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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 18, 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]

THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the government's most important responsibilities is ensuring public safety. That is as basic as it gets; without that foundation, there is no democracy.

Today, we will be voting on Bill C-349, which establishes a list of criminal organizations similar to the one we have for terrorist organizations. The list will help law enforcement officials do their work. This is a good bill that will help keep families safer. It is one more tool to help us fight organized crime more efficiently. The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will have an opportunity to amend it if need be. I am not saying this will solve everything, but we need to embrace the principle of this bill.

Let us support Bill C-349 and send it to committee so we can launch a new offensive against organized crime. I call on everyone here to do the right thing, to do their duty.

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PAUL LAROCQUE

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour an influential man, a visionary in our community. Paul Larocque is retiring from politics after 24 years of exemplary public service as mayor of the town of Bois-des-Filion.

Mr. Larocque has decided to spend more time with his family and more time taking on new professional challenges after being elected six times, which shows how highly regarded he is in Bois-des-Filion. Knowing Paul personally, I share that admiration and consider

myself lucky to have had the opportunity to work with him over the past 18 years on many files, including Highway 19, for example, as well as to call him a friend.

Well known for his integrity, his social and political involvement, his economic vision, and his courage in the face of adversity, Paul Larocque helped modernize his town's administration, while also tackling some of the critical issues facing our region.

Paul, you are, and will always be, an inspiration.

* * *

• (1405)

[English]

CITY OF CALGARY

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the *City of Calgary* is retiring. No, not my hard-working hometown, but rather a Boeing 747 airliner that has shared the city's name since 1989.

Calgary aviation enthusiasts have been lobbying KLM to bring the plane to its namesake city before it is retired. I think this is a fantastic idea.

The *City of Calgary* is one of the oldest 747s in KLM's fleet. Like its namesake, the plane is made of sturdy stuff. It narrowly avoided a crash just months after entering service, losing all power to its engines after flying through a volcanic ash cloud. The *City of Calgary* remained true to its name, however, and weathered a crisis to soar once more.

Although named after my city, the aircraft has never actually landed there. It is my hope that KLM will support a Calgary touchdown so the plane can receive a fond and final farewell.

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[Translation]

PERSONS DAY

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to promote and celebrate Persons Day.

On October 18, 1929, the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of "persons" was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. This decision gave women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

The Famous Five, as we know them, were courageous women who pursued the case for recognition. As a woman, I can stand here today, an equal among men, because of their tireless work. For that, I and women everywhere are forever indebted to them. We owe it to them and other groundbreaking women, past and present, to continue the fight for gender equality and women's autonomy.

* * *

GORD DOWNIE

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the boy, Canada's boy, has gone home to Fiddler's Green. We are devastated by the loss of Gord Downie.

The Tragically Hip have been the soundtrack of our nation, that cranked up, rowdy arena rock band that was both profoundly intimate and profoundly Canadian.

I had the honour of knowing Gord a bit from my days as a musician. He was not just an incredible artist; he was a decent, loving human being who believed the world could be a better place.

In the face of his own mortality, he took his suffering and brought our nation on a journey of reconciliation and justice. Gord wanted the nation to know that there were thousands of Chanie Wenjacks out there today, trying to find their way home from a system that had robbed them of their families, of their identity, and of their culture.

Go to the angels Gord and rock that choir. We will watch those constellations and Gord reveal themselves one star at time.

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ENRIGHT CATTLE COMPANY

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have found the answer to the age-old question, "Where's the beef?" Why, it is in Tweed, Ontario, of course, at the Enright Cattle Company, and it is making its way to our nation's capital.

Kara and Darold Enright will be pitching their business to Startup Canada demo days this week, in Ottawa, as one of four finalists. No bull, as proud representatives from Tweed, they are the only rural finalists in the competition, alongside companies from Toronto, Vancouver, and Ottawa. I think we can all agree that it is "udderly" amazing to see small entrepreneurs making it to the big time.

The finance minister and I had a chance to talk with the Enrights at their farm this summer, when we had a tour of their operation. We heard about their innovative bar coding system that allows them to track their sustainable beef from farm to table.

"Moo-ve" on over for the Enright Cattle Company.

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RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with excitement, sadness, but mostly pride that I rise today to recognize a key member of south Edmonton, Councillor Bryan Anderson.

Since 1998, we have only known one city councillor in our area, a city councillor who is better known as "Coach" instead of councillor. He began his career as a basketball coach at Harry Ainlay High School in Edmonton, but because of his desire to help and support our growing south community, he let his name stand for city council. Since then, he has been a vocal advocate of encouraging Edmontonians to live more active and healthy lifestyles.

His efforts have led to the construction of several recreation centres around our community, providing the opportunity for hundreds of kids to enjoy playing sports each and every day.

I thank Coach for all the years of service. I wish him and his family all the best as he heads into retirement.

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● (1410)

CROATIA

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome Gordan Jandrokovic, Speaker of the Croatian parliament, along with his parliamentary colleagues, as they pay an official visit to Canada.

In 1991, the Croatia people realized their centuries-long dream of an independent and democratic Croatia. Since then, Croatia has successfully held several parliamentary and presidential multi-party elections. Croatia is now a member of the UN, the World Trade Organization, the EU, and is an active contributor to NATO.

Canada and Croatia enjoy solid relations, having signed three bilateral agreements in the areas of youth mobility, foreign investment protection, and avoidance of double taxation. Croatian officers have trained with our military, and today Croatia is a reliable NATO partner and has contributed to several UN peacekeeping missions.

On a personal note, I am happy my Croatian grandparents chose to come to Canada but I am intensely proud of my Croatian heritage. I wish Speaker Jandrokovic and his parliamentary colleagues great success.

Dragi gosti, dobro dosli u Kanadu.

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GREENPARK GROUP

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that home is where the heart is. Today, I recognize a Canadian success story and an incredible organization, the Greenpark Group, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

[Translation]

In 1958, at the age of 19, Carlo Baldassarra immigrated to Canada from Italy full of ambition.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

Through his entrepreneurial spirit, Carlo co-founded the Greenpark Group, which has built homes for over 72,000 Canadian families.

A home is where our children grow up, where we make memories, and communities come to life. Understanding this, Greenpark Group has established itself as one of the largest Canadian homebuilders and its generosity and charitable initiatives know no bounds.

[Translation]

Local businesses are the backbone of our economy and I am proud to represent a community full of success stories.

[English]

I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Carlo, his passion for success, and the entire team of Green Park Group for 50 years of building communities.

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GORD DOWNIE

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I join with Canadians from all walks of life today with a heavy heart and offer condolences to the family and fans of legendary front man of The Tragically Hip, Gord Downie.

As someone who grew up in Gananoque, just a few minutes from his hometown of Kingston, I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Downie and the Hip many times from the early beginnings when they played the Nash in Gananoque and the Lakeview Manor in Kingston.

Gord Downie wrote the soundtrack to many of our lives, and the music he leaves behind will ensure that his legacy as a singer, songwriter, poet, and of course as an advocate for many issues, especially, lately, the impact of residential schools, remains in our collective memories.

Gord's music, his lyrics, his melodies, and his stage presence touched us all in a very personal way, as he wrote so many songs that made us better understand our country. He was unique, driven, inspiring, and he was never trying to compete with anyone but himself.

He will be sorely missed by all Canadians.

* * *

WARREN ALLMAND

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today in recognition of a truly remarkable Canadian, the late Warren Allmand.

Mr. Allmand, as we all know, was a member of Parliament for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce from 1965 to 1997 and served under the late Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau as minister of consumer and corporate affairs, minister of Indian affairs and northern development, and solicitor general. As solicitor general, Mr. Allmand cemented his legacy as a tireless defender of human rights, both in Canada and abroad, and played a key role in the landmark abolition of the death penalty in Canada in 1976.

In remembrance of his untimely death last year, I invite all members of this esteemed House to join the Allmand family this evening at a reception in the Wellington Building to celebrate the life and legacy of this remarkable Canadian.

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● (1415)

ATTACK IN MOGADISHU

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2005, as I walked down a dusty road in Jowhar, Somalia, a small girl walked up to me and took my hand. She was barefoot, with only a torn T-shirt to wear. When she took my hand, she beamed the most beautiful smile. I have often thought of that little girl. Did she ever learn to read and write? Did her black curls turn reddish from malnutrition? How had violence impacted upon her life? Was she in fact still alive?

Over the decades, Somalis have faced civil conflict, the anarchy of war lordism, violent extremism, and famine, and now they grieve as they try to come to terms with the horrific terrorist truck bombing in Mogadishu that took over 300 lives, with over 400 wounded. Members of this House grieve with them.

To my Somali brothers and sisters, I extend my heartfelt condolences.

[Member spoke in Somali]

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*[Translation]***RELAY FOR LIFE IN THE RCM OF L'ÉRABLE**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, cancer is devastating. Everyone is affected, regardless of whether one is rich or poor, in shape or sedentary.

Fortunately, Canadians everywhere are committed to restoring hope. Today, in Ottawa, I am hosting volunteers from the board of directors of Relay for Life in the RCM of l'Érable. Serge Barthell is a good-hearted man who leads this team to amazing things and unbelievable results. In 2017, Relay for Life in the RCM of l'Érable received the people's choice award from the Canadian Cancer Society.

Although our relay is held in a small region of Quebec, it is very successful. Last year, more than 17,000 luminaries were sold, and our region was recognized as the largest Relay for Life in the world.

On behalf of all of my colleagues in the House of Commons, I want to acknowledge the volunteers, walkers, and survivors of Relay for Life for their dedication and hard work. We have lost too many people over the past 11 years, but the thousands of luminaries lit in their honour remind us that they are still in our hearts. The tougher cancer gets, the stronger the people of l'Érable respond. These people stand tall, and they stand together.

Thank you, Serge, thank you volunteers, thank you Relay for Life in the RCM of l'Érable for keeping 17,000 flames glowing.

*Oral Questions**[English]***DIWALI**

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Diwali, which is celebrated across the world, brings people together to reflect on the victory of good over evil and the power of knowledge and hope over ignorance and despair. On October 19, in my riding of Surrey—Newton, the festival of lights will be celebrated in a big way with an amazing fireworks display at the brightly lit Lakshmi Narayan Mandir with Mata Lakshmi prayers and Kirtan. Also on this day, many of my constituents will be celebrating Bandi Chhor Divas at several gurdwaras throughout my riding.

I want all members of this House to join me in wishing all who are celebrating across this great nation a happy Bandi Chhor Divas and happy Diwali.

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PERSONS DAY

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate Persons Day. Eighty-eight years ago, women were legally defined as persons in Canada. This decision paved the way for some women's participation in public and political life. Indigenous women continued to face racist barriers that prevented them from getting involved in politics publicly. Immigrant and working-class women faced different barriers.

In the fight for equality, nothing has been given to women. What has been achieved is the result of tireless struggle and solidarity. This week, as millions of women took to social media to share their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault through #metoo, we are reminded of the inequality we still face.

As we look ahead, there is much to fight for, such as justice for missing and murdered indigenous women, child care, economic justice, and an end to sexual violence. We need men to own up and step up, and we need to move beyond individual acts and work together collectively to push for system change and to achieve the equality and justice we deserve.

* * *

● (1420)

GORD DOWNIE

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to mourn the death and to celebrate the life of Gord Downie.

Gord Downie was a true poet of the Canadian experience. His band, The Tragically Hip, chronicled life, love, joy, and justice for over three decades. The Hip, and of course its front man, Gord, was a uniquely Canadian band. All people could relate to them and feel that they were speaking to and about us.

Gord has been in our hearts since his diagnosis. He used his remaining time to maximum effect, championing indigenous rights and reconciliation. His sense of social justice was legitimate, and his passion burned bright. Of course, the final tour of The Hip last year became an iconic Canadian moment. It felt like all of Canada came together because “in Gord we trust”.

As we bid farewell to Gord Downie, we express our condolences to his family and express confidence that Gord Downie's example will help us live with “No dress rehearsal, [because] this is our life”.

* * *

GORD DOWNIE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of a true Canadian legend, Gord Downie. We will remember him as one of the greatest artists of our time.

Gord and The Tragically Hip started playing for Kingstonians in small pubs in the 1980s. Quickly winning over the hearts of Canadians, they rose to be known as Canada's band, thanks to Gord's stories through his songs, his wild antics, and his rantings on stage. However, for all his achievements and recognition, Downie was loved and admired for so much more than his talent. Perhaps what is most remarkable about Gord is that he chose to use his fame in a way to build up others. None of this was more true than when finding out his time was limited. Even with his personal struggle, he recognized that there were others facing challenges much greater than his, so he used his fame to advocate on behalf of indigenous communities.

I encourage everyone to remember Gord Downie for exemplifying what it means to be Canadian, both on stage and off.

The Speaker: I understand that there is agreement to have a moment of silence in honour of the late, great Gord Downie, and I invite members to stand.

*[A moment of silence observed]***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***ETHICS**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another day, another scandal involving the Minister of Finance.

Last night we learned that the Minister of Finance retained direct control over all of his personal holdings, including shares in his billion-dollar family business.

When did the Prime Minister become aware that his finance minister was still controlling tens of millions of dollars' worth of investments from his personal fortune?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance was first elected almost two years ago, he consulted the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and followed all of her advice. That is the kind of thing that the members of this House and all Canadians expect.

Oral Questions

Furthermore, the Minister of Finance just wrote a letter to the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ask if there is anything more he can do to go above and beyond what she initially advised, in order to demonstrate the highest level of integrity that Canadians and all members of this House expect.

• (1425)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): It seems he sent a letter, Mr. Speaker. That is real action right there.

The Prime Minister cannot defend this conflict of interest. The finance minister is developing legislation that could give all investors significant financial benefits, and he is doing so while still managing his personal fortune. His shares in Morneau Shepell, which were worth \$30 million two years ago, are now worth \$40 million.

When did the Prime Minister become aware that his finance minister was still controlling tens of millions of dollars' worth of investments from his personal fortune?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Minister of Finance worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner from the start to make sure everything was up to date, to work with her, and to follow her advice in order to fulfill his ministerial mandate with integrity.

He followed her advice and he remains open to doing so. He even asked the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner if there was anything else he could do to go above and beyond her initial requests.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was not the question. It was when did he know.

Speaking about following the letter of the law, here is a quote from the Prime Minister. The finance minister must “uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality, and both the performance of [his] official duties and the arrangement of [his] private affairs should bear the closest public scrutiny. This is an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law.” Who said that? It was the Prime Minister, in his mandate letter to the finance minister.

Once again, when did the Prime Minister become aware of the finance minister's conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the finance minister first got elected two years ago, he approached the Ethics Commissioner, as many of us did, to talk about his situation and to ask her advice on how he could ensure that all the rules and all the principles were followed. He followed all of her advice, and indeed, has recently asked her if there is more he can do to go above and beyond what she originally asked of him. That is the kind of integrity Canadians expect from all members of this House.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all summer long, the Prime Minister and the finance minister travelled across the country calling pizza shop owners and mechanics and farmers tax cheats who are trying to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. All the while, if the Prime Minister truly wanted to find a wealthy Canadian who was using the system to

avoid paying higher taxes, all he had to do was turn slightly to the right, where he would find the finance minister, who is doing exactly that. So when did the Prime Minister become aware that the finance minister continued to control his personal fortune?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the summer, we heard from Canadians, small businesses, and middle-class Canadians who are looking forward to making sure that the system is fair. That is exactly what—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am having trouble hearing the Prime Minister, and I am having trouble hearing the answers. I need to be able to hear them so I know if someone breaks a rule. I remind members that most members in the House are able to sit through question period and hear things they do not like, members of all parties, without reacting and without blurting things out, like adults, and I encourage the rest to do the same.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in the election campaign, we committed to supporting the middle class and those working hard to join it and to lower small business taxes to 9%. That is exactly what we have done. We know that hard-working small business owners deserve all the support they can get, because they create jobs, they create economic growth. We are proud of the work that the finance minister and this government have done to support small businesses right across this country.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): That is what they would like us to believe, Mr. Speaker, but what the Liberals were actually doing this whole time was protecting wealthy millionaires and those trying to hide it.

We know that the finance minister still owns \$40 million in shares in his family business, Morneau Shepell, a business that the minister is responsible for regulating. That business will directly profit off target benefit pensions, which the Liberals are introducing in Bill C-27. Therefore, can the Prime Minister confirm that his finance minister recused himself from any and all discussions on that bill?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 2015 election campaign, we promised that as we reduce the small business tax rate to 9% from 11%, we will ensure that Canadian-controlled private corporations are not used to reduce personal income tax obligations for high-income earners rather than supporting small businesses. That is a promise we made in that election campaign. That is what we are doing.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's answers do not make any sense. The finance minister is trying to justify his unjustifiable position by using a loophole that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner requested be closed back in 2014. Which loophole is this? The one where, instead of owning shares in his own name, he can have them held by a company of which he is the sole shareholder.

Does the Prime Minister think it acceptable for the finance minister to be doing indirectly what he cannot do directly?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite what the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner might have said in 2014, the finance minister consulted with her in 2015 to ask her advice on what he should do to ensure he follows all the rules in place that govern us all. He followed her recommendations, and, as he said, he is always open to doing more, if she advises him to do more, to go above and beyond what she initially asked of him.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a finance minister's responsibilities may be in conflict with a company he controls. For example, in a 2013 speech given by the minister, then a principal at Morneau Shepell, he said:

[English]

“We need legislation enabling Target Benefit Plans and Shared Risk Plans in all Canadian jurisdictions.”

[Translation]

In 2016, he introduced Bill C-27, which does exactly that and will benefit his company. I know my definition of “conflict of interest”. Perhaps the Prime Minister would like to share his?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here in Parliament, we have a Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner who helps us make sure we are in compliance with conflict of interest and ethics rules. The Minister of Finance began working with the commissioner in 2015 to ensure he was fully compliant, and he is still working with her. He has even asked her if she has any other recommendations above and beyond what she asked him to do in 2015.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder when this Prime Minister will finally take a bit of responsibility for this rather than trying to throw the Ethics Commissioner under the bus. Instead of selling millions in Morneau Shepell shares or even putting them in a blind trust, the finance minister chose to stuff them into a numbered company. He personally owns one-third of this company while the other two-thirds are owned by a second company. Who owns that second company? The finance minister does. What happens when you add one-third and two-thirds, other than a finance minister in a whole mess of trouble?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite needs to take a sharp look at who he is throwing under the bus. The finance minister worked with the conflict of ethics commissioner, followed her recommendations

and advice, and has continued to. The fact is that by following the rules and by following her recommendations—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, I am unable to hear the answer.

I know that members all want to have their say and put in their word, but they have to have confidence in those who actually get the floor to do that.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in this place, we have a conflict of ethics and interest commissioner, in whom we have confidence. We expect that when she gives advice to do something or behave in a certain way, we follow that. That is why we continue to have confidence in the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and the advice she gives to us all.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, “conflict of ethics”: I think that is what they call guilty in a court of law.

Only Liberals could find virtue in coming clean after they get caught. The Prime Minister says that putting their holdings in a blind trust is, in his words, the “gold standard”. The opposition, media, Canadians, even Liberals and the company Morneau Shepell, all believed that the finance minister had placed his wealth in a blind trust. He never once corrected the record.

This is a clear question to the Prime Minister. Did he know, and if he did know, what did he do about it, or does he even care?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I and everyone in this House, expect all members of this House to work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to follow the advice that she gives. That is what we do in this House, and that is one of the ways we go above the partisan politics and personal attacks to have confidence in the work that each and every one of us does in this House.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: the Prime Minister hid the details of his vacation on a private island from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, and now we see that the Minister of Finance did the same thing for two years by concealing the existence of his villa in France and refusing to place his assets in a blind trust.

When did the Prime Minister learn that his finance minister holds assets in his company, which is managed by the Department of Finance and which still he fully controls?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question.

As everyone knows, the Minister of Finance worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure full compliance on everything having to do with his personal assets.

Oral Questions

Once again, we are working very hard to keep the promises we made to the middle class and small businesses. We cut the small business tax rate, which will drop to 9%. We cut taxes for the middle class and raised taxes for the wealthy. We will continue to do just that.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible.

The Minister of Finance is supposedly driven by a sense of fairness in his tax reform, or so the Prime Minister would have us believe.

Is it fair to propose a reform that will benefit his own personal interests by attacking SMEs, our workers, farmers, mechanics, restaurant owners, and the middle class?

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Is it too much to ask for him to get his Minister of Finance to disclose all his assets to the Canadian public?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. Those mechanics, small business owners, farmers, and fishers will all benefit from a tax cut thanks to the actions of this government. We promised to lower the small business tax rate to 9%, and that is exactly what we are doing while ensuring that the wealthy cannot use these mechanisms to avoid paying the same tax rate as the middle class.

We will continue to stand up for small businesses. We will continue to stand up for the middle class. I am very proud of the work that this government and the Minister of Finance are doing.

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the Prime Minister to focus clearly on what the question is, because we are not getting the answer.

When the finance minister was first elected, he clearly said that he was going to put his vast fortune into a blind trust. We learned two years later that in 2015 he had a choice between selling the shares and putting them in a blind trust and, lo and behold, he did neither.

I want to know one specific thing. When did the Prime Minister learn that the Minister of Finance did not dispose of his shares in accordance with the Ethics Commissioner?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as is the case for all our ministers, I knew that our ministers, each and every one of them, have worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that her advice is followed in their personal affairs. This is something that matters to all parliamentarians. It allows us to focus on the things that really matter to Canadians, like lowering taxes for small businesses, like lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%, like delivering the Canada child benefit to give more money to nine out of 10 Canadian families. That is what this government is focused on, not the petty politics that the members opposite are focused on.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the Prime Minister one thing. Where I come from in Milton, Ontario, it is not petty to want to make sure that our Minister of Finance is absolutely—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Milton.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: The Prime Minister, in the House, is now shrugging off responsibility. It is a personal matter; it is not his to look after. It absolutely is, and shame on the Prime Minister for not having the decency of ensuring that his finance minister is following the law.

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my responsibility is to ensure that this government stays focused on the things that matter and that we follow all the rules. That is why the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner gave clear advice to the Minister of Finance, which he followed and which he will continue to follow. If she wants to make any more recommendations, he will be happy to go above and beyond.

We remain focused on the folks in Milton, the folks in 337 other ridings across this country, as we lower taxes for the middle class, as we raise them on the wealthiest 1%, as we lower taxes for all small businesses.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after months of calling hard-working Canadians tax cheats, we now know that the Minister of Finance found a loophole and has all of his Morneau Shepell shares—by the way, about \$40 million worth of them—tucked away for a rainy day in a numbered company in Alberta. The hypocrisy of this is mind-boggling, but what is beyond mind-boggling is the Prime Minister defending this, saying he knew about it all along and he is perfectly okay with it. Is that where the Prime Minister stands today on his finance minister using loopholes to cover up and protect his assets? Is that what we are hearing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, apparently unlike the members opposite, I still have confidence in the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. She gave clear advice to the Minister of Finance. He followed that advice.

One of the reasons we have a Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is to avoid the gutter politics that the members opposite are involved in right now, making wild accusations when the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is there to protect members on this side of the House and members on that side of the House. We have a system in which Canadians can be proud. We will continue to defend that system.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fig leaf that the Prime Minister is trying to hide behind is getting smaller and smaller by the moment. We have a Minister of Finance who has for the past two years owned tens of millions of dollars' worth of shares in Morneau Shepell. All along he has been doing two things: first of all, making a whole lot more money in the last two years; second of all, enacting legislation that benefits that company.

Oral Questions

We are going to give the Prime Minister another chance. Does he defend the behaviour of the Minister of Finance making money off of assets that he owns while enacting legislation as Minister of Finance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that we can talk about the behaviour of the finance minister. The finance minister lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them on the wealthiest 1%. He has contributed to the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs across this country, record numbers over the past 10 years. We now have the fastest-growing economy in the G7. The finance minister put forward a strengthening of the Canada pension plan that will secure retirement for generations to come, and continues to look at ways to help Canadians like, for example, delivering the Canada child benefit which helps nine out of 10—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, I would ask the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman to listen.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance stands to make millions in profit from a bill before Parliament that he himself wrote.

This may be the most blatant conflict of interest in history. It is undeniable that, if Bill C-27 were to become law, Morneau Shepell would reap greater profits, which would pour into the finance minister's pocket. That is totally unacceptable.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his Minister of Finance has utterly betrayed Canadians' trust?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians placed their trust in this government and this Minister of Finance because we promised to invest in the middle class, promote economic growth, and help families in need. That is exactly what we are doing.

We lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them for the wealthiest Canadians. We introduced the Canada child benefit, which gives more money to nine out of ten families, and we improved the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors. We continue to invest in infrastructure across Canada to help our communities and Canadians. We are going to continue creating economic growth for all Canadians.

• (1445)

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the boss at Morneau Shepell told investors in 2013 that legislation was required to go after defined pension benefits and, voila, he introduced Bill C-27. Morneau Shepell told investors this legislation would be a game-changer.

The Prime Minister is talking about a gold standard of ethics. Gold for whom, for the finance minister, who is now making \$150,000 a month? A blind trust will not cut it. Will the Prime Minister withdraw Bill C-27, and his finance minister's blatant attack on the pension benefits of Canadian workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the work that the finance minister and indeed this government has done to support organized labour, to support workers across this country. We are going to continue to put money in the pockets of the middle class and those working hard to join it, because we know that is the best way to grow the economy. When we invest in the middle class, when we support the middle class, whether it is small businesses, single moms, or hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast, we know that the entire economy benefits. We are going to stay focused on the promise we made to Canadians to grow the economy in a way that works for everyone. That is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ministers are banned from owning stocks. To get around that, the finance minister stuffed his stocks in a numbered company in Alberta. The finance minister earned \$13 million in gains from a financial company that he regulates. When did the Prime Minister learn that his finance minister had over \$40 million in stocks in a company that he regulates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, apparently, unlike the members opposite, I have confidence in our Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, who was fully updated on all the personal situations of every member of our government, and who worked with each one of them, including the Minister of Finance, to ensure that everything they did conformed to the rules and the principles that govern this place. We will continue to be fully confident in the capacity of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to do her job, and I really would recommend that the members opposite do as well.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the member for Battle River—Crowfoot to restrain himself. I am sure we will all listen to the questions and the answers.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister used a loophole to keep himself invested in a financial company that he regulates. He earned \$13 million, while finance minister, through the use of that loophole, all the while going across the country calling honest plumbers and farmers tax cheats. When did the Prime Minister know that his finance minister had shares in Morneau Shepell?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has helped us in a time when we have the fastest-growing economy in the G7. He has lowered taxes on the middle class and raised them on the wealthiest 1%. He increased the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors. He strengthened the Canada pension plan for future generations. He has been the finance minister through investments in infrastructure across this country that are going to create millions of good jobs and secure communities and their futures for many years to come. These are the kinds of things that Canadians expect from this government. These are the things that we are staying focused on.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is actually staying focused on something else and that is growing his family fortune. He used a loophole in order to get around the ban on ministers owning stocks. This is the finance minister, the country's most powerful financial decision-maker, and he kept secret from the Canadian people over \$40 million of investments that he had in a company that he regulated.

When did the Prime Minister learn that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has contributed to the creation of over 400,000 new jobs across this country, most of them full time.

Since December 2015, the unemployment rate has dropped from 7.1% to 6.2%, the lowest point in nearly nine years.

We have cut taxes for the middle class by raising them on the wealthiest 1%. We have ended the sending of Conservative child benefit cheques to millionaire families so we could give more money to nine out of 10 Canadian families, and cut child poverty by 40%.

These are the things the finance minister has been focused on. These are the things Canadians elected this government to deliver.

• (1450)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, based on public filings, Morneau Shepell has been sending million-dollar cheques to the millionaire finance minister. He has continued to own shares in a publicly traded company that he regulates. This is the finance minister, the man who is supposed to regulate our financial markets, and yet he has a \$40-million secret stake in one of the most powerful companies in the country.

When did the Prime Minister learn these facts?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why members opposite just want to make personal attacks and sully the good name of members across this way. It is because they have nothing to say on the substance of what we are doing. For months, we have heard them shrieking—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: For months, Mr. Speaker, members opposite went on and on about how we were attacking small businesses, even though we were doing no such thing. We have demonstrated that we are moving forward on keeping our electoral commitments to lower the small business tax to 9%, while at the same time ensuring that the wealthiest Canadians do not benefit from tax advantages that middle-class Canadians do not. This is our focus.

It is no wonder that they have nothing to do but sling mud.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are truly pitiful. During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to amend our inadequate bankruptcy laws to put an end to pension theft. Two years later, they have yet to do anything. If they had acted more quickly, they could have protected

Sears workers and pensioners. Now it is radio silence, and it is as though they never even made that promise. Oddly enough, today, we learned that Morneau Shepell will be in charge of the Sears Canada liquidation. This is just as bad as the sponsorship scandal.

Did the Prime Minister forget his promise because the status quo will benefit the financial interests of—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I expect this kind of cynicism from the Conservatives, but it is very disappointing to hear it coming from the NDP. We will continue to work with Canadians, with workers who are going through tough times, especially those in the retail sector, and we will continue to support families, workers, and seniors to ensure that they are confident about their futures. That is what this government does every day, and that is what we will continue to do.

[English]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Certainly not supporting the middle class that is for sure, Mr. Speaker.

Workers at Sears Canada are very worried about whether their pensions will be protected, but guess who has been appointed to administer the Sears Canada pension plan? Morneau Shepell. This is a company that advocates transferring more risks from employer to employee.

The government promised it would fix our bankruptcy laws but it has done nothing.

Furthermore, if Bill C-27 becomes law, the finance minister will profit off workers getting stuck with weak pensions.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Is this the real change he promised working Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the workers who were affected by the decisions taken by Sears.

We are making every effort to connect Sears employees and pensioners with programs and services that will help them get through this tough time. I understand current Sears Canada pension fund assets are held in trust, and must be used solely for the benefit of pensioners.

Service Canada has been meeting with representatives of Sears Canada to ensure a rapid national and coordinated response to meet the needs of the impacted employees. Approximately 80 sessions have already been delivered across this country.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year is the 38th Small Business Week, which celebrates Canada's entrepreneurs and small businesses. From mom-and-pop shops in Brampton, like T By Daniel to innovative giants, small businesses truly are the backbone of the Canadian economy.

Oral Questions

This week, over 208 events being held from coast to coast to coast give entrepreneurs the opportunity to network, and access business advice and solutions.

Could the Prime Minister tell us how our government is helping small businesses in Canada?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government always has supported and always will support hard-working Canadian entrepreneurs and small business owners.

This week we announced that we are delivering on our commitment to reduce the small business tax rate to 9%, and that small businesses would have to have, at 5% returns, over \$1 million sitting in their account to be impacted by our proposals.

We all benefit when Canadian businesses are strong and creating good, middle-class jobs for Canadians and those working hard to join the middle class.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by secretly keeping his shares in the financial services firm he runs, the Minister of Finance was able to earn \$13 million in passive income and capital gains since becoming finance minister two years ago.

Ministers are not allowed to own shares. To get around that, the finance minister put his shares in his numbered company in Alberta, thereby circumventing ethics rules and paying less tax.

When did the Prime Minister find out that his finance minister was using a loophole to hold on to shares in a company he runs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very disturbing that personal attacks are being made not only against the finance minister but also against the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

The Minister of Finance worked with the commissioner to ensure that he was following all the rules and principles. What is more, he remains open to continuing to work with her if she has any further requests that go above and beyond her initial recommendations.

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a question through you to the Minister of Finance, though we know the Prime Minister is speaking for the Minister of Finance again today. It is a simple question, which I hope the Minister of Finance will make himself available to the House to answer, sooner than later.

When did the Minister of Finance advise the Prime Minister—when did the Prime Minister learn that Canada's chief financial officer so deliberately offended the spirit of the ethics law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to once again highlight that during Prime Minister's question period on Wednesdays, I am happy to take all questions from all members opposite.

Furthermore, in the time since the Minister of Finance was elected, he has worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that his personal holdings conform with the rules, principles, and laws that regulate us all in this place, and will continue to do exactly that.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has been secretly holding \$40 million of shares in a financial services company. The minister regulates pensions; his company administers pensions. He introduced a bill to promote target benefit pension plans; his company administers those plans. His tax proposal coerces small businesses to open individual pension plans; his company sells those plans.

When did the Prime Minister learn that his Minister of Finance still owns \$40 million of shares in a financial services company he regulates as minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is actually fairly interesting. For months we heard nothing from the Conservatives except concern about our proposals to make the tax system fairer.

Now that we have laid out what we are doing, and were always intending on doing, they have nothing to say about that. The Conservatives have fallen back on personal attacks, on throwing mud, on calling into question not just the Minister of Finance's ethics, but the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner herself. That is really where the members opposite have ended up.

They know that the proposals we put forward for small businesses and Canadians are the right ones.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is forbidden from owning stocks in finance companies, but he used an ethics loophole to stash the stocks in a numbered company in Alberta. The same finance minister who has called farmers and plumbers tax cheats for using what he calls “loopholes” used an ethics loophole to keep his stocks, which have made him \$13 million while he has been the Minister of Finance.

When did the Prime Minister learn that his finance minister used ethics loopholes to pocket \$13 million by owning stocks in a company he regulates as the Minister of Finance?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now we see clearly that the supposed concern of the members opposite for plumbers, farmers, electricians, and small business owners was nothing, because as soon as we put forward the proposals to demonstrate that we would be supporting small businesses while making sure that the wealthiest Canadians pay their fair share of taxes, they had nothing to say about it.

They have completely forgotten all the arguments they have made over the past months and do nothing but engage in personal attacks and slinging mud, both at the finance minister and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. Shame on them.

Oral Questions

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that Bill C-27 furthers the private interests of the finance minister. The Conflict of Interest Act states that a minister is in a conflict “when he or she exercises an official power...to further his or her private interests or those of his or her relatives”.

Will the Prime Minister just admit that his Minister of Finance has violated the Conflict of Interest Act, or is he just too busy working hard for the French villa owners, or those who are working hard to become French villa—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our focus remains on supporting the middle class and those working hard to join it. That is exactly what we have been doing, lowering taxes on the middle class, raising them on the wealthiest 1%, delivering a Canada child benefit that helps nine out of 10 Canadian families, staying focused on strengthening the guaranteed income supplement for our vulnerable elderly seniors, and helping students get back to school with upfront grants and more money. These are the types of things we are focused on. All the while, we trust in the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and the recommendations she makes to each and every one of us in the House.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister kept calling this a “conflict of ethics”, so I wonder how many sets of ethics the Liberals actually have for them to have a conflict between one set and another.

He said he is focused on what he thinks is important. Well, a finance minister setting up a numbered company to exploit an ethics loophole is important to Canadians. He says this finance minister's breaking of his own ethics code is “petty politics”. We think protecting Canadian pensions is important and do not think a conflict of ethics is petty politics.

When is he going to apologize for his dismissive remarks and finally take some action about this blatant abuse of public office?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the opposition has to resort to nothing more than mudslinging and personal attacks, we can see that the government must be doing something right. We are, because we are investing and are lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%.

We are lowering small business taxes for Canadians right across the country. We know that small businesses are at the heart of the economy. They are the employers, the local community hubs that make such a difference in our towns and cities right across the country. We are going to continue to stand up for small business owners and grow the economy in ways the previous government never could.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's answers clearly show that the Liberal government has a serious credibility problem because they live in a world that is out of reach for the middle class. The government keeps its word only as

long as the cameras are rolling. The more the Liberals repeat something, the more people should be worried. Their tax reform that attacks farmers proves it. The parliamentary secretary for Canada-U.S. relations was clear. The government has room to negotiate with the Americans on supply management.

Can the Prime Minister confirm this?

The parliamentary secretary basically revealed the government's true position.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I speak on behalf of all the members on this side of the House when I say that we will always stand up for supply management. It was a previous Liberal government that implemented it. The Liberal Party and all its members will always stand up for supply management. Unfortunately, the members opposite cannot say the same.

● (1505)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 11, in a debate that was televised, recorded, and broadcast in the United States, the parliamentary secretary said this:

[*English*]

“Is there room to discuss and negotiate? Of course.”

[*Translation*]

Contrary to what the Prime Minister and the ministers are saying, the truth is that the Liberals are ready to make concessions with respect to our supply management system.

Will the Prime Minister chastise the parliamentary secretary for giving the Americans that opening? Any concession will have disastrous consequences for dairy, egg, and poultry producers.

Will the Prime Minister promise to protect the integrity of the supply management system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say how pleased I am to see how enthusiastic the member opposite is about supply management, and I hope he will talk about it on Wednesday mornings. I can assure everyone that the Liberal Party will always defend supply management. The system works for our producers and our consumers. We have managed to negotiate plenty of international agreements without infringing on supply management. We will always defend supply management.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Jennifer Catcheway's parents have every reason to feel betrayed. They lost their beautiful daughter, an 18-year-old, on her birthday. They have spent years waiting to tell their story, and at the murdered and missing inquiry they were told they could have a couple of minutes, that was it.

The Prime Minister is responsible for this process. How can he justify such an insult to the victims of murdered and missing indigenous women?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls across this country have been a national tragedy for decades now. We know we need to bring healing for the families, justice for the victims, and to put an end to this national tragedy once and for all. That is why, despite 10 years of the Conservative Party saying no and refusing to act on this, this government has moved forward on the difficult process of a national inquiry into the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and we are working hard with this inquiry to ensure that everyone is heard.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 18 is Persons Day, a day that marks a pivotal moment in Canadian history when, in 1929, women were legally recognized as persons under our Constitution. Can the Prime Minister please tell the House how we can honour the legacy of the Famous Five who stood up for women's rights and advanced gender equality in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Humber River—Black Creek for her long-time advocacy on behalf of women's rights in the House.

Famous Five member Nellie McClung once said, "Yesterday's successes will not do for today! Women must claim the place they have won." Although 80 years later women and girls are claiming their place, there remains much more to do for gender equality to become a reality. On Persons Day this year, let us renew our commitment to make a difference in the lives of women and girls and ensure that everyone's voice is heard regardless of their gender identity.

* * *

[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government must approve the sale of the Bombardier C Series aircraft to Airbus in a few weeks' time. We know that the government has given Bombardier millions of dollars to develop the C Series. Now it is time for Canadian taxpayers to be reimbursed. My question is simple.

Will the conditions for approval for the Bombardier-Airbus agreement include a specific condition that Canadian taxpayers get their money back?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will go even one step further. Not only do we expect to be paid back for our loans to Bombardier, we also expect the company to create jobs for Canadian workers until 2041, if not beyond. These are good jobs for the middle class in the aerospace industry, and as I have always said in this House, we will always stand up for the Canadian aerospace industry and its workers.

● (1510)

[English]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Citizens for Public Justice reports that people living with disabilities are highly vulnerable to poverty, particularly those facing multiple discriminations. Their median income is almost half the median income of those without disabilities. While we appreciate the government's upcoming legislation on accessibility, we know that people living with disabilities face many more issues.

I ask the Prime Minister, will the Liberal accessibility legislation address this poverty crisis or will the government at least offer income support through other means?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her for deep concern for this issue and one that we share.

We know that too many Canadians living with disabilities face economic challenges that other Canadians do not have to face. This is going to part of our accessibility legislation to ensure that Canada offers full opportunities for each and every one of us to achieve our potential, regardless of the barriers we may face.

* * *

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Denis Lemieux (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to reliable, broadband Internet service is very important in today's economy. It is important for every aspect of daily life.

However, many regions in our country, especially our rural and remote regions, are still lacking good Internet connections. Even my riding, Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, does not have the necessary infrastructure to support broadband Internet service. That is why I was pleased with our government's announcement regarding the connect to innovate program, which will help resolve this problem.

Can our Prime Minister provide the House with an update on this important matter for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for his question and his passion for his beautiful region.

Internet access is an essential part of daily life. With connect to innovate, we are investing up to \$500 million to bring Internet access to 300 rural communities. I was in Roberval to announce \$13 million for high-speed Internet for every region in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and the Mauricie. These are necessary investments for improving the lives of Canadians and giving them more opportunities.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been asked a clear question: When did he know that his Minister of Finance held \$40 million in Morneau Shepell? He totally dismissed that as a petty question, because the pensions of Canadians apparently are petty to the Prime Minister.

The minister regulates pensions and his company profits from pensions, which is an obvious potential conflict of interest. Therefore, once again, when did the Prime Minister know that his Minister of Finance had \$40 million invested in Morneau Shepell?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I expect all parliamentarians on both sides of the aisle to work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all the rules are followed. In the case of the Finance Minister, he took the advice of the Ethics Commissioner, and even offered to do more if she feels he needs to do more.

The fact is, we will stay focused on what matters to Canadians, and what matters to Canadians is not personal attacks, but our delivering on lowering taxes for the middle class, on lowering taxes for small businesses, and on growing the economy in a way that helps everyone in this country.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, the National Assembly passed a bill on religious neutrality. Whether the federal government agrees or not, that is the National Assembly's absolute right.

Will the Prime Minister commit to not doing what was done with Bill 99? Will the Prime Minister commit to not challenge Bill 62 in court and to not to fund potential challenges of this bill?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to all Canadians.

One of my responsibilities as Prime Minister is to uphold the charter. I will continue to ensure that all Canadians are protected by the charter, all while respecting the choices made by lawmakers at all levels. Nevertheless, the federal government will defend the rights of all Canadians.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Gordan Jandrokovic, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the participants of the 14th Canadian Parliamentary Seminar organized by the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROYAL ASSENT

● (1515)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall

Ottawa

October 18th, 2017

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that Ms. Patricia Jaton, Deputy Secretary to the Governor General, in her capacity as the Deputy of the Governor General, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 18th day of October, 2017, at 1:00 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wallace

The schedule indicates the bills assented to were Bill S-226, An Act to provide for the taking of restrictive measures in respect of foreign nationals responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights and to make related amendments to the Special Economic Measures Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code (protection of journalistic sources).

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, three reports of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas.

The first report is its bilateral visit to Havana, Cuba, from March 13 to 15, and its participation at the second gathering of the Open Parliament Network and the 42nd meeting of ParlAmericas' board of directors held in San José, Costa Rica, from March 15 to 18.

The second report is its participation at the ninth gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians and the 43rd meeting of the ParlAmericas' board of directors held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from May 22 to 24.

The last report is its participation at the 47th regular session of the OAS general assembly held in Cancun, Mexico, from June 18 to 21.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

LIAISON COMMITTEE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Liaison Committee, entitled “Committee Activities and Expenditures: April 1, 2017—August 31, 2017”.

This report highlights the work and accomplishments of many of the committees in the House, as well as detailing the budgets to fund the activities approved by committee members.

* * *

● (1520)

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON DISTRACTED DRIVING ACT

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-373, An Act respecting a federal framework on distracted driving.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House today to introduce my private member's bill, Bill C-373, an act respecting a federal framework on distracted driving. The bill calls upon the Minister of Justice, in collaboration with the Minister of Transport, to work with the provincial and territorial governments to develop a federal framework to coordinate and promote efforts to deter and prevent distracted driving involving the use of hand-held electronic devices.

The framework would include six provisions on: the collection of information relating to incidents involving the use of hand-held electronic devices; the administration and enforcement of laws respecting distracted driving; the creation and implementation of public education programs; the role of driver-assistance technology in reducing the number of collisions and fatalities; the sharing of best practices among jurisdictions; and recommendations regarding possible amendments to federal laws, policies, and programs.

Right now, a person is more likely to be a victim of distracted driving than a victim of impaired driving. Last year, in my home province of Manitoba, over 11,000 collisions were related to distracted driving. That is almost 25% of all collisions in my province. As a result of these collisions, 29 people lost their lives. This is an issue that has impacted all of us here in this chamber, myself included.

In my career as an emergency room physician, I provided care to multiple victims of distracted driving, some who died as a result of their injuries. On a more personal note, on Halloween 2009, a good friend lost her teenage sister in a collision with a distracted driver.

I introduce the bill in the hope that we can prevent future tragedies like this.

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

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my private member's bill, Bill C-374, an act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act, composition of the Board.

The bill would add three indigenous members to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada: one first nations member, one Inuit member, and one Métis member. It is a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action, No. 79(i). The bill would also update language within the act.

Reconciliation is a responsibility of all Canadians. While significant work remains to be done, the bill is one small step toward reconciliation.

I look forward to debate and discussion with my colleagues as we advance the bill in the coming months.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from members of the Greater Niagara Medical society. I met with them a couple of weeks ago. Needless to say, they are quite concerned about the changes proposed by the finance minister.

In particular, the petitioners believe these changes will jeopardize the investments they have made in their practices, the staff they employ, the patient care they are able to provide, and ultimately their ability to retire. As well, they believe these proposed changes will drive some of our country's best and brightest physicians out of this country.

The petitioners are opposed to what the Minister of Finance has proposed. Therefore, I would like to table this petition. This is not in the usual form, so I would ask for the consent of the House to table it.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for Niagara Falls have the unanimous consent of the House to table the petition?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: The Liberals apparently do not want to have a petition from the physicians tabled in the House. I will report that to them.

● (1525)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table.

The first petition is from Canadians who signed an electronic petition, 1018. They note that the vast majority of Canadians oppose cruel and inhumane practices against animals.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call on the House to work toward having Canada become an animal testing free country by 2020, and ensure that existing and future animals in labs be released in good health instead of being euthanized until animal testing is phased out by 2020.

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with Canadians who are very concerned about the treatment of temporary foreign workers in our country. They point out that many of them are exploited and that there is inadequate protection for them.

The petitioners call on the House to enact the recommendations laid out by the HUMA committee in the temporary foreign worker program report issued in 2016.

CABOTAGE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, finally, I have a petition signed by hundreds of people who are concerned about the Emerson report suggestions to dismantle established rules governing cabotage in Canada.

The petitioners call on the House to protect Canadian seafarers and port assets to ensure Canada has a strong domestic internal waterway system that protects Canadian jobs and Canadian Maritime assets.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of people in my region who are very concerned about what is happening in regard to the protection of our rivers and lakes. This petition pertains to the Thames River system.

The previous Conservative government stripped the regulations in regard to environmental protection connected with the Navigable Waters Protection Act. That made hundreds of rivers and lakes vulnerable, including the Thames.

As the Liberal government has failed to keep its promise to reinstate environmental protection, the petitioners want the Government of Canada to support my private members bill, Bill C-355, which commits to prioritizing the protection of the Thames River by amending the Navigation Protection Act.

[*Translation*]

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today.

It is a great honour for me to rise to present a petition to support a national environmental education strategy. The petitioners believe that the Government of Canada must play an international leadership role in promoting the importance of environmental education.

[*English*]

TAXATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners urge the Government of Canada to seek to close tax loopholes, real ones, such as the stock

options deduction that leads to some significant tax evasion, in the view of the petitioners.

PHARMACARE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is one we debated recently in this place, which is a call for a long-overdue national pharmacare program. The petitioners point out that we are the only country in the world with universal health care where that universal health care plan does not include guaranteed access to medically necessary pharmaceuticals.

CARBON TAX

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to present in the House a petition having to do with climate change and the carbon tax that is going to be imposed come January. It was unilaterally declared that there will be a national carbon tax before the premiers of the different provinces were even consulted. That is brought up in this petition.

In addition to that, this petition declares that Canadian governments already collect \$17 billion annually from the oil and gas industry to fund essential government programs and services. It further brings up that there is no guarantee that a national carbon tax would be revenue neutral. It goes on to explain that this will, in fact, make life more expensive for everyday Canadians and will disproportionately target those who are poor within our country. It will do this by increasing already high prices on gasoline, vehicles, clothing, shoes, and the food we eat. Basically everything in Canadian society will go up in price.

For that reason, and because we are already facing tough economic times in Canada, many members in my riding signed this petition. They are calling on the Government of Canada to not unilaterally impose any national carbon tax or pricing mechanism that would duplicate existing provincial programs and harm Canada's economic competitiveness domestically, in North America, or internationally. I think it is fair to say that what I am holding in my hand is basically a cease and desist order.

● (1530)

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to solve, once and for all, the long-standing abandoned vessel problem, I bring again to the House voices from Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Gabriola Island, and Honeymoon Bay calling on the government to vote in favour of my bill, Bill C-352. It would make the Coast Guard the responsible agency, the one-stop shop, for dealing with emergency abandoned vessels and would also institute a program, in co-operation with coastal communities and the provinces, to deal with vessel recycling, finding new markets for fibreglass, and preventing the oil spill risks that abandoned vessels pose. I urge Parliament and the government to take the advice of these petitioners and act now for coastal communities.

*Government Orders***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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy 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 be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-57, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I will be sharing my time with the member for Whitby.

I would like to speak about an issue in relation to Bill C-57 that is really important, not just to all Canadians but to many of my Pontiac constituents. There are a great number of Pontiac residents who work as public servants within the federal civil service. Many of them, across all departments, recognize the importance of the federal government, as a whole, contributing to a greater degree to achieving our sustainable development objectives. It is for this reason that I rise with great pleasure today. It is important that we have a discussion about what the federal government can do as an entity to better the outcomes toward sustainable development. Whether it is with regard to climate change or a reduction in the use of toxic substances, this is an important issue in my riding.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act, was introduced in the House on June 19, 2017 by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. It amends the Federal Sustainable Development Act, which has been in effect since 2008, and seeks to broaden the scope of that act, make the process for developing the federal sustainable development strategy more transparent, and increase accountability to Parliament.

[*English*]

The first thing that has to be said is that this Federal Sustainable Development Act is important, because it helps create a federal sustainable development strategy. To many Canadians, this is internal business of the government, and it is, but it is business that reflects the interests of all Canadians. If one considers how

many buildings are operated by the federal government, how many cars are purchased by the federal government, and what kinds of procurement decisions are made by the federal government, one can see just how important and how impactful a federal sustainable development strategy can be.

[*Translation*]

The Act requires federal departments and agencies to prepare their own sustainable development strategies. Each strategy must contain the department or agency's objectives and plans, comply with and contribute to the federal sustainable development strategy, and be appropriate to the department or agency's mandate.

The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the progress of departments and agencies in implementing their strategies.

This is a perfect example of how Parliament works under a Liberal government. In spring 2016, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development conducted an assessment of the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

• (1535)

[*English*]

This standing committee study was a perfect example of how Parliament can work when there is collaboration among different parties. This was actually the very first piece of work I had the privilege of being involved in with the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I would like to take this opportunity to commend my colleagues on the opposite side, both Conservative and New Democratic, and there was also some good input from our Green colleague, for working together in recognition of the fact that the Federal Sustainable Development Act is not a perfect law. One of the reasons it is not a perfect law is that, as I mentioned, it was in fact passed in 2008 as a private member's bill. The law itself did not emerge as a government bill back in 2008, and it needed some updating. Parties worked together in this committee and came forward with some really interesting proposals for reform. I should add that these proposals were unanimously agreed upon, and they were tabled here in the House by the chair of our committee.

This is the result of a positive process, a process the Minister of Environment and Climate Change clearly took note of. She herself responded very positively to our report. That is why we see Bill C-57, which reflects a number of the amendments proposed by our committee.

[*Translation*]

Our assessment revealed various weaknesses in the current process for developing and implementing the federal sustainable development strategy. The committee's report contained 13 recommendations to correct these weaknesses. The minister agreed, on behalf of the federal government, to propose changes to improve the act's effectiveness and the federal government's performance in sustainable development.

Government Orders

The bill makes more federal entities subject to the act. From now on, the act will apply to all designated entities, meaning all of the departments, agencies, and agents of Parliament named in schedule I.1 to the Financial Administration Act, and all departmental corporations listed in schedule II to that act.

[English]

We are talking about a much broader application of the Federal Sustainable Development Act, and that is a very positive development.

[Translation]

First, the legal framework for developing and implementing a federal sustainable development strategy must now increase the transparency of federal decision making in relation to sustainable development rather than to the environment.

Second, the sustainable development strategy must now promote coordinated action across the Government of Canada to advance sustainable development and respect Canada's domestic and international obligations relating to sustainable development, with a view to improving the quality of life of Canadians.

The bill lists a number of principles that must be considered in the development of sustainable development strategies.

In addition to the principle that decisions are to integrate environmental, economic and social factors, the bill adds the principle of intergenerational equity, the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, the internalization of costs, openness and transparency, the involvement of Aboriginal peoples, collaboration and a result-based approach.

[English]

I will have a few more things to say about the issue of principles in this bill, and I will come back to that momentarily.

[Translation]

There will also be improvements to the Sustainable Development Advisory Council. The bill sets out the role of the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, which is to advise the minister on any matter related to sustainable development that is referred to it by the minister. The bill also changes the council's membership by increasing the number of aboriginal representatives from three to six, and adds a provision calling on the minister to ensure that, to the extent possible, the council's membership reflects the diversity of Canadian society.

The bill amends the way in which designated federal entities develop their own sustainable development strategies and report on their progress. Under the new provisions, the Treasury Board may establish policies and directives regarding the environmental impact of the operations of designated entities, and designated entities must take these policies and directives into account when preparing their sustainable development strategies.

Lastly, the bill authorizes the Governor in Council to make regulations prescribing the form and content of the sustainable development strategies of designated entities. The Governor in Council may also, by order, add or remove entities from the list of designated entities subject to the act.

The bill adds a new provision requiring a review of the act by a parliamentary committee—a House of Commons, Senate, or joint committee—every five years following the coming into force of the bill, which is a worthwhile initiative.

• (1540)

[English]

One aspect that makes this bill touch down is that it goes to how each department is going to become more sustainable in its everyday operations. For example, when departments like Global Affairs Canada make a commitment to buy more eco-friendly cars, hybrid or electric vehicles, or Heritage Canada commits to establishing electric recharge stations at Terrasses de la Chaudière, these are concrete measures. We need our departments to concretely make advances so that we can achieve sustainable development.

If there is one thing I would like to conclude with, it is simply that I look forward to a discussion before our standing committee during clause-by-clause, because there are aspects of this bill that can be improved, notably with regard to the addition of additional principles. However, all in all, I think the Minister of Environment is to be commended for this bill.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I think it is worth mentioning the name of the former member of Parliament who brought forward this legislation as a private member's bill when it was originally passed during the years of minority government under the former prime minister, Stephen Harper. It was the hon. John Godfrey, with whom I have had decades of friendship. I met him initially when he was president of King's College in Halifax.

Since the hon. member was a member of the environment and sustainable development committee that worked on what I think is an excellent report on how to improve this act, I would ask him in which respects the current legislation differs from the recommendations of the parliamentary committee.

Mr. William Amos: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for the positive comment about the committee's work, and absolutely for the reference to former member Mr. Godfrey, who was a witness before our committee. His service over many years to Canadians in the direction of sustainable development was remarkable. I tip my cap to him.

With respect to the committee's report on the government's proposed legislation, we are looking forward to a back and forth, and I do not think that the Minister of Environment is closed-minded as to suggestions on how it could be improved.

As I mentioned, I would like to see some additional principles of environmental law considered in the context of the bill, particularly with regard to prevention; the principle of substitution; the principle of non-regression, which is a key principle given the decade prior to 2015 that we endured where regression was the name of the game for environmental law reform; and also the principle of environmental justice.

Another issue that is going to be important to discuss is the role of central agencies in the implementation of this legislation. Obviously, Treasury Board would have a key role to play pursuant to the bill.

Government Orders

There is an open discussion to be had about what the proper governance mechanisms are to achieving sustainable development across federal departments.

• (1545)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always encouraging to hear that a committee's recommendations are incorporated into legislation.

For the purpose of people who are not familiar with this piece of legislation, such as myself, what concrete difference will it mean pre and post this legislation, for instance, to a department such as the Department of Justice or the Department of Public Safety? That is so that people have a concrete feel of what this legislation would make in terms of real difference to real departments.

Mr. William Amos: Madam Speaker, the member asked a good question, because at the end of the day Canadians need to understand the concrete purpose of this legislation.

Department by department, there are sustainable development strategies that are developed pursuant to the existing law, but there are many federal agencies that are not covered within the ambit of this legislation, Canada Post, for example. A whole range of government entities ought to be preparing sustainable development strategies, ought to be contributing toward the sustainable development goals we have established pursuant to international agreement and the work our country has done with countries across the world before the UN.

We need to appreciate that if every department is looking for opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the impacts on the environment and on social and economic outcomes, through its own purchases, whether it is with a fleet of cars or with respect to building repairs and new building criteria, that these are all opportunities for the federal government to drive our markets toward sustainability outcomes. Canadians will be supportive of that, particularly in the Pontiac, where we have so many civil servants who are working in these buildings and driving these fleets of cars.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand here today to speak to Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

I want to thank the House Standing Committee on Environmental and Sustainable Development for the recommendations for legislative amendments to strengthen the act.

In October 2016, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change agreed with the recommended amendments, and committed to report back within one year on action taken. The bill responds to the committee's recommendations by shifting the focus of the Federal Sustainable Development Act from planning and reporting to results, and increasing the accountability of departments and agencies for setting and achieving ambitious sustainable development targets.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, I understand that the 2030 agenda on sustainable development is the defining global framework of our time. I am glad that Canada is fully committing to the agenda, both at home and abroad.

It is here that I will start with an example of how Canada is achieving these sustainable development goals, the SDGs, worldwide.

In January, I had an opportunity to visit Ghana. Through the work of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, administered by a local Ghanaian non-governmental organization, A Rocha, it aims to empower community members, especially women, to sustainably manage their own mangrove resources, resulting in productive and profitable fisheries, coastal ecosystem conservation, and improved resilience and rural livelihoods. This project operates in two small communities in the coastal town of Winneba, Ghana, and seeks to build resilience against climate change and promote a sustainable multi-land use approach for the management of the mangrove ecosystems. It also works with women's groups to build their capacity, and the capacity of their members, for businesses and within the value chain. Finally, the project aims to restore the ecological integrity of degraded mangrove stands and the adjacent ground that surrounds them.

Often we think of development in terms of developing countries versus developed countries—it is here versus there—but in order to achieve the 17 goals and 169 targets, we need to work together. The interconnectivity of the sustainable development goals, the SDGs, forces us to work across country borders, and, of course, here at home across provincial borders as well. The ability to work together is best demonstrated through our young people.

In early June, I had the pleasure of meeting 40 children in grades three to 11 from Toronto and Niagara, through Millennium Kids. They presented me with gift boxes representing the SDGs that showed how the goals apply both at home and abroad. Millennium kids are interested in Canada's funding for development, its plan to implement SDGs, and building greater awareness for the SDGs. Young people, like those in Millennium Kids, will most be affected by the actions we take today, the actions we take to tackle the problems that face our world, including climate change. Their concerns should be our concerns. I am glad to see this legislation providing a roadmap toward solving the problem that will affect our youth for years to come.

Residents in my town of Whitby and the region of Durham understand as well that the changes we face can be summarized by warmer, wetter, and wilder weather. Durham's community climate adaptation plan includes 18 proposed programs that address local adaptation measures within Durham region. Since much of Durham's physical infrastructure was built in the 1950 to 2000 period, it was designed to be resilient to the climate in that period. The region understands that this climate no longer exists. Therefore, we not only need to upgrade our infrastructure to make it more resilient to the climate of the present, but to look ahead to see how we could build resiliency within our communities. Even within our small towns like Whitby, we are taking the necessary precautions to build a more resilient community.

Government Orders

•(1550)

On October 6, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change stood in this House and defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. I am glad that Bill C-57 includes an expanded set of sustainable development principles, including pollution prevention and intergenerational equity, the important principle that comes to mind when I think of the millennium kids and the residents of Whitby. Canadians of all ages have clearly told us that they want a sustainable future for Canada. This bill clearly shows that sustainable development and the environment are top of mind and a major priority for our government going forward.

In the time that I have remaining, I would like to demonstrate how our government has already proven, in the work that we have done so far, how we have committed to these 17 sustainable development goals. There is more that we can do, but we are building on a track record, and one that is positive.

On goal number one and goal number two, no poverty and zero hunger, we are developing a poverty reduction strategy. We have introduced legislation such as the Canada child benefit that will lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty and will give more money to nine out of 10 families.

When we look at goal number three, good health and well-being, we have made a commitment of \$5 billion to ensure the mental well-being of our young people under the age of 25.

Goal number four is quality education. We are making it easier for adults to go back to school, boost their skills, and get new certification by expanding Canada student grants. We are creating thousands of new work and co-op opportunities so that people can have the skills they need to have a good quality of life.

Goal number five, which is central to my work within international development, is gender equality. We led by example with a gender-balanced cabinet. Budget 2017 was the first ever budget to include a gender statement. The Minister of International Development and La Francophonie delivered the most ambitious feminist international assistance policy, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs ensured that all our trade policies include gender equality.

Goal number six is clean water and sanitation. Our commitment to eliminate boil water advisories is something that remains top of mind for our government.

I could go on. Goal number eight is decent work and economic growth. We have recently announced that we are reducing the small business tax rate for small and medium-sized enterprises, ensuring that they are able to grow and create good-paying jobs.

Goal number nine takes into consideration the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. He has just announced the creation of a supercluster, which is a business-led initiative, partnering with SMEs, large businesses, small businesses, and academia.

I would like to end on what I think is one of the most essential of the sustainable development goals, which is goal number 17, around partnerships. Canada has been very diligent in ensuring that we are

creating the necessary partnerships around the world with businesses, academia, with other neighbouring countries. As part of that, Jamaica, which is in the Caribbean, and Canada, have formed a group of friends looking at ways to explore how we are going to finance the SDGs. We have to think about our sustainable development in a broad context. We have to think about how we can all work together to not only communicate the goals of sustainable development but also ensure that we achieve them without leaving anyone behind.

•(1555)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was thinking as the hon. member was speaking that we seem to be sleepwalking into catastrophic events. As a brief canvas of what is going on in North America, we have had fires in California. We were at a caucus meeting in Kelowna this summer, and there were fires all up and down the B.C. interior. There were catastrophic hurricanes in Houston, in Florida, and the Caribbean. I know the hon. member has ties to the Caribbean. I wonder whether the hon. member might be prepared to comment on this apparent sleepwalking by some members of not only this House, but particularly Congress in the United States, about these catastrophic events that seem to be becoming much more frequent, and for which we do not seem to be willing or able to prepare in any kind of fashion.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, the development in terms of weather around the world is that it is wetter, warmer, and wilder.

As we look at how climate change disproportionately impacts the poorest and most vulnerable in our society, particularly women and girls, it is really important that we are mindful and are able to communicate the sustainable development goals, the targets we are looking to achieve, and make sure that people are aware.

This bill demonstrates to Canadians the federal government's leadership in understanding that it is not one size fits all, it is not just one solution that can work. We have to work across our entire country.

As I mentioned, in the region of Durham, we have 18 proposals that will help in our own small region to make a contribution to achieving the sustainable development goals. The province is doing it. Municipalities are doing it. Federal governments are doing it. We are working together to ensure that we are building more resilient communities, we are building more resilient countries, and we are building a world in which everyone could grow to reach their full potential.

•(1600)

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, it looks like the hon. member and I will be carrying on this debate for a few minutes.

I am asking a question in respect of her capacity as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of International Development. Can she elaborate on the issue of climate change resilience as Canada provides aid and development assistance to various vulnerable countries, the very vulnerable countries that she talked about, the ones that are, in many instances, the victims of climate change?

Government Orders

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, our job throughout international development is to really work with our partners, tremendous partners, that we have around the world. At this point, I would like to thank them for the work they do day in and day out.

As we see these catastrophic events happening around the world, whether it is floods or hurricanes, these are the individuals, our partners, who are on the ground and who step up during those very difficult and trying times. I would like to thank them for the work that they do.

To go back to my hon. colleague's question, it really is about ensuring that we are building resilient communities, such that the poorest and the most vulnerable in our society, in our world are able to have a resilient capacity to continue to live their lives and to continue to grow and reach their full potential.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak today on the subject of sustainable development and the environment. The bill seeks to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act. It does so by looking at changing its purpose and simply by adding some other nice words, "to advance sustainable development and respects Canada's domestic and international obligations relating to sustainable development, with a view to improving the quality of life for Canadians."

The problem for the Liberals with the bill and with the act it seeks to establish a strategy for, what they do on the environment for so many things, is the difference between good-sounding words and action that is dramatically different from the good-sounding words. We see it on so many files, but the environment file is a perfect example.

We often hear the Liberals talk about the importance of combatting climate change. The member who spoke before me did that, but what did the Environment Commissioner of Canada have to say about the efforts of the Liberal government on exactly that environmental file? He said:

We concluded that Environment and Climate Change Canada, with support from other government departments and agencies, did not make progress toward meeting Canada's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We concluded that Environment and Climate Change Canada, in collaboration with other federal partners, did not provide adequate leadership to achieve the federal government's adaptation to climate change impacts...there was no action plan nor clear direction to ensure that the federal government would integrate climate change considerations into its own programs, policies, and operations.

The Environment Commissioner also said of the Liberal government's efforts on the environment and climate change:

Most of the federal departments and agencies we examined did not take appropriate measures to adapt to climate change impacts by assessing and managing the climate change risks to their programs, policies, assets, and operations....Stronger federal leadership is needed.

Like so many other areas on the environment, on sustainable development, the Liberals talk a great talk but they simply do not deliver results. I served under a leader who was very motivated as prime minister to be judged by his results because it grated on him that for years and years the Liberals would say great things but never actually deliver the results. It was that gap between great-sounding words and actual action. He wanted to be judged by those results.

Our government could be judged by those results and those actions. On sustainable development, legislation like this may be nice words, but what are the Liberals doing in practice?

Our Conservative government took action on the environment in a tangible way in my part of Ontario by establishing the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund. Close to \$60 million flowed over 10 years to help clean up that critically important lake, the largest body of fresh water in Ontario other than the Great Lakes. What did the Liberal government do? It cancelled that, a program that was helping sustainable development, helping eliminate and reduce environmental impacts, that was doing positive things and delivering results for the environment.

That is when I talk about the difference between words and results and words and deeds. Liberals may talk a good line on the environment, but when it comes time to actually act, as they have done with the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund, they are environmental vandals putting back the cause of the environment, putting back the cause of sustainable development.

What was the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund? As I said, it was an innovative fund. It was \$60 million over 10 years, two five-year stretches, but it focused not on building a bureaucracy, not on great policies and speeches and marketing, but on actual measures and actions and steps taken to improve water quality and to reduce environmental impacts. These were actual remediation efforts that delivered physical results on the ground. What is more, it did so without a bureaucracy, using volunteer committees, folks who had been involved in environmental cleanup issues in the community for years, who assessed projects. The funding was given to those groups to carry out projects and they used it to leverage money. It is estimated that the \$60 million over 10 years actually produced well over \$200 million in real remediation work because of matching funds and in-kind contributions from partners and volunteer contributions from organizations. That made real results happen.

● (1605)

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority would say that it was able to make development in the watershed more sustainable, to ameliorate some of the impacts of previous development, to make sure that new development actually was sustainable for the future. That is the kind of thing that was happening because of the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund. What did the Liberals do? They cancelled that. They cancelled that, harming the quality of life for people throughout the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Under the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund, how was the environment protected? How did we see sustainable development? Over 72,000 trees, shrubs, and grasses were planted in the watershed to help prevent and reduce phosphorus runoff, phosphorus being the major contribution to eutrophication of the lake and harming the lake's health. Over 20,000 metres of fencing was installed to restrict 1,300 livestock from fouling watercourses, again adding nutrients that would harm the water quality. There were 5,000 kilometres of stream and lake bank that were stabilized and, significantly, in previously developed areas, stormwater pond retrofits were undertaken.

Government Orders

What is significant about it is that not only was it encouraging sustainable development, but going back to previous development that was not sustainable and making it sustainable and improving environmental impacts. What did the Liberals do? They cancelled that.

What were some of the projects that were funded, the kinds of projects that the Liberals have now cut off funding for? Things like the adopt-a-stream-crossing program run by the Regional Municipality of York. The recipients stabilized and revegetated stream shoreline areas with native plant species and encouraged the community to become stewards of those streams. Educating landowners and others through these actions was a main component of the program. That, again, resulted in a more sustainable environment. The Liberals have now cut off that funding.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority got funding for a program called CNSRVS. The description of the program is as follows:

The recipient will support projects including retrofitting septic systems, tree planting, improving/retrofitting streams and on-line ponds, stormwater management pond retrofits, managing milk house waste, managing manure, livestock restrictions, controlling cropland erosion, enhancing wildlife habitat, and irrigation water management.

Again, they were real, physical measures on the ground that delivered sustainable development, that produced results for the environment, not high-minded words, not fancy opportunities for politicians to make speeches and people to puff themselves up and be proud of saying the right things. It is not enough that one's heart is in the right place. It is the actions that matter, and the action of the Liberal government on the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund was to cancel it.

There are over 200 projects like those I already read, and there are more. The Oro-Medonte best management practices focused on improving the sustainability of development locally. ReWilding Lake Simcoe was a great one. The people and the nature new stewardship program, run by the Ladies of the Lake Conservation Association, delivered 24 on-the-ground restoration projects and also developed a set of unique urban-suburban best practices to improve habits. This was specific to the watershed, specific to the kind of private lake and beach associations they had, remarkable, great work that engaged the community, and involved volunteers and citizens. They did real, physical things to remediate the lake. All they needed was a little help, a little funding from the government, and they would take that initiative and leadership. They did that stuff, but now the Liberal government has cancelled the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund and the kinds of projects that it was producing.

There was the RainScaping retrofit program for low-impact development demonstration projects. Can anyone think of anything that is more focused on sustainable development? How can we take the normal development of houses and reduce their environmental impact in this sensitive area on Lake Simcoe and make it more sustainable? The description of this project, which was again through the conservation authority, was as follows:

This project will identify opportunities to control phosphorus and improve water balance in seven major urban centres in the Lake Simcoe watershed. Each of the seven municipalities will undertake one low impact development (LID) demonstration project. The projects will help transform current stormwater practices in both developed and to be developed lands. Low Impact Development methods to be

demonstrated will reduce water pollution (especially phosphorus), alleviate flooding, and reduce stream bank erosion by controlling water quantity and increasing infiltration of rain water back into the ground.

• (1610)

That is actual physical, real sustainable development. It is the kind of stuff that was going on under the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund, but the Liberal government has said no. It has cancelled it and said that it is over.

The Liberals are going to talk about the environment and say nice things. They say their hearts are in the right place, but they are not actually going to deliver action. In fact, they are going to stop what has been happening and the work of hundreds of citizens across the community.

What have people in the community been saying about this, people who care about sustainable development and the environment? Richard Simpson was the head of the citizen's advisory group that approved all of these projects and would review them. These were unpaid volunteers reviewing the projects and assessing what was important for the community. Richard, who also happens to be the current vice-chair of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority because he is no longer head of this advisory committee abolished by the Liberal government, says that "The Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund advisory board was proud to select projects for funding and work with partners across the watershed to deliver real results for Lake Simcoe's environment. The cancellation of the fund puts Lake Simcoe at risk once more, and it is disappointing given how much progress has already been made to clean up Lake Simcoe."

There are more comments by people who have written to me, telling me their views. John from Newmarket says, "All reports from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority point to improved water quality. This affects water quality for towns around Lake Simcoe. Tell the Liberal government not to reverse these improvements."

People care that this fund has been cancelled. People in the communities were engaged. It was having real results for the environment. The real action by the Liberal government is to cancel it.

Steven from Keswick says, "I live on the shore of our great Lake Simcoe. I have seen it go from bad to much cleaner as a result of the Clean-up Fund—it must be continued to keep to ecosystem healthy." Sue from Brown Hill says, "Having fresh, clean water is one of our treasures. Cancelling the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund is very sad: one step forward, and two steps back."

Government Orders

All these people understand what our Conservative government understood, that we should be judged by our actions and what we really do. Let us deliver material results. That is what the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund did. I give credit to Stephen Harper and Jim Flaherty, both of whom took the decision, despite what the Department of the Environment at the time might have wanted, to fund this initiative and structure it in this unique way that did not build the bureaucracy but rather put money in the hands of people in the communities who would deliver actual remediation, and in the process leverage those funds into tremendous results.

We have seen results. Guess what? We did not think this would happen in the short time it did, and the conservation authority has expressed its surprise that the improvements were as great as they were. We thought it would take 15 to 20 years before we would start seeing improvements, but just seven years into the initiative, native species that had not bred in the watershed, cold water fish species, were suddenly returning and breeding in parts of the watershed. Real results were happening for the environment. It was improving. Moreover, phosphorus levels were being measurably reduced. Testing is undertaken all the time by the Ministry of Natural Resources in Ontario.

Why is this so important? Lake Simcoe is in an area that is under huge pressure from development. There are massive new subdivisions going in. The provincial Liberal government has identified Barrie on the shores of Lake Simcoe as a growth target area. If one cared about sustainable development in a serious way, one would think that would make it a target area for sustainable development efforts. One would want to reinforce something like the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund, but instead the Liberals chose to cancel it. In fact, Eleanor from Sharon, who wrote to me, made exactly that observation. She said, "With all the development in our region it is important that the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund continues!"

While I commend the effort that went into this bill—and I think the bill is fine—the bigger question when we talk about sustainable development is not saying nice things about objectives and creating strategies, and so on. It is about what people's actions are, what is being done on the ground, and what is being done for the environment. The environment commissioner has said the same thing as the people in Lake Simcoe. The Liberal government may say nice things, but its deeds do not match its words. In fact, they are the very opposite, and we have seen that with this very dramatic cancellation of the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund.

• (1615)

It is a very sad thing to have happened, and I can tell members, as one who worked with so many of these community organizations, they are remarkable people. I mentioned the Ladies of the Lake. Another another is Kids for Turtles, a beautiful group out of Oro-Medonte. There were remarkable groups throughout, such as Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, the conservation authorities, the municipalities, and even provincial departments, which eventually got engaged and started supporting and helping with some of these projects. The farmers and the Federation of Anglers and Hunters got involved in support of physical, material projects.

Members of the Holland Marsh Growers' Association have a problem with the canals in their area. Because it is Ontario's richest

farmland, there are already a lot of nutrients there naturally in the soil that they farm, and with normal agricultural practices, one would try to manage nutrients as well. Guess what? They had an opportunity to donate land. As a result of this fund, they donated land that was matched by partnering with plantings by the clean-up fund and other organizations that got involved, thereby again making real, material, physical improvements to the health of the lake.

There are others that are remarkable. There was the project to evaluate development best practices for residential developments in NewMarket, including a fairly recent one, Mosaik Homes in the Glenway subdivision. This project demonstrated and evaluated the widespread application of low-impact development techniques in a new residential subdivision in the Lake Simcoe watershed, exactly addressing those sustainable development challenges. The project included rain gardens, vegetated biofilters, an underground exfiltration system, and best practices for the management of soils in landscaped areas.

It would be nice to think that after 10 years and \$16 million, enough was done, that the health of the lake was secure for the future and that we did not have to worry any more, because Lake Simcoe was in good hands. However, the fact is, every single expert, including the provincial Liberal officials at the Ministry of Natural Resources, all tell us that while good progress is being made, there is a real need for more to happen. This is why there is such disappointment with the cancellation of the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund.

Fausto from Cookstown is another person who wrote to me. He says that "Lake Simcoe needs to be taken care of today." Greg from Sutton says that "Water is our most important resource!" Robert from Keswick says that "Programs like this are important to the future of safe water for our communities for years to come!"

The local Georgina Island First Nation in Lake Simcoe is involved right now in a lawsuit trying to protect the lake's health. Its members were partners in this fund. They also have been working hard. Why are they concerned? It is because there is a proposal for a new large sewage waste treatment plant in the watershed. While there was work done on that, it is a legitimate concern.

However, why are we, at the same time those folks are using their own funds to try to protect the lake, taking away funds from others who are trying to protect the lake and allowing potentially injurious actions to go ahead?

Marie from Jackson's Point says, "Lake Simcoe is very important to the people near it because of tourism, fishing, and many people rely on it for their livelihood." Brian from Sutton wrote to me that "To bring economic prosperity to the area, we need to continue to protect and restore Lake Simcoe—our most important resource!" Charlie from Holland Landing wrote: "Clean water and protection of this resource must remain a high priority!" Madeline from Willow Beach said it simply: "We must save Lake Simcoe!"

Government Orders

This is what sustainable development means when it is actioned. This is what it is about when a government has real programs that deliver real remediation that improves the environment, and people from the community get a stake in it and feel a part of it. This is a classic example of where a Conservative government delivered results, and chose to be judged by its results and not by great words. However, this action and real results were cancelled by the current Liberal government, which is focused more on words, photo ops, images, and impressions and not on delivering real results for sustainable development on the ground.

• (1620)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not want to interrupt my colleague, but it would be good to have an appropriate quorum when we have such fine speeches in the House. I would like to do a quorum call please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is quorum in the House.

Questions and comments. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the minister of international development.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not know if I should be impressed or offended by the member opposite claiming to be a steward of the environment when the Conservatives so deliberately gutted environmental protection over the 10 years of their mandate. They gutted the Navigable Waters Protection Act at the time, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, the Species at Risk Act, and I could go on. How can he stand and preach about environmental stewardship, knowing full well that his previous government blatantly abolished, dismissed, and disregarded environmental laws?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, one often gets moved by the concept of chutzpah. Today we just saw a good example of chutzpah, when someone complained about the changes to the navigable waters act, which a mere couple of hours ago an NDP member noted the Liberals had said they would change but had not done so. Words but no action, I believe, was the theme I was speaking about. Judge them by their actions. That is what Canadians are doing increasingly.

My constituents in the Lake Simcoe watershed are not the kind of people who have a lot of time to sit down and write letters. They are busy people. They have busy lives, but the cancelling of the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund, shutting down the best thing that has happened to the environment here in years, has had an impact.

I do not want to say bad things about my predecessor in my riding because I believe she cared passionately about the environment. She said that Lake Simcoe was her top priority. She was there for over a decade, and not one penny was provided for Lake Simcoe. There was not one legislative change to help Lake Simcoe. There were none of the regulatory changes we brought in to ban the dumping of waste waters, the mandatory rules on invasive species to stop bilge water from being dumped into the freshwater Great Lakes, and things like that. We did all of those things. There was no ban on phosphates in dishwasher detergent, like we did. None of that stuff happened. However, she did have some success at the end of her

time. She was appointed Canada's ambassador for the environment. That was something.

• (1625)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I sat in opposition when Stephen Harper decided to kill the Experimental Lakes project in western Canada, Ontario, the northwest, and Manitoba. The Experimental Lakes were contributing to all sorts of wonderful projects beyond the Prairies and Canada. It was a fantastic organization. If it had not been for the provincial government of Ontario, there is a chance it might not even have survived. That is a real, tangible example of Stephen Harper's actions.

If we want a tangible example from our government, within a few months we were in Paris. We came up with a national program to put a price on carbon. All provinces and territories, except one, of all political stripes got on board with it. Countries around the world support a price on carbon. Only the Conservative Party of Canada in the House of Commons does not think it is a good idea.

Why does the member feel that the Conservatives are so out of touch with Canadians on such an important environmental issue when other political parties and countries around the world are saying that it is about time we had a price on carbon?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, again, that is chutzpah at work.

This member comes from Winnipeg. Who set up the Lake Winnipeg cleanup fund? It was the very government of Stephen Harper, who the member was criticizing. It was a parallel fund to the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund. Once again, it was something that focused on real results, on the ground, for the environment. Where did it come from? It was the Conservative government once again.

The member stands up and complains about what happened. The actual facts are that in Manitoba, what happened was that the Lake Winnipeg cleanup fund was created. For the first time, there were real measures undertaken, which had never been done before by any previous government, particularly the previous federal Liberal government, which claimed to care about the environment but never spent a penny on it, not one penny.

Along came a Conservative government that did it. Why? It is because there were real results. It was not words. It was not going to a fancy conference. Jetting off to fancy conferences is Liberal action. Funding small community groups to do cleanup projects, to do tree planting, to do shoreline restoration, and to try innovative ways of reducing phosphorous inputs, working with hundreds of citizens, that is Conservative action.

Government Orders

It was not as fancy as the trip to Paris, and there was maybe not as much in carbon emissions as the trip to Paris, and there were maybe not as many great meals. Tim Hortons kicked in some Timbits. It was not like those fine dining opportunities the Liberals had at the climate change conference in Paris with all their friends. However, I put it to members that the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund did a lot more in terms of real results for the environment here.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague speaks with much wisdom on this.

As a former park warden and conservation officer in the province of Alberta, someone who has worked for Alberta Fish and Wildlife, someone who is an active member of the Lacombe Fish and Game Association as a hunter and a fisherman, I have spent a lot of my life actually working towards conservation, real conservation that actually produces real results.

I want to thank my colleague for his eloquent speech. Money is leaving Canada to be spent in various countries around the world, billions of dollars for the climate change fund, money the World Bank has said it is using for project development in third world countries under some other means, other than combatting climate change. I am sure the member has been privy to the same discussions I have as a lowly member of Parliament, when he was an esteemed cabinet minister for year.

Would the member please elaborate on the value of something like the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the local groups that are actually doing real work on the ground instead?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, I went through some of the messages I was sent. I actually skipped some. There were quite a few that actually made the exact point the hon. member has made. Why is it that we are sending money overseas and at the same time are taking away the money that was helping improve our local environment? What kind of trade-off is that? Someone asked, “Is this the Government of Canada or the government of some other faraway place?”

People care about their communities. I did not want to quote those things, because I am not going to necessarily dispute that we have a role internationally. I think we have a role to help internationally. However, our very first role is to help our own communities, to get our own house in order, not the environment somewhere else. If we cannot get our own house in order, if we cannot clean up our own lakes and our own lands and focus on them, then we are not doing our job.

That is why I say that it is not words like “sustainable development” that matter but actions that show that we are actually making sustainable development happen.

• (1630)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, parenthetically I will note that the previous government under Stephen Harper slashed funding for the Great Lakes cleanup.

I just want to make the point to the hon. member for York—Simcoe that the Paris negotiations did not take place in the city of Paris. There were not fine dining opportunities. It was hard work in a place called Le Bourget, in a set of airport hangers. The hon. member

from Okanagan can clarify for the member, because he attended, that we were in large warehouse facilities doing work to negotiate.

I would wish it was possible to negotiate among 193 countries by Skype, but it is an intensely physical process. It requires 24-hour, round-the-clock negotiations. The Paris agreement is not yet fulfilled, but it holds far more promise than anything done by the Stephen Harper administration.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, I have been out there in the community with young kids and senior citizens in their boots, in the mud, when it is raining and pelting us, trying to do some of these remediation works and planting trees and so on. It is not hard work; it is work they love. It is messy, dirty, cold, and tough, but that is what they are doing for their environment. They are not asking for any thanks. They are not asking for their expenses to be paid. They are Canadians who care about their country and their environment, and the Liberal government has said to them, “Your efforts do not matter. The little bit of seed funding you needed to do your stuff we are cutting off. Your view of the environment is not part of our view of the environment.”

I think that is a mistake.

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150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been some discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, at the conclusion of Oral Questions on Monday, November 6, 2017, the Speaker, a Member of each recognized party, a Member of the Bloc québécois and the Leader of the Green Party each be permitted to make a statement marking the 150th anniversary of the first meeting of the First Parliament of Canada and the time taken for these statements shall be added to the time provided for Government Orders.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, Indigenous Affairs; the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable, Ethics; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs.

*Government Orders**[English]***FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-57, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

I had the pleasure of serving as vice-chair of the environment committee when we studied the Federal Sustainable Development Act, a study that has resulted in some of the amendments before us today.

As had been noted before, the original act was an opposition private member's bill that was passed in 2008 under our previous Conservative government. Our Conservative Party recognized that sustainability needs to be included in every decision to ensure a balance between social, economic, and environmental factors. This type of policy-making ensures not only that today's generation will have a healthy and prosperous lifestyle but that we can pass health and prosperity on to future generations to come. I have 11 grandchildren and a great-grandchild. I am very proud of them. I want them to have a good life, as I have had. I want them to enjoy what I have enjoyed travelling throughout this great country of ours. I want them to appreciate the beauty of this land.

The importance of sustainable development is something on which all parties agree. This is proven by the fact that the report by the environmental committee was unanimous. While we are on that, a number of the aboriginal witnesses who came, from coast to coast to coast, to give evidence at committee also agreed that it was very important for them to be involved and that sustainable development was part of the agreement made between Canada and the aboriginal community.

Sustainable development is important to the future of Canada and our grandchildren. Not only should environmental factors be considered but social and economical pillars should be considered. For example, the National Energy Board's mandate is to promote safety and security, environmental protection, and economic efficiency in Canada's public interest and the regulation of pipelines, energy development, and trade. This ensures that Canada's pipelines are built to protect our environment while they create jobs and get our oil to foreign markets. This is one of the reasons the National Energy Board gives compliance conditions to companies, with literally hundreds of conditions on the list.

Given the board's commitment, as well as the commitment of companies, to build safe pipelines in Canada, it baffles me why the Liberal government has found it so hard to make progress on pipelines, such as the now dead energy east pipeline and the gridlocked northern gateway pipeline.

Our party is committed to sustainable development, because it is about protecting our kids and grandchildren. However, it seems that the current government is having a hard time implementing any of its policies.

In a recent report titled "Departmental progress in implementing sustainable development strategies", tabled by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the minister and her government were given failing grades in applying a cabinet directive. The directive requires federal departments and agencies to consider environmental concerns early in the planning of policy and program proposals before making irreversible decisions. The commissioner concluded that the directive has not been applied to almost 80% of the proposals, which is a clear failure by the Liberals. If the Liberals were in school, they would not have received a passing mark and probably would not have gone on to the next grade because of such a failure. The same thing applies in 2019. This is a one-term government. It has failed Canadians and the environment.

In another report, titled "Progress on Reducing Greenhouse Gases", the commissioner concluded that the minister's department did not make progress toward meeting Canada's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases. Just before me, the hon. member for York—Simcoe talked about the Lake Simcoe project and Ladies of the Lake. He asked that we judge the Liberals on what they have done and not on the talk they are giving. The Liberals are all about talk and no action.

● (1635)

I find it hard to believe when the Liberal government says it is championing sustainable development and protecting the environment. According to the last surveys, the Liberals are not doing that. They are not doing any of that, nor are they protecting Canadian jobs in the process. With all this considered, it concerns me how the government is planning to protect future generations, not to mention the mountains of debt that the government is piling on our grandchildren, or the massive new taxes being proposed. Liberals really need to rethink their policy.

Liberals always say they have a plan, but we never see any action on that plan. It makes sense that economic, social, and environmental priorities be advanced through an integrated whole-of-government approach. We cannot advance one of these priorities while ignoring the others. This brings me to a point where I have a lot of concern. During the past break week, Parks Canada announced a hunt in Jasper Park. It was allowing aboriginals from B.C. to go into the park and hunt deer, elk, and sheep. No one was told about this until it slipped out that they were allowed to go into a designated area to shoot. Many of my hunting and fishing constituents are very upset about us taking animals from our national parks.

We cannot advance one of these priorities while ignoring the others, yet this is exactly what the Liberal government did in allowing a hunt in our national parks. It did not take everything into consideration. Canadians expect that their government will consider all three priorities when designing policy and legislation. I do not believe that last week the Liberals took all those priorities into consideration. They were trying to please a small group of Canadians and ignored the interests, economic viability, and the environment in doing so.

Government Orders

The Liberals seem to forget about the economic aspect. If we are going to allow hunting in our parks, one of the largest attractions in our national parks are the animals. When I travel through the national park going to Jasper, which is in my riding, I love to stop on the side of the road and look at the elk and deer. In fact, I feed approximately 15 deer in my yard every winter. I love watching them in front of the house, and they stay there during the day. It costs me a little money, but I believe I am helping the environment and I am helping the deer.

We have a government that is allowing people to go into our national parks and to hunt there just to meet some of the Liberals' ideas. They think they are doing the right thing. However, they are not consulting with all the groups that should be consulted. I know that many people working within the parks were very upset when this was brought to their attention only days before the hunt started.

Instead of considering the economic component, the government has completely neglected our economy and the importance of small businesses across Canada. As Conservatives, we have confidence in the private sector and small and large businesses. They all contribute to the prosperity of this country, and they should be encouraged rather than punished for the risk they take. The government's approach to sustainable development and its policies seems very lopsided from the economic factors.

I was extremely disappointed this summer when I learned what the government proposed to do with the tax changes for corporations. I was very sad to hear two weeks ago about the cancellation of the energy east pipeline. Why? It is over-regulated. Liberals changed the regulations midstream, making it economically not viable for the company to proceed. The government is throwing in rules and regulations to make it not economically viable to retrieve natural resources from this country that help our economy, help develop jobs, and so on.

● (1640)

I have heard from small business owners, farmers, nurses, doctors, and accountants from all over my riding of Yellowhead, who tell me that the tax changes would endanger their businesses and family farms. In my riding of Yellowhead, which is in Alberta, the effective tax rate on investment income could be well over 70%, and new capital gains rules would make it more expensive to pass down a family farm then to sell it to a third party.

I was serving at a farmers appreciation breakfast on Saturday in the community of Wildwood. A couple of people came to me who were very concerned about their children taking over the family farm. They are third generation, and their fourth generation wants to take over the farm, but they are terrified by this tax. They are not sure which way to go, whether they should sell it to an outside concern or see their children struggle to try to buy it due to the unfair tax system that the Liberal government is planning.

A just and fair tax system should reward success and reasonable risk-taking. Most small business people take a tremendous amount of risk.

My son-in-law is a small businessman. He has a small oil company in the town of Edson. He has been successful. His company has grown. He employs over 100 people during the winter

months. He is taking a large financial risk to employ these 100 people and to increase the economy of the town of Edson, the riding of Yellowhead, the province of Alberta, and the economy of Canada. He takes the risk, yet the government across from us wants to punish him for taking that risk. If he makes a little extra money and puts it aside, the government wants to punish him and take it. The government wants to tax it, up to 73%. Is that fair?

Going forward, I hope the government will honestly consider sustainable development throughout its departments when drafting new proposals. Again I go back to the commissioner's report, which said that the government failed. There are 80% of departments that did not comply with what they were asked to do. That is alarming. It is a total failure.

One of the amendments to Bill C-57 would require more departments and agencies to contribute to the federal sustainable development strategy, bringing the total to 90 departments and agencies. That is a lot of departments. Currently, only 26 departments are affected.

The bill would also require them to prepare strategies and to table progress reports on their implementation. If we go by today's figures, a failure rate of 80%, only about 18 departments out of 90 would possibly do what they are supposed to do. That would be if we follow what has been happening over the last two years with the government. That is sad statistical data.

We cannot continue to be so short-sighted in policy-making that we rack up billions of dollars in debt, and yet the Liberal government is doing exactly that. When the Liberals were elected, they said they would have a small deficit of about \$10 billion, but that grew to well over \$30 billion in the first year and the second year. We will probably be shocked at what it will be in the third year, but we have to wait and see.

● (1645)

I have four children, and we taught them when they got their first credit cards that they should not accumulate long-term debt in exchange for short-term unnecessary spending. We taught them not to spree and buy things they cannot really afford, that it might be nice to have a credit card, but if they cannot pay for them, not to buy. The current Liberal government is not setting a good example for my grandchildren; your grandchildren, Madam Speaker; the grandchildren of the secretary of state across there; and the hon. member directly across from me whose son is in the RCMP and is going to have to pay. We need to be cognizant of the money that the government is spending.

Government Orders

However, let us remember one thing. Sustainable development is a requirement in this country. This is an energy-producing country, and whether mining companies, oil companies, or gas companies, if a sitting government puts numerous hurdles in front of them that make it impossible for the companies to do economic research and development, where is the money going to come from to pay the bills of the government? Right now, the Liberals are blocking that. The oil and gas sector was one of the largest contributors to Canada's economy, and the Liberals have made it virtually impossible to take the natural products from the earth, the oil and gas in the provinces of B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and get them to an international market. The government members across think it is all right that we can just ship it down to the United States and we should be happy with that. That is one market. It is a big brother that controls us pretty hard. Will we get fair world prices on our oil and gas products? The country of Canada would be much better off if we could get our products, especially the oil and gas, to our coastal ports. Whether it be the east coast or the west coast, or even into the James Bay area, it would make it very reasonable.

We heard discussions yesterday about the ban on oil tankers on the west coast of British Columbia. We heard people standing up across from us, over to our left, talking about how unsafe it was to have oil tankers on the west coast of British Columbia. Under the pressure of the current sitting Prime Minister, they want to put a ban on oil tankers on the west coast. It is so bad, but it is okay on the east coast. Yesterday, one of the Liberal members was talking about how bad it was. I explained that when they go up the inlet into Stewart, which is about 130 or 140 miles, the line goes up the centre, so on one side of the inlet they can have a tanker, and on the other half they cannot. The Liberals are trying to tell us, logistically, that it is unsafe on one half of the inlet but it is okay on the other half. This is the logic that the current government is passing on. When we go back to the commissioner, and I brought her up a few times, it is obvious that same logic is being passed down hill to our bureaucrats, because we failed.

The Liberals have not reduced greenhouse gases one bit since they have been in government. I can stand here and say that when the Conservatives were in government, we did decrease carbon gases, in transportation and in coal-fired energy. They cannot say that. It is a failing mark. It is easy to talk, but when we walk the talk, it is much more difficult. Our former Conservative governments walked the talk. The current government just talks the talk, and there is no form of action.

Therefore, I am looking forward to this bill moving to the committee stage, so that it can be studied more and have more input and more evidence received.

● (1650)

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the greatest respect for my friend from Yellowhead, and I plead ignorance on the notion of animal welfare and species in his part of the world. I have travelled through it on my way to visit my son in the Peace River country, so I see a little, but I am a little puzzled. In our part of the world, first nations, under the direction of Parks Canada, are culling deer herds that are destroying the sustainability not only of farmlands but of the deer herds themselves.

Would my friend from Yellowhead tell me how sustainability works with the deer he is feeding, as opposed to allowing first nations, which were coming back to the traditional lands from which they were taken, to look after this issue?

I am puzzled, and I am sure the member for Yellowhead will have a good answer, but could he tell me how feeding wild deer is a sustainable practice?

● (1655)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Speaker, using aboriginal communities to cull herds in specific protected spaces is nothing new. I grew up in a community called Chipman, Alberta. It is about 35 miles east of Edmonton. Elk Island National Park is there. It is famous for its buffalo herd. We moved there in about 1959. In 1960, my dad worked for Parks Canada. It had a culling program going on at that time. Some of the aboriginal communities were invited as were local farmers. They kept the herd down to a manageable size. There was only so much land, and as we know, buffalo take a large amount of land to roam, as do caribou and elk. Therefore, we need to look at conservation in these areas.

I have no problem in some of the northern parts of our country where aboriginal people are hunting to keep the herds culled to a manageable number to sustain the growth of the herds, etc. However, in the case I brought up, it was a traditional hunt, because their forefathers hunted in the park. It has nothing to do with culling the herd or anything like that. However, 12 different aboriginal groups claim rights to Jasper National Park and Banff National Park. If all 12 groups want to hunt, that becomes very serious. If we open the door, we have to be prepared for the flood.

Yes, I feed deer. Do I call it sustainability? Yes, because the mother keeps coming back with twins every year and the twins are starting to come back with young ones. I call that sustainability. The herd is growing.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I was not able to put a question to the member for Yellowhead after a particularly moving address he gave to the House a few days ago. It was relevant to the topic of sustainable development. He included an anecdote, I believe about his grandfather, who put mud directly from the land into an open wound from a farming accident. I wanted to share with the hon. member that I found his grandfather's connection to the land very moving, and also very profound.

I would like to thank him for his role as vice-chair of the environment committee, because it certainly was the unanimous report that has led to the amendments before us today.

In the work of a sustainable development strategy for a whole-of-government approach, could the member see ways in which procurement by government agencies could advance sustainable development through the government's purchasing powers?

Government Orders

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Speaker, it is very important that government invests in sustainability. I encouraged that our committee report put a special fund aside to pick up land that may be very crucial for the sustainability of maybe the animals in the area, or maybe for industry that might be affected. We have a lot of concerns about the cariboo situation in a number of areas. However, cariboo, which is an endangered species in some areas, could be affected by industry. The government could work with industry, maybe to buy out the land it might have rights to. It is very important there is a fund to pick up more protected lands in Canada.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when the member referred to our grandchildren, I have been blessed thus far with two. Hopefully there will be more, but it is not up to me to make that decision. There is a big difference between this government and the former government.

The member referred to the issue of pipelines and natural resources. We have a policy in place that takes into consideration the different stakeholders, the environment, and the importance of economic development. We have seen tangible results from a known process on which everyone seems to respect and wants to move forward. Pipelines have been approved under that system.

If the member looks at that process and the approval of pipelines, would he agree that we are on the right road in ensuring we have balance between the development of our energy sector and protecting our environment for generations to come?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Speaker, I cannot disagree with what the member said. Northern gateway was approved, with 230 stipulations, which I believe industry was prepared to follow suit and comply with. The aboriginal communities along the northern gateway pipeline through the central part of British Columbia were looking forward to that economic development and the sustainability it would have given to the communities along the Yellowhead route going to Prince Rupert. However, it is not built and it will not be. A multi-billion dollar port facility is not going to be built. Why? Because of the policies set by the government.

Energy east was the most recent pipeline to be stopped. Why did it stop? It is pretty hard for a Canadian resource company to tell government or be responsible for a product that it may sell to a third world country, or to China, or Russia, wherever the market is, if we delivered it to the ports. The Liberals want the company to be responsible, yet they are not responsible when we buy it from third world countries such as Venezuela, with its decrepit practices of getting oil from the ground.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise this afternoon to speak to the debate on the amendments to the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

The concept of sustainable development is not new in Canada. There have been a number of reports and bills on this topic. Sustainable development was first set as a goal in 1995 as part of the amendments to the Auditor General Act, which sought to create the

position of commissioner of the environment within the Office of the Auditor General.

• (1705)

[*English*]

We have had laws on the books for some time that make sustainable development a goal of the Government of Canada. As I mentioned, since 1995 and the Auditor General Act, we have had a commissioner for environment and sustainable development to review government policies. We have also had federal sustainable development strategies. Since 2008, we have had this law, the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

Canada has a long engagement with the term “sustainable development”. I want to retrace those steps briefly.

The term “sustainable development” was first used in 1987 in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. This report was generally referred to as the “Brundtland Report” because it was a world commission of primarily people who had some role in political life. Gro Harlem Brundtland was prime minister of Norway at the time, which gave this UN effort quite a lot of prestige. She started out as chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development as leader of the opposition party in Norway. Quite extraordinarily, she stayed committed to this process. When the government fell, she became prime minister of Norway and continued as chair of the process.

Two notable Canadians participated in this process. One was the Canadian member of the commission itself, Maurice Strong, who I met at the time in the late 1980s when I was working for the minister of environment. The federal Government of Canada, at that time, under the leadership of former prime minister Brian Mulroney, played a significant role in helping to fund the work of the work of the Brundtland commission.

More significant with respect to the creation of the term sustainable development, the man who held the pen in writing “Our Common Future”, the report of the Brundtland commission, became one of my very best friends, Jim MacNeill. He passed away a little more than a year ago. He was secretary-general to the World Commission on Environment and Development. He is the only person I know to have written a bestselling book without his name on the cover.

“Our Common Future” sold in many languages and sold around the world. It put in place the goal that in order to ensure countries and people, including Canada, who lived in poverty, could be raised out of poverty and at the same time limit the damage done by a consumerist industrialized society in destroying our environment, we needed to ensure that we developed to lift people out of poverty but do it in a way that did not destroy the life chances of peoples around the world, and particularly future generations.

Government Orders

The goals of the sustainable development strategies as put forward by the Brundtland commission rested on three legs, not two. It was not merely environment and development, but environment, development, and peace to which the Brundtland report directed its attention. It called for a limiting of military spending, attention to the need to end wars, and to end the environmental damage of the military industrial complex.

By the time the Brundtland commission report went to the United Nations General Assembly, the goals of peace and non-violence and ending military spending were set aside. It was the Brundtland commission report's recommendations around sustainability that led to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The acceptance of the framework convention on climate change and our entire agenda on fighting global warming by reducing greenhouse gases can all be traced back to this document from 1987 written by Jim MacNeill and endorsed by world leaders.

The term sustainable development in the Brundtland commission report is the one that more or less appears in Bill C-57. There were a number of definitions, in fairness, within the Brundtland commission report entitled "Our Common Future". The one that seemed to achieve the most salience, which appears in somewhat changed form as a principle within a number of principles in this revised act is the following.

[Translation]

The principle of sustainable development is based on the ecologically efficient use of natural, social, and economic resources and the need for the Government of Canada to take environmental, economic, and social factors into consideration in every decision it makes.

[English]

That is a slight change, as we can see from the Brundtland definition, which was that sustainability and sustainable development required that the current generation develop in ways that did not jeopardize the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, the intergenerational equity piece was very strong.

Intergenerational equity then appears in the second part of principle 5 under this act, "that it is important to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In taking this forward, the act has broken apart in two pieces, but I do not think it has done damage to the concept.

The principle of sustainable development was taken forward by the Government of Canada and we became one of the leaders of the world in operationalizing the Brundtland commission report when we put in place the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. This was the primary mechanism of the Government of Canada in ensuring sustainability. It was brought in under former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The act on which it was based was repealed in Bill C-38 in the spring of 2012 in the omnibus budget bill bulldozed through by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. I do not know how many people even remember that is how the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy was eliminated, because that bill touched over 70 different laws and ran to over 400

pages. People could be forgiven for forgetting the various pieces and how they bulldozed forward.

This piece of legislation comes at a good time.

•(1710)

[Translation]

On October 3, 2017, Julie Gelfand, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development in the Office of the Auditor General, released a very serious report. She said it is clear that this government, like its predecessors, has no chance of meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets. Here it is in her words:

Climate change is one of the defining issues of this century. It will require a whole of government approach. It's time to move from planning to action.

Clearly, time is of the essence. The Government of Canada and all of the people on this planet are in an emergency situation because climate change grows worse by the day and we are still without an action plan to reduce greenhouse gases. However, we do have targets, and I think we also have the will to meet them. I think this government's desire to reduce greenhouse gases is genuine, but the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development made it clear that there has been too much talk and not enough action.

[English]

If we had a sustainable development strategy that was working, that touched all aspects of government, we would have a response to the single greatest threat to our future in climate change.

This bill, which I support, creates an opportunity that perhaps is more significant than members in this place realize as we debate this bill and take it forward to committee. The opportunity is here. Again I want to thank the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for its report in June of 2016. Most of the committee's recommendations were unanimous, and are coming forward in this bill. I will pause to note some that are not.

However, the committee did good work after having heard from many witnesses. One witness, who I am very proud to say is also my constituent, is one of Canada's leading experts in environment and sustainable development. Professor David Boyd described the current bill as a disaster.

I want to go back and say, as I did in earlier questions and comments, that the sustainable development bill that came forward in 2008 was based on a private member's bill from a member of the opposition, a Liberal member of Parliament, a former cabinet minister in the government of the former prime minister Paul Martin, a very dedicated parliamentarian who was very committed to climate action, and a dear friend of mine.

I mean no criticism of the Hon. John Godfrey when I say that the current bill is too weak. He had to get a private member's bill in 2007 in the time of a minority Parliament where the prime minister was Stephen Harper, the minister of environment was the Hon. John Baird, and there was tremendous co-operation to get this bill through before John Godfrey resigned from Parliament. It was a tremendous effort and success. We got a sustainable development act, but it did not call on the government to adopt a whole-of-government approach. The strategies around sustainable development were essentially environment strategies.

Government Orders

I also want to share this with the members of this place. We are told to get Christmas card designs in to the House of Commons print shop to receive free Christmas cards to send to all our constituents. However, I want to warn members that they will not be on recycled paper. Members might think that, having had a sustainable development strategy act since 2008, something as basic as the Parliament of Canada having Christmas cards on 100% post-consumer waste card stock would not be a current issue of concern. I hate to tell members this, but by ordering Christmas cards through the free available Christmas card stock, it is not from recycled paper.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

It is virgin non-recycled paper.

[*English*]

I know that all of us would rather have our Christmas cards go out on recycled paper. That is a basic thing, as well as that the parliamentary dining room would serve seafood that does not come from an endangered species, and does not contaminate coastal waters because it is farmed salmon. I have written to the Board of Internal Economy and to the Speaker about this. I tried over the years to figure out how to control the decision-making by the wonderful staff in the terrific parliamentary dining room. The chef is wonderful and I do not mean to criticize. However, the staff does not have the scope to ensure that they can spend the money on ethical seafood for parliamentarians and their guests. Therefore, one has to be very careful when looking at the menu.

One would think these are basics for the Government of Canada, having had a sustainable development strategy since 2008. I do not think Canadians would be surprised to find that it had not radically reformed our attitude towards fossil fuels. Members might have hoped the strategy could do the little stuff, such as use recycled paper for Christmas cards, have ethical seafood in the parliamentary dining room, and not allow cars to idle outside Parliament Hill. That was a role, by the way, put in place by former speaker John Fraser when he was Speaker of the House in a document called “Greening the Hill” in which he required recycled paper, no idling of cars, and no use of pesticides on parliamentary lawns. That one is still in place. I hope what this bill does is to ensure the little stuff is done. More than that, it is my hope that some of the large goals can be achieved based on the changes in this act.

What are the places where we are looking at sustainable development now globally in 2017? Our biggest challenge is the sustainable development goals that were adopted by the United Nations in September 2015.

There are 17 sustainable development goals, and they have within them 169 specific targets to be achieved by 2030. They include such things as taking care of oceans, and a specific goal of stopping the dumping of plastics in our oceans. They include eliminating poverty. They include education for women and girls. These are broad and critical sustainable development goals, all 17 of them, and they apply domestically to industrialized countries, just as they apply globally, and create pressure for industrialized countries to do more in official development assistance to lift all people of this planet out of poverty. We can do it, we have the resources to do it, and that is a sustainable development goal.

I should also mention rights of indigenous peoples. In the Brundtland report, “Our Common Future”, it is very clear that an essential aspect of sustainable government are rights of self-determination for indigenous peoples. Therefore, I would submit to the House that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is part and parcel of the sustainable development goals, which are now called the SDGs of the United Nations system.

I will now return to Bill C-57 that we are debating.

I like the “Purpose” language under the act:

The purpose of this Act is to provide the legal framework for developing and implementing a Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that makes decision making...more transparent and subject to accountability to Parliament, promotes coordinated action across the Government of Canada to advance sustainable development and respects Canada’s domestic and international obligations relating to sustainable development, with a view to improving the quality of life of Canadians.

The international piece is important here as well.

I do not think there is a single department of the Government of Canada that will not find itself challenged to take these principles on board seriously, develop a strategy, and report to Parliament. These principles now include: openness and transparency; indigenous engagement; intergenerational equity; and social, economic, and environmental sustainability. These are all positive changes.

However, there is one change that I find problematic, and that is the deletion of the requirement under the previous act of performance-based contracts, which is found in section 12 of the act as it exists right now. It reads:

Performance-based contracts with the Government of Canada shall include [which is mandatory language] provisions for meeting the applicable targets referred to in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

The parliamentary committee makes a reference to the performance-based contracts but does not suggest that the section be deleted. It suggests that it be given more specificity and applied to more entities. Therefore, I find it a little disturbing that, having done such a good job overall in drafting amendments to Bill C-57, performance-based contracts are removed. One of my law professors used to refer to something like this as having a lot of “weasel words”. This is now replaced with proposed section 10.1 under “Power of Treasury Board”.

10.1 The Treasury Board may establish policies or issue directives applicable to one or more of the designated entities in relation to the environmental impact of their operations.

In other words, that proposed section is a big fat nothing compared to the performance-based contracts section that exists in the current act. Therefore, I certainly will be taking amendments forward to committee, when the bill goes to committee, in hopes of preserving the existing section 12 for performance-based contracts.

Overall, Bill C-57 cannot come too soon. Sustainable development has been on the lips of Canadian politicians, who did not have any idea what it really meant, for decades now. If we are serious about this, it is about equity between a wealthy, industrialized country like Canada, and people who are the poorest of the poor living on this planet right now with us: our human family.

Government Orders

It is also about equity in intergenerational terms. I am a grandmother, but I do not have the right, nor anyone in our baby boom generation that just had a great big party since the end of the Second World War, to leave the ecological damages and ecological debt on our kids' credit cards. We do not have the right to deprive children born today of their access to a healthy and sustainable biosphere to live out their lives without fear of annihilation.

• (1720)

We are on the cusp of the last moment we can save this place. Let us get this bill to committee, and let us get a climate change plan under way immediately.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I commend the member opposite for a very thoughtful and wise intervention, including some of her suggestions and ideas on how government can approach sustainable development with an actual work plan.

The member for Vancouver Quadra is currently engaged in a greening of government exercise. It would be great, if you have not put those specific proposals on recycled paper, to have you do that.

I have a question about—

• (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member to address the other member through the Chair.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, the question I have is the following.

Given that we are all so involved as a country in supporting the sustainable development goals at the international level, I am wondering what advice the member might have on practical things we can do to support other countries as they, too, decide to engage in sustainable development goals, as we leave that era of thinking that all progress is good progress, that said that if we build an expressway in downtown Toronto, it is good because it means jobs, even though it destroys the city, wipes out the local economy, pollutes the air, and displaces low-income populations—a policy, by the way, that the CCF supported, curiously enough.

I am just curious if the member has advice for us on what we can do to support other countries as they embrace sustainable development goals.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, very briefly, we should lead by example. They will not believe us if we tell them what to do when we are not doing it.

It has always been very clear that we have to live off the earth's interest. We cannot dig into the capital. We have to recognize that we should be ensuring, in the words of indigenous peoples, that we are borrowing from our grandchildren, not stealing from them. We need to ensure a legacy for future generations that is better than the earth that we received. Frankly, we are doing the opposite.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague.

A five-minute walk from my house is the most beautiful place I know on earth, Cross Lake. People cannot swim in that lake. People

will probably not be able to swim in that lake for another 100 years, because it used to be considered completely acceptable to take the toxins from the mine and just dump it in lakes because they were there.

The environment is recovering, but it is only recovering because of legislation. No one did this or made this happen voluntarily; it was legislation. Could my hon. colleague comment on the necessity of having strong legislation to protect not just our water, but our air as well?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, there is a clear record on this.

When we fought acid rain, we did it with regulations. Eliminating mercury took banning it. Getting lead out of gasoline took regulations. We can do a lot with carrots, but we better not forget our sticks.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate. 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: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

Mr. Mark Strahl: Madam Speaker, I request that you defer the vote to Thursday, October 19 at the end of the time provided for government orders.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Accordingly, the recorded division stands deferred until Thursday, October 19 at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-349, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts (criminal organization), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-349 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1805)

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

*(Division No. 366)***YEAS**

Members

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Berthold	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Boudrias
Fortin	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gourde	Marcel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Motz
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Plamondon	Rayes— 18

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Bossio	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Brosseau	Brown
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carr	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Davies
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Diotte	Doherty
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid

Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk	Fast
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Gallant	Garneau
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gladu	Goldsmith-Jones
Gould	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Harder
Hardie	Hehr
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Johns	Jolibois
Jones	Jowhari
Kelly	Kent
Khalid	Kitchen
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Liepert	Lightbound
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Malcolmson
Maloney	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nantel	Nassif
Nater	Nault
Ng	Nicholson
Nuttall	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poilievre	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansi	Reid
Richards	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Saganash
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Saroya	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	ShIPLEY
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sikand
Sohi	Sopuck
Sorbara	Sorenson
Stanton	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tilson
Tootoo	Trost

Private Members' Business

Van Kesteren
Vandal
Vaughan
Viersen
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Yurdiga
Zimmer — 261

Van Loan
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Virani
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Wilkinson
Wong
Young
Zahid

Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Falk
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gameau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goldsmith-Jones
Gourde
Hardcastle
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Johns
Jones
Kelly
Khalid
Kusie
Lake
Lametti
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lebouthillier
Leitch
Leslie
Liepert
Lobb
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Maguire
Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
Nault
Nicholson
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rayes
Richards
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Saroya
Scheer
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)

Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Egliniski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fast
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Genius
Gill
Godin
Gould
Hajdu
Harder
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Jowhari
Kent
Kitchen
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lemieux
Levitt
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson
Marcil
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald
McKenna
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Motz
Nantel
Nater
Ng
Nuttall
Oliver
Ouellette
Paul-Hus
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Picard
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Reid
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Saganash
Saini
Samson
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sikand

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

• (1810)

[*English*]

CONTRIBUTION OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The House resumed from October 16 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 108.

• (1815)

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

(*Division No. 367*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arseneault
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bennett
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bossio
Boudrias
Brassard
Breton
Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings
Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Cullen
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Diotte
Dreeshen
Dubé

Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Angus
Arya
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Baylis
Beech
Benson
Bergen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boucher
Boutin-Sweet
Bratina
Brisson
Brown
Calkins
Caron
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cormier
Cuzner
Davies
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Doherty
Drouin
Dubourg

Private Members' Business

Sohi	Sopuck
Sorbara	Sorenson
Stanton	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tilson	Tootoo
Trost	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wong	Wrzesnewskyj
Young	Yurdiga
Zahid	Zimmer— 282

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 6:17 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

[*Translation*]**CARBON PRICING**

The House resumed from June 6 consideration of the motion.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to talk about the environment and the fight against climate change as we debate a motion moved by a Conservative member, whom I know very well since we worked together on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development during my first term. Motion No. 131, entitled "Carbon Pricing", states the following:

That the Standing Committee on Finance be instructed to undertake a study on:
(a) how the government could examine approaches and methods to ensure maximum transparency for consumers related to the costs of carbon pricing...

In short, my colleague wants to know how the government can illustrate the cost of carbon pricing for Canadian consumers. It is somewhat ironic that the motion addresses only part of the problem facing Canadians. Allow me to explain.

Every day, Canadians are suffering the often far too harsh consequences of the dangerous climate change that we are experiencing. We saw the consequences of the heavy rainfall, droughts, and forest fires that Canadians suffered through this year. All of this comes at significant cost. It is normal for heavy rainfall, forest fires, and other natural phenomena to fluctuate, but the increased intensity and frequency of these phenomena are the direct result of dangerous climate change. In that sense, I would have liked my Conservative colleague to ask the following question: what is the cost of inaction when it comes to fighting climate change? Unfortunately, that tends to be forgotten.

The fact that the Liberal government has introduced carbon taxing is good news, but unfortunately it is not enough. The government

cannot just put that on the table and think that it has done its part in the fight against climate change. A lot more needs to be done.

I want to read from a report with the Conservatives in mind since they were the ones who moved this motion. It is a report by the national round table on the environment and the economy, which was around for a while at the end of the 2000s and early 2010s, and then dissolved in 2012 because the Conservatives cut its funding. That was the only round table that conducted studies on the environment and the economy together. It was the only round table that brought together economists, environmentalists, and scientists to shed light on the measures that the government must take to fight climate change. Unfortunately, the round table was abolished.

Since then, we parliamentarians have not had this information and these resources to guide our actions. That is deplorable. The report I am going to quote from was issued by the national round table on the environment and the economy in 2012 and is still highly relevant. The round table found that the cost of inaction is much higher than the cost of action:

Our analysis shows that waiting until 2020 to implement climate policy aimed at cutting emissions by 65% from 2005 levels by 2050 implies close to \$87 billion in refurbishments, retrofits and premature retirement of assets.

● (1820)

Merely stating how much carbon pricing will cost citizens is a red herring. We need to calculate much more than the cost of carbon pricing alone. We also need to consider the full impact of climate change inaction.

The NDP intends to vote against this motion. Regrettably, we can see that this motion fails to cover all of the important aspects that need to be studied with regard to the fight against climate change.

Most provinces already have carbon pricing in some form. British Columbia has a carbon tax. Quebec has a carbon market. The NDP is very much in favour of carbon pricing. We see it as a positive first step that deserves strong support.

As I mentioned, the round table was disbanded. However, my Conservative and Liberal colleagues would do well to meet with the scientists who are doing excellent work right now and have no political affiliation. They are not with the NDP. They are scientists from across Canada. Roughly 90 scientists from every field have formed a network called Sustainable Canada Dialogues.

What do they do? They offer suggestions and make proposals for transitioning to a low-carbon economy. It is very important for parliamentarians to listen to these groups. They are scientists from across the country who have recently produced reports on a number of topics, including energy efficiency.

What is the Liberal government doing with the energy efficiency file right now? Nothing. We need a solid energy efficiency roadmap, but right now, we have nothing like that even though the government is pouring billions into infrastructure every year. We need a long-term vision for energy efficiency, and we need to adapt to climate change. We must be prepared, but, unfortunately, nothing is being done. The Liberal government should listen to these scientists.

Private Members' Business

For the past few years, the Green Budget Coalition, another very important group, has been putting out an annual green budget. A few weeks ago, the coalition published a report containing clear green budget proposals. Interestingly, in every one of its reports, the coalition has called for the elimination of the \$1.3 billion in fossil fuel subsidies. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals should examine that expense. Why have we not yet gotten rid of that \$1.3 billion fossil fuel subsidy?

We should take that money and invest it in transitioning to clean energy. That is extremely important. Leaving aside this nonsensical motion, we need to do the math properly. We need to bring science back into the conversation about fighting climate change. We need a comprehensive plan that covers not only carbon pricing, but also energy efficiency and the clean energy transition. That is so important.

• (1825)

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, having been a critic in the Manitoba legislature for conservation and environment for nearly seven of my 14 years, and a farmer almost all my business life, nature is a great concern of mine. That is why I am pleased to be able to speak to this motion, which instructs the finance committee to undertake a study on ensuring maximum transparency of the costs associated with the carbon tax, including a requirement for a dedicated line item on invoices and receipts. This is important to every one of my constituents in Brandon—Souris.

For months, I have been trying to get the Liberal government to come clean about the full costs of the carbon tax. I know that many members of our Conservative caucus, including the member for Carleton, have tabled numerous petitions, filed access to information requests, and even tabled Order Paper questions. Alas, no information has been forthcoming. The Liberal government either has no idea what consumers will have to pay once the carbon tax is implemented, or it knows exactly what it will cost but is afraid the information will cause the government even further political pain.

Never has a government changed its stripes so quickly and with such abandon as the Liberals who sit across from us today. Just mere months ago, they were touting how they were going to be open and transparent. That promise even got a separate page in the Liberal Party platform. They said they would restore a sense of trust in our democracy and would make all government data and information available by default. They said that access to information requests would start to apply to the Prime Minister's Office and ministers' offices. So far, the Liberals have failed to even make a remote effort to live up to these campaign promises.

This brings us to today's debate on Motion No. 131. It is almost comical that a member of the opposition has to use private members' business to get the government to provide even the most basic information on the carbon tax plan. Regardless of whether one thinks Canada needs a carbon tax, the Liberal government owes Canadian taxpayers the cold, hard truth of what it will cost them. No taxation without information is not a revolutionary idea. If the government wants to introduce a new tax, it has an obligation to tell us what it will do to our wallets and the overall economy.

I would think that the Prime Minister would want to share this information. It is a significant change in environmental policy, and it is clearly the Liberals' flagship initiative to deal with greenhouse gases. However, after the many unsuccessful attempts by us to get the financial analysis of this, it is clear that the Liberals have failed to live up to their own word about making government data and information available by default. Probably not a single Liberal member of Parliament across the way will vote in favour of this motion, which is a sad state of affairs considering that they all ran on this solemn pledge.

I should also point out that the government refused to respond to a direct Order Paper question asking for a financial analysis on what the carbon tax will do to families' household budgets. The Liberals refused to provide any information on how their carbon tax will impact low-income persons and families. The government refuses to tell us how much the carbon tax will impact inflation and how it will erode the disposable income of pensioners and seniors. It begs the question of what they are hiding.

I imagine that every member of Parliament has received correspondence or has been stopped in the street by a constituent asking for information about the carbon tax. I know I have. Let me just provide one example of what I am hearing from constituents. My office was contacted by a couple who live just outside the city of Brandon, but drive into the city every day to work, shop, and run errands. They drive hundreds of kilometres every week, out of necessity, and take every possible measure to keep their fuel bill manageable. Once their income is taxed, groceries are purchased, and they pay their bills, there is not a whole lot left. They would like the Liberal government to be forthright with them. In particular, they would like the government to spell out exactly how much more money it will take out of their family's budget.

• (1830)

While this is just one specific example of constituents wanting to know more details about the carbon tax, I can guarantee people that every member in the House has a similar story. Not only should this motion be passed, it is also incumbent upon the Liberal government to change its secretive ways when it comes to accessing financial information.

The documents that were released from Finance Canada were so heavily redacted we would swear they must have contained the nation's secrets or maybe even the Minister of Finance's disclosure to the Ethics Commissioner. What we can glean from the documents is that the government knows there will be a cascading effect on prices that consumers, families, and businesses will pay as a result of this new carbon tax.

These documents reference data tables in which those costs are laid out for families, broken down by income brackets: the very poor, the poor, the middle class, the upper-middle class, and the very rich. However, they are all blacked out. So much for a government that ran on a pledge that all government data and information would be made "open by default".

Private Members' Business

What exactly is it hiding? The secrets to Area 51 or the whereabouts of Amelia Earhart? The negative financial impact on these income brackets should be laid bare in front of the House so all members, even backbench Liberal MPs, can scrutinize and review the government's carbon tax.

Now in respect to the motion, I am fully supportive of the government having to report annually on the financial impact of the carbon tax. As my colleague from Oshawa has said, transparent government is good government. If Canadians are to trust their government, we need a government that trusts Canadians.

Considering the amount of times the Liberals have had to be forthright but passed on every occasion, they should not be surprised that when they decide to impose their pan-Canadian carbon tax, they will be met with the same fury as their proposed tax hikes on small businesses and farmers.

In this vacuum of information, we can only estimate what the negative impacts will be. What we do know is that a Statistics Canada official testified at committee and stated that any increases in fuel, food, and other basic necessities would increase the number of people living below the poverty line. While the price of fuel, food, heating and electricity, and just about anything else a family buys continues to go up, they will have to find another extra few dollars out of their budget to pay for a carbon tax that we have no idea will even reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I want the Liberals to turn back the clock and think about when they were knocking on doors in the last election. They said that they were going to bring out real change. I ask that they keep their solemn promise of making government data and information available.

I ask every one of them to vote in favour of this motion and send the entire issue of the carbon tax to the finance committee. I ask that members pass the motion so Canadians know exactly what this carbon tax will cost them.

I know some members on the Liberal benches are uncomfortable with the recent direction of the government and I know it will take courage to break ranks. Unfortunately, they know full well there will be consequences if they vote in favour of the motion.

I want my colleagues across the aisle to remember that it is their constituents who put them in the House to represent their interests. Not a single member of the House was given the great honour to be a member of Parliament by the Liberal Party hierarchy. It was their voters who gave those members the opportunity to be their voice in Parliament.

I believe we can all agree the government should be transparent with its carbon tax. Canadians should know what it will cost them. Taxpayers of our great country deserve no less from their duly elected government. I say that because the government even refuses to release that information. It expects us to believe it, it expects us to give it the benefit of the doubt, and it expects us to go along with its plan, while refusing to provide any meaningful data.

This is a government that has made an absolute mockery of answering questions in the House. It obfuscates like no other. Today, all I ask it to do is to turn over a new leaf.

• (1835)

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a fair amount I would like to share with the member. I will pick up on his points about this government and information. The Stephen Harper government actually did something that was historic in its very nature back in 2011, when the Canadian Parliament was the first in the British Commonwealth to be in contempt of Parliament for not releasing information that was requested of it. That was a ruling that put the Canadian parliamentary system in the history books, and that was under Stephen Harper.

For over 10 years, Stephen Harper promised to reform the Access to Information Act. Nothing was done. There was no reform to the Access to Information Act. Within 18 months, this government changed the Access to Information Act, and it did it with great substance, such as allowing access to information officers to provide orders calling for information, something the Harper government stayed away from. We do not need to take any advice or lessons on access to information or being accountable or transparent to Canadians, because I would argue that we have done more on the issue of accountability and transparency in the last 18 months to two years than the Conservative Party did in over 10 years of being in government.

There is always more room for improvement. We can do better, and we will strive to be better.

The member across the way and the Conservatives are saying we should be voting—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I do not know what it is about the hon. parliamentary secretary, but when he gets up, opposition members want to help him out. They are coaching him, and now they are starting to coach him from the other side as well. I want to remind members that the rule is that when someone is speaking, we pay them a little respect and we try to listen and not shout out at them.

The hon. parliamentary secretary can continue.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I want to give all of my colleagues, on both sides of the House, some advice on what they might want to consider doing with respect to the motion before us. I would highly recommend that they vote against the motion.

We have the Conservatives saying that they want more accountability and transparency. They say that when they are in opposition, but we know the reality when they are in government; they stay away from transparency and accountability. However, that is not so with the present government.

Private Members' Business

That is their argument, more transparency and more accountability on the whole issue of the price of carbon. There are a number of thoughts that come across my mind on that argument. The first one is that the opposition, particularly the Conservatives, need to realize that this is a pan-Canadian agreement and not just Ottawa saying that it wants to have a price on carbon.

Let us revisit a little history. It was not that long ago when the Prime Minister, with the provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, and other stakeholders, went to France and came up with the Paris agreement. That was followed by more negotiations and discussions that took place here in Canada. We have a historic agreement on the environment dealing with a price on carbon. There were political parties of all stripes, provincial governments, territories, indigenous people, and many others, who came to an agreement that it is about time we have a price on carbon. I think there was one province at the time that said no, but we had countries around the world, through the Paris agreement, recognize that this is something we need to do.

However, we have the national Conservative Party here, standing alone, not only in Ottawa but in all the different regions, saying that they do not think there should be a price on carbon. They say that with pride. I would suggest to the members across the way that they are so out of touch with Canadians that they stand alone in not wanting to have good sound policies that will have an impact on sustainable development into the future. It is somewhat unfortunate, but it may be fortunate for us on the government side that the Conservatives continue to be irrelevant in terms of not listening to what Canadians have to say on very important issues such as the environment.

The Conservatives are opposing it and not recognizing that this particular agreement is pan-Canadian. That means that the Government of Canada sat down with stakeholders and provinces, and we came up with this agreement. There are all sorts of things that will take place to ensure that there is accountability and transparency. However, the national government would be operating in bad faith if we were to support the motion being presented. We would be saying that we do not care about the agreement that was achieved.

I understand that the Conservatives do not support the agreement. However, if we were to act or vote in favour of the motion, what are they talking about in terms of having that national coalition that has come around, that historic agreement that was signed off? Do they not understand or appreciate the importance of seeing that when we have the provinces, territories, and others sitting down and signing off on an agreement that there is an obligation? There is an obligation that we have to continue to work to develop, and there is an accountability and transparency component to it.

The federal, provincial, and territorial governments agreed to work together to review progress annually, in order to assess the effectiveness of the collective actions. First ministers agreed that the programs and policies will in fact be monitored. Results will be measured, and actions and performance will be reported on in a way that is transparent and accountable to Canadians. Again, you might not like it across the way, but this was agreed upon by not only the national government, but provincial—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. Even when I am standing, members are yelling at each other. I want to remind hon. members to try to keep from shouting. Just whisper. Some of you have wonderful voices that carry very well. I just want you to control them and maybe bring them down to a whisper.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this reporting commitment includes the provision in the pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution, which I have already mentioned. The jurisdiction should provide regular, transparent, and verifiable reports on the outcomes and impacts of carbon pricing policies.

In addition to the general undertaking to report on the effectiveness of all actions, the pan-Canadian framework also specifically provides that the federal, provincial, and territorial governments work together, and I would underline “together”, to review the pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution. The review will include working with experts to assess stringency and effectiveness and will compare carbon pollution pricing systems across Canada, including the proposed federal system as well as the various provincial and territorial systems. The review will be completed by early 2022 to provide certainty on the path forward. In addition, the PCF requires the completion of the interim report in 2020.

It is important that we recognize, when we talk about a price on carbon, that for most Canadians, it is not new. In fact, there are provinces, such as British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, and unfortunately not my province, but I understand that it is getting closer, that recognize the importance of having something in place. The majority of Canadians already understand and have some form of a price on carbon or cap and trade. In the negotiations and discussions that have taken place between Ottawa and the different provinces, territories, indigenous people, and so forth, there has been a general consensus.

My recommendation to my colleagues across the way in the Conservative Party is to listen to what Canadians actually have to say on the issue and vote accordingly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I might say that was much better, and I thank both sides.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Abbotsford.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Motion No. 131, which is sponsored by my good friend from Oshawa. He has done a great job highlighting the fact that the Liberal government lacks the transparency it promised during the last election.

Private Members' Business

Effectively, what the motion does is to instruct the Standing Committee on Finance to undertake a study to ensure that the cost of the Liberal carbon tax is disclosed to consumers, and that the government annually reports the financial impact of it on Canadian households and employers. This is important because, quite frankly, Canadians have no idea how it will hit them. They have no idea that the national carbon tax that the Liberal government has imposed will undermine Canada's prosperity, and undermine Canadians' ability to purchase the consumer goods that they have become accustomed to.

If the Liberal government is going to move forward with imposing a national carbon tax, Canadians deserve to know how much it will cost them. It was the Liberal government that promised to be transparent with Canadians. When it comes to the carbon tax, they are doing no such thing.

I refer the members to the mandate letter that each of the cabinet ministers received from the Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister's instructions to each cabinet minister. Of course, there is a section that deals with conflict of interest, which we know the finance minister is breaching so flagrantly, as we remind the government every day here in this House. However, there is something else that is written in the mandate letter from the Prime Minister that is directed to the environment minister. It states:

We have also committed to set a higher bar for openness and transparency in government. It is time to shine more light on government to ensure it remains focused on the people it serves. Government and its information should be open by default... Canadians do not expect us to be perfect—they expect us to be honest, open, and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.

That is the letter directing the environment minister to be open and transparent in the job that she is doing for Canadians. Has she done that? Of course not. The Liberal government and the minister have repeatedly denied requests to provide Parliament with basic information on the impacts of a carbon tax on Canadians.

I have provided a specific request to the minister's office to provide me with any analyses that may have been done on its impact. I got a response, but it was not what I expected. It was basically a whole bunch of nothing because the attached report was almost wholly redacted. For those Canadians who do not understand what redaction means, it means purging documents of their content. Our request for some information about analyses that have been done on the impact of the carbon tax was completely purged of anything substantive in the response I got from the environment minister. We have nothing to go by or to share with Canadians.

Where do we go from there? The government is not being honest, transparent, and open.

We went to another report that The Conference Board of Canada issued. The Conference Board of Canada is a private sector think tank that has thoroughly analyzed the impact of the Liberal government's pan-Canadian framework on climate change, and the impact that carbon taxes will have on Canada. What is painted is a grim picture of what is to come. It provided a variety of scenarios and it confirmed that a carbon tax will not create jobs, and will not foster investment, despite the repeated claims made by the minister herself. In all of the scenarios that The Conference Board of Canada paints, the impact on real GDP or, in other words, economic growth in Canada, is negative, and its environmental impact negligible.

On the one side we have a negligible impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and The Conference Board of Canada says that on the other side it will suppress economic growth in Canada.

● (1850)

The report says a carbon tax is “insufficient...to achieve Canada's Paris accord commitments.”

The study also found that a carbon tax would weaken real household income through lower wages. It also found that business investment and trade volumes would be eroded. Canada is a great trading nation. To think that our ability to trade with other countries and to remain competitive with them when it comes to trade and investment will be eroded is a thought I do not want to countenance. I am surprised the Liberal government is going down this road runs that very real risk.

The study goes on to say that a carbon tax would depreciate the value of the Canadian dollar. It would disproportionately impact industries with a domestic focus, such as residential construction, finance, insurance, and real estate sectors. Chemical manufacturing, primary metals, wood, paper production, food manufacturing, plastics and rubber production all would be negatively impacted by a carbon tax. That comes from the Conference Board of Canada.

The study found one final thing and that was that a carbon tax and the plan the Liberal government wanted to impose on Canadians would result in federal deficit increases due to a decline in personal and corporate income tax revenues. Imagine that. This is not declining revenues because the Liberal government has found ways of reducing taxes on Canadians. This is a decline in tax revenues due to a decline in economic activity due to the fact that people will lose their jobs because of carbon pricing. That is the message of this report.

Let me quote one more piece out of that report. A carbon tax “not only creates downside economic risk, but also means that domestic policies that are designed to reduce emissions could simply result in those emissions occurring in another jurisdiction.” Essentially, that is called carbon leakage. The government imposes these heavy carbon taxes on top of all the additional business taxes the Liberals have imposed on Canadians recently, on top of all the payroll taxes they have imposed on Canadians.

Eventually Canadian companies that do business here and want to expand will decide they can no longer operate here because it is not profitable in Canada. They will decide to move to the United States or China and do business there where environmental standards are much lower than in Canada. We lose the jobs but overall global greenhouse gas emissions go up. Imagine the folly of this kind of plan, yet that is what is happening.

Private Members' Business

Today I met with stakeholders from the Canadian chemical industry. They say that they have somewhere in the order of \$12 billion that is waiting to be invested in Canada. The told me that this investment was now at risk. This is a fast growing industry, with \$53 billion worth of shipments in 2016. It is also a great job creator in Canada. They said that they were paying salaries of around \$147,000 for highly trained Canadians to do the work. It is globally the best in class.

Canada's chemistry industry is already a world leader in low intensity carbon chemical production and an employer of a highly skilled workforce. This industry is considering moving either to the United States or to China to do its manufacturing. Guess what. We will be buying those same products, the very products that are helping us to reduce our carbon footprint. We are chasing all these jobs out of our country, yet greenhouse gas emissions will rise in the rest of the world. Why do we not do it here at home where we have sustainable practices, where we have strong standards with which our companies have to comply?

This is a sad story of another Liberal failure. The Liberal government is a disaster when it comes to tax planning and not understanding the consequences of imposing increased tax burdens on Canadians. We are all going to pay the price for that and for that, the Liberals should apologize.

● (1855)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, transparency seems to be the topic of the week, and obviously, from the parliamentary secretary's speech, the Liberals are running away from it.

My motion being debated here today was brought forward as an opportunity for Liberal and NDP members to prove that they do, in fact, want to be as transparent as possible with Canadians. Motion No. 131 seeks just that. It is a motion that seeks to have the finance committee undertake a study that would determine ways to ensure that the cost of the mandatory Liberal carbon tax is disclosed. The Prime Minister himself has stated that his plan is \$10 a tonne by 2018, increasing to \$50 a tonne by 2022. To put this into perspective, that is an extra 2.33¢ per litre at the pumps in 2018, and an extra 11.63¢ per litre by 2022. That is a potential increase of up to \$2,569 per year for the average Canadian family by 2022.

If the provinces choose not to introduce this arbitrary tax on their citizens, the Liberals will impose the tax themselves.

There is no denying that a carbon tax will have profound effects on every single Canadian, so it seems a bit rich that the Minister of Environment had the audacity to say that their plan was credible and fair for all Canadians. How is nickel and diming hard-working Canadians fair? How is it fair to do it without disclosing the actual costs associated with this new mandatory tax?

As the only party that represents the taxpayer, we have continually pushed for answers on these very questions. At first the Liberals said they did not have the answers, but then a very heavily blacked out Finance Canada document showed that the government did have the answers but was trying to keep them from Canadians. Why are the Liberals hiding the cost of the carbon tax if their plan is credible and "fair for all Canadians"?

Canadians are already struggling to make ends meet under the Liberal government. The Prime Minister's out-of-control spending habits have led to increases in payroll taxes. We just found out that the CRA wants to attempt to tax employee discounts. There is the elimination of the vital tax breaks that help low- and middle-income Canadians, and now there will be another new tax grab that will affect every single Canadian and drive businesses right out of the country because it is not affordable.

Why do I think that every member in the House should vote in favour of Motion No. 131? It is simple. This is a non-partisan issue.

While the Conservative Party does not endorse imposing higher taxes on Canadians, the Liberal Party clearly does. I do not think anyone would argue with the fact that a tax on every single Canadian and business should be studied, and in fact, passed unanimously.

As elected members of Parliament, it is up to us to be honest with our constituents and ensure that their voices are heard in Ottawa. Earlier this year, I asked my constituents a very simple question: do you agree with the Liberal government's carbon tax plan? Ninety-six per cent of respondents said no. They do not agree with the Liberal plan. Why? It is because my constituents know that this tax will empty their pockets. This tax will make manufacturers, a major job creator in Oshawa, think twice about investing in our community and in our future. The tax is anything but affordable and fair.

Unfortunately, the Liberals have made it clear that they will not listen to Canadians on most of their tax-grabbing schemes. However, they can at least keep one of their election promises and be open and transparent. If the Liberals vote against my motion, there is no doubt that they are trying to keep this tax grab hidden from Canadians. There is no doubt that the Liberals have broken their promise to set a new tone, something the Prime Minister said he would achieve by being open and transparent with Canadians.

The Liberals are already being criticized for their lack of transparency. We as Conservatives believe in helping Canadians achieve prosperity and opportunity instead of taking it away from them with overspending and higher taxes. Governments should encourage growth and investment. Instead, under this government, businesses will look elsewhere. Jobs will be lost, and Canadians will have less money in their pockets.

I look forward to seeing the committee's report once the study is complete. I encourage all members of Parliament to vote in favour of transparency for Canadians.

● (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota) The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to the House*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Adjournment Proceedings

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 25, 2017, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

● (1905)

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 4, I rose in my place to ask the Prime Minister to justify why Omar Khadr, a convicted terrorist, got a rushed \$10.5 million payout while the Liberal government refused \$6,000 worth of dental surgery for Josey, a young Cree girl, and continued to fight her in court. These are very different kinds of cases, but as members hear my argument they will understand why the question was so important and the answer so unsatisfactory. There are times when we need courts to make decisions and times when compassion and common sense should reign, especially when smaller dollar amounts are at stake.

To talk specifically about the Omar Khadr case, in 2010 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Khadr's rights had been violated while he was detained in a U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he was held after being captured as a suspected terrorist. As a remedy in response to the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling, the Conservatives brought Khadr back to Canada and, of course, he kept his citizenship. The current Liberal government then provided a \$10.5 million compensation package to Omar Khadr for abuses he suffered while detained in that U.S. military prison for captured and suspected terrorists. The federal Liberals stated that the funds were given because of the 2010 ruling by the Supreme Court on the violation of his rights.

It is important to say what the Supreme Court did and did not say. The Supreme Court did not instruct the Prime Minister to financially compensate Khadr. As Howard Anglin wrote in the *National Post* on July 6, "There was no court order requiring payment and the government could have continued defending the claim for years to come."

It is also important to remember that Khadr was found assembling IEDs, a fact that has been reported widely in the Canadian media, including by *The Globe and Mail*, *Macleans*, and *Global News*. Also, in 2010 he plead guilty to killing U.S. medic Sergeant Christopher Speer. Here we clearly have no obligation. Certainly there was a court process under way, but I would argue that the government should have let that court process play itself out before it just awarded \$10.5 million, and not only that, before it rushed to make the payment to prevent the widow of Sergeant Christopher Speer from having any recourse.

Then we have the case of Josey Willier. She is a Cree who was living in Calgary. She was nine years old. Her teeth began to emerge sideways in her palate. Many of us in this House have children and have seen the different things that happen as children grow and that we need to remedy those things. Over a number of years, it is important to note, she experienced ongoing problems with her teeth that resulted in headaches and a chronic aching pain in her lower gums. Moreover, she was not able to chew properly and had difficulty opening her mouth. There was significant discomfort associated with the impacted teeth and overbite, and she was taking over-the-counter medications daily. An orthodontist recommended braces, without which she would need to have invasive jaw surgery in the future and her jaw, of course, would have to be broken.

The government ended up fighting Josey in court. It—

● (1910)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services.

Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to address the concerns raised by the member in relation to the federal health benefits coverage for first nations and Inuit children, and orthodontic coverage, in particular, as it relates to the specific case in question.

We recognize that there are unacceptable gaps in the outcomes that continue to exist for first nation and Inuit children in Canada. This is why our government is committed to providing first nation and Inuit Canadians with access to the health services that they need, including coverage for medically necessary health benefits provided through the non-insured health benefits program, or NIHB.

Health Canada's NIHB program is one of the largest supplementary health benefit programs in the country. The program is national in scope and provides needs for approximately 839,000 eligible first nation and Inuit clients, both on and off reserve. Last year, the NIHB program spent over \$1 billion to provide access to these benefits, including prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, medical supplies and equipment, medical transportation, vision care, and dental care. In recent years, the NIHB program has paid for dental claims made by a total of approximately 300,000 first nation and Inuit clients annually.

Adjournment Proceedings

First nation and Inuit children should have access to the same health care services that are available to non-indigenous children. In Canada, orthodontic services are not covered under universal provincial and territorial public health programs. The NIHB program, therefore, provides coverage for orthodontic services for eligible first nation and Inuit clients when it is medically necessary. The program's policies and criteria have been established on the advice of health professionals and reflect best practices in health services and evidence-based standards of care. Decisions are made based on clear criteria and are published on Health Canada's website. With regard to the case reported in the media recently, like all requests for coverage of orthodontic treatment, this case was reviewed by a licensed orthodontist when it was initially submitted for approval, and subsequently reviewed by three other licensed orthodontists during the appeals process, all of whom agreed with the initial assessment.

Having said that, we know that more can be done and better is always possible. We acknowledge that there is room for improvement in the NIHB programs and services delivered through the government. As we move forward with the creation of the new Department of Indigenous Services, we will work with all partners to ensure that NIHB is improved and reflects the needs of first nation and Inuit children. Our goal is that benefit plans will be planned and delivered by indigenous people for indigenous people. Until that is a reality, we will continue to look for ways to improve the services that we deliver.

In closing, our government is committed to a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples to make progress on the issues that are most important, including health.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I did not get to finish my story. It is important to recognize that the government spent \$110,000 fighting Josey in court when it had a \$6,000 orthodontic bill. Someone who had examined her directly recognized that she was having chronic pain and needed medication on a regular basis. I contrast the government choosing to fight, spending \$110,000 on an orthodontic case, when it agreed to give \$10.5 million to a convicted terrorist without seeing it through the court process and, in spite of what the government has alluded to, had no obligation to do

If we compare these two cases, everyone can certainly see the significant concerns that Conservatives have and will continue to raise with the government.

• (1915)

Mr. Don Rusnak: Mr. Speaker, again, our government believes that all first nation and Inuit children receive the care they need through the NIHB program. We believe it is absolutely unacceptable that there continues to be socio-economic gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. That is why we created the Department of Indigenous Services. We know we must continue to work with partners to close the gaps, and that includes working together to improve the NIHB program.

I have to say that I find it odd that the Conservatives are suddenly questioning this government's commitment to reconciliation and improving the NIHB program. After all, it was in fact the previous Conservative government that cut numerous services to indigenous

peoples across this country, and it was actually the previous Conservative government that first denied the claim in question.

We know that more must be done. We must continue to work with partners to ensure that the NIHB program is improved and reflects the needs of our first nation and Inuit children. As we continue to work on our journey of reconciliation and work toward a future—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable

ETHICS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House this evening to talk about a question period from last May.

It was a question period for the history books. During that question period, we had occasion to ask the same question 17 times, 18 if you include the last question that I had the opportunity to ask the Prime Minister.

Let me provide some context. It is important to know that the Prime Minister is the first sitting prime minister to be scrutinized by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner for his actions. He is being scrutinized, as hon. members will recall, for taking his family on vacation to the Aga Khan's private island.

That question period was memorable because we asked the Prime Minister the same question 18 times. The question was simple: how many times did he meet with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner? The same question was repeated 18 times during one question period, but not once did the Prime Minister see fit to answer it.

To sum up the response I got from him at the time, the Prime Minister told us repeatedly that he was very pleased to work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and answer all of her questions. All we wanted to know was how many times he had been required to answer questions from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. However, despite being asked the same simple question 18 times, not once was the Prime Minister able to answer.

He behaved the same way he did during question period today, when we asked him another question about ethics. We wanted to know how long he had known that the Minister of Finance had not put his family fortune in a blind trust. Today, the Prime Minister used the same technique as he did on May 5. It was not that he could not answer the question, but that he would not. I was very disappointed because I had some friends visiting me here in Ottawa who came to watch question period and listen to the back and forth between the political parties. They expected that a question asked by this side would be answered by that side.

Adjournment Proceedings

Again today, the Prime Minister avoided the question seven or eight times, if not more, and he failed to address our concerns. It is no wonder Canadians are feeling cynical about what goes on in the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister thought it would be a good idea for him to take all of the questions from the opposition every Wednesday. That is an excellent initiative. The only problem with the Prime Minister's decision is that he is supposed to actually answer all the questions, and not simply say whatever he wants any time a member asks a question. That is what happened again today, and that is what happened back in May when the Prime Minister failed to answer a simple question on 18 separate occasions, the question being how many times he had met with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

I hope the parliamentary secretary will finally be able to answer that question this evening, once and for all. How many times did the Prime Minister meet with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner?

• (1920)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more time to expand on the remarks of my colleague and friend from across the way.

I can somewhat recall the incident back in May. I know there was at least one and possibly even a couple of opportunities where the official opposition had been offered the opportunity to ask question after question of the Prime Minister. When I think of those days back, there was a lot of discussion about many different topics. It is unfortunate that the Conservatives would ask the question once, hear the answer and because they do not like the answer, they ask it again and again. It is not like we are not answering the question. They might not like the answer they are receiving, so they persist on asking the very same question. They might tweak it a bit here or there, or something of that nature.

It is important that we put this into perspective, so let me give a different perspective for the member to hopefully appreciate.

All 338 members of Parliament are obligated to meet with or have discussions with the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, including me and the member across the way. Individual members of Parliament will correspond with that office. They might be in communication in different ways. I suspect it is a very busy office, not only because of the Liberals but because of the Conservatives and New Democrats as well. On any given week or month, MPs are advancing issues or the commissioner might be looking into an MP. It is not just the government of the day. This one happens to be the Prime Minister as has been the case of others members on all sides of the House.

The member is saying, "We want this." Yesterday, those members were saying that they wanted everything the Minister of Finance ever provided to the commissioner. Before they wanted to know everything about the Prime Minister. Where does the questioning stop? It could be endless. Why does the opposition not say let us skip the commissioner and get everything possible tabled in the House so

Canadians can go through every document of the 338 representatives?

We have faith in the Ethics Commissioner. That is her job. Mary Dawson has done a good job of ensuring there is a sense of independence. We know the Conservative Party does not like it when this government does positive things for Canada's middle class. When we increased the taxes on Canada's wealthiest, what did the Conservatives do? They got mad and voted against it. When we gave a tax break to Canada's middle class, what did the Conservatives do? They got mad and voted against it. It was the same over the last number of weeks with respect to the issue of tax fairness. The Conservatives do not want tax fairness, so they continuously yell and scream from their seats, saying that they do not like it.

Therefore, why would we have confidence and trust in the Conservatives calling for something when we have an independent officer who has the confidence of at least the government of the day, and I would like to think of all members?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals have faith in the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, why will the Prime Minister not meet with her? Why will the Prime Minister not tell us how many times he has met with her?

I will now be able to say that we asked this question 19 times. It was 18 before, but this makes 19 times now that the government has refused to tell us how many times the Prime Minister met with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Once again, we see that this government's hallmark is avoiding the question. When we ask how many meetings took place, the answer should not be about taxes or other such things. We expect the response to be a number, such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 or zero.

• (1925)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what it all boils down to from my perspective is whether the member has confidence in the commissioner. Does he have confidence in Mary Dawson doing what she has been charged to do?

Mr. Luc Berthold: We do.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: We do, Mr. Speaker, and the member said that he does too. I am glad to hear that. We should respect the process in place to deal with the types of issues the opposition has been raising. Therefore, if one has confidence in it, as the member across the way said he does, then let us accept the process and move on to talk about the issues Canadians want us to talk about.

What is more important than serving Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, and all of those individuals who will benefit from fantastic program enhancements, whether the guaranteed income supplement, the Canada child benefit program, or the CPP enhancement over the coming years, not to mention all of those other issues? This is what Canadians want us to be talking about.

Adjournment Proceedings

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow up a question that I had an opportunity to ask directly of the Prime Minister on May 10 about the crisis affecting the Rohingya. At the time, of course, it was before this issue had entered into the media and public discussion to the same level it has since then. However, even then, and in fact even a year before that, we were calling for a strong response to the escalation, which could well have been called “ethnic cleansing”. We have now described the situation as a genocide.

I asked the Prime Minister at that time if he was prepared to personally contact Aung San Suu Kyi and push her to step up, allow access to Rakhine, and stop the ongoing slaughter of Muslim Rohingya. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister did not respond to that question but said:

Mr. Speaker, this government is extremely concerned with the human rights abuses in the news coming out of Myanmar. We know we have a tremendous amount of work to do around the world to promote values Canadians stand for so strongly. Making use of the connections we have with Canadians around the world is going to be an effective way of continuing to impress upon the world the values Canada stands for. The values of openness, respect, tolerance, and defence of human rights remain a priority for all of us.

Oftentimes, and certainly at that time, we get these kind of general statements, expressions of aspirations, but it took until this fall, as far as we know at least, for that direct contact to be made. Of course, we also need to see direct engagement with Min Aung Hlaing, the commander in chief. Burma has a divided government system, but, nonetheless, we continue to contend that Aung San Suu Kyi needs to do more.

Following up this question of mine from May reminds me, and I think it should remind the House, of the fact that we did not get a response from the Prime Minister and the government at the time to our direct and important questions on the need to engage. We have seen more action this fall, since the current escalation of the problem, as well as the attention paid to it, but our view is that it has been much later than it should have been and much more action is still needed.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary a number of follow-up questions. Technically speaking, these are not specifically the earlier questions that we asked, but ones I have asked in question period more recently with respect to Rohingya that have not received answers thus far.

We submitted an Order Paper question on this today and I hope that we will at least get an answer in writing, but I would like to know if the government's much-vaunted Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion has been at all engaged with the situation. We had an office of religious freedom in place that was actively engaged. Former ambassador for religious freedom, Andrew Bennett, despite no longer being with the Government of Canada has continued to be vocal on this issue. The government has said that this new office was notionally replacing in some ways the function of the previous office of religious freedom. Therefore, I would like to know what this office is doing to engage with and promote a change in direction in Burma.

I would also like to know if the government has been willing to engage China directly on its obstruction of progress on this issue at

the UN Security Council. Again, I have asked this question before and have not gotten an answer to it in question period. Therefore, I would like to know about the engagement with China. Also, I had asked earlier about why the Prime Minister did not raise this issue at the UN General Assembly.

However, if we can at least get some response with respect to the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion and with respect to engagement with China, I think it would be very helpful—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

• (1930)

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for raising this important matter. I share his deep concern. Every human deserves dignity and respect for their rights. What is happening right now in the state of Rakhine in Myanmar is horrendous. About 600,000 Rohingyas have been displaced and have now moved into neighbouring Bangladesh. There is an ongoing humanitarian disaster.

There is ongoing violence, and our government has been out in front of this issue. We have called this crimes against humanity and we have called it ethnic cleansing. We have been seized by the matter, and we have been active on this file.

Let me also respond to my hon. colleague and correct one thing. When Aung San Suu Kyi visited Canada in June, the Prime Minister met with her and raised the issue of the Rohingyas and other minorities in Myanmar. He expressed to her the concerns of many Canadians, including the concerns of my hon. colleagues in the House of Commons, about what is happening there. I agree that things have escalated since August. We have been a global leader in calling this ethnic cleansing for what it is.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has spoken with like-minded countries, with her colleagues, with other ministers around the world, working together on finding ways to address this. The Prime Minister directly also called Aung San Suu Kyi to remind her that the responsibility for ending this violence lays squarely on the shoulders of the military and the civilian government, and that we, as government and Canadians, are very much concerned about what is happening there. We want to see the violence stopped. We also want to see access to the Rakhine state and to the region by humanitarian aid organizations, by fact-finding missions, so they can tell us what is happening on the ground.

Our ambassador recently joined a delegation of other ambassadors to visit the region of Rakhine, again to emphasize and to clearly indicate that Canada is interested in what is happening there. We want to see an end to the violence. We have also committed more than \$30 million this year to offer humanitarian aid to the Rohingyas in Bangladesh and in Myanmar.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Prime Minister has written an open letter to Aung San Suu Kyi reminding her of her moral responsibility and grave responsibility to end the violence. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has spoken to the military commander of Myanmar to tell him that Canadians expect the violence to end, that our government will continue to push for an end to this disaster and to get to the bottom of the root causes and resolve them.

• (1935)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight a number of points in terms of questions that I would like to see addressed. I know that the minister has spoken about crimes against humanity, and I know she has used the words “ethnic cleansing”. Certainly one of the things I have heard from Canadian communities on this issue is people using the word “genocide”, because it carries a particular legal meaning. I think the evidence is quite clear in this case. We have every indication of an effort by a government to remove a population from an area, and that is the definition of genocide according to the convention.

I wonder if the government or the parliamentary secretary is prepared to use that word. I want to ask about what engagement there has been from the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion. I want to ask about engagement with China on this issue and about the willingness of the Prime Minister to speak about this at

the United Nations. These are important points that will help us move forward on this issue.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to push for access to the state of Rakhine for independent, fact-finding missions to tell us what is happening and what is going on. We need to rely on their testimony. We need to rely on their findings. As the hon. member knows, the label “genocide” carries legal consequences. We need to take that seriously. We are certainly looking at this and we want to see facts. We want to see independent bodies have access to the region.

I totally sympathize with my colleague's desire to find out a lot of details about what is going on. I have the privilege of being part of a government that is doing a lot of work. Sometimes speaking publicly about the work we are doing may undermine our efforts.

I ask my hon. colleague to stay tuned. More is coming.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now 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 7:37 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Fight Against Organized Crime

Mr. Fortin 14225

Paul Larocque

Mr. Ayoub 14225

City of Calgary

Mr. Benzen 14225

Persons Day

Mrs. Nassif 14225

Gord Downie

Mr. Angus 14226

Enright Cattle Company

Mr. Bossio 14226

Retirement Congratulations

Mr. Jeneroux 14226

Croatia

Mr. Bratina 14226

Greenpark Group

Mr. Sorbara 14226

Gord Downie

Mr. Brown 14227

Warren Allmand

Mr. Ehsassi 14227

Attack in Mogadishu

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj 14227

Relay for Life in the RCM of l'Érable

Mr. Berthold 14227

Diwali

Mr. Dhaliwal 14228

Persons Day

Ms. Ashton 14228

Gord Downie

Mr. Clement 14228

Gord Downie

Mr. Gerretsen 14228

The Speaker 14228

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ethics

Mr. Scheer 14228

Mr. Trudeau 14228

Mr. Scheer 14229

Mr. Trudeau 14229

Mr. Scheer 14229

Mr. Trudeau 14229

Mr. Scheer 14229

Mr. Trudeau 14229

Mr. Scheer 14229

Mr. Trudeau 14229

Mr. Caron 14230

Mr. Trudeau 14230

Mr. Caron 14230

Mr. Trudeau 14230

Mr. Cullen 14230

Mr. Trudeau 14230

Mr. Cullen 14230

Mr. Trudeau 14230

Mr. Rayes 14230

Mr. Trudeau 14230

Mr. Rayes 14231

Mr. Trudeau 14231

Ms. Raitt 14231

Mr. Trudeau 14231

Ms. Raitt 14231

Mr. Trudeau 14231

Ms. Bergen 14231

Mr. Trudeau 14231

Ms. Bergen 14231

Mr. Trudeau 14232

Ms. Brosseau 14232

Mr. Trudeau 14232

Mr. Angus 14232

Mr. Trudeau 14232

Mr. Poilievre 14232

Mr. Trudeau 14232

Mr. Poilievre 14232

Mr. Trudeau 14232

Mr. Poilievre 14233

Mr. Trudeau 14233

Mr. Poilievre 14233

Mr. Trudeau 14233

Pensions

Ms. Quach 14233

Mr. Trudeau 14233

Mr. Duvall 14233

Mr. Trudeau 14233

Taxation

Ms. Sahota 14233

Mr. Trudeau 14234

Ethics

Mr. Gourde 14234

Mr. Trudeau 14234

Mr. Kent 14234

Mr. Trudeau 14234

Mr. Strahl 14234

Mr. Trudeau 14234

Mr. Strahl 14234

Mr. Trudeau 14234

Ms. Kwan	14235
Mr. Trudeau	14235
Mr. Cullen	14235
Mr. Trudeau	14235
International Trade	
Mr. Berthold	14235
Mr. Trudeau	14235
Mr. Berthold	14235
Mr. Trudeau	14235
Indigenous Affairs	
Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	14235
Mr. Trudeau	14236
Status of Women	
Ms. Sgro	14236
Mr. Trudeau	14236
Aerospace Industry	
Mr. Bernier	14236
Mr. Trudeau	14236
Persons with Disabilities	
Ms. Hardcastle	14236
Mr. Trudeau	14236
Telecommunications	
Mr. Lemieux	14236
Mr. Trudeau	14236
Ethics	
Mr. Poilievre	14237
Mr. Trudeau	14237
Intergovernmental Relations	
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	14237
Mr. Trudeau	14237
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	14237
ROYAL ASSENT	
The Deputy Speaker	14237
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mr. Nault	14237
Committees of the House	
Liaison Committee	
Ms. Sgro	14238
Federal Framework on Distracted Driving Act	
Mr. Eyolfson	14238
Bill C-373. Introduction and first reading	14238
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	14238
Historic Sites and Monuments Act	
Mr. Aldag	14238
Bill C-374. Introduction and first reading	14238
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	14238

Petitions	
Taxation	
Mr. Nicholson	14238
Animal Welfare	
Mr. Davies	14238
Temporary Foreign Workers	
Mr. Davies	14239
Cabotage	
Mr. Davies	14239
The Environment	
Ms. Mathysen	14239
Environmental Education	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14239
Taxation	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14239
Pharmacare	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14239
Carbon Tax	
Ms. Harder	14239
Abandoned Vessels	
Ms. Malcolmson	14239
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	14240
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lamoureux	14240

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Federal Sustainable Development Act	
Bill C-57. Second reading	14240
Mr. Amos	14240
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14241
Mr. McKay	14242
Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes	14242
Mr. McKay	14243
Mr. Van Loan	14244
Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes	14247
Mr. Lamoureux	14247
Mr. Calkins	14248
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14248
150th Anniversary of Confederation	
Mr. Lamoureux	14248
Motion	14248
(Motion agreed to)	14248
Federal Sustainable Development Act	
Mr. Eglinski	14249
Mr. Bratina	14251
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14251
Mr. Lamoureux	14252
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	14252
Mr. Vaughan	14255
Mr. Angus	14255
Division on Motion deferred	14255

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Criminal Code

Bill C-349. Second reading 14256
Motion negatived..... 14257

Contribution of Farmers and Ranchers

Motion..... 14257
Motion agreed to..... 14258

Carbon Pricing

Motion..... 14258
Mr. Choquette..... 14258
Mr. Maguire..... 14259
Mr. Lamoureux..... 14260
Mr. Fast..... 14261

Mr. Carrie 14263
Division on Motion No. 131 deferred 14264

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Indigenous Affairs

Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)..... 14264
Mr. Rusnak..... 14264

Ethics

Mr. Berthold..... 14265
Mr. Lamoureux..... 14266

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Genuis 14267
Mr. Alghabra 14267

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