models. Carriers are trying to do more to maximize the use of their aircraft and develop new revenue generation strategies. This has contributed to reduced passenger comfort and general satisfaction when they travel by air.

Let us return to us, the passengers. In general, the main issues we face relate to delays, cancellations, being denied boarding as a result of overbooking, lost or delayed baggage, a lack of information communicated to us when things are not proceeding as planned, long tarmac delays and wait times, or even seat assignments when parents or guardians travel with young children.

Several countries have therefore chosen to legislate or regulate certain practices in the airline industry by establishing mandatory measures or minimum levels of passenger services offered by carriers. It is time for Canada to align its current approach with practices that are in effect elsewhere in the world for the benefit of both travellers and our country.

Bill C-49 proposes to develop an approach that protects the rights of air passengers, and will meet the expectations of passengers, by establishing a clear, predictable, and fair framework that governs the practices and responsibilities of the airline industry while not imposing an economic burden or undue operational restrictions on it. In this regard, Bill C-49 proposes adopting a legislative framework within which the Canadian Transportation Agency can establish detailed and specific regulations that address common situations we face as passengers and thus establish standards and minimum service and compensation levels we can claim when our travel plans are affected.

• (1010)

Moreover, Bill C-49 would gather various indicators and data relating to passenger experience that could assist the government in better understanding, and if necessary, acting on situations or problems travellers may face.

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In closing, a new approach to protecting the rights of air passengers could contribute to improving the general satisfaction of users. The government is actively working on this. However, it would be wishful thinking to believe that all concerns or criticisms of carriers or the airline industry made by passengers would be resolved. The reality in Canada is that flights will continue to be affected by the harshness and vagaries of our climate. It is not guaranteed that an approach, however prescriptive and broad it may be, will contribute to limiting the impact on users in such situations, even if it allows them to benefit from some mitigation measures, where applicable.

I ask my hon. colleagues to support Bill C-49, which aims to implement several measures to make a transportation system that is safe and secure, green, innovative, and integrated and that will contribute to our economic growth and a cleaner environment, not to mention the well-being of Canadians when they travel.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been a strong advocate for air passenger rights. We have known for many years that passengers want to be more empowered or to at least be treated better overall. This is the type of legislation that would assist in setting a framework for providing guarantees.

I am wondering if my colleague would share some of her thoughts on the importance of getting legislation of this nature through the House.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, consumer protection and increasing the ability of passengers to travel across, out of, and into Canada would, by extension, increase our economy. By facilitating transportation, we would encourage more economic growth and tourism. Such legislation would provide a safe network for Canadians to go above and beyond and achieve their full potential, whether it be for economic or entertainment reasons. It would provide a safety net for passengers.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I am sure she appreciated the opportunity to have her say on Bill C-49, a bill that amends 13 other laws.

Yesterday, the minister said that over 80% of the legislative changes are specific to a single act. The thing is, amending just one section of an act can determine whether someone is charged with sexual assault or not. The number of sections amended does not matter as much as what those sections do.

My colleague must have been pleased to have a chance to talk about this bill. Does she believe that what she has to say or what I have to say is more important than what other members want to say but cannot because the government decided to limit debate on this bill?

[English]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing the member's speech on this very important topic.

The hon. member talked about the different acts Bill C-49 seeks to amend. I can say that 80% of the bill is specific to the topic at hand.

Debate in the House is very important. It is crucial to our democracy, and I am very happy to be participating in this debate. I know that many members have participated and will participate on legislation that affects Canadians on a daily basis.

• (1015)

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague whether the Liberals would agree to divide Bill C-49 since it is an omnibus bill that amends 13 laws, as my colleague just said. We think this is yet another sloppy bill. The only measure we can support is the one for grain shippers that help western producers get their crop to market, but all of these measures would come into force on August 1, 2017, which is a bit too soon. Because it is part of an omnibus bill that amends 13 laws, it will be impossible to implement all of this at the same time and help grain producers.

Would my colleague be prepared to separate the section for grain producers from the rest of the bill so we can at least agree on that one?

[English]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-49 is an all-encompassing approach to improving our transportation system. It is really about evidence, increasing security, and increasing access for Canadians to transportation within and across Canada.

I encourage the member to express her views on this bill. I look forward to the debate continuing today and to comments members have in this House.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the question that I asked my colleague earlier, which was about the fact that 80% of the amendments pertain to a single law.

Bill C-49 is an omnibus bill that amends 13 laws, and 80% of those amendments pertain to a single law. Does that mean that the other laws that are being amended are not important? Does that mean that, when just one provision of another law is amended, it is not important? That is exactly what we were trying to tell the minister. Why is the government insisting on introducing omnibus bills that cover so many topics?

We are talking about rail transportation, financial participation, a passengers' bill of rights, video surveillance on trains, and more. The government wants us to make a decision on all of these topics, which are so very different, with just one vote on a bill that amends 13 laws.

Does my colleague think that one law is more important than another?

[English]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member opposite and his party know all about omnibus bills and their use of them in the past.

I assure the member that this bill is an all-encompassing approach that looks to understand the full scope of the issue and how to address the issues Canadians have told us they face.

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I look forward to the speeches from members in the House, and I look forward to the passage of this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech and for the extraordinary work that she does in her riding.

Could my colleague explain how the bill will save passengers time, improve their comfort, and lower the cost of tickets, things that affect them almost every day?

[*English*]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, this bill seeks to provide cleaner transportation and more security, more safety, more reliability, and more responsiveness to the needs of Canadians. I am sure all members in this House can appreciate that. We use our airlines frequently, and we are directly impacted by what happens with our airline systems across Canada.

Having increased accountability by airlines would increase the quality of service and encourage more travel, safer travel, and more reliable travel for Canadians across the country.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to what I was saying earlier about the fact that the bill contains a number of other bills, one of which amends the Coasting Trade Act.

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to leave that law alone. However, in the end, the government broke its promise and is giving ships registered in other countries an unfair competitive advantage, without any reciprocal measures. Canadian shipowners will not have access to the European Union, but EU shipowners will have access to Canada.

Does my colleague agree with that? The government is undermining our shipowners' ability to compete fairly. Do the Liberals support that?

[*English*]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, there were major consultations done on the bill. We consulted with all those impacted. We understand that, as a government, we have a role to play in increasing competition, but also ensuring that our consumers are protected. The bill does just that with respect to transportation. It provides for more reliable transportation, more protection of consumers, and for more accountability of airlines to consumers, while also ensuring that the level of competition is still there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and add my remarks to the debate on Bill C-49.

Before I begin, I would like to take a second to acknowledge a very poignant moment today in the House. I was here when the Clerk, Marc Bosc, arrived for his last shift here in the House of Commons as Acting Clerk of the House, as we have heard from a number of sources.

Mr. Bosc was the person who welcomed the members who had been newly elected in 2015 to the House. It was a very emotional time for us. To us, Mr. Bosc is the Clerk of the House, because he is the only one we have ever known. Mr. Bosc has always been there for us and has always shown the utmost professionalism. He was respected by all, at least by everyone on this side of the House. Mr. Bosc has always served with enormous professionalism, and we have always respected him.

For me, Mr. Speaker, it was a very poignant moment to see him enter the chamber this morning and take his place before us, to begin his final sitting day in the House of Commons. I trust that Mr. Bosc will always hold a place of honour here in Parliament.

In closing, we found out about this rather suddenly. I would have liked the opposition parties to be consulted more on the process to replace the Clerk. No offence to the incoming Clerk, but I just wanted to take a few moments on behalf of my colleagues, myself, and my family, who shared in all the emotion that we experience when we first arrive here, to acknowledge Mr. Bosc's excellent work.

Mr. Bosc has been here much longer than I have, but like me, he has seen his share of governments and their different approaches to ensuring that their bills get passed.

Bill C-49 is another example of the government using closure to prevent giving the opposition opportunities to speak to this bill or criticize it. By the minister's own admission, this bill is quite complex, and it will make significant changes to Canada's transportation industry. Even so, we will have just a few of hours of debate to discuss it and raise what I think are some very important points.

Why is this especially troubling in the case of Bill C-49? It is because this bill does not amend just one or two sections or one or two acts. It amends 13 pieces of legislation.

For the past two days, I have been listening to the arguments given by the Minister of Transport who says that the opposition is overreacting, since 80% of the changes proposed in Bill C-49 will amend just one law, and therefore the opposition has no reason to protest so loudly. What? How is that an argument? It is as though one section of an act were more important than another. If the 20% of Bill C-49's clauses that amend 12 other laws are not all that important, why bother including them? Why are we talking about them? If they are not that important, if everything is focused on just one law and the opposition is outraged, why keep the other 20% of the amendments? Why not remove them and create another bill with those amendments and consider it separately? It does not matter, because everything is in the same bill.

Clearly, this argument simply does not hold water. It is particularly troubling. As members know, I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities since I arrived in this place. Obviously, transportation affects all Canadians in every field. Transportation has an impact on the daily lives of all Canadians, whether we are talking about the transportation of goods or people.

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•(1025)

They say this is a complex bill, that they will not give the opposition much time to talk, and that, since 80% of it is specific to one act, there is no need for us to protest so loudly. I think the minister should go back to the drawing board, take another look at what is in his bill, and think carefully about the repercussions that each amendment in Bill C-49 will have on the day-to-day lives of all Canadians.

Here is the lowdown on Bill C-49. The Liberals' omnibus transportation bill will establish a new air passenger rights regime; liberalize international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers; enable the Minister of Transport to consider and approve joint ventures by two or more airlines; update the Canadian freight system; require railways to install audio-video recorders in locomotives; expand the Governor in Council's powers to require major railway companies to provide rate, service, and performance data; and amend the Canada Marine Act to allow port authorities to access Canada infrastructure bank loans.

However, there is nothing there. According to the Minister of Transport, a few hours of discussion are enough to address all of these issues, since he did not think that the opposition had anything relevant to say during the first hours of this debate. Why would the government want to continue listening to opposition members provide supposedly irrelevant information when it can simply expedite the process by muzzling them? At least, that is what the minister seems to think.

Since when are opinions that differ from the government's irrelevant? The big problem with the Liberals is that, when we do not agree with them, on this or any other issue, they feel threatened and under attack. They think that anyone who does not share their opinion and does not think like they do is irrelevant, and so they have no reason to take any interest in what those people have to say in the House. That explains a lot.

It explains a lot, such as Motion No. 6 and the many time allocation motions that have been imposed on us since the beginning of this session. It explains the infamous discussion document that the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons tabled to supposedly improve the way the House operates. When we read that document carefully, we learned that the Liberals' intention was once again to avoid hearing what the opposition parties had to say.

It is not complicated. When things do not sit well with the government, it decides to muzzle dissenting voices that cast grey clouds over Liberal sunny ways. Well, I have news for the Liberal government. The official opposition and all the other opposition parties, I am sure, have no intention of staying quiet. We have no intention of letting changes slip through. We have no intention of completely agreeing with everything the Liberals put in front of us. We have no intention of being the people who enable the Liberal Party to push through their entire election platform. That is not our role here. Our role is to present criticisms.

As an aside, let us talk about the Liberal platform. It did not take long for the Liberals to realize that much of what they wanted to do is simply impossible. They promised big spending and small deficits. They kept only one of those promises. They are spending big, but

they have come to realize that this requires huge deficits. That is something the government does not want the opposition to criticize. They would like us to keep quiet and just watch them and applaud them because they really like applause. That is not what we are going to do. That is not our role.

Let us come back to Bill C-49 because it seems like we are off topic, that we just keep providing an overview, and that we keep talking about everything but Bill C-49. Let us talk about Bill C-49 and what it amends. As I was saying, it significantly amends 13 different laws and has repercussions on three modes of transportation. This legislative measure will weaken legislative protections for shippers and western Canadian farmers.

•(1030)

We want to concentrate on proactive measures to make travel less expensive and more convenient for all travellers. This would include abolishing the carbon tax, instead of the Liberals' plan to establish reactive compensation that will benefit only a small segment of the population.

This bill provides very little detail about the proposed air passengers' bill of rights, and it does not have the support, in its current form, of many passengers' rights advocates. Also, port authorities and their wholly owned subsidiaries will have access to loans and loan guarantees from the Canada infrastructure bank. There is an inconsistency here. That does not make any sense to me, since this bank does not exist yet. It remains a proposal for now, and it is held up in another house, for very good reasons.

Like us, the senators think that the infrastructure bank warrants its own bill, given the impact it will have and the \$15 billion that the government intends to provide to it. That is \$15 billion from Canadian taxpayers to be given to a board of directions to manage on our behalf without any accountability to Parliament.

These points alone justify our opposition to the passage of Bill C-44, which is currently being studied on the other side in its current form and includes all these budget measures as well as creating the infrastructure bank. I hope that people will get the message.

In Bill C-49, they already assume the outcome. Port authorities are being given approval to access loans from the non-existent infrastructure bank. What I do not understand is that the government, ever since it began telling us about the infrastructure bank, keeps saying that it will be an independent bank. As an aside, the process to find the president for this non-existent bank has already started.

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Therefore, the infrastructure bank, which does not exist, will be made up of a so-called independent board of directors who will manage the money given to them by the Liberal government. At the same time, these supposedly independents will be told that they have to invest \$1.3 billion in Montreal's Réseau électrique métropolitain and provide loans to port authorities. To sum up, here is an independent infrastructure bank that will not be independent and does not yet exist. However, we are being asked to approve a clause of the bill that will allow port authorities to secure loans from this infrastructure bank that will be created in the near future.

It is clear that something is not working, that they are improvising, and that the minister wants to move quickly. We do not understand why he insists on moving so quickly. Some will tell us that it is because they want to settle the matter of Bill C-30 before it expires on July 31 in order to protect western grain producers in their rate negotiations with the railways. That could be the case, but that is not what is going to happen, since even if Bill C-49 is rushed through today or Monday and is referred to committee, the committee meetings are scheduled for September.

The committee was prepared to meet in July if the government agreed to hive off all the measures concerning Bill C-30. That would have allowed us to study them quickly in order to avoid having a legal vacuum for western grain producers. These meetings could have been held before August 1. The committee was prepared to meet in the middle of summer, during vacation—at least, the opposition members of the committee were. That would have been a major sacrifice for some of us to show up and study a bill to help western grain producers.

• (1035)

Why was the official opposition prepared to do that? Because we get that this is important. Right now, grain producers are concerned about what is going to happen this fall if there is a legal vacuum. We do not know exactly how the market will react. These people are negotiating right now.

We see another problem here. I myself am not a grain producer. However, several of my House of Commons colleagues represent western Canadian ridings, and they know a lot about grain production. From what I understand, grain producers usually harvest their crops in the fall. What time of year is busiest for grain producers? The fall, when they are bringing in the harvest.

The government is going to ask grain producers to testify on Bill C-49, which will have a major impact on their future, in the fall. The government is going to ask them to leave their machinery and their fields so they can come testify in Ottawa in September. That is when they should be in their fields doing their work, doing what we support them doing, and making their contribution to Canada's economy by producing and working. This makes no sense.

That is why the opposition was prepared to agree to move quickly on that part of the bill. We were prepared to let many things slide in order to move quickly. Why? Canada's grain producers are far more important to us than adding another number to our legislative record. The farmers need us to come to Ottawa to protect them, stand up for them, and help them succeed. That is our role.

If we are not taking extraordinary measures to get Bill C-30 passed before the deadline, then there is no urgency to justify speeding up the process and muzzling the opposition. The government probably does not want to let the opposition speak because it does not want to hear arguments like mine in defence of western grain producers.

I want to talk about another initiative that was very well received by the public, I admit. This was the main point in the message from the Minister of Transport. Indeed, he wants to create an air passengers' bill of rights. This is urgent. Like all of us, all Canadians who have flown over the past few months have seen the coverage of some of the dramatic incidents that have taken place in the U.S. Since the bill announced the creation of an air passengers' bill of rights, we thought we would get some information. We thought we might be told what to expect, but no, all the minister did was mandate the Canadian Transportation Agency to begin consultations that will eventually lead to regulations and, at some point, the air passengers' bill of rights.

Do we really need a bill to ask the Canadian Transportation Agency to begin consultations on a bill of rights? It makes no sense. There is no need for urgency when it comes to Bill C-49, apart from the legislation protecting western Canadian grain farmers; on that, we agree.

We believe that the only way to go and the only explanation or justification to make this measure acceptable, to make this gag order acceptable, would have been to split the bill and immediately pass the measures in Bill C-30, in order to make certain temporary measures permanent. We were ready to go ahead with that, but everything else could have waited; there is no need to panic. The only emergency here for this government is to silence the opposition. The government is not ready. It is improvising and presenting measures that just do not make sense.

For all these reasons, and despite a few good measures in the bill, the official opposition cannot support Bill C-49.

• (1040)

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why has my hon. colleague spent over half of his time talking about things that had very little to do with the bill? Most of the conversation was about us not providing enough time to talk about it.

I would like to understand why quantity and quality are not necessarily equated. One could be succinct and point out critical points that may not be strengths of a bill in a significantly shorter time. When we look at time for debate, the debate should be around the substance, the precise criticisms, the highlighting of the oversights or the challenges within a bill. That is the point of being in the House: to highlight the specifics that perhaps the opposition does not feel are the strengths of a motion or a bill.

Could the member opposite provide three significant focused and specific challenges with the bill that he feels must be changed?

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[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I would ask my hon. colleague, who said that I spent over half of my time talking about things that had nothing to do with Bill C-49, to withdraw her remarks.

I will check, but I am sure that I spent 100% of my time talking about the impact of Bill C-49. The fact that we are debating this bill when they are imposing time allocation is a fact that has to do with Bill C-49. Perhaps she misunderstood my intention.

One clause alone has major repercussions for western grain farmers—the one that extends them protection and makes it permanent. What, then, gives my colleague the right to say that my remarks are irrelevant? I would like her to explain herself to western grain farmers and answer that question.

Why does she not consider these measures to be important for western grain farmers?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I wish to raise two points that he talked about in his speech. It seems to me that the theme both these points have in common is the arrogance of this government. The fact that there will be a period of time between when the old rules expire and when the rules proposed in Bill C-49 are brought in is a real problem for western grain farmers. This does not seem to be a problem for the Liberals; they look after their own when they should be fulfilling their duty to work on solving the problems of western grain growers.

The member also mentioned the fact that in the bill, an integral part of the transportation strategy is the infrastructure bank, a contentious subject here in the House of Commons as well as in the other place. The bill may not pass in time. When the Liberals stated that something Parliament has yet to vote on will be a part of their transportation strategy, their arrogance was on full display yet again.

Have I forgotten other aspects of the member's speech touching on this theme of arrogance?

● (1045)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which is very relevant and gives me an opportunity to talk about another equally important topic, the relevance of the opposition.

My colleague also read the bill and saw the impact that Bill C-49 will have on all of the areas he just talked about. In response to the statement about how we are only concerned with a few issues, I would say that only a few members will have the opportunity to speak. If the government would let us all talk, we could hear people's opinions on every aspect of Bill C-49. Since the government is muzzling us and denying us the right to speak, we have to focus on the essentials. We have to focus on what affects us directly and what will have the greatest impact on Canadians. If the Liberals would give us more time, we would address Bill C-49 in its entirety, from beginning to end.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I was shocked to hear him say in his speech that the members on his side of the House were going to reject all of the Liberals'

proposals. Is that how he plans to help Canada and Canadians, by rejecting everything the government is proposing to improve the lives of Canadians and make our country more prosperous?

I am asking my colleague whether he will withdraw that statement and correct himself?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to withdraw those words if I had said them, but I did not. Therefore I will not withdraw them.

I thought them, though, but I restrained myself because sometimes the Liberals do in fact include some good measures in their bills. There are some, in Bill C-49, that we could support, particularly with respect to western grain producers. We are prepared to support them, and we wish to do so.

If the government did the right thing, which is to split the bill, it would have the opposition's support to pass the positive measures introduced by the Liberals. There are not that many. That is why I did not say it. I thought it, though.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to explore the questions from the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill. She was quite indignant when asking my colleague to give three reasons on Bill C-49. The irony is that the Liberals are limiting debate on all of these subjects.

We have a government that has only passed 19 bills in its time in office, and now the Liberals are using time allocation on virtually every piece of legislation, limiting debate, yet they are not giving any reason for that. This is a bill that addresses rail, marine, and air safety, and the Liberals are limiting debate on it. Then when we ask questions or give speeches here in the House, they suggest that it is not sufficient debate.

I would ask my colleague what he thinks about the Liberal government not permitting debate or even the questioning of their decisions in our nation's interests. It is quite concerning, and I would like my colleague's comments on that.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I find that, in telling us that, my colleague makes an absolutely extraordinary point. I am a fairly new member, and I do not have my colleague's experience. By the way, he ran an excellent leadership campaign, and I wanted to point that out. He learned a lot because he travelled across Canada and saw the effects of Liberal proposals. He very much appreciates why the opposition needs time here, in the House, to ask questions and point out the flaws. They may not like it, but it is simply because our role is to find what does not work and to propose better legislation.

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What we want is to improve the lives of Canadians. It is not just to introduce bills quickly, with a lot of flash and photos, and then go through Parliament and arrange things to avoid uncomfortable moments when decisions are questioned, and finally take another photo when the bill is passed. We want to do real work for Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to speak to Bill C-49, the so-called transportation modernization act.

Before I go any further, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Saskatoon—University. I look forward to his presentation on this as well. He comes from a neighbouring province to the west, and he also has a great knowledge of what is required in this field.

It is a privilege to put on the record again, as I had the opportunity to do with our opposition day motion on Monday this week, how important the movement of grain is to western Canadian farmers, as my colleague just said. However, it is not just important to the farmers but to the whole industry and economy of western Canada, which affects us all. We are one of the largest exporters of grain in the world with regard to the percentage that we grow.

I think the changes that have come forward in the bill would be somewhat detrimental, although there are a few that will work very well on the grain side.

Bill C-30 was brought in by my colleagues when we were in government due to the conditions that took place in the Prairies in the winter-fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014. I will never forget that because that is when I was elected as a member. Having farmed in western Canada all my life prior to getting into politics, I certainly know the importance of making sure that we have a reliable system of moving grain and exporting it, not just for the farm community but for the logistics of the rail companies and the port authorities and facilities on the west coast, east coast, and in Thunder Bay. At that time, there was also some grain movement through the Port of Churchill.

Before I get into too much of that, I would like to say that what we need to do in the Prairies with regard to the evolution of the transportation system, as we move forward, is to make sure that we look at processing more of these grains on the Prairies than we have in the past. I was in the room with the minister from Regina—Wascana, which I believe was his constituency at the time, in 1995, when the Crow benefit changed and was taken away. I lobbied to make sure that happened. I did that because my farm was located halfway between Vancouver and Montreal at the time, and we would have been faced with the highest freight rates on the Prairies, right in my kitchen.

We did that so that our future family members, our children, in western Canada would have a job locally by processing more of that grain. That is one of the key reasons for a lot of the lobbying that went on in those days to make changes not just to the rail system but to the way grain was marketed. My colleagues in the House have also brought forward the opportunity to allow farmers to sell their own grain and do their own marketing, which is key to the future

development of more processing plants and those types of facilities in the Prairies.

The processing of grain is an example of how important this can be. We have rail lines that begin in Winnipeg and pretty well run parallel out to Portage la Prairie, and then branch off to Calgary and Edmonton through the west. That is why the interswitching that my colleague has brought in, and extending it from 30 kilometres to 160 kilometres, was a great advantage for farmers and competitive rates in the Prairies. It did not only work for them but also for the grain companies. It gave them the ability to have a bit more competition.

The types of things that we gained from the 160-kilometre range of interswitching would be taken away in this new bill, Bill C-49, which I think is a detriment to the longevity of the competitiveness we could have. One example is that we can only do it at a point where that interswitching is available. If one's grain is in northern Alberta or the Peace River areas of northern B.C., the first point of interswitching is Kamloops.

Of course, then one cannot really have much competition for all of that grain in northern Alberta and the Peace River area, if one cannot get access to a competitive rate until it gets to Kamloops. I worked there in the early seventies. I know the city well. It is a great place. I know my colleague from Kamloops agrees with me. This would not allow the type of rate competitiveness that we could have seen in the Prairies.

● (1055)

Bill C-30 also mandated the rail companies to carry half a million tonnes each of grain per week to catch up on some of the backlog that was there at that time. This bill just allows them to continue to talk. It does not mandate a level of grain shipments. That was for a period of time until that backlog got taken care of, which happened later on that summer. We hope we do not see those kinds of conditions, but we do have cold weather on a regular basis in western Canada in wintertime and there was a lot more at stake than just the cold weather in forcing that grain back on to the Prairie farms at that time.

There may be some opportunities here. We cannot haul all of the grain in the Prairies by truck. It has to get onto a rail system at some point. Now that there are more opportunities for farmers to move their own grain, I have young farmers coming to me every day talking about the movement of their grain north-south by truck. Some of that is entering into the United States.

We also purchase a lot of grain in feed form, and that sort of thing, from the U.S., and we need to look at continuing to expand our processing. We need to make sure we continue to have that mechanism to move the grain and also to import from the United States.

Statements by Members

We also need to make sure that we are continuing to process even more of the product we have on the Prairies. That is being done in many places in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Some of it is being done with the expansion of our livestock industries, because they consume an awful lot of feed grains in western Canada, which then gets moved in another form. Most of it ends up being slaughtered in some of the largest processing plants in the world in Alberta, in Brooks and High River. We know there is an opportunity there to continue to move that product.

It is being done in Manitoba with the largest pea processing plant in the world, coming to Portage la Prairie. It is a \$400-million investment by a French company. The Manitoba government is putting very little infrastructure money into this, other than connecting the hydro lines and natural gas.

These are the kinds of investments we need. I know Bill C-49 will not be as good as Bill C-30 was, as far as that goes. It also speaks to other areas though, such as the air industry and marine industry as well. We need to make sure that while there are changes taking place, they are not detrimental to the future of those industries as well, because we do rely quite heavily on our export ports, particularly on the marine side, to be able to export and move this grain.

Bill C-49 eliminates some of the things that were good parts of Bill C-30, particularly in regard to ordering the railways to compensate any person for expenses caused by the railway's failure to fulfill service obligations.

I will end there and see if anyone has questions before my colleague, the member for Saskatoon—University, takes over.

● (1100)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Brandon—Souris will have a period of five minutes for questions and comments pertaining to his remarks when the House next resumes debate on the question.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Meech Lake accord died on June 22, 1990. Canada told Quebec to suck it up because it is the same as all the other provinces. Brian Mulroney's vision of Quebec's glorious return to the Canadian fold went up in smoke.

The Prime Minister's statements make it clear that the government is not prepared to give Quebec the respect it deserves in terms of the Constitution.

That is what the 150th anniversary represents: Ottawa's rejection of Quebec. Ottawa wants us to not bother anyone, do like everyone else, and quietly fade away and be forgotten. Ottawa says Quebec is no different from any other province.

I would like to remind everyone what then-premier Robert Bourassa said: "English Canada must clearly understand that no

matter what anyone says or does, Quebec is and always will be a distinct and free society capable of taking charge of its own destiny and its own development."

That was true 27 years ago, and it is still true today. *Je me souviens*. I remember.

* * *

[*English*]

RICHMOND YOUTH HONOUR CHOIR

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give a shout-out to the Richmond Youth Honour Choir, which represents some of the best young singers in British Columbia.

[*Translation*]

Under the direction of Heidi Epp, with the assistance of Molly Bushell, the Richmond Youth Honour Choir sings all styles of music from Bach to Broadway musicals. It recently premiered its own commission, *Listen to the Music*, which it was very excited to share with Canadians in Ottawa in honour of Canada's birthday and the 150th anniversary celebrations.

[*English*]

They recently toured Japan where they performed for the Emperor, and in Richmond's sister city, Wakayama. They also performed at the 2010 Winter Olympics. Their holiday harmonies concert is an annual favourite for locals.

I wish to congratulate the Richmond Youth Honour Choir on their 15th anniversary and wish them continuing success.

* * *

FATHER'S DAY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Sunday is Father's Day, and I would like to take a moment to thank all fathers who have done so much for their children.

Typically we think of fathers as the go-to people if something needs to be fixed or put together, but fathers are so much more than that. Their love and selfless giving helps mould our young citizens. A father's dedication to his job as a father helps shape our young people into responsible, caring individuals.

In my own life, it was my father's wisdom and guidance that helped make me into the person I am today. Fathers provide a moral compass that children look up to and emulate when they themselves become fathers. Strong role models create strong, healthy societies.

I am honoured to stand here today to acknowledge all the fathers who help their children face life's challenges, from tying their shoes to riding their first bike. The greatest thing a father can be is present.

To my father, and to all fathers across the nation, I give my thanks for being there when we needed it. Happy Father's Day.

*Statements by Members***CANADA–UKRAINE RELATIONS**

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the European Union introduced visa-free travel for citizens of Ukraine. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko hailed this historic milestone, calling it the fall of the paper curtain between Ukraine and the liberal democratic west, and *Business Ukraine* magazine referred to this day as “Ukraine's Berlin Wall moment”.

Since Ukraine's revolution of dignity in 2014, walls and obstacles to Ukraine's transition into a strong, consolidated western liberal democracy continue to fall. It is time for Canada to study the removal of visa restrictions between Canada and Ukraine, the last Soviet legacy dividing our two countries.

In the meantime, let us work with Ukraine to reinstate the youth mobility agreement between Canada and Ukraine to allow young Ukrainians and young Canadians to travel to our respective countries and enrich their professional and personal lives by experiencing all the benefits that each of our countries has to offer.

* * *

• (1105)

FILIPINO–CANADIAN WEEK

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the City of Saskatoon proclaimed June 10 to 17 as Filipino-Canadian Week. Do not get me wrong, I am glad I am here in Ottawa, but I wish I could have joined the Filipino-Canadian community of Saskatoon at the city hall flag-raising ceremony commemorating the independence of the Philippines.

My riding of Saskatoon West is home to over 7,000 Filipino Canadians, a growing community of vibrant and dynamic Filipinos and Filipinas.

We are proud to honour the many contributions of Filipino Canadians in Saskatoon. They are our neighbours, our friends, our colleagues, and our teammates. We are all richer for having them in our midst.

I would especially like to thank the Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon for promoting Filipino heritage for all of us to enjoy.

Please join me in congratulating the nominees for this year's most outstanding Pinoy of the Year: Hilbert Macadaeg, Mike San Miguel, and Vanessa Spencer.

To all our Filipino-Canadian friends in Saskatoon, *salamat*

* * *

ARTS AND CULTURE IN DAVENPORT

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to promote and pay tribute to the rich arts and culture community in Davenport. From theatre, film, dance, publishing, visual arts, song writing, musicians, designers, writers, to gaming, we have it in Davenport.

Earlier this year, I welcomed the Minister of Heritage in my riding. She announced funding for the new museum of modern art that will not only showcase modern art to Canadians, but also showcase our very best to the world. They say that great artists provide a glimpse into the soul of the nation. Indeed, it was the

artists in Davenport who saw the enormous potential of abandoned industrial segments in my riding, and through their art transformed them into vibrant hotbeds of creativity, innovation, and life.

I want to give a shout-out to Theatre Centre, Roseneath Theatre, Theatre Gargantua, Xspace, Akin Collective, Mercer Union, Clay & Paper Theatre, Arts & Crafts, House of Anansi, LIFT, DAREarts, and the following dance companies: Dreamwalker, Janak Khendry, and Lua Shayenne.

As we celebrate Canada's 150, I invite my fellow members to go out and support local artists, their inspiring work, and transformative contributions to their communities, and notably this great country we are blessed to call our home.

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INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is an incredible opportunity to unleash Canada's economy, and we cannot afford to let it pass us by. A Senate study states that a truly Canadian free trade agreement would add \$150 billion to Canada's GDP. That would mean an additional 78,000 jobs in Alberta and B.C. alone.

In a few short months, the Supreme Court will hear the Gerard Comeau Case. The fact that Mr. Comeau was charged for buying alcohol in Quebec and bringing it home to New Brunswick shows that our current system in Canada is outdated and unconstitutional.

Free trade in Canada is a constitutional right, and we are calling on the Liberals to act as an intervenor in this case and defend the lower court's decision. Eliminating trade barriers between the provinces is good for our economy, good for our businesses, and it is good for Canada.

This is not a partisan issue, it is right versus wrong. I hope the Liberals will do the right thing to help free the beer and help unleash Canada's economy.

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CHIEF OF PROTOCOL

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, later this summer, the parliamentary community will bid farewell to one of its own, Elizabeth Rody, chief of protocol for the Parliament of Canada. For more than 30 years, and may I note, 14 of them as only the third chief of protocol of Parliament, Ms. Rody has placed her talents and expertise at the service of several Speakers of the Senate and of the House of Commons, coordinating a vast array of parliamentary events in Ottawa and across Canada.

She has welcomed dignitaries from all over the world, from Margaret Thatcher, to former President of the United States Barack Obama, who during his visit told her admiringly, “You run a tight ship.”

Statements by Members

Ms. Rody will cap her remarkable parliamentary career with the upcoming visit of the President of Italy, and then embark on the next chapter in her life. On behalf of all members in this chamber, I would like to thank her for her exemplary service and wish her all the best.

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PROPOSED WOMEN'S COUNCIL

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women empowerment is not about making women strong; women are already strong. It is about changing the way the world perceives that strength. It is about using that strength to build better economies, to have sound justice, to govern ourselves better.

Our government continues to empower women through gender-based analysis plus, our feminist international development policy, and having more women at the decision-making table. That female perspective, that voice, must be heard as we aim to empower.

That is why I have put out a call to women in Mississauga—Erin Mills to establish a women council. Through this women council, I aim to give women a platform to engage in policy, to harness that strength. Through this council, I aim to give women in my riding a voice, because a woman with a voice is by definition an empowered woman.

* * *

● (1110)

[Translation]

THETFORD MINES AND ASBESTOS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for over 100 years, two towns in Quebec have been contributing more than their fair share to the Canadian economy.

Thetford Mines and Asbestos are two mining towns where the gold was white, where labour movements took off, and where no dreams were too big. Over time, this white gold took on a dark sheen, and some do-gooders chose to ban it rather than learn how to use it properly. This white gold left traces over time, but those traces, called mine tailings, are full of minerals just waiting to be transformed into cold hard cash. At the very heart of this country, in a capital called Ottawa, the do-gooders hold in their hands the key to a new white gold rush. Ministers, as well-intentioned as they may be, to this day refuse to honour the promise made to the mayors of those two towns who want to meet with them.

Thetford Mines and Asbestos are not looking for a handout; they simply want to be allowed to take control of their own destiny. In closing, Thetford Mines is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year because those who live there are proud of their history and determined to overcome adversity.

* * *

[English]

ROBERT HEITSHU

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise today to mark the passing of Brigadier-General Robert Heitshu, a decorated veteran, a family friend, and a fellow gunner.

Bob joined the army reserves in 1944, served the guns honourably and well, and received his commission as an officer in 1950, thus serving his nation in uniform for over 39 years. Throughout his career, General Heitshu became an army pilot, and, as mentioned, served on the gun lines, was an air observer, and was later president of Canadian AirOP Association.

Following his retirement from the military, Bob joined a variety of organizations and remained very active in the Ottawa community. He joined the Corps of Commissionaires, as well as the Gloucester police commission.

[Translation]

I and all successive generations of officers who followed are greatly indebted to General Heitshu for his enormous contribution to the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. Being a soldier was his lifelong dream.

[English]

I extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends.

* * *

[Translation]

MEN'S HEALTH

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this week leading up to Father's Day, we are reminded of the importance of protecting the health of men in Canada. We know that 70% of the health problems affecting men can be prevented with healthier lifestyle choices. Even small, positive changes can have a significant impact on men's health and well-being.

[English]

We also know that to improve the health of Canada's men is to improve the health of our families, our communities, and our nation.

Today, I am proud to be showing my support for Men's Health Week by wearing plaid for Dad to help raise awareness about prostate cancer.

I urge the men of my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, and everywhere, to take the time to learn about the lifestyle changes they can make to enjoy a longer and healthier life with their families. Happy Father's Day.

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DON MATTHEWS

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a great contributor to Canada, CFL coaching legend Don Matthews, who sadly passed away on Wednesday.

“The Don” was one of the best coaches that the CFL has ever seen. He won 231 games in the CFL, the second-highest win total in league history. The Don was the head coach for the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Edmonton Eskimos, Montreal Alouettes, Toronto Argonauts, BC Lions, and Baltimore Stallions, making nine Grey Cups and winning five in that role, and winning another five Grey Cups as a defensive coordinator.

Oral Questions

The Don was chosen CFL Coach of the Year five times, and was inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame in 2011.

As the official opposition critic for sport and a diehard CFL fan, it is an honour for me to stand in this House and pay tribute to such an accomplished individual. I would like to extend our sincere condolences to Don's wife Stephanie, their sons, and their grandchildren. The whole CFL nation mourns with them.

Don's legacy will live on for generations to come.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all children deserve a good start in life, something that we depend on our teachers and early childhood educators to make happen.

Ms. Tanya Farzaneh, at Seneca College Early Childhood Education Lab School in my riding, recently received a Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

Tanya's achievement and dedication shines through in her work to cultivate a creative learning environment for her students. She is committed to their success. Tanya embodies the best of the critical work that our educators do every day, giving our children the skills to succeed, and opening the doors to a brighter future for everyone.

* * *

• (1115)

VETS CANADA

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, hundreds of volunteers joined VETS Canada, also known as Veterans Emergency Transition Services Canada, for their second annual coast to coast Tour of Duty.

The Tour of Duty is a national walk to raise awareness of veteran homelessness, and to locate veterans on the streets or in shelters in need of help. I would like to applaud the hundreds of volunteers in 17 cities for their dedication to the men and women who have served our country so very well.

Since 2010, VETS Canada, a national charity and service provider of Veterans Affairs Canada, has assisted more than 1,600 homeless and in-crisis veterans. Across my riding of North Island—Powell River, my team and I work with vets who are facing housing challenges, high costs of medication, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

In a country as rich as Canada, our veterans should never be faced with this neglect. We must do better.

* * *

TURKEY

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians of Turkish heritage who disagree with the domestic policies of Ankara are worried. The Turkish government has broadened its crackdown against the coup plotters to include all those who dissent with the policies of the AKP. I am concerned that peaceful support for the Turkish opposition by Canadians of Turkish

heritage in Canada is becoming the target of surveillance and intimidation.

Across our border to the south, on May 16 in Washington, members of the Turkish president's security entourage, joined by civilian supporters, physically assaulted peaceful protesters, a moment caught on video and shared worldwide. Justly concerned about this violation of our shared value of freedom to dissent, the U. S. House of Representatives foreign affairs subcommittee held a hearing on May 25 to investigate the circumstances surrounding this altercation. Now we learn that arrest warrants have been issued for two Canadians who assaulted protesters during that May 16 altercation.

Differing opinions, dissent, and debate are welcome and encouraged in Canada. Intimidation of Canadians, regardless of their country of origin, by foreign powers is a violation of our rights, and we should guard against such illegal activity at home.

* * *

CANADIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the end of National Public Service Week in Canada. I would like to take a moment on behalf of all MPs to thank all of our dedicated and committed public servants in the House, in the national capital region, and across our entire country.

All governments stand on the shoulders of competent and talented public servants. They administer our programs, keep us safe, conduct our research, help keep our environment clean, and do so much more.

[Translation]

Once again, we sincerely thank all public servants who are there for us every day.

[English]

I would be remiss as well if I did not take an opportunity to wish happy Father's Day to all the fathers in our public service and to every other father across this beautiful country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I ask my first question, I would like to recognize and sincerely thank Marc Bosc for his work as Acting Clerk of the House.

By approving the sale to China of a firm that manufactures equipment used to keep us and the Americans safe, the Prime Minister showed us two things this week.

Oral Questions

First, the Prime Minister acted irresponsibly with regard to our national security. Second, the Liberals are damaging our relationship with our main ally, the United States.

When will the Prime Minister finally get his priorities straight and tell Canadians what really happened here?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, national security is a top priority for our government. All transactions reviewed under the Investment Canada Act are subject to a multi-stage security review process. We can confirm that the process set out in the act was followed to the letter and it was determined that there was no threat to national security. Our security agencies had access to all of the information they needed throughout the process.

We never have and we never will compromise on national security.

• (1120)

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are fed up with all the rhetoric. It is not simply not true. This is serious. We just do not sell a Canadian company that makes equipment and satellites and protects our national security from foreigners without a full security review.

Will the Liberals cut the rhetoric and immediately put in place a full national security review?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have listened to our national security experts. We listened to their advice. National security was reviewed as part of this transaction by people who have the knowledge.

It is based on their advice and recommendations that we authorized this transaction. I want to reassure the House and all Canadians that we will never compromise on national security and we will always work to advance our national interests.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, listening is one thing, acting is another. That is not what the Liberals are doing right now.

Let us talk about the proposed infrastructure bank. We had just one hour and a half to discuss it in parliamentary committee and the Senate also requires an in-depth study before going any further.

Now we find out that after choosing the location for the bank, the Liberals have even chosen the CEO. If that is not arrogance, then I would like to know what word they want us to use to describe them.

When are the Liberals going to respect this institution and allow us to thoroughly review this bank?

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that no appointments will be confirmed and made until we have the legislation passed through Parliament. That is exactly what we said earlier and that is exactly what we will follow.

Our goal to establish the Canada infrastructure bank is to allow our municipalities and provinces to build more infrastructure and create jobs and opportunities as well as to make sure that we are working with them in partnership to allow them to bring forward projects that they think are necessary for them to build.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we already knew that the new Liberal infrastructure bank will offer taxpayer-backed loans and loan guarantees to cover the losses of wealthy foreign investors who build megaprojects in Canada, but who will be on the bank's board? Let me quote the Minister of Finance: "I will say that it's not clear that the people on the board will necessarily be Canadians."

That means foreign financiers could help foreign financiers access \$35 billion in taxpayer-backed loans and loan guarantees here in Canada.

Who is standing up for taxpayers in this country?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member, we have confidence that we will be able to attract Canadians who have the talent and expertise, and we will make sure that we reflect the regional diversity of our country and the gender parity of our country. We also attract people from diverse backgrounds.

We want to make sure that the board of the infrastructure bank reflects who we are as Canadians, and that is exactly what we will achieve.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, who we are as Canadians is people who have Canadian passports, yet the finance minister said that he might consider someone who has the expertise but does not have a Canadian passport. Those were his words yesterday in a Senate committee hearing.

Therefore, Canadian tax dollars will be put at risk in the aid of foreign investors who, if they lose money on an infrastructure megaproject, will get backup from the people in this country who pay taxes and have Canadian citizenship. Can that minister guarantee that no one will be on the board of the infrastructure bank other than a Canadian citizen?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is failing to understand is that our own Canadian pension funds, such as the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, the teachers' pension plan, OMERS, Caisse de dépôt, and Alberta Investment Management Corporation, invest in other countries' infrastructure. What is wrong with creating conditions to allow them to invest in our own country, to create jobs in our own country, and allow us to strengthen our middle class in our own country to create opportunities? That is exactly what we are focused on, and the board will reflect the diversity of Canadian communities.

Oral Questions

● (1125)

[Translation]

PRIVACY

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question yesterday, so let us try again.

The media are saying that the Liberals plan to give the police more power to access Canadians' personal information on the internet without a warrant. The Supreme Court has already ruled that such a program would violate the charter. It would be a serious violation of privacy rights and another broken Liberal promise.

Can the minister assure the House that there will be no such program?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the details of the legislation that will ultimately be proposed cannot be discussed until that legislation is before the House of Commons. Those are the rules of this House. However, I can assure the hon. gentleman and all Canadians that the new proposals with respect to national security will fully respect the Canadian Constitution.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that this is the kind of assurance that Canadians expect to hear. Let us look at the government's actual record. The Liberals voted for Bill C-51 under the previous government. They then claimed, right after they won the election, that they were preparing legislation to undo many of the bill's provisions, yet here we are, two years later, and Bill C-51 is completely untouched.

How can the Liberals be trusted with protecting the privacy and civil liberties of Canadians?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the legislation is presented in this House, the hon. member will have her full answer. The fact of the matter is that we have taken the last 18 months to consult carefully with Canadians, and over 75,000 submissions were received in response to our consultations.

Our objective is to make sure that we accomplish two things simultaneously: keeping Canadians safe and making sure we safeguard the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister warned the Senate yesterday against splitting the infrastructure bank out. I guess the Senate is independent only when it is convenient for the Liberals, but this was exactly what the NDP proposed to do. The Prime Minister is busy making infrastructure announcements that will be directly linked to the Liberals' infrastructure bank, but the Liberals never mentioned the privatization goal of this bank during the campaign, and now they are against taking the time to study it.

Do they not understand it looks as though they have something to hide?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have put forward a very ambitious plan to allow our municipalities to prosper, to allow them to build the infrastructure that they need to grow their economy, to reduce congestion in major urban centres and build more affordable housing and recreational and cultural infrastructure. We believe that by mobilizing institutional investors and pension funds, we can free up resources to build more affordable housing and more shelters for women fleeing domestic violence. That is our goal, and that is exactly what we are focused on.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that those same Canadians they want to work for are going to pay the tolls and user fees that come along with this privatization.

[Translation]

There are a lot of announcements, but there are still a lot of questions about the infrastructure bank.

Like the NDP, the Senate is asking for the omnibus bill to be split so we can at least try to get answers to these questions. Considering privatization, omnibus bills and the lack of respect for Parliament, we have to wonder who is in power. Is this real change or is Stephen Harper still on the other side?

Why will this government not allow a proper review of this privatization bank that will charge tolls and user fees?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is different is the commitment we have made to our Canadian communities to allow them to build the infrastructure they need. We are tripling our investment to \$180 billion. That is a historic investment in infrastructure.

The hon. member fully understands that in the last election, his party had no plan to build the infrastructure. The party opposite, the Conservative Party, ignored the needs of Canadian communities for a decade. We are here to work with them, to allow them to build the infrastructure they deserve and their citizens need.

* * *

● (1130)

[Translation]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Norsat scandal, the sale of a high-tech firm to Chinese interests without a national security review, has become a burden, a wrecking ball really, to Canada's international reputation. It is just wrong.

Our ambassadors are uncomfortable, our allies are wondering what happened, and international experts are worried. Canadians deserve better. The only way to reassure everyone, Canadians and our international allies, is to release all the documentation.

Why does the government refuse to do so?

Oral Questions

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take our national security very seriously.

All investments reviewed under the Investment Canada Act go through a rigorous, multi-step security review process conducted by Canada's national security agencies. That process was followed in this case, as it is in every other case. Our national security agencies conducted their review and confirmed that the security measures and guarantees put in place comply with our high standards. No transaction would take place if it did not meet our strict standards for national security.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's wilful blindness is unacceptable and it is harming Canada's international reputation. The government seems pretty confident about what it is doing. Fine, then, let it turn over all of the documents. If it really believes this is the right thing to do, it should have no problem tabling the documents. This is an international scandal that is damaging Canada's reputation, so transparency is vital.

Why is the government refusing to do the right thing for the whole country?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on issues of national security, we look to our experts, our national security agencies. That is exactly what we did.

The agencies did the necessary consultations. They had the facts. Members across the aisle seem to think it was pure conjecture, but it was not. It was facts. The agencies based their assessment on the facts. This is a national security matter, and we will go along with what our experts say.

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, China is not shy about its efforts to spy on Canada or our allies.

According to documents obtained from CSIS, China continuously targets our classified information and advanced technology. That did not seem to stop the Liberals from allowing China's Hytera Communications to buy Norsat, a Canadian company that creates advanced technology used by our military and our allies, which is exactly what China has been after.

When will the Liberals stop putting our national security at risk?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we never have, and we never will, put our national security at risk. We followed a multi-stage process in this case and we based our decision on the considered opinion of our national security experts.

What does the other side of the House have against our national security experts? They are the ones who have the facts in front of them. We rely on their opinion in this process. It is a very good process and we will continue to follow it.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister would start walking the walk instead of just talking the talk, we might be able to believe him when he repeats his lines about being open and transparent.

We have asked for simple answers regarding his decision to sell defence secrets to the Chinese government. Our U.S. neighbours are raising alarms about that decision. Security experts are concerned. A former ambassador has spoken out again it.

Will the Prime Minister please explain to Canadians why he did not request a full, formal national security review of this transaction?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a multi-stage national security review process in place, and that process was followed. Within the course of that process, our national security experts based themselves on the facts of the case. Our national security agencies are the only ones in this case that had the facts before them. Unlike the opposition, we are basing our decision on their recommendation to us.

* * *

●(1135)

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that trials needed to be conducted in a timely manner.

Our Conservative government appointed well over 500 highly competent and diverse individuals to the bench. There was never a shortage of exceptional candidates to choose from. When are the Liberals going to get their act together and fill all these judicial vacancies?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring our criminal justice system keeps communities safe, protects victims, and holds offenders to account. As the court in the Cody case reiterated today, every actor in the criminal justice system has a responsibility to ensure criminal proceedings are carried out efficiently and effectively.

Our minister met with her provincial and territorial counterparts in April to focus on the roles that each of our governments could play. They identified four priorities for legislative reform, including dealing with mandatory minimum penalties, bail in the administration of justice, preliminary inquiries, and reclassification of offences.

We are working together to address these delays.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are not even appointing the necessary judicial advisory committees that give advice when making appointments. Incredibly, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, and southwestern Ontario still do not even have a committee to advise the minister on judicial appointments.

Obviously, the government has a problem in this area. What is it going to take for it to clean up this mess?

Oral Questions

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to advise the House that the Minister of Justice has made tremendous progress, not only in developing a system which will strengthen our judiciary to ensure we maintain judicial excellence while reflecting the great diversity of the country. To date, the Minister of Justice has appointed 77 judges and 22 deputy judges across the country.

We have a system in place, it is being implemented, and we are seeing significant progress.

* * *

[Translation]

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at first the Liberals said that they had no choice but to change the rules of Parliament. Now, after being roundly criticized, the Liberals are walking back everything, or almost everything. In their platform, the Liberals promised to end the practice of having parliamentary secretaries manage what happens in committees.

Why are the Liberals forcing through changes to the rules that would allow just that?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the campaign, we promised to bring real change to Parliament to make it more efficient, open, and transparent. We made a specific commitment on how to achieve this. Yesterday I testified at a committee and I answered members' questions.

We have a plan, and I think that it will work very well.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians are getting tired of the combination of high-handed actions and non-sequitur answers by the Liberals.

Just as they grew tired of omnibus bills under Stephen Harper's regime, the Liberals promised in the last campaign to end them. Omnibus bills allow for the government to push through hundreds of changes at once, without time for Parliament to scrutinize them or for civil society to scrutinize them. However, instead of getting rid of the practice of omnibus bills, the Liberals are proposing new rules that will legitimize the practice of omnibus bills.

We are just wondering this. What happened to the Liberals of the campaign?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said in French, during the election campaign, we promised to bring real change to Parliament to make it more effective, open, and transparent. We made a specific commitment on how to achieve this. We have worked in good faith with the opposition, and we welcome a debate on the proposed changes in the coming days. Yesterday I moved a motion for the changes.

We have been working very well together. I knew we could. My door has always been open. It was good to see members come through that door so we could collaborate and work for Canadians.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, she ought to do that with her hand over her heart. It is much better.

However, the Heritage Minister is preparing a cultural document that will determine the future of Canadian online content for providers like Google. Her chief of staff has been lobbied six times alone this year by Google, a company for which she was a top executive.

Now, under the Conflict of Interest Act, minister's staff must abstain from participating in decisions that would place them in a conflict of interest. The rules are clear, but the minister either ignores them or thinks they do not apply to her.

Why did the minister allow Leslie Church to participate in these sensitive discussions?

• (1140)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have said it many times before. Creative industries are going through a period of disruption brought on by the digital shift.

The minister has met with all major digital platforms as part of the Canadian content in the digital age review. Ms. Church's expertise and broad knowledge of the digital landscape is essential to our understanding of how to best support this sector during this transition. She has been fully transparent about her former employment, including with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): She is still in a conflict, Mr. Speaker.

Husky Energy recently hired that Minister of Natural Resources's former chief of staff, Janet Annesley, who worked for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers just prior to taking the job with the minister, and Husky lobbied her just before the one-year cooling-off period began. In other words, up until she left the minister's office, she was directly involved in decisions that could directly impact her new employer.

Again, the law is clear. We know conflicts of interest come naturally to the Liberals, but will they stop using their offices as a resource to set their friends up for greener pastures?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we well know, all former staff is bound by a set of rules laid out by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. Those rules are quite clear and those rules will be followed.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all five members appointed by the Prime Minister's Office to the Halifax Port Authority donated to the Liberal coffers. Their combined contributions were \$76,000.

Will the Prime Minister admit right now that when it comes to appointments, Liberals need only apply?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of déjà vu here. I reject the premise of the question, of course, because we are taking a new, open, and transparent approach that is merit-based, that also takes into account diversity, including gender diversity.

The Port of Halifax is extremely important for Canada's economy. I am very proud of the five people whom we have named because of their professionalism. This is good for the Port of Halifax.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a government that when it was campaigning, said it was going to be the most open and transparent government in Canadian history. One of those donors gave over \$50,000 to the Liberal coffers. It is truly transparent. It is transparent that someone who is a Liberal donor gets the job, a Liberal donor gets the appointment, a Liberal donor gets the project.

Why is the minister putting the interests of Liberal donors ahead of everyday Canadians?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, I totally reject the premise of that question. Our selection of board members for the Port of Halifax, and any other port across the country, is based on an open, transparent competitive process that is merit-based and takes into account diversity, including gender diversity.

We are very proud of the people who we have selected for the Port of Halifax. They are a great group of people who have the interests of the Port of Halifax, the economy of Nova Scotia—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. There is too much noise in the chamber. It is very difficult to hear the questions and in some cases the answers. I would ask for order.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after cutting funding to one-third of all HIV organizations, including AIDS Saskatoon in my riding, the minister told us not to worry. She said there were \$30 million of new funding for the federal initiative on HIV. Well, we have the department documents and guess what they say. The increase to the federal initiative on HIV, zero dollars. The increase to the community action fund, which funds these groups, zero dollars.

Could the minister explain where exactly is this funding, or did she mislead the House and Canadians?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is deeply committed

to addressing HIV and AIDS in Canada. As the minister said yesterday, and I will reiterate, budget 2017 included new investments of \$30 million over five years to support front-line interventions to reduce new cases of HIV and hepatitis C by adopting a harm-reduction approach. This builds on the \$72.6 million being spent this year alone under the federal initiative to address HIV/AIDS, with \$26.4 million going to community-based organizations, such as the one to which she has referred.

We continue to work closely with all our partners in order to meet our targets and eliminate AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

* * *

•(1145)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals botched the process for replacing the Official Languages Commissioner, and they refused to support a new process that most of the parties agreed on. What a mess.

The problem is that the interim commissioner's term ends tomorrow. When my colleague from Drummond asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage about this two days ago, all she said was, "I will have an opportunity to tell you about the process."

Today, I am giving her the opportunity to explain to us who will make sure that the Official Languages Act is complied with as of Sunday.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are at the heart of Canada's history and identity. They are a priority for us.

We promised Canadians a new, open, rigorous, and merit-based process, and that is what we gave them. The role of Commissioner of Official Languages is very important, and we are sure that the person recommended will have all the required qualifications. We will be making an announcement in the next few days.

* * *

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, residents of the national capital region understand the importance of public transit for shorter commutes, cleaner air, and a stronger economy. With the first phase of light rail nearing completion, it is important that we build on this momentum and expand the system. Could the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities please tell the House how the government is supporting the future of public transit in this, our beautiful national capital region?

Oral Questions

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, because of the hard work of the members of the national capital region caucus, this morning the Prime Minister announced more than \$1 billion toward Ottawa's light rail transit, stage two, project. This investment will transform public transit across the region and create jobs and economic growth in the national capital region, while making communities more sustainable and inclusive.

We are very proud to support the City of Ottawa and the national capital region.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the director of operations for the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry has resigned. That is four senior employees that have jumped ship in less than a year.

The inquiry is losing credibility. Families are suffering with trust and trauma issues. Does the minister not see that there is a problem? Why is there such a significant staff turnover, and what is she going to do to reassure families that she will personally make sure that the inquiry gets back on track?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ending this ongoing national tragedy. After decades of loss, discrimination, and mistreatment, families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls are speaking and feeling heard. The commission has acknowledged the need to increase communication and that families must be at the centre of the inquiry, and it is committed to ensuring this.

I was also pleased to see the positive feedback from the first family sessions in Whitehorse. I am confident that the commissioners have the background, the experience, and the mandate to lead this inquiry.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister vowed to phase out the oil sands, and unfortunately for Canada, it seems his plan is working. Imposing a carbon tax, axing the discovery wells tax credit, and forcing his anti-oil activists onto the energy minister's staff are taking their toll. In March, there were 25 junior oil companies left in Alberta, down from close to 100. These risk-takers are the heartbeat of Alberta's energy sector.

When will the Prime Minister make the right priorities? Why are his priorities a job-killing carbon tax and paid anti-oil activists, when they should be Canada's economy and the jobs of hard-working Albertans?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the party opposite, we understand that the environment and the economy go together. That is why we are putting a price on pollution that will reduce what we do not want, which is pollution, and foster what we do want, which is innovation, clean growth, and good jobs.

We also approved two pipelines, which the party opposite was unable to do. We understand that the environment and the economy go together. We want a more sustainable future for our kids, and we want clean growth and good jobs.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have calculated how much revenue could be generated from a carbon tax, but they will not release that important information. The estimated cost of the tax is \$2.5 billion in Saskatchewan alone. That is right, billion, with a “b”.

In my riding, one trucking company estimates that this Liberal cash grab will cost him an extra half a million dollars per year. Why do the Liberals refuse to disclose the cost this forced carbon tax will have on Saskatchewan families and businesses?

● (1150)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear to the member opposite. As we have repeated over and over, all revenues that are received to better put a price on pollution go directly back to the province.

Let me also be clear that 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where, through the leadership of the provinces, there is already a price on pollution. We are very hopeful that every province will step up, do the right thing, put a price on what we do not want, pollution, and foster what we do want, clean jobs, innovation, and a more sustainable future for our kids.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day, the Liberals continue to drag their feet on the reintroduction of vital security measures that would help eliminate the PED outbreak in hogs in Manitoba. By doing so, it continues to put the livelihoods of farm families at risk. Manitoba farmers cannot wait any longer. The time to sit around and talk is long gone. The Liberals need to listen to industry experts and take immediate action.

Will the Minister of Agriculture stop ignoring the very people he is meant to help and reintroduce the much-needed biosecurity measures immediately?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, porcine epidemic diarrhea, or PED, poses no risk to human health. PED is a reportable disease at the provincial level and is not regulated by the federal government.

The minister of agriculture for Manitoba and the Manitoba Pork Council are following the normal response protocol for PED. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has offered its support to Manitoba and will assist as needed.

It is too early at this stage of the investigation to identify the source of the disease or how far it has spread.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after weeks of pressure from the NDP, yesterday the Liberals announced that they were reversing their plans to eliminate two important marine programs. I want to thank all those across B.C. who reached out and spoke up. Together we were able to turn the tide. However, there is much more we can do and need to do. For example, the salmon run in the Somass River is down from 1.3 million last year to only 170,000 this year.

What is the government going to do to provide immediate support for this vital B.C. resource and those who depend on it?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that wild salmon are the lifeblood of the west coast, which is why our government is investing significantly in managing and restoring our wild Pacific salmon stocks.

In addition to our continued support for the salmon enhancement program, we have announced a new \$75-million coastal restoration package, as part of our \$1.5-billion oceans protection plan, and a further \$1.4-billion investment as a result of the department's recent comprehensive review. This means more evidence-based decision-making, more scientists, more habitat restoration, and more community partnerships.

We are committed to ensuring that our wild salmon thrive for the benefit of our communities and our future generations.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year the NDP introduced a motion calling on the government to reinstate the perishable agricultural commodities act. Since this was a Liberal campaign promise, growers across Canada were deeply disappointed when it did not happen. The agriculture committee also unanimously urged the minister to implement a payment protection model, but we still have not heard anything.

When will the Liberals take action for our farmers and growers across Canada, do as they promised, and reinstate PACA?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I did not clearly understand the member's question. Could he repeat the question please?

The Deputy Speaker: Time is short. Could the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay quickly repeat his question?

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question is about the perishable agricultural commodities act. It was a Liberal promise to reinstate it. It has not been reinstated, despite calls from growers, the NDP, and the agriculture committee.

When will the Liberals take action and reinstate the perishable agricultural commodities act?

• (1155)

[Translation]

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

We are currently analyzing the situation so that we can respond appropriately.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister about the CRA's new tax grab on small businesses like campgrounds and self-storage facilities. However, she will just stand up and once again completely insult small businesses by saying they need to start paying their fair share. Then she will falsely claim that the Liberal government has not changed the tax rules.

Is she really that incompetent, or has she finally checked her facts, realized that she is totally wrong, and changed her talking points?

Ms. Kamal Khara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is firmly committed to ensuring that every Canadian pays their fair share of taxes. We continue to support small and medium-sized businesses from coast to coast to coast, because we recognize that they are the backbone of our economy. Our commitment to tax fairness is at the core of our mandate, and our government will continue to support small and medium-sized businesses.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is almost like I predicted what she was going to say. Now I think the Liberals will next claim that we failed to act on it somehow.

Oral Questions

Our Conservative government conducted a review of this issue in 2015, but those Liberals cancelled that review then immediately came out with a new interpretation of the rules, and small businesses started receiving huge new tax bills. They even ignored a finance committee report that recommended that these rules be fixed. It seems the only thing the Liberals are not ignoring is another attempt to punish small businesses.

Will the Liberals stop this war on small businesses, or will the minister just get up again and tell them they are not paying their fair share?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member opposite that when his party was in government, it held consultations with stakeholders and decided not to move forward on such legislative change.

We continue to support our small and medium-sized businesses from coast to coast, because they are the backbone of our economy. Our commitment to tax fairness is at the core of our mandate, and our government will continue to support small and medium-sized businesses.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once these small businesses have gone bankrupt, I am sure the Liberals will be handing out subsidies to them.

Nathan has a small farm in my riding. In order to make ends meet, he works for other farmers in the area. One of the farmers he works for happens to be his dad. Liberal changes to the small business tax credit mean that arm's-length organizations that exist within farm families must share one small business tax credit. This means that Nathan and his dad must now decide how they will divide their small business tax credit.

Why are the Liberals using the tax code to hurt farm families like Nathan's?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to supporting our job creators, which are small businesses. We made a commitment to Canadians that we will help our small businesses grow through innovation and trade, and that is exactly what we are doing. We know that when it comes to the products and services our small businesses offer in this country, not only are they good for Canadians, they are good for the world. Small businesses are in communication with us every day. We listen to the very real challenges they are facing. We need them to be able to grow to create the jobs Canadians need. We will continue to support our small businesses.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, like many of my colleagues, hear regularly about three issues: a strong evolving economy that leverages Canada's skills, trade, and expertise; a strong, vibrant commitment to the protection of the environment, where innovation creates good jobs; and a strong, clear plan that ties together innovation, infrastructure, and the environment where the next generation economy works for all Canadians.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change please update this House on how the low-carbon economy fund will help address these issues?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the low-carbon economy fund will support the best and most innovative ideas to reduce our emissions for the good of our children and grandchildren and will create good jobs. This will support projects that will make our homes and buildings more efficient, help companies innovate and access technologies to reduce their emissions, and help the forest and agriculture sectors enhance their capacity to capture carbon and to reduce emissions. I am excited to move forward on this key pillar in supporting our pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. It is about a more sustainable and cleaner future for our kids and grandkids.

* * *

● (1200)

[Translation]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of job creation, the National Optics Institute wants to partner with the government to spur the creation of innovative, prosperous new businesses in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec.

On February 22, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development told the House that he supported the expansion, but we have not heard another word about it since.

Why are the Liberals not moving on this? Does the minister still think it is a good idea? When will he invest in growing our world-class National Optics Institute?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we supported the National Optics Institute last year in the 2016 budget. We will continue to invest in innovative industries across the country. We created 250,000 jobs in the past six months. The previous government never even came close to those numbers. Our track record is fantastic and is going to get even better.

[English]

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the new changing economy and moving toward the knowledge-based digital economy, we need to make sure we have the talent needed to compete in the global economy. We need to focus on our young people and make sure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to compete and succeed in the new economy.

Can the parliamentary secretary please explain what steps the government is taking to ensure that young people are ready for the economy of today and tomorrow?

Oral Questions

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working hard to ensure that Canadians have the necessary skills to fully participate in the new digital economy.

Wednesday, I was delighted to join the minister and a bunch of kids from Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa who were here in Ottawa to launch CanCode, which over the next two years will give 500,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12 the opportunity to learn in-demand skills, especially encouraging young women, indigenous Canadians, and other under-represented groups.

We are investing in our young people today to ensure that they are ready to meet the—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yellowhead.

* * *

PARKS CANADA

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Jasper National Park, one of Canada's major tourist destinations, has been devastated by the pine beetle infestation. Much of the forest is dead or dying. The dead trees are a tremendous fuel load that present a significant risk to the community of Jasper.

Residents are concerned for their own safety and that of the visitors, and the security of their homes. There is a high risk of wildfire fuelled by a forest devastated by the pine beetle. Have the Liberals put a plan in place to protect this park?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is absolutely committed to the ecological integrity of our national parks. That is my first priority as a minister.

We are working very hard in all of our parks, including Jasper National Park. I look forward to talking to the member further about this and seeing how we can move forward.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec is calling on Ottawa to give it five of the 25 federal ports on the St. Lawrence. It is a good idea because when it comes to maintaining ports the Canadian government is not only negligent, it is utterly irresponsible. This is another example of what Quebec has to pay to be part of Canada.

Will Ottawa hand over the ports that Quebec is asking for and transfer the \$100 million it will take to repair this infrastructure after the mess it left them in?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our collaboration with the Province of Quebec, especially because of its maritime strategy. In fact, I spoke with Minister Jean D'Amour and Premier Couillard about the idea of divesting the ports. As hon. members know, they announced that they would be interested in five ports. Negotiations will get under way soon. The federal and provincial governments will be working on this together; I am sure that it will be a good partnership.

• (1205)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is another meaningless answer.

Through the infrastructure bank, the Government of Canada can exempt the financial world from the laws of Quebec. Environmental protection, farmland, city planning: nothing is sacred. Quebeckers are being put in their place. Toronto is making the decisions. For weeks, the Liberals have been telling us that this is not their intention. If the Canadian government does not intend to deliver Quebec up to Toronto bankers, why does it not amend Bill C-44?

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear and I have assured the House a number of times that the infrastructure bank and any projects undertaken by the infrastructure bank would have to abide by provincial and municipal rules. We respect local jurisdictions.

I am proud to say that this week we made a significant investment in the city of Montreal, supporting an REM project that will create 34,000 jobs in that region. That is the kind of investment we want to make to ensure that our municipalities have the right tools to grow their economies and create jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not a single soul in Quebec supports the federal government on this. Not one expert agrees with the Liberals. The Quebec National Assembly is unanimous. Is that clear enough?

The Liberals do not have any friends in Quebec when it comes to Bill C-44. The entire agricultural industry is opposed to it. The government is on its own on this issue, with the exception of the 40 phantom MPs from Quebec who are being irresponsible about this.

Will someone on the other side of the House stand up, just once, and say that they will not allow Quebec to be at the mercy of bankers?

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member once again that we have a very strong working relationship with the Province of Quebec, and the bank would have to abide by all the rules that are in place in every province and municipality.

On top of that, the bank will work very closely with the provinces and municipalities to bring forward the projects our communities need. Thirty-four thousand jobs have been created under one project for the Province of Quebec. We are proud to be working with them. We are proud to support to them.

*Routine Proceedings***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): *Qujannamiik uqaqti.* Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of visiting the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the riding of Kanata—Carleton. I was happy to donate to the society's north of 60 project, which is a national initiative aimed at providing food, supplies, and other goods to northern communities, including five communities in Nunavut.

While Nunavummiut are thankful for such generosity, they are also eager to see what changes have been made to the nutrition north program. Can the minister update the House on when Nunavummiut can expect the changes to be made?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his advocacy on this file.

It is completely unacceptable that so many northerners are still struggling to feed their families. I am pleased to announce that the findings from the nutrition north community engagement sessions are now available online. Our government is considering all the feedback received during the recent engagement and is collaborating with northern and indigenous organizations to update the program to be much more reflective of northerners' needs.

Together we can ensure that northern families have access to affordable, healthy food.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report "Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process".

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty, entitled the first amendment to the Espoo Convention adopted with decision II/14 of the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention in Sophia, from February 26 to February 27 2001, and the second amendment to the Espoo Convention adopted with decision III/7 of the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention in Cavtat, from June 1 to June 4, 2004. An explanatory memorandum is included in this treaty.

● (1210)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 13 petitions.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the 136th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and related meetings in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from April 1 to April 5, 2017.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs in relation to Bill S-3, an act to amend the Indian Act in relation to the elimination of sex-based inequities in registration.

The committee has studied the bill and decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to Bill C-23, an act respecting the pre-clearance of persons and goods in Canada and the United States.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates regarding the review of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

While I am on my feet, let me just say, on behalf of my entire committee, how proud I am of the work the members have done. Their foresight and their hard work has resulted in a report that I believe will encourage all public servants to come forward to report any government wrongdoing that they may have seen, and they will be able to do so in a safe environment, without fear of reprisal.

I congratulate the committee.

Routine Proceedings

LIAISON COMMITTEE

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Liaison Committee, entitled “Committee Activities and Expenditures: April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017”.

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled “Starting Again: Improving Government Oversight of Immigration Consultants”.

[English]

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

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HOUSE OF COMMONS CALENDAR

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, you should find consent to adopt the following motion for the 2018 calendar of the House of Commons. I move:

That, notwithstanding Standing Order 28 or any other usual practice of the House, the following proposed calendar for the year 2018, referred to as Option H, be tabled and that the House adopt this calendar.

• (1215)

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: 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)

* * *

PETITIONS

AUTISM

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present three petitions from the constituents of Kanata—Carleton.

The first petition calls on the government to develop a national autism strategy through consultations with all levels of government and stakeholders.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, asks the government to develop a fairer electoral system.

UNMARKED GRAVES OF SOLDIERS

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition was given to me by students of All Saints High School in Kanata, who are in Mrs. Kirtz's civics class.

The students call for the government to find a constructive path forward to help identify unmarked graves of soldiers who died during the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

I am impressed by the level of engagement of these students, as they learn how our democracy and government function.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of a private member's bill, Bill C-316. This sensible proposal has been brought forward by my colleague from Calgary Confederation.

The petitioners call on the House to improve the organ donation system in Canada by making the process to register as an organ donor much easier. This would be achieved by adding the simple question to our annual tax returns.

Currently, 90% of Canadians support organ donation, but only 25% are registered. Forty-six hundred Canadians are currently awaiting a life-saving transplant. We know that making the registration process easier would save more lives in our country.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians across the country. This is the fourth petition I have submitted on this issue. It is a petition signed by craft brewers, distillers, and vineyard owners, as well as Canadians who enjoy the incredible craft beer, wines, and spirits we have across Canada.

This petitioners ask the Liberal government two things.

The first is to act as an intervenor in the Supreme Court case of Gerard Comeau, which will be happening later this year. The petitioners want the federal Liberal government to support Canadian free trade.

Second, the petitioners ask the Liberal government to work with the provinces to include alcohol as part of the Canadian free trade agreement in time for Canada Day in 2018.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal war on history continues to prompt many petitions to my office, and I have a fistful of them today.

In the past, commemorative medals were issued by the Government of Canada on significant milestones in our country's history, recognizing the contributions of everyday Canadians to their communities, contributions that mean a great deal to so many but often go unrecognized and unacknowledged.

Medals to recognize people like that have been issued on the occasion of our Confederation in 1867, when the Fathers of Confederation were among those who received such an award. We also had such medals on the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation in 1927, the Centennial in 1967, and the 125th anniversary in 1992. However, as part of the Liberal war on history, there will be no medal honouring the country-building contributions of Canadians on the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

This is the case notwithstanding that plans were very well advanced under the previous government for such an award, including a design, and these plans were cancelled by the current government. As a result, tradition is being ignored and community-leading Canadians are being forgotten.

The petitions I have received and am presenting today come from the following communities: Cardigan, Prince Edward Island; Montague, Prince Edward Island; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Morden, Manitoba; Cartwright, Manitoba; Cupar, Saskatchewan, Mather, Manitoba; Duncan, British Columbia; Slokan, British Columbia; Petit-de-Grat, Nova Scotia; Arichat, Nova Scotia; Sturgeon Country, Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta; and Morinville, Alberta.

The petitioners call upon the government to reverse the very unfortunate decision to cancel the medals and to respect tradition and recognize deserving Canadians by issuing a medal to honour Canadians who have helped make a contribution to their communities, during this the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

* * *

• (1220)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 1005, 1014, 1015, 1020, 1022, 1023, 1028, 1032, 1034, and 1037.

[Text]

Question No. 1005—**Mr. Michael Cooper:**

With regard to the \$545 million of Treasury Board Secretariat funding allocated to “paylist requirements” in Supplementary Estimates (C) 2016-17: (a) how was this amount calculated; and (b) what are the “paylist requirements”, broken down line by line, being accommodated by this funding?

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the \$545 million amount included in 2016-17 supplementary estimates (C) is made up of amounts set aside by departments for collective bargaining purposes, as well as an amount for the employer’s anticipated costs for collective agreements that were expected to be finalized in 2016-17. Roughly 75% of the funds are amounts that departments set aside in prior years.

As a result of the 2013 operating budget freeze, departments are required to absorb the cost of wage and salary increases that take effect in 2014-15 and 2015-16, and their ongoing impact. This also includes retroactive payments. To assist departments in managing these obligations, they were provided with the opportunity to reprofile—move forward to future years—funding from 2014-15 and 2015-16 to manage the costs for which they are responsible.

Routine Proceedings

Wage and salary increases that take effect in 2016-17 and future years, along with their ongoing impact, are part of the employer’s anticipated costs and will be funded centrally.

At the time the 2016-17 supplementary estimates (C) were prepared, 12 tentative collective bargaining agreements had been reached, covering over three-quarters of represented public servants. However, not all of these agreements had been ratified by the bargaining agents and none had been signed by the employer. Funding was included in supplementary estimates (C) to provide sufficient capacity to address cash management pressures that might have materialized had the agreements been ratified and signed by March 31, 2017.

As collective agreements were not ratified and signed by the end of the fiscal year, funding was not allocated to departments and lapsed to the fiscal framework. As a result, funding for the same purpose has been included in the 2017-18 supplementary estimates (A).

With regard to (b), Treasury Board Secretariat vote 30, paylist requirements, is a central vote that is used by Treasury Board ministers to allocate funds to departments for costs related to parental and maternity allowances, severance pay; and adjustments to the terms and conditions of employment of the federal public service, including members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Forces, when these have not been provided from Treasury Board Secretariat vote 15 on compensation adjustments.

The entire amount requested for supplementary estimates (C) was for adjustments to the terms and conditions of employment of the federal public service to reflect new collective agreements, as described earlier.

Question No. 1014—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the \$3.6 million allocated to the Department of Canadian Heritage for the celebration of the 375th anniversary of Montreal in Supplementary Estimates (C) 2016-17: what funds have been awarded thus far, broken down by (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) project description?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (i), the funds were awarded to the Society for the Celebrations of Montréal’s 375th Anniversary.

With regard to (ii), the amount delivered in 2016-17 is \$3,620,895. The total funding for the project is \$10,000,000, to be delivered over two fiscal years, 2016-17 and 2017-18.

With regard to (iii), the proposed activities will highlight the history of Montreal and its importance in the development of Canada. Programming planned by the society is taking place over 375 days, from December 21, 2016, to December 31, 2017, and includes shows, interpretive and commemorative activities, documentaries, multimedia experiences, and indigenous-themed activities. The proposed programming will permit a large audience to participate free of charge as they commemorate and celebrate the history of Montreal.

*Routine Proceedings*Question No. 1015— **Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the government forgiving student loans owed: (a) how many student loans have been forgiven since November 4, 2015; (b) what criteria is used to determine eligibility for debt forgiveness; (c) what reasons are laid out within the criteria as acceptable to forgive student debt; and (d) for each of the instances in (c), how many loans were forgiven under each reason since November 4, 2015?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are three types of loan forgiveness provided through the Canada student loans program, the CSLP. They are the severe permanent disability benefit, Canada student loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses, and forgiveness in cases of death.

In the case of the severe permanent disability benefit, a borrower may be eligible for the severe permanent disability benefit, the SPDB, if they have a physical or mental impairment that prevents them from ever being able to study at a post-secondary level and take part in the labour force; and the disability is expected to remain with them for life. The borrower must submit an application for SPDB, along with medical documents to support the application. From November 4, 2015, to March 31, 2017, 969 Canada student loan borrowers were approved for loan forgiveness through SPDB.

In the case of the Canada student loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses, family doctors, residents in family medicine, nurse practitioners, and nurses who practise in designated rural or remote communities may be eligible to have a portion of their Canada student loans forgiven.

To be eligible for Canada student loan forgiveness, borrowers must have started their current employment—full-time, part-time, or casual, including self-employment for family doctors with a private family practice—as an eligible medical professional in a designated rural or remote community on or after July 1, 2011; completed a full 12-month loan forgiveness period, during which time they worked in a in an under-served rural or remote community; and submitted a Canada student loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses application form.

Applicants must meet the necessary licensing requirements for that profession under an appropriate authority, such as the College of Family Physicians of Canada or provincial nursing associations, and must be practising in Canada in one of the following professions: family doctor; family medicine resident in training with an accredited medical school in Canada, who would be exempt from the licensing requirement; registered nurse; registered psychiatric nurse; registered practical nurse; licensed practical nurse; or nurse practitioner.

Family doctors and family medicine residents in training with an accredited medical school in Canada may receive up to \$8,000 per period in Canada student loan forgiveness, to a maximum of \$40,000.

Nurse practitioners and nurses may receive up to \$4,000 per year in Canada student loan forgiveness, to a maximum of \$20,000 over five years.

From November 4, 2015, to March 31, 2017, there were 4,922 recipients of doctors and nurses loan forgiveness.

In the case of loan forgiveness for reasons of death, in the event that a borrower dies, all repayment obligations are terminated regardless of the loan regime.

From November 4, 2015, to March 31, 2017, 2,014 Canada student loan borrowers had their loans forgiven due to death. The data includes figures related to a processing backlog and does not necessarily reflect the number of borrowers who died from November 4, 2015, to March 31, 2017.

Question No. 1020—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the Tribute to Liberty's Memorial to the Victims of Communism: (a) what are the current expected start and completion dates for construction of the Memorial; (b) what is the current status of the Memorial; (c) why was the location of the Memorial changed from in front of the Supreme Court building to the Garden of Provinces and Territories; (d) why was total funding and the government's contribution to the Memorial cut; and (e) why has construction on the Stanley Cup Monument and on the National Holocaust Monument, both six years between the proposal and project's projected completion, been prioritized and fast-tracked while the Memorial to the Victims of Communism has been delayed and is facing a longer timeline?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), monument construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2018. Major monument elements are scheduled to be completed in late 2018.

With regard to (b), with the winning concept proposed by Team Raff, as announced on May 18, 2017, the memorial is now entering into the design development phase.

With regard to (c), the results of a series of consultations led by the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2016 informed the decision to change the location of the memorial.

With regard to (d), due to the change of the site, the budget was revised. The allocated financial resources will permit the erection of a monument that reflects Canadian values for present and future generations.

With regard to (e), the creation of national monuments follows a process that has three major phases: design competition, design development, and implementation. Each monument project is realized under its own set of circumstances, such as the nature of the commemoration, the site or location, the budget, the involvement of partners, and varying schedules

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1022— Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to the announcement made by the Government House Leader (GHL) on the evening of April 30, 2017, concerning a government motion proposing to amend the Standing Orders of the House of Commons: (a) was the decision, which was the subject of the announcement, taken by the Cabinet or a committee of the Cabinet; (b) if the answer to (a) is negative, by whom was the decision made, on behalf of the government; (c) in coming to the decision announced, was anyone consulted in this respect; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the relevant names, titles, dates and associated file numbers concerning those consultations; (e) what is the government's current position concerning the contents of the GHL March 10, 2017, discussion paper; (f) was the GHL letter to the Opposition House Leaders shared with journalists prior to being sent to her colleagues; (g) if the answer to (f) is affirmative, why was the letter shared; (h) with respect to the "specific commitments" in the 2015 Liberal Party platform, referred to by the GHL, what are the so-called specifics; and (i) why were no details concerning, or drafts of, the government's intended motion provided by the GHL?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Small Business and Tourism and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the announcement made by the government House leader, the GHL, on the evening of April 30, 2017, concerning a government motion proposing to amend the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, the government will be moving forward with the commitment to modernize the rules of the House of Commons in order to make Parliament more relevant for Canadians and make it a better place to work by introducing a government motion in the House of Commons to implement these commitments. The motion will refer to the commitments made in the platform during the election in relation to the inappropriate use of prorogation and omnibus bills, the strengthening of committees, improving financial oversight, and increasing accountability in question period.

In the discussion paper released in March 2017, the government put forward ideas in good faith to foster a dialogue on additional ways that we could modernize the operations of the House of Commons. As indicated in the letter of April 30, 2017, the government does not intend to move forward on these items at the present time. Going forward, the government remains committed to dialogue among all parties on how to improve the tone in the House of Commons and to find new ways of making the House more effective at addressing government and private members' business. Most importantly, we hope that we can make the House of Commons more accountable to Canadians.

Question No. 1023— Mr. Alupa A. Clarke:

With regard to the approval of the purchase of Super Hornets without a tender, and to the statement made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Service and Procurement in the House on April 6, 2017, that "I will let the Department of National Defence provide him with details regarding this capability gap": what are the details of any information that would have led to this statement, including those relating specifically to the existence of a "capability gap"?

Mr. Jean R. Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has obligations to the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, to have a certain number of fighter jets mission-ready at all times, as well as obligations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO. The number of mission-ready planes the Royal Canadian Air Force, or RCAF, can put in the air today is fewer than Canada's NORAD and NATO obligations combined. The RCAF is risk-managing this capability gap, and has been doing so for a number of years. However, the government is not willing to accept this level of risk anymore.

On November 22, 2016, the government announced that it will launch, within its current mandate, an open and transparent competition to replace the fleet of CF-18 fighter aircraft. In addition, the government announced that Canada will immediately explore the acquisition of 18 new Super Hornet aircraft to supplement the CF-18s for an interim period until the permanent replacements arrive. While the government has entered into discussions with the U.S. government and Boeing about this potential acquisition, no decision has been made yet. Discussions must demonstrate that the interim fleet is appropriately capable and can be obtained at a cost, schedule, and economic value that are acceptable to Canadians. Furthermore, the government also announced that it would increase support for the current CF-18 fleet.

On June 7, 2017, the government unveiled its new defence policy: "strong, secure, engaged". In order for Canada to counter today's evolving threat environment and remain highly interoperable with its allies and key operational partners, this policy commits to replacing the CF-18 fleet with 88 advanced fighter aircraft.

Question No. 1028—Mr. Wayne Easter:

With regard to the investigation into the Clyde River Fish Kill in Clyde River and area on Prince Edward Island (PEI): (a) how many personnel from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) have been involved in the investigation; (b) with regard to interviews conducted between DFO officials and individuals involved in the case, how many interviews have taken place, and over what period of time; (c) with regard to trips to PEI related to this investigation made by off-island DFO offices, (i) how many trips were made, (ii) how many vehicle hours have been accumulated, (iii) what was the duration of each trip, (iv) what were the accommodation and travel status costs; (d) who requested this extended investigation at the federal level; (e) which individual, or individuals, from PEI requested the assistance of the DFO; (f) has the DFO been provided with a report from Environment Canada on the extraordinary rain event that caused the flooding, and if so, what did the report conclude; and (g) what are the details of all correspondence, both written and electronic, related to this matter, between officials from the PEI Department of the Environment and DFO personnel?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary for Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there was no involvement by personnel of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO.

With regard to (b), no interviews were conducted by DFO.

With regard to (c), no trips to P.E.I. related to this investigation were made by off-island DFO offices.

Parts (d) and (e) are not applicable.

With regard to (f), no, DFO has not been provided with a report from Environment Canada.

With regard to (g), there has been no correspondence between officials from the P.E.I. Department of the Environment and DFO personnel.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1032—Mr. Jamie Schmale:**

With regard to the decision made by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to charge \$100 for a ten minute search for information and \$30 for each additional minute, as described in The Hill Times on May 3, 2017: (a) what is the title of the individual who made the decision to charge for information; (b) when was the Minister's Office made aware of the decision to charge for information; (c) has the Minister or his office issued a statement approving of the decision to charge for information; (d) has the President of the Treasury Board advised IRCC that charging for information is not in keeping with the Prime Minister's directive to make government data "open by default" and, if so, when was this done; and (e) what was the response by IRCC?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), no decision to charge for this information was made. The requester was advised to contact the statistical unit in the department responsible for providing data on a cost-recovery basis. This is standard operating procedure when an access to information request has been received for which no records exist. In an attempt to assist the requester, the access to Information and privacy division suggested the requester turn to the cost-recovery unit. IRCC only charges the \$5 request fee for access to information requests. The authority to charge for data related to immigration that has not been published by the department is contained in subsection 314(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. The amounts that can be charged are also contained therein.

With regard to (b), no decision to charge for this information was made, as this is part of IRCC's established practice to meet requesters' information needs.

With regard to (c), as noted in (a), charging for reports produced under cost recovery is done under the authority of subsection 314(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations and the fees set under paragraphs 314(1)(a) and 314(1)(b) of these regulations.

With regard to (d) and (e), as noted in (a), charging for customized reports is done under the authority of subsection 314(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. IRCC is implementing a rigorous open government plan by posting greater numbers of data tables with an increased frequency on the Government of Canada's open data portal. IRCC data tables on the open data portal are among the most-accessed data sources.

Question No. 1034— Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to individuals detained at airports by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), since January 1, 2016, broken down by airport and by month: (a) on how many days have CBSA holding cells at airports been (i) at half-capacity, (ii) at capacity, (iii) over-capacity, (iv) empty; and (b) what is the protocol when CBSA holding cells are over-capacity?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the CBSA canvassed all regions across the country for the requested information. While the CBSA has holding cells in 21 airport locations, not all airports were able to provide the data requested. Manual records exist; however, given the scope and time frame of the request, as well as the large volume of information, the CBSA is unable to provide detailed information as requested.

With regard to (b), the CBSA has short-term holding cells in 21 airports across the country. These cells are for detentions of 48 hours or less. CBSA holding cells at airports are under capacity the majority of the time and are normally used for a short period of time

while the individual is awaiting pickup from a local police agency or to be escorted to an outbound flight.

Should holding cells reach overcapacity, the CBSA will move individuals to other designated facilities as per the established agreements in place in each region. The nature and reason for detention may dictate the facility used in some circumstances.

Question No. 1037—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: (a) has the Minister receive communications from stakeholder groups expressing concerns regarding the National Inquiry; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, which stakeholders expressed concern and how many communications were received; (c) has the Minister received communications from individual Canadians expressing concerns regarding the National Inquiry; and (d) if the answer in (c) is affirmative, how many communications were received?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs received 456 pieces of correspondence in the form of letters and emails from stakeholder groups and from individuals across the country on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls between November 4, 2015, and May 3, 2017. Records are based on a search of the department's document tracking system. Some items may not have been captured if they fell outside the search criteria or were not tracked or entered correctly in the system. The correspondence reflected various views on the inquiry, including views on the mandate of the commission, opposition to the inquiry, concerns with inquiry timelines, and support for the inquiry.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1000-1004, 1006-1013, 1016-1019, 1021, 1024-1026, 1029-1031, 1033, 1035, 1036, and 1038 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1000— Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the use of malaria prevention drugs in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for each year since 1990: (a) which deployments were required to have anti-malarial drugs administered; and (b) in each deployment, how many CAF members were given (i) doxycycline, (ii) atovaquone-proguanil, (iii) chloroquine, (iv) primaquine?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1001— Ms. Dianne L. Watts:

With regard to the government's Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy and the government's Opioid Action Plan: (a) what, if any, is the government's strategy on recovery; (b) what is the government's position on recovery versus treatment; (c) what is the government doing to increase access to recovery; (d) how much has the government committed to recovery programs and initiatives since November 4, 2015; and (e) what is the funding for each item in (d), broken down by (i) recipient, (ii) project, (iii) amount, (iv) date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1002— Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Medicine Hat, Alberta, from October 13 to 15, 2016: (a) what public business did the Prime Minister conduct on this trip, separate from his business as Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada; (b) how many employees of the public service, including employees of the Office of the Prime Minister, traveled with the Prime Minister or were involved in this travel; (c) how many employees of the Privy Council Office (PCO) traveled with the Prime Minister or were involved in the Prime Minister's travel; (d) what public business did PCO employees, including the technical employees, conduct for this travel; (e) was any of the work conducted by PCO employees partisan or to the benefit of the Liberal Party of Canada and the Liberal campaign in Medicine Hat and, if so, was the government reimbursed; (f) did any PCO employees provide any assistance, including technical set-up or assistance, related to the Liberal rally attended by the Prime Minister and, if so, (i) what assistance was provided, (ii) what are the details of any invoice submitted to the campaign resulting from such assistance; (g) was any government property used for partisan purposes during the Prime Minister's trip and, if so, what amount was the government reimbursed by the Liberal Party of Canada or the Liberal campaign in Medicine Hat; (h) was the government reimbursed by the Liberal Party of Canada or the Liberal campaign in Medicine Hat for the Prime Minister's travel to and from Medicine Hat and, if so, what was the amount of the reimbursement; (i) what personal business (according to the itineraries published on the Prime Minister's website) did the Prime Minister conduct on October 15 and 16, 2016; and (j) what was the Prime Minister's physical location on October 15 and 16, 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1003— Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to carbon emissions, for each minister, including the Prime Minister: what have been each minister's carbon emissions, calculated as tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted, from November 5, 2015, to February 28, 2017, broken down by (i) transportation via land vehicles to and from locations required in accordance with that minister's portfolio, (ii) transportation via land vehicles to and from the minister's constituency, (iii) transportation via air to and from locations required in accordance with that minister's portfolio, (iv) transportation via air to and from the minister's constituency, (v) electricity used in the minister's Ministry offices, (vi) electricity used in the minister's Parliament Hill offices, (vii) electricity used in the minister's constituency offices, (viii) natural gas or other fossil fuels used in the minister's Ministry office, (ix) natural gas or other fossil fuels used in the minister's Parliament Hill office, (x) natural gas or other fossil fuels used in the minister's constituency offices, (xi) the minister's food consumption, (xii) other carbon-emitting activities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1004— Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to merchandise purchased by the government with the Canada 150 logo, since January 1, 2016: (a) what Canada 150 merchandise was manufactured outside of Canada, broken down by individual item; and (b) what is the breakdown of the purchases listed in (a) including (i) item description, (ii) price per item, (iii) country of manufacturing, (iv) quantity purchased?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1006— Mr. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to handling of the grievance process relating to Phoenix by government departments: (a) how many grievances have been filed since May 2016; (b) how many Full-Time Equivalents have been added per department to manage grievances; (c) how much has been paid in overtime to the employees hired to

manage grievances; and (d) how much has been spent, broken down by department, on arbitration costs and services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1007— Mr. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to Satellite Pay Centres across Canada, broken down by pay centre: (a) how much has been spent in total on each of the centres; and (b) of the amount in (a), how much has been spent on (i) salaries, (ii) building rental and lease costs, (iii) employee travel, (iv) overtime pay, (v) accommodations, (vi) incidentals, (vii) per diems?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1008— Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to the government's response to Q-575 and the statement made by the Privy Council Office (PCO) that they "have just received new direction that this Q should only be assigned to ECCC" (A-2016-00682, page 16): what are the titles of the employees in the Office of the Prime Minister or the Government House Leader's Office who provided this new direction to PCO?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1009— Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to the \$911 million in grants allocated to research projects and personnel support in Supplementary Estimates (C) 2016-17 to the Canadian Institute of Health Research: what funds have been granted thus far, broken down by (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) project description?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1010— Mr. John Nater:

With regard to government procurement and contracts for the provision of research or speechwriting services to ministers since September 20, 2016: (a) what are the details of contracts, including (i) the start and end dates, (ii) contracting parties, (iii) file number, (iv) nature or description of the work, (v) value of contract; and (b) in the case of a contract for speechwriting, what is the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) audience or event at which the speech was, or was intended to be, delivered, (iv) number of speeches to be written, (v) cost charged per speech?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1011— Mr. John Nater:

With regard to spending by the government on private investigators since November 4, 2015, broken down by department, agency, Crown Corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of each expenditure including for each the (i) vendor, (ii) amount of contract, (iii) date, (iv) file number, (v) situation overview or reason for investigation, (vi) finding of investigation, if completed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1012— Mr. John Nater:

With regard to Budget 2017 and to contracts signed by the government with McKinsey and Company, its partners or consultants, since November 4, 2015, for each contract: (a) what is the (i) value, (ii) description of the service provided, (iii) date and duration, (iv) internal tracking or file number; (b) was the contract sole sourced; (c) what specific role did McKinsey and Company, its partners or consultants, or Dominic Barton play in the preparation of Budget 2017; (d) what specific sections of Budget 2017 were prepared by, in whole or in part, by McKinsey and Company, its partners or consultants; and (e) what are the details of any briefing notes or memorandums regarding Budget 2017, McKinsey and Company, its partners or consultants, or Dominic Barton, including for each the (i) sender, (ii) recipients, (iii) title and subject matter, (iv) date, (v) internal file or tracking number?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1013— Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada: (a) what action has been taken to fulfill a fair wages policy, as is laid out in the last two mandate letters for the Minister; (b) what constitutes a fair wage, as laid out in the last two mandate letters for the Minister; (c) what job sectors are being considered to be included in the proposed fair wages policy; and (d) what are the details of any meetings which have taken place to create a fair wages policy including for each the (i) dates, (ii) attendees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1016— Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the alternative medicine therapy known as cupping and Health Canada: (a) does Health Canada endorse this therapy; (b) what benefits does this therapy provide; (c) what evidence does Health Canada have that the therapy is effective in providing the benefits identified in (b); (d) what certifications or qualifications does Health Canada require before someone is permitted to administer cupping therapy; (e) does Health Canada consider cupping to be a legitimate medical therapy; and (f) do federal government health care plans cover expenses related to cupping therapy?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1017— Mr. Robert Aubin:

With regard to the \$3.3 million investment, announced in Budget 2016, to fund an in-depth assessment of VIA Rail's high-frequency rail proposal and other Transport Canada studies and assessments: (a) how much of the \$3.3 million has been invested to date, broken down by (i) feasibility study, (ii) contractor; (b) has the in-depth assessment been finalized and, if so, will a full version of the assessment and its conclusions be available on Transport Canada's website; (c) if the answer to (b) is negative, what is the time frame for finalizing the assessment and posting the full version and conclusions on Transport Canada's website; (d) how many employees are assigned to the assessment; (e) has VIA Rail provided the federal government with studies on the high-frequency rail proposal; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, will Transport Canada post the full versions and conclusions of these studies on Transport Canada's website; (g) on what date did Transport Canada begin receiving studies from VIA Rail; (h) what have been Transport Canada's responses to the VIA Rail studies; (i) was CPCS Transcom Limited hired in this assessment process; (j) if the answer to (i) is affirmative, will a full version and the conclusions of the study by CPCS Transcom Limited be posted on Transport Canada's website; (k) how much of the \$3.3 million funded the assessment conducted by CPCS Transcom Limited; (l) what are Transport Canada's responses to CPCS Transcom Limited's conclusions; (m) on what date did Transport Canada begin receiving conclusions from the assessment conducted by CPCS Transcom Limited; and (n) how many other studies and assessments have been conducted to date in this area by Transport Canada and, where applicable, (i) what are the conclusions of each of these studies, (ii) will the full versions and conclusions of these studies be posted on Transport Canada's website, (iii) what was the cost of each of these studies, (iv) what are Transport Canada's responses to each of these studies, (v) on what dates did Transport Canada read these studies?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1018—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Lethbridge, between April 1, 2016, and April 1, 2017: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they applied for funding under, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Lethbridge that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Lethbridge by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (i.e. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1019— Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to total funding spent by the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs in the last five fiscal years: (a) what percentage has been spent inside the National Capital Region versus outside the National Capital Region, including staff costs, operating costs, contract work and transfers to individuals, tribal governments or organizations, broken down by year; (b) what is the total amount spent inside the National Capital Region versus outside the national capital region, including staff costs, operating costs, contract work and transfers to individuals or organizations, broken down by year; (c) what is the percentage of direct transfers to individuals, tribal government, or organizations as opposed to the total amount spent by the Department, broken down by year; (d) what is the total amount of direct transfers to individuals, tribal government, or organizations, broken down by (i) year, (ii) program, (iii) sub-program, (iv) recipient organization, (v) funding amount, (vi) date funds were transferred; and (e) what is the total amount spent by the Department, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1021— Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the investment made by the government in BC Ferries: (a) what grants has BC Ferries received since it became eligible; (b) what requests for grants were made by stakeholders since they became eligible; (c) how many times has the Prime Minister met with the Ferry Stakeholders and the Premier of the Province of British Columbia to discuss BC Ferries; (d) how many times has the Minister of Transport met with the Ferry Stakeholders and the Premier of the Province of British Columbia to discuss BC Ferries; (e) how many times has the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities met with the Ferry Stakeholders and the Premier of the Province of British Columbia to discuss BC Ferries; (f) what were the results of the meetings in (c), (d), and (e); (g) is the government committed to ensuring same level of ferry service across Canada; (h) has the government studied problems that are hindering interprovincial trade with Coastal Dependent Communities in British Columbia; and (i) has BC Ferries ever been a determinant in hindering interprovincial trade and, if so, (i) what solutions were proposed, (ii) what solutions have been implemented since then?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1024— Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the processing of family members under the One-Year Window of Opportunity Provisions for refugees and protected persons, from 2005 to the present time: (a) how many applications have been submitted, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin; (b) how many applications were for spouses, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin; (c) how many applications were for dependents, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) number of dependents per application; (d) what is the processing queue for this program, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin for application; (e) how many applications in the processing queue are for dependents, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) number of dependents per application; (f) how many of the applications in the queue are for spouses, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin; (g) what is the average processing time for applications under this program, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) dependent application specific, (iv) spousal application specific; (h) what is the median processing time, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) dependent application specific, (iv) spousal application specific; and (i) how many applicants have had to do more than one medical exam as a result of the 12 month expiry of the medical examination, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) dependent application specific, (iv) spousal application specific, (v) number of medical exams conducted?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1025—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), since the changes made to the refugee determination system in 2012: (a) how many cases have come before the IRB, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the refugee protection division (RPD), (iv) through the refugee appeal division (RAP); (b) of the cases heard at the IRB, how many were 'legacy cases', broken down (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the RPD, (iv) through the RAP; (c) what was the average length of delay for a legacy case to be heard, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the RPD, (iv) through the RAP; (d) what is the total funding provided to the IRB by the government, broken down (i) year, (ii) purpose; (e) how much internal funding has been shifted within the IRB to process 'legacy cases', broken down (i) year, (ii) area funding was shifted from; (f) how many 'legacy cases' have reached final decisions at the IRB, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the RPD, (iv) through the RAP; (g) of the remaining 'legacy cases', what average length of time the case has been before the IRB, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the RPD, (iv) through the RAP; (h) does the government have a plan in place to eliminate the backlog of 'legacy cases'; (i) in what year is it expected that 'legacy cases' will be eliminated; (j) how many instances have there been of 'legacy cases' having hearings cancelled, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the RPD, (iv) through the RAP, (v) rationale for cancellation; (k) what is the average length of time between a 'legacy case' hearing cancellation and the hearing being rescheduled, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) through the RPD, (iv) through the RAP; (l) how many instances have there been of 'legacy case' hearings being rescheduled multiple times, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) number of hearing cancellations; (m) how many citizenship applications have been suspended due to the cessation of refugee protection provision, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant, (iii) duration of period of suspension; (n) how many citizenship applications are being prosecuted due to the cessation of refugee protection provisions, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant; (o) since 2009 how many cessation cases have been initiated pursuant to IRPA s. 108(2) at the Immigration and Refugee Board in total, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of citizenship of person concerned; (p) how many cessation cases are being investigated in total, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin of applicant; (q) what percentage of citizenship application suspensions are triggered by or related to cessation issues, broken down (i) year, (ii) country of citizenship of origin of applicant; (r) what is the average length of time it takes for a cessation case pursuant to IRPA s. 108(2) from its initiation by the Minister of IRCC, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of citizenship of person concerned, (iii) method of determination; (s) what is the number of currently unresolved cessation cases pursuant to IRPA s. 108(2) that are pending before the RPD, broken down by year of initiation by the Minister of IRCC; and (t) what is the average time that currently unresolved cessation cases pursuant to IRPA s. 108(2) that are pending before the RPD, broken down by year of initiation by the Minister of IRCC?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1026—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to interprovincial migration of refugees as it relates to resettlement funding: (a) what, if any, accounting is done by the government in anticipation of interprovincial migration when allocating resettlement funding; (b) what measures does the government take to monitor and assess interprovincial migration; (c) on an annual basis, from 2005 to 2016, what levels of interprovincial migration were measured, broken down by (i) province of departure, (ii) province of arrival, (iii) country of origin, (iv) immigration and refugee category; and (d) how much total funding for resettlement services has been provided by the government, broken down by (i) year, (ii) service type, (iii) organization, (iv) province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1029— Ms. Sheri Benson:

With regard to the Canada Child Benefit: (a) what is the total number of eligible (i) parents, (ii) children in 2016-17; (b) what is the total number of applications received in 2016-17; (c) how many were successful, meaning how many families actually received the benefit in 2016-17; (d) what is the regional breakdown of applications received and approved; (e) what is the urban and rural breakdown; (f) what are the protocols and service standards for the processing of applications; (g) how many applications, if any, exceeded the processing time specified in the service standard; (h) what were the most common reasons for exceeding the processing time; (i) what remedy is available for cases that have gone beyond the service standards and, if difficult cases are moved to a different unit for treatment, are they then subject

to a different set of protocols and service standards; (j) where are these applications processed; (k) are there regional offices with trained staff; (l) do all staff who process applications receive the same training; (m) are there regularly scheduled training or briefing sessions to keep the unit staff current on Ministry policies and practices and, if so, how often do these occur; (n) who is ultimately responsible for incorrect information given to applicants and MP offices, in particular what is the chain of command, or organizational chart for staff processing applications; (o) are all applicants given the same options and information, or is this a flexible standard, depending on the agent and officer; (p) what is the appeal process, if any, for unsuccessful applicants; (q) what are the service standards for the appeal process; (r) has the department identified issues and been made aware of problems with regard to the delivery of the CCB to eligible Canadians and, if so, what are they; (s) how many eligible families are currently not receiving CCB payments; (t) of the families identified in (s) what are the reasons they are not receiving payments; (u) what triggers a review of a CCB file; (v) what documentation is required from persons under review and how are they informed that these documents are required; (w) are benefits suspended during a review and, if so, when are benefits reinstated; and (x) is there a service standard for how the review is conducted and is there an appeal process when a review is conducted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1030— Ms. Sheri Benson:

With regard to the government's promise to introduce proactive pay equity legislation in 2018: (a) what is the government's engagement strategy for developing and drafting the proposed legislation; (b) which departments have been tasked with developing and drafting this legislation; (c) what is the timeframe and schedule for (i) the development and implementation of the framework, (ii) the drafting and introduction of the legislation; (d) how are the recommendations of the (i) Pay Equity Task Force (2004), (ii) Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (June 2005), included in the terms of reference and the draft legislation; (e) what criteria does the government anticipate will be used to determine the scope and implementation schedule of the proposed legislation; (f) with regard to the development of the proposed legislation, what consultations has the Minister for the Status of Women or government officials undertaken with (i) parliamentarians of any party, (ii) non-governmental stakeholders, (iii) labour and human rights experts, (iv) witnesses who have appeared before, or provided written submissions to, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and the Special Committee on Pay Equity; (g) have there been, are there any ongoing, or will there be any consultations with individuals or groups outside of the federal government and, if so, (i) who was consulted, (ii) when were or will they be consulted; (h) were or will there be any academics, experts, or any other outside advisors consulted in the development and drafting of the proposed legislation, and were or will they be paid for their services; and (i) what are the details of any correspondence or briefing materials related to the development and drafting of the proposed legislation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1031— Mr. Alexander Nuttall:

With regard to grants and contributions, including loans and loan guarantees, for research and development, since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such grants and contributions including (i) the recipient, (ii) the date, (iii) the amount, (iv) the type (grant, loan, etc.), (v) details on if the contribution is repayable, (vi) the project description, (vii) the address of recipient, (viii) the electoral riding where recipient is located, (ix) the number of jobs expected to be created from each grant and contribution, (x) the number of jobs actually created from each grant or contribution, if available?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1033— Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, and the concerns and objections raised by Parliamentary Budget Officer in his discussion paper entitled “Reforms to the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Proposed in Bill C-44”: (a) what specific measures is the government taking in order to address each of the concerns raised by the Parliamentary Budget Officer; (b) what types of amendments is the government prepared to make in order to address the concerns of the Parliamentary Budget Officer; (c) if there are any concerns raised in the discussion paper which the government does not believe requires amendments to Bill C-44, which specific concerns are those; and (d) for each discounted concern, what is the rationale for not making the suggested amendments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1035—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to guest speakers or other cases where individuals were contracted to give speeches: what are the details of all such contracts including the (i) vendor, (ii) date and duration, (iii) amount of contract, (iv) number of speeches to be provided per contract, (v) date of speeches, (vi) topic or purpose of speech, (vii) location of speech?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1036— Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the Department's response to Q-877: (a) what is the process by which Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada identifies an Indigenous group as a nation, as described by the mandate letter to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs; and (b) how many Indigenous groups and communities has the Minister met with since November 4, 2015, broken down by (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name and title of the Indigenous group or community, (iv) attendees, (v) recommendations that were made to the Minister?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1038— Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to First Nations financial transparency: (a) which bands, leaders, communities and organizations did the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs consult with between November 4, 2015, and May 3, 2017, broken down by (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name and title of the Indigenous group or community, (iv) attendees, (v) recommendations that were made to the Minister; (b) with regard to the consultations in (a), by which criteria did the Minister decide which bands, leaders, communities and organizations to consult with; and (c) what are the details of the discussion questions brought to each meeting?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up the question, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris had a period of five minutes for questions and comments. He had just finished his speech prior to the beginning of members' statements, so we have five minutes for questions and comments and we will go to that now.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, we are very happy with the Brandon airport and the expansion that has been taking place. I know that my colleague across the way would be very familiar with that. Maybe I will use that as a link to how important it is that we have air passenger rights. This is legislation that will ultimately lead to rights for air passengers. Would the member agree that we need to do what we can as legislators to ensure that there is a higher sense of fairness and that passenger rights are overdue?

• (1225)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his interest in the Brandon airport, which is now complete. It has expanded. It is three times the size it was. It was my pleasure while a member of the government to be able to put some of those funds forward, and I appreciate the fact that it was carried out. I was there with another member from Winnipeg to make sure that they had spades in the ground and got it going a year and a half ago.

It is very important that we have rights for passengers in the airline industry, but I have a great concern in regard to the compensation levels, because the bill would give the Minister of Transport and the Canadian Transportation Agency an open cheque to set monetary compensation for passengers who are affected in this way, rather than having a set fee or set compensation for certain areas. That would be my main concern in that area.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member talked a great deal about wheat and the importance of wheat to our prairie provinces. We will talk about the province of Manitoba once again. In the legislation, we are seeing actions being taken with respect to rail lines. I wonder if the member might provide some comment on how important it is that we get it right in dealing with our rail lines, as our commodity industries need the best system possible.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we are able to export the grain we grow on the Prairies. A greater proportion of what we grow is exported than in any other country, virtually.

I am concerned that there are not even going to be committee meetings on Bill C-49 until September, as pointed out by my colleague. The bill would not come into action before July 31, when Bill C-30 dies. Bill C-30 had many sound management tools that could be used to make sure grain could move in a predictable manner. There will be no predictability in the movement of grain as of August 1, and of course, August 1 is the very beginning of the new crop year, when grain will start to be harvested for this year and moved.

Government Orders

I was urging the government to do everything it could to at least get Bill C-49 through. Maybe it could split some amendments by the end of July. However, we are rising shortly, and that is not going to happen. They have indicated that it will not even go to committee until next fall. We do not know when it will pass or how big a priority it will be for the government at that point.

We are very concerned that there will be a gap in the management of the movement of grain off the Prairies in a predictable and safeguarded manner.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a few years since I was last on the transportation committee, I think four or five, if my memory serves me correctly, but I enjoy speaking about these issues. One reason I enjoy talking about them is that in a country as vast as Canada, transportation really matters. Every country has its unique issues, but Canada's would be distinctly different from most countries in the world. Perhaps Australia, the United States, and Russia face some of the same challenges as Canada, but very few other countries in the world would have the exact same problems.

The other thing I find very interesting about the legislation is that it deals with an underlying problem, which is different economically than many issues with which we deal.

Before I discuss that, let me say a few basic words for context about this broad legislation.

Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, is legislation that we call, for people watching at home, an omnibus bill. Many elements from different areas are put together under one larger theme. We have heard members from various opposition parties point out that not all elements of the bill really fit together. In fact, I suggest the government would have been better off breaking the bill into three, or perhaps even four, pieces of legislation.

A very small element of the bill deals with marine issues. There is a larger element that deals with railway issues, which could have been subdivided into separate legislation to deal with railway safety issues and broader economic railway issues. It also deals with issues related to airlines, consumers, the financing of airlines, foreign ownership rules, and so forth.

In many ways, the government has put together many things that really do not belong in a single piece of legislation, which makes it somewhat difficult to comment on. Some things in the bill are well-intentioned and could possibly be useful and good for the country. Other pieces of the legislation the government should rethink. I will take apart as many elements of the bill in the time allotted to me.

One of the biggest rail transportation issues in Canada is that there is a natural monopoly tendency. That is not caused by the railways through any malice or problem; it is just that there are some very natural realities. To build a railway, a large capital investment is required, making it very difficult for competition. Railways also serve specific geographic areas exclusively. They need to have that natural monopoly. To pay for the underlying capital cost, they need to capture the majority of the market. That, then, leads to a problem of a power imbalance.

If commodities can be shipped by means other than railways, for example, oil can be shipped by pipeline or perhaps trucking is better

for other commodities, that is not a problem. However, for certain commodities and situations, rail may not be available. That is where a problem tends to result and get argued about when it comes to rail transportation.

In highly competitive markets where a lot of commodities enter and exit and product substitution is easily done, etc., there is no call for the government to get involved because there are few issues with the market. No monopoly is ever naturally total or pure, but to some degree railways in our country have those sorts of issues.

That has therefore caused a long history of the governments of Canada regulating, subsidizing, and interfering in the rail transportation industry, particularly in the west. If we look at the population centres of eastern Canada, they are much closer to the United States and commodities can be trucked. In that case, there is a considerable amount of competition.

• (1230)

That tends to be the underlying issue the government has to deal with whenever it deals with rail transportation issues.

In a previous Parliament, there had been some issues on grain transporting in the Prairies due to bottlenecks. Some of this was perhaps due to the railways, some of it perhaps due to weather issues, and the large crop in western Canada. The previous government put in some adjustments, which allowed shippers to use the railway system within 160 kilometres. This is a bit of a simplified interpretation. They were allowed to use the existing railways, and have the right, to ship their grain and other commodities to the United States and then connect.

It is this interconnection that is being discussed. It used to be 30 kilometres and was then extended to 160 kilometres. For those in places like Regina who needed to ship their grain and CN, CP could not get it out, they could then get them to ship it to the United States at which point a railway like Burlington Northern would have the option to ship the grain. As has been noted, that is coming to an end.

What the government has suggested is changing the rules to introduce something it is calling long-haul interchangeability rights, eliminating this 160-kilometre rule.

This is very similar to what has already been in the legislation before and has not been used. If the government is putting in a new provision but it is almost identical to something that has been in the legislation since the 1990s but has not been used, what is the purpose? What is the government trying to accomplish?

The government will have to deal with this at committee. Why is it eliminating something that has helped eliminate a bottleneck situation and going back to an older system that has not worked well. That is my first criticism and question for the government.

Government Orders

The second thing I want to point out, particularly with the rail issues, is that I do not see anything the government is doing in this to bring down the costs. Service is important, and commodity shippers in western Canada have told me they are willing to pay more if they can get timely and accurate services. That is very good. Ultimately, time is money when shipping products.

I am failing to see where the government is dealing with ways to make the regulatory process quicker and smoother. In fact, most of the legislation seems to add more layers onto it. I understand it goes back to that underlying problem, the natural monopoly and how to deal with it. We often deal with it through regulation.

There is a second question I would like to put to the government. With the rail situation and the added costs that will soon come through the carbon tax, which will ultimately hurt the producers, the shippers, and other Canadians involved, how will it do things to lower the costs?

Finally, there are elements in the bill which personally interest me and many of my constituents. They are around the creation of a passenger's bill of rights. In many ways, this sounds very good. As someone who flies a lot, and most western Canadian members of Parliament joke that our third office is an airplane, I am very familiar with problems airlines can have.

My question is this. What has been costed and how will this cost be passed on to the customer? Costs for airline flights in Canada are some of the highest in the world. We all have a major concern with that. If our businesses are going to grow, if we are going to have better connection and the ability for places like Saskatoon, where I come from, to move out and do business in the world, we need costs to be dealt with.

• (1235)

Therefore, these are the basic questions. Why is the government taking away something that has worked and replacing it with something that has been tried and seems to be wanting? Where is the government's ability to bring down costs, both for railways and air passengers? Also, how is it going to simplify the regulatory burden?

These are questions the government needs to deal with when the bill goes to committee. The Liberals would have been wiser if they had split the legislation into smaller bills so we could deal with it in more bite-sized pieces.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it might be surprising to the member that we are on the same kind of ground. We want to achieve the same kind of impact for Canadians.

We tried to take an integrated and collaborative approach to this kind of legislation. The response from the actual stakeholders and experts has really been positive.

The Western Grain Elevator said, "We're thankful that Minister Garneau and Minister MacAulay understand just how fundamental this is to grain farmers and the industry...This is an important day for...grain shippers."

Cereals Canada said, "Cereals Canada Applauds Grain Transportation Policy...The policy announced today will provide that accountability when enacted in legislation."

From the Pulse Canada and Canadian Special Crops said, "On the whole, the Government has identified the core issues that need to be addressed and we see opportunities to engage...A great deal of consultation has been undertaken."

I have more, but my question for the hon. colleague is this. Why not send this to committee so we can hear from these experts and stakeholders?

The Deputy Speaker: I will use this occasion to remind hon. members, even when another hon. member's name appears in a quote or citation in the course of a member's remarks, to change up the name to the member's title or riding name. This works well, and it is the right way to do it.

The member for Saskatoon—University.

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, we are coming up to the mid-point of the government. We are likely to have, but not guaranteed, a prorogation where everything gets restarted and reset in the fall. However, if we send the bill to committee, there are ways of reviving it.

My suggestion earlier in my speech was that the government, instead of putting this out as one bill, was to put it out in four smaller pieces of legislation. This would have allowed the government to get the rail piece of the bill out sooner and get it done. As my colleague, the member for Brandon—Souris pointed out, it would prevent the legislative gap that was about to happen.

Therefore, if this is such a priority, and I agree it is, why did the Liberals not get started on it earlier? Why did they not break it down into smaller pieces where the urgent items could be dealt with and the less urgent items could then be debated more extensively?

• (1240)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns I have about the bill is the number of things we have in it.

It is clear that the passenger bill of rights does not have any minimums or maximums with regard to identification of penalties, fines, or expectations for passengers. Regulations can set these things, but having no guidance at all from Parliament appears to be a weakness, especially when the European Union and the United States have at least hard targets for their legislative body to be involved.

What is my colleague's position on at least having some directional targets set by the legislative body versus leaving it all to regulations?

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, the member has a good point, and this is one of the things that would be discussed at committee.

Government Orders

If, and this is as big if, we are going ahead with these penalties, it would be wise to have the elected representatives give some sort of a framework rather than have it purely be done by regulation. I understand regulation can be more flexible, but the framework to the regulators should be given by the elected officials. This tends to be the democratic process, and I suspect that will be looked at when the bill comes to committee.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be splitting my time with the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

In a previous Parliament, the member for Elmwood—Transcona was Bill Blaikie, who was a good friend of mine. I had the pleasure of spending some time with him in regard to a number of issues, including transportation.

The Winnipeg area is a gateway to much of the west and the United States. Ironically, my riding of Windsor West is the same. Transportation plays a key part in not only our economy, but also in the social and cultural makeup of civilization. Trade creates relationships, opportunities, entrepreneurship, and some of the hard industries.

When we were fighting for a new border crossing in Windsor, what I really appreciated about Bill was his understanding of the transportation issue.

I can tell members who were not in the House when Bill Blaikie was a member that he was a giant, quite literally. When he was coming to Windsor, I asked people what he was like, and a friend of mine said, “Well, he hasn’t met a sandwich he didn’t like.” I was to pick him up at the airport, and I pulled up in a two-door Cavalier. This giant of a man was standing there. When he got in the car, the first thing he asked was whether the seat would go back. I replied, “Unfortunately, it is all the way back.” He travelled with me in that car with his knees in his face for a long time.

Bill’s first observation in my riding was on the border crossing. Transport trucks were lined up all the way down Church Road, one stacked after the other. He told me that in Winnipeg those things were called trains. Hundreds of transport trucks cross that particular border. As I said, I will be splitting my time with the new member for Elmwood—Transcona, and he has the same pedigree with respect to transportation.

This piece of legislation is important for transportation in many respects. I am going to focus on the airline passenger bill of rights aspect, which is something I personally have been trying to move in Parliament for a number of years.

I am sure that all members know that Canada lags when it comes to this. The European Union and the United States in particular have had a passenger bill of rights for some time. For Canada not to have one is a good example of our lack of consumer protection.

Canada is very unique when it comes to a lack of protection and the influence of those things on our pocketbooks. New Democrats have worked on a variety of issues, with the most recent one getting a lot of attention being the unlocking of cellphones. I worked on this with Rogers at one point in time. Rogers was the first company to unlock cellphones. That would be normal and expected behaviour, and at no cost to the consumer. The CRTC ruled that consumers

would have a reasonable expectation of this, because it is normal practice in most countries around the world. For us to be treated differently is a drag on our economy and a drag on our capacity to compete.

An airline bill of rights affects passenger travel, and passenger travel is also business travel. Say, for example, a business traveller has been ripped off or not been treated properly or did not get to a destination, that individual would have something to fall back on. If we are spending so much of our time trying to figure out rules and regulations and fairness, and there is nothing more than a dog’s breakfast out there, with people fighting for decency, for anything, from a bit of nourishment to proper compensation, they are wasting their time, energy, and resources. Airline travel then becomes an uncompetitive part of our economy.

Canada needs to think about consumer protection. If we do not have some kind of protection, it is a drag on our capabilities. We will be out of sync with our competitors and our partners, be it the United States or the European Union or whoever else when it comes to these types of things.

● (1245)

This act unfortunately includes several things. The Conservatives were very good at bringing a healthy repertoire of omnibus bills to the House of Commons, and we debated those bills on a regular basis. To some degree, I have to give the Liberals credit. Given that we have had so few bills coming forth, when they do come forward, they are omnibus bills on steroids. They are pumped up with several different aspects that we would not have seen in the past. They have augmented this type of practice.

In this bill, we should be discussing the passenger bill of rights on its own—for the reasons I have noted in the precursor—with respect to the competitiveness of our economy, let alone sincere fairness. If one has ever sat on the tarmac before, one sometimes has to wait three or four hours and cannot even go to the washroom, which is unhealthy to begin with, not to mention the spillovers we have seen in the past. We should be thinking about those small issues when we are talking about other things in this bill.

The Canada Transportation Act is being amended in this bill, as is foreign ownership of airlines. We are talking about an industry that has had quite a colourful past. Its current characterization of ownership has a full cast of characters in unknown quantities, to say the least. That is dependent upon a series of things, and we are shedding some control of ownership, which is worthy of a debate.

What is interesting with respect to the Railway Safety Act is where Canada stands with railway and railway safety. I was a former transportation critic for this party, and we worked on the railway safety review. There were a number of things that were never implemented. However, just because we are built on a railway system and have had some great advances, we should keep this example in mind when we compare ourselves to other countries. While we are still struggling to find high-speed rail, Uzbekistan is beating us on that. I can say that bleeds through the entire process with respect to rail safety in this place, because that is what it looks like.

Government Orders

I am a former municipal city councillor. One of the things I have learned in the House of Commons, and in my previous representation, is that there is city council, the provincial legislature, the federal legislature, then we have the Lord, and then the rail companies. It seems that is essentially the pecking order with respect to being a representative and dealing with the complications of rail safety, which are very significant, not only for workers, but also for the men and women who live around the rail lines and interact with them. For example, with respect to hazardous materials, the transportation between Canada and the U.S. is significant.

We also have the Coasting Trade Act, the Canada Marine Act, and the western grain transportation act that are all affected by this bill.

We have now moved closure on this bill, and instead of seeing this done properly, it will be done altogether. I do not want to be too hard on the previous government, but the reality of omnibus bills is that they do not go through the full vetting process that is necessary. It has not been cast in terms of a political advantage or political commentary for the Liberals or the Conservatives, the reality is that legislative bodies, like our committees, are supposed to go through individual legislation because we can enhance it. Even if we do not agree with the legislation and what it has done, we often find mistakes and other problems. Hence, the previous government ran into several different problems in the court system because bills did not go through the proper channels and the full vetting that is necessary.

The current government seems to have built upon that and pumped up its legislation to include even more. We will see this go to committee, and there will be a cluster of different things that will require testimony. I can tell members that we will have testimony that overshadows many different departments, from many different witnesses, and it will likely come back as a giant muddle and mess. At the end of the day, we will be dealing with this again.

I know that my time is coming to an end here. However, in conclusion, I want to impress upon the members that Canadians have spoken loud and clear about the passenger bill of rights. The EU has some models and targets that it has reached, and we have proposed that they should be part of our legislation. The United States also has that.

● (1250)

Let us not just think about the inconvenience of a passenger being delayed, but let us also think about our economy and capabilities, and the time management we have as individuals, who should have a good contract. When we purchase a ticket, we should at least receive a product that is similar.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the bill, for a couple of reasons. As a licensed pilot and a long-time trainspotter, it has all my interests in one place.

The railways in this country were built around the concept of building local monopolies. They are spaced out by certain distances for a reason. They were set up that way so that each company would have their territory.

I think it is very important for us to be modernizing it in the way we are doing here, and allowing these interchanging rules to be far improved to increase the competition.

I wonder if the member would agree with that general sentiment.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the railway companies historically, when building this country, received unprecedented, even corrupt types of beneficial practices.

In fact, when we go back and look at, not just Canada, but also North America as well, there were whole practices in the United States, political as well as business, that looked at the interests of individuals and the accumulation of wealth. Sadly, these are some of the things we have to correct as part of our culture and heritage. I think of the types of labour we used on building our railways in particular.

I think that changes how I feel, and I think many feel the same. It is about time we realized that our land and our infrastructure are the predominant domain of Canadians, and the use of them is a privilege. The privilege should be respected.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, anyone who listened to the speech by my colleague from Windsor West would know that comes from a position of knowledge. I had the opportunity to serve with him on the industry committee, and I respect his opinion.

He talked about the importance of the bill and getting it right in respect to Canadian competitiveness. Both his community and mine rely on a good transportation system as far as competitiveness, particularly for the automotive industry.

I am wondering if he could answer why it is so important that we get this right and that we give the time to study it properly, relative to our competitiveness internationally. I wonder if he could comment on how important it is to get this right.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intervention from the member for Oshawa, who is very well versed in the complications and challenges of the automotive industry. He well understood that on committee, and as a parliamentary secretary. For example, the movement of goods and services for supply, be it just-in-time delivery, but also the final products and how interrelated they are, multimodal, are very critical.

When we have the hearings related to the bill—and he was right to caution us on this—we will get a crossover of a lot of different things that are important. However, they may not get the heightened attention and the specific details they need. For example, a simple thing we would think would be easy to do is a rail tunnel between Windsor and Detroit. However, it does not allow for triple stackers for the automotive industry. For years, we have not been able to do proper shipments because the expansion of it is not there. If they run it through there, certain cargo may get destroyed. It is simple things like that.

We can only imagine constituencies like Oshawa that are still obviously very integrated to the auto industry. They need to make sure that transportation is an efficiency attraction for the investment, not a detraction, if the rail and other types of services do not provide for the easy and expedient access that they deserve.

Government Orders

•(1255)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also want to second the comment from the member for Oshawa, in terms of the member for Windsor West and the great knowledge he shares around consumer rights and protections. He has fought for capping merchant fees, for a gas ombudsman, and wireless competition to lower fees for consumers.

In the bill, it talks about raising the cap on foreign ownership from 25% to 49%, which was a recommendation in the Emerson report that the Liberals are supporting. However, the University of Manitoba research reports submitted in relation to the Emerson report concluded that there is no reliable evidence of a link between raising the foreign ownership cap and boosting competition. Would the member speak about that?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question because the expectation is that by going to 49% we would increase competition. However, there should be in the bill, at the very least, measurables for that. There is no corroboration between the two in terms of increasing the foreign ownership. That is a real problem because there are so many anomalies with regard to who owns airlines and what they can have financially.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to speak to what is essentially the government's omnibus transportation bill. Unfortunately, I will not be able to hit on all the points of what is contemplated in the bill because, frankly, there is too much. It changes laws having to do with everything from shipping to railways to the airlines. It changes a number of different acts, and with a number of different purposes in mind. It would have been better to break the bill up into its component pieces so that they could be studied properly and on theme, rather than trying to rush it all through at once.

I would remind members of the House that debate in this place is not just for the sake of opposition politicians, or even backbench MPs on the government side, wanting to talk a lot. When we are talking in the chamber, and during the time it takes to pass the bill, Canadians and civil society are also learning about the bill and forming a judgment about whether they think it is a good idea or not, and having the time to be able to mobilize, either in support or against aspects of the government program.

When we talk about criticizing omnibus bills, it is not just for the sake of members in the House who want to go on talking. While we talk about that bill, Canadians are talking about it too, and they are getting a chance to weigh in. They are able to contact us, and become, through us in this place, part of the debate. Therefore, when governments lump a whole bunch of significant changes together and ram them through Parliament, they are not just cutting out parliamentarians from that debate. That is the time it takes in order to have a meaningful, civil engagement with respect to changes.

Bill C-49 contemplates many significant changes in a number of different areas of transport within Canada. As someone who comes from a rail town, I am particularly concerned about the provisions that purport to be about railway safety. Actually, what they are about is supervising workers in the workplace and tramping on their right to privacy in the workplace. We know that in terms of railway safety, the predominant issue has to do with fatigue management. What we hear time and again from people who are working on the trains is

that railway companies in Canada are doing a very poor job of fatigue management. We know that is having real consequences for Canadians and the extent to which they feel safe in their own communities.

A government that was genuinely sincere about wanting to do something about railway safety in the country would be taking action on the issue of fatigue management. However, that would require getting involved in telling the railway companies something they do not want to hear. What we have seen from the government is that it is not willing to stand up to big companies and tell them what they do not want to hear. That is certainly true of railway companies.

It is not only true of railway companies. It was true when Bay Street corporate magnates came to Parliament Hill and told the Liberals to break their promise on closing the CEO stock option loophole. It was true when Air Canada came knocking and said it wanted to be off the hook for when it broke the law and exported the maintenance work on its planes, which rightfully belonged to Canadian maintenance workers. The government retroactively changed the law, and shame on certain members of the House. I am thinking of some colleagues of mine from Winnipeg, particularly the member for Winnipeg North, who stood with those workers and said the previous government should enforce the law and then became part of a government that changed the law and pulled the carpet out from beneath the feet of those workers who were successfully challenging Air Canada in court.

It is a theme of the Liberals to play pushover to big companies. The provisions around railway safety in the bill are no different. The railway companies came to them and said, "Let's not talk about fatigue management. Let's talk about putting video and audio surveillance in the cabs of trains so that we can watch the workers."

If the Liberals were sincere about making it a safety issue, there would be provisions in the bill that would say only the Transportation Safety Board would have access to those recordings, and only when something happened, so it could go back and find out what was the root cause of an incident and rule on that. Instead, the legislation would give that 24-7 surveillance material to the companies, any time they like, for whatever purpose they like. Therefore, it is hard to believe that this is really about railway safety when the government is silent on the real issue facing railways and railway communities when it comes to their safety, and is giving unfettered access to that material to employers who we know will be able to use that information for other purposes.

•(1300)

The other thing about omnibus bills is that, for as much as certain things that require more legislation and more study do not get that study, by mingling issues, some things where there is widespread agreement, for instance some of the provisions in the bill for grain producers on the Prairies, who in part because of the elimination of the Wheat Board now need a legislative fix in order for them to be able to get a fair price for shipping their grain, do not get passed as quickly as they might.

Government Orders

The problem with the legislation is that the Liberals took so long to take action on that particular issue, which was not a surprise and did not have to wait on developing. To the extent that the government was putting all these issues together, and it is not a very thorough air passenger bill of rights, because it wanted to present it in an omnibus bill, the Liberals took far too long to address a real problem on the Canadian Prairies for grain growers.

Now we are going to have a gap between when the old rules were in place, as a bit of Band-Aid solution to be able to help those grain producers on the Prairies, and when these new rules come in. If the Liberals were not so committed to omnibus legislation, they could have introduced those measures separately. They would have found that there was enough agreement to be able to expedite passage of those provisions. On this side of the House, we care about western grain growers and we want to make sure that they can get a fair price for shipping their grain.

However, the Liberals wanted to tie all these issues together in order to be able to conflate the issues and say that opposition parties are opposing good pieces of legislation, or were supporting bad pieces of the legislation. It is all tied together. In other words, in order to cover their political behinds, Canadian grain producers are the ones who are going to suffer.

It is wrong of the government to ask Canadian grain growers to essentially pay for political cover for the government. That is a big part of what is going on here.

I just want to take a moment to thank the member for Windsor West, not only for sharing his time with me today but also for the work that he did on the air passenger bill of rights. He actually helped to develop a substantive air passenger bill of rights. I will also recognize one of my NDP predecessors for Elmwood—Transcona, Jim Maloway, who did good work on an air passenger bill of rights. He paved the way and presented a bill in the last Parliament that the now Minister of Transport actually supported. It took forever to produce and the changes that were necessary to actually protect consumers were spelled out in that legislation, a bill the Minister of Transport supported.

However, do we see the substance of that bill represented in this omnibus piece of legislation? No, we do not.

This is just how complicated omnibus legislation gets. Canadian grain growers were waiting for legislation to fix a legitimate problem the government knew about since it took office. The Liberals came up with a lame phantom version of an air passenger bill of rights that was already developed while they were really just having discussions with the railway on how to institute 24-7 surveillance, so that the railway companies could know about the issues that were being discussed in the workplace between workers who were members of the union and who wanted to file grievances or take up other issues with their employers.

That is how muddled it all gets when things that have absolutely nothing to do with each other are all rammed into the same bill. That is really what is going on with the bill. It is kind of a big tossed salad of different legislative measures, some of which the government probably could have found widespread agreement on and would have been able to advance quickly, and some of which is just sort of

a hollow version of previous legislation that the Liberals have no excuse for having taken this long to get around to. Had they adopted more substantive provisions, they probably would have found more widespread agreement.

All of that is going on so that the Liberals can work with certain companies, and in this case I would say particular rail companies, in order to do something that has nothing to do with rail safety and everything to do with employers at the railway being able to put employees under their thumb. It is a travesty.

● (1305)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in a lot of what the hon. member had to say. I totally agree with him that 13 acts on three modes of transportation is ridiculous. One would think the Liberals do not care at all about Parliament and just want to ram the bill through. It is absolutely disgusting to see what is happening on such an important matter, whether it is air traffic, rail traffic, or whatever.

The member made some good points on safety. There has been no opportunity for good debate in this place, and that is what we are here for. We are here to talk about the safety of rail transportation, but I am more interested in the safety of the communities the railways go through and the safety of the people working on the railways. We are not being given the opportunity to speak. I will give a quick example and then ask my hon. friend to comment.

In my community, there are supertrains, large trains with grain bins, oil tankers, and containers. They go into small communities from one end of Canada to the other. They block crossings, and people cannot get to and from their communities, cannot get to hospitals, and cannot get to work, sometimes for hours on end, because the trains sit while waiting for another train going east or west. I wonder if the member would comment on that situation. I know it is happening in his and all members' ridings in this country, and it is a danger to Canadians.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right that there is a lot to talk about when it comes to rail safety. The length of trains is certainly part of that. My father, who was in this place before me, has a long record of fighting for trains of appropriate length. It has been a tradition in Canada for trains to get longer and longer. That has an economic impact because for the goods that are not moving by train, it means significant delays. Safety is involved when people are delayed in getting to hospital. It is another example of successive Liberal and Conservative governments just not being willing to stand up to the railways to tell them they are changing their practices in ways that have serious negative effects on communities and they need to stop it, because they can still make money by running shorter trains. No one can tell us that it is not economically viable to run trains of a reasonable length.

Fatigue management is a serious issue. I spoke to that a little earlier. There are issues in my own backyard. In the community of Mission Gardens a new underpass was built and now the railway has unilaterally decided that it is going to start marshalling trains on the main line between the shops and the yards, which it never used to do. People who have lived in the community for 30 or 40 years are now saying they have cracked windows, cracks in their foundations, diesel fumes in their homes, pictures are falling off walls, and the government is not willing to tell the railway that it cannot make those kinds of unilateral decisions. Communities should not be forced to bear the consequences of the decisions that railways make in their own economic self-interest without regard to what is going on in communities.

It is high time we had a government in this country that is willing to play tough with the railways and let them know they are not the only ones using the land in Canada. People live by their tracks and the railways have to respect them.

• (1310)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, having formerly been in the transportation industry for over 22 years, I have a lot of questions regarding Bill C-49. On the airline part of the bill, the bill does not specify what the compensation levels for passengers would be under the passenger bill of rights, and that causes concern.

There is something I have not seen in the bill, which I would like to ask my colleague about. Just a week ago, we were debating the Liberals' legalization of cannabis and I spoke at length about my concern of how that is going to impact the transportation sector. Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, is an omnibus bill and I have not seen anything with respect to drug use, drug policy, and specifically cannabis addressed. I am wondering if my hon. colleague could comment.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I have a two-point answer.

On the first issue he raised, one of the virtues of the legislation that the NDP proposed on an air passenger bill of rights was that it would stipulate what the penalty would be, that passengers who had their flights cancelled or could not get on their plane would be entitled to a full refund, and if the airline was not compliant, it would be a \$1,000 penalty to passengers on top of the full refund. There are ways of doing this, which the Liberals who are now in government supported in the past, but they have simply decided not to include them.

He raises a fair point in saying that there are a lot of other moving pieces when it comes to government legislation. One of the virtues of giving time to study them is to ask those questions about how interrelated issues are addressed in difference pieces of legislation. If we had more time, then we could get into those kinds of questions in greater detail. As it is, I have not even talked about any of the shipping provisions in the bill.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, they yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 30, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 19, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[English]

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am wondering if you might find the consent of the House to see the clock at 1:30.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to see the clock at 1:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1315)

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-211, An Act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Todd Doherty moved that the be read the third time and passed.

Private Members' Business

He said: Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to speak to my private member's bill, C-211, an act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder.

On a personal note, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped us on our journey to get to today.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank the paramedics, firefighters, military, veterans, police officers, correctional officers, dispatch, and nurses. I thank those who came forward to provide feedback about how we could go about strengthening this legislation in the future, if it is the desire and the will of the House and the Senate to enact the bill into law. I want to thank the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, the jurors, and Mr. Mark Farrant for the honest and heartfelt feedback.

I want to acknowledge the families of the fallen, those left behind to pick up the pieces. I want to thank them for sharing their stories of their loved ones. I want to thank them for showing incredible strength through their immeasurable and unspeakable pain they are going through. I know it has not been an easy journey for anyone, and their willingness to share their stories has been truly inspiring.

I also want to apologize to everyone that it has taken this long to get to this point. It has been 606 days since we were elected. It has been 600 days since I first landed in Ottawa with the background for Bill C-211. It has been 462 days since we tabled Bill C-211. It has been 100 days since we all stood together in the House and passed it unanimously at second reading.

Over this journey, I have tried to bring the voices of those who are suffering forward. I have tried to relay their incredible stories, with the same honest emotion they have shared with me.

I said this before and I will say again, we have received so many emails, so many calls, and so many messages, many of them full of heartbreak and tragedy. With the indulgence of members, I will take this opportunity to read a small excerpt of an email I received a little over a year ago after we first tabled Bill C-211. It is from the wife of one of our fallen, and it reads:

“Thank you.”

“As I write this, I'm trying hard to hold back the tears. The truth is I'm unsure how I even have tears left. I've cried every day since his death and it's been over a year. I can only manage a day at a time, and even that at times is too much. I don't know what tomorrow will bring. I guess no one really does. We were only married three years and he was my one true love. He would have been 30 this year. Our son will never know his father. He will never know the incredible man he was. My husband only wanted to serve and to save. Sadly, no one could save him. It's odd how everyone gathers around you at first, then life goes on. I don't get the invites anymore. It's like other wives don't want to be reminded of this, of how this could have been them.”

“Mr. Doherty, your bill is too late for my family, but I hope you will be successful. My pain endures and I'm not sure there is a fix. I will tell my son that his dad was a hero and saved lives. I believe if my husband knew of you and your efforts, it just might have given him enough hope that he would have reached out, that he would

have hung on. Please keep fighting for this. For us it is too late, but you and your colleagues will save the lives of others.”

The letter ended with a big “thank you”.

This is one of hundreds, maybe even thousands of emails, messages, comments on social media and from private meetings that we have received since tabling our bill. It is truly overwhelming the stories we have heard from those who are struggling today, those who are receiving help, and those who are left behind to somehow pick up the pieces.

I challenge us all to come up with solutions so we do not lose another life to PTSD.

● (1320)

My team has also heard horrific stories of pain and suffering. In some cases, for those we met with along the way, today was too far away, and the pain was too great. Last week alone, we saw four responders from across Canada commit suicide. Within the last 48 hours, we have had a firefighter from Ottawa and a paramedic from Pickering commit suicide.

One of the questions I was asked when I was appearing at the health committee was whether there was one story that really stands out. The truth is that there are many. It is hard not to get emotional when talking about this, because it is an incredibly heavy burden. Collectively in this House, we have created so much hope.

I will take a moment to try to explain some of this to our hon. members who are in the House right now. From a young age, there are people we have been told to respect and to hold in the highest regard. We hear the stories of their heroics. Books are written. Movies are written and made about these larger-than-life individuals, these superheros. They truly embody all that is Canadian. They are altruistic individuals who want nothing more than to go out and go to work so they can help others, so they can save others, and so they can make their communities and our country safe.

This is something we heard very powerfully from Natalie Harris, a former advanced-care paramedic in the county of Simcoe in Ontario. When she appeared before the health committee on May 16, she told committee members that she went to school in 2001 to become a paramedic. She said, “I learned something new every day, was financially stable, and made such a difference in people's lives. I was in my glory, but no matter how much I loved it, each year became a bit tougher for me to cope with, and I didn't know why.” She would tell herself, “I've fought too hard. I've conquered so many difficult circumstances in my life.” She did not want to lose this career. She reassured herself, “I'm sure I'll be okay.”

Natalie continued by saying:

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It's not normal to have a person ask you to just take their leg and arm off because they were experiencing so much pain from being trapped in a car with multiple open fractures all over their body. It's not normal to learn that the patient who hanged himself the night before had a second noose waiting for his wife, had his son not called 911 at the right time. It's not normal to witness a young woman, seven months pregnant, rub her belly with the only limb that could move as she had a stroke that would leave her disabled. It's not normal to see the cellphone on the road beside the obviously dead driver, crushed between the pavement and the car, who was texting and driving, and it's not normal to know he made the three sisters in the other car now two. It's not normal to experience and see the look of true evil when you learn how two innocent women were murdered.... It's not normal to see someone die before your eyes more times than you can actually count.

I would like to take this moment to thank Natalie once again for coming forward. Nothing prepares a person for these experiences. As politicians, we often do our best to translate our concerns and the concerns of our constituents into speeches and talking points, but I can truly say that in all my life, there are few people who have been able to make such an impactful statement. I know the members of the health committee who are here today felt the same way.

Our warriors make the ultimate sacrifice. They make the sacrifice by taking time away from their loved ones, their family, and their friends. They put their uniforms on every day knowing full well that they may never have an opportunity to say goodbye. They are those who run toward danger when we and others would run the other way. They experience human tragedy every day, yet they still, without exception, without hesitation, answer the call of duty. They face the sights, sounds, and smells that will stay with them for a lifetime.

● (1325)

Freedom is not free. There is a very real cost. Knowing what these individuals go through, I would like to share with members the flip side for a moment.

All of a sudden, these roles are reversed. Those people are now looking toward this House. They are looking to all of us, as members of Parliament and legislators. They are asking for help.

The hardest part in all this is having those people, who I know our hon. colleagues also look to as heroes, coming forward, through emails, calls, and messages, saying, "Thank you for bringing this legislation forward."

It is such an honour to be a member of Parliament. It is truly a humbling experience. There are a few experiences I have had over the course of the last two years that have really hit home. I would like to tell members about a couple.

Shortly after being elected, stepping out of my car in a parking lot back home in Cariboo—Prince George, someone came up to me and asked if I was a member of Parliament. I said I was, and the person said, "We just want to let you know that our family loves you, and we pray for you every night. Thank you for your service."

Another point was having someone come to us, with tears in his eyes, a police officer, thanking us, saying that we have saved his life because of the work we have done on this bill. It has allowed him to come forward to his family and to his friends, seeking help.

The other was at second reading, when a giant of a man, a former firefighter who himself has been fighting post-traumatic stress disorder, came to me and said, "Thank you. For the first time, I have

hope." Then he introduced me to his young son and said, "This is what a true Canadian hero looks like." Words cannot express how humbling that was.

Is there not something to be said about that, that our heroes, our warriors, have been left to deal with the horrors of post-traumatic stress disorder alone and in silence? Even though they are hurting, they continue to remain just a call away when we need them. To me, that is simply shameful. It breaks my heart.

We have been blessed that so many people have followed us along this journey, some of whom were here March 8 when 284 members of Parliament rose together to send Bill C-211 to committee, and they have seen the good work we have done to this point. However, the work does not stop here.

Bill C-211 was developed to look at the overwhelming issue and the epidemic we have with respect to our first responders, our veterans, and our military. We are losing our warriors left and right. The challenge is this, a challenge that many groups we have met with over the last 18 months acknowledge. Today, as it stands, we do not have a piece of legislation that deals with PTSD. We have inconsistencies across our country, even in terminology, in diagnoses, and in treatment. We have some groups doing great work. We have others who hang a shingle and claim that they are experts. The reality is that they are causing more harm than good. We have inconsistencies across our nation in who or what is covered. An RCMP member serving in one part of our country may not be eligible for the same services their colleagues are in other provinces.

One academic brought forth the rule of thirds. He said 30% of those who are suffering with PTSD will recover 100%; 30% will have an okay life; and 30% we will lose altogether. That was one of my first committee meetings, and I took exception to this. Post-traumatic stress disorder is not something that can be cured 100%. It is a traumatic brain injury, and anything can trigger a setback.

I want to leave my hon. colleagues with this. If they had the power to save a live today, would they do so? If they knew their actions today could save lives, would they be brave enough to follow through? I ask because we have been given that opportunity today, as we speak. We can help ensure that another life is not lost and that the four lives last week, the two within the last 48 hours, and the hundreds lost since I first tabled Bill C-211 were not lost in vain.

As I read earlier from the wife of the fallen officer, the one line that sticks out is, "I don't know what tomorrow will bring.... I guess no one really does."

● (1330)

For those who have been following our journey, those who are in the room with us today and those who are watching across our nation and internationally, tomorrow is just another excuse or delay, and sometimes tomorrow is too far away. I ask of you, let us not wait for tomorrow when we can truly make a difference today.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this measure forward. I have served here just over 15 years, and this is one of the most important pieces of legislation I have seen. It addresses one of the most important things that Canadian families need to do, and that is to come to grips with the value of addressing mental health issues. To have an inclusive strategy like this one is important for so many reasons.

When it comes to implementing the bill, will they continue the co-operative effort with provinces and municipalities to get real results for Canadians? That is how it has been delivered to the House. Will that continue?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, that is the crux of my bill: to ensure that our government and future governments continue to work with our provincial legislators, our territorial legislators, our academics, and our industry to ensure that a hero in the east is treated the same as a hero in the west.

I ran out of time in my speech, and I just want to leave another comment with the House. This is a note I received today from the mother of a recently fallen officer. It says, "Mr. Doherty, I want you to know if you can do one thing, remind your colleagues that they're not just police officers. They're not just firefighters, paramedics, or veterans; they are human. They hurt, and sometimes they need help too. Who rescues the rescuers? They are someone's son, daughter, husband, wife, and they are someone's father and mother.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a speech like that from the member for Cariboo—Prince George shows the House of Commons at its best. When he arrived here 600-plus days ago, he wanted to help first responders. I am really proud of his efforts and I am proud to second the bill. I am also very proud of government members who have spoken passionately about this subject.

When I was in the Canadian Armed Forces, it was following the crash of Swiss Air in Nova Scotia that I heard the words "operational stress injury" for the first time. In the two decades since that, Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs have become experts in trying to diagnose, treat, and help people with operational stress injuries.

This is an area where the federal government really can bring national expertise to bear and make sure there is not a patchwork of care across the country. We can be the champion to help create that national framework that anyone who serves our country in the uniformed services needs.

Could I ask my friend to outline how the expertise with the road to mental readiness, the wellness training of the Canadian Armed Forces, and the resiliency training we have developed federally can help our first responders from coast to coast to coast?

• (1335)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question from the member for Durham. I want to acknowledge that he is one of the first members of Parliament I reached out to when I first arrived here. Through his work with the True Patriot Love foundation, he truly gets the debilitating effects that post-traumatic stress disorder has on our vets, our military, and our first responders,

He is absolutely right. We have organizations and groups that are doing some incredible work that countries around the world are

paying attention to. The Canadian Forces R2MR program is being used and can be used for first responders. I was in Edmonton in early fall last year, and Fire Station No. 1 was adapting the Canadian military's R2MR to help prepare new recruits for what they are going to see. Nothing fully prepares them for the tragedy they are going to experience, the sights and smells.

The R2MR program used by the Canadian Forces over the last while is one we can truly be proud of, and that is exactly what we are talking about: consistent care and diagnosis from coast to coast to coast. That is what we are looking to do.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to private member's bill, Bill C-211, an act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-211 was introduced by the member for Cariboo—Prince George and calls on the Minister of Health to spearhead a concerted effort aimed at developing a federal framework to address a complex issue.

[*English*]

I would like to thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for bringing this to the House. I would like to take a moment to talk about the important issue of post-traumatic stress disorder, otherwise known as PTSD in Canada.

As the daughter and spouse of firefighters, and the mother of two serving Canadian Armed Forces members, the issue of PTSD is a personal one for me. We have come a long way in our collective understanding of PTSD since it was first added to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980.

This addition was a significant turning point, because it formally acknowledged PTSD as an acquired mental health condition rather than a personal shortcoming. During the last decade, neuroimaging studies have reaffirmed that PTSD is real and measurable. Researchers can now observe the brain circuits that mediate this disorder.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, sensational media coverage has helped perpetuate the stereotype that people with PTSD are psychotic and violent, which is an inaccurate portrayal of this mental illness.

A traumatic event involves exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence. It may be a one-time incident or involve sustained or repeated exposure.

Exposure can involve experiencing the traumatic event first-hand or witnessing or hearing about a traumatic event that happened to others.

The traumatic event or events completely wipe out the individual's capacity to deal with or process the thoughts and emotions related to the incident.

[*English*]

Events that may be associated with PTSD include combat exposure, childhood abuse, sexual assault, and physical violence. Many other traumatic events can be associated with PTSD, such as natural disasters, intimate partner violence, and other extreme or life-threatening events. PTSD can develop immediately after someone experiences a disturbing event, or it can develop weeks, months, or even years later.

According to a 2008 study, about 9% of people in Canada will experience PTSD at some point in their lives. This is consistent with the worldwide prevalence, which ranges between 7% and 12%. Studies show that females are twice as likely to develop PTSD compared to males, but males are less likely than females to seek help. Children and adolescents also experience this disorder, and genetics may make some people more likely to develop it than others.

We also know that certain populations are at increased risk for PTSD because their jobs expose them to extreme and traumatic events that may be recurring. While many associate PTSD with military service, it can manifest in first responders, firefighters, corrections officers, emergency room personnel, victims of crime, and members of the RCMP.

The few studies that have been conducted indicate that between 10% and 35% of first responders will develop PTSD, and the lifetime prevalence of this disorder among active members of the Canadian Armed Forces is 11%. Unfortunately, there is not enough quality data to provide a clear and complete picture of the prevalence, and social and economic impacts of PTSD in Canada.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Collecting quality data on the prevalence and impact of PTSD in Canada is only part of the solution. Another important aspect is raising public awareness about this mental illness.

Although Canadians have become much more aware of this problem in recent years, there are still gaps in their knowledge and understanding of PTSD symptoms and treatment.

As with many other mental illnesses, a big problem is that, unfortunately, the stigma associated with PTSD prevents many people from getting help and prevents others from recognizing the symptoms associated with this mental illness.

[*English*]

Developing PTSD is not a sign of weakness. Many factors play a part in whether a person will experience PTSD, and it will manifest itself differently for different people. Risk factors make a person more likely to develop PTSD, while protective factors can help build resilience and reduce the risk of developing this disorder.

Risk factors include having prior trauma, having been abused as a child, having pre-existing mental health issues, and having a family history of mental illness. Other socio-economic risk factors include

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lower levels of income and education, and being from an ethnic minority. Following a traumatic event, people who lack social supports are also at a higher risk.

Protective factors include seeking and receiving support from friends and family, finding a support group, and having positive coping strategies. Researchers study the importance and interplay of risk and protective factors. Their findings continue to inform our understanding of PTSD, including the development of effective preventive and treatment approaches.

[*Translation*]

While symptoms vary from one individual to the next, those affected by PTSD often relive a traumatic event they experienced either through flashbacks and nightmares or by being exposed to situations that trigger memories of the traumatic experience. Some symptoms include negative thoughts, feelings of isolation or distress, and lack of reaction or fear.

People with PTSD might also have sleep disorders, anxiety, and depressive behaviour, or feel paralyzed at the thought of doing the simplest task.

It is also common for individuals with PTSD to self-medicate by using drugs or alcohol.

[*English*]

With such a range of symptoms, it is not surprising that this disorder can also reduce a person's ability to function in relationships, at work, and in leisure activities.

[*Translation*]

Without proper treatment, the symptoms of PTSD can get worse and have lasting and devastating effects including substance abuse, chronic pain, hypertension, self-mutilation, and suicide.

[*English*]

Growing evidence shows that early treatment of trauma symptoms may reduce the risk of developing PTSD. This suggests that identification and early intervention using evidence-based treatments is critical to preventing this disorder. PTSD affects people differently, so a treatment that works for one person may not work for another. Some people with this disorder need to try different treatments to find what works for them. Recovery is more complicated for people who have endured repeated trauma, and for those who were traumatized early in life.

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● (1345)

[*Translation*]

The idea is to develop more personalized, effective, and efficient treatments, and possibly even to prevent the disorder from ever manifesting.

[*English*]

Diverse areas of research continue to provide pieces of the puzzle bringing us closer to understanding the whole picture of PTSD. I am inspired by the work done on PTSD, not only by federal departments but also by provinces, territories, and advocacy groups across this country.

We need to come together to break the stigma and to allow those suffering, and the families who suffer along with them, to get the help they need. Today, we come together, we put partisanship aside, and we support our everyday heroes.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak about this important issue in the House of Commons.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and speak to Bill C-211, an act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder.

I would like to thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for putting this legislation forward. His approach in getting the bill through the House is very professional. It is important to recognize that members of Parliament can work together, and this legislation is a good example of that co-operation.

There are a couple of points that I want to note with regard to the bill, but first I want to tell the House one of the reasons I have such an interest in the bill.

Some of the people in Windsor West who might be watching us today are from Branch 143 of the Royal Canadian Legion. It was during my time as a member of Parliament that I learned about the seriousness of what is taking place and the commitment that our men and women in the military make, both overseas and in Canada.

About 10 years ago, I had one of the most interesting and life-changing moments of my life. I was invited to participate in a discussion group at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 143. Also present were a number of individuals who were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. That intimate exposure was certainly important. These were not just soldiers who fought in Afghanistan. They were World War II veterans, Korean veterans, peacekeepers, and others who were all still struggling with the ordinary things in daily life. That experience helped to elevate my understanding of PTSD.

I was a social worker before I came to this place. I dealt with people who came to Canada as refugees. The trauma that they experienced in their countries is quite different from what people go through here in Canada. My job was to help them integrate into Canadian society, whether it was school or work or whatever. How can we take a young man who has lost his family and his house and then integrate him into our Canadian society? He himself might have volunteered in a hospital or another traumatic place while never receiving any type of support.

This legislation is important because it would help to bridge a gap. PTSD does not just affect military personnel. It affects first responders and other citizens in all of society. We need to understand that mental health and illness issues are a lifelong journey for all of us. People should not be ashamed of these issues and should not be afraid to talk about them. More importantly, work needs to be done to provide the support that people need.

Windsor West lacks many services for children who need, for example, psychologists. This is a critical problem. We do not invest in mental health in the way we should, as we do in our other health areas. Not being able to deal with these kinds of issues on a regular basis affects all of us.

If, despite the overlap of jurisdictions, we can deal with this issue as a nation from coast to coast to coast, with all of the provinces and territories and all the municipalities, it will make Canada truly special and an example for others to follow. More importantly, we can achieve effective results.

It is important to outline a few things in the legislation that people may not understand. The bill talks about bringing together the appropriate ministers in a reporting process. I will not go into all of the details, but the bill proposes putting a system in place that could deal with PTSD. The bill is not talking only about consultation. A lot of people, especially our good men and women in service, have been consulted many times, and they need action.

I will be supporting the bill in its current state because although it includes the consultation process, it also talks about expectations, measurements, and deliverables. That will put the government of the day and members of Parliament of the day on notice that this is a serious issue that affects all Canadians. At the end of the day, we expect to see results, and the results mean helping people deal with the many different personal issues related to PTSD.

● (1350)

Those issues affect us so profoundly. The symptoms include everything from re-experiencing traumatic events over and over or reliving them, to recurring nightmares, disturbing memories of the event, acting or feeling as if the event is happening again, avoiding friends and family, drug addiction, being unable to feel pleasure, constant anxiety, difficulty concentrating, getting angry easily, sleeping difficulties, fearing harm from others, experiencing sudden attacks of dizziness, a fast heartbeat or shortness of breath, and fear of dying. All of these things, when left in a vacuum, are not helpful, not only to the individual but to society.

I would argue, not on the principle of doing this for mere ethics or because it is the right thing to do, but I would argue that it is a bond and social contract that should be expected in return by individuals who occupy professions that put them at risk in service to their communities and society.

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We have decided to provide the supports necessary to allow the people in those occupations to not only have what they have today but in the future. That is a social contract for firefighters, police officers, soldiers, nurses, and paramedics. For all of the different occupations, there is a social contract that does not end when that occupation concludes. We are asking people to perform duties that put them at risk and affect their families as part of their jobs. The social contract we have is to provide the proper supports so they can continue to be productive and, most importantly, have good mental health.

We have an opportunity in the House to make a difference with the bill. The member for Cariboo—Prince George has provided the opportunity for all of us, in a non-partisan way, to end this session on a high note. New Democrats are very proud to be part of it. There are so many people who contribute so much. We have invested in training professionals, in their occupations, in being parents, and in being community leaders. If we do not take care of them, we are not taking care of ourselves.

One reason I like community activism is the ability to act. At the end of the day, the ability to act defines us differently as Canadians. When I look at all the campaigns to stop the shame of mental illness, many of them involve the corporate sector, the non-for-profit sector, and, where I come from, the professional sector. Some of the moments for our Afghanistan veterans have put things in a different light and we now have an opportunity to go forward.

I do not want to name people, but I will name one person, because it is an important chapter that will never get told. A gentleman in the Windsor area named Wayne Hillman was among a number of Canadians who served in Vietnam. He told me that our Afghanistan veterans are coming home with some of the same issues that he and his comrades had. They had no supports when they came home, even though they served in the American military. They finally got some psychological counselling and services, which helped them in their lives. The same thing has been happening here, so we need to apply those resources.

With this bill, let us apply even more resources. Let us make sure it not just captured in one occupation or profession. Let us make sure it is part of the normal Canadian practice and culture that mental illness and wellness is part of living healthy in a healthy society.

• (1355)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in the House to lend my support to Bill C-211.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a difficult challenge for many Canadians and their loved ones. We need to do more to help Canadians from all walks of life living with this condition.

I want to thank my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George for bringing this very important bill forward. I want to thank people from home, the Port Alberni Fire Department, who are watching this live. They have been advocating for a long time for us to deal with PTSD. I also want to thank all the first responders and nations in my community who contributed to help advise me and those who are in the chamber who have been affected by PTSD.

At present, we lack the resources to even begin addressing these challenges. PTSD touches all Canadians in one way or another and we need a national approach to solve it.

Nearly one in 10 Canadians experience post-traumatic stress at some point in their lives. Bill C-211 is a strong step toward helping these Canadians. It sheds much needed light on a disorder too often kept in the darkness. Many people struggle with the stigma attached with mental illness. Particularly, it is difficult to articulate how the effects of trauma continue to manifest in a variety of symptoms. Canadians do not lack in compassion, but we are failing to provide the resources that people need to deal with mental illness.

As I mentioned, the bill is a very strong step, but I am concerned with some of the limits in its scope. It calls for a conference within the next 12 months between the ministries of health, veterans affairs, and National Defence, provincial groups, and health care providers to determine a framework to begin addressing PTSD. I am very happy to see that. These measures include: establish a program to monitor and track rates of PTSD and its social and economic costs at the national level; establish best practices guidelines for health care providers to diagnose and treat PTSD; and create an awareness program to help spread the word across the country around the issues and challenges that people with PTSD face.

We know we are lagging behind our fellow OECD countries when it comes to the funding for mental health. This is inadequate. We must do better.

I am glad the bill calls for collaboration among the ministries of health, defence, and veterans affairs. How we choose to support our veterans, as my friend from Windsor West talked about, will be a key part of the legacy of both the current and previous governments. Many veterans in my riding come home with PTSD. I see them on the doorstep. They are vocalizing the lack of supports they need. Now is also the time for us to take a really hard look at ourselves and how we treat our vets. We see the impact that prolonged military engagements have had on our bravest service men and women and we are failing them.

While the Prime Minister reminds us that we have a sacred obligation to our veterans, very little has been done for those who are falling through the cracks. This is in large part due to the traumatic events they have bravely volunteered to face for our country.

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The bill also calls for a better collection of data related to cases of PTSD across Canada. Canada has been described as a country of trials and pilot projects when it comes to health care. We often have innovative projects that result in great outcomes and knowledge. However, when it comes to implementation and education across the country, we fall behind. At the moment, Canada has little to no data at the national level informing our policy on PTSD.

In my riding, despite the best efforts of some truly amazing health care professionals, our health care system is in a state of crisis. The bill would help immensely to bring the level of PTSD awareness up across the country. It would help ensure that the knowledge and research of experts is shared with practitioners and a framework is adopted for everyone.

PTSD is a significant issue for first responders, police personnel, firefighters, and the countless others we ask to assist in emergency situations. According to the Tema Conter Memorial Trust, 68 first responders committed suicide in 2016. This is a tragedy and we need to have better support for these individuals. It is staggering how little consistency there is to support these professionals from province to province. We need to take the lead at the federal level to establish a national framework.

One RCMP officer put it to me like this: “We should not have to beg and jump over fences to get the help we need.” I could not agree with him more.

In the small communities in my riding, first responders often get called to fatal emergency sites of people they personally know. It is difficult for these individuals to describe the feeling of isolation and helplessness that this can create.

• (1400)

While these individuals are hard at work keeping our communities safe, they often struggle in their personal lives. One individual spoke about how something as everyday as a car driving by pulled him back to the scene of a particularly devastating accident. That accident was 10 years ago, but the vivid details still linger for him. This is all too often the case.

Another individual had this to say about a recent experience: “In this last couple of days, I’ve experienced some overwhelming emotions that I haven’t experienced a lot in my previous nine and a half years on the job. On a Thursday nightshift during a response to a stabbing, during the treating of the victim before ambulance arrived, my partner was working directly in front of me. Due to the nature of injuries, we both had to be very hands on, totally focused on patient care. It was during this time that I had this feeling of wanting to keep looking over my shoulder. After the patient was packaged, my partner went with paramedics to assist. As I walked back to the blood-covered clothes and started looking at all the equipment we had used, I felt this overwhelming sense of being alone. As I gathered up our equipment and drove alone to the hospital to pick up my partner, the full weight of trauma set in.”

I want to thank these brave individuals who took the time to share their stories with me. We are doing this for them, and for the countless others who keep our communities safe. It is vital that this bill includes the Department of Public Safety in its framework.

We also need to have a meaningful look at how we handle mental health for indigenous peoples. I wish that this bill did more to address these challenges, but ultimately it falls to the government to do more. Many first nations people are living with trauma and damage from the lingering horrors and effects of the residential school system. They are living with PTSD. Unfortunately, suicide and illness are a common part of life in my community, and in communities across this country. The legacy of residential schools cannot be downplayed.

This is a key opportunity for us to address their suffering, which is too often ignored by Ottawa. I know that many of the communities in my own riding have established, but heavily underfunded programs that rely on counselling, traditional healing, and other services to help their members.

I urge the House to consider those people and their programs as they confront PTSD. I want to conclude my remarks by reminding my colleagues in the House that partisanship must not stop us from addressing the challenge of post-traumatic stress disorder. It touches homes and communities across the country. New Democrats and I are proud to support those in this House and others who are taking actions to deal with this tragic disorder. We sincerely hope that we can get both education and treatment for those who need it.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak to this important issue. I thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for highlighting the tragedy of PTSD, putting forward concrete solutions to improve the treatment of PTSD in Canada and how we can support the men and women who suffer from it.

Today I will be very brief, as we all want this measure to move quickly through the House. Since time is of the essence, I would simply like to recount the story of a friend of mine, a veteran, and his recent experiences with the tragic consequences of how we treat people with PTSD. This man suffers from both pain from his injuries and PTSD from his experiences. He was once on a regimen of over 30 pills a day. That treatment was ineffective, so he turned to medical marijuana. It turned his life around. He could once again take part in his community and enjoy life.

Last month, Veterans Affairs Canada cut back the amount of cannabis that veterans could use, from 10 grams a day to three. My friends was taking eight grams. Since that action, he has suffered the worst six weeks of his life. His nightmares have returned, and he is only getting three hours of sleep a night. He repeatedly broke down crying while telling me his story.

He was told that this cut was implemented because there was not enough science to support the higher doses. Instead, he has been offered an opportunity to take part in a trial using psilocybin, or MDMA. Why can he not use the cannabis dose that gave him his life back instead of trying new, stronger hallucinogens?

He is also unwilling to go back to the mix of opioids and alcohol, and the dangerous dysfunctional life that produces. He was told that he could get a letter of exception to allow him his former dose of cannabis, but he needs to get that letter signed by a specialist who is willing and able to see him. The earliest appointment he can arrange is September, and that will require travel across the province at his expense.

That is a minimum of four more months of hell for him to satisfy pointless bureaucracy, and he would have to repeat that every year. This does not just affect him. There have been three suicides in his network of PTSD sufferers that use cannabis, since this cutback was implemented. Three lives have been needlessly taken because Veterans Affairs refused to listen to the men and women suffering from PTSD.

I will end there, but I would like to simply repeat that plea. Veterans Affairs should listen to and work constructively with the men and women suffering from PTSD. I wholeheartedly support this bill, because it will help that process.

• (1405)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Accordingly, we will go to the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George. The hon. member has up to five minutes for his right of reply.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was fitting that the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne was here to speak at third reading, because as I tabled it the very first day, so long ago, she was the first member of Parliament from the government to actually reach out and thank me. I want to thank her for her support and words of encouragement along the way.

Next I want to thank the friends, the families of the fallen, those who are suffering today, and some who have had very recent losses

Private Members' Business

who are with us today. It is through their stories, their bravery, their courageous words, their perseverance, and their strength that we are here today, and I want to thank them.

At times in this House, we take jabs at each other. We are feisty. We are here to represent our electors the best way we know how. Often, partisan politics gets in the way. I tell everyone that QP is really just for TV, because behind the scenes, we work very collaboratively together. On this point, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Louis-Hébert for his work in helping steward this through to this point. He has been a great source of knowledge and has worked very diligently and honestly with us on this.

This is a non-partisan issue, as we see, and often it is with much paranoia that we enter into some of these discussions, but today we did a good thing, I hope.

I want to thank my friends from the NDP for the work they have done. I want to thank the health committee and my colleagues here who have helped get us to this point.

I challenged us last Friday, as I stood in the House to recognize a fallen officer from the Peel paramedics and the three other first responders who passed away last week. We know now that we have had two more in the last 48 hours. I said that day that we must do better. Today I think we are there. There is a lot of work yet to be done, but today we are sending a message that those lives matter and that those who fight for us, we are fighting for them.

• (1410)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

It being 2:12 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 19, 2017 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:12 p.m.)

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