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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada* led by the hon. member for Windsor West.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CATALONIA

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, Spanish police arrested 13 top Catalan officials like common criminals. Imagine our government officials being thrown in jail just for carrying out Parliament's instructions. This is a serious denial of democracy, an abuse of power by an unfit Spanish government. The Government of Canada's silence on this matter is unacceptable.

The Catalans voted freely for a separatist government, and they want the same right to self-determination as any other nation. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I condemn Spain's undemocratic and repressive actions, and I proclaim our support for the Catalan state in its democratic pursuit of independence.

Long live freedom. Long live democracy.

[*Member spoke in Catalan as follows:*]

Visca Catalunya!

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[*English*]

RURAL-URBAN RIDING EXCHANGE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer the member for Pickering—Uxbridge and I embarked on a rural-urban riding exchange. As a long-serving member, and as a new member, mentorship and exchanging perspectives played a key part.

In Malpeque, we experienced the ingenuity of local entrepreneurs, the creativity of P.E.I.'s experiential tourism, and the quality of our national park. At Springwillow organic farm, we hand-picked

potatoes, taking lessons from 90-year-old Joyce Loo. The member for Pickering—Uxbridge can now identify the qualities of a good dairy cow.

In Pickering-Uxbridge, we competed in a dragon boat race and saw the strength of local athletes. With entrepreneur Bernadette Recto, we embraced pilates and felt how important exercise was to mental health and well-being. We attended the island dinner of the Lucy Maud Montgomery Society, and reflected on our shared cultural heritage.

The exchange left us with a broader perspective on the challenges we face and the diversity of Canadians.

* * *

• (1405)

TAXATION

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, business people in my riding are unanimous in their outrage at the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. These entrepreneurs and job creators are angry and deeply concerned over these tax proposals, and the negative impacts they will have on their livelihoods and that of their employees.

Hundreds of thousands of middle-class Canadians have been called tax cheats by a government claiming to represent them. The same government that killed family income splitting and cut rebates for children's activities has the arrogance to say it is protecting our economy.

There is nothing fair about tax proposals that create a toxic Canadian business environment. Incentives for starting and building a company are now being punished. These business owners warn that companies will windup business, entrepreneurship will drop, and companies will leave the country.

Business people know the current government does not have a revenue or tax-loophole problem; it has an excessive spending problem. It is time the government followed common sense and cancelled this horrific tax grab.

* * *

BODY SHAMING

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week I have my hair in braids, much like I have had for most of my childhood. However, it has come to my attention that there are young girls here in Canada and other parts of the world who are removed from school or shamed because of their hairstyle.

Statements by Members

Body shaming of any woman in any form from the top of her head to the soles of her feet is wrong, irrespective of her hairstyle, the size of her thighs, the size of her hips, the size of her baby bump, the size of her breasts, or the size of her lips. What makes us different makes us unique and beautiful.

I will continue to rock these braids for three reasons: number one, because I am sure everyone will agree, they look pretty dope; number two, in solidarity with women who have been shamed based on their appearance; and number three, and most importantly, in solidarity with young girls and women who look like me and those who do not.

I want them to know that their braids, their dreads, their super-curly Afro puffs, their weaves, their hijabs, and their head scarves, and all other variety of hairstyles, belong in schools, in the workplace, in the boardroom, and yes, even here on Parliament Hill.

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[Translation]

STANISLAV PETROV

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week we learned of the passing of Stanislav Petrov.

[English]

Stanislav Petrov was on duty at a Russian nuclear early warning centre in 1983 when computers wrongly detected incoming missiles from the U.S. He decided they were a false alarm and did not report them to his superiors. Had he not done so, we might have had a nuclear war by mistake, by accident.

[Translation]

What happened that day illustrates the danger and utter absurdity of the atomic bomb and the arms race, a madness that continues to this day. That is why we need to continue to work towards nuclear disarmament.

[English]

Canada's absence today at the United Nations, at the signing of the nuclear weapons ban treaty is shameful. The world deserves better.

[Translation]

Thank you, Stanislav Petrov.

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ROSH HASHANAH

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Jewish communities in my riding of Mount Royal, across Canada, and around the world will be celebrating Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, this evening.

[English]

While Rosh Hashanah is a time to look forward, it is also a time to look back. Last year we saw an increase in the levels of anti-Semitism around the world. Jewish Canadians have seen vile acts targeting us and our places of worship.

On this Rosh Hashanah, let us join together as parliamentarians to deliver a message to Canada's Jewish community that we recognize

and appreciate the over 250-year contribution of the Jewish community to Canada.

We denounce anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred, and will combat it with words and with deeds. We stand against discrimination against any group, bigotry against any people.

On behalf of all of us, I wish all those celebrating Rosh Hashanah a happy and healthy new year.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA WILDFIRES

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on July 1, across the riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, there were fun-filled celebrations for Canada's 150th. No one would have guessed that a week later the anticipated summer would turn into the worst wildfire season in B.C.'s history.

Volunteers stepped up to the plate providing food, shelter, and a safe space for evacuees. Others worked 24/7 to move animals, big and small, to safety. RCMP and firefighters bravely fulfilled their duties under very challenging conditions.

This was not a short disaster period. As the days and weeks progressed, the stamina and perseverance of so many was inspiring with long days, vacations forgone, and neighbours helping neighbours. Although the immediate crisis has diminished, the long-term recovery will be a challenge.

I thank those who stepped up to the plate. Those who lost their homes and livelihoods are in our thoughts. We commit to working through the recovery. The summer of 2017 will be remembered for how strong, compassionate, and determined we are.

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● (1410)

ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2007, this House unanimously adopted a motion presented by the late Honourable Mauril Bélanger to declare October as Islamic History Month. Islamic History Month recognizes the important contributions of Muslims to Canadian society, their cultural diversity, and the importance of fostering great social cohesion.

On September 25, the Toronto District School Board is launching Islamic History Month at the Aga Khan Museum, located in my riding of Don Valley East. The Aga Khan Museum presents insights on the history of Muslim civilizations through various activities, events, and exhibitions that act as a catalyst for mutual understanding.

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Islamic History Month, I encourage people from all backgrounds to take the opportunity to learn about the history and diversity of the Muslim people.

*Statements by Members***ROSH HASHANAH**

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr Speaker, this week is the start of a new year. Kids are back to school, the harvest season is in full swing, members of Parliament are back in this place, and it is Rosh Hashanah. It is my favourite time of the year.

On Sunday, I enjoyed participating in the community Rosh Hashanah luncheon at the Bernard Betel Centre hosted by CIJA and the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. Together with the members for York Centre, Richmond Hill, Willowdale, and Toronto Mayor John Tory, we served lunch and shared a meal while learning about poverty in the Jewish community.

I hope everyone celebrating Rosh Hashanah enjoys some time with family, friends, and community. This is a great time to enjoy some tasty local honey and apples and my Danforth Rosh Hashanah tradition would not be complete without some honey soaked loukoumades.

I wish everyone a new year of sweetness and prosperity.

Shanah Tovah.

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INVICTUS GAMES

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday marks the opening ceremonies for the 2017 Invictus Games. First established by His Royal Highness Prince Harry in 2014, the Invictus Games provide an opportunity for sick, wounded, and injured military personnel and veterans to compete in a multi-sport event against athletes from around the world.

From September 23 to 30, Toronto will host over 550 athletes from 17 nations, including 90 individuals representing Team Canada. The Invictus Games are a great way for Canadians to recognize and pay tribute to the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to keep this country safe. They, as well as all their families, deserve the utmost respect and honour.

I encourage everyone in the House and all Canadians to attend and watch the games to show support for these outstanding athletes. Invictus is Latin for “unconquerable” and these competitors certainly embody that spirit.

I will conclude with the Invictus motto: “I am”. I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.”

* * *

RECOVERY DAY

Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, Montrealers gathered to celebrate Recovery Day. This annual event celebrates recovery from drug, alcohol, and behavioural addiction, and challenges the stigma surrounding addiction that so often prevents sufferers from seeking help.

Recovery Day began in 2012 with one city, Vancouver. This September there are Recovery Day events in over 30 Canadian cities. We all have people in our lives who have been touched by addiction,

who are afraid to speak out, and speaking out is a crucial first step to recovery.

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

Today I wish to thank all those who helped organize Recovery Day and are fighting to overcome the prejudices still surrounding addiction and recovery. I also want to thank the organizations in my riding that support people struggling with addictions, such as the Maison Jean Lapointe, the Salvation Army Booth Centre, and the Welcome Hall Mission.

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100TH ANNIVERSARY OF GOGAMA

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the residents of Gogama, who are celebrating their town’s 100th anniversary. Gogama, a hidden treasure in northeastern Ontario, is a beautiful community that offers plenty of outdoor activities. People go there for the fishing, the hunting, the bike trails, and, last but not least, the campfires.

[*English*]

Gogama went through some very hard times following a train derailment. A community of 450, and in the summer thousands, their strength should not be measured by their numbers. They have persevered and opted to take a negative situation and turn it into an opportunity. No time was wasted and they produced a fantastic tourism video as a result.

I am incredibly proud of Gogama and its residents for their triumph over tragedy.

[*Translation*]

Happy 100th anniversary, Gogama. Knowing the residents' determination, I am confident that they will prosper for another 100 years.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I held a round table in Owen Sound to discuss the Liberal government's latest attack on small business owners, physicians, family farms, and more. The message was loud and clear that these reforms will be very damaging to each of these sectors. To make it crystal clear for the Prime Minister, I drafted this poem to truly get the point across:

Oral Questions

Prime Minister and finance minister, a message for you. It's from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound so you know that it's true. Small businesses, farmers, and physicians alike are left scratching their heads at this unfair tax hike. Have you ever been to a barn? It's not a tax haven. Your proposals will tax hard-earned money that we've been saving. My retirement plan, my kids' education, that's what you're taxing, not some island vacation. Small businesses and doctors they're not some tax cheat, they're out creating jobs and making ends meet. So Prime Minister and finance minister please don't be so sinister, abandon this plan, it's unfair to administer.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is United Nations' International Day of Peace. It is a day where citizens around the globe put peace ahead of their differences and try to create a culture of peace. Both inner peace and peace in society are very important to me. This is why I am delighted to announce that tomorrow, at noon, Jon Kabat-Zinn is coming to the Hill. Jon will be leading a mass mindfulness meditation session on the Hill. We are so fortunate to have Jon. He is a world-renowned meditator. He is a retired professor from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, where he created both the stress reduction clinic and a mindfulness centre.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Innerspace, under the direction of Sher Van Aarle, who has set up this event. I cannot think of a better event to attend on the International Day of Peace than a mindfulness session with Jon Kabat-Zinn. I know that I will be surrounded by fellow MPs, and I am hoping that the lawn will be full.

* * *

TWYLA ROSCOVICH

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most devastating part of losing someone we love is the silence that fills the space that was once filled with their unique sound. On the west coast of Canada, the silence that has taken the beautiful space of Twyla Roscovich is stark. None of us can believe she is gone.

At 38, she was too young to leave us. An independent filmmaker focused on protecting wild salmon, Twyla directed multiple films. Perhaps the most well known was *Salmon Confidential*.

I had the honour of knowing Twyla for many years. What I will always carry with me was her determination to make sure that the voices that were often silenced were heard, her absolute love for her four-year-old daughter Ruby, and the trips on the ferry from Powell River with her father Glen, whose absolute pride and love for his daughter touched me profoundly.

I hope, in this time of grief, her loved ones know we are all holding them up with our love. I would like to thank Twyla. For the short time she was here, she made a world of difference.

● (1420)

ROSH HASHANAH

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this evening at sundown, the Jewish community in Canada and around the world will gather to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the start of the Jewish new year and the high holiday season. During this time, Jewish communities will gather with friends and family to enjoy festive meals as the new year is ushered in to the sound of a shofar. This is also a time for retrospection, observance, and prayer for a good year.

This past year, we have seen a continuing rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes. The Conservative Party will always stand with the Jewish community in Canada and around the world in the face of this pernicious hate. On behalf of the official opposition and the Conservative Party of Canada, I wish everyone celebrating, a happy, healthy, peaceful, and sweet Rosh Hashanah.

Shana tova u'metuka.

* * *

[Translation]

MEXICO

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I planned to acknowledge Mexico Independence Day, which was celebrated on September 16 by nearly 100,000 Canadians of Mexican descent, including my wife and my family.

However, as co-chair of the Canada-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Group I want to offer my thoughts and prayers as Mexico grapples with a second earthquake in as many weeks.

[English]

Mexican Canadians have left their cultural mark in communities, including Gatineau, which is host to a campus of Mexico's national university and to Ballet Folklórico Aztlán, the traditional folkloric ballet of Mexico in Canada.

Our connection is strong, but our hearts are heavy. I ask all Canadians to join me in doing what they can to support our cultural, economic, and humanitarian partner as it faces tough days ahead, and to learn more about supporting the Mexico Earthquake Relief Fund or the Red Cross as a proud and resilient people face these enormous challenges.

[Member spoke in Spanish]

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister continued his campaign against small businesses.

Oral Questions

Our local businesses need tools for saving money when times are good, money for a rainy day, because they want to be able to pay their employees when times are tough. However, the Prime Minister's new taxes will make it harder for them to do that.

Will the Prime Minister end his campaign against local businesses and stop attacking job creators?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all week the Conservatives pretended to stand up for business women. Members on this side were deeply disappointed by comments made by the Conservative member for Battlefords—Lloydminster about the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

We can all agree that sexist comments should not be part of the public debate or part of any conversation anywhere, period.

Will the Leader of the Opposition stand here today, do the right thing, denounce his member's comments, and ask him to issue a full apology to the House?

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, women entrepreneurs expect their government to stand with them, not attack them.

The Prime Minister does not seem to understand that his tax hikes will mean fewer jobs, fewer working hours, and lower salaries and benefits for workers employed by small and local businesses.

Here is a lesson for the Prime Minister. When he raises taxes on businesses, he makes it harder for them to grow and hire more workers. He makes it harder for them to invest in new, start-up businesses that would create even more jobs.

Why is the Prime Minister putting up roadblocks to job creation?

• (1425)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how disappointing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has the floor.

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, it is very disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition will not denounce these statements and not show that the leader of his entire caucus understands how inappropriate those comments were and ask the member to apologize to all members of the House and all Canadians, today.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while answering media questions yesterday, the Prime Minister described his “family fortune”, which is held in at least three separate numbered companies. It must be nice. Shockingly, he confirmed that he would not be affected by the tax changes he has claimed are intended to make wealthy Canadians pay more.

While the Prime Minister is going after local plumbers, mechanics, and farmers, he is bragging that he will not be affected. How is that fair?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only do we on this side of the House defend the entrepreneurs and businesswomen, we also represent the integrity

and respect women from coast to coast to coast. The Leader of the Opposition refuses to denounce the comments of his colleague in front of all members of the House and, indeed, in front of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 35 organizations representing businesses, SMEs, professionals, self-employed workers, and farmers, with more than 1.2 million members between them, were never consulted about the Liberal government's tax reforms. These are not multi-millionaires we are talking about. These are people who work hard day after day to create jobs right across the country.

My question is simple: is paying \$1,500 to attend a private cocktail party with the Prime Minister the only way for these people to make themselves heard?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to get rid of a system that encourages the wealthiest Canadians to incorporate so they can get a lower rate of tax than middle-class Canadians. That is what we are trying to do. We are listening. We are in the middle of consultations right now. We are listening to people across the country. I am visiting chambers of commerce all across Canada to hear what they have to say, and that is very important. We are going to continue to listen so that we can make sure our measures are the right ones to help us come up with a system that is fair.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is a real life example. Joseph, an entrepreneur and small business owner, wrote me a message yesterday on Facebook. He said, “I have struggled to stay in business for a long time, but this tax reform is forcing me to liquidate my equipment and shut down. The Liberals' vision involves helping the wealthy at the little guy's expense.”

That is the truth. The government is not going to help Joseph and families across Canada by raising taxes for SMEs.

Will the minister rethink his unfair, ad hoc tax reform?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that we currently have a tax system that encourages the wealthy to incorporate so they have a lower tax rate than the middle class. That is the truth. That is our situation. That is why we want to be sure that our system is fair. We listened to SMEs to make sure that the system works for them so that they can continue to make active investments in their businesses. That is very important.

We are listening.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister left the door open to joining American ballistic missile defence, just one month after saying the Liberals would not change their position against such a system.

Oral Questions

The system is dangerously unreliable, exorbitantly expensive, and it may well just spur a nuclear arms race. Just last week the Canadian deputy commander of NORAD warned clearly, “The extant U.S. policy is not to defend Canada.”

How has Trump convinced the Liberal government to keep this one on the table nonetheless?

• (1430)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the security of Canadians and the defence of North America are of the utmost importance to the Canadian Armed Forces and to our government. Our new defence policy recognizes the growing threats of ballistic missiles and commits to continuing to work actively with the United States and looking broadly at all threats to North America, as we look at NORAD modernization. However, the policy has not changed yet.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is the government's logic?

The Liberals are opposed to the UN treaty for nuclear disarmament, but they are leaving the door open to participating in an ineffective, dangerous system that will precipitate an arms race.

Is that the Liberals' foreign policy?

Is it accepting Donald Trump's belligerent fire and fury policy rather than participating in the diplomatic efforts that more than 120 countries are making towards disarmament?

What kind of world do they want to live in?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you can be sure that our goal is nuclear disarmament. We are working hard to take real action toward that goal.

For the first time in 2016, Canada rallied 159 countries to sign the fissile material cut-off treaty, and countries signed that treaty, whether they had nuclear weapons or not. That is real action. We are working toward nuclear disarmament.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats have fought for tax fairness for generations, so we welcome the Liberals to the conversation with open arms, yet in typical Liberal fashion, they have somehow managed to screw up the consultation and decided to focus only on small business. The New Democrats are calling on the government to extend and expand this review to get it right.

Billions in tax havens, hundreds of millions of dollars in CEO stock options, no wonder small businesses do not trust the Liberals when it comes to their affairs. The Minister of Finance is going after all the minnows but he keeps throwing back the whales.

Will the Liberals get serious about going after tax cheats even if it might hurt some of their wealthy and well-connected friends?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, our government chose to tackle tax evasion. In our last two budgets, we invested over \$1 billion, which enabled us to recover \$13 billion. Now that we have started, we will not stop.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals were really serious about tax fairness, they would have kept their promise to eliminate the loophole available exclusively to CEOs.

We have all heard fishing stories. Here is a good one. Usually fishers throw back the little fish and keep the big ones. Strangely enough, the Minister of Finance is doing the opposite: he is throwing the big ones back into the lake and keeping the little ones.

Why are the Liberals attacking small businesses and doing nothing that might affect their Bay Street buddies, CEOs, billionaires, and tax havens?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we do not want a system that enables the rich to set up private companies so they can enjoy lower tax rates than the middle class.

Over the past two years, we have cut taxes for the middle class, raised taxes on the wealthiest 1%, introduced the Canada child benefit, and given the Canada Revenue Agency an extra \$1 billion to work with. The NDP supported none of those measures. We intend to stay on track with a system that is fair.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister wants to double tax the investment income of small businesses for a total of 73%, but public corporations, those trading on the stock market, are exempt from this new double tax, so they will keep paying the current lower 55% on their passive investment income.

How is it fair for the pizza shop owner to pay a higher tax rate than the millionaire owners of public companies, like, say, Morneau Shepell?

• (1435)

The Speaker: Order, please. I would remind colleagues that they are not to do indirectly what they cannot do directly. That is close to the line.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, what we are talking about here is a system that encourages wealthy individuals to arrange their taxes in an incorporated way so they can get a lower rate of tax than middle-class Canadians. This is what we are trying to get after here.

Oral Questions

We are working hard to make sure we listen to Canadians, to understand the concerns of those people who are looking at this measure and how it might affect them. However, we want to be absolutely clear. Our goal is to have a system that is fair, one that makes sure we do not encourage the wealthy to have a lower tax rate than the middle class.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, that is precisely the system the Liberals are now creating. In fact, while the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister have gone around accusing our mechanics, farmers, and pizza shop owners of playing games to avoid paying their fair share of taxes, in fact, they are imposing a much higher tax rate on those small business owners than is paid by the owners of much bigger companies on Bay Street.

If a 73% tax rate is so fair, then why is he only applying it to the little guys on Main Street and none of his big friends on Bay Street?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we do not have a system that encourages the wealthy to take up an approach that is going to make sure they have a lower tax rate than the middle class. We are going to stay on top of this.

We are making sure that misinformation and inaccurate facts are dealt with. We are going to listen to Canadians and clarify what we are trying to achieve to make sure that everyone knows we are going to end up with a tax system that is more fair. That is our goal, and we are going to stick with that.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about fairness.

[Translation]

The Minister of Finance's proposal is to tax small business investment income at 73%. This means that a businesswoman in my riding, Diane, who owns a garage in Louis-Saint-Laurent, will have to pay a 73% tax, while big financial corporations, such as Morneau Shepell, for example, will not have to pay the same rate at all.

Is the minister really saying it is fair for small business owners, for the businesswoman in my riding, to pay 73%, when even billionaires do not have to pay that much?

[English]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure we have a system that is fair. We want to make sure that wealthy Canadians cannot choose the approach that is going to allow them to have a lower tax rate than other Canadians. We also want to make sure that small business owners have the ability to invest actively in their businesses, because we are seeking to ensure that our economy can continue to grow.

We are going to listen to people to make sure we get this right, but again, we are going to follow through with measures that will ensure that all Canadians can see that our system works for our country.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best way for that to happen and for the system to be fair is if small business owners were not penalized by this greedy government that just wants more taxes from small businesses.

Once again, the reality in my riding is that a businesswoman, Manon, who owns a restaurant in Loretteville, not too far from where I live, is going to have to pay a 73% tax, while Bay Street billionaires like Morneau Shepell will not pay 73%.

Does the Minister of Finance think that is fair?

[English]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know, there are situations in our country where wealthy Canadians find a way to incorporate so they pay a lower rate of tax than middle-class Canadians. We know that this is not appropriate.

I am happy to continue to talk with Canadians and listen to them. Over the course of the next week, I will be having a tele-town hall with Canadians so they can talk to me and give me a sense of their concerns and their issues. People will have questions. We are looking forward to listening, but we will move forward to make sure the system is fair and that it works for small businesses and for all Canadians.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the last two weeks I have spoken with Canadians in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. They have shared with me the stories of how they are going to be impacted by these tax changes.

I met Andrew, who is an apple farmer in New Brunswick. He explained to me that his problem is this. He will, at some point in time, because of this impact, choose between his employees and his family. I do not think, under the minister's plan, Andrew being in a case where he has to think about one or the other is very fair. I want to know why the finance minister is forcing Andrew to pay a 73% tax that not even millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell—

• (1440)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we are looking toward a system that does not encourage wealthy Canadians to incorporate so they have a lower tax rate than middle-class Canadians. We are trying to make sure that people can invest in their businesses over the long term. That is our goal.

We are certainly listening to people across the country to make sure that they will continue to invest in business and to create jobs, to ensure that we have a healthy economy for this generation and the next. The next generation, like this generation, deserves a fair tax system.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in one ear and out the other; that is the kind of listening they are having. CFIB released figures showing that two-thirds of Canadians, small and local businesses, make less than \$73,000 a year.

This just in: interestingly enough, yesterday, Morneau Shepell declared a cash dividend to shareholders. Why is the finance minister forcing small businesses to pay a 73% tax, when even the millionaire owners and shareholders of Morneau Shepell will not have that on their dividends?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, what we believe is important—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that our system is fair. We want to make sure that it does not encourage wealthy Canadians to incorporate so they have a lower tax rate than middle-class Canadians. We also want to make sure that we do not have a situation where some people that are, frankly, very well compensated, pay a lower tax rate than others.

The members opposite may be comfortable with that, because that is the system they were in before our government came into power, but we know that a fair system requires all Canadians to find themselves in a situation where they can actually have opportunities that should be available to all Canadians.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the most sued country in the world under investor state dispute settlement provisions in NAFTA's chapter 11, allowing companies to sue governments over anything they believe has reduced their profits. The threat of chapter 11 challenges has had a chilling effect on government action and has eroded our democracy. Numerous stakeholders insist that chapter 11 should be removed, and today, an Ekos poll reported that 63% of Canadians agree. Our trade deals cannot put profits before people. Will the minister finally listen to Canadians and eliminate chapter 11?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada welcomes the modernization of NAFTA in support of our middle class and those working hard to join it. Our objectives for a modernized NAFTA include reforming the investor state—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Members seem to be enjoying question period today. Let us have a little order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our objectives for a modernized NAFTA include reforming the investor state dispute settlements, chapter 11, and we want to make sure that the government has the unassailable right to regulate in the public interest. We will always stand up for our national economic interests and for Canadian values. Chapter 11 is very much under discussion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the dairy farm investment program is a total failure. No surprises there.

Many dairy farmers have hit a wall and will not be able to get the compensation they are owed because the program is underfunded. It is ridiculous. In less than a week, the program already handed out \$125 million of the \$250 million, while the losses are estimated to be at least \$750 million. CETA comes into effect tomorrow and dairy farmers must and want to invest right now.

Will the Minister of Agriculture allocate more money to the dairy farm investment program or not?

● (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that this government has supported, and will continue to support, the supply management system. It was quite clear when we invested \$350 million in the dairy side of the supply management sector, making sure that \$250 million went to innovation on the farms themselves and \$100 million went to the processing sector. We have continued and will continue, and other dollars are available. The supply management system is safe and well in this country.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Wildwood Transport is a trucking company in my riding that employs 55 Manitobans. Ryan, who is the owner of Wildwood Transport, has told me that the finance minister's tax increases are going to have a drastic effect on him and his employees. What Ryan does not understand is this: why is the finance minister forcing him to pay a 73% tax that not even the millionaire owners of the minister's own family-owned company, Morneau Shepell, have to pay?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working toward ensuring that our tax system is fair. We want to make sure that there is not an encouragement for wealthy Canadians to incorporate so they pay a lower rate of tax than middle-class Canadians. We know that Canadians see that as fair. We are going to work toward ensuring, as well, that entrepreneurs like Ryan are assured that they can continue to actively invest in their businesses to create jobs and to help keep our economy, which is growing very well, healthy over the long term. They need a fairer tax system, and they need encouragement to invest. That is what we are working on achieving.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has his head in the sand, because jobs that are created by Ryan and this company are going to be driven into the ground under the tax increases by this minister. We ask again, how is it fair that someone like Ryan and a company like this are going to have to pay 73%, when millionaire owners of companies like Morneau Shepell will not have to? How is that fair?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that having a system that is fair is critically important. We know that a system that favours the wealthy over the middle class just does not work. We know that members opposite were happy to have a system where the wealthiest might have had a lower tax rate than the middle class. We are not comfortable with that. We want to move forward with measures that will encourage investment but make sure that our tax system is fair. We want to ensure that wealthy Canadians do not have an encouragement to have a lower tax rate than the middle class, and we will follow through with that goal.

Oral Questions

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is proposing to tax the investment income of small business owners at a rate of 73%. That means that Boyd Yamamoto, the owner of Sardis Health Foods, in Chilliwack, will now be punished after years of hard work for setting aside money for his retirement. Why is the finance minister forcing Boyd to pay a 73% tax that not even the millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell will have to pay? How is that fair?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having a system that encourages the wealthiest among us to incorporate—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I am sure most members would agree that they would defend the right of others to speak, even though they disagree. Therefore, I would ask them to respect that right as a fundamental principle of democracy.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians expect us to put in place a system that is fair. We know they have seen a system that, over the years, has encouraged the wealthiest to incorporate and get a lower tax rate than the middle class. That is not something we want to have as a continuing situation in our tax system.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Seventy-three per cent fair.

Hon. Bill Morneau: We know we have to have two objectives met. We want to have a system that encourages people to invest in their active businesses. We also want to have a system that is fair for this generation and future generations. That is what we are working toward.

The Speaker: It appears the hon. member for Brantford—Brant did not hear me. I would ask him to not be blurting things out when someone else has the floor and he does not. He knows that is not permitted in the rules.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kelly Langille owns a heating and air conditioning business in Chilliwack. He works hard, creates good jobs within my community, and hopes to share his success with his children and save for his own retirement. The Minister of Finance's tax changes will harm his business and his family.

Kelly says, "I will now have to re-evaluate my ability to save not only for my retirement, but to keep my business running." Why is the Minister of Finance forcing Kelly to pay a 73% tax that not even millionaire owners of companies like Morneau Shepell have to pay, and how is that fair?

• (1450)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we know with our current system is that it does encourage wealthy Canadians to incorporate so they can have a lower tax rate than middle-class Canadians. What we also know is it is important to continue to listen to Canadians to make sure that as we put these measures in place, they will continue to be incentivized to make investments in their businesses.

We want to achieve that at the same time as making sure our system is fair. We know those two goals can both be achieved, and that is why we are out listening to Canadians, to make sure we actually achieve them.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we heard some serious allegations about Saudi Arabia using Canadian-made weapons against civilians.

[English]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs launched an investigation and promised that she would take action if it was confirmed. However, later, the Saudi ambassador to Canada himself confirmed the allegations.

When can we expect the results from the minister's investigation, and what actions will she take now that the allegations have been confirmed by the Saudis themselves?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should know that we are absolutely committed to the defence of human rights at home and abroad. We deplore human rights abuses everywhere around the world. Canada expects the end-user of any and all exports to abide by the end-use terms in issued export permits.

The minister has asked for a review of the situation and officials have been actively seeking further information on the allegations.

I can confirm that no new export permits have been issued for vehicles to Saudi Arabia. We have expressed our concern to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its security operations that they respect international human rights law.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of all talk and no action, the Minister of Finance did not include a single penny in his budget for correcting the mistakes on the no-fly list.

Fifty or so Liberal MPs, including ministers, wrote to the Minister of Finance to ask him to correct the situation. Families have to cancel trips because their children's names are on the list and business people are facing delays on their business trips.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Will the government finally keep its promise and implement and fully fund a proper redress system for the no-fly list and, once and for all, end this victimization of children and business people?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the design flaws in the no-fly program stretch back many years. It was designed in a way which required people who were inadvertently red-flagged to present themselves at the counter to be cleared manually. That is a very bad system. We are determined to fix it. I would point out for the hon. gentleman that in Bill C-59 he will find the beginning of the legislative changes that are necessary to fix it.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of New Brunswick Southwest is home to some of the largest exporters of seafood in Canada, including lobster, scallops, salmon, herring, sardines, and so much more.

I know so many of the businesses are excited about the opportunities with CETA. Could the Minister of International Trade please update the House on what CETA will mean for the businesses and the implementation process?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is the question all Canadians have been waiting for.

Tomorrow the free trade agreement between Canada and Europe will come into force. It will open a market of 510 million consumers for businesses across Canada.

I invite all members of this House to make a difference in the lives of farmers, fishermen, businesses, and small businesses, and use the agreement. This is a great day for Canada. I invite all members to join in that.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had an opportunity to chat with Terry, a grain farmer from my riding after his conversation with the Minister of Finance about Liberal tax changes. The minister said nothing to alleviate Terry's concerns for his livelihood. These changes mean that Terry's retirement is in jeopardy.

Why is the Minister of Finance forcing Terry, an independent grain farmer from Nipawin, Saskatchewan to pay a 73% tax that not even millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell will have to pay? How is that fair?

●(1455)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across the country, we want to make sure that our tax system is fair.

We know that they do not want a system that encourages just the wealthiest to incorporate, to have a private company so that they can actually pay a lower rate of tax than middle-class Canadians.

I was pleased to speak to Terry, as I will be pleased to speak to Canadians who will come on our teleconference later this week, in order to hear their questions and ensure that we are listening to what these changes will mean for them.

Our goal, again, is tax fairness. We want to make sure that people like Terry and others can continue to invest. Those two goals, we believe, can be met together.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Darrel and Kathy hope to have their son Jackson take over the family farm some day. They told me how their rainy day fund saved them when their combine broke in the middle of harvest. The Minister of Finance's tax grab would have made that impossible. Meanwhile, multi-million-dollar companies traded on the stock market are exempt.

Why is the Minister of Finance forcing Darrel and Kathy to pay a 73% tax that not even the millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell have to pay? How is that fair?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a tax system that favours the wealthy over the middle class is not one that we see as fair. We want to make sure, as we move forward to have a fairer tax system, that it really does continue to enable farm families, fishers, and people across the country to be successful. We are listening to people across the country to make sure that there are not unintended consequences.

Clearly, what we are after is making sure that the wealthiest Canadians do not have an advantage to have a lower tax rate than middle-class Canadians. We will continue with those goals while we listen to farmers and people across the country about their—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal tax changes will affect hard-working Canadians like Allison and her husband, who, despite the downturn in Alberta, have gotten up, dusted themselves off, and started again. Allison's husband lost his job, and she was a stay-at-home mom of four kids, who substitute taught, but then she suffered a stroke and could not work. Despite all of this, they carried on and started a small business.

These new Liberal tax changes will devastate that dream. Why is the Minister of Finance forcing Allison to pay a 73% tax that not even millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell will have to pay? Maybe he could try answering now. How is that fair?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity again to say that what we want is a tax system that is fair. We want a tax system that does not encourage the wealthiest to incorporate so they can have a lower tax rate than middle-class Canadians. That is what we are working towards.

Oral Questions

We are going to listen to small business owners, to people across the country, because we want to correct the misinformation that is out there, suggesting that they will be in a worse-off situation. We want to make sure that wealthy Canadians do not have advantages not available to the middle class, while encouraging people to continue to invest in our economy, an investment that is going well as we can see with the growth in our economy right now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance wants to tax the investment income of local small business owners at a rate of 73%. These Liberal tax increases will take a toll on Éric Boisvert's thriving SME, Impression Stratégique, located in Beauport. This company and many others like it could be forced to cut salaries or even lay off some employees.

Why does the Minister of Finance want Impression Stratégique to pay a 73% tax when the millionaires who own Morneau Shepell do not have to pay a cent?

How is that fair?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a notion of what is fair. We do not want a system that encourages the wealthiest to incorporate so they can get a lower tax rate than the middle class. That is not fair.

The fact that members opposite believe that it is fair for the wealthiest to pay a lower tax rate than the middle class is something we do not understand. We are going to move forward with a system that encourages people to invest in business, but a system that allows all Canadians to have opportunities with a fair tax system.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians knew that Trump's anti-immigrant policies would create a climate of fear in the U.S. In August alone, over 5,000 asylum seekers crossed into Quebec and it doubled in B.C. NGOs are left grappling with this without any additional resources. At committee, Liberal MPs have shut down debate on this issue not once, not twice, but four times.

Will the government finally agree to work with all sides of the House to develop a comprehensive and humanitarian approach to this critical situation?

• (1500)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that the member opposite has asked me that question because it gives me a chance to highlight some of the actions we have taken to deal with this unusual situation.

We have mobilized the government operations centre to mobilize and coordinate actions across government. We have been able to work seamlessly with the provinces of Quebec and Ontario under the federal task force. We have processed and increased the capacity of the IRCC office in Montreal, in order to be able to improve the process of asylum seekers and their claims from months to days. We have fast-tracked the processing of work permits in order to

minimize their reliance on social assistance and provincial social programs.

Throughout this process it is evident that we have planning. It shows early mobilization and seamless—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hochelaga.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, having 14 people squeeze into a two-bedroom home with walls that are black with mould is the reality faced by too many indigenous Canadians living on reserves. If they choose to leave, they end up much more vulnerable to marginalization, discrimination, and homelessness.

We have had two years of talk from the Prime Minister. Now it is time for action.

Will the minister work in partnership with indigenous peoples to implement a focused strategy that comes with immediate funding to tackle the growing indigenous housing crisis?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House as Canada's very first Minister of Indigenous Services.

I heartily agree with the member opposite that for too long indigenous peoples in this country have lived in substandard conditions. That is why our government has made such significant investments and already 6,500 homes have been built or are under construction. We will continue to work with our partners in first nations, Inuit, and Métis people of this country to make sure all people have a good quality of life.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers are right in the middle of the harvest, and the Minister of Finance wants to tax the investment income of small businesses, such as family farms, at 73%.

Éric and his two family partners, farmers from Sainte-Christine, in the riding of Shefford, will not be able to leave their farm to their six children, and the minister is putting their retirement in jeopardy.

Why is the Minister of Finance forcing Éric to pay a 73% tax rate, but will not make the millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell pay?

How can he claim that is fair?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we want and what all Canadians want is a system that is fair. We do not want our society to privilege the wealthy and encourage them to have a lower tax rate than the middle class. This is our goal.

We are listening to farmers across the country to make sure that there are no unintended consequences for them. That is very important. Our goal is clear. We want a fair system.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, John owns Johnny Finger Cats Welding in my riding. He is an employer in a small rural community who has fought hard to keep his business afloat despite the energy downturn. Now the Minister of Finance wants to take more money out of his pocket with these punitive tax changes. This is going to force him to lay off staff and certainly inhibit the ability for him to grow his business.

Why is the finance minister forcing John to pay a 73% tax hike when millionaire owners of companies like Morneau Shepell do not have to pay it? I would like him to tell rural Canadians how that is fair.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that rural Canadians and all Canadians want to have a system where we do not encourage the richest to incorporate so they pay a lower tax rate than middle-class Canadians. That is really important. For business owners, for people across the country who are trying to invest in their business, we encourage that activity.

At the same time, we want to make sure that we are not encouraging others to incorporate just for lower tax rates than those business owners or middle-class Canadians. That is what we are working toward. We will listen to make sure we get it right.

• (1505)

Mr. Phil McColeman: Shell owners on Bay Street.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Brantford—Brant is still having difficulty controlling himself. Perhaps he would like to step outside for the rest of the day, to exit and take a little break if he cannot stay calm. I invite him to do that.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kirby Baumung, who owns Lyons Transmission Centre, employs seven people in Brandon, Manitoba and is being forced to pay a massive tax increase because of the finance minister's punitive tax increase package. Why is the finance minister forcing Kirby to have to pay these huge, massive taxes that not even his millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell have to pay? How is this fair?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a tax system that encourages the wealthy to incorporate to pay a lower tax rate than the middle class is not a tax system that is fair. We want to be clear that we want to encourage investment in small business, and that is why we plan on keeping small business tax rates low, the lowest in the G7 countries. That is our goal.

We are going to make sure the system does not encourage wealthy people to have a lower tax rate than the middle class and at the same time, encourage small businesses to invest in their business so that we can grow our economy.

* * *

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's largest industrial and research park is in my riding, Saint-Laurent. It is home to nearly 4,500 businesses, including 100 technology and innovation businesses in Technoparc

Montréal's Campus Saint-Laurent, and employs over 105,000 people.

Can the Minister of International Trade tell the House how the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union will benefit businesses and start-ups in my riding and the rest of Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Laurent for her question.

That question is on the minds of all Canadians. The Canada-Europe free trade agreement will take effect tomorrow, giving businesses across Canada access to a market of over 510 million consumers. I encourage all MPs to use the free trade agreement to make a difference in the lives of small businesses, families, workers, farmers, and fishers. It will be a great day for Canada.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how disgraceful and unfair.

The Minister of Finance wants to tax small business investment income at a rate of 73%. As a result, the retirement plans of a pork producer in my riding, Mario, will be seriously jeopardized.

Why is the Minister of Finance forcing Mario to pay a tax rate of 73% that the millionaire owners of Morneau Shepell do not have to pay? How is that fair? What a disgrace.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not want to have a situation where the wealthy can simply change their situation by incorporating so they have a lower tax rate than the middle class. That is not a fair system. We want a system where small and medium-sized businesses have the opportunity to make investments with one of the lowest tax rates in the G7, but at the same time, one that is fair. That is our goal, and we are confident that we can create an economy that works for all Canadians.

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*[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the say-so of a U.S. court, North Dakota is pushing ahead with two water diversion projects that could have terrible consequences for Lake Winnipeg. Foreign organisms could be transferred between independent watersheds and increased nutrient loads could mean further problems with toxic algae.

Routine Proceedings

It was a platform commitment of the Liberals to protect Lake Winnipeg. The way to do that is to refer these projects to the International Joint Commission for independent review and Canadian oversight. Now that the time for talk is over, will the Liberals stand up for Lake Winnipeg and make that referral?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the health of Lake Winnipeg is a priority for the government, and it was reflected in the budget. There was \$27.5 million allocated in the budget to protect Lake Winnipeg and its basin. In that regard, we are working with the relevant provinces in the basin and the relevant states in the United States to ensure that we are protecting and enhancing the ecological status of the lake.

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HEALTH

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is World Alzheimer's Day. Almost every member of this chamber has been touched by Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia in some way or another, and so have most Canadians. We all know that more needs to be done to help those struggling with dementia and those caring for them, as well as in research to understand and treat these diseases.

As I congratulate the new Minister of Health on her appointment, can she update us on her department's work on this important issue?

● (1510)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Don Valley West for his question and his work, along with the member for Niagara Falls, on Bill C-233.

This is a priority for our government and a priority of mine personally, as my mother lives with Lewy body dementia. This is why we are continuing to contribute \$42 million to Baycrest Health Sciences to support new research and development, testing, and scale-up of products and services for brain health and aging. Last year we launched the largest-ever study in dementia in Canada.

We will continue to work to improve the lives of those with Alzheimer's and their families.

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ETHICS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indigenous Services filed her public declaration of assets with the Ethics Commissioner on February 26, 2016. In that disclosure, the minister said there was a compliance agreement permitting her to continue as president, treasurer, secretary, and director of her professional corporation until August 3, 2016.

Did the minister recuse herself from any discussions involving tax changes between November 4, 2015, and August 3, 2016?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear all the details of the question, but I would be happy to speak to the member afterwards.

I was not involved in the discussions related to the tax changes. I did have a medical professional corporation, and it was closed down.

I made that decision on the day I was elected when I knew that I would not be practising for some time to come.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

We know that since Bill C-38 in 2012, the National Energy Board, with no competence or experience in environmental assessment, is making a hash of the projects that it reviews. Two expert panels have now recommended taking the National Energy Board out of environmental assessment.

I think the National Energy Board may be nailing the nails in its own coffin with the recent approval of a Spectra natural gas pipeline against the advice of Environment Canada's concern for endangered species. A similar mining project in the same region is getting different treatment through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Can the minister confirm that we will get the National Energy Board out of environmental assessments once and for all?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the government has spent the last number of months looking at modernization and reform of the National Energy Board. It is part of a coast to coast to coast set of conversations with Canadians.

I can assure the member that when we come to the House later with legislation, it will embody those very principles that matter to her: indigenous consultation, environmental stewardship, and responsible economic growth for Canada.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1515)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take the time to table these documents on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Routine Proceedings

Pursuant to Standing Order 32.2, I have the honour to table in both official languages the treaties entitled “Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer”, adopted at Kigali on October 15, 2016; “Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone”, adopted at Gothenburg on November 30, 1999; and “Amendment of the text of and annexes II to IX to the 1999 Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone and the addition of new annexes X and XI”, adopted at Geneva on May 4, 2012.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT AND PRIVACY ACT

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages, a charter statement on Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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PETITIONS

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present an online petition calling on the Government of Canada to secure future production levels at Unifor local 88, GM CAMI Ingersoll, where workers today are on strike over this very issue. The petition points out that GM announced in January 2017 that 625 workers would be laid off because production of the current model Chevrolet Equinox would end one year earlier than previously stated. The petition also states that for every auto job lost, the surrounding community loses seven jobs, negatively affecting 4,375 jobs; and that Canada has seen zero new auto factories over the last five years, while Mexico has had nine new facilities.

The signers of the petition demand that GM reverse its decision to build the next-generation GMC Terrain in Mexico and bring that production back to GM CAMI Ingersoll, maintaining production and staffing levels at 2016 numbers.

The petitioners also request that the government engage stakeholders to develop an effective national auto strategy, including the integration of federal and provincial investment attraction incentives, ensuring that Canada's investment incentives are competitive and efficient, and reversing the automotive trade deficit with all countries, including Mexico.

[*Translation*]

WATER QUALITY

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the subject of Lake Winnipeg came up during question period. I want to talk about Lake Champlain again. The lake needs government intervention because its water is green and smelly. No one would drink it. It is like pea soup.

I want to commend the mayors, especially the mayor of Venise-en-Québec, Jacques Landry, who chairs the Actions Lac Champlain committee.

On Saturday, a meeting will be held at Lake Champlain in the Saint-Armand sector, to discuss the state of the lake with our American friends. I want to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for Saint-Jean for his support. He is monitoring this situation closely.

• (1520)

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by campers who stayed at Sportsman's Park Tent and Trailer in Alban, Ontario, a place as close to heaven as people can come while still being alive, in the riding of Nickel Belt. The petitioners call on the government to ensure that campgrounds with fewer than five full-time, year-round employees will continue to be recognized and taxed as small businesses.

Unlike having a chalet in the Laurentians or a villa in the south of France, campground owners toil day and night ensuring the availability of clean running water, septic services, and everything necessary to keep guests safe and comfortable. These businesses are not tax-avoidance schemes. Reinstate the small business tax credit for them, and call off the tax grab on other small businesses.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present e-petition 927 with 1,432 signatures. It is concerning the old-growth prairie and the prairie farm rehabilitation administration pastures, which under the Conservative government were being transferred to the provinces and the private sector. These pastures are really important for meeting our commitments under the UN convention on biodiversity, the Aichi accord, the Paris accord, the migratory bird convention, and our national biodiversity strategy, “Pathway to Canada Target 1”.

The petitioners are asking the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to work with livestock producers, first nations, Métis organizations, and conservation organizations to create a multi-use prairie conservation network on all former PFRA community pastures, and protect the ecological well-being of this important ecosystem.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition in the House on behalf of my constituents in my riding of Niagara Centre, particularly in the city of Port Colborne.

The petition has been duly certified and calls for hospice palliative care to be a defined medical service under the Canada Health Act so that provincial and territorial governments will be entitled to funds under the Canada health transfer system to be used to provide accessible and available hospice palliative care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces as well as territories.

CONTRACEPTION

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I present e-petition 935, signed by almost 1,000 constituents from across the country. The petition asks the Government of Canada to support the NDP's Motion No. 65, which calls on the federal government to work with the provinces to cover the full cost of prescribed contraceptives.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first is from residents within my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands. It calls on the Government of Canada to withdraw Canadians troops from Iraq and Syria, to sign and ratify the UN arms trade treaty, and work toward lasting solutions for peace and civility globally.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition speaks to the issue of fossil fuel dependency. Constituents from Salt Spring Island, Pender Island, and throughout Saanich-Gulf Islands call on the government to work to achieve the goals set out in the Leap Manifesto, working to transition off fossil fuels.

[*Translation*]

TAX HAVENS AND TAX AVOIDANCE

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two series of petitions to table on behalf of the people of my riding, Drummond.

The first calls on the Government of Canada to fight against tax havens and tax avoidance. The Liberal government could, among other things, keep its promise to eliminate the tax loophole associated with stock options, which benefits extremely wealthy millionaires and CEOs. That would be one way to fight tax evasion, which is what the people of Drummond would like the government to do.

I have another series of petitions that I will get validated and table later.

● (1525)

SALE OF ARMS AND ARMoured VEHICLES TO SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): I have some petitions signed by students from my riding who are calling on the Liberal government to cancel the sale of arms and armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia and other countries that do not uphold human rights. This week, once again, we learned that the arms Canada sells to Saudi Arabia are unfortunately being used against civilian populations. This is quite upsetting, and this is why so many people in Drummond have signed these petitions. I will be presenting more in the weeks to come, because this issue is quite upsetting to the people of Drummond.

Points of Order

[*English*]

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to solve the long-standing problem of abandoned vessels on three of Canada's coasts, I proposed legislation, Bill C-352, calling on the federal government to legislate a solution to this long-standing problem. Petitioners from Gabriola Island, Vancouver, Cowichan Bay, Duncan, Nanaimo, Ladysmith and Chemainus all urge the government to work together with the provinces and local coastal communities to identify the Coast Guard as the point of first responsibility in responding to abandoned vessels so they will not create oil spills and threaten maritime jobs and economies. They also call for innovative solutions around recycling and product stewardship that would create salvage markets for these problem vessels.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PETITIONS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, having come back at the end of summer, I ask for guidance on how to handle this issue of concern, and to remind other members. A number of presenters of petitions have used this time as a launching place for a mini-speech. I know our rules tell us we are to present petitions in summary form, not read them, and not be an advocate for them.

I lament that Arnold Chan's wonderful words to us did not last until today's question period, but that is a point of order for another time.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her point of order. She is quite right. I would encourage members to provide a summary of the petitions they present. Of course, they know not to provide any editorial comment on those petitions.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***STRENGTHENING MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY FOR CANADIANS ACT**

The House resumed from September 19 consideration of the motion that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: When this was last debated, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock had just spoken and there was one minute remaining in questions and comments after his speech.

Questions and comments. Seeing none, we will carry on with debate.

The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill S-2, an act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, otherwise known as the strengthening motor vehicle safety for Canadians act.

The safety of Canadians is of high importance to this government, and this bill will help further ensure Canadians can enjoy peace of mind while driving on our roads.

The rapid development of automated and connected technologies for light duty vehicles is of great interest to this government. This summer I had the pleasure of attending the conference of U.S. governors in Rhode Island, where we were treated to a talk by Elon Musk, the owner of Tesla, about the advent of fully autonomous vehicles, which can fully drive themselves without the aid of a driver.

He predicted that this type of vehicle will replace human-operated cars in the next 15 years, so members should enjoy their cars while they can. The prototypes of some of these vehicles are already undergoing on-road testing in the U.S. This exciting area of vehicle technology development can be seen as both a safety benefit and an economic innovation opportunity.

Shifts in the global technology landscape are placing a growing reliance on vehicle safety innovation while transforming business practices and consumer demands. These emerging and disruptive technologies offer promising opportunities for economic safety and environmental benefits, as well as a number of regulatory challenges. The challenges at the pace of change associated with these technologies, and how they are transforming the motor vehicle sector, is rapidly increasing while the regulatory process remains unchanged.

New technologies offer promising opportunities for improving road transportation, including the environmental impact of vehicles. However, these technologies can be challenging in terms of safety oversight. Much of the technological safety of a vehicle cannot be seen by the naked eye. From the outside, two vehicles may look the same, but many of the safety elements are internal to the structure or operating system of the vehicle.

Safety standards include those related to crashworthiness and crash avoidance. Crashworthiness or how to survive once one is in a collision standards include those related to front and side impacts. As we shift to new technologies and building materials, we need to ensure that this survivability is not compromised.

Personally, I prefer the second element of crash avoidance. These crash avoidance technologies allow drivers to detect and avoid collisions. One example of such a technology is electronic stability control, which has been mandated on new vehicles since 2011. For this type of technology, we need to ensure that the promises made by the developers are accurate, as consumers will be relying on these technologies. The speed and scope at which new technologies are being developed and implemented is challenging the status quo and is testing the ability of governments to respond in a timely manner.

Canadian industry and businesses need to understand, adopt, and deploy new innovations and business models to stay competitive and better position Canada for success in leveraging the full potential of emerging and disruptive technologies.

I had the opportunity to hear some of the debate on Bill S-2. Many of the issues that are involved in Bill S-2 have already been discussed in full, including the Auditor General's Report No. 4 from 2016, which my hon. friend and chair of the public accounts committee, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, discussed yesterday at length. Therefore, I will be limiting my time today to the regulatory issues that are involved in Bill S-2.

I want to focus on motor vehicle technologies that are regulated. The legislation needs to be flexible and adaptive to promote Canadian leadership and to give Canadians access to these new technologies as quickly as practically possible. The regulations are aimed at keeping Canadians safe, but cannot be so rigid that they delay the introduction of new vehicle safety technologies or fuel systems. There is a balance to be struck there.

These proposed improvements to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act have been developed to address these and a number of other important challenges. Currently, the Motor Vehicle Safety Act includes a provision for interim orders. An interim order allows a Canadian regulation that corresponds to a foreign regulation to be suspended or modified if there is a change by that foreign government.

● (1530)

Currently, interim orders can only suspend or modify a Canadian regulation for one year, which does not reflect that some regulations could take longer to develop, particularly if they deal with a very technical subject matter. As such, Bill S-2 proposes to extend the period of an interim order to three years to reflect the typical length of time required to complete the full regulatory process for such a technical requirement.

Government Orders

The bill also introduces suspension orders, which would allow for the suspension or modification of existing Canadian regulations. For this type of order, a foreign government's enactment or regulation is not required. In this way, Canada would have a tool to lead the way in regulatory development to address new and emerging technologies. This process would permit the Minister of Transport to allow newer technology solutions, when appropriate, to take effect more quickly. The order would be in place for up to three years.

Both these tools would increase the flexibility of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act to address an ever-changing landscape related to the automotive industry. These orders would be published, and would apply to all manufacturers equally in order to provide a level playing field.

Another tool currently available in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act is an exemption order. These orders allow the minister to exempt a model of vehicle from a regulation.

Currently, exemption orders are only valid for one year and require approval from the Governor in Council. An exemption is requested by the regulated body, and it is up to that entity to demonstrate that safety is not negatively affected. An example of this type of request would be if a manufacturer applied to not meet a rearview mirror regulation in order to install instead a rearview camera that performed the same function or improved on the existing function.

As these requests are very technical in nature, under these proposed changes the minister would be given the power to decide, based on the best evidence, and I would think common sense, whether it is in the interest of safety to grant the exemption. The duration of the exemption would apply for three years to allow sufficient time to determine what technical regulatory requirements would be appropriate, and to allow time for the manufacturer to implement and use the proposed technology.

The exemption would only apply on that model of vehicle, but the exemption would be made public, again, this is very important, allowing other manufacturers to be knowledgeable about options for advancing their own technologies.

In summary, the automotive industry is changing very rapidly, and vehicle technologies are making vehicles safer and more fuel efficient. However, these changes are challenging our regulatory capacity to assess and apply them in the Canadian context in a timely fashion. This act would include a number of tools that would allow adoption of regulations already available in another country, and the ability to create new short-term regulatory changes in advance of a full regulation being available.

This represents a new regulatory process for Canada for the next century, will increase safety and fuel efficiency on our roads, and help Canada be an important player for the next generation of automobile innovation.

Madam Speaker, I neglected to say that I will be sharing my time. I am sorry, but I do not know who I will be sharing it with, but if there is another speaker, I will be sharing that time.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. I worked with him on a committee and I know him well. We are approving the bill at this stage so that it can be sent to committee. We still have some questions, which I will talk about more during my speech.

Does my colleague not think that this bill gives the Minister of Transport a little too much discretionary power?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the aisle. We remember the discussions we had in committee about the problems with Transport Canada and enforcement and the fact that there has been rapid change. Of course, we know the auto industry never stops innovating, but over the past few years, that has been happening faster than the Department of Transport could handle.

The Auditor General's report covered the period from 2010 to 2016, which, it is fair to say, is quite a long period of time. The report showed that when changes happened in the U.S. or Europe, Transport Canada took too long to react. The department explained its reasons to us, but the issue remains unresolved. Car companies in Europe or the United States, under the supervision of the respective governments, consider it important to have certain regulations in place. Since we here in Canada use the same cars, thanks to integrated manufacturing chains, we need to be faster at making changes for the public safety of Canadians by giving this power to the Minister of Transport.

• (1540)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I have some questions for her, since the Senate made a few changes, and I think that the Minister of Transport is being given too much power.

Does my colleague think that the Minister of Transport is being given too much power?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite.

The Senate's amendment has to do with the contractual terms between vehicle suppliers and manufacturers. The amendment is a well-intentioned attempt to fix an industry problem regarding safety issues with a vehicle that has already been delivered to the supplier, who would not be fined.

However, this bill is about protecting Canadians, so it would be better for this to be done outside the bill. The government cares a great deal about protecting Canadians, so it makes sense that the Minister of Transport would have that responsibility.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I will be sharing more of my thoughts on this somewhat mechanical bill. I prefer political philosophy, but as a member of Parliament, I am required to discuss all kinds of topics. I am learning every day, and I am truly happy to have this opportunity.

Government Orders

I will be sharing my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, a beautiful riding that I have visited twice before. The last time was two years ago, and I saw that there had been a lot of construction in Lac-Mégantic. The town is getting back on its feet, and that is a good thing.

I would like to add my voice to the debate on Bill S-2 today. This bill was introduced in the Senate and it would amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act to give the Minister of Transport the power to issue recalls and to force companies to fix defective vehicles at no cost to consumers. I quite like the idea of no cost to consumers. We are all consumers. Our constituents are consumers. This is good news for them.

I remind members that it was the Conservatives who essentially introduced this bill in 2015. However, it was not passed before the election period started in the middle of the summer. The election period lasted a long 78 days, as we all remember.

This bill gives the Minister of Transport the power to fine companies, up to \$200,000 a day, based on the violation. The bill also gives the Minister of Transport the power to order a manufacturer to conduct specific tests on its products, to ensure that it complies with the act. Furthermore, the bill allows the minister to make exemptions to the regulations, if the exemption would, in the opinion of the minister, promote the development of a safety feature connected to a new technology. This bill also increases the number of notices that companies must issue to consumers once a recall process has been initiated.

I have a few comments to make. This bill is important, but one thing I need to point out, and we all need to remember, is that there has never been a major case of a company failing to voluntarily issue a recall after discovering a defect, or failing to pay for the necessary repairs.

In light of that fact, the justification for urgently pushing this bill through seems weak. Back when we first tabled this bill, we made sure that the consumer would not lose out, and we strengthened protections for drivers and the general public. What we did not do was draw up a set of provisions that would give the minister far too much power and make things difficult for businesses.

As I said, we support this bill in principle, and we want it to go to committee so that amendments can be made.

As a resident of Beauport—Limoilou, I care deeply about road safety. I myself have two young children, a three-year-old and a six-year-old, who both ride in car seats. When I watch the news on TV, I always see far too many car crashes, especially in summer. Car accidents can be caused by fatigue, stress, uncontrollable events, drugs, and alcohol. Unfortunately, there are all kinds of reasons accidents happen.

The government has to do its part by taking all possible steps to make sure no accidents happen because of manufacturing defects. It is important to realize that this kind of accident is preventable.

As I said earlier, as a father myself, every time I get in a car with my children, this worry is in the back of my mind, because car crashes are one of the leading causes of death in western countries and indeed around the world.

I would like to relay an example involving my family that I experienced up close. I was involved in three accidents with my parents when I was a child. One was caused by black ice, but another may have been caused by a manufacturing defect. I was nine years old. It was in the 1990s in New Brunswick, near the Acadian peninsula. We were going down a big hill in a Plymouth Chrysler. I do not believe that this car is still being made today. We were quite pleased with that car at the time. It was red. We bought it brand new, but it was a few years old at the time of the accident. I was with my mother and my brother, who was 15 or 16 at the time. We were going 100 kilometres per hour down the hill.

● (1545)

Suddenly the gas pedal was stuck to the floor and the brakes stopped working. I did not know why. I was just a kid and we were all gripped by panic. I relay all this with a smile because in the end nothing bad happened. My brother had the genius idea to tell my mother to kill the motor. The engine could have exploded, but our lives were at stake. Then he told my mother to pull over to the side and let the car slow down enough to use the handbrake. This all happened in a matter of seconds.

Later, when my parents took the car to the mechanic, the repair costs were quite high. It was the early 1990s. Today we might wonder if that incident was caused by a manufacturing defect. I just wanted give all those in my riding who are watching me, of which there are many I am sure, a personal example where a manufacturing defect, if that indeed was the cause of the accident, could have had very serious consequences.

A few years ago, dozens of relatively serious recalls were announced on the news, and I wondered if any of them affected my Subaru Forester. I did some Internet research and was very pleased to discover that they did not.

In the context of increased globalization and free trade, which I strongly support, automobile manufacturers must take on greater civil and social responsibility with respect to their national customers, in this case Canadians, because a car can be made up of parts from 10 different countries, and that is no exaggeration.

It is therefore vital that we establish safeguards and that we grant Transportation Canada more power so that it can be proactive on this issue. This bill must put a certain amount of pressure on manufacturers that assemble vehicles so that they are highly motivated to guarantee the safety of their vehicles and conduct proper follow up, particularly since these products are one of the leading causes of death in our society and it is possible to reduce the number of incidents caused by technical problems.

In closing, we support sending the bill to committee, but we would like some amendments to be made. For example, we will propose that clause 10.61 be amended to read: "The Minister may, by order, require a company to inform the person or dealership that obtained a vehicle from that company to ensure that any defect or non-compliance in a vehicle or equipment is corrected before the vehicle is offered for sale."

Government Orders

We also propose that clause 8.1 be amended to read: “The Minister may, by order, require a company to conduct reasonable tests, analyses, or studies on a vehicle or equipment to determine whether there are any defects or non-compliances.”

We also suggest amending clauses 10.4 and 16.13 to ensure that the minister does not have too much discretionary power.

• (1550)

There should be no inappropriate government intervention in auto manufacturing, which is private enterprise.

Three cheers for vehicle and road safety.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for giving an example from his childhood about consumer safety and the issues that Canadians, like his constituents and my constituents, face. I am very thankful that situation resolved itself positively.

Could my hon. colleague speak to the amendments from the other place? Though well-intentioned, perhaps they are outside the scope. Maybe he could expand on those issues and the amendments put forward by the other place to this legislation.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, the question is not whether the House supports those amendments. The question is whether the minister and his colleagues at committee, where the bill will go following this debate, will support the amendments proposed by the Conservatives and the Senate. If so, how they will proceed with the bill?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I did not want to miss this opportunity to ask my colleague a question. He shared a lot about his own experience with vehicles from when he was a small child.

This bill was first introduced by the previous government, which unfortunately did not have time to get it passed. Does he agree that it will make Canadian drivers and the families who get around in these cars safer?

Does he also agree that the government could have acted on this a lot sooner by introducing the bill in the spring rather than waiting until now?

• (1555)

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, when it comes to Canadians' safety, there is no such thing as too soon. This bill could have come before the House much sooner. I think it is very important because it does not really have any budget implications, which means that it will not result in additional costs. It simply says that there are certain things the minister can do.

Although this bill gives the minister a little too much discretionary power, one good thing about it is that it puts more pressure on automakers. That will push them to meet higher standards, which will definitely be a good thing for the safety of my children and all children in Canada.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, this falls into the category of commentary.

We have been debating Bill S-2 now for a while and there are large degrees of agreement on all sides of the House that it should go to committee. Members on all sides of the House have spoken in favour of it.

I am not a member of any of the parties that can have House leaders discuss the business of this place, but I would like to think that after the toxic partisan shenanigans of last spring, the leaders of the New Democratic Party, the official opposition, and the government benches will be working constructively. This is the sort of bill where we can speed up debate so more contentious bills can be debated more thoroughly.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That was not really a question, but the member for Beauport—Limoilou can comment if he wants.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, I will leave that in the hands of the House leader of the official opposition.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about his support for sending the bill to committee to be looked at. That would fall under the category of consultation. I would like him to contrast what he would want to see happen with respect to consultation on these kinds of issues. We have seen the kinds of consultations, what I would call a sham consultations, from the Liberals on the small business tax changes they have proposed. They were done in the dead of summer, without giving people an opportunity to actually have a say on these kinds of changes. Could he contrast that a little for us?

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Madam Speaker, it is a beautiful contrast, because it is absurd.

My constituents are extremely unhappy. Just this morning, many of them contacted my office, saying that I had to ask questions about this, that I had to put pressure on the government, and that I had to ensure it changed on its mind on the issue of tax reform. They said that it was extremely bad for the economic well-being of their small and medium-sized enterprises. This party will do everything it has to do to stop the changes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his grand finale and his great response to the question from my other colleague regarding the consultation process. I also thank him for his speech, which was based on his personal experience.

I want to come back to a comment made by one of our colleagues regarding the idea of moving quickly. If we had moved too quickly, I would not have had the opportunity to talk about what I wanted to share today, that is, comments from some of my constituents on Bill S-2. I really wanted to share these comments with the House, because it is quite rare for Canadians to reach out to us regarding changes to a bill, much less a Senate bill.

Government Orders

I think it is important that all members be aware of what my constituents think. The people who wrote to me are from the small business community, and I will have an opportunity to come back to this a little later in my speech.

My colleague touched on the issue, but I will give a brief overview of the bill. The bill seeks to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and provide the Minister of Transport with the authority to order companies to correct defects without any cost to the consumer. That is key. It should be noted that the current legislation limits Transport Canada's authority to issue safety deficiency notices and to take legal action against the offending manufacturers. The bill also gives the Minister of Transport the authority to fine companies up to \$200,000 a day depending on the offence.

However, Transport Canada will also have the authority to impose non-monetary penalties. The bill also gives the Minister of Transport the authority to order a manufacturer to conduct tests on its products. It gives the minister the authority to grant an exemption if the exemption would promote the development of new safety features or new technologies. I think we can all agree that self-driving cars fall into that category. This is the type of thing that we should see coming and I think it is important that the legislation provide for this eventuality. The bill increases the number of notices that companies must issue to consumers when a recall process is initiated. It increases the authority of Transport Canada inspectors to visit plants and request documents and employee testimonies. It gives the Minister of Transport powers that are similar to those of his U.S. counterparts.

This is a major bill that will give a minister a lot of power. Why are we, on this side of the House, going to support a bill that will give so much power to a minister? The answer is simple: it is a matter of safety. The government and MPs have a major role to play in situations like this. Sometimes, we have to give ministers certain powers that go above and beyond what we would normally give them, powers that go beyond the power a minister would usually have, to keep all Canadians, all motorists, and everyone travelling on our roads safe. If something goes wrong with a car when it is travelling at 50 km/h, accidents can happen. Pedestrians or cyclists could be injured. In short, I think it is important that we do something to prevent that.

As I mentioned in my question, we could have moved forward even more quickly if we had dealt with this bill in the spring. The opposition agreed to expedite the process and ensure that the bill was sent to committee more quickly. Just looking at the statistics, there does not seem to be any great sense of urgency. Transport Canada has not taken any legal action against an auto manufacturer because of safety defects since 1993, and the industry seems to have self-regulated fairly well. However, in light of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, sometimes it is necessary to look a bit further ahead and prevent this type of accident. I think that is the main takeaway. This bill will help prevent catastrophes, whether big or small. When opportunities arise to help ensure the safety of Canadians, we must not hesitate to take any action required.

●(1600)

The Senate introduced an amendment to protect dealers. Since the beginning of this debate, members of the government have been

telling us that we need to stay out of contractual negotiations between dealers and manufacturers, because that is not our role. They do not seem very supportive of this amendment. However, we need to remember that when this act is passed, if it is passed, it will transform the natural market rules. It will cause changes that may not have been covered in the contracts between dealers and manufacturers. We need to make sure dealers have some protections. That is what I want to talk about.

I have received many letters on this subject from dealers in my riding. One letter, written by Julie Boulanger of Disraeli, Serge Routhier of Thetford Mines, Martin Bizier of East Broughton, and André Ste-Marie of Thetford Mines, urged the House of Commons and the Senate to support these amendments. I will read briefly from the letter these dealers sent me:

Car dealers in your riding and across Canada hope you will support our amendment throughout the entire parliamentary process. Our request is fair and reasonable. Your support for the amended act is vital to Canada's 3,200 car dealers.

Those 3,200 dealers, which are Canadian small businesses, expect us to do the right thing here. They want us to study this in committee so we can get a sense of what they want. Here is another excerpt from the letter:

The Government of Canada and the Canadian auto industry have been working to harmonize auto policies with the United States for many years. Our industry is integrated on a continental level, and regulatory and legislative harmony between Canada and the U.S. should be a primary objective in the sector. With this new government power over the recall process, our amendment will ensure that auto dealers who are caught in the middle of a complex, expensive and time-consuming process are treated fairly as the small business customers of the manufacturers.

When government interferes in the private sector, there are going to be consequences. Preventing problems in the first place is better than seeing dealers fail to do the recall work they are supposed to do because they do not have the means and cannot absorb the cost themselves. This is not about protecting the market or protecting dealers. This is about safety. This is about protecting drivers whose vehicles have been recalled and making sure repairs are done properly.

If we look at it that way, it is not a question of interfering in negotiations between a manufacturer and dealerships. It is about protecting drivers whose vehicles have been recalled, and ensuring that replacement parts are of the best quality, and not substituted parts, because dealerships might not be able to afford them if they have to pay the full cost themselves. It is important to listen to what the dealerships in our regions have told us.

One of the passages from the letter I received that struck me reads as follows:

The relationship between a manufacturer and a small dealership is not a partnership of equals. Adopting the amendment that we are proposing will enshrine in statutes the equity and fairness we seek for all dealerships across Canada, not just those that happen to partner with a manufacturer who decides to pay compensation to dealers for the burden of recalls.

Government Orders

I think that says it all. I want to thank Julie, Serge, Martin and André for sharing those comments regarding the amendment. I really think it is important to address this in committee.

One of the words that really struck me in the letter from the dealerships was the word “equity”. The real danger facing motorists is the tax reform this government wants to bring in. Indeed, most car dealerships are small businesses. They have worked very hard and could be in danger today. If each of those dealerships has to lay off one, two, or three employees, it might be one of the employees dedicated to vehicle safety. They could be laid off because of this government's unacceptable and ridiculous proposals on tax reforms. It is important to keep that in mind. If we want to keep our vehicles and roads safe, we must not forget that safety comes in part from the financial health of dealerships and acceptable standards, as well as increased powers for the minister, which are sometimes necessary and acceptable, as we have heard.

•(1605)

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today we had demonstration on Parliament Hill of an autonomous bus that was going around Parliament Hill. We are in the midst of significant technological change and driving may be completely different within the next 10 or 20 years.

I am wondering if the hon. member could speak to that point and the importance of providing the minister with the ability to be nimble and to have the authority to deal with these types of safety issues going forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, innovation in the automotive industry, as in any industry, comes mainly from small and medium-sized businesses. If we want innovation in the automotive industry and the agrifood industry, then we need to allow companies to hang on to their money for research. If we take away all their money by overtaxing them, we will unfortunately miss out on witnessing events like the ones we saw this morning.

I am happy for the minister to be given some latitude, but I would urge the government to let companies keep their money for research.

[*English*]

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to take a few moments and begin today by welcoming all the members of the House back to the Commons after the summer recess. I trust that we, on both sides of the House, have all had a good summer and are returning refreshed and invigorated, ready to continue the work bestowed upon us by our constituents.

There is much work to do toward creating a Canada where no one is left behind; where full access to universal and affordable housing, medicare, pharmacare, child care, and education are a reality; where communities are able to reconcile with our indigenous people, and that reconciliation amounts to more than just empty promises; and where assurance that promises for the issues that matter to Canadians, such as true electoral reform and environmental justice, are not forgotten.

The summer has been very productive for me in visiting with the people of London—Fanshawe. I had a chance to hear their concerns,

communicate my renewed commitment to them, and celebrate our achievements as a community and as a country, while we were able to recognize that we still have much more to accomplish. I look forward to the session with renewed hope that we are able to work together to achieve progressive solutions for all. I am most eager to continue the work of New Democrats in the House for our goals of social justice, social democracy, fairness, and equity in all areas of life, which, quite logically, brings me to today's debate on Bill S-2. It is a bill that deals with motor vehicle safety.

Bill S-2 touches on issues that, while seemingly complex in the legislative language we use on the Hill, affect the lives of my constituents in real and substantive ways. In southwestern Ontario, London in particular, because of the lack of adequate federal investment in public transit infrastructure, notably rail, we are dependent on motor vehicles whether we like it or not. The Highway 401 corridor can be a death trap, especially in the winter. Without alternative means of travel, Canadians are forced to take the road in order to conduct the business of living from day-to-day.

It is distressing to me to note that motor vehicle safety is not mentioned in the mandate letter of the Minister of Transport. New Democrats see this as a real matter of concern, given that road accidents are responsible for the deaths of thousands of Canadians each year. The very least we can do at the federal level is enact binding legislation that protects the safety of our constituents as we transport ourselves and our loved ones to work, school, and play. This can be accomplished by reducing the risk of harm arising from motor vehicle manufacturing defects.

In 2017, motor vehicles have become moving computerized islands with Wi-Fi access, Bluetooth connection for communication while driving, enhanced voice recognition, and options for entertainment and even shopping while on the road. They offer safety modifications and driver assistance options programmed into the vehicle to make our drives easier, safer, and more pleasant. These are all good things, but as the member for Trois-Rivières pointed out yesterday, this advanced technology leaves the individual car owner unable to diagnose problems that are bound to occur or make repairs on her or his own. As motor vehicle owners, we are reliant on the systems and experts who understand these systems to ensure that everything is in working order when we hit the road. Our lives are quite literally in their hands.

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While much of the automobile industry in Canada has been gutted by globalization and the absence of protection for the industry from this and preceding federal governments, southwestern Ontario remains the centre of automobile production in Canada. However, we do worry, because workers at CAMI local 88 in Ingersoll, Ontario are facing and fighting that precise situation. More than 400 jobs were lost this past spring, because GM moved a product line, the Terrain, to Mexico, and not a word from the government. Now, 2,800 CAMI workers and their families are striking to keep the plant open with the production of the Equinox, and still nothing from the government.

• (1610)

It is my sincere hope that we can enact federal incentives and protections to prevent more automobile manufacturing jobs from moving offshore, and even to restore the industry to the powerhouse it was and can be again.

While the industry remains active in my region, I believe it is vital to enact legislation that protects consumers, retailers, and manufacturers from the financial, emotional, legal, and personal life costs we all pay for when safety regulations are inadequate.

Among others, the legislation before us today grants ministerial power to order a recall and to require more information from automakers. The minister may order a vehicle manufacturer to carry out tests, analyses, or studies on materials in order to obtain information on the defects of a part or of a particular vehicle model. This provision could have avoided the situation with General Motors Corporation, where there was a time lag between the corporation's awareness of an ignition system defect in 2004 and the company's recall notice 10 years later in 2014. That was 10 deadly years. That kind of delay is completely unacceptable.

General Motors has admitted responsibility for 29 deaths linked to these defects, and claims are still outstanding for 150 others. General Motors started its initial investigation of the problem in 2004 and conducted several tests, analyses, and investigations, but Transport Canada was only informed of this problem on February 10, 2014, a full 10 years and far too many lives later. One life lost as a result of manufacturing defects is too many, particularly when the company knows about the defect.

Despite the efforts of Bill S-2 to enhance motor vehicle safety for Canadians, the Auditor General of Canada's most recent report drew attention to several cases of dysfunction in the division of Transport Canada responsible for motor vehicle safety oversight. The Auditor General concluded that the funding cutbacks to the department were harmful and degraded the quality of the information that informs the directorate's planning and regulatory decisions.

He also indicated that the department had ignored essential partners like consumers' associations, motor vehicle safety advocates, and police forces in the process to review motor vehicle safety regulations. Consequently, it is possible that motor vehicle manufacturers exercised a disproportionate influence on Transport Canada decisions.

The Auditor General also pointed out that the department had not used its own research on rear seat occupants to develop a standard to increase safety. Rear seat passengers have a greater probability of

sustaining injuries in an accident. Many of them are children. Despite 15 years of investment in research, Transport Canada has still not identified new safety measures for rear seat occupants.

New Democrats are of course in favour of granting ministerial powers that serve to avoid the kind of tragedy we saw in the case of the GM ignition system recall, and we will be supporting the bill at second reading. We do, however, have concerns about the ability of the ministry to enforce such powers when the fact of the matter is the department's operating budget for crashworthiness testing has been slashed by 59% for 2016-17, dropping from \$1.2 million to \$492,000. It makes it difficult for me to applaud the Liberals, who have allowed a budget that should have been enhanced to be so drastically diminished. This leaves a deficit of over \$700,000 in a budget that should be enhanced to ensure public safety.

New Democrats call upon the minister to cancel the budget cuts to his department in order to make sure that these new powers granted in the legislation will be backed up by adequate resources. In addition, we are calling for a limit on the minister's discretionary power to enter into agreements with companies in violation of the act. We want to see the minister properly consult all partners when proceeding with a regulatory amendment that affects the safety of Canadians, and we want the minister to effectively use the data produced by his own department in order to adopt standards that will protect the safety of Canadians.

I hope that when the bill goes to committee it will be improved so that our constituents are safe.

• (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that Bill S-2 is all about making our roads and communities safer. This is a very important issue. Within two years, we were able to get this substantial legislation, which has been modified quite significantly from the Conservative legislation brought forward. When we look at that, it also protects the consumers. When someone walks into a car showroom and buys a vehicle, there is a certain expectation that the person is buying a safe vehicle. It provides even greater assurances to those consumers on those recall products.

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Could my colleague share her thoughts about the importance of the data bank within Transport Canada? Most Canadians might not even be aware of it. People can go to the data bank at Transport Canada, type in their vehicle details, and get recall information. People might be surprised about how many vehicles have been recalled for one thing or another. It is estimated that as high as 50% or more of vehicles on the road today have some item under recall.

Could my colleague provide some thoughts on this great data bank, for those who might be participating in or following the debate? We should do what we can do promote that data bank.

• (1620)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Madam Speaker, of course it is important to have the kinds of tools that will support consumers in their decisions and ability to access information. However, I would also suggest that the Liberal government needs to put its money where its mouth is. The budget has been reduced to Transport Canada for the kind of work all of us have been talking about.

Why on earth would we be happy with a government that does not see fit to ensure that the very ministry in charge of automobile safety has the kind of resources and funding it needs to ensure that we, the consumers, are protected?

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is talking about priority spending in an era where spending on pet projects seems to be the priority for the Liberal government. I know the hon. member spoke about the reduction to Transport Canada.

Could the hon. member comment on how important the safety of consumers is with respect to her ranking of spending as a priority of the government?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Madam Speaker, with respect to the priorities of this Parliament, our constituents and consumers should be number one. People in Canada are depending on their government to make good decisions and wise decisions. That element of trust cannot be abused. I would much prefer to see the needs of the people in my community and every community in Canada be recognized and met rather than, as my colleague described them, “pet projects”.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. It is always inspiring to hear a woman with such experience who comes from a region where the automotive industry is so important.

We can all agree on the importance of safety. However, at the end of her speech, my colleague talked about the importance of allocating resources to help ensure that safety. I would like her to tell us more about how good intentions are for naught without adequate resources.

[*English*]

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Madam Speaker, I am reminded of an old catchphrase “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”. That is very true. The intent of the bill is to protect consumers. The intent of the bill is to help dealers. However, unless it is supported with the resources that Transport Canada research teams need, then it means nothing.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour for me to take part in debates. Today's debate is very important and deals with motor safety.

When I saw Bill S-2, I could not help but wonder. With everything that is happening right now, there are much more important issues to deal with. However, we know that the Liberal government does not want to talk about them. It is much easier for the Liberals to focus on a bill that is an easy sell because it addresses an important need. Everyone agrees that motor safety is important, so we are going to participate in the debate.

Again today, there are not very many members opposite who want to talk about the bill that they themselves proposed, so I commend the members of the opposition for speaking in their place. It is a bit strange that the members opposite, the members who govern our great and beautiful country, are not participating in this debate as readily as we are. I commend my colleague opposite, whose name I forget but who is always in the House. It is honour to see you because you are—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I remind the member that she must address the Chair and that members must not poke fun at each other.

The hon. member may continue her speech.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Speaker, I would appreciate it if you could thank the member opposite on my behalf, because I feel it is important to point out that he is always present for every debate. I think he deserves credit, because apart from him and a few others, we have not had much opportunity to debate bills with members on the other side of the aisle since Parliament resumed.

Bill S-2 is, in my opinion, very important for motor vehicle safety. It is also common sense legislation. This motor vehicle safety bill gives the minister of transport the power to order a recall and make companies repair defects at no cost to consumers. I think that is tremendously important.

We are buying new cars more and more. My dealership, which is located in my riding, is nice enough to call me or send me a letter every time there is a recall. That way, I know my car will be fixed at no cost to me. My dealership has already gotten into this useful habit. Dealerships have worked hard to make this progress happen. Now it is our turn to do our part by passing this Senate bill. We hope that all members will see their way clear to accepting the Senate's proposed amendments, which are extremely important.

Clause 10.52 states:

10.52(1) In this section, dealer means a person who is engaged in the business of purchasing vehicles or equipment directly from a company and reselling it to another person who purchases it for a purpose other than resale.

I support all the corrections being made, but the one that speaks to me most is:

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10.52(2)(a) provide the dealer, at the company's expense, with the materials, parts or components required to correct a defect or non-compliance in the vehicle or equipment, in accordance with any terms and conditions specified in the order;

Of course, it would be better if the bill went a bit further. Some potential changes that everyone could agree on would give the minister the authority to order a company to advise the person, in this case the dealer, who acquired a motor vehicle, to ensure that any defect or non-compliance involving the vehicle or a part is corrected before the vehicle is sold. That would avoid a lot of problems.

We know that Canada's roads are becoming increasingly dangerous. When people drive non-compliant vehicles it makes matters worse. We all know someone directly or indirectly who was in a serious car accident because they made a mistake, were inattentive, or were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. At times, however, the vehicle is to blame.

We heard my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou share a story with us. We see things like this in our communities every day. This bill needs to go back to committee and be amended a little. It needs to be discussed collectively because, based on what I am hearing, pretty much all the parties agree on the safety issue. The safety of drivers and people in general is what matters most. If there is a mechanical problem, this puts people in danger.

• (1630)

Obviously, I support Bill S-2. I would hope that the party opposite will accept these common sense, non-partisan changes, since this is about people's safety, which should be our top priority. Yesterday we talked about border safety, and today we are talking about motor vehicle safety. I hope to see more bills on safety in Canada. It is an issue that is crucial to everyone. This is about life and death, and it is just common sense.

In my riding, like almost everywhere else, people are talking about important issues that the government is trying to sweep under the rug, specifically, Liberal taxation. We also need to have a non-partisan conversation on that issue. I have spoken with some Liberal backbenchers who have had the same problems we are having. We are receiving 200, 300, or 400 letters a week in our ridings from people who are worried about the direction the party opposite is taking.

It is a shame they are introducing bills that everyone agrees on. Our debates here should clarify things for Canadians. Bill S-2 is a very good example of that. Automakers need to talk about safety, inform people, make Transport Canada part of the process, and be transparent. As the member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, I find that this bill gives the minister a little too much power. However, if this will make Canadians safer, I am prepared to vote for it as long as it goes to committee for a few other changes.

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that members on this side were not taking part in the debate. I would like to commend my hon. colleague, the hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle, who just spoke a few

moments ago and gave an excellent speech on the importance of safety.

I am disappointed that the hon. member would rise on this point and talk about how important it is for a mechanic or a salesperson in the dealership to pay less in tax than the owner of the car dealership. However, she also mentioned that we should be debating more important issues. What is more important than the safety of vehicles and the safety of the consumers who are driving their vehicles so they have confidence in them?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The two go hand in hand. I talked about safety because the safety of our fellow citizens is important, as is their right to a bit of an easier life. The member did not like me talking about the new Liberal tax, but it is a fact. The government would rather keep this quiet, but our riding offices get calls every day, and not just Conservative MPs' offices. A lot of Liberal MPs get calls too, but they cannot talk about it. The opposition can talk about it because everyone is bringing this issue to us.

The reason people bring me their issues is not that they voted Conservative; it is that I represent everyone in my riding, and some of them are worried. When they come see me, I do not ask them who they voted for. I ask them what their issues are. I put this question out there, and they came to see me and talk about it. It is not my problem if the Liberals do not listen.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I will speak to Bill S-2, the act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act. You may recall that former Conservative minister Lisa Raitt tabled a similar bill in June 2015—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would remind the member that he must not name a member currently sitting in the House.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, the bill tabled back then had the consumer's best interests at heart. Is that not the very essence of our work? Is it not our duty as parliamentarians to work for the well-being and prosperity of Canadians?

Looking at all the initiatives we examine in the House of Commons, it is very easy to see which ones put Canadians first and which ones do not. Let us look at a few examples.

Is it in the best interests of Canadians for our country to rack up so much debt? Not in my view.

[English]

As we speak, Canada's federal debt stands at \$650 billion, and grows by \$77 million per day. Under the previous Conservative government, we guided this country through the worst recession of our lifetime. Through these difficult times, we managed to balance the budget by reducing taxes, reducing spending, and focusing on policies geared to steer the economy in the right direction.

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Due to this, we needed to make difficult decisions. Someone once said that if everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority. However, we knew that these hard decisions would lead to better days for everyone.

Our goal was to create a climate for job creation and to see Canadians bring home more disposable income, more money in their pockets and not in the government's pockets.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

On the other hand, the Liberal government chose to increase spending, not during a recession, but at a time when the economy was doing well. They are spending endlessly and without any real priorities. In their first two years in office, the Liberals spent the surplus left by the Conservative government, and they increased spending and the debt just as much as any socialist government would. Unbelievable. They can chuckle across the way, but that is the truth. Financial management at the finance ministry is so far left that it looks like the NDP's policies. The Liberals seem to have embraced the vision of the left.

Let us get back to the real issue here. Increasing the debt without a valid reason is not, and could never be, in the interest of Canadians, and yet, this government does not hesitate to act recklessly by wasting public money and creating a financial burden that will be left to our children and grandchildren. The Liberals are being just as reckless when it comes to the legalization of marijuana. Here is the question that none of the Doobie Brothers wants to answer.

What is behind the Liberals' desire to pass this legislation? We have as many questions as there are points in this bill.

[*English*]

We know that many Liberals have made serious financial investments in this industry, and we know that the same people stand to benefit. We also know that because of all their reckless spending, the Liberals are short on cash and need to find new revenue sources. This may explain their rush to pass this bill.

Yesterday the Minister of Public Safety informed us that this law would reduce the market share of organized crime in the marijuana industry, and that loss to organized crime would be a gain for the legalized system. The expected tax revenue for the federal government might explain its rush to implement this bill. Let us remember that the Liberals have spent all the money and need much more.

The Prime Minister stated that legalized marijuana is important to remove organized crime from the marijuana industry and to keep pot away from youth. At best, this statement demonstrates a clear lack of judgment. At worst, this sort of reasoning borders on insanity.

Why does the Prime Minister insist on insulting the intelligence of Canadians? Why would he add to the anxiety of parents who clearly are not interested in drugs being more accessible?

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister is well aware that the pot available in 1969 was very different from the pot available now.

The RCMP can tell you that pot is often laced with methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs that get people addicted the first time they try it. Here again, the Prime Minister is refusing to let the facts get in the way of a good story.

We need to get back to the basics of governance and the primary role of government. We need to remember that the work we do and the decisions we make here in Ottawa, in the House of Commons, are important. We need to remember that what we do in the House today will affect our society for many years to come. We must never lose sight of our mandate, a mandate to work for the people in each one of our ridings. The 338 seats here represent 38 million Canadians. We must never forget that. We are here for them, not for special interest groups that already have a leg up.

As I said earlier, Bill S-2 is very similar to the bill the Conservative Party introduced in 2015. It is about giving Canadians the advantage and enhancing consumer protection.

As you know, from time to time, auto manufacturers issue recalls for certain vehicles to fix defective parts. As things stand, auto manufacturers themselves handle recalls for their products of their own accord. In 2015 alone, five million passenger vehicles were recalled in Canada.

• (1645)

[*English*]

As we debate the bill we need to be very careful about what the final product will look like. Yes, the intent is to increase consumer protection, but we have to make sure that this does not result in increasing costs for Canadians. We must ensure that the final text of the legislation does not provide opportunities to the Minister of Transport to make partisan decisions when applying the law.

In my province of Quebec, there is a law that requires drivers to install winter tires for the winter months. Changing winter tires is an added cost to consumers, but it can be argued that this measure actually saves lives.

[*Translation*]

As far as Bill S-2 is concerned, the final text has to be balanced. This is not just about giving the new transport minister new powers. He has to put the consumers' interests first. On this side of the House, we will review what is being proposed and wait to hear the government's arguments.

After witnessing the government's actions over the past two years, Canadians are right to be concerned for the next two years. Canadians gave the Liberal government another chance after the sponsorship scandal. Canadians forgave that government for taking their money with one hand and giving it to their friends with the other.

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Canadians also realize that the Liberals are inclined to promote the interests of their party instead of the interests of Canadians. People recognize the importance of 2019, the year of the next federal election, the year they can thank the Liberals for their service and bid them farewell.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before moving on to questions and comments, I have to read the following.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Nanaimo-Ladysmith, Taxation; the hon. member for North Island—Powell River, Housing; the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, Government Appointments.

The hon. member for St. Catharines.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member across the way is talking about road safety and perhaps wandered a little into the topic of cannabis, but since we are talking about it, perhaps it is a good opportunity to ask him the following. He talked about the cannabis of his day in the sixties and seventies not being as potent or dangerous as it is now, but is that not the reason or an excellent rationale why cannabis should be regulated and legalized, so that we can protect individuals and know what is in the product, its quality, its quantity, including how much THC is in it? Is he not making an argument in favour of the legalization of cannabis?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I thank my dear colleague for his question.

Cannabis is a broad issue, and the government's plan to legalize it will not resolve the problem of cannabis use. The government is proposing that people be allowed to grow any kind of marijuana plant at home and there will be no regulations governing that at all. The government will therefore have no control over what will be mixed in with that marijuana and sold on the black market. The Liberals' plan will not work.

Furthermore, since we are talking about road safety, it is important to remember that marijuana-impaired driving is a real problem. The government is telling us that repression did not work, and that is supposedly one of the reasons why it wants to legalize marijuana. However, it is also saying that it is going to reinvest in our police forces so that they are better able to deal with marijuana-impaired drivers. There is a lack of consistency there, but that is another story.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that there is some flexibility in the questions and the speeches, but they should really be related to the bill before the House.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, when it comes to road safety, we are all extremely concerned about marijuana-impaired driving.

With regard to Bill S-2, our concerns lie with motor vehicle recalls that do not happen. The problem is equipment-related. Our concerns about marijuana involve the person behind the wheel.

What does my colleague believe is a bigger safety issue, the concerns that are addressed in Bill S-2 or impaired drivers?

• (1650)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, you might find that question strange, but it is a good question.

Bill S-2 is about cars, about vehicle maintenance, about needing new wheel bearings. Now people will be buying joints at the corner store, smoking them, and getting behind the wheel. That is a fair bit more dangerous than a broken antenna. We need to deal with cars to prevent accidents, but a person who has legally smoked a joint and gets behind the wheel is much more dangerous.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague also touched on the Liberal government's deficits, its out-of-control spending, and its all-out assault on small business.

Does my colleague think that, once they have forked over all of their money to the Liberal government, dealerships will have the means to keep drivers safe and do the necessary recall work? That is why the Senate's amendment is absolutely vital.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, that is another question that may seem out of context, but it actually is not.

I myself was a car dealer, and I dealt with recalls. Dealerships have to have liquid assets so they can absorb the cost of certain things that have to be done. Manufacturers send money, but it is complicated. If dealerships end up paying more tax in a roundabout way because of our wonderful government's new tax laws, that can have an impact on safety.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is nice to be able to rise today and speak to Bill S-2.

I want to thank my colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek for her work on this file as our critic in the area. I join her in supporting the bill going to committee for further study.

Vehicle safety is an important issue. It is an important issue for all of us in the House and for all Canadians. Over 22 million motor vehicles are registered in Canada, which is equal to one vehicle for every 1.6 Canadians. That is a pretty staggering number. With such a high number of cars and trucks on the road, we as parliamentarians need to ensure that automakers are being responsible to consumers.

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As a former firefighter, I had the unfortunate opportunity to see first-hand the aftermath of many car accidents. I am pleased to know that over the years vehicle safety has dramatically improved. As technology continues to improve and increase, consumers become more aware of the need to have a safe car. Nowadays, many of the advertisements for new cars begin with safety ratings or listing the number of airbags or other new technologically advanced safety features, which tells consumers where they are at with these things, and it is good to see.

It is up to us as parliamentarians to ensure that safety continues to be at the forefront of the agenda by doing what we can to ensure that vehicles that have defects get recalled promptly and that consumers are notified. The strengthening motor vehicle safety for Canadians act would certainly provide the power to the minister of transport to order a recall of vehicles and order companies to address deficiencies at no cost to consumers. This would be a way to ensure that Canadians are protected if there is a defect in their vehicle that would be as a result of the error of the manufacturer.

This legislation would also give the minister the ability to have manufacturers conduct specific tests on their products in order to be able to verify compliance with the act.

The minister of transport would have the ability to grant exemptions for regulations if the exemption promotes the development of new safety features or new technologies. That would be possible under this legislation as well.

Under Bill S-2, a manufacturer would have to increase the number of notices that it sends to consumers once a recall is issued, to ensure that the notice has reached consumers.

Transport Canada would also be granted additional powers to visit facilities and to obtain documents and testimony from employees.

This legislation would bring the powers of the minister of transport in line with those of our counterparts in the United States.

One of the reasons to support sending the bill to committee for further study is because these are all points that should have further discussion and debate.

Consumer advocacy groups have spoken out in support of this legislation and from their perspective it is necessary legislation. Our previous Conservative government introduced similar legislation in 2015.

These changes certainly may be needed but we need to ensure that all groups are heard from and given an opportunity to have their say. We have to take into consideration the point of view of auto and parts manufacturers who also represent a large part of the Canadian economy. Canada has a large auto and parts manufacturing sector that creates thousands of good-paying jobs nationwide. The last thing we would want to do as parliamentarians would be to create legislation that would drive them away from our country.

These new powers being proposed may be too sweeping. They may provide Transport Canada with the ability to order tests and unreasonable acts such as providing regular updates on the status of a recall and the availability of parts. What will happen when there is a difference of opinion between Transport Canada and auto and parts manufacturers?

Recalls have been increasing over the past six years. Safety-related recalls have increased by 74%. That shows that the current legislation we have is working and that auto and parts manufacturers are being responsible by initiating safety recalls without any prompting from the government.

• (1655)

My understanding is that auto and parts manufacturers are not necessarily opposed to this legislation, but they have raised some valid concerns and that is why it is important to look at sending this bill to committee.

I certainly would agree as well that Canada should attempt wherever possible to be in line with our American friends when it comes to certain legislation. The American government has the power now, for example, to induce a manufacturer to provide compensation to consumers for vehicles that need recall. In 2015, an auto manufacturer there was forced by the U.S. government to pay U.S. \$105 million to buy back 500,000 trucks and SUVs and to offer incentives for consumers to participate in the recall. Canadian owners of those same vehicles did not receive those offers. That is a reason why it may make sense for our legislation to be in line with the U.S. government legislation, so that consumers are provided with the same levels and types of protections.

The biggest reason that I support sending this bill to committee is to ensure that proper consultations will actually happen with this bill. Proper consultations are extremely important, and the committee gives an opportunity for experts and witnesses to be heard and to provide their opinions on the matter. It is in contrast with what the Liberal government is currently doing with the small business tax changes that would damage our economy, small business owners, and those who work for small businesses. It would have a very detrimental effect on small business owners and employees and also on communities right across the country. In the communities I represent like Airdrie, Crossfield, Cochrane, Canmore, Banff, and many other communities like them all across the country, when there is a need to support a local sports team, when there is a charitable initiative, when someone is seeking to raise money for a family who is suffering through difficult times—and we have certainly seen some of those with some of the policies we have seen from the current government and its provincial counterparts in Alberta, that there is a lot of need for these things—it is small business owners who step forward. The current government, by not seeking to help them properly, is not giving them an opportunity that we would see under this bill with getting an opportunity in committee. When I think about those types of consultations, that is not what I want to see here.

Government Orders

I know, when speaking to people in the tourism industry, an industry that is important in my riding and important right across this country—about \$90 billion to the economy—they tell me that the government has brought forward consultations on the small business tax changes. They are huge, massive changes that would have very detrimental effects. It is right in the middle of their busiest season, the tourism season in the middle of the summer. They have not even had a chance to look at these and figure out what kind of impact it would have on them, so how could they possibly be a part of consultations on it? They are certainly asking for more ability to be consulted on that. That is the kind of thing that we need to see occurring on all things like that. Certainly this change we are talking about here would be studied by a committee. That would give people an opportunity to be heard. That is what the government should be doing in the case of things like that.

When we talk about ensuring that people are being heard in this regard, we are talking about auto and parts manufacturers. They certainly need to be listened to. I hope that by sending this bill to committee, we will see them get the opportunity to speak and to give their recommendations on this legislation. I am pleased to see that the manufacturers support the premise of the legislation, but it is now up to us in this chamber to see what we can do to make the legislation work for all Canadians. That means sending the bill to committee for further evaluation and study.

Another aspect that the committee could seriously consider is that this bill would go beyond simply protecting consumers. It is a bill that would mandate that auto manufacturers need to provide financial compensation to auto dealers when a recall occurs. This changes the bill from a consumer protection perspective to a commercial relationship. By sending this bill to committee, the members would be able to discuss further whether additional ministerial or government powers are needed to build increased consumer protection.

We can address other concerns such as whether there are any unintended consequences that the bill might have on consumers. Obviously if the manufacturers are forced in the bill to comply with these regulations regardless of whether they are necessary, we can expect the prices of vehicles to increase to pay for the compliance with those things. These are things we need to be considering, and making sure that when this is being looked at, it is considered from a balanced perspective of manufacturers and the interests of consumers.

● (1700)

Achieving that balance is certainly where the challenge would be for this legislation. That is why it is important for the committee to have an opportunity to study it. That is why I support its going there.

Certainly, consumers need to be protected, especially when it comes to something as serious as motor vehicle safety. There is no question that studying the bill at committee would be an opportunity for us to see that done.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Madam Speaker, strengthening motor vehicle safety is, without a doubt, an important issue for all Canadians who travel all the time. Whether someone is in a car, a bus, or however one travels, this is important.

I would like to find some common ground here because I hope we can all agree that Canadian consumers deserve to at least be as well informed as our southern friends are about recalls. That is a real problem right now. We hear about recalls in the United States and assume that because our cars are so similar, the recalls must mean the same thing for our cars as well. Would the member agree this is a grey area that we need to work on together?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, if the member had listened a bit more intently to my speech, she would have heard me talk about exactly that. We saw a recall in the United States where there were not the same kinds of protections for consumers as in Canada. In fairly great detail, I thought, I discussed the idea that we need to make sure that we try where possible to line up things so that consumers in Canada and the United States have the same legislation. That is a goal we should seek to achieve. However, we obviously have to hear the perspectives of people. That is why it would be great for this to go to committee.

I hope that when we talk about the idea of common ground that she mentioned, she might support our position that for people who have small businesses, which affect our communities and are so vital to small communities across the country, there should be some proper consultation done on things like that.

I can say, and I am sure she has heard it as well, that I have received hundreds of emails and phone calls from all over my constituency, and probably all over Canada, telling me how concerned people are about these changes and the massive detrimental effect they will have. When we talk about ensuring that we are protecting consumers and those who serve our consumers, she should be talking to her government and the people on the front lines, the finance minister and the Prime Minister, about the kinds of terrible changes they are talking about. Making them would devastate our economy.

● (1705)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it has been difficult to know what bill we have been debating the last little while. We have been hearing a lot of speeches against tax changes. We are hearing speeches about cannabis. We have a non-controversial bill in front of us.

The bill was drafted by the Conservative government, under the administration of Stephen Harper. I have been listening to the debate for almost two days now. I have not heard anyone opposed to sending the bill to committee. In fact, it came to us from the Senate, where it has already gone through extensive hearings before a committee. The only controversial thing I have heard about the bill was in terms of the minister's comments whether the government would accept the Senate amendment to the bill extending protections to dealers. That needs to be studied at committee.

Does my hon. colleague not agree that the bill is widely supported on all sides of the House and just needs to get to committee?

Government Orders

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, the member indicated she was confused. I will tell her what it is: this is Bill S-2, the strengthening motor vehicle safety for Canadians act. It is right there, so if she wants to check it out, she can have a good look at it. That is what we are debating. There has been lots of discussion about it here. That is a good thing. It is always a good thing to have an opportunity to discuss a bill.

When we talk about its going to committee, I agree with her. It should be receiving some good study at committee. That is important, and I would support seeing that happen. There is no question about that. We should hear the different perspectives and make sure they are all taken into account in making changes. I would encourage that to happen.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I hope that the House would join me in sending condolences to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound on the death of Wiarion Willie today.

Hon. Tony Clement: A sad day.

Mr. John Brassard: Yes, a very sad day. However, on a day that we are talking about motor vehicle safety, it is important to know that the venerable rodent died of natural causes today. The people of Wiarion will be holding a funeral for Wiarion Willie.

It is an honour to rise today for the first time in the House of Commons since returning from a summer of talking with constituents, attending events in Barrie—Innisfil, and being able to connect with Canadians across Canada in my former role as Veterans Affairs critic. One common theme that I heard this summer was that consumers are not having an easy time. Their taxes are going up and the cost of essential services is also rising, making it more difficult for them to replace those larger items they depend on, such as cars, trucks, and appliances. For anyone to suggest that the middle class and those working hard just to stay in it are any further ahead under the current government is false.

Bill S-2 was introduced by Senator Harder in May 2016. It resembles Bill C-62, which was introduced by my colleague from Milton, the former minister of transport in June 2015. In short, Bill S-2 would protect consumers by strengthening the Minister of Transport's responsibility to consumers by giving the minister the ability to assign penalties to car manufacturers for car defects and recalls.

It seems that vehicle recalls are becoming more commonplace. While these recalls ensure that road safety and preventing tragedies from happening are priorities, there needs to be a sense that manufacturers will continue to up their game and produce cars and trucks of greater quality than the year before, thereby preventing increased costs for consumers, dealers, and carmakers.

In 2015, over five million vehicles were recalled as a result of over 200 recall notices being issued. Bill S-2 would increase the authority of the minister, from issuing notices of safety defects and criminally prosecuting manufacturers, up to assigning penalties for safety defects.

The opposition does support the bill but feels that a greater conversation should take place in committee where amendments can be made to strengthen the bill. There, discussions will take place that

will further protect consumers and manufacturers and, at the same time, make sure that the powers of the minister do not exceed a realistic expectation that might hamper the ability of car and truck makers.

Last night, in preparation for speaking today, I watched a few speeches by my colleagues. They were all excellent. However, I found the speech by the member for Peace River—Westlock to be the most interesting. He spoke from the perspective of a mechanic responsible for correcting the safety defects that cars are recalled for. I would like to read from *Hansard* a bit of what my colleague said yesterday:

The interesting thing about the recalls is that there is no similarity between any two of them. As mechanics tasked with correcting the issue, we often wondered why one thing was recalled and another was not, or why the same part was often recalled several times in a row. That goes to some of the issues the bill is trying to correct.... Many automotive manufacturers use the same supplier of airbags, and so the airbag recall crossed several different companies.

The last statement by the member for Peace River—Westlock identifies a concern about recalls and the suppliers. Will Bill S-2 single out car manufacturers only? Will the proposed act allow the minister to apply penalties to the suppliers of the car manufacturers?

The member for Peace River—Westlock also talked about the complexity of the recall itself. Again, reading from *Hansard*:

The whole [recall] system is in place already for when a manufacturer declares a recall, but it gets a little more interesting if the minister is going to declare the recall. Can the manufacturer at that point just say that since it is the minister who is declaring it, the parts will be made available and they will pay for getting the job done, but not necessarily reimburse the dealership's parts department or ensure they can actually make some money on it, particularly in the case of recalls that take a long time to develop the parts or develop the solution.

I do not know if Canadians completely understand how complex the issue of a recall can be, but I know that listening to the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock was a learning experience for me.

● (1710)

If, as my colleague points out, there is a disagreement between the Minister of Transport's office and the carmaker, will the car owner be caught in the middle? Make no mistake about it, the powers being given to the minister are diverse and tough. Do they extend further than they should?

Bill S-2 would give the minister the ability to order a company to issue a recall, require manufacturers and importers to fix defective vehicles at their expense, require companies to provide additional safety information, require companies in Canada to be more aware of foreign defects and issues with cars similar to those sold in Canada, fine manufacturers up to \$200,000 per day per defect, and would provide increased powers to Transport Canada inspectors.

Government Orders

Bill S-2 would give the transport minister the same authority as the minister's American counterpart. Without doing some digging, the bill makes it seem that carmakers are sometimes reluctant to issue a recall notice. Here is a shout-out in support of manufacturers for issuing over 300 notices between 2010 and 2016, when Transport Canada had not received any complaints. Personally, my wife and I are currently going through a recall notice for one of our vehicles.

Will this bill make driving safer?

In the five years between 2010 and 2015, Transport Canada was responsible for only 9% of all notices from carmakers. Given that it only influenced 9% of recall notices, what does the government expect to see going forward? Will the minister have a threshold number of complaints before ordering a recall? Will the minister issue compensation awards based on the number of complaints or the severity of the defect?

It is my hope that Bill S-2 will not see carmakers going into either a defensive formation or issuing recalls to avoid an order to issue one. In preparing for speaking today, it has been my observation that car manufacturers in Canada and the U.S. have been, and are, very responsible to ensure that all defects are announced and taken care of as quickly as possible. No one wants to be driving a car that has a recall notice, and no one wants to be without a car because of a recall notice.

Finally, I also want to bring up a point that is related to how dealerships have to operate in these cases. The Minister of Transport will have to consider the ability of a dealership to correct defects quickly. In larger centres, this may not be the issue. In smaller centres like Barrie—Innisfil, the availability of parts for the recall will have an impact on the bottom line. Many dealerships are family-run businesses, with many family members being mechanics, sales people, and often office support staff.

Though I speak today on Bill S-2, I would be remiss if I did not mention that the government's planned tax reforms will also have an impact on these family-run businesses and their ability to provide good-paying jobs to people in their community. I cite some examples in Barrie and Innisfil of family-run operations that employ thousands of people in our area: men like Paul Sadlon, Jim Williams, Bob Jackson, Jamie Massie, and Drew Tilson, all automobile dealers.

The tax reforms that will hurt these family car dealerships can also affect how Bill S-2 would get defective cars repaired quickly. If tax reforms force the closure of a dealership or the downsizing of staff, all the efforts of Bill S-2 will be for naught.

Let us send Bill S-2 to committee to have important amendments made to strengthen the needs of the consumer while protecting responsible and proactive manufacturers from unreasonable government interference.

• (1715)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, my husband has been in car sales for over five and a half years. As the member indicated in his speech, one of the key issues they have in the smaller dealerships is the lack of parts. In the St. Thomas area, they are one of the highest selling car sales agencies in London. They are a small dealership, with six employees. The problem is that they have four parts available for

100 cars, and so a lot of times there has been a real delay in getting those parts, and sometimes for up to one year.

It is important that small rural dealerships be at the table at committee so we can recognize some of the issues of rural and remote dealerships.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I am aware that the hon. member's husband has been in the automobile business for rather a long time. It is critical that this piece of legislation go to committee to have proper consultations with everyone affected by it, whether small or large automobile dealers. I sit on the automobile caucus, and this was an issue that came up. About a year and a half ago we were talking about this.

It is important that we get this right. We have indicated on our side that we are generally supportive of the legislation. However, there are some amendments that do cause us concern. That is why we have committees, to properly and insightfully look at these issues, how they impact Canadians of all stripes, and to try to come up with good pieces of legislation that we can recommend to Parliament.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Motion carried on division. Consequently, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, when we carry bills on division, I want to be registered as having voted for the bill, rather than having it appear that on division I voted against it.

• (1720)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Thank you. That is noted.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is there unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:30, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]**[English]***PORTUGUESE HERITAGE MONTH****Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.)** moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the important contributions Canadian Portuguese have made to building Canada and to Canadian society in general, the cultural diversity of the Portuguese communities in Canada, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Portuguese heritage and culture for future generations by declaring June 10 as Portugal Day and the month of June as Portuguese Heritage Month.

She said: Madam Speaker, it is with enormous pride and a sense of privilege that I rise in this venerable House to support my private member's Motion No. 126, celebrating the contributions of Portuguese Canadians to this great nation.

My riding of Davenport is blessed to have the largest Portuguese community in Canada. I truly believe that Canada and Canadian society is enriched by Portuguese culture, traditions, history, and language.

[Translation]

It is with enormous pride and privilege that I rise in this venerable House to support my private member's motion, Motion No. 126, celebrating the contributions of Portuguese Canadians to this great nation.

[English]

However, any discussion on settler community in Canada cannot start without first acknowledging and thanking the traditional stewards of this land. We are grateful to the indigenous peoples as we are gathered here today on the traditional unceded lands of the Algonquin people.

It is a pleasure to be back in the House this week with all of my colleagues. I want to thank members from all parties for supporting my motion. I would like to thank the Minister of Canadian Heritage, my Liberal colleagues, and especially the members of the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group, for all their encouragement and support. Of course, I would like to thank my staff for its hard work over the last few months and days.

It is also important to mention that the province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and the public and Catholic school boards of Ontario all took the lead in recognizing June as Portugal heritage month and/or June 10 as Portugal day in their respective jurisdictions. I am building on their great initiatives and accomplishments, and I want to thank them for their leadership.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the Portuguese leaders, Portuguese clubs, associations, and the Portuguese media in my riding of Davenport and across the country. They have tirelessly promoted the Portuguese culture, language, and community and serve as an inspiration for this private member's bill. It is to honour them and their aspiration for the Portuguese to be recognized at the highest level of our nation and be celebrated for its many contributions to Canada, and equally to set the stage for the preservation and promotion of the Portuguese language, traditions, and culture for many decades and centuries to come.

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

There are approximately 16 million Portuguese around the world, from those who live in Portugal, including the Azores and the Madeira Islands, and other parts of the Americas, Europe, India, and Africa. However, when we consider Portuguese-speaking people, that number jumps from 16 million to 220 million.

Indeed, the Portuguese language evolved from Latin and became a compulsory language in Portugal under King Dom Diniz in the 14th century. For the following two centuries, the 15th and 16th, the Portuguese were known global explorers, such as Vasco de Gama, who discovered far off lands that at the time were unidentified and who discovered, in 1497, the first ocean route between India from Europe, connecting for the first time ever the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

There is also Fernão de Magalhães, born in the northern part of Portugal, who, in 1519, led the very first expedition by ship that circumnavigated the world.

Poet Luís Vaz de Camões wrote the epic poem *Os Lusíadas* that interprets this exciting age of exploration and discovery of the Portuguese. Camões is known as Portugal's greatest poet and, indeed, the day of his death, June 10, is celebrated as Portugal's national day.

It was also around this time period, the 15th and 16th centuries, that the Portuguese were first identified as coming to the shores of Canada to fish off the coast of Newfoundland. In subsequent centuries, a number of Portuguese explorers made their way to Canada.

● (1725)

There are two great stories I want to share. The first is the story of Pedro Da Silva, Canada's first official letter carrier, who, on behalf of New France, delivered parcels and letters between Montreal and Quebec, beginning in 1705.

Then there is Portuguese Joe Silvey, born in Pico, Azores. Portuguese Joe came to Canada in 1860 via whaling schooner, and decided to stay, trying his hand at goldmining. He married an indigenous woman from the Coast Salish nation, became one of the founders of Vancouver's Gastown, and had 11 children, with many of his descendants still populating the B.C. coast today.

Just last year a monument was erected to honour him in Stanley Park. It honours the link between Portuguese and Coast Salish first nations cultures, marking the land's rich heritage and symbolizing unity for Vancouver's present-day diverse inhabitants. I love this wonderful connection between the Portuguese and Canada's first nations.

Private Members' Business

The first official group to come from Portugal, in terms of immigrants, arrived at Pier 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia on May 13, 1953. They came aboard a boat called the *Saturnia* steamship. Three to four more full boatloads came the year after. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Portuguese immigrated to Canada to escape the poverty they experienced under the dictatorship of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, considered the most oppressive and longest-serving dictatorship of western Europe. Many also left to flee the Portuguese Colonial War, Portugal's war against the nationalist movements in Portugal's African colonies.

In the early 1970s, our then prime minister Pierre Trudeau introduced the policy of multiculturalism, the first country in the world to adopt such a policy. It was this policy that paved the way in the early 1970s for Canada to create a pathway to citizenship for many of the tens of thousands of Portuguese who to this day are forever grateful to have been given a chance to start a new life in a country that has given them their freedom without having to give up their language, culture, traditions, and identity.

Indeed, now over 40 years later, the Portuguese are 500,000 strong, which includes up to their fourth generation. While their population is largest in Ontario and Quebec, they have vibrant communities right across this great land from the west coast in B.C., right to the east coast in Nova Scotia.

Members will also be very happy to know that many universities across the country now offer Portuguese studies, from the University of British Columbia, University of Winnipeg, York University, University of Toronto, and Brock University, to Université de Montréal. The University of Toronto celebrated 70 years of Portuguese instruction just this year. I want to thank and acknowledge university academics right across this country, including Manuela Marujo, Inês Cardoso, Maria João Dodman, and Carlos Teixeira for their tireless efforts to promote Portuguese studies in Canada.

More locally, in my riding, the First Portuguese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto has been teaching the Portuguese language since 1956. I want to give a shout-out to Celina de Melo, the current principal, for her tireless years of service to the school.

Today, it is gratifying to see Portuguese taught in schools right across the country. There are over 16 jurisdictions in Ontario, and a number of public schools right across the country, from B.C. through to Manitoba through to Nova Scotia.

Finally, I want to recognize the heroic work of Portuguese clubs right across the country. They work tirelessly to provide a space for their members to come together, to practise their language, and to celebrate their culture and traditions. There are over 150 clubs in Canada, and more than 20 in my riding of Davenport alone. I wish I had the time to mention each one of them, because they work hard and they deserve the recognition.

I want to thank each *casa*. I want to thank each organization, leader, board member, and all tireless volunteers for all that they do to keep their clubs active and relevant. It will not come as a surprise that so many Portuguese groups do a lot of fundraising to raise money for different initiatives in the community.

Two of my colleagues, the member for Brampton South and the member for Brampton West, told me of their great pride of the Amigos Portugueses do Peel Memorial for their extraordinary fundraising efforts for the William Osler Health System and for the Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness.

I know that my Mississauga colleagues would tell me that they are so proud of the Luso Canadian Charitable Society Centre, headed by Jack Prazeres, that supports families and adults living with developmental and physical disabilities. Of course, I have to give a shout-out to the many female Luso groups, such as the Amigas de Toronto, raising money for cancer research and support.

We cannot talk about Portuguese clubs in Canada without mentioning ACAPO. The Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario does such an extraordinary job of bringing all the clubs together, doing the most ambitious programming for Portugal Week, and organizing the second-largest street festival in Toronto. I want to acknowledge José Maria Eustáquio for his leadership, and the leadership of their board and volunteers.

● (1730)

The Portuguese are highly established and very integrated into the Canadian diaspora. Many of the Portuguese when they arrived in Canada took construction and cleaning jobs. These honourable jobs helped hard-working Portuguese to support their families, buy homes, and contribute to their church and community. The Portuguese also raised citizens and leaders who currently serve in important roles and who are an inspiration to all Canadians. We know of many of them today.

There are two in the House. We have the MP for Brossard—Saint-Lambert and the MP for Mississauga East—Cooksville. We have two provincial financial ministers: the hon. Charles Sousa and the hon. Carlos Leitão. We have a provincial member of Parliament, Cristina Martins and wonderful municipal leaders in Ana Bailão in Toronto, Frank Monteiro in Cambridge, Martin Medeiros in Brampton, and Nelson Santos in Kingsville.

The Portuguese even have their own Portuguese Walk of Fame, created in 2013 by Toronto-based community leader Manuel da Costa to recognize Portuguese Canadians in all fields for their outstanding achievements to our country.

From cleaners and construction workers who have built much of the infrastructure in Toronto and across Ontario, a very successful professional class of talent has emerged. The Portuguese business community is super-active.

A group called the Federation of Portuguese-Canadian Business Professionals was created to promote business activities, leadership, and Portuguese culture. This group has inspired an impressive list of civic leaders, including two of its founders, Armindo Silva and Fernando Dias Costa, and businessmen such as José Pinto and Louis Louro Jr. I have no doubt that under the current leadership of Michelle Jorge, the federation will play an integral role in building stronger economic ties to Portugal through the Canada-Europe trade agreement, which was just ratified today by the Portuguese parliament and which comes into force tomorrow.

I cannot mention groups in Canada without mentioning the fact that I have a very strong building trades union and construction union in my riding. There is no Portuguese fundraiser that is not supported by local 182 and local 506. I want to thank Jack Preset as division manager for his extraordinary leadership.

Our Prime Minister never tires of saying that diversity is strength. One could be a proud Portuguese and a proud Canadian and there is no conflict. Indeed, the Portuguese Canadians have shared much of their culture with us including their fado music; their great love of football, whether a Benfica, Porto, or Sporting FC fan; their amazing cuisine, whether it is the *bacalhau*, *churrasqueira*, *queijos*, amazing *pastéis de natas*; and their amazing world-class wines from Douro, Alentejo, or Dão regions.

Portuguese media is like no other I have ever seen. They are unbelievably strong for a community of its size, particularly in Montreal and Toronto. I would like to give a huge shout-out to *Sol Português*, Antonio Perinu; *Correio da Manhã*, Eduardo Viera, ABC, Fernando Cruz-Gomes; and *PostoMilénio*.

We also have wonderful TV programs with Omni, Sergio Mourato; and GenteTV, Nellie Pedro; and of course Portuguese radio CIRV that was created by Frank Alvarez.

The motion to enshrine June as Portugal heritage month and to designate June 10 as Portugal day in Canada is important not just for the obvious reason of ensuring we recognize the contributions of the Portuguese to Canada at the national level, and not just to promote the culture and language in years to come, but because by doing so we also reinforce and promote our Canadian values and serve as a model to the world.

This is especially important at a time when there is increasing racism and anti-immigration sentiment in too many countries globally. It is much easier to see our differences than our similarities. In Motion No. 126, we remind ourselves that we are stronger because of our differences and not in spite of them. Canada is a light and model for the world for showcasing that diversity is a strength.

The Portuguese have always been a people open to the world, a people who came to Canada and have successfully integrated into Canadian society, achieving great things and setting an example for the leaders of today and tomorrow.

I have no doubt that the Portuguese from every part of Canada will continue to play a key role in creating a better Canada. It is an absolute honour to be able to present Motion No. 126 today, celebrating the contributions of Portuguese Canadians to this great nation.

Private Members' Business

I am thankful for the opportunity to do so.

• (1735)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to my friend, the hon. member for Davenport, *muito obrigada*.

We are very pleased to see the bill come forward. I am happy to second it and I wanted to let the member know that the story of Portuguese Joe is one I know well. Joe Silva is very well known throughout the coast of British Columbia and his life did take a very unhappy turn. At one point, he left Stanley Park where he had been so successful, one of the early founders of Gastown. In his last days, he lived in my area on the Salish Sea on Reid Island, just off Galiano.

There is a lot of Portuguese heritage that stretches to both coasts. A lot of Portuguese explorers and colonizers were the first to reach Cape Breton and many of the place names around Cape Breton Island, where I am from, were also originally Portuguese.

I want to thank the member for this initiative. In terms of a question, I can only ask what we can do to help.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I love the story of Portuguese Joe. I love it because there is this connection between the Portuguese community and the first peoples of our country. I also love the statue. I have only seen pictures of it. I have not been blessed to see it, but I know it is a beautiful statue. It has Portuguese tile from the Azores Islands surrounding it. It also represents a special story in the history of Canada.

With respect to, having this motion pass in the House is important. Continuing to encourage the Portuguese culture to support the Portuguese communities across the country is one of the ways all of us can support the diversity of our great nation.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for bringing this private member's bill forward. She no doubt has much support of House.

One of my favourite restaurants in my hometown of London is Portuguese. It is located in the riding of one of our colleagues across the floor, who I think would agree with me that King of the Pigs is quite possibly the best restaurant around.

I want to thank the member, because the Portuguese community of London will be happy we are supporting this. I truly hope everyone will be on board. I want to ensure that others have a chance to appreciate the Portuguese culture.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I probably could have spent 15 minutes just talking about Portuguese food, because the porchetta sandwiches are very popular. These pork sandwiches are famous within the Portuguese community.

I have just returned from a month in Portugal and was blessed to taste a lot of its fresh fish. I did not mention the bacalhau, or codfish, which is very popular and has also been introduced to our Canadian culture. I also think the queijos, which are the cheeses, are popular in Canada. With the Canada-Europe trade agreement going into effect tomorrow, I have no doubt that we will be able to experience even more Portuguese food within Canada very shortly.

Private Members' Business

• (1740)

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin today, I would like to share a quote with my colleagues that I came across while preparing for this speech. It is a quote from Summer Sanders:

To be a champion, I think you have to see the big picture. It's not about winning and losing; it's about every day hard work and about thriving on a challenge. It's about embracing the pain that you'll experience at the end of a race and not being afraid.

As Canadians, we are not shy when it comes to hard work and facing challenges, particularly in my beautiful riding of Haldimand—Norfolk, where we are not afraid to roll up our sleeves and get the job done.

When I think of my Portuguese friends at home, these are the traits that personify them completely.

Today, I rise to pay tribute to the Portuguese community within my beautiful riding of Haldimand—Norfolk on the south coast, north shore of Lake Erie, and I do so by sharing my thoughts on Motion No. 126.

This is the first time the motion has been debated in the House, so for my colleagues who are not aware of what the motion proposes to do, let me explain briefly.

Motion No. 126 was put forward by the member for Davenport, and calls on the government to recognize the contributions made by the Portuguese community to building Canada and their contributions to Canadian society in general.

As a way of educating and reflecting on Portuguese heritage and culture for future generations, the motion proposes that June be declared Portuguese heritage month, and that June 10 be claimed as Portugal day. Before I go into why I am standing to support the motion today, please let me first share with the House a brief history about why this month and this day are important to the Portuguese community.

Every June 10, the Portuguese celebrate their national holiday known as Dia de Portugal, or Portugal Day, as it known to the rest of the world. While many Portuguese Canadians currently celebrate Portugal Day, the motion would solidify this day as a recognized cultural day right across Canada.

This date commemorates the death of Luis de Camoes, a significant figure in the history of Portugal. Camoes is best known for his work on *Os Lusíadas*, the national epic poem of Portugal that celebrates the nation's successes and its rich history.

Camoes was known to be an adventurer. His many escapades include surviving a shipwreck in the region of Cochinchina, now known as Vietnam, and losing an eye while in battle in Ceuta. Legend has it that in order to save the *Lusíadas*, Camoes had to keep it afloat with one of his hands while he used his other arm to swim through the unforgiving waters of the region's seas. Patriotism and bravery are just a few of the qualities that Camoes had that made the nation choose to celebrate Portugal Day in his honour.

Camoes, and his perseverance through his adventures, is a direct representative of the Portuguese people in my area. Their ability to see a challenge and overcome that challenge is, quite frankly,

inspirational. I cannot think of a better way to honour them than by showing our support for this day and the motion.

In order for me to explain further why the motion is important to people where I live, I need to share with the House a bit of background on my beautiful riding of Haldimand—Norfolk and the wonderful people who live there.

There is no doubt that Canada is a diverse country. Many people come from all over the world to live here, and that is something that should make us all proud.

I do not have the largest Portuguese population in my riding, especially when it is compared with ridings like those of the member for Davenport. In fact, Haldimand—Norfolk is made up largely of people from countries such as Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, and Hungary.

• (1745)

The Portuguese people make up just shy of 3% of the population throughout Haldimand—Norfolk according to the latest census records. That is just over 3,000 people. That may not seem like a lot, but 3,000 people is the total population of many of the smaller communities in my riding if I were to lump them all together.

While the Portuguese community in my riding does not make up the same large percentage of the population as perhaps that of the member for Davenport, and there may not be as many Portuguese in Haldimand—Norfolk now as there have been in past years, this group contributes immensely to the community. It is not just about the number of people, but the quality of those people and the action that those people choose.

In Haldimand—Norfolk, challenges are abundant. In order for many people in my community to provide for their families, hard work is often a requirement. It is not easy, but if they are not afraid to get some dirt on their hands, the opportunities are also abundant. All the Portuguese people I know make hard work look easy, even when we know that it is not. In fact, they welcome it with open arms, and that does not change whether that work is working in the home, or around the yard, working for an employer, or their very generous contributions as volunteers.

Not only does the Portuguese community welcome hard work, but they also welcome other people around them. I consider myself very fortunate to have good friends in our Portuguese community. In fact, whenever I visit them, they always make me feel at home.

I have one very special good friend who is a leader within the community and he often takes me to visit with his friends and even with his family. Whenever I enter their homes, I am always greeted with love and affection, just as if I were a direct member of the family. We share stories and we share wonderful food. We laugh and sometimes we cry from laughing so hard. Then, perhaps after too many carafes of *Vinho Verde* or *Porto*, I leave feeling even more like a family member than when I arrived.

Like hard work, this comes as second nature to the Portuguese community. I am proud to call them my friends, and I am honoured to support this motion. This is a community that could not be more deserving of this kind of recognition.

Private Members' Business

For my Portuguese friends at home and those in communities right across Canada, they truly are champions and they deserve this. *Obrigada*.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): *Obrigado*, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today and tell the member for Davenport how much we appreciate her motion. I think it represents a step in the right direction.

Quebec and Canada are societies and communities of people that come from all over the world. With the exception of the first nations and Inuit people, we are all sons and daughters of more or less recent immigrants, some families having settled here earlier than others.

We often say that our diversity is our strength, a slogan that can sometimes ring a bit hollow. We need to live with other people, participate in cross-cultural dialogues, and celebrate together to see just how true this really is and to realize how lucky we are to live in a peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and diverse society where we can meet people from all over the world. As parliamentarians, we need to recognize that.

The member for Davenport's motion seeks to celebrate our diversity and one community in particular, which is very dear to me for several reasons that I will talk about in the few minutes that I have to speak.

Strong ties between Newfoundland, Quebec, and the rest of Canada and the Portuguese community have existed for a very long time. As far back as the 16th century, Portuguese fishermen would sail the coast of Newfoundland and even make contact with the people living there. Monuments have been erected to remind residents of that connection and of the presence of fishermen and people from Portugal off the coast of Newfoundland and sometimes even on the island.

I did some research, and the first known permanent Portuguese immigrant supposedly arrived in 1677. His name was Pedro da Silva and he was from Lisbon. Mr. da Silva was a family man, and in fact, had 15 children. It is believed that most of the da Silvas in Quebec and Canada today are probably descendants of Mr. da Silva, who arrived in 1677.

In certain communities I know in Montreal, some of which I am lucky enough to represent, the Portuguese community has very deep roots, although the vast majority of Portuguese people began arriving in the 1950s. A strong, vibrant, hard-working community has been established and has integrated well. We know that these are very hard working and entrepreneurial people. They love their gardens, love food, and love making things grow. There are apparently at least 25,000 people of Portuguese descent in Quebec. Most of them are in Montreal, but some have more recently moved to Laval.

I have the good fortune of living in a neighbourhood where my neighbours on one side are Chinese, Fred on the third floor is from Haiti, and then on the second floor we have international students from France. My neighbour on the other side, Anibal, is an older gentleman originally from Portugal. I have to thank Anibal because he takes care of keeping the front of our house very clean every

morning. He is there for us. He is extraordinary and he always says hello to us. He is a very nice man.

The closest grocery store to us is a cornerstore called Marché Sá et Fils. It is currently being run by two brothers, Benny and Eddy. My wife and I know them well. There is also the late Fernando, their other brother who disappeared, unfortunately. They know us well because my wife and I are not always very organized and we end up going back to the store two or three times in the same day to get milk, butter, or the ingredient or vegetable that we forgot.

In the neighbourhood, on the corner of Rachel and Saint Urbain streets, there is the Santa Cruz church, a very important place to the Portuguese community. It opened its doors in 1986. Another church already existed in the neighbourhood, but it was too small.

● (1750)

It is a big, beautiful church, awash in colour and bustling with life and activity. During the summer, the Portuguese community begins its traditional religious processions at the Santa Cruz church, and those processions often go right by my house. It is always very interesting to see, and participants even give out food sometimes. These processions are traditions that come from Portugal's Azores and Madeira islands.

Just recently, there was a large parade of Portuguese Canadians that was much louder than the usual religious processions. It was when Portugal won the Euro 2016 final against France 1-0. For a while, I was living in the loudest neighbourhood in Montreal. Everyone was in the streets waving flags and honking their car horns. We came out of the house with our children and walked around and celebrated with our Portuguese friends, who were extremely proud of their victory.

That is how we celebrate diversity in real everyday life, when we are close to a community like this. That is why I am so pleased to see this motion to make June Portuguese heritage month and declare June 10 Portugal day.

I also want to say that Festival Portugal International de Montréal was celebrated for the fourth year in a row this past June, giving thousands of people the opportunity to enjoy Portuguese traditions such as good food, dancing, and music. I hope that the festival will continue to be held for many years to come. I am certain it will, since we are extremely proud to have friends from Montreal and Quebec of Portuguese heritage.

In closing, I am pleased to say that we will proudly support the member for Davenport's motion to help celebrate our friends from the Portuguese community.

● (1755)

[*English*]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak in the House today in support of Motion No. 126, introduced by the member from Davenport. It seeks to have the House recognize the important contributions Canadian Portuguese have made to building Canada and to Canadian society. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and the government are proud to support the motion.

Private Members' Business

The motion seeks to acknowledge the cultural diversity of the Portuguese communities in Canada, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Portuguese heritage and culture for future generations by declaring June 10 as Portugal day and the month of June as Portuguese heritage month.

Our country has a long and proud tradition of opening its arms to newcomers from around the globe. Because of this, we have become one of the most diverse countries in the world. The presence of Portuguese individuals in Canada contributes to that tremendous diversity.

People from all corners of the globe choose to leave their homes, family, and friends to come to Canada. When they do so, they know they will become part of a welcoming society with a strong commitment to inclusion, grounded in a proud tradition of multiculturalism. As the parliamentary secretary for multiculturalism, I know personally that newcomers play a critical role in developing our cultural diversity and economic strength, and in contributing to the vitality of our communities.

In 1988, our country became the first nation to proclaim a multiculturalism act, an act that requires we preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of all Canadians. It also requires that we work to ensure that all Canadians are equal in our economic, social, cultural, and political life.

Our government is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the value of our Canadian diversity and strengthening our multicultural and pluralistic society. This commitment was clearly articulated in the Speech from the Throne, and is referenced in our cherished Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which includes a specific provision declaring that the charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

As Canadians, we can never take this commitment to diversity and inclusion for granted. Our society has prospered, and will continue to prosper, thanks to the strides we have all made to ensure Canada remains a welcoming society for people from all corners of the globe, of different faiths and cultural backgrounds, who can feel proud in calling this country their home.

Parliament's support for Portuguese heritage month and recognition of June 10 as Portugal day will be in line with our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Celebrating the rich diversity of our many multicultural communities is nothing new in Canada. In my riding, just this past weekend, we concluded a weekend of celebrating both the Polish and Ukrainian diasporas that exist in my riding of Parkdale—High Park, communities that I am very proud to represent in Ottawa. Each year, celebrations such as those are held in communities across the country to honour and recognize an incredibly diverse range of communities that call our country home.

On a national level, we have the celebration of Black History Month in February and Asian Heritage Month in May. These are two significant examples of Canada's commitment to acknowledging and highlighting the vital contributions of Canada's many diverse communities to our society.

By seeking to recognize the unique contributions of Canadians of Portuguese heritage who live in my riding and ridings around the country, such as Davenport, and ridings in Montreal, what we are doing today with this motion is continuing this quintessentially Canadian tradition of respecting and nurturing the pluralism that continues to make Canada the envy of the world.

Motion No. 126 presents us with another important opportunity to appreciate the commonalities that unite us, while helping to dispel negative preconceptions that may divide us. In celebrating our diversity, we learn about our common struggles and our shared values.

Portuguese heritage month and Portugal day would provide an opportunity to celebrate our diversity and for Canada's Portuguese community to share its unique culture, history, and traditions with all Canadians.

There was a national household survey in 2011. It indicated that approximately 430,000 people in Canada reported their ethnic origin as Portuguese. Additionally, Portuguese was the tenth most spoken non-official language in our country, with approximately 225,000 Canadian households reporting it as their primary mother tongue in the 2011 census. For those people, *obrigado*.

Canadians of Portuguese heritage from coast to coast to coast should feel welcome and duly recognized through the motion brought forward by the member for Davenport. Recognition of Portuguese heritage month would be in keeping with the recognition already given in my home province of Ontario, with the largest population of Portuguese Canadians, which established June 10 as Portugal Day and June as Portuguese History and Heritage Month in 2001.

• (1800)

Ontario has an act called the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act, which points to the long-standing presence of Portuguese in this country that dates back over 500 years to the age of exploration and the seafaring of Portuguese navigators, such as Gaspar Corte-Real, who explored the northeast coast of Terra Nova, or Newfoundland, and named Conception Bay and Portugal Cove.

Government recognition will also be consistent with the fact that Portuguese heritage is also celebrated officially and unofficially throughout June in cities right across Canada. Toronto's Little Portugal neighbourhood, right next door to Parkdale—High Park, in the lovely constituency of Davenport, is home to a thriving and vibrant community of Canadians of Portuguese heritage who come together annually to celebrate the month of June, and June 10 is Portugal Day.

My constituents of Portuguese and non-Portuguese descent attend that celebration to celebrate with their neighbours, but also to show their respect to the immense contributions of Portuguese to this country.

Private Members' Business

Portugal Day, which falls on June 10, is celebrated in honour of Luis de Camoes, who is one of Portugal's most revered poets and author of the most famous Portuguese epic poem, *The Lusíads*. Portugal Day is also officially recognized as a day to celebrate Portuguese communities around the world in recognition of the millions of people of Portuguese descent who reside outside of the homeland.

With this in mind, this motion is timely, given that Canada is home to one of the largest Portuguese diaspora communities in the entire world. The establishment of Portuguese heritage month would provide an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about this tremendous community, and the many notable historic and current figures who have contributed to Canada in so many ways.

The list is immense, but I will cite just a few examples, such as the world-famous singer Nelly Furtado, and, no, I will not do a rendition; Canadian Olympic medalist, Meaghan Benfeito; and the hon. Maria T. Linhares de Sousa, who is a judge of the Superior Court of Justice in Ontario; among many others.

Celebrations such as Portuguese heritage month are an expression of the vitality of our multiculturalism, which I started out referencing. Our hope is that Canadians of all backgrounds will view Portuguese heritage month as an opportunity to learn about Portuguese culture while celebrating our inclusive sense of Canadian identity.

I will conclude by reiterating our government's support for this motion, our government's support for the efforts being made by the member for Davenport, and highlighting that it is essential that Canadians celebrate, and acknowledge the various communities that have helped to make Canada one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world.

With this in mind, I urge all members of this House to vote in favour of Motion No. 126.

Obrigado.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Motion No. 126.

I rise in support of the groups of talented and dedicated Portuguese Canadians in my riding of Brampton South. I rise in support of the talented and dedicated Portuguese Canadians across the country. It is important to recognize those who worked hard to help build our country, and whose hard work continues to shape and define our communities from coast to coast.

In Brampton South, we have a very special group, Amigos Portuguese do Peel, whose members dedicate their time, energy, and talents to supporting community projects throughout Peel. Under passionate and compassionate community leadership, the Amigos Portuguese has made its mark on the Peel region and in Brampton South. It has been working hard over the four years, organizing fundraising events, dances, golf tournaments, bocce tournaments, and more, to support redevelopment of Peel Memorial.

In my first speech in this place, I spoke of the Amigos Portuguese and its fundraising efforts, where once again it exceeded its goals. It is clear to me, and to anyone who works with this group, that it is dedicated, hard-working, and is eager to make a difference in our

communities. We should all be so fortunate to have groups like Amigos Portuguese in our ridings and across the country. Their hard work is literally shaping our community.

Across Canada and around the world, in businesses, sports, media, and in community building, the Portuguese community is thriving. In Canada, we know that diversity is our strength, and we can do more when we come together as one family. The Portuguese Canadian members of this family have shared their diversity, their culture, and their custard tarts with us. We are forever grateful.

As we know, the GTA saw a major movement of Portuguese immigration in 1955, most of the Portuguese people coming to Canada to help fill labour needs. Keeping up with the post-World War II development boom, Portuguese families settled into their new homes and helped rebuild cities. From those early days to today, we have a lot to thank our Portuguese Canadians for.

I support this motion because I feel it is vitally important to recognize and celebrate the various communities that have come together to make the Canadian mosaic.

During the summer, I had the chance to visit Ponta Delgada, on Sao Miguel Island in the Azores. I toured the beautiful landscapes and learned about the community. I was happy to see this beautiful place, where many residents of Brampton South trace their heritage.

In my riding, I am proud that we are home to the Church of Our Lady of Fatima, which hosts the annual Santo Cristo procession and the Holy Ghost festivities. Both of these celebrations are among the largest in Ontario, and bring Portuguese Canadians from across the province and beyond to join in.

In June, I joined my colleagues in Brampton, along with members of the city government, to raise the Portuguese flag at Brampton city hall. It was an honour to join my colleagues and honour this important community in Brampton.

Later that day, everyone was invited to Garden Square in downtown Brampton, which is right beside my office, for a Portuguese festival that celebrated the unique heritage of this community. There was live music, a food festival, traditional dancing, and many crafts. It was a wonderful day, and I look forward to continuing these celebrations in years to come. In fact, on that day, for the first time, June was proclaimed as Portuguese heritage month in the city of Brampton. I hope we can share this celebration across Canada with the adoption of this motion.

By marking Portuguese heritage month, as this motion would do, we are entrenching in Canadian culture the importance of recognizing the history and traditions of so many of our neighbours and friends.

Private Members' Business

●(1805)

I am proud to have a great community partner in regional councillor Martin Medeiros, who joins me in engaging the Portuguese community. Councillor Medeiros is tireless, and I am grateful for the work he does to recognize Portuguese Canadians at the regional level in Brampton and Peel.

We have also had important celebrations in Ottawa. Last spring, the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group hosted a parliamentary celebration of Portugal Day. We had visitors from Brampton South, a whole bus load, as well as from many other communities in the GTA with large Portuguese Canadian populations.

The festivities that day were celebrated with joy. We had music, food, and friends, the best kind of celebration. This is how we should always celebrate our diversity. We share our histories. We share our cultures. We share our values. One of the traditional dances of Portugal is the Fandango, a competition to see who is the lightest on his or her feet while engaging each other in a fun and exciting dance. I encourage all members here to join their Portuguese community and learn the Fandango.

As a member of the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group, I want to take a moment and thank my colleagues, the chairs of the group, for the work they do in organizing special events to celebrate Portuguese heritage. They have worked tirelessly as leaders of our group, and I would be remiss not to thank them for their work. To paraphrase an often-repeated line, "Together, better is always possible", we are always better together.

I want to commend my colleague the member for Davenport, for bringing this motion forward, and recognizing the wonderful contribution Portuguese Canadians have made, and will surely continue to make to Canada. The member is a hard worker. It speaks great volumes of her dedication to representing her community, and celebrating the diversity of all Canadians, to bring forward such a motion in this place.

I encourage all colleagues to join me in supporting this motion, and in supporting the celebration of Portuguese heritage this year, and every year going forward.

Obrigada.

●(1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the speech made by my colleague and friend, the member for Davenport. Listening to her speech, one gets an appreciation for just how much passion she has for the Portuguese community. This is not the first time I have heard her speak in the House and outside of it, whether it is in caucus or in the lobby. One gets the sense that she has immense pride and joy for the Portuguese Canadian heritage group. I applaud her for her actions today in recognizing the value of one of our treasured communities in Canada in the month of June. It is long overdue, and I applaud her, as well as others.

Members often bring resolutions and ideas such as this to the floor of the House of Commons, which are quite often supported by the

grassroots within our communities, those who work so hard on ethnic and cultural events that take place in every region of our country. My colleague from Davenport has already mentioned many of them, even by name, as she knows the community so thoroughly, but generally speaking, I am referring to all of those involved in assisting us to have this great discussion and debate today and recognizing a very important community.

The Prime Minister often talks about Canada's greatest strength, being our diversity. I am a little biased, I will admit that up front. I would argue there is no greater demonstration of our diversity than in Winnipeg during the month of August. My colleagues, the members for Winnipeg South and Winnipeg Centre, join me and we share our sense of pride in the Portuguese community. In fact, the member for Winnipeg Centre has at least two Portuguese activity centres in his riding. I know that he, as I and other members of the Manitoba caucus have, has taken a great deal of pride in enjoying the wonderful Portuguese hospitality.

When we listen to the Prime Minister talk about that strength, we really get an appreciation. Some members referenced what other countries are thinking, at least in part. Not all other countries but some raise concerns, and perhaps do not recognize the true value of multiculturalism or immigration, and how our society in Canada have benefited from it. We can see that. We get a snapshot of that by looking at the Portuguese community.

My colleague from Davenport made reference to good, solid, quality jobs in construction. I hate to think what construction the City of Winnipeg would have missed out on if there were not such strong, hard-working personalities in that community. There is a beautiful Portuguese centre on Notre Dame, and I know individuals like Mario Santos and so many others made it happen.

Let us talk about commitment. Nowadays groups will go to governments at different levels and ask how they can get centres built. I encourage governments to get involved where they can, and having said that, this community centre was built decades ago. Members of the Portuguese community went to the table, talked about getting the land and supplies, and took part in building the centre. For those who have never seen the centre, I would encourage them, if they are in Winnipeg, to check out the Portuguese centre.

●(1815)

When I meet with members of the Filipino and Ethiopian communities, I often make reference to the Portuguese centre as an ideal type of centre, and even the manner in which it came into being.

In recommending that members go to the Portuguese cultural centre, let me make a suggestion as to when they should go. If they really want to get a taste of Portugal and see Portuguese pride, I would recommend they go during Folklorama. That particular facility, and as I have said there is more than one facility, really comes alive in a tangible way then.

Thousands of people from Winnipeg and other parts of Canada and from the United States are there during the month of August to participate in Canada's greatest multicultural show, and many of them will visit the Portuguese pavilion. People have a choice when they walk into this particular pavilion. They can start by looking at the heritage clothing that is often worn and is on display in the basement. They will see an emphasis on football-soccer, depending on what one wants to call it. The sport is a passion of the Portuguese. Downstairs there is a wonderful display of all sorts of things that makes one think about travelling to Portugal.

In the main auditorium people will be treated to some fantastic food. Some of my colleagues have talked about good food. Well, during Folklorama the desserts are hard to say no to, let alone some of the other food. The hospitality is incredible.

People will also see some fantastic dancing, whether by young people or not as young. It is done in circles, and I must be excused for not knowing the actual name of the dance, but it is a real treat to see. This is just one aspect of our Portuguese community.

I could talk about the Portuguese community in rural Manitoba where many Portuguese own property.

I could talk about both pavilions, both of which are first class.

I realize my time has expired. I always appreciate being able to share a few words.

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): When the motion returns to the House, the hon. member will have two minutes' credit to continue.

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on April 10th of this year, I asked a question of the Minister of Social Development about seniors in dire need of proper housing. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives had published a report showing that 42% of B.C. seniors were experiencing core housing needs.

The Minister of Social Development answered by saying that the Liberals reduced the age of eligibility for OAS back to 65 years, and that was lifting them out of poverty. That really was not my question. The housing crisis is systematically impacting seniors, and I am hoping that today we can get these concerns addressed in a more candid fashion.

In that report, certain groups of senior renters face even higher rates of core housing needs than seniors as a whole. Senior renters

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living alone are more at risk than those living in families, 51% compared to 23%. Women are disproportionately affected. More than half of all senior women renters living alone experienced core housing needs at 54%, compared to 45% of senior men living alone. I have seen it time and time again.

In my riding of North Island—Powell River, in British Columbia, and across the country, where are the resources so desperately needed now? This is after report after report has demonstrated the need for support now. The minister was basically saying good luck, and that is unacceptable.

The CCPA information about core housing needs was reconfirmed this week by government sources. According to data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC, nearly 370,000 senior citizens living in British Columbia are going through a rental squeeze.

About two years ago, the vacancy rate for seniors across B.C. was at 6.3%, but this figure has seen a reduction by 10% this year, with the rental vacancy rate for seniors standing at 4.7%.

Canada's seniors worked hard to build our country, but rising costs mean that seniors cannot make ends meet. Unaffordable housing is one of the many factors making life more difficult for seniors. Today, more than a quarter million seniors live below the poverty line. In a country as prosperous as Canada, that is unacceptable.

In my riding of North Island—Powell River, we held 11 town hall meetings across the riding to discuss issues impacting seniors. Hundreds of constituents participated by attending those town hall meetings, emailing, or calling with their thoughts.

Earlier this summer, we organized and participated in round tables with local stakeholders on the issue of housing. Both issues are very important to me and my constituents. These are both local issues and national issues that require immediate action.

Whether it is seniors who cannot leave the hospital due to a lack of housing, who simply have nowhere to go, or partners living on 20% of a pension because the remainder is paying for a spouse's care facility, or seniors living in shelters, there is no doubt the time for action is now.

The time to turn a blind eye is over. I hope the minister understands that the government's own crown corporation is telling it there is a problem. He has to listen. Our country needs strong institutions that can effectively meet the challenges of Canada's aging population.

Canadian seniors deserve a solution now. Could the minister tell struggling seniors, who are having difficulty paying rent or difficulty finding appropriate housing, how this will be addressed?

• (1825)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the hon. member for North Island—Powell River asked in the House how the finance minister could tell Canadian seniors that housing was just not available. On behalf of the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, I would like to suggest that is simply not true.

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The welfare and the well-being of our seniors, notably through proper housing, are top of mind for our government. In fact, over the past year and a half, our government has brought forward a number of measures, policies, and initiatives to improve access to affordable housing for Canadian seniors. As announced in budget 2017, we will invest more than \$11.2 billion over 11 years in initiatives designed to build, renew, and repair Canada's stock of affordable housing. The national housing strategy, which will be announced later this year, will ensure that more Canadians have access to housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. This will help to reduce core housing needs and lift more Canadians out of homelessness, contributing to stronger, more inclusive communities.

As part of the government's renewed role in housing, we will establish a national housing fund to address critical housing issues and prioritize support for vulnerable citizens, including our seniors. Working with the provinces and territories, we will also co-invest with the proponents so that housing can complement other socio-economic priorities, such as housing for seniors and at-risk youth.

The budget 2017 initiatives build on the government's budget 2016 announcements related to housing, which included over \$200 million over two years to help improve housing conditions for more than 5,000 low-income seniors' households. This funding is being delivered by provinces and territories through the investment in affordable housing. Greater accessibility and availability of services tied to housing and more housing options are top priorities for this government, as they will support Canadian seniors, among others.

That is why we held extensive consultations across the country to gather ideas and suggestions to guide the development of an inclusive national housing strategy for Canada. We know that the prosperity of the middle class and inclusive communities rely on safe, affordable housing, yet too many Canadians, including seniors, still struggle to find affordable housing that really meets their needs. We have been working with provinces and territories, indigenous peoples and other communities, as well as stakeholders and the public to address this issue and improve the lives of Canadian seniors, and we intend to continue on the same path.

On a very quick note, I would make reference to one of the first initiatives that we put in our very first budget. It was to ensure that the poorest of Canada's seniors, those receiving the guaranteed income supplement, would receive a substantial increase, to the degree that many of those seniors, for example, are now receiving an additional over \$900 a year. For a senior in poverty, that is a lot of money. That was a priority of this government.

Our seniors and individuals who are concerned about the future of housing in our country need to be assured that we have a Prime Minister and government that are committed to providing the types of housing that we believe, and we know, Canadians are going to need into the future. We are working in a very robust fashion to deliver wherever we can on this very important issue facing all Canadians,

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I encourage the government to listen to its own body, the CMHC, which has reported in the past year that there was also a short supply of new homes for seniors across B.C., with only 500 newly erected buildings. Earlier this year, we saw low-income seniors facing eviction from their retirement

homes to make way for higher profits for the owners. This example gives us a glimpse of the vulnerable situation low-income seniors are facing. Without the public's outcry this situation might have had a very different outcome.

With a growing aging population, this need will just continue to grow. Can the minister offer us a concrete solution? How will he and his department help spur growth of seniors' homes and make sure that seniors have appropriate housing? They cannot wait.

● (1830)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier some of the measures, the policies, and initiatives that our government had put in place to meet the needs of Canadian seniors for affordable housing.

As I said, in budget 2017, we announced \$11.2 billion over the next 11 years to build, renew, and repair Canada's stock of affordable housing and help ensure Canadians would have affordable housing that would meet their needs.

The national housing strategy, which will be launched later this year, will also provide funding to support innovative approaches to housing development, to encourage better collaboration, and leverage additional investments in housing.

Budget 2017 investments are in addition to the existing funding for housing and the homeless provided in budget 2016, which included additional funding to help seniors access affordable housing through the investment in affordable housing.

We also consulted Canadians from coast to coast to coast to develop an inclusive national housing strategy for Canada. That is what we have been doing to improve access—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

TAXATION

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in June, the New Democrats made a final appeal to the finance minister to maintain the public transit tax credit. This used to be an incentive to encourage ridership.

In the last federal budget, the government announced that the tax credit would be killed on June 30. It was extremely disappointing that after all the opposition from seniors, students, poor workers, and single moms, the government still decided to go ahead and abolish the tax credit. That is not leadership and that is not walking the talk on either the middle class or on climate change.

Adjournment Proceedings

That transit tax rebate made the daily use of public transit a bit more affordable in my community. In our community of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, there was a double hit of the cancellation of this tax rebate: bus riders were the obvious one, but also ferry-dependent communities, such as Gabriola Island, where I live.

Lots of commuters go back and forth every day. People in my community who work at the hospital, who are back and forth on the ferry every day, were saving hundreds of dollars a year, and more. In my region the evidence does not support the government's assertion back in the spring that this was a benefit for wealthy people riding the bus. Middle-class families and low-income individuals are the ones who are paying the price of this cancellation.

In 2018, 1.5 million Canadians will see an increase in their federal income tax because of the cancellation of the public transit tax rebate. The public transit users, obviously not the wealthiest people in Canada, were getting back, collectively, \$250 million a year. Now each individual person will pay, on average, \$150 to \$200 more in federal taxes. That will affect seniors, students, the working poor, and single moms. It is a transit tax rebate that used to be open to everyone across the country. It was one of the things that used to give people who would ride public transit a bit of a break.

Reducing accessibility to public transit while everyone is just struggling to get by runs counter to the fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Clearly, the government does not walk its talk on either public transit or affordability. Therefore, if the government is really serious about fighting climate change and defending the middle class, why did it proceed with the cancellation of the public transit tax credit?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. I think we share the same goal, which is to create favourable conditions for public transit. We may differ on how to achieve that.

I can assure her that our government is determined to build an economy that works for middle-class Canadians. That is why we embarked on an in-depth review of federal spending, taking into account concerns people shared with us about the efficiency, fairness, and complexity of the tax system.

The purpose of the review was to ensure that federal spending is fair for Canadians as well as efficient and viable in terms of the budget. We know that eliminating misguided and ineffective tax measures as well as ineffective and outdated government initiatives saves money and frees up resources that can be redirected toward more important priorities.

• (1835)

[*English*]

Quite simply, evidence suggests that the public transit tax credit has been ineffective in encouraging the use of public transit and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Canadians deserve better. They deserve government investments that actually work for them, whether in support of public transit or a cleaner environment. Our government is committed to supporting both, but unlike the public

transit tax credit, we are doing so in a manner that is actually effective.

Budget 2017, for example, announced \$20.1 billion in funding over 11 years to provinces and territories, plus at least \$5 billion through the Canada Infrastructure Bank for improved public transit, and it goes even further to support clean, healthy communities for Canadians.

Budget 2017 laid out the government's plan to invest \$21.9 billion in green infrastructure, including initiatives that will support the implementation of the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. This included \$9.2 billion for provinces and territories over the next 11 years to support priority projects, including those that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, deliver clean water, safely manage waste water, help communities prepare for challenges that result from climate change, and help build cleaner, better connected electricity systems.

[*Translation*]

These are just a few examples of the steps we are taking to put our plan into action, a plan to grow the economy in a way that works for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

It is worth mentioning that we also introduced a tax cut for the middle class that is helping nearly nine million Canadians. Furthermore, thanks to the Canada child benefit, nine out of ten families are getting more help today than they did under previous programs, with an average increase of nearly \$2,300 in tax-free benefits per year.

Still more recently, in budget 2017, the government took steps to make these tax breaks for individuals and families even more effective and more accessible. These are just a few examples of what we can achieve when we make more efficient use of available resources.

This is why I am proud to support this approach for the benefit of Canadians.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, we still have heard no evidence from the government on the basis which it decided this was not an effective way to help affordability and help people want to ride public transit. The prospect of spending on public transit 11 years out does nothing for the people who right now need that rebate to help them ride the transit to get to work. The middle-class tax cuts that the government keeps talking about did not affect the most low-income people in my community or across the country. Therefore, it is very hard to hear this. There is a good intention, but there is no implementation.

Adjournment Proceedings

My colleague, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, had an online petition. Thousands of people signed it, saying that public transit helps local air quality, commuters, jobs, and the environment.

Why did the government proceed, and do this mean-spirited cancellation of the tax rebate?

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I have heard loud and clear the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, but when she talks about the poorest members of her community, they do not actually stand to benefit much from a tax credit. This is why it was an inefficient measure, both in helping lower-income Canadians to have access to public transit, and ineffective in inducing people to actually use public transit.

We decided, instead of going forward with a measure that we know to be ineffective, to go with investments in public transit; cleaner communities; tax cuts for the middle class; and the Canada child benefit, which will lift 300,000 children out of poverty in this country.

These are effective measures to reach the goals, which I know we both share, to have cleaner, healthier communities, and less inequalities in this country.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual, I am pleased to rise in the House. I see that my colleague is still here so I want to say hello. I imagine he is the one who will be answering my question.

This evening, I am going to talk about Liberal appointments. During the last session, I was asked many questions about the partisan appointments the Liberals were making. Members will all recall the appointment of a former Liberal minister who had just left her job as an Ontario minister. She was angling for a Senate seat but instead was appointed official languages commissioner. She had met a huge number of people from the Liberal Party since she had contributed to the Prime Minister's election campaign. If that is not partisanship, I do not know what is.

The opposition parties all joined in strongly condemning that appointment since, in our opinion, a high-ranking Parliament of Canada official should never, and I mean never, be associated with any party, whether it be the Liberals, the Conservatives, or the NDP. Such officials really need to be non-partisan. When Ms. Meilleur withdrew her candidacy, which was very commendable of her, the government told us that the selection criteria had been revised, even though it had previously boasted that the criteria in use were the very best.

As of today, September 20, no one has been appointed as Commissioner of Official Languages; the position is being temporarily filled, and no one knows what the selection process is. I was familiar with the last process because I used to work on the official languages file. I now look after rural affairs. I know that some senior Liberal Party officials will be going over these appointments, but I would hope that this process will be much more transparent this time and that people in the opposition will be asked to provide names of candidates.

Both sides of the House need to ensure that the next person appointed Commissioner of Official Languages or any other Officer of Parliament is non-partisan. It is essential that these people maintain a certain degree of independence. When we appoint a Commissioner of Official Languages, we are accountable to linguistic minorities. It is not about talking on behalf of a party. This has to be—

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to national government appointments, I suggest that it is actually a good news story. I sat in opposition and witnessed former Prime Minister Stephen Harper make many appointments. When it comes to appointments, it is a good news story, and let me explain why.

This government put in place a new appointment process that supports open, transparent, and merit-based selection processes. When we talk about being open, this what we mean. Selection processes are open to all Canadians to provide them with the opportunity, should they be interested and have the required qualifications, to participate in their democratic institutions by serving as a GIC appointment. When we talk about being transparent, we are talking about clear information about the requirements and steps involved in the selection process being readily available to the public in order to reach as many Canadians as possible and attract a strong, diverse field of highly qualified candidates. Appointments are publicly available on the Privy Council Office orders in council database.

With regard to merit, let us think about the selection being designed to identify highly qualified candidates who meet the needs of the organization and are able to perform the duties of the position to which they would be appointed. It seeks individuals who have the qualifications, including education, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities, and personal suitability to fill the position, and who are also able to meet any statutory and/or other conditions that may be required. This new process will help strengthen trust in our democracy and ensure the integrity of our public institutions. Our aim is to identify high-quality candidates who are committed to the principles of public service and embrace public service values.

Under this process, we have made well over 200 appointments. It is important for us to recognize the mix of those 200 appointments: 60% are women, 10% are visible minorities, and 10% are indigenous people. This truly reflects Canada's diversity. It is something I am very proud of, especially if we contrast the new process that we have put in place since the current Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians of being open, transparent, and merit based when it comes to national appointments, with the previous one. That is why I say it is a good news story. When we do the comparison, hands down everyone will realize that this government takes its commitment very seriously, and by the results that I just listed, everyone will see that we have maintained that commitment.

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1845)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted to hear my hon. colleague talk about transparency. Let us settle something once and for all: stop talking about the former government. The Liberals have been here for two years now.

If there had been transparency, the opposition would not have needed to stand up in the House to condemn the partisan appointment. If they want to have transparent appointments, then the Liberals need to talk to us. The last time I talked to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Ms. Ambrose was still here as acting leader. We received the letter two days before Mme. Meilleur's appointment. If that is what they call transparency—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, to be very clear, Canadians can in fact continue to apply for positions on commissions, boards, crown corporations, agencies, and tribunals across the country as the selection process for more positions continues to be launched. Let me be very clear that we have a process that is open, transparent, and merit based. This new process will help strengthen trust in our democracy and ensure the integrity of our public institutions. As I say, it is indeed a good news story.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:48 p.m.)

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