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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

Prayer

• (1005)

[Translation]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that Mr. Julian, member for the electoral district of New Westminster—Burnaby, has been appointed a member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. Rankin, member for the electoral district of Victoria, for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PROMOTION OF LOCAL FOODS ACT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-380, An Act to promote local foods.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be introducing a bill that I have been working on for six years now. I sincerely believe that an act to promote purchasing local foods will benefit our farmers and us as consumers. For years, many people from all over Canada have been calling on the federal government to do its part to support farmers by implementing a buy local policy.

I should point out that the agrifood industry accounts for one in eight Canadian jobs, makes our rural regions more attractive, and helps populate those regions. That is what groups that support this proposal, such as Équiterre, the Union des producteurs agricoles, the Producteurs de pommes du Québec, the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Beauharnois-Valleyfield-Haut-Saint-Laurent, local development centres, and the people and vegetable growers in my region, have been telling us. They know that if 48,000 federal government units start buying locally, local producers will benefit from new markets and create new jobs while protecting our agricultural heritage.

I hope the Liberals will support this bill, which they actually supported in 2014, because it is time people in the federal government started eating locally.

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

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition on behalf of 34 of my constituents, who are drawing the attention of the government to the Alberta Jobs Taskforce Report. Alberta has made plans for job creation to mitigate the hardship of Albertans in the wake of the provincial job crisis, which is still ongoing many years after the reduction in the price of oil. I hope that by tabling this petition, perhaps the government will listen and there will be some good news for Albertans—

The Speaker: Order. I want to remind members not to editorialize or engage in debate during the presentation of petitions.

The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

EATING DISORDERS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table a petition to the Government of Canada concerning a pan-Canadian strategy for eating disorders. I know members are well aware that eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, have the highest mortality rates of all mental illnesses and—

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order. I must remind the member of what I said yesterday and again today: members must not editorialize or engage in debate during the presentation of petitions.

[English]

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the petitioners indicate that there are children as young as seven who are being diagnosed and hospitalized with eating disorders, which affect more than one million Canadians. Given the fact that there are long wait times, the petitioners are extremely concerned and asking for support for Motion No. 117, which talks about a pan-Canadian strategy for eating disorders.

* * *

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 Speaker: Is that agreed?

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 20 consideration of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): *Niwakomacuntik Tansai Nemeaytane Awapantikok.*

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, outraged by the toll alcohol is having in northern Saskatchewan, in 2015 a crown prosecutor took six months off work to talk to first nation communities and look for solutions.

Harold Johnson, an indigenous author of a new book called *Firewater*, took a critical look at the impact alcohol has had on the people in the north. Harold, who is based in La Ronge, Saskatchewan said:

...alcohol is responsible for much death and destruction in the north, and as a Crown prosecutor he's had a front-row seat to its effects.

Ninety-five percent of what we deal with in provincial court, the person who committed the offence was drunk at the time of the offence. It's every day.

Are we tired of going to the graveyard? Are we tired of burying our relatives? Have we had enough of this now?

As Johnson told the CBC, alcohol misuse permeates all aspects of society, whether it's the justice system, health, poverty or the economy.

Indeed, according to a 2011 study of northern Saskatchewan health regions, two-thirds of fatal motor vehicle accidents are alcohol-related. The rate of drug and alcohol use during pregnancy in the north is three times the provincial rate.

Moreover, the CBC reports that according to Johnson, it even affects the cost of infrastructure in the north, as contractors take into account absenteeism and lowered productivity because of hangovers and include those costs in bid prices.

●(1010)

It is an issue that has also touched Johnson in his own personal life. Two of his brothers have been killed by drunk drivers, and most recently in 2014. The Justice Department gave him six months to work with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the Montreal Lake Cree Nation in a search of answers to open a discussion. He says he is not hoping to work miracles, but just to get people talking. As he says, "Are we tired of going to the graveyard? Are we tired of burying our relatives? Have we had enough of this now?"

I am proud to be here to debate Bill C-46, which proposes substantive changes to modernize the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with drug- and alcohol-impaired driving offences.

The purpose of the bill is to protect public health and safety by creating new provisions and strengthening existing provisions to deter impaired drivers and come down hard on anyone caught committing drug- and alcohol-impaired driving offences. This bill also aims to give police the resources they need to improve the detection of the presence of drugs and alcohol in impaired drivers and facilitate the prosecution of such cases. It is important to develop a regulatory policy to stop impaired driving.

Part 1 of the bill amends certain provisions that deal with offences. Among other things, the amendments seek to do the following: enact new criminal offences for driving with a blood drug concentration that is equal to or higher than the permitted concentration; authorize the establishment of prohibited blood drug concentrations; and authorize peace officers who suspect a driver has a drug in their body to demand that the driver provide a sample of a bodily substance for analysis by drug screening equipment that is approved by the Attorney General of Canada.

It is important not only in the big cities, but also in the rural areas and communities where I come from. I am proud to be here and to have the opportunity to express myself in Cree, English, and French, the founding languages of our nation.

People may have noticed that I did not provide a translation for the part of my speech that I delivered in Cree. I addressed those words to the people in our communities. I hope they will hear them. They need to hear discussions about what we once were and what we can become.

●(1015)

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for speaking in Cree. A lot of indigenous languages are on the verge of disappearing entirely, including Syilx language in my community, so I would encourage that.

I know that he talked primarily about alcohol and its effects. Bill C-46 is about marijuana and other drugs as much as it is about alcohol, and a lot of it revolves around how we are going to test for marijuana in roadside tests. How does the government plan to do that when we heard at the justice committee that there is no relationship between marijuana THC levels in blood and impairment? People who are using marijuana legally can have chronic levels of THC in their blood, so they would essentially be banned from driving. Would the member comment on that?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for offering more information about the issue of THC levels in the blood. Obviously, there are people who have chronic issues.

Government Orders

I remember, from discussions with some of my comrades from the 5 Field Ambulance when I was in the army, that in Afghanistan in the medical corps we would often have to treat people who would come into the hospitals who might be Afghans and some of them had chronic drug use for many years. Unfortunately, the medics gave one dose and a second dose and it still didn't have any impact; the individuals still felt a lot of pain and that was because they had been constantly using, often in this case, opium or the poppy. It does create an issue where the person seemingly was functional working in the Afghan military, but probably it would not be acceptable within any western military or for sure in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I am not an expert, but I did go to the justice committee for one day to some of the hearings. I heard about the idea of how we have to be careful with police checks and how we ensure that we do not go after one ethnic group or one group more than another. I will stop there because I need another question.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend from Winnipeg was just mid-sentence on a point that I raised in committee and attempted to provide amendments on. The Canadian Criminal Lawyers' Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and a number of other organizations raised real concerns that the random sampling would not really be random but would actually be selective and amount to racial profiling.

I invite my hon. colleague to finish his sentence because it seems that he is concerned about the same point.

•(1020)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, it is obviously a grave concern to me. I represent a riding that has an awful lot of social issues, even in my own case when I was at the University of Manitoba. I do not always wear a suit and I was walking around in a certain area of town in Winnipeg and, lo and behold, with my long hair and just wearing a T-shirt, I was stopped by police and questioned. It is nothing that ever happened to me when I was in Quebec City or Calgary but it happened to me in Winnipeg. I had many of my students say they were always being stopped, especially a lot of the men, indigenous men in this case with very strong aboriginal appearance, even stronger than mine. They were being stopped and questioned by police. It does create that potential, so we do have to be very careful in ensuring that, for instance, police forces receive adequate training and sensitization on the issue, to make sure that we continue to work with these communities.

The City of Winnipeg under the former chief of police, Devon Clunis who is a great moral man, was attempting to build bridges to get the police out of their patrol cars and into the community to speak with people and get people working together to have a discussion to build bridges. Often, if they do not have those bridges it becomes very easy to start seeing it as a war zone where it is us against them. Really, it is about serving communities.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government is currently rushing through the marijuana legislation despite kickback from health care practitioners, law enforcement agents, parents, teachers, municipal leaders, and provinces who are all speaking up and speaking out against this legislation and the time frame that has been imposed on this country.

Despite this outcry, the government insists on continuing and rushing forward, for no other reason than the Prime Minister of course would like to include it in his party on July 1, 2018.

Now, the government has made it clear that Bill C-46, the impaired driving act, is closely tied to the marijuana legislation. However, despite the so-called positive intent of this bill, Bill C-46 is, in fact, poorly drafted and fails to hold up to scrutiny from scientists and legal practitioners who have commented with regard to this legislation.

The impaired driving act before us would include roadside tests that lack scientific evidence, would grant police the power to force tests without reasonable evidence of impairment, and is of course full of very poorly worded measures that make many parts of this bill likely to be thrown out by the courts. This poses significant issue.

As I will detail shortly, there are legitimate questions around the constitutionality of certain provisions within Bill C-46. As the Canadian Bar Association has noted in its brief, impaired driving is one of the most litigated laws in all of Canada. There have been many appeals, many constitutional challenges, and a great deal of court time taken up with establishing legal precedence. Rushing this legislation through the House without the proper time to ensure the government has it right would inevitably lead to a great number of appeals and further backlog.

This could not happen at a worse time since the Liberals have failed to appoint new judges and adequately care for our justice system here in Canada. In the era of the Jordan decision, where court cases are being dismissed without a trial because of long wait times, the legislation has the potential to actually clog this up even further, thereby taking away from our justice system. This means accused criminals could actually be set free without a trial because of this poorly crafted legislation before the House today. To recklessly endanger the criminal justice system in order to rush the legalization of pot is a gross mismanagement of prioritization, and poor government.

Permit me to discuss the constitutionality of this bill. This legislation would allow law enforcement agents to demand a saliva or blood test from a driver if they reasonably suspect that the person has drugs in his or her body. For example, if officers notice the person has unusually red eyes, abnormal speech patterns, or perhaps has the scent of marijuana on them, they could demand a drug test.

Government Orders

The problem is that these types of drug impairment tests actually ignore science, thereby putting the Liberals' entire drug impairment driving section at risk of being unconstitutional. A first-year medical student should be able to tell us that marijuana has a main component within it called THC and that it dissolves in fat and not water. It is accepted science that THC disappears from the blood within a couple of hours after smoking it, however impairment lasts much longer.

Why is this important? It is important because blood is mostly water while the brain, which is where the impairment actually takes place, is mostly fat. Although the THC may not be found in the blood, it may be found in the brain. The new impairment tests this legislation is putting forward actually only measure the THC concentration in the blood, thus rendering the new tests proposed by the Liberal government absolutely useless. This fact draws into question the constitutionality of large parts of the bill before this House.

If the purpose of the legislation is to demonstrate impairment but the government's test for impairment is not scientifically viable, then it is going to be challenged by defence lawyers and tossed out by the courts. This, of course, is a significant problem.

Although an officer would need reasonable grounds to test for drug impairment, when it comes to testing for alcohol impairment the officer would no longer need reasonable grounds to do so. The federal justice department states on its website, "...police officers who have an approved screening device on hand would be able to test any driver they lawfully stop, even if the officer does not suspect the driver has alcohol in his or her body."

In other words, in the same way that a police officer can pull one person over and demand to see a licence and proof of registration, the officer would also be able to demand that a driver take a Breathalyzer, even if the officer has absolutely no reason to suspect impaired driving.

● (1025)

Although the roadside test in and of itself cannot lead to a charge, it would allow the police to open up further investigation and subject the driver to further testing and scrutiny, which could lead to great embarrassment, time off work, etc., with respect to this person who is accused of doing something that the officer had absolutely no reasonable grounds to accuse the person of. For these reasons, many criminal lawyers from across Canada are raising their eyebrows, putting up a flag, and saying that this will be challenged and perhaps tossed out in the courts.

It is clear that the current government is doing all that it can to rush the legislation through, both Bill C-46, as well as the legalization of marijuana, but the approach is altogether wrong. The timeline for legalizing marijuana is simply too short. Cities and towns have said this, first nations chiefs and elders have said this, provinces and territories have said this, and police and first responders have said this. The government has made it clear that Bill C-46 and the legalization of marijuana go hand in hand. It is attempting to tighten the legislation around drug-impaired driving before the possession and use of marijuana is made legal in our country. However, it has failed to leave enough time for law enforcement agents across the country to properly train and adopt the

new screening technologies needed to enforce this bill. I have been told by several police chiefs that the only place law enforcement agents can receive adequate training in this regard is in the United States, and that the cost for this training is quite expensive, upward of \$20,000 per person. To make matters worse, the wait time in order to get into this training is more than 12 months long, which then poses some problems because marijuana is going to be legal in Canada in about nine months from now. Therefore, members can see my concern here.

Canada is a big country, and there are many police forces with different levels of resources. Many of the smaller centres are already having a tough time making ends meet. Many centres do not have the money to pay a team of lawyers and consultants to write new operational policies for front-line officers, and do not have the resources to buy a huge supply of new marijuana tests. They certainly do not have the staff training budgets to train all of their officers on how to use the new technology, that is to say even if they could get into the training within the time frame provided, which they cannot.

What is the result? The result is the disempowerment of police forces across this nation. It also means insufficient law enforcement, which puts the public safety of Canadians at risk.

Before closing, I would like to address one more concern with respect to the legalization of marijuana. When I look at studies done in Washington and Colorado, they demonstrate that with legalization comes a decrease in the perception of risk among our young people. This stands to reason because a government-regulated product should have better quality control standards than something grown by organized criminals, and no one thinks the government will legalize a product that would pose any sort of risk or harm element to him or her. However, we all know, or should know, due to the studies that have been given to us, that there is no safe use for youth. Both the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Paediatric Society have made it very clear that marijuana damages brain development in youth and young adults under the age of 25. Youth who use marijuana are more likely to have mental health issues later in life, including schizophrenia, and they are more likely to underachieve. These risks are not understood by Canadian youth, and therefore are problematic.

Before legalization takes place, there needs to be a strong public education campaign for both parents and youth on the health effects of marijuana. The Liberal government's own legalization task force recommended this, and we have yet to see it come into effect. Again, the legalization of marijuana is set to take place in less than nine months from now.

In conclusion, I would say that this legislation is extremely poorly crafted. The Canadian Bar Association has laid out the many ways this legislation will likely be challenged in court. Those challenges and appeals are going to clog the justice system, letting accused criminals off the hook, meaning victims of crime will watch their attackers go free, all because the Liberals made a political promise to legalize marijuana, and to have it done by July 1, 2018. This is unacceptable. This is detrimental to Canadians.

Government Orders

•(1030)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made some incorrect statements with respect to training.

In 2007, in the 39th Parliament, the government of the day introduced legislation that created the drug recognition experts and standardized field sobriety testing within the impaired legislation. It passed that legislation within only weeks before the date of implementation. Less than \$2 million was allotted for the training of police officers. I remember this very well. As the member has said, the training was only available in the United States. This made it inaccessible to many police services.

We have learned from the mistake of the government opposite. In fact, when we introduced the legislation, we also announced \$161 million to provide for the training for drug recognition experts, which are needed to enforce the legislation. This had not been available to law enforcement. We also made provision to pay for oral fluid test kits so police services would have them available. The past government failed to do this.

With the provision of \$161 million for the training of officers, the provision of money for public education and for oral test kits, would the member like to revise her comments?

Ms. Rachael Harder: Madam Speaker, when we talk about training for our officers, the Liberals can throw money at a problem. However, if they do not provide the adequate training or access to adequate training, it does not solve the issue. With regard to education, again, the Liberals can throw money at education, but if they do not actually put the campaign into place, it does not solve the problem.

We have seen neither of these things take place from the current government. The Liberals like to talk a lot. They make many promises, then they break them. I have to give them marks at least for consistency, because they are very consistent on this point.

The point is this. The Liberals say that they want to train officers, but training is not available. They are not pursuing it. They say that they want to educate young people, but they have not taken any steps to move forward to put a campaign in place to make young people aware of what is going on with the legalization of marijuana and the impacts it will have on them. That is a problem. It is a problem the government needs to address and is not doing it.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, I could address a number of things, like what I read this morning. The medical officer of Colorado said that one of the reasons Colorado had diminished negative aspects to its legalization was that prior to the legalization, it had a broad, expansive education program that went across the entire state. He also mentioned the legal age for marijuana in Colorado was 21. That is much different than here. It is three years earlier. There are also the negative effects on the brains of youth. Also, it certainly does not have a provision where someone 12 to 18 years old can have 10 grams in his or her possession.

With those things in mind, the member for Winnipeg Centre, a member of the government party, said that two-thirds of all fatalities could be traced back to alcohol consumption. Therefore, why would

the Liberals rush something through that will only exacerbate fatalities in motor vehicle accidents?

•(1035)

Ms. Rachael Harder: Madam Speaker, the hon. member makes some excellent points with regard to Colorado as a case study. The government would do well to pay attention.

When it comes to rushing this legislation through and putting marijuana into the hands of Canadian children, youth, and the general public, we need to consider an exhaustive education campaign. That needs to be put in place. We have seen no evidence of that whatsoever, and we are less than nine months away from the legalization of marijuana.

With regard to impaired driving, we do not have adequate testing mechanisms in place or readily available to police enforcement agents. That allows people to be in their vehicles, on the roads, driving drug impaired. This is a problem for the safety of Canadians. The government has a responsibility to do due diligence and solve this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak in favour of Bill C-46. As chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, I want to thank my colleagues from all the parties who helped come up with 15 amendments, which were adopted by the committee. I believe those amendments will improve the bill.

[*English*]

It was a great pleasure, as always, to work with members of all parties on this issue. In coming up with amendments, our committee made productive contributions toward improving the bill before us.

I strongly agree with Bill C-46. The goal of the bill is to reduce the number of alcohol and drug-related offences on our roads. Too many Canadians die, too many Canadians are injured, too many families across the country are hurt every year because of impaired driving accidents. The crashes that ensue, because someone has consumed alcohol or drugs and taken to the road, are not acceptable under any circumstances.

If I were starting from scratch and writing alcohol-related legislation, there would be no tolerance whatsoever for anyone who is caught driving with alcohol or drugs in his or her system. Nobody can drive safely when marijuana or other drugs have been consumed, no matter how little. No one can drive safely when alcohol has been consumed, no matter how little.

It is true that due to the constraints of our testing, we cannot test at certain levels, which means we have to set per se limits. We need to have certain thresholds which one cannot pass in order to create an offence, in addition to when an officer suspects impairment. From my point of view, no Canadian should be driving if he or she has consumed drugs or alcohol.

Government Orders

I would like to talk about the two of the most contentious issues related to this legislation. Our committee held extended hearings. We sat for many hours over a period of two weeks and listened to witnesses from across the spectrum. The two areas about which I heard the most concern were mandatory screening and minimum mandatory sentences.

The constitutionality of mandatory screening was questioned, and I want to go back to the recent speech made by my colleague from Lethbridge. I thought it was very interesting to hear her question the constitutionality of minimum mandatory screening. I want to point out that she, along with most of her colleagues, voted in favour of the private member's bill of the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, Bill C-226, that was recently before the House. It proposed mandatory screening. I find it funny to hear the member question the constitutionality of mandatory screening when that was the entire premise of Bill C-226, which she voted in favour of earlier this year.

Why, despite constitutional questions raised, do I support mandatory screening? Because at committee we heard there was only one way to deter drunk driving, that there was only one way to deter drug-impaired driving. That was to scare people into really believing they would be caught. Minimum mandatory sentences and what will happen after the fact, will not deter people; it is the idea that police may actually catch them in the act.

At committee, we heard from witnesses from Colorado, Australia, and from other jurisdictions where mandatory screening was introduced. They told us that mandatory screening had a huge deterrent because of the heightened probability of being caught.

Since mandatory screening was introduced in Australia, Finland, Sweden, France, and Ireland, there was an incredible reduction in the number of deaths related to alcohol. In Finland, where mandatory screening was introduced in 1977, a study noted that the number of drivers impaired by alcohol had decreased by 58%. According to a report published in Ireland, deaths caused by impaired driving decreased 19% in the first year following mandatory screening.

We know that mandatory screening really works. It has been proven to work across the globe. Some groups, such as the Canadian Bar Association and the Barreau du Québec, asked questions about the way mandatory screening would work. At committee, we introduced a provision into the preamble of the bill to reassure Canadians that any check needed to be done in line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

●(1040)

Police officers are able to do a lot of things when they make a legal stop, including asking someone for a breath test, under common law. We are now codifying what existed already under the common law. We are seeing that without reasonable suspicion, we can ask for a breath test, provided it was a lawful stop. The committee and all of us want to ensure we follow those rules and have asked, as part of this law, that the minister undertake a review of what has happened in three years to ensure mandatory screening is carried out properly.

Other measures and amendments on minimum mandatory sentences were introduced at committee. While I am very pleased

that maximum sentences have increased for the very serious offences under the law, we did not introduce new minimum mandatory sentences. This was the one and only area where I saw divergence between ourselves and members of the official opposition.

The committee heard from groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, that there was no proof in any case that minimum mandatory sentences actually stopped people from driving impaired. When asked specifically, MADD stated that it did not favour increasing the minimum mandatory sentences that existed. However, I note that the committee, on an amendment from a Liberal member, reinserted minimum mandatory sentences in the one place it had been removed in the bill, which was for the most serious offence of driving while impaired causing bodily harm, and extended the maximum sentence.

I am not one of those people who believe there should never be minimum mandatory sentences. For the most serious offences, there needs to be minimum mandatory sentences. However, I also note that this has to come under a thorough review to determine exactly the right standards and the right duration of those sentences, because we also know there are drawbacks. When there is a minimum mandatory sentence, one does not plead out. People are very reluctant to plead out because they know they will go to prison for a certain minimum term. Therefore, it clogs the court system, which is already clogged, and causes difficulties under Jordan, where people are acquitted because they do not get a speedy enough trial.

We also know that minimum mandatory sentences are not really a deterrent. They do reassure families and victims, but they do not deter people from the behaviour. I would rather wait, before we change what the minimum mandatory sentences were, the committee having reinserted the exact same minimum mandatory sentences that exist now in law, to see what the review of the Minister of Justice has to say. Certain minimum mandatory sentences already in the Criminal Code have been found unconstitutional and others may need to be inserted. I would rather wait for a thorough review before changing them for impaired driving offences.

Finally, I want to thank the dozens of witnesses who appeared before committee. It was heart-wrenching to hear the testimony of parents who had lost children in impaired driving accidents. It was heart-wrenching to hear about the beautiful people whose lives were prematurely shortened and whose mothers would never become grandmothers, would never see their kids graduate from college, and would never see their kids have families of their own or have successful careers. It was awful. The people who came before committee to be heard deserve commendation. They chose not to just sit back and suffer, but to make changes to improve our laws, to fight to improve our laws to improve Canadian society. I want to herald the parents who had the courage to come before the committee. While they supported the thrust of the bill, I do not support their call for longer minimum mandatory sentences at this time.

Government Orders

From what I heard, we really need to work on what we do to help the victims their families. That issue of concern needs to be addressed. However, I support the thrust of the bill and encourage all my colleagues to support it.

• (1045)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the comments of the member were thoughtful, as always.

I share his concern about the tragedies of parents who have lost children in accidents involving impaired driving. I am even more concerned that with 249 days to go before the arbitrary legalization of marijuana and based on what other jurisdictions saw, there will be a doubling of these kinds of fatalities due to drug-induced driving, with no test in place. Clearly, police services have indicated they will not be ready.

Could the member comment on whether he thinks it is a protection for preventing future tragic incidents like this to rush ahead with the July 1 date?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, again, there is no July 1 date. There was never any desire to put this on Canada Day. I do not think that is actually correct. As well, we were not studying Bill C-45; we were studying Bill C-46.

The police brought before our committee were asked questions. We asked multiple police organizations whether they could be ready. Most of them said that they could be, but they needed money and resources for testing. The government has indeed put in place an amount of \$161 million for training front-line officers to recognize signs and symptoms of drug-impaired driving. Provinces and territories will be getting another \$81 million over the next five years for new law enforcement training. I believe that people can be ready.

What I am concerned about, and of course, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton was not at committee, is that nobody was able to tell the committee that there had been an increase in deaths or fatalities, or even impairment accidents, in jurisdictions where marijuana was legalized. We spoke to police from those jurisdictions, and we did not get that feedback. Again, I think we all have that concern, and we all want to make sure the police are ready.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his overview of the work of the committee from his vantage point as chair.

He said in his speech that he believes that no one should take the wheel with faculties impaired either by drugs or alcohol. However, for that to happen there needs to be a massive public awareness and education campaign. He says there is no set date for legalizing marijuana, but we know it is on the government's agenda. There is not so much as a whisper about a major public awareness and education campaign.

Will the hon. member join my voice and that of the CAA and many other groups and call on the government to immediately launch a major public awareness and education campaign to put an end to all these impaired driving tragedies?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for the question. I com-

pletely agree with her that we need a massive public awareness and education campaign.

We asked the justice department's representatives these questions. They told us that the campaign is already underway. They have been working for some months on this campaign and they promised that it would be rolled out in earnest in the coming months. I completely agree that it is the responsibility of our government and all parliamentarians to educate Canadians so that these accidents no longer happen.

• (1050)

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Mount Royal mentioned \$161 million being given out to train these police officers. If we do the simple math, \$20,000 per officer basically amounts to 8,050 officers. The police force of Toronto alone has 5,400 officers.

How does the member see that amount of money covering all of Canada, including rural Canada, where we need people in place to do that proper testing?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, we also heard testimony that in 2008, under the Conservative government, laws were amended, and about \$2 million was given to start police training in this area. The police never actually started the training.

We need to make sure that enough police are trained. What we heard at committee was that the money should be sufficient, provided it is rolled out quickly.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak to Bill C-46 today, a bill that would change the Criminal Code in relation to offences related to driving under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. The bill is essentially paired with Bill C-45, a bill that would legalize marijuana, so it is safe to say that it is meant to provide some comfort to Canadians concerned about the dangers of driving under the influence of marijuana or THC as much as it is about alcohol impairment.

The NDP clearly stands for deterrence to driving while impaired. Canada has a terrible record of deaths and injuries related to impaired driving. About 1,000 Canadians are killed each year in traffic accidents involving impaired driving.

Others have spoken eloquently on that aspect of the bill, but what I want to spend most of my time here today talking about are the concerns about the difficulty of testing, in any meaningful way, for impairment by marijuana.

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I sat on the justice committee for one of the meetings set aside to consider Bill C-46, and we heard very interesting and compelling testimony about roadside testing for marijuana. We are all used to the concept of testing for alcohol levels through roadside breath tests. These tests produce results that accurately measure blood alcohol levels. Blood alcohol levels rise and fall in a predictable manner that relates closely to impairment. We can therefore deduce impairment from alcohol blood levels, and we do that in roadside tests every day across the country. We have per se limits for alcohol impairment, usually .08% or .05% blood alcohol.

The psychoactive ingredient in marijuana is THC, and it acts in a very different physiological way than does alcohol. Unlike what happens when drinking alcohol, THC levels rise very quickly in the blood when marijuana is smoked, and while those initial levels are high, the person may not be significantly impaired, because the effects of THC occur when the THC leaves the blood and binds to fatty tissues in the brain. THC binds to fatty tissues so strongly that blood levels generally drop very rapidly. When impairment levels are high, THC levels in the blood are usually very low, so THC levels in the blood do not necessarily relate at all to the level of impairment.

Impairment also differs significantly between alcohol and THC. Alcohol impairment involves a loss of motor control, hence the famous tests such as walking a straight line or standing on one leg. THC impairment affects faculties such as reaction time rather than motor control. People impaired by THC will often report that they know they are impaired, so some are more likely to decide not to drive, or they will drive more slowly. Alcohol impairment has essentially the opposite effect, so drunks drive more recklessly. I do not want to suggest that people under the influence of marijuana are safe drivers, just that we have to test for impairment in a very different way.

At committee we also heard from a toxicology expert that we can back extrapolate from a blood alcohol level measured at some time after an incident to assess the level that would have existed at the time of that incident. We cannot do that for THC. If a driver involved in an accident was found to have some level of THC some hours after the fact, we could not, with any scientific certainty at all, know what the THC level was at the time of the accident. Even if the level was tested at the time of the accident, we would have no way of relating the THC level with impairment.

Dr. Thomas Marcotte, an expert in testing for THC and impairment, from the University of California, San Diego, gave extensive testimony on these difficulties. He and his colleagues have found no way to usefully match THC levels with impairment. He and others have found that it is not only difficult to relate THC blood levels to impairment but that regular users of marijuana will have chronic low levels of THC in their blood, with no impairment at all. This is extremely problematic for the task of finding a meaningful way to test for THC impairment on the roadside.

We are making it legal for Canadians to use marijuana. Indeed, it is already legal for users of medical cannabis. If some of these law-abiding Canadians have chronic low levels of THC in their blood, and we use some per se limit of THC as a surrogate for impairment, then we are essentially saying that yes, people can legally use marijuana or medical cannabis, but they can never drive again or

they could be charged with impaired driving, despite not being impaired.

● (1055)

Also at committee we heard from two witnesses from Australian police forces. Australia has used extensive roadside testing for alcohol and drugs, which others have mentioned in this debate. Much of this testing is through what they call “booze buses”, which process hundreds of thousands of Australians annually. They literally close off highways and test everyone for alcohol levels, while a smaller sample are screened for drugs.

Australian police also carry out so-called random testing at their own discretion, usually in neighbourhoods they feel need scrutiny. It is this type of testing the NDP has great concerns about, as it is clearly open to racial profiling. My colleague for Victoria on Friday covered some of these concerns very well in his speech, so I will leave this point, but I am sure members will hear more about it from my colleagues later today. However, one of the serious issues with Bill C-46 is that it undermines the present system of testing only after reasonable suspicion of impairment.

The Australian police also testified about the test they use for THC. These tests are expensive: about \$30 for the preliminary test and ten times more for a secondary test given to those who score positive. Anyone found with any level of THC is charged with impaired driving and has a licence suspension. Now, this works in a jurisdiction such as Australia, where marijuana is illegal. However, as we have heard from experts at committee, people who use marijuana regularly, and there are many across Canada, including thousands who use cannabis for medical reasons, will have chronic levels of THC in their blood. If they lived in Australia, they would not be able to drive at all for fear of being charged for impaired driving, even when they were not impaired, and even if they had not used marijuana for many hours or even days.

Government Orders

How do we test for marijuana impairment? As I mentioned before, THC impairment presents as a slowing of reaction time and other similar faculties, but not a loss of motor control. Dr. Marcotte testified that he and others were working on developing iPad-based tests that would test for these abilities. However, we hear from the government side in this debate that its members are confident that meaningful roadside mouth-swab tests will somehow be developed in the next few months, despite expert testimony that any test measuring THC will be meaningless as a measure of impairment. If we use the Australian model, we will be criminalizing marijuana users who have chronic levels of THC in their blood, even though they have not used marijuana that day and are in no way impaired. We need a better solution to this problem.

On July 1 next year, Canadians will be able to use marijuana legally, and many will be using and driving. We need a system that tests for impairment from marijuana, not for meaningless THC levels.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that we need to modernize the legislation. All of us are aware of the election platform. A commitment was made with respect to cannabis. We have three political parties, New Democrats, Greens, and Liberals, who really want to move forward on this issue. To do that, the responsible thing to do is to bring in legislation that would enable our law enforcement agencies and others to have some of the tools necessary to further advance the legalization of cannabis.

I wonder if the member across the way can provide his thoughts specifically on how important it is that we advance legislation, given the election platform and the commitment made by more than one political entity inside the House of Commons.

• (1100)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I am very much in favour of the legalization of marijuana, but I am also concerned, as I think all Canadians are, about the safety of Canadians on the roads and impairment while driving. What I am concerned about with regard to the bill before us, and what I have heard from the other side, is that the government is prepared to go ahead using per se limits for THC levels in the blood and relating that to impairment. However, we heard at the justice committee that this simply cannot be done. If we do that, we will be criminalizing people who are not impaired and who pose no threat to other motorists and are acting legally under the law, in that we have made marijuana legal, or will have within a year. This is my concern. We have to test for impairment rather than for THC levels.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for pointing out that there is no test for impairment with THC. The member has highlighted a couple of concerns about people who use medical marijuana legally; it would be in their system and so there would be court challenges on that. However, the member missed a point wherein second-hand smoke is also of concern. There may be people who are exposed to others who are smoking marijuana when it is legal, who could have it in their blood, and they could also be falsely tested. The government members talk about how the government is always fact and evidence based. The science shows there is no test that can show impairment

with THC. Could the member comment on those people who may be impacted by secondary smoke?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, yes, there are issues around second-hand smoke as well. It is not something that comes into debate when we talk about alcohol, for instance; it is a very different situation. What I and other Canadians are concerned about with the legalization of marijuana is the issue that now we would have to test for impairment, and the real issue is developing a test for impairment that actually does that. It is clear that we cannot do it with per se limits for THC, so we have to look at developing other tests. People are working on it. I do not know that it would be ready within a few months. I got the impression from the testimony at committee that this would not and could not be ready in time. Therefore, it is something we have to consider before bringing Bill C-46 forward.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak against Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code, regarding offences relating to conveyances, and to make consequential amendments to other acts, also known as the impaired driving legislation. This bill is the accompanying legislation to Bill C-45, the cannabis act, with which I am extremely familiar.

In essence, Bill C-46 seeks to create new and higher mandatory fines and maximum penalties for impaired driving, as well as authorize mandatory roadside screening for alcohol. Although I am entirely in favour of higher penalties for those driving while impaired, as this sends a strong message that impaired driving will not be tolerated, I have extreme concerns about this bill.

Similar to members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, I and my fellow members of the Standing Committee on Health sat through an entire week of testimony on the subject of marijuana and how the proposed legalization might affect our society. Nearly every witness who spoke before the committee stressed the need to be prepared well ahead of the date of the legalization, which in our case is the arbitrary date of July 1, 2018. Witnesses highlighted Canada's lack of testing equipment, of drug-recognition experts, of training abilities, and simply of public education in this area.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Bills C-45 and C-46 are inextricably linked. It is crucial that we understand that the part of the bill on drug-impaired driving that we are discussing stems directly from Bill C-45. The overlap between these two bills is evident and although the government is still trying to deal with these two bills as separate and independent bills, that is not the case.

*Government Orders**[English]*

This morning, I would like to address numerous concerns that I have regarding the legislation, in an effort to once again remind the government just how far we are from being truly ready to deal with the consequences of legalizing marijuana in Canada.

[Translation]

Driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana is one of the many causes of death in Canada. We have worked tirelessly for decades to reduce the number of drunk drivers on our roads with voluntary roadside checks, social programs, and many public education campaigns. However, that has not been the case for driving under the influence of marijuana.

[English]

Many studies have indicated that drivers who have used marijuana are more than twice as likely as other drivers to be involved in motor vehicle crashes. Fatal crashes involving drivers who recently used marijuana doubled in Washington after the state legalized the drug. Yes, that is right: they doubled from 8% to 17%. In Colorado, the increase in impaired drug driving due to the legalization of marijuana was a 32% increase at the start.

In terms of the statistics in Canada, if we look at traffic fatalities, we see we already have 16% caused by alcohol-impaired driving; another 24% were caused by drug-impaired driving, and most of that is marijuana; and then there is another 18% that is a combination of the two. That is the problem we have now. The government is rushing in 249 days to put in place the legalization of marijuana, when the police have clearly said they are not going to be ready. They are saying they need 2,000 people trained as drug recognition experts, and there are only 600 today. It is very costly to train them, and the training takes place in the U.S. The U.S. is backlogged because various states are busy legalizing. We are not going to have the trained officers we need.

Many colleagues today have talked about the testing. There is absolutely no test for impairment with marijuana. We can test for THC presence in the saliva and the blood, but that says nothing about whether people are impaired. This is really problematic because people who are on medical marijuana may have this residual in their system for days and days; people who were exposed to second-hand smoke may have it in their system; or people who may have smoked marijuana over the weekend and be driving 24 hours or more later and not be impaired might still have it in their system. It is really a problem that there is not a test in place. It will mean serious challenges to any offences charged under these new laws because there is no scientific way of telling whether somebody is impaired.

It is hugely hypocritical of the Liberal government to be introducing this bill and deciding to take alcohol limits from .08 down to .05, to be more stringent, when it is opening the barn door wide to allow people to drive impaired with marijuana without a test. Now, there is discussion of the per se limits, but of course those limits do not speak anything to impairment. We may have to take a pragmatic view and say that we are going to do what some other jurisdictions did and go with zero per se limit: if someone has any level at all, they must not drive. Then again, that will impact many people who are not impaired but who have THC in their system. The

government needs to quit rushing this legislation and concentrate on developing the science.

Every testimonial we heard at committee talked about the importance of having a public education campaign in place before the legalization. They want a campaign similar to what MADD did, trying to educate people about not driving drunk. That kind of campaign needs to happen before legalization. We need to have a campaign on other things as well, such as stopping smoking and about how marijuana smoking is bad for us. However, especially with respect to Bill C-46, we need to have that education in place. The fact is that the government, Health Canada, did not even send out the RFP with bids coming back. Bids were due last week, October 16. The program is just being created and it has not started to roll out.

We have been warned and warned by these other jurisdictions that this will be a danger to public safety, and so we need to look at that.

As well, we talk about the recommendations that came forward from committee.

- (1110)

[Translation]

Ms. McLellan, chair of the Liberal task force, recommended giving researchers additional time to develop effective and reliable testing tools.

The fact that the Liberal government is ignoring that advice is shocking. It has no regard whatsoever for Canadians' health and safety. In that same report, the task force also highlighted comments from Washington and Colorado about the importance of implementing education campaigns well ahead of legalization.

The degree of impairment can vary widely depending on the potency of the marijuana used and the driver's frequency of use. This bill sets no limits on those parameters and fails to properly prepare our law enforcement officials for their role. We have only 249 days to go. We need to educate Canadian society as a whole about the dangers of drug-impaired driving.

The deadline imposed by the government is unrealistic and puts Canadians' health at risk. Canadians need to understand the risks of drug-impaired driving before we move forward with this bill. There are just too many unanswered questions, which makes me doubt whether the government is capable of enforcing this law safely or effectively.

[English]

With flawed legalization and the flawed drug impaired driving framework proposed, I join my voice to those of my colleagues in calling for the Liberal government to rethink its deadline of July 1, 2018, and to do everything in its power to ensure the health and safety of all Canadians, especially on our roadways.

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In summary, we see we are rushing ahead with an arbitrary deadline when the police have said they are not ready, we do not have testing in place, we know the rates of impaired drug driving will likely increase and potentially double, and we know that 88% of Canadians do not smoke marijuana. These are the people who will experience these unintended effects, these tragic affects, so I call on the government to please reconsider and not rush toward this arbitrary date.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we need to recognize the Conservatives' desire to drag their feet on a relatively important issue. To hear some of the Conservative MPs speak, one would think there are no individuals smoking marijuana and driving today. There are serious issues today that still need to be dealt with. Members across the way need to realize that we have more young people experimenting with marijuana than any other western nation in the world. The past 10 years or so have not been successful, and this is just one part of the whole issue, dealing with some of the consequences. The whole issue has been top of mind for Canadians for many years. Now we have a government that is moving forward on it.

Would the member not acknowledge that the legislation we are talking about today would in fact make our communities safer, because we should not be assuming there are not people smoking marijuana on our streets today? I would like to think she believes there are people doing that. We are providing more tools that will, hopefully, help make our streets safer.

•(1115)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I know there are people smoking marijuana today, and one of the very concerning things with our young people is that they are unaware of the harms of driving a vehicle while impaired. Many of them think it is not hazardous, harmful, and dangerous to do so. They also think they are not going to see the 30% increase in schizophrenia, psychotic disorders, depression, and anxiety that the Canadian Medical Association has clearly documented.

That is why it is so important that we have the public education rolled out. The government has had two years. The Liberals ran on this as a platform campaign promise. They have had two years to get the public awareness out there to these young people that it is dangerous. They have had two years to put these things in place, and the training that is required to do this safely.

I do not think the bill, as introduced with the timeline, will bring safety to Canadians. We will see what Washington state saw. It already had a problem with 8% of fatalities due to marijuana-impaired driving, and the number has increased to 17%. We are not ready for that.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, in 2008, the Conservative government introduced tougher penalties for drunk driving, and yet in 2011, Statistics Canada noted “The rate of impaired driving increased for the fourth time in five years...and was at its highest point in a decade”, so longer sentences certainly did not seem to deter drunk driving.

I am interested in how the member thinks we can best keep Canadians safe moving forward, given it looks as if the Liberals are going to pass this, and marijuana will be legal by next July.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, when it comes to enforcement, we heard about this testimony as well when we talked about the legalization of marijuana. We heard that the enforcement over the years has not been effective, but we heard that what is effective is public education. When people understand the harms to our young people, understand the harms of driving under the influence, and explain to people exactly when they are impaired with marijuana and when they are not—should we be able to develop any research that would do that, which does not exist today—those are the kinds of things that would be much more helpful in protecting the public.

When we had the big campaign by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, we saw drunk driving really reduced. That is what we need to do, in a similar fashion, proactively, before we legalize marijuana.

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to contribute to the debate on Bill C-46, which proposes a number of changes to impaired driving legislation in Canada. More specifically, this legislation is proposing a number of changes in anticipation of the passing of Bill C-45, which seeks to legalize marijuana in Canada.

I, among others in the House, along with my colleague, the member for Samia—Lambton, sit on the health committee. We returned a week early in September from the summer recess to hold a series of marathon meetings on Bill C-45. At the committee, witnesses from across Canada and around the world presented their concerns on a number of issues related to the legalization of marijuana. Specifically, there were a number of experts who provided commentary on the aspects surrounding impaired driving. I want to share some of their testimony with members today.

Before I do, I want to say that we all know all too well that impaired driving is a deadly activity that often claims the lives of people who are entirely innocent. Canada is now on the verge of normalizing marijuana use, which could likely see impaired driving and death rates rise. I am not suggesting for a second that drug-impaired driving does not happen now and has not claimed lives already; however, I and many others are concerned that the normalization of marijuana use will make matters much worse on our roads and highways.

On September 12 of this year, during health committee testimony, Deputy Chief Thomas Carrique from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police stated:

What we do know is that impaired driving by way of alcohol is the number one criminal cause of death in this country. If we are to expect that the use of cannabis may go up, that causes us great concern. It puts our communities at peril....

He went on to say:

It is unknown what the combination is when you combine drugs and alcohol. We have heard all sorts of statistics from our neighbours south of the border that indicate that it has a great impact. There is...a 28% increase in the amount of intoxication. That creates a...danger behind the wheel.

Deputy Chief Mark Chatterbok, of the Saskatoon Police Service, who also represented the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, stated:

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We anticipate that as a result of new legislation the number of impaired drivers will only increase. This increase will be realized in a city and a province where impaired statistics are already far too high.

...the Saskatoon Police Service has concerns about an increase in impaired driving due to drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs...what happens when a driver already found to have a blood alcohol content of 0.07 also has the presence of THC in his or her blood. Technically, this driver may be under the legal limit for both individual substances, but what effect does the presence of both of these drugs have on impairment?

That is a very good point, and to my knowledge the issue has not been addressed. The Liberal government has set an artificial deadline to legalize marijuana use in Canada. As a result, it is left rushing through other legislation, such as Bill C-46, to try to head off a huge problem. The huge problem of the Liberals, once again, is their failure to keep their promises. Therefore, we are being asked to rush through legislation for no other reason than to enable the government to meet its deadline of Canada Day 2018. It has been my experience, whether making dinner or in making legislation, that rushing only ends in mistakes and poor results. There are aspects of this bill, Bill C-46, and also Bill C-45 for that matter, that will likely end up before the courts because a charge or conviction will be challenged.

What happens if we pass these changes and legalize marijuana and then parts of this law are struck down? We will not be able to turn back the clock at that point because marijuana use will already be rampant.

Being ready for the legalization of marijuana is a huge issue, in particular for law enforcement. There are thousands of police officers who will require specialized training on all of the anticipated legal changes. However, they do not have the time to complete this before Canada Day.

● (1120)

Also before the health committee this year, Deputy Chief Mike Serr, speaking on behalf of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, said:

In order to support the successful implementation of this comprehensive legislation, the CACP urges the Government of Canada to first consider extending the July 2018 commencement date to allow police services to obtain sufficient resources and proper training, both of which are critical to the successful implementation of the proposed cannabis act.

We need to remember that training takes both time and money, and law enforcement has clearly indicated that they do not have enough of either.

Sure, that government has announced that it has committed funding for training, but it is not enough and we only have 249 days to get it all done. In fact, departments cannot even put together training manuals for the police yet, as the laws to legalize marijuana have not even been made clear. Moreover, the bill still has to go the other side, to the red chamber, and how long could that take?

Just to give the House an idea of the monumental task of training thousands of police officers, deputy Chief Mark Chatterbok also said:

The International Association of Chiefs of Police website lists the process for certification for DRE training.

That is drug recognition expert training. The deputy chief continued:

Everyone who's involved in the program first has to first take the standardized field sobriety training before they attend the DRE program. Then the program itself consists of three phases. The first phase is a two-day preschool. The second phase is a seven-day classroom program with a comprehensive exam following that. Then between 60 and 90 days following phase two, the candidates attend a program in the U.S. where they have to evaluate subjects who are suspected of being impaired by drugs. My understanding is that they must participate in at least 12 evaluations successfully in order to then get the certification.

This training is going to take a long time to complete, and there is no way it will be done on time by Canada Day.

This brings me to my next point, one that was raised by almost every single witness at committee. In fact, there was a strong consensus on this issue amongst all parties as well, and that is public education. It has not gone unnoticed that we are spending a great deal of time and money to legalize marijuana, but we have not embarked on a public education campaign to educate Canadians, especially our youth.

We know that marijuana use by youth is higher in Canada than anywhere else in the world, and we know there is the strong likelihood of increased drug-impaired driving after legalization. We also know that early use, before the age of 25, has negative impacts on human brain development. In fact, the Canadian Medical Association, CMA, which represents 83,000 physicians, said that the age of legalization should ideally be 25 years of age. It says:

Existing evidence on marijuana points to the importance of protecting the brain during its development. Since that development is only finalized by about 25 years of age, this would be an ideal minimum age based on currently accepted scientific evidence...

We know that marijuana use by youth can facilitate the onset of schizophrenia and other psychotic conditions in certain people. Complications include cognitive impairment, social isolation, and even suicide. Just this month at the World Psychiatric Association's World Congress in Berlin, we were presented with further evidence of that.

Knowing all of this, and knowing the rush this Liberal government is in to legalize marijuana, why are we putting off a public education plan? We know that for a message to sink in, it must be repeated over the long term, yet we are looking at a last-minute public education plans. A last-minute public education plan will not get the message across in time. I do applaud MADD Canada, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, who have taken an early and proactive lead in public education about drug-impaired driving. However, more needs to be done in this area.

To close I would like to reiterate and summarize my main points of concern. While I support a strong stand against impaired driving, I also believe that we need to look at the bigger picture. We need to recognize that we are not ready for marijuana legalization in Canada. We have not educated Canadians adequately on marijuana and its effects. We have not educated Canadians, especially our young, on drug-impaired driving. Neither have we provided our police with adequate time to prepare for all of these changes. We do not have accurate drug detection equipment. We do not have enough trained, front-line officers to handle drug impairment.

In short, we are not—

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•(1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the member's time is up.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a cyclist, I very much believe in the need for safe streets—we call them Open Streets Toronto, a program by 8 80 Cities—for cyclists and active transportation so that people can get around from the age of eight to 80 and beyond and be safe on our streets.

What are the member's thoughts on this legislation specifically? He discussed all sorts of broader issues, but I see this legislation as including steps to make our streets safer from impaired drivers by its enacting new criminal offences authorizing the establishment of prohibited blood drug concentrations, and simplifying and modernizing the offences. Parts of this legislation seem to specifically target a lot of what I heard is his concern, which is impaired driving.

Mr. Len Webber: Madam Speaker, all of the presentations at committee on this subject have been made, but I encourage the member to read the Hansard of the committee to see what was said. It clearly indicates that there is deep concern among police associations throughout Canada and many others, including the Canadian Medical Association, about impaired driving. I could list more than 100 presentations made at committee that clearly identified that impaired driving was a serious concern and that we needed to take our time in looking at this legislation. It is being rushed. The Liberals are rushing it. We need to look at it. We are not dragging our feet on this side, as the parliamentary secretary said earlier. We are concerned about Canadians and the increased death rates that may result from this legislation's becoming law, apparently, on cannabis day. It is a shame.

•(1130)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' law-and-order approach over the last 10 years has not worked in Canada. Impaired driving charges actually went up under the Conservative government. Despite the longer sentences that were introduced in 2008, Statistics Canada noted in 2011 that "The rate of impaired driving increased for the fourth time in five years...and was at its highest point in a decade." We are dealing with systems that have not stopped this level of impaired driving in Canada.

The member talked about testing and I heard Conservatives in the House today talk about the fact that there are no good tests for marijuana-impaired driving. MADD Canada has endorsed the idea of per se limits, but I wonder if the member agrees with me that testing and per se limits should be based on a scientific approach.

Mr. Len Webber: Madam Speaker, absolutely we need proper testing equipment, scientifically proven and tested, that will accurately detect whether or not a driver is impaired by drugs. Right now, we do not have that in place. Therefore, why are we moving ahead with legalizing this drug when we do not even have the proper testing equipment in place for police officers around the country to determine whether individuals are impaired?

One important thing we need to do right now is to educate the public and individuals who tend to like to drive while impaired. You

stated that the levels of impaired driving have increased since the Conservative government put in place harsher punishment for those individuals, and that may be the case, but I believe that we need to educate society and these individuals even more than we are now. We need to tell them that dire consequences will occur if they are caught driving impaired.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member directed some statements to the member and I want to remind him that they are to be addressed through the Chair.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to speak to Bill C-46. We have discussed the proposed legislation at length here. The bill introduces new and higher mandatory fines and maximum penalties for impaired driving crimes as well as mandatory alcohol screening at the roadside.

The Conservative Party supports measures that protect Canadians. However, we are concerned for a number of reasons, one of which is that the police, municipalities, and premiers are not prepared for the legislation that would be enacted, and I am referring to Bill C-45.

This is good legislation inasmuch that it would increase fines and the penalty for impaired driving would be less of something that people generally who are driving would consider. However, some serious complications have ensued.

I want to take us to the very heart of this legislation, which is Bill C-45, the legalization of marijuana bill. What does that entail? For starters, it means that 18-year-olds in this country would legally be able to purchase and legally be able to indulge in smoking marijuana.

There has been a lot of talk about this proposed legislation. There has been a lot of talk about what the bill would do. I would like to bring to the House's attention a recent poll in the *Vancouver Sun*. The question was, "Where do you think people should buy their pot?" Multiple choices were listed. The highest group of people, 82.31%, answered "None of the above. I don't agree with legalization". If we are hearing that this is what people want, it certainly does not reflect what we are seeing at the polls. The number dwindles down from there, shops that sell cannabis, pharmacies, liquor stores, etc.

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I was pleased to hear from the member for Steveston—Richmond East the same news as was contained in the *Vancouver Sun*, that the federal government will not move ahead with marijuana legalization if it is not ready. It is good to hear that members on the other side are starting to talk this way. The member further said, “The concerned group is right. Things are not ready yet. We are still in the process.” We are looking for more of that encouragement from members on the opposite side. It is a step in the right direction, but it is a long way from where they should be.

I have been in this place for 12 years. I have served on a number of committees. Oftentimes when legislation is being proposed or new ideas come up, I always ask: Are there other jurisdictions that we can point to that have had this experience? What have they discovered? What have they learned from their enactment?

I am pleased to say there are a number of jurisdictions, and I am going to cite a few from a study on the legalization of marijuana in Colorado. Colorado took it upon itself in 2013 to legalize marijuana. It had relaxed laws and it continued on in that direction. We must remember that when we legalize marijuana the legal age will be 18, whereas in Colorado the age is 21. I do not have time to talk about that, even though it is an important issue as well.

The Colorado experience was such that it talked about impaired driving and fatalities. Marijuana-related traffic deaths more than doubled from 55 deaths in 2013 to 123 deaths in 2016.

If this foolish legislation, Bill C-45, is passed we are going to hear moms and dads, sisters, brothers, and grandparents asking the Liberals to answer for their situation, for their circumstance, for their pain, since they brought the legislation forward.

Marijuana-related traffic deaths increased 66% in the four-year average since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana. There is more.

● (1135)

In 2009, Colorado marijuana-related traffic deaths involving drivers testing positive for marijuana represented 9% of all traffic deaths. By 2016, it doubled to 20%. On youth marijuana use, we are talking about 21-year-olds. Youth past-month marijuana use increased 12% in the three-year average from 2013-15. In the latest poll, 2014-15, results show that Colorado youth ranked number one in the nation compared to number four in 2011-12. Colorado youth past-month marijuana use for 2014-15 was 55% higher than the national average. We know what is coming down the pipe.

Colorado is one jurisdiction that we can point to, but we can talk about drug usage and what other countries have experienced as well. When we do that, I would like to talk about the Netherlands. I have a little tie to the Netherlands. My parents emigrated from the Netherlands and I have family who live there, so I have a little understanding of what goes on there.

Before I talk about that though, I need to say that although there are some different opinions and different laws in other countries, the current UN treaty forbids countries to legalize or regulate drugs for recreational use. We are a signatory to that. Most countries, with the exception of Uruguay, moved in another direction. Holland tried something different. It tried a two-tier system. It sounds complicated and I would explain that the Dutch have an attitude. Let me quote

what Prime Minister Mark Rutte said. He is a hip guy, he is not a stuffy old guy. Mark was the guy who rode his bicycle when the G7 participants went to the Netherlands and President Obama came in with choppers and cars. Mark said during an interview that, “people should do with their own bodies whatever they please, as long as they are well informed about what that junk does to them.” He was talking about marijuana usage.

He went on to say that cannabis legalization of the Colorado model for 21-year-olds, “—where the state taxes and regulates all levels of the supply chain and adults age 21 and over are allowed to purchase weed from state-licensed stores—was out of the question”. He said “if we were to do that, we'd be the laughing stock of Europe.” In relation to the system that they tried to adopt, which would maybe allow some marijuana usage for those with the right to do so, this two-tier system where it is being sold openly but cannot produce it, is complete bankrupt. This is from Jon Brouwer, a law professor at the University of Groningen who specializes in Dutch drug policy. It is a system that is fundamentally flawed, pumping millions into the criminal underworld. Of course, the Liberals insist that this will greatly hinder the underground and the criminal element. We are finding out in Holland, which started to tamper with it, it did not work that well.

I spent some of my time yesterday reading a report by the World Health Organization. I recommend it. It is a great read. It reinforces pretty much everything I have been saying. The health and social effects of non-medical cannabis use is what we have all signed to. I encourage members to read that. I will not be supporting Bill C-45. I think Bill C-46 is moving in the right direction, but we certainly need to do a lot more work.

● (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague across the way. One of the first things that came across my mind is that there seems to be a sense of denial on the other side that Canada already has more young people who are engaged in the use of marijuana than have many other countries around the world, including the United States. When the member across the way talks about all the young people in the United States, he needs to highlight the fact that there are more young people in Canada on a per capita basis who use marijuana than in the United States. It is trying to give what I would suggest is a false impression.

Government Orders

Here we have legislation that would provide some tools. This whole legalization of marijuana is to deal with the criminal element, the hundreds of millions of dollars every year that the criminal element makes off our young people through illegal sales. It is to protect our young people. It cannot be any worse than what it was during Stephen Harper's or other administrations because we already have the youngest participation in marijuana. We already have people high on marijuana who are driving vehicles today in society. The legislation that we are debating today would help with that specific issue.

Would the member across the way at least acknowledge that we have an exceptionally high number of young people using marijuana today and that many of them are driving after using it?

• (1145)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, I say, “so what?” The member is right. We have a huge number of young people who are smoking marijuana, far too many. It does not change the fact that this legislation would not correct that or move it in the right direction. Speaking to Bill C-46, the legislation that we are dealing with right now on the laws pertaining to driving, I have three sons who are policemen. They have told me, as have the police chiefs and countless others in law enforcement, that this is crazy, that we are not near ready for any of this, that we are not ready for that legislation in itself, let alone the fact that we would be encouraging young people to smoke marijuana. We are not talking about just the legalization. When a government takes it upon itself and says, “This stuff is legal, go for it”, what is it actually saying?

I would just encourage the member to take a good, hard look at what his government is proposing and I am hoping that by July 1 the government does an about-face.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the question is that this legislation would provide the member's sons and the other individuals who are law enforcement agents across this country an opportunity to do something that they were not able to do anywhere near as effectively for individuals who are driving today who are high on marijuana. There is going to be legislation. The Conservatives can continue to debate that, overall, government policy is going in the wrong direction, but at the very least this legislation would make our streets safer. That, I would argue, is unquestionable. Would he not agree with that fact?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, the legislation is good inasmuch that it would increase the fines. However, the fact remains, and this is what police officers and police chiefs are telling me, they are not even slightly ready for this. They can have great legislation that would not be able to be enacted because law enforcement simply does not have the tools. We haven't even talked about what premiers and municipalities are saying, and what costs are involved. This is a giant mistake, and the hon. member needs to take a good look at what the Liberals are proposing, and back-track. Let us talk about this again. We need to talk about this a whole lot more.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be here today to participate in this debate on behalf of the people of the great riding of Timmins—James Bay.

The bill before us this morning seeks to amend the Criminal Code to give the police more authority when it comes to dealing with drug- and alcohol-impaired driving. This bill arises from the Liberal government's decision to legalize marijuana. I have a lot of questions about this bill.

First, there is no reliable test for detecting the presence of drugs in a driver's system. That is problematic because the police do not have the resources they need to deal with this new reality. Where is the national campaign to make Canadians aware of the effects of the legalization of marijuana?

The other problem with this bill is the Liberal government's decision to give police officers more authority, which will allow them to arrest drivers for no reason. Canada currently enjoys a legal balance where the police have the tools they need to keep people safe and individual rights are protected. I believe that this bill will undermine that balance.

• (1150)

[*English*]

The issue of our response as a society to the legalization of marijuana is an important question for Parliament. Certainly, we have seen too many lives affected with permanent records for having been charged for the recreational use of marijuana. Therefore, I applaud the government for moving in the direction of legalization. However, I have a number of questions about the lack of preparedness from the government in offering our society the protections necessary and to ensure police officers have the resources they need to maintain the fundamental balance that exists right now between the rights of citizens to know their streets are safe from drunk and drug-impaired drivers and the rights of individuals to be protected from unnecessary stop and search.

Right now, we do not have a credible, simple, clear test to prove the influence of drugs, which is a serious question. We have to ask ourselves whether the resources will be in place for the police to deal with this. It is a straightforward. However, in response to this, we hear this from the government. Because there is no credible test for marijuana, it will move forward with arbitrary mandatory tests for alcohol impairment without reason. I am very concerned about this. It undermines the principle that has been established in our country about the need for just cause.

Right now, if police officers believe a driver is impaired from drugs or alcohol, they have the right to stop that vehicle and demand a test, which is fair. They have the right, identified by the court, to set up programs, such as the RIDE program, where police officers can stop, for a limited period of time, all drivers and test them. However, it is proven that the program does not target individuals, because it is applied fairly across the board, such as at Christmas or other times where there may be high levels of drinking. The fact that we would add a provision that could allow police to stop an individual anytime, anywhere, and demand tests, to me, is an undermining of the basic questions of the charter. We have to be looking at why the government is moving in this direction.

Government Orders

In the case of *R. v. Oakes*, there was a simple test, that the measures adopted must be carefully designed to achieve the objective in question, which is the protection of society and the maintaining of individual rights. It says, “They must not be arbitrary, unfair or based on irrational considerations.” This means that even if rationally connected to the objective in the first place, which would be to stop drunk driving, they should impair as little as possible the right or freedom in question.

Why is this so important? Right now, if we go to court on any given day, we will never see upper middle-class white teenagers in court for marijuana possession. It is racialized. It is immigrant and indigenous. The targeting of certain groups is a fact. If members represent a rural region like I do, they want to ensure our roads are safe but also that powers are not abused to target people just because of who they are. Talk about driving while black or driving while indigenous.

These protections have to be maintained. Civil society is based on the rule of law. These tests have been brought to the Supreme Court. They have been tested to ensure we still have the powers necessary to go after drunk driving, while we ensure the tools police officers have do not exceed the limits so they do not unfairly targeting certain individuals who, just because of perhaps their economic disposition, or where they live, or the colour of their skin are identified for harassment.

It always strikes me with the Liberals, the so-called party of the charter, that whenever they can, they overreach on these issues. These are fundamental principles and we need to talk about them. We are all invested in finding that balance. We want safe streets, but we also want to know that the rule of law to ensure the police officers do not overstep is protected. I am very concerned about this with respect to this change.

This leads us back to the fact that this is being added in on alcohol when we do not have a credible test for drugs. We need to start a major campaign of public awareness about the legalization of drugs and how we will start to apply that. There was a huge campaign of public awareness over drinking and driving. It had a major impact in reducing people's decisions to get behind the wheel after Christmas parties. That was a very successful campaign. It was maintained through having credible powers of police and testing that could be applied in court. It was a clear test. However, we do not have that with marijuana.

To simply say that we will add more mandatory searches of people left, right, and centre will not address that fundamental problem. I am surprised the government has attempted to go in this direction. We will see major questions in section 1 charter liabilities over the rights of citizens.

When we talk about adding more rights of citizens, for example, the right to smoke marijuana legally, we have to also then say what resources we have to protect society. Then from that, the question of how to ensure those tools the police and authorities have do not exceed their respective authority and protect the individual rights of Canadians. With the Liberal government, I see a complete overreach. It is using the issue of the legalization of marijuana to add tools in the police tool box that it should not have and that have been found

by the courts to exceed and undermine the rights of citizens. Some fundamental problems have to be addressed.

Within this Parliament, we can address those issues, because they are complicated. They do not necessarily have to fall down on party lines. We have to find out what the right tools are to protect society and the rights of individuals. At this point, the Liberal government does not seem to have found that balance.

● (1155)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He mentioned how important the public awareness and education campaign regarding drinking and driving was. I am the mother of young adults and they know that there is a zero tolerance policy and that they must not get behind the wheel if they have been drinking.

It is important that the government quickly launch this same type of public awareness and education campaign on marijuana-impaired driving.

Does my colleague agree that the government should immediately announce the launch of such a campaign? We know that plans for this sort of campaign are under way, but we think it is taking too long. Since the legalization of marijuana is on the agenda, the government needs to start this campaign before the drug is legalized.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the incredible work my colleague is doing. I am surprised that the government decided to legalize marijuana without any plans to launch a national awareness campaign for Canadians on the rights and problems related to marijuana, specifically on the effects that drugs have on drivers.

There was a national campaign in response to the issue of impaired driving, which caused a lot of accidents. This awareness campaign was very useful in helping to protect Canadians.

Why did the Liberal government forget to put the proper resources in place to launch a similar campaign in response to the issue of the influence of drugs and marijuana?

● (1200)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech.

I have a question that has been bugging me. It has been stuck in my craw, as they say, since this whole marijuana legalization process began. The government decided to legalize marijuana, so why is it just now waking up to the importance of awareness? Why, all of a sudden, does it feel the need to go to great lengths to reduce marijuana use among young people even as it is taking steps to make the substance available everywhere? Why did the government not launch this campaign first so it could gauge the effect and then maybe explore the possibility of legalizing marijuana? Maybe the government should have waited to see if a youth-focused awareness campaign would have helped reduce the number of people getting behind the wheel after smoking marijuana.

Government Orders

Does the member not agree that the government is going about this all wrong? We certainly support measures to crack down on drug-impaired driving, but I think that should be the last resort. What we need to do is make sure young people do not drive under the influence of marijuana in the first place.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, during the last election, the Prime Minister appeared to really champion the rights of young people. Personally, I have no objection to legalizing marijuana, but what I do object to is a government that has begun the process without any plan to create a public awareness campaign, particularly regarding problems related to drug-impaired driving.

The Prime Minister was very supportive of legalizing marijuana, but he refused to address the problems and bring in a credible plan for Parliament and for Canada, to make sure we have Canadians' trust. We do not have that now.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a very sensitive and very serious matter, namely, how the legalization of marijuana relates to road safety issues. What effect will it have, and what measures should be taken?

I want to begin by saying that we on this side of the House are in favour of cracking down on impaired drivers. We must never compromise on safety. Any time someone takes the wheel, they must be fully cognizant of the fact that they are wielding what can be a terrifying weapon if it is not used properly. It is the responsibility of all drivers to ensure that they are fully competent to drive. Woe to anyone who chooses to drive while impaired by either alcohol or, unfortunately, drugs. That is where Bill C-46 comes in.

Essentially, the bill makes the law tougher on people who consume drugs and then take the wheel. We certainly cannot oppose virtue, but it is the approach that is highly objectionable and needs to be examined because in our view it is not the right one.

Let us return to the thrust of the matter. The government wants to legalize marijuana. That is why it tabled this bill. It is not a good thing. Anyone who has even taken a slight interest in this matter knows that wherever this has been tried, whether in Colorado or Washington, there has been an increase in crime, the consumption and illegal production of drugs, accidents, social problems, and deaths on the road.

Furthermore, this bill and the Liberal's ambition to legalize marijuana will normalize the use of a drug. There is no place for this in public discourse. It has a place in debate, but not in legislation. It is unacceptable to move forward with normalizing a drug.

The government is claiming that, with this new approach, organized crime will not reap the ill-gotten gains of marijuana production. I only need to quote one person to refute this argument, and that is the Commissioner of the RCMP, who says that it is naive to believe that organized crime is going to lose out. I am not the one saying so; it is the Commissioner of the RCMP, who knows all about this. For more than 150 years, the RCMP has done a superb job of fighting organized crime, the people who make money on the backs of the poor. The Commissioner of the RCMP is telling us that we would be naive to believe that this will allow us to stamp out organized crime.

Colorado and Washington's experience has shown that organized crime has actually gotten better at organizing. Worse still, legalizing, and therefore normalizing, marijuana consumption means this dirty business will be sanctioned by the government. When a teenager or youth tries marijuana for the first time, they will be doing so legally and with the approval of the Liberal government. That first contact will open the door to hard drugs.

No drug user starts off with cocaine. First they try one little joint. Then they try a stronger joint. Then they start taking a little of this and a little of that. This depraved behaviour will have the blessing of the Liberal government. This is totally inappropriate. That is my overview of the marijuana issue.

Now, let us take a closer look at what Bill C-46 says about driving and driving-related measures. First of all, the government has been rushing forward on this issue at breakneck speed. Everything absolutely must be finished and passed by July 1, 2018. What is the rush? Is there a meteor heading for Earth? No. The July 1 deadline is all in the Liberal members' heads.

• (1205)

This is to say nothing of the Liberal government's outrageous idea to tie our national holiday, Canada Day, to the legalization of marijuana. Are the Liberals going to sing, "O Cannabis!"? I certainly will not. I am proud to be Canadian and I want us to sing O Canada, not "O Cannabis". Well, that is what the Liberal government wants to do on July 1. What were they thinking, for Pete's sake? There are 365 days to choose from and they chose that day. If I were not in the House of Commons I would call them fools, but I will watch my language. It is not right to do that on July 1st, and so hastily to boot.

The provincial governments are left to deal with everything having to do with health, public safety, transportation, and housing. Thanks to this gracious Liberal government, it will be legal to have pot plants in every house in Canada. That is fantastic. This creates more problems.

Is there a single provincial government that is happy about having to implement all this in the amount of time they have been given? No, there is not a provincial government, a premier, or a health minister who has said that everything is just fine. Some are getting through this a bit better than others and say that they are on track to adapting to this new reality, but this is not something that should be done under pressure as quickly as possible. The provincial authorities are the ones that are stuck dealing with this problem. It is an insult to our provincial partners.

The same applies to road safety. Does the government seriously think that the police have all the tools they need to deal with this new reality? Does the government think that the police have the training needed to use those new tools? Does it think that all police officers will be ready to deal with this right away and that they will be ready to enforce this law on July 1, 2018?

Government Orders

That is absolutely not the case. The head of the RCMP and all of the other police forces across Canada are saying that they do not have the tools they need, even though that is fundamental. This bill requires people to deal with this situation even if they are not ready. That is the problem. The Liberals are rushing to implement this measure without doing the necessary research. If they have to legalize marijuana, could they not at least take the time to do things right and make sure that the police and everyone else who has to deal with this sad reality have the proper training? Unfortunately, that is not what the Liberals are doing. They are just rushing this thing through.

The government is saying that it is going to spend millions of dollars to make people aware of the risks associated with marijuana. First, that sends a contradictory message because why would the government legalize something that it does not want people to use? That makes no sense. Second, the money that the Liberal government has allocated to make people aware of the risks associated with marijuana is just a fraction of what Washington State and Colorado allocated for the same purpose.

We are hearing a lot of bluster about this, but the government has not taken any real action to serve Canadians as it should in this regard. The government is not doing enough in terms of prevention and it is not providing the resources and tools our police officers need. The government is trying to rush the provinces into this and force them to hastily implement this measure by July 1, 2018.

Legalizing marijuana, which normalizes and gives our children easier legal access to the drug market, is clearly a bad idea. What is worse, Bill C-46 will lead us astray; we will not have enough time to give law enforcement the training or equipment it needs and even less time to raise awareness among those we are trying to protect. Unfortunately, the government is going too fast in the wrong direction.

• (1210)

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague, and it seems to me that there are 338 of us members. If we were all to take a different view to my colleague's, that is to say a positive and forward-looking one, then we would have more time to explain the positives. That is what Canadians expect. I would ignore any inflammatory and negative speeches.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, if I misled the House in any way by providing false information, the member should rise and point it out, and I will immediately withdraw my remarks.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent can really crack us up.

On a more serious note, I have worked with troubled youth, I took part in youth round tables for almost 20 years, and I was the director at a community shelter for troubled youth. I agree with my colleague that we have to do something to ensure that legalizing marijuana does not give people licence to use it all the time.

Having worked with troubled youth for years during the Conservatives' reign, I concluded that their approach did not reduce accidents caused by impaired driving, nor did it reduce consumption. I found a harm reduction approach to be much more effective. Awareness and education are much more effective than repression.

Does my colleague agree that we must immediately urge the government to launch a massive public education and awareness campaign to ensure that legalizing marijuana does not normalize marijuana consumption?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her always temperate and well-articulated comments.

We obviously do not share the same social vision, but the beauty of the House of Commons is that it brings together people from the “for” camp, people from the “against” camp, people who are more to the right, and others further to the left. That is Canada, and that is the very purpose of the House of Commons.

The member said that under the Conservative government, consumption rose despite stronger repressive measures. I do not think this problem is related to whether the government is Conservative or formed by another party. Rather, it is a global problem.

We believe that legalizing and therefore trivializing marijuana consumption is no way to reduce consumption. Naturally, we support any initiative aimed at raising public awareness, such as an outreach campaign. However, the worst thing that could happen would be for an outreach campaign to be launched at the same time as marijuana is legalized. That would be sheer folly.

Legalizing marijuana trivializes it. That means taking marijuana will no longer be considered illegal or wrong. Well, taking marijuana is wrong. Legalizing it is wrong, and trivializing it is definitely wrong.

We agree with the idea of an education campaign, but for God's sake, let us launch it with all possible speed and energy, and delay the legalization of marijuana as long as possible.

• (1215)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We have 30 seconds for one more question and 30 seconds for the response.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with only 30 seconds, just one question comes to mind.

As a father, I know that legalizing marijuana opens the door in a way that could in fact encourage my children to consume more. I have a daughter who will be getting her driver's licence very soon. There is absolutely no campaign under way at this time. Unfortunately, marijuana will be legalized before all the awareness campaigns have a chance to make a difference and convince my daughter not to drive and use drugs at the same time.

Can the member tell me whether the Prime Minister's fantasy land has any resemblance whatsoever to real life?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his very relevant question.

Government Orders

This is about our children and grandchildren. For months and months now, I have been meeting with older people who tell me that it is not their children they fear for, but rather their grandchildren. They say they are worried about their four- or five-year-old granddaughter, for instance, who, once she becomes a teenager, will say to her mom that the Prime Minister said it is legal and it is no big deal. That is why we must not move forward on this. If this government does unfortunately move forward on this, the very least it must also do is educate young people and encourage them not to use marijuana. The government needs to do so as quickly and as aggressively as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour to be in the House today to speak to Bill C-46. I want to thank the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent. He provided some very important points to this House. I appreciate not only his passion and hard work for his constituents but also that he is standing up for Canadians.

Bill C-46 is evidence of another broken promise by the current Liberal government. It is another symbol of the top-down approach that the Prime Minister takes. He informs members of his caucus, of his party, that this is what he has decided to do and that this is what they will do, which is to have marijuana legalized as of Canada Day, with a great celebration. This member brought up that the Prime Minister has said that is what the Liberals will do and that they must support that position, that plan.

Recently, we saw what happens when members show some independence and represent the concerns of their constituents. They are kicked off committees or are disciplined severely, because they must assimilate and support the position of their leader. It is disappointing. That is not what Canadians were promised. They were promised transparency. They were promised that the government would be listening, truly consulting, and representing the concerns of Canadians, of the constituents. We saw a model of that being hammered down, where one member of the Liberal caucus who said, "I'm going to represent my constituents", was severely punished.

I am proud to bring the voice of the constituents of my riding of Langley—Aldergrove. I love it. It is a beautiful part of Canada. I have consulted about this. I consulted with a unique group of people, young professionals on my youth advisory board, which is made up of students from grades 11 and 12, as well as university. These are our future leaders, so I asked them about impaired driving and the legalization of marijuana. The current government has a minister for youth who is the Prime Minister himself. He has said that he represents this age group. This age group is telling the Prime Minister and these Liberal members to slow down the process. They feel that it is being rushed and the government will not get it right.

I think of the old adage, haste makes waste. There is real truth in that, and we are seeing that played out by the Liberal government, which is hastily moving forward regardless of what it is hearing from Canadians, from the provinces, and from police chiefs. Overwhelmingly, the government is being told to slow the process down and that it is moving too fast because Canada is not ready for this, particularly with respect to Bill C-46. This is the legislation that the government, with great gusto, promised would make our roads safer.

The Liberals said that they would not legalize marijuana until they first had legislation in place in Canada to make sure they keep our roads safe. They were going to get tough on impaired driving. That is anything but the truth, because they are not. What they are proposing will make our streets much less safe.

I have met a lot of people in my riding and have heard some tragic stories while representing my constituents. I met Victor and Markita Kaulius. Their daughter Kassandra was killed by a drunk driver not that long ago. They were devastated, as any parent would be. Whether it is a daughter, a son, a sibling, a spouse, a partner, it is devastating to lose someone. It is a normal part of every human being to want justice if that were to happen because of a criminal offence. Driving impaired and killing someone is the number one criminal offence in Canada. Therefore, Canadians are calling out for justice. Markita Kaulius became part of an organization across Canada that has sent literally tens of thousands of petitions to this House calling for a toughening of the Criminal Code of Canada.

• (1220)

The previous government, in the last Parliament, introduced legislation to toughen the impaired driving laws in Canada, to include mandatory minimum sentencing. It found that the sentences coming from the courts in Canada for impaired driving causing death were actually just fines. None got anywhere close to the maximum.

It suggested that impaired driving causing death be called what it is, vehicular homicide, and Families for Justice said it wanted mandatory minimums. They felt that, if someone knowingly drives a vehicle while impaired and kills someone, a first offence should be at least five years. Five years is actually one-third of that; it is about a year and a half. With statutory release, after one-third of a sentence people qualify to be released.

Families for Justice asked for five years. In the additional three and a half years after the initial one and half years of being locked up and receiving treatment and programs, people would be supervised to make sure they were not driving while impaired. It was very reasonable, and it is actually where Canadians are.

The last government said yes, and it introduced legislation. All the leaders running in the last election were asked if they would support the legislation, because there was not enough time to get it passed in the last Parliament. The Prime Minister wrote a letter to Markita Kaulius saying that he would support that.

Government Orders

Moving forward into this Parliament, that was another broken promise. The Prime Minister did not support that. There have been two pieces of legislation. One was a Conservative private member's bill, and one was a Liberal private member's bill. They were not good enough for him. He wanted to be in front, leading the parade on this, so those were shut down. We now have Bill C-46.

As per the promise the Prime Minister made to Markita Kaulius and to Families for Justice, in Bill C-46, there were to be mandatory minimum sentences. I was honoured to serve on the justice committee just recently in the study of Bill C-46, before it came back to the House. The Liberal government, as dictated by the Prime Minister's Office, said that we are going to get tough by increasing the maximum—and nobody gets the maximum. The guidelines to the courts, to provide discretion to the courts, said that on a first offence, people would receive at least a \$1,000 fine for killing someone while driving impaired. For the second offence, the second time someone killed somebody while driving impaired, they would get 30 days in jail. Now with 30 days, one-third is 10 days. The third time someone killed somebody while driving impaired, they would get 120 days, which is 40 days.

I was flabbergasted when the Liberal members at the justice committee were defending that as being just. They said that five years, which is a year and half of incarceration, and dealing with the causes of why this person was driving impaired, is much too harsh. They wanted to give the courts discretion.

The courts are bound by precedents, previous rulings of the court. They need to have discretion, but they need guidance from this House. Canadians wonder why sentencing is so small, and why it does not represent what Canadians want. It is not our judges; it is the people sitting across the way. They are weak on crime.

Canadians want us to be tough on crime. They want fairness and justice, and they are not getting it from the Liberal government. Sadly, Bill C-46 is not even close to what Canadians want. It is another broken promise by the Liberal government, a top-down approach that will unfortunately leave our streets very unsafe. Marijuana-impaired, alcohol-impaired, and illegal drug-impaired driving will be a growing problem in Canada because of the government.

• (1225)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would the member across the way acknowledge the reality that we have people who have been smoking cannabis or marijuana for the last number of years—10, 15, 20, whatever number—and from a world standard, compared to the U.S., we have more young people engaged in the consumption of cannabis than virtually any other country in the world, including the United States, England, Australia, and so forth?

We have had this issue for decades. Can the member opposite explain what tools the Stephen Harper government put in place to deal with those individuals who were high on marijuana or cannabis? What sorts of consequences were there during the Stephen Harper era?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the member is right that we have an impaired-driving problem in Canada, so the focus really is

where we go from here. How do we make our streets and our communities safer?

I was part of a think tank that recommended that medical marijuana be by prescription. That was the recommendation. If we were moving forward in that, if a doctor said that medical marijuana would help someone, he or she could go to a doctor, get a prescription, and have it filled. Rather than having it filled at a drug store, it would be mailed in secure mail. That was the direction that government was heading. In considering how we can keep our streets safer, we were faced with the challenge that the police can test for impairment with alcohol but they cannot test for marijuana impairment, scientifically with a tool for the police. There are drug-recognition experts in different police departments being trained to recognize impairment, and they would go back to the detachment to determine what type of drug people had in their bodies. However, we need more DREs, drug-recognition experts, and we need them to be trained and distributed throughout, so they can properly enforce it.

However, none of this is happening. This is being downloaded by the Liberal government with the arbitrary date of July 1 of next year. Therefore, the message to the government from Canadians is to slow the process down. The Liberals are rushing because they want to have this in place by Canada Day of next year. It is irresponsible, it would hurt Canada, and it would break a promise.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was looking forward to asking one of my Conservative colleagues a question about their rationale for opposing the legalization of marijuana.

My question is quite simple, and will only take a few seconds. Based on their rationale for prohibiting marijuana, I am wondering if we can expect that the Conservatives will again be calling for the prohibition of alcohol in the next election.

Are we to understand from my Conservative colleagues' speeches that alcohol will soon be prohibited in Canada?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I respect the member but I am surprised by the question. No, Canadians do not have to worry about alcohol being made illegal. If somebody is found driving a vehicle and there is an open bottle of alcohol, it can be confiscated by the police. What is being proposed by the Liberals is that people could have 60 joints sitting in that car. They could be smoking away, and each of the people in the car could have a bag of 60 joints in the car, and they are all happy, and the police could not confiscate the marijuana.

What is being proposed by the government is bizarre. Alcohol will remain legal, but people are not to be driving impaired. Bill C-46 is about impaired driving. We are not talking about the legalization of marijuana; we are talking about keeping our streets safe, and Bill C-46 would not do that. The bill does not have mandatory minimum sentences. A fine of \$1,000 for killing somebody is not realistic. It is not just; it is not fair; it is not where Canadians are.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to add to the debate on Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding offences relating to conveyances and to make consequential amendments to other acts. The title, though, is not really a description of what this bill would do, which is to change the impaired driving laws in Canada to ensure that we deal not only with drug impairment but also increase the sanctions on those who drive while impaired by alcohol. This is a complex subject that the NDP and I are very concerned about.

I agree that this bill is important. To be clear, nothing is more important than protecting the Canadian public. The NDP has been a long-time advocate of improving and ensuring deterrence of impaired driving, whose tragedies we all face in our ridings. This is in no way the only component of this bill. I have many concerns about it and its true effectiveness and would like to outline some of them.

When people speak about impaired driving, they often refer to the victims of these crimes. Without a doubt, the human cost of impaired driving is huge. Every year, hundreds of people are killed and tens of thousands are injured as a result of impaired driving crashes in Canada. This affects our friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues, virtually everyone in our lives. There is perhaps no greater pain than losing a loved one so suddenly under circumstances like impaired driving. The frustrations of the legal system are even more significant on top of the pain and anger from one's loss. I agree that impaired driving has had a long history of causing heartbreak in our country and that changes need to be made to prevent any more tragedies from happening in Canada.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, in 2010, impairment-related crashes resulted in an estimated 1,082 fatalities, 63,821 injuries, and damage to 210,932 vehicles. There are also significant financial and social costs as a result of impaired driving. There was a total of 181,911 crashes, costing an estimated \$20.62 billion. This includes the costs of the horrific fatalities, injuries, property damage, traffic delays, hospital costs, and the cost of first responders, such as police officers, firefighters, and ambulance attendants, to say nothing of the psychological impact on our front-line workers. Naturally, the government should want to put forward

legislation that prevents people from needlessly suffering. My question is why it does not want to do it right.

The largest problem with this bill centres around the mandatory roadside alcohol and drug testing or screening proposed in section 320.27. This would be the first time in Canada that authority would be given to police to stop someone on a whim. These are very dangerous and murky waters we are wading into here. Currently, under the law, officers must have a reasonable suspicion before they can stop someone. Many civil liberties groups have raised concerns about these proposed changes, stating that the removal of reasonable suspicion would result in disproportionate targeting of racialized Canadians, indigenous people, youth, and other marginalized groups.

I am the proud mother of two young black men, so I am additionally concerned about the uncertainties this bill would create. Carding and unfair racial profiling is an issue in many communities, and many other Canadians must deal with this on a daily basis, so why would the government create a piece of legislation that could potentially worsen this problem? Why would it put our valued police officers in such a precarious position? This issue may also be challenged in the judicial system and be subject to defeat under section 1 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 1 “guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

Random and mandatory breath tests for alcohol screening are also included in this bill, and they too could be challenged under sections 8 and 9 of the charter, which address the rights of individuals to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure and the rights of individuals not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned. Therefore, I again must ask the House why the government would create a piece of legislation that could impact the rights of individuals as laid out by the charter. This is incredibly short-sighted.

● (1235)

There is also the problem of how the police are expected to test and screen people for impaired driving from cannabis. The proposed plans are to use roadside oral fluid drug screeners. In Ontario, the pilot projects that use these devices are unreliable, and there is no standard chemical test that states when a person is impaired. Furthermore, the proposed legislation does not name any per se limit. The legal limit that would show impairment is not in the bill. Instead, the government has stated that this shall be prescribed by regulation.

Government Orders

I am reminded of a recent court case last year that shows why it is so important for the government to create legislation that is thorough and well thought out. This case involved a Toronto police officer and three young black men. The officer pulled their car over, despite the absence of any evidence. He said he was relying on a type of sixth sense to suss out usual suspects. These young men were handed four charges, including one of assaulting a police officer. The judge threw out these charges and stated:

...upon seeing this older vehicle being driven by three young, black males Constable Crawford's immediate conclusion despite the lack of any evidence, was that they were up to something.... It was more probable than not that there was no articulable cause for the stop but that the real reason for the stop was racial profiling.

As legislators, it is imperative that we find solutions to problems, but not create more problems. By not creating clear and well-thought-out laws, we leave stranded those who must enforce those laws and those who must abide by them.

The NDP is asking for a more effective piece of legislation that deals with the problem of impaired driving holistically. We need a robust public awareness campaign that educates the public and police about the dangers of driving while impaired from either alcohol or drugs. Through education, we can effectively teach and deter people, thereby avoiding the problem in the first place.

This was a major recommendation of the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation. It stated quite accurately that we need to "develop a national, comprehensive public education strategy to send a clear message to Canadians that cannabis causes impairment and that the best way to avoid driving impaired is to not consume."

The Canadian Automobile Association helped fund a study by the Ottawa-based Traffic Injury Research Foundation that suggests that legalization would pose "incredible challenges" for managing pot-impaired drivers. The CAA also commissioned a poll that found that almost two-thirds of respondents are worried that our roads will become more dangerous after legalization.

There are a lot of misconceptions out there about marijuana usage in our country, and we certainly have heard a great deal of them in the House today. In the poll I referred to, some people even believed that taking pot made them a better driver. Suffice it to say that there is a great deal of research that challenges and supports these perceptions. However, it is the responsibility of the government to study this issue in more detail, educate the public on the best information available, and ensure that it puts forward legislation that effectively and fairly addresses this problem.

New Democrats want a smart bill that truly works to protect Canadians. Repeatedly, experts and their research show us that education and prevention are truly bigger deterrents than sentences. This is why we believe that the bill must focus more heavily on these issues. Yes, impaired driving is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. There are lives at stake, and I believe that as legislators we must include effective provisions to stop people from ever making the choice to drive impaired.

I have to say that it is disappointing that the Liberals on the committee defeated five out of six NDP amendments, and the majority of the opposition members' amendments as well, but of course supported all of the government's amendments. I think there

was an opportunity at the committee to get the bill right, but it is disappointing that it has now come to the House without that happening.

This issue is too important to put band-aid solutions on it. We must do this correctly, and we must do it intelligently to end the long, heartbreaking history of impaired driving in Canada. Nothing is more devastating than the loss of a loved one, and we must do everything we can to prevent the tragedies that occur on our roads.

● (1240)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned her concern about police officers pulling people over on a whim, but I just want to bring to her attention the fact that the legislation does deal with this issue.

I would refer my colleague to proposed subsection 320.27(2) concerning mandatory alcohol screening. Within the legislation there is the requirement that a police officer must be "in the course of a lawful exercise of powers under an Act of Parliament or Act of a provincial legislature or arising at common law". The police must be in the exercise of a lawful authority to pull someone over. If a police officer were to pull someone over while not acting in the exercise of a lawful authority but based on bias or, in particular, the insidious practice of racial profiling, the stop would be rendered unlawful. It is unlawful under the provincial Police Services Act, it is unlawful under provincial human rights legislation, it is unlawful under Canadian human rights legislation, and therefore such a stop would be unlawful and any test administered during it would be rendered inadmissible.

The legislation very clearly requires that a police officer be acting in the lawful performance of a duty as prescribed in law before being able to demand a mandatory alcohol screening test. I would submit to the member that this protection exists and would like her comment on it. Would that be sufficient to address her concerns?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is disregarding the vast amount of evidence that under the current laws in our country, there is racial profiling and carding of black and indigenous drivers, who are randomly stopped. This is an epidemic in our country that needs to be addressed.

To say that our current laws prevent this is patently false. There is so much contrary evidence to that. Certainly in the member's own riding in Toronto, there is incredible evidence showing that carding is happening, that people are being randomly pulled over unlawfully without any reason, but just on a whim.

I do not know how the member can believe that the system is working well for people of colour, because those very people do not feel that the system is being used in the way it should be, but that police officers are using their authority to stop people randomly.

Government Orders

I am pleased to see that our new leader Jagmeet Singh has handled this issue very well provincially. He has called for a federal ban on carding, which is exactly the direction we need to go. Under Bill C-46, allowing police officers or front-line people to continue to randomly stop people without any just cause will have a disproportionate impact on people of colour, and that is a fact. I am not confident that this legislation would stop that from happening in any way, because it continues to be an epidemic in Canada.

• (1245)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians do not tune in to committee proceedings, so I am wondering if my colleague would share with us some of the more important amendments that would have made a great deal of sense to be included in the bill, but which Liberal committee members voted down.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: I would be happy to, Mr. Speaker. One of the six amendments that we brought forward proposed that within three years the Auditor General would do a report. Another of our amendments proposed stopping everyone at designated checkpoints to avoid random stops from happening. We supported having such a checkpoint so there would never be the impression of a disproportionate number of people of colour being stopped, but unfortunately the Liberal members at committee voted that down. It is disappointing that we will not see this applied in a way that would blanket every individual that we capture within that space, versus allowing police officers to card and target and racially profile.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak to Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts. I would also like to thank the member for Essex for her very kind words and thoughts. As a mother, I am on the same page on this. I would like to thank her very much for sharing that.

Today we are speaking about safe roads for Canadians and their families. It should be a simple discussion, but we must recognize that with the ramming through of this legislation, our cities and municipalities will not have the proper tools and resources to make sure that safety is our priority.

During the summer, I met with many people to discuss Bill C-45. Many individuals brought forward their concerns about impaired driving due to cannabis, which concerns Bill C-46.

The task force put together many recommendations for the Liberal government to review. First, the chair of the committee indicated that the best solution was to give researchers time to develop proper detection tools. Second, for many users, specifically youth, the potency and impact is greatly unknown and underestimated. Third, there should be increased funding for law enforcement authorities to get ready for the new regime. Fourth, and one of the key points I find extremely important and that was recommended by both the task force and the states of Washington and Colorado, which have legalized marijuana, was the importance of extensive impaired driving campaigns before the legislation.

To begin, I would like speak about the need for proper detection tools. Results were announced indicating that there was a pilot project using a new device to detect the concentration of cannabis in the system. It was reported by officers that the device was easy to use

and successfully detected the drug. At this time, there has been no indication of what the next steps will be and how we are going to pay for it.

Second, is it the best test, and will it detect impairment? We have heard other members of Parliament speak about these tests and the equipment necessary. We do not have the silver bullet when it comes to detection devices.

It was also stated that the best method to prevent impaired driving was public education funding for public resources and education. Education is definitely a word everyone will hear more and more throughout my speech.

Another concern is the unknown and underestimated impact of cannabis on youth. Studies show that cannabis has many different effects on people, specifically on the skills that are extremely important when driving. They include loss of motor coordination, problem solving, and thinking; and distorted perception. I believe we all agree that these are important skills that should not be at risk when driving.

Keeping this in mind, we should take into account a few other factors. Statistics posted by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction state the following:

According to the 2012 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey, 5% of youth aged 15-24 reported driving after using marijuana during the past year, compared to 9.4% after consuming alcohol.

Data from the National Fatality Database revealed that between 2000 and 2010, marijuana was the most common illicit drug present among fatally injured drivers aged 15-24 in Canada.

The 2011 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey revealed that individuals aged 15-24 were more likely to be passengers of an individual who had consumed alcohol or other drugs, rather than to drive impaired themselves. Riding with a driver who has used drugs or alcohol can lead to consequences just as tragic as driving while impaired.

Addressing impaired driving among our youth must be done. CCSA goes on to say:

CCSA has conducted a series of reviews examining effective approaches to preventing drugged driving among youth. Key findings include:

Factual messaging created by youth ensures that information is believable and easily understood by youth.

Empowering youth to plan and create their own prevention initiatives can increase the effectiveness and reach of the message.

Parents, teachers, coaches and so on should talk to youth about impaired driving and discuss implications to encourage youth to think critically before making decisions.

Government Orders

Overall, what we are talking about are awareness campaigns that centre on youth to deter them from driving while impaired, especially under the influence of marijuana. Once again, my focus here is education. The most common drug used first by Canadian youth is marijuana, and among our youth population, we have the second highest use of marijuana in the world. Where is the education regarding the potential effects and the conversation on driving while impaired?

● (1250)

Next, what is available for resources and financial support? Currently, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments have been speaking, but there are no decisions, and there is still one main player missing at the table. The cities and municipalities that will be in charge of keeping our roads safe have not been provided with this tool. They have been left out of these conversations. We still have to talk to them. We need to talk about education. We need to talk about potential detection devices, but currently, all we are doing is talking about reasonable suspicion.

How many officers in Canada are currently qualified? With legalization and predicting increased use, will more officers need to be trained? Where is the training, and what are the current waiting times for training? These are things I have had discussions about in my riding. I have spoken to the chief of police in the city of St. Thomas. We talked a lot about drug recognition officers. What is the cost? What is the delay? We have heard many reports indicating that there are too few officers available and that the education is not available. Right now, because we, as well as other states, are going forward with this, there is a huge delay in getting this done.

According to an article published by the *Ottawa Citizen* on February 4, 2017, here are the numbers: 2.6% is the proportion of drivers in Canada who admitted driving within two hours of using cannabis in the past year, according to Health Canada's 2012 Canadian alcohol and drug use survey; 632,576 people is how many this represents; 10.4 million is how many trips this represents; 2.04 million is how many Canadian drivers admitted to driving after consuming two or more drinks in the previous hour, which represents 13.3 million trips; 5.5% is the proportion of drivers who tested positive for cannabis use, according to a 2013 study in British Columbia; and 16.6% is the proportion of fatally injured drivers who tested positive for cannabis, according to an examination done between 2000 and 2010. Males are three times as likely as females to drive after using cannabis.

Therefore, this is an issue we must address. We need to provide the proper resources for our police forces to deal with this. Regarding drug recognition experts, there are currently 578 drug recognition experts in Canada, and 160 to 200 new DREs are certified every year. Some existing DREs do not recertify, or they are promoted out of the role. It is hard enough to maintain the current number of DREs, much less increase the number, said one of the people working in the department.

At the same time, training is expensive, and some of it has to be done in the U.S. Opportunities to get field training in the U.S. are being squeezed as demand to train officers increases there. This is a clear challenge that needs to be addressed.

According to the 2017 budget:

Health Canada will support marijuana public education programming and surveillance activities in advance of the Government's plan to legalize cannabis by directing existing funding of \$9.6 million over five years, with \$1.0 million per year ongoing.

However, Health Canada has just issued a public tender to find a contractor to develop a national marketing plan targeting youth that will focus on education and awareness of the health and safety risks of cannabis. This campaign is going to be targeted at Canadian youth aged 13-18. An important point to note, though, is that this program is going to start running after December 2017, so we are talking about putting in a program less than six months before the legalization of marijuana. There is no exact date when the ads are going to start. Just saying it will be after December 2017 is not good enough.

Why is the government rushing on this issue? Why are we rushing to not keep our roads safe? Why are the Liberals not doing more? Why are they rushing Bill C-45 and Bill C-46, other than because of extreme political views? Why are we not taking the safety of Canadians on our roads as paramount?

● (1255)

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the statistics my colleague cited serve to reinforce the need to amend the Criminal Code regarding this matter. She said that marijuana is the most used drug, especially by youth. Could she please comment on her insights regarding Mothers Against Drunk Driving and such organizations?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, there needs to be more done. When it comes to the great work Mothers Against Drunk Driving does, we have to understand that people still go out on the roads impaired, whether it is from drug use or alcohol use. My biggest fear is that we are being given six months for public education, and that is not enough time. Six months to create a program is not enough.

Although I see that there are Criminal Code changes, and I will let the people talking on the justice side look at them, as a mother, I look at the fact that we are not being given enough time. We are not giving parents, educators, coaches, and more importantly, our youth, who are at risk from this bill, enough time. We need more than just six months to get this work done.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could expand on the problem we have. Despite the great need for going after impaired drivers, because we have an epidemic of impaired driving deaths and injuries across Canada, here we have marijuana, which is going to become legal, and there is no good test for marijuana impairment. There are great tests for THC levels in the blood, but they do not mean anything with regard to impairment. We heard in committee that this was a problem.

Government Orders

We are going to have people with THC levels in their blood, because they are using it for medical purposes or are using it legally for recreational purposes, but they will not be impaired. They may have used it a day or two ago. They will not be impaired, yet they will be criminalized if they are pulled over and tested using a per se limit for THC. I wonder if she could comment on that.

• (1300)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my speech, the chair indicated that the best solution for this was to provide research money so we could make these types of tools for detection. We have found a tool that works, but as the member indicated, it looks at blood levels. As the member for Lethbridge indicated, impairment is shown in the fat cells in the brain.

It is just not good enough. Why are we not getting everything done before we put forward the legislation? Why are we not getting all our ducks in a row so we can make sure that Canadian families are safe on our roads?

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recent statistics done by the State of Colorado, in looking at its marijuana sales through its vendor agencies, show approximately \$14 million in sales in January 2015 alone. However, by January 2016, one year later, in the same month, for the same period of time, it was \$37 million in marijuana sales. As lawmakers, we should be trying to encourage a decrease in impaired driving. I would like to ask if my hon. friend thinks that doubling the amount of marijuana use in one year is going to lower the number of impaired drivers.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely not the case. I have spoken to many colleagues who have never smoked cannabis before, many individuals and friends who have never partaken. The fact is, come the time of the legislation, some people will be interested. There will be more people trying it, because it is legal.

I have had this discussion with my staff as well. The moment something is legalized, it makes it acceptable, so we are going to find that more people are going to try it. They may not enjoy it, but they will at least try it. We have to be worried about impairment. There is a discussion about taxation of this as well.

It is very concerning. We need to make sure that the money does not go into government coffers but is actually used as a resource for our police forces to make sure that Canadians are safe on the road. We need to make sure they have the proper detection tools and the proper training.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this bill seeks to clearly set out the offences of and the sentences for people who decide to drive under the influence of marijuana and to update provisions on drunk driving.

We supported this bill at second reading and since then we have been examining it. Unfortunately, impaired driving is the leading cause of criminal deaths in the country. Canada has one of the worst impaired driving records in the OECD.

We need to implement an effective and well funded public awareness campaign. As we have been repeating from the start of today's debate, it is important for the government to quickly implement this public awareness and education campaign.

Earlier today, my colleague from Mount Royal, the chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, said that we were here to talk about Bill C-46, not Bill C-45, which deals with the legalization of marijuana. However the government chose to introduce these two bills around the same time, one after the other. We cannot talk about one without talking about the other. It is therefore important to make sure that the awareness and education campaign is done right and that it is launched immediately, well before marijuana is legalized.

The NDP has always stood for sensible measures to prevent impaired driving. We need to focus on powerful deterrents that can actually help prevent tragedies. I just said it, but I want to reiterate that the government needs to launch a robust public awareness campaign before the marijuana legalization bill comes into force.

Bill C-46 does not clearly define the levels of marijuana in saliva that would qualify as impairment. That needs to be made clear. We need an unbiased, science-based strategy for stopping drug-impaired drivers.

Under the bill, the police will no longer need to have reasonable grounds to suspect that the person consumed alcohol in order to demand a breath sample. Civil liberties groups and the legal community have expressed concerns over the constitutionality of the proposed measures. In fact, earlier, my colleague from Essex illustrated how this might lead to profiling during arrests, which is problematic.

These civil liberties defence groups also wonder whether marginalized groups will be targeted. That is why, upon reflection, it is important to have experts provide testimony at committee to ensure that Canadians' civil liberties are respected and protected.

The NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh, was outspoken during his time in the Ontario legislature about the ability of the police to go after people simply on the basis of their race, be they aboriginal, black, or Canadians of other minorities.

The discriminatory police practice of carding was central to his work in the Ontario legislative assembly. Mr. Singh says that as Prime Minister, he will enact a federal ban on racial profiling to end it once and for all.

In fact, he said in a *Toronto Star* interview that he had been stopped more than 11 times because of his appearance. He said:

I've been stopped by police multiple times for no other reason than the colour of my skin. It makes you feel like you don't belong, like there's something wrong with you for just being you.

Government Orders

I find meeting with our constituents to be a very interesting part of our work as MPs. I have been asked how we come to decide how to vote in the House. Of course, the discussions like the one we are having today, as well as the ones with our colleagues, are key. My colleagues' speeches today have been very enlightening.

• (1305)

During caucus discussions, we draw on our personal experiences and our own judgment, but also on the experiences of our colleagues in the House. As such, I would like to talk about my colleague from Victoria's speech, which was very enlightening for me on this issue. I had the chance to sit on the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying with my colleague from Victoria, and his legal and constitutional expertise was very enlightening for me. The bill before us today, Bill C-46, is also very enlightening.

I would like to read part of a speech he gave, one that I feel is very important.

Currently under the law as it exists, one has to have reasonable suspicion before stopping someone. If one no longer has to have that reasonable suspicion, which is what this section at issue would do, then there is the potential, indeed, the certainty that there will be disproportionate targeting of racialized Canadians, indigenous people, youth, and other marginalized groups. That is the nub of the problem and why this is such a difficult bill for the House to deal with.... However, we have to get this balance right. We are not convinced that it has been achieved. We are still studying it and will continue to study it before the vote takes place in the next while. At the committee, the NDP did manage to get one amendment that would somehow address this issue. That amendment would add the proposed section 31.1 to the bill, which would require that this issue be studied and reported to Parliament within three years of enactment. The committee agreed with that, and I hope the House will accept that final amendment as well. We will see whether the concerns that so many experts have brought to the attention of the committee will prove true in practice.

I want to quote something else he said, because, unlike him, I did not have the privilege of taking part in the deliberations of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. He said:

We heard from Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other countless witnesses at the justice committee, telling their heartbreaking stories of the loss they had suffered. However, the bill poses serious concerns, particularly in the area of mandatory alcohol screen.... What is the concern with mandatory alcohol testing? The new police powers enacted through the legislation would remove the reasonable suspicion requirements for roadside inspection by peace officers that presently exist in the Criminal Code, instead moving to a mandatory system by which, at the discretion of the patrolling officer, motorists must submit to random breath samples without any justification whatsoever, in other words, on a whim.

I was saying earlier that our personal experience can inform our discussions of this type of bill. I often tell the House that before being elected, I worked for the Quebec ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food, was a municipal councillor, and also worked with youth for almost 20 years. In light of my experience with a youth round table and as the director of a community housing organization that served troubled youth, I cannot help but have concerns about the impact of this type of bill, which requires a very balanced approach. I sincerely hope that the only NDP amendment to be retained will remain intact. It is important that we do not target certain groups in society when we address impaired driving. As parliamentarians it is our duty to ensure that each and every citizen is treated fairly and that the laws we pass make that possible.

• (1310)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member articulates her concerns so well.

I want to respond to a particular issue. The member opposite expressed concern about the validity of oral fluids testing and the experience in other jurisdictions.

First, I want to share with her the results of a report done by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction, CCSA, which it submitted to the government in April of this year. It did a very thorough examination of the use of oral fluids testing in other jurisdictions. It makes note that, for example, in Victoria, Australia, these tests have been conducted within its legal framework since 2008. The oral fluids testing kits are also currently in use in such countries as France, Belgium, Spain, and, most recent, the United Kingdom, as well as in several states in the United States.

The CCSA also indicates that the Canadian Society of Forensic Science drugs and driving committee has recently done an evaluation of the oral fluids testing kits that currently exist. It has said that they have reached a sufficient level of accuracy to be useful in the Canadian context. Those have also been tested by eight different police services across the country to ensure they actually work in a Canadian environment.

Based on that information from the CCSA, might that respond to some of the concerns expressed by my friend opposite?

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, the problem with comparing tests is that we can end up choosing tests that speak to our concerns. Let us talk about the collection of test data.

Here in Ottawa in 2016, a data collection project involving roadside tests and race was initiated following a complaint concerning human rights and racial profiling. Several points were brought to light. First, 12% of drivers were perceived as being Middle Eastern, while only 4% of drivers in Ottawa are Middle Eastern. Also, 8.8% of drivers were perceived as being black, while fewer than 4% of drivers in Ottawa are black. Lastly, males between the ages of 16 and 24 are stopped more often than expected given the proportion of drivers they represent.

When we compare university studies with the test studies, we need to listen to what Canadians are saying. Civil liberties organizations provide a great number of accounts. As I said earlier in my speech, I was never stopped 11 times. When someone says he was stopped 11 times over a short period of time, I think there is cause to ask questions. Our leader, Jagmeet Singh, said so himself. The reality is that, without extremely clear rules and laws that leave very little room for interpretation, we must make sure that every Canadian is treated fairly.

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•(1315)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who is always on point and keeps partisanship to a minimum, although she sometimes gets carried away, which is entirely normal, since that is the game we in the House play. She is very concerned about this issue.

When a member of the House asks a colleague a question, it might be a good idea to stay in Ottawa long enough to hear the answer. I understand why government members are unclear on all of the nuances of parliamentary language and the excellent comments made by people on this side of the House. When people ask us questions, they should take the time to listen to the answer. This is just something I'm throwing out there, because I was a little angry at the lack of respect I just witnessed in the House.

To return to my colleague's remarks, I would like to know whether what I see as the government's off-the-cuff attitude as it rushes to push through the marijuana issue might cause problems for the police and addiction workers down the line. I do not think we are ready.

What is my colleague's opinion concerning Bills C-45 and C-46?

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the first part of my colleague's question since we are not to refer to the presence or absence of members.

Rushing this will have an impact on our society. The government has said that it will allocate \$161 million to help police do their job, but police officers in Saskatchewan are saying that they are not getting the proper training.

I used to work in this area, and I have seen cases where young people have had to wait up to a year to get into a detox centre. Young people who realize that they have a substance abuse problem have to wait a year. The government needs to allocate significant resources to help young people who need drug treatment before moving forward. The government is being too hasty on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak again today on Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding offences relating to conveyances. Shortening the title, we are dealing with impaired driving and a review and updating of the old sections of the Criminal Code. It is impaired driving by alcohol or drugs.

I was a policeman for 35 years and held Breathalyzer operator certificates since 1970. I took part in probably well over 1,000 impaired cases involving alcohol and drugs. My first year, there were about 100, as a rookie. In those days, I could arrest a guy for impaired driving, bring him into the office, do up all the paperwork, and get back on the road within an hour or an hour and a half, except once. This is how bad impaired drivers can be.

I remember a case when I arrested a guy for impaired driving and brought him back to the office. At the time, the policy of the attorney general and the province was not to hold or detain, or remove vehicles from the road. I brought the man in and he blew .26. We had to release him, so I released him. Fifteen minutes later, I saw him

driving down the road. I picked him up, brought him back to the office, processed him, and gave him an appearance notice because I could not hold him, and let him go. Twenty minutes later, lo and behold, he drove by me again. This time, I brought him in and arrested him. Impaired driving has always been a very serious part of our society.

Is impaired driving going down, whether it is due to drugs or alcohol? That is debatable. We have to thank groups like MADD for their work, but I do not believe it is going down, and I will provide two specific reasons. One is that the time to process a simple impaired driving case takes anywhere from three to four hours, and closer to four hours. Therefore, the police officer is off the road for four hours in order to do the paperwork. Why does it take that long? It is because of all the different wording in all of the legislation. He has to cross all of his t's and dot all of his i's to get a conviction. All we are doing right now is bringing in more legislation, more work for lawyers, and it is going to complicate it that much more.

The second reason is deterrence. I had the good fortune to find a court book from 1950 for Vancouver Island and impaired drivers were being fined anywhere between \$100 and \$300 in 1950. The average salary in 1950 was about \$1,700. In 1970, the fines were still \$100 to \$300, but people were earning about \$5,700. Today, the minimum fine is \$1,000 and people are earning an average of \$50,000, though I think it is a bit higher than that. Therefore, there is no deterrent to cause people to think about drinking and driving.

I will comment on what my hon. friend from St. Albert—Edmonton said. He brought up in committee that we need to strengthen some of the legislation. An example was to have a five-year mandatory sentence for someone who drives a vehicle while impaired and kills a person, and the Liberal government said no and voted against it. Right now, the minimum fine under summary conviction is \$1,000. If we go to the more serious offence of causing injury or death, it is \$500 more. That is ridiculous. It was more effective many years ago than it is today.

I will provide some simple statistics for those in the room. One shot of whisky is equal to 12 ounces of beer or a glass of wine. An average 140-pound woman who has three ounces in an hour would probably have a reading of .11, which would put her at .03 over the limit. Here is one place where I can say men might be just a little better than women. A 140-pound man having three ounces in an hour would have a .09 reading. That is because our dissipation system seems to be a bit better, and I will leave it at that.

•(1320)

Science gives us the ability to calculate the effects of alcohol. I could sit down with any person in this room, and if he or she told me what he or she had to drink I could probably break it down and tell him or her what the reading would be.

Proposed section 254.01 of the Criminal Code, the new one that we are talking about, states:

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The Attorney General of Canada may...approve

- (a) a device that is designed to ascertain the presence of alcohol in a person's blood;
- (b) equipment that is designed to ascertain the presence of a drug in a person's body;
- (c) an instrument that is designed to receive and make an analysis of a sample of a person's breath to determine their blood alcohol concentration

Paragraphs (a) and (c) have been in existence since the 1960s. With respect to paragraph (b), we are told that some countries have some form of testing that they believe is correct. We are looking at that and testing it right now. However, it is not definite, for sure. I do not believe we have enough scientific evidence out there. However, we will be going ahead with this law to make marijuana legal.

Impaired driving, under proposed section 254 of the bill refers to any conveyance. Therefore, we will be able to go after anybody riding an electric bike, an electric wheelchair, an ATV, a lawnmower, all the way up to a transport truck. All these people will be subject to the new rules and regulations that we are imposing. Some of them will be able to use legalized marijuana for medical purposes, and others will use legalized marijuana for recreational use.

We all know that marijuana goes through the lungs into the bloodstream, then into the body, and gets stored in the fat cells. The sad part about it, which is different than alcohol, is that alcohol dissipates at about one ounce per hour for an average person. Therefore, it is gone. If one has three drinks in an hour, probably three to four hours later one's body is clear of that alcohol. That is not the case with marijuana. It stays in one's brain tissue and fat cells and can come up anytime one agitates one's body or gets excited. What does marijuana do? It knocks the heck out of our senses: sense of time, moods, movements, thinking, the ability to problem-solve, and memory. If we overindulge in the use of marijuana, then we can go into hallucinations, delusions, and psychosis. However, most people will just experience the former part, which is a form of impairment.

Duke University in New Zealand did a number of tests in the last few years with young people. I am saying this because it has proven that kids using marijuana on a regular basis had an IQ that was eight points less than their counterparts who did not use it. That is already a form of impairment right there.

According to Colorado State University, the tests it has done over the last few years show that the THC level of marijuana has increased over 30% in the past 20 years. It is much stronger than it used to be, which is another form of impairment.

My concern is that marijuana stays in one's body for three to 10 days immediately, and it takes up to three months for it to completely dissipate.

The shocking fact is that Colorado sold \$14.6 million worth of marijuana in January of 2015. In the month of January 2016, it sold \$36.4 million. That is more than double. To me, if the amount has doubled, so has the amount of impaired driving, which means we need to double the amount of money that we are going to spend on education. The current government has told us that it is going to spend a certain amount. We know that as soon as it becomes legal, the use of marijuana is going to at least double.

The legislation in Bill C-46 has some good intentions, and I do not disagree with it, but it needs to be reviewed with more scrutiny. It needs to be looked at. We need to get rid of a lot of the ambiguous parts that are written in there because it is going to tie up police officers on the road and make it very difficult for us to enforce impaired driving, especially with respect to drugs.

• (1325)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague for his speech and his years of service in law enforcement. He is truly a tremendous addition to our caucus, and his wise counsel is very important to us.

Is there any test available to determine the concentration of drugs in a person's body?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, it has been stated in this House that there are certain tests being done and certain countries have accepted them and that we have been doing some tests in Canada with certain police officers, but yet we stand here and we have a government that wants to put legislation forth. We are getting close, with seven months to go, and yet we do not have an approved test in this country, that is approved scientifically, that is going to guarantee us that the results given on a roadside screening test are right. We need to have that done prior to putting the legislation out there and prior to setting up people in Canada for criminal convictions.

• (1330)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member across the way would acknowledge that Canada has the highest youth engagement in the consumption of marijuana of virtually any western country in the world including United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and so forth. We know that our youth are engaged in the consumption of marijuana and cannabis. I am sure the member, being a police officer, is very much aware that there are people who are smoking cannabis and driving their vehicles.

Is the member trying to tell Canadians that there is no way drug-impaired people can actually be detected or that the Stephen Harper government did absolutely nothing to ensure that people who are impaired by drugs were being minimized? That is the impression that the member across the way is trying to give listeners. I wonder if he could provide any assurances that in fact we do have law enforcement branches or agencies that are fairly effective at what they do in keeping our streets safer, and this legislation would assist into the future.

Maybe the member could just share with us what happens today, or happened while Stephen Harper was prime minister, when someone is high on marijuana or cannabis and is caught driving a car.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Harper was prime minister our government was not wasting its time on a ridiculous legislation of making marijuana legal. We were more involved in making crimes more serious so offenders paid for the crimes they did. We were looking at the most serious crimes in Canada.

I am not saying that there is no test for marijuana for impaired driving because I charged a person back in 1970 for using marijuana and I used the simple old-fashioned way of looking at his eyes, physical symptoms, etc. In Canada, we have approximately 600 police officers who are trained to recognize impairment by drugs. We have 65,000 police across Canada so we have roughly 60,000 police officers who are not trained properly to stand up in a courtroom and say that a person was impaired. We have about 600 trained officers, and yet we are bringing in legislation in seven months down the road. How are we going to train enough officers to be able to detect people when they have marijuana with the device that the Attorney General may approve? It is not “approve”; “may approve” is written right in there.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise to speak about the shortfalls and the negative consequences of Bill C-46.

When I last voiced my concern about the bill back in May, I brought to the attention of the House a devastating tragedy that was suffered by the Van de Vorst family in my city of Saskatoon. Early last year, they lost four members of their family to an impaired driver. It is an unimaginable tragedy. Some say it was the worst accident in the city of Saskatoon's history. Linda and Lou Van de Vorst lost their son, their daughter-in-law, and their two grandchildren when an impaired driver blew through the intersection of Wanuskewin Road and Highway 11. Four members of their family were wiped out on that January night. Two nights ago, the first official roadside memorial sign, with the names of the Van de Vorst family, was put up at this intersection as a reminder.

I am sure all of us have driven through an intersection where we spot flowers, a white cross, and teddy bears from time to time, but this is the first sign with actual names in my province of Saskatchewan. The names are Jordan, Chanda, Kamryn, and Miguire Van de Vorst. I ask members this. Will Linda and Lou Van de Vorst be able to drive that road again, or will they look for an extra-grid road so that they do not have to pass by that sign? The impaired driver was three times over the legal limit. The sentence then for killing all four innocent people was a mere 10 years.

I have another story of Melanie and Allan Kerpan, another family that has suffered a tragic loss. Just a week ago today, the Kerpan family unveiled a sign on Highway 11 that reads “In memory of Danille Brooke Kerpan”. Three years ago this month, their daughter, Danille, was driving on a double-lane highway when a drunk driver going the wrong way—we understand for many kilometres and many minutes—ran into her vehicle, taking her young life. Allan Kerpan came to Ottawa about a year and a half ago and spoke on this.

I mentioned Kerpan's name, because Allan is a very good friend of ours and he is also a former member of Parliament for Blackstrap. The Kerpans' entire family have been outspoken about the changing attitude toward drinking and driving, the need for awareness, and the need for education.

There was a province-wide campaign led by Saskatchewan Government Insurance, or SGI, showing real-life victims of impaired driving crashes. Let us imagine on the television set that one by one

these faces disappear. We lose one and then another and then another. It is a 30-second spot on Saskatchewan television.

Again I ask, every time Melanie and Allan Kerpan leave their family farm in Kenaston to go south on Highway 11, as they approach Bladworth, where this accident occurred, will they be reminded now of this tragedy, because of a sign?

Unfortunately, my province of Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates, if not the highest, of impaired driving in this country, as per Statistics Canada 2015, and families suffer as a result. I just talked about two of many families in my province. In 2016 alone, there were 6,377 incidents of impaired driving in our province of Saskatchewan. In my city of Saskatoon, with a population of under 300,000, we had 649 incidents of impaired driving.

● (1335)

This is an unacceptable statistic, which represents serious harm to the lives and the well-being of people not only in my constituency but in our province and certainly our country.

We are left here with Bill C-46, a bill concerning driving under the influence of drugs, notably marijuana. It is a bill with substantial flaws, which the Liberal government refuses to address.

Actually, the motivating force for Bill C-46 would be Bill C-45. The claim that this legislation will keep marijuana out of the hands of children and drive criminals out of the business of profiting from the sale of marijuana is simply ridiculous. I have stated before in this House that this is simply not true. It is fake news, if I could say that. A legal age for consuming alcohol has not stopped underage children and teenagers from consuming alcohol if they want it. Criminals will always be able to profit from a black market for illegal marijuana and will find more desirable targets in underage youth because of this Bill C-46.

We have talked about the burdens on police and the justice system due to this Bill C-46. When we look at statistics from 2015, we see that drug-impaired driving is on the rise nationally, even before marijuana becomes legalized. That should be deeply troubling to all members, combined with the fact that cases of drug-impaired driving take longer to resolve before the courts when compared to drunk driving, and are less likely to result in a guilty finding.

With an increase of people using marijuana or trying it out for the first time, we can only expect that these stats will become much worse after it becomes legalized. The government does not appear to be considering how difficult it will be and how many resources it will need to properly police drug-impaired driving. Unlike drunk driving, which we can predict will peak at times such as Friday and Saturday nights, drug-impaired driving is a problem, I think, which will occur any time of the day, any day of the week. Stats Canada reports:

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What this suggests is that drug-impaired driving may be more difficult to combat than alcohol-impaired driving since research has indicated that targeting known peak periods is one of the most effective ways to combat drinking and driving.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, including my own Saskatoon police service, told the federal committee they need more time to properly train officers about the new cannabis laws, and they need more than double the number of police officers who are certified to conduct roadside drug-impaired driving tests. Police have asked the Liberal government to postpone the date for legal pot because there is zero chance they will be ready by July 1.

We also have the issue of growing marijuana plants. That is going to be a major issue. Just last week I had a delegation from the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors wondering about landlords' rights when renting out their property. Do they have any rights? This is an issue on which they have not been consulted.

As I mentioned, this issue is a burden that police face in response to how rushed we are now on this Bill C-46. In my last speech I talked about it. However, I wonder if the Liberal government is even listening to these concerns.

The most important issue is education. We have not even started that. The Liberal government claims it is going to start it in the month of December, which is six or seven months prior to when we legalize pot on July 1. It has not even contacted the Canadian School Boards Association, yet these are the vulnerable people, age 15 and up, whom we are talking about, and they have not been educated on drinking and driving or the effects of marijuana. We are deeply concerned about the lack of education, and that the government has not progressed at all.

In conclusion, there are many glaring shortcomings that are present in Bill C-46, which need to be addressed in order to improve the safety and well-being of my constituents and others in this country.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech, which once again shows how the Liberal government is improvising when it comes to the legalization of marijuana. He also talked about the potential impacts on would-be marijuana-impaired drivers. My question is very simple.

Does he truly believe that Canada's young drivers will be ready on July 1, 2018, when the Liberal government makes marijuana a legal and commonplace drug?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, of course they are not going to be ready when July 1, 2018, hits. I talked about the lack of education the government has done. It has not consulted the premiers or the provinces. I have the attorney general of Saskatchewan in my riding, and he is scared to death about July 1, 2018. They have no idea how they are going to progress with the bill. They have been told, "Here it is, you deal with it". What are the resources needed? We talked about the lack of police force and training to detect marijuana in someone.

Yes, there is great concern because my province, unfortunately, leads the country in impaired driving. I cannot wait to see the stats once marijuana is legalized on July 1.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaker after speaker from the Conservative Party seem to have their heads in the sand on this issue. Do they not realize that we have the highest amount of youth engaged in consumption of cannabis?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. I want to remind hon. members that I am trying to hear the question, and they are making it very difficult for the Speaker.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative MPs seem to think there is no one in the history of Canada driving around after having smoked up on marijuana or cannabis. It is almost as if the Harper government had gotten rid of cannabis. I have a news flash of reality for the Conservative caucus. Cannabis is something very real. It is tangible. It is happening today in our society. In fact, we have more youth engaged in cannabis consumption than any other country in the world, including the U.S.A.

We finally have a government, unlike the Harper government, that has said we need to have legislation in place that will help make our communities and roads safer. How does the member justify voting against legislation that is going to make our road system safer, when the previous government ignored the issue and we had people who were high driving on the roads?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, it will not make our roads safer in this country. I gave some statistics from my province of Saskatchewan: 6,377 incidents of impaired driving alone in my province. With the Liberals legalizing marijuana we could double those numbers. We have no police protection right now. There is no training.

We heard from the Saskatoon police commission, who came to Ottawa to testify. They are not ready for this. What more do the Liberals need to be told, when outgoing police chief Clive Weighill stood and told the committee they were not ready to even look at the legislation? However, even though we do not want it, the government seems hell-bent on bringing it forward to Canadians.

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Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the summer, I took on the task of holding five town halls on the government's legislation to not only legalize recreational marijuana, but also on Bill C-46, which we are debating in the House today. I threw open the doors and invited constituents who cared to attend, so everybody would have a full understanding of what was being proposed in both pieces of legislation. It was from those five meetings that I got a better understanding of the concerns of not only everyday residents, but also from community leaders such as mayors, reeves, and councillors.

Listening to one's constituents should not only happen during town halls, it is a practice that every elected official should subscribe. If truth be told, not many members of the government hosted a no-holds barred public meetings on either Bill C-45 or Bill C-46.

I would argue that legalizing recreational marijuana is one of the largest changes to the Controlled Substances Act in my lifetime. However, not many government MPs took the opportunity to meet with their constituents in an open door forum. If they did, they would have quickly become aware that not only was the Liberal government's political deadline of July 1, 2018, to implement legal recreational marijuana usage untenable, it would unnecessarily raise the risk of bodily harm and injury on our roads and highways.

At a recent Council of the Federation meeting, Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister requested an extension of the Liberal government's deadline of July 1, 2018, for marijuana legalization. In response to Premier Pallister's request, the premiers established an official working group on marijuana, co-chaired by Manitoba justice minister Heather Stefanson. Since then, it has been closely following the debate in the House and in committee meetings that were held on this legislation.

As was stated by many expert witnesses at committee or quoted in the news, it is simply unfathomable to expect that police departments and the RCMP will be prepared for the July 1 deadline as currently set out.

I would like to quote Director Mario Harel, the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who stated at committee on Wednesday, September 20:

The question many in policing have is what level of readiness the government, and more importantly, our communities, expect law enforcement to deliver. We can be ready at some level July 2018, but are we delivering on the public safety objectives Canadians would expect of us?

That question gets to the very heart of the concerns that many members of Parliament, including backbench Liberal MPs, have publicly voiced.

We know the science surrounding the impairment of one's ability to drive after consuming cannabis varies widely from one individual to another. We know that one's level of impairment can be impacted by how long an individual has either legally or illegally consumed cannabis. For instance, if one has been consuming cannabis on a daily basis for 20 years, that person's mind and body will be impacted differently than someone who consumes it on a monthly basis. Let me give the House a specific example.

During one of my town halls, a constituent stated that she had taken medical marijuana for years. She consumes cannabis in an edible form for her chronic pain. She said, not only in our public meeting but also publicly in the local newspaper, that it would be more dangerous for her to drive while not under the influence of medical marijuana. While I am not a medical expert, nor proclaim to understand the precise impacts of one's cognitive functions, driving under the impairment of marijuana is just as dangerous as driving under the impairment of alcohol or other prescription drugs.

While this is my belief, it was quite a shock to hear that some individuals who had consumed marijuana for years, if not in some cases for decades, pushed back on this premise. They pushed back because they felt that under no circumstances was public safety at risk because of their consumption of cannabis while driving a vehicle. This is a huge concern and I am quite certain that if a Conservative member of Parliament is being told this, it begs the question, What other long-term beliefs are held by Canadians who have long consumed marijuana?

In respect to the legislation, beyond a shadow of doubt, as it is currently written, it will be challenged almost immediately when brought into force. The reason I am so confident in saying this is that unfortunately Canadians will be caught and charged for driving under impairment of cannabis. It is safe to suggest that criminal defence attorneys will be looking at every available avenue to lessen the client's charge. There is empirical evidence to suggest this is exactly what will happen.

● (1350)

We know that the current drinking and driving laws are some of the most heavily litigated areas of criminal law. In respect to determining the exact nanograms of THC per ml of blood, it was good to hear even Liberal MPs, such as the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, ask about the objectively determined standards for marijuana that the police could measure against.

What was disconcerting was that the Minister of Justice did not respond directly to her colleague's question. She noted that the government had set up a drug impaired driving committee, but neglected to answer his question of setting the benchmarks to determine impairment.

Now, I am not the only one who is asking these questions. The Canadian Bar Association recommends that the federal government base any measurement of blood drug concentration on proven scientific evidence that links the concentration of THC to impairment. According to the briefing to the Minister of Justice, it outlined the difficulties of introducing specific blood drug concentrations of setting an objective standard for penalizing a person and then linking the findings to impairment. It even goes as far as saying that legislating specific blood drug concentration levels is problematic.

Statements by Members

While the Canadian Bar Association is probably well aware of the legal quagmire that will soon engulf our nation's courtrooms, it is wise to take a moment and reflect on whether the government is rushing ahead without the scientific data to back up its legislation.

We all want our roads and highways to be safe from those who make the callous decision to get behind the wheel after one too many beers, and soon to be one too many tokes. With that in mind, it is troubling to hear from legal experts and marijuana users that the Liberal government's legislation may not hold up under heavy scrutiny of a well-funded legal defence team.

The other aspect of concern is that the costs associated will be borne by the provinces and municipalities regarding Bill C-46. This was one of the most concerning matters raised by other levels of government.

Earlier this summer, I wrote the parliamentary budget officer requesting a costing analysis for implementing the Liberal government's legislation to legalize marijuana. I received a response from the PBO last month, describing both a lack of transparency by the Liberal government and an intention to offload costs onto provinces.

According to the PBO's letter, Justice Canada responded to its requests for information by stating that the estimated costs of marijuana legalization were a cabinet confidence. Similar responses were provided to the PBO by Public Safety Canada and Health Canada. In response to my letter, the PBO wrote:

This clearly indicates that the federal government does have access to some cost estimates of Bills C-45 and C-46, but without that information it would be difficult for the Office of the PBO to provide a reasonable cost analysis.

I requested an in-depth costing analysis for several areas of concern for my constituents, including the cost of education campaigns and workplace health and safety regulations. We know the Prime Minister has thrown out the idea of sharing any federal excise tax equally with the provinces, but even that was not enough to calm the nerves of the premiers and their respective finance ministers.

May there be no illusion of any member in the House that with the passage of Bill C-45 and Bill C-46, the policing, legal costs, and court delays will go down. The fallacy purported by some well-meaning but ill-advised commentators about how police resources will now miraculously be shifted from cracking down on simple pot possessions to much more serious matters is but a dream.

First, as with anything the government regulates, legislates, and oversees, there will be no cost savings when equipment, training, bureaucracy, and simple paperwork are all accounted for. Second, as the provinces have announced, the government will make the purchase of legal recreational marijuana so restrictive that the neighbourhood pot dealer just gave a loud round of applause as his business will prevail in the near future.

The issue of legalizing marijuana for recreational purposes, while also updating the Criminal Code so police officers have the necessary tools and legal framework to keep our streets and highways safe, are not necessarily bound by one another.

• (1355)

Under no circumstances should the legalization of recreational marijuana be pushed forward without at least some time after Bill C-46 is brought into force. Not only should Bill C-46 be allowed to be tested, prodded, and probed, but the federal government has the responsibility to fund the vast majority of upfront costs of doing so. The provinces and municipalities should not be taken for granted and their cause of concern on the timelines proposed in the Liberal legislation should be heeded.

As I have stated on many occasions, the Liberal government should wade carefully into the full legislation of recreational marijuana. It needs to move beyond its politically motivated deadline, disclose the true cost of marijuana legalization, and provide municipalities and provinces with the resources they need to ensure safety for all Canadians.

Until that time, the legislation should not move forward. I encourage the Liberals to listen to the myriad of voices that echo similar apprehensions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Brandon—Souris will have five minutes for questions and comments when we return after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

WILLIAM JACKMAN

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, William Jackman of Renew, Newfoundland entered the cod and seal fisheries as a boy. He commanded sailing vessels on the Labrador and at the ice. It was at Spotted Islands, Labrador in 1867 that Captain Jackman was the hero of a striking rescue at sea.

In a fierce gale, he saw the fishing schooner *Sea Clipper*, with 27 people aboard, run aground on a reef 600 feet from shore. He plunged into the heavy seas and swam to and from the vessel 11 times to carry 11 persons to safety on his back. Even though he was almost paralyzed by the cold, he fastened a rope around his waist and made 16 more swims to bring the remaining men and women ashore. Not one was left behind.

Captain Jackman was awarded the Medal of the Royal Humane Society of London, England, and 150 years later we remember this man of immense energy and strength, a noble man of great courage and humanity. We are joined in remembering his legacy today by his great-great grandchild, the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Statements by Members

● (1400)

TAXATION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently Ali Mouallem, a constituent from Slave Lake Alberta, whose parents immigrated to Canada, shared his frustration with the Liberal tax hikes. He writes:

My dad was 55 years old before he started writing cheques to himself.

Before that, he struggled as an entrepreneur. He paid the government, he paid the bank, he paid his landlord, he paid the utilities, he paid his suppliers, he paid his staff and rarely paid himself.

When there wasn't enough money left at the end of the month to pay his staff, he asked my mother to work and he picked up more and more shifts. They both worked long hours and work didn't get better....

My parents sacrificed everything in their life. Their family, their money, their time, their health, their house, and their relationships for a better future.

Our lives changed, when we opened a small pizza place 15 years ago. Finally, they were able to pay themselves and even put some money away to reinvest in our community. My parents finally had a retirement plan.

Now...the Liberals want to penalize my parents for their life's work. [They] even accuse them of taking advantage of tax loopholes....

This doesn't sound fair to me.

There is nothing fair about the Liberals' fair tax proposal.

* * *

SPORT

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, around this time of year, on any given day, we will find football teams like the Western Patriotes and the St-Lazare Stallions taking to the field in my community of Vaudreuil-Soulanges. It is a time of year that hundreds of kids look forward to. Unfortunately, about a week and a half ago, one of our peewee players, Kieran, took to the field and was injured.

[Translation]

While the coach and others were taking care of him until first responders arrived, all of the players took a knee as a show of support. It took some time before Kieran was able to receive care. The practice was long over, but the players stayed.

[English]

I rise today to first share with the House that Kieran is doing fine and is once again taking to the field, but I also want to say a special thanks to every one of the players who took a knee as a sign of respect, and finally, thank all of the parents, coaches, and managers, who do their best to teach our kids not only how to be good players in the field, but also how to be good people.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are all dependent on clean drinking water. This is something that motivates Autumn Peltier from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, who is the only nominee from Canada for the prestigious International Children's Peace Prize.

At 13 years old, Autumn is an inspirational activist who opposes environmental degradation and the threat that pipelines represent. She has addressed the Assembly of First Nations and spoke with the

Prime Minister on behalf of the water she loves. Autumn says she speaks for water because water does not have a voice.

She wants her advocacy to inspire people to come together and to try to purify the water, which she says is alive, has a spirit, and hurts every day because of what people are doing.

Just like any other young person, Autumn has hopes and dreams for her future. What she does not want to imagine is a future in which we do not have clean drinking water anywhere.

I hope all members will join me in congratulating Autumn and support her efforts by doing all we can to protect our sacred waters. I wish Autumn good luck.

* * *

[Translation]

LOVE LETTERS TO CANADA EXHIBIT

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 11, Trinity Western University in Richmond invited me to attend a student exhibit called Love Letters to Canada.

[English]

This exhibit showcased the gratitude and love for Canada of three students: Cecilia from China, Adriana from Mexico, and Sushil from India. The students expressed their appreciation for the quality of life and the focus on family, faith, and social justice that we Canadians may enjoy in our everyday lives.

[Translation]

I want to thank the president of Trinity Western University, Bob Kuhn, as well as Rebecca Swaim, Katherine Sayson, and everyone else at Trinity Western for inviting me and sharing such a beautiful and edifying afternoon.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

EDMONTON—WETASKIWIN

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, Albertans voted in municipal elections. In Canada's largest constituency of Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, four outstanding leaders retired after nearly a century of collective service among them. Today I rise on behalf of our shared constituents to offer heartfelt appreciation to Mayor Greg Kruschke from Leduc, Mayor Camille Bérubé from Beaumont, Mayor Bill Elliot from Wetaskiwin, and Mayor John Whaley from Leduc County.

These men have been exceptional leaders, impassioned champions of their communities. Along with their council colleagues, they translated that passion into meaningful action, and the lives of the people they served were improved and will continue to improve because of their work in office. All the while, each of these mayors conducted their business with the utmost grace, compassion, and genuine goodness.

Statements by Members

It has been an honour to serve alongside Greg, Camille, Bill, and John. May God bless them and their families as they embark on their next adventures.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1977, when I was 14 years old, I remember telling my dad that I wanted to be prime minister one day. He told me that while I might be good at it, it was not likely to happen because women were not elected to federal government. He was not far off. Women received the right to run as candidates in 1920, and the first woman elected federally in Nova Scotia was Coline Campbell in 1974. Sadly, there have only been three women elected in Nova Scotia in the 21st century. In the last 97 years, only nine women from my home province have been elected to the House, an average of fewer than one every 10 years.

As the only woman sitting in the House representing my home province, I would like to send a huge thanks to the women who came before me: Coline Campbell, Roseanne Skoke, Dianne Brushett, Mary Clancy, Michelle Dockrill, Wendy Lill, Alexa McDonough, and Megan Leslie.

I say to all the women who come after me to claim their place; they belong in this House.

* * *

MIKE SMITH

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to recognize the passing of Chief Mike Smith. Chief Smith was a visionary who cared deeply about the well-being of Yukon first nations. A residential school survivor, he devoted much of his life to serving his people as a lawyer, as a three-term chief of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, as a past-chair of the Council of Yukon Indians, and as Yukon's regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations. It was a pleasure to work closely with Chief Smith over the years. I remember how proud he was the day he signed the Kwanlin Dun First Nation Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement, the first such urban agreement in Canada, giving the Kwanlin Dun people control over their own destiny.

While Chief Smith's leadership will be missed, his legacy will live on through his work, his family, and the generations of leaders whom he mentored.

[Member spoke in Tlingit and Southern Tutchone]

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act was unanimously adopted by Parliament and is now law in Canada. Known as the Sergei Magnitsky law, this legislation provides Canada with the tools to target foreign officials responsible for gross human rights violations and corruption.

While these sanctions are applicable to corrupt individuals from any nation, only one country has taken exception to Canada's joining

the global Magnitsky campaign for human rights. Vladimir Putin and his Kremlin kleptocrats are threatened by Canada's crackdown on corruption. In response to the Sergei Magnitsky law receiving royal assent, President Putin placed Bill Browder on Interpol's wanted list for the fifth time. Mr. Browder has been working tirelessly since the murder of Sergei Magnitsky in 2009 in the pursuit of international justice.

Putin's petty move is an attempt to prevent Mr. Browder from travelling to Ottawa to celebrate the passage of the Sergei Magnitsky law. I call on the government to ensure that Mr. Browder is able to travel freely to Canada so that together we can all celebrate this historic milestone.

* * *

HMCS KOOTENAY DAY

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia and in Halifax, October 23 is HMCS *Kootenay* Day. The HMCS *Kootenay* was a Restigouche-class destroyer in the Royal Canadian Navy. Forty-eight years ago, in 1969, the *Kootenay* was passing through the English Channel, headed home to Canada after exercises in the United Kingdom. At 8:10 in the morning, the *Kootenay* was ordered to perform a routine full-power exercise. The trial ended in tragedy. At 8:21 a.m., a mechanical failure suddenly caused an explosion and fire in the starboard gearbox. The resulting fire and smoke claimed the lives of nine crew members and seriously injured 53 others. The tragic incident remains the worst peacetime incident in the history of the Royal Canadian Navy.

I invite all members of the House to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to the crew of the HMCS *Kootenay* and their loved ones. May we never forget that today we enjoy all the privileges of being Canadian because of their courage and service.

* * *

● (1410)

ISLAMIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise as a proud Muslim Canadian to recognize October as Islamic Heritage Month. Over one million Muslims are proud to call Canada home. Islam is Canada's second largest religion after Christianity. We are doctors and lawyers, shopkeepers and teachers, elected representatives, neighbours, and friends.

As we celebrate Islamic Heritage Month, I invite all Canadians to come to learn more about their Muslim Canadian neighbours. They should visit their local mosques. We would be happy to welcome them. They will see that we all want the same things: to build a better life and better community for our children and the next generations.

We are proud of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which says that all Canadians are free to live how they want, to worship how they want, and that in Canada no one can tell women what they can or cannot wear.

*Statements by Members***CAPITAL EXPERIENCE**

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every year, 14 students, two from each of the seven secondary schools in my riding, are selected to participate in the capital experience program, an opportunity to learn about careers.

During their three-day stay in Ottawa, they met with staff from Summa Strategies, journalists, diplomats, and many more. In Ottawa today are Vaibhavi Marathe and Arden Harrop from Haliburton Highlands; Tyler West and Meagan Muscat from Brock; Taylor Saltern and Beth McConkey from Crestwood; Chloe South and Grace Leuenberger from Fenelon Falls; Samantha Willock and Landyn Bowen from LCVI; Catherine Cadigan and Lauren Goode from I.E. Weldon; and Georgia Keenan and Jakob Paek from St. Thomas Aquinas.

I would like to thank all of the sponsors, the Lions and Rotary Clubs, local legions, and small businesses for their generosity. It is my hope that these students will be inspired to consider one of the many careers they were exposed to during their visit.

I invite my colleagues to join me in welcoming these students to Ottawa.

* * *

WORLD POLIO DAY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, October 24, I stand to recognize World Polio Day. Canada has been a global leader in the fight against polio from the very beginning and we are committed to seeing it through to the end. In June, our government announced that Canada would contribute \$100 million over three years to the global polio eradication initiative's endgame strategic plan, which seeks to wipe out polio once and for all to protect children all over the world.

Further, I want to recognize the work of Rotary, an organization whose members have committed countless hours and have been at the forefront of the polio eradication effort since 1979. Rotary's efforts to fight this disease are truly commendable and I applaud its inspiring achievements in fundraising and advocacy, and for mobilizing others to fight for this important issue.

Moving forward, our government must ensure that it remains steadfast in its commitment to working with organizations like Rotary, as well as our Canadian and international partners, to eradicate polio by 2020.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council created the position of UN independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity. Unfortunately, distinguished international law professor Vitit Muntarbhorn completed only one year of his three-year mandate before having to step down for reasons of health, and yet his reports demonstrate the critical importance of this work. Not only did he investigate and document far too many incidents of arrest, torture, and killings, but he also began to lay out a plan for international efforts to eradicate this kind of violence and

discrimination. Given the current epidemic of anti-LGBTQ arrests and violence, which has spread from Chechnya to Azerbaijan, and now to Tajikistan, it is crucial that this work continue.

While I salute the Canadian NGO Rainbow Railroad for helping individuals under threat find a safe haven and I acknowledge the quiet co-operation of our Canadian government in those efforts, today I am asking for more than rescue missions. I am calling on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to make sure that the position of UN independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity is filled without delay so that the international community can act to end this violence and discrimination.

* * *

STURGEON RIVER—PARKLAND

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the sky is blue in Alberta after nearly 80% of voters in Sturgeon River—Parkland voted Conservative and a strong message was sent to the Liberal government, a government that has made life more difficult for everyday Albertans. Albertans know that there is only one party that consistently has their back, and it is the Conservative Party of Canada.

I want to congratulate Dane Lloyd, the new Conservative MP, for his massive victory. Dane's win is especially meaningful to me, as he ably served as my parliamentary assistant prior to the by-election. I know that Dane will be a strong voice for Sturgeon River—Parkland and a strong voice to take on this out-of-touch Liberal government.

I congratulate Dane.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

BYELECTIONS

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was another big election night last night. I want to congratulate both newly elected members, starting with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean and of course the hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

Being a member of Parliament is an honour and a duty that we all take to heart. Despite our differences of opinion, I know that every one of us here in the House is working very hard to represent our constituents. I want to thank all the candidates, volunteers, supporters, election workers, and the voters who expressed their clear will by exercising their right to vote, the foundation of our democracy.

Let us not forget the support we get from our families, who often make significant sacrifices to allow hon. members to defend the interests of their constituents.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

A last piece of advice for those two members: they should dream big, work hard, exercise, stay focused, and surround themselves with good people.

ORAL QUESTIONS

*[Translation]***TAXATION**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has become clear that the Prime Minister will not stop his never-ending quest for new revenue streams to pay for his out-of-control spending even for compassionate reasons. Last weekend, we learned that in May 2017, the Liberals began to deny major tax credits to vulnerable diabetics, against the advice of doctors.

How can the Prime Minister justify funding his reckless spending on the backs of diabetics?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that all Canadians can access the credits and benefits to which they are entitled. We fully understand the concerns of these groups. Diabetes affects the lives of many Canadians.

The minister's office will be meeting with these groups this week. We are currently hiring nurses to assess disability tax credit applications in the first step of the process, and the minister has asked the Canada Revenue Agency to improve its data collection process in order to better understand the agency's decision-making process.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the disability tax credit provides important tax relief for many vulnerable Canadian diabetics. It is pretty simple how it works. The government determines the qualifying criteria, and the patient's doctor certifies whether the patient meets those criteria. The Prime Minister decided that his tax collectors in Ottawa have a better understanding of diabetic patients than their own doctors. This is truly the worst of big Liberal government. Therefore, the question for the Prime Minister is simple. Who is better placed to determine the needs of diabetics, tax collectors in Ottawa or doctors on the ground?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits to which they are entitled. We understand the concerns expressed, because many Canadians are touched by diabetes. The minister's office and the agency are meeting with the concerned groups to continue our work. We are rehiring some of the nurses who were fired by the previous government to assess the disability tax credit applications in the first step of the process. The minister has asked the agency to improve its data collection to better understand the decision-making process of the agency.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government does not need to hire more people at the

Canada Revenue Agency, it just needs to listen to doctors who are helping their patients.

The Prime Minister claims he wants to have a fairer tax system. However, it is now clear that his definition of that word cannot be found in any pages of any English dictionary that I am aware of. Therefore, I am hoping he can help Canadians better understand his new Liberal definition. Can the Prime Minister tell us this. Does he believe that raising taxes on vulnerable diabetic Canadians is fair?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election Canadians had a choice: go for the Conservative Party that had continued to not grow the economy very quickly, and gave wealthy people the opportunity to have more benefits; or, go with a Liberal government that is committed to invest in Canadians and to grow the economy by putting more money in the pockets of the middle class. That is exactly what we promised to do. That is exactly what we did. A little later today, everyone is going to see the results of that plan we put in place that is delivering for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps raising taxes on middle-class workers. Families are paying more for things like bus passes, their kids' sports, piano lessons, tuition, and textbooks. Local businesses will also pay more taxes.

Why is the Prime Minister working so hard to make life easier for his millionaire friends, while forcing middle-class Canadians to pay more and more?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we saw last night in Lac-Saint-Jean, Canadians are not buying what the Conservatives are selling. The Conservatives brought in tax credits that did not help families. What we introduced is a Canada child benefit that is giving more money to nine out of 10 families and will lift over 300,000 children across Canada out of poverty. We will continue to keep our promises in order to create economic growth for families. That is what Canadians expect, and that is what we are doing.

* * *

*[English]***ETHICS**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister is a little confused because most recently the most popular Liberal announcements are when the Liberals are announcing that they are cancelling their previous announcements. The fact is that with the current government Canadians will pay more taxes, and they know that the government will always protect its own personal interests and those of its Liberal friends. The Prime Minister has spent weeks defending the finance minister's attack on local businesses while that same minister used loopholes to protect his own personal fortune, so I have a very simple question. Was the Prime Minister aware that his finance minister still controlled millions of dollars of stock in Morneau Shepell while his government—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a promise to Canadians two years ago to lower taxes on the middle class and to raise them on the wealthiest one per cent, to deliver a Canada child benefit that would grow the economy and help Canadian families right across the country, to strengthen the CPP, and to increase the guaranteed income supplement that would help the most vulnerable seniors. These were things we promised to do because they would grow the economy. That is exactly what we are seeing. We have the fastest growth in the G7 and have created hundreds of thousands of jobs, because putting money in the pockets of Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. minister for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for the past two weeks, the Minister of Finance has been hiding behind the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to avoid taking responsibility for his actions. That same Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner wrote to him, saying, “If your official duties provide an opportunity to further your private interests or those of your relatives or friends, you are considered to be in conflict of interest”.

That is exactly what we saw with Bill C-27, which he himself introduced. Why is the minister still refusing to take responsibility for his actions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition's misleading insinuations are false. There is no conflict of interest. The minister acted on all of the commissioner's recommendations, which included setting up an ethical screen, which the commissioner said was the most effective way to handle things. The minister followed all the rules and is willing to go above and beyond what the commissioner suggested. That is what people expect of this government and every member of this House.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for two years, he let everyone believe that he had put his assets in a blind trust.

[English]

The fact is, when the Liberal defence minister was found in 2002 to have given a \$36,000 contract to a company owned by an ex-girlfriend, he was asked to resign from cabinet. When the same year, the Liberal solicitor general was found to have given a \$6-million contract to a college presided by his brother, he was asked to resign. However, when this finance minister tables a bill that allows him to gain \$2 million through shares he never placed in a blind trust, he gets a free pass. Why is the finance minister held to a lower ethical standard?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is torquing up insinuations with no basis. The minister followed all the guidance of the commissioner, including setting up a screen that was determined to be the best measure of compliance by the commissioner. The minister has followed the rules and is willing to go above and beyond.

However, I understand why the opposition wants to talk about these things and not about what matters to Canadians, growing the economy, because there is such good news coming for Canadians. We have the fastest growth in the G7. We have created hundreds of thousands of jobs, and we are continuing to invest and putting money in the pockets of the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the finance minister is desperate to change the channel by performing some magic tricks, Canadians understand that he has used public policy for his own advantage. Bill C-27 is not only bad legislation and an attack against good pension plans, it is also very good news for some people, for example, Morneau Shepell.

The finance minister was supposed to put his assets in a blind trust. He did not do it. The Liberals were supposed to tackle the tax loophole of the CEOs. They did not do it. When will the Liberals stop working for their friends on Bay Street and work for the common good?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night we got an opportunity to hear from Quebecers and people across the country about how we were doing as a country and how we are doing in terms of growing the economy. The priorities that Canadians showed actually demonstrated that we are on the right track. We are moving forward and continuing to put money into the pockets of the middle class, and growing the economy in ways that work for everyone. We will stay focused on Canadians while the opposition stays focused on Liberals.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberals are the government.

[Translation]

The Liberals bumped up their economic update in a desperate attempt to sidestep a scandal, but no one is fooled. The Minister of Finance introduced a bill that directly benefits his company. He was supposed to put his company in a blind trust, but he did not, just as he was supposed to tackle the little arrangements that their big CEO friends have.

Instead of attacking people who take the bus, instead of attacking employee discounts, instead of attacking people with diabetes, could the Liberals start checking the pockets of their friends on Bay Street?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals went to Lac-Saint-Jean to talk to the locals about what was happening there, what they need, what we could do to help them and where we could do more.

The people of Lac-Saint-Jean told us that things were going well. They thanked us for our work and gave us their vote of confidence by sending Richard Hébert here to be the next member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

That is exactly what we wanted to do. That is exactly what we are going to announce this afternoon. We are implementing a plan that is working for Canadians.

Oral Questions

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are some plain facts.

On February 20, 2013, two years before being appointed, the Minister of Finance was arguing in favour of a bill that would create target benefit plans. Three years later, on October 19, 2016, the minister introduced Bill C-27, which would create these very plans. What a coincidence.

When will the Minister of Finance admit that he has not fulfilled his obligations and that he has a real conflict of interest, as proven by the \$2 million he has personally pocketed since becoming finance minister?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are some more plain facts.

As soon as he was appointed, the Minister of Finance met with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that he was following all the rules we are subject to. He followed the ethics commissioner's recommendations and last week he announced that he would go even further.

Here are a few more plain facts, if members are interested. Two years ago, we wondered if we were in or headed towards a recession. Now, two years after the Minister of Finance took office, it is very clear that Canada is not in a recession. Canada's growth is the envy of the entire world, and that is thanks to our Minister of Finance.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot be fooled.

The minister tabled a bill that would benefit his own company, which was still paying him more than \$65,000 a month in dividends. This is a clear-cut conflict of interest.

This government claims to be a beacon of integrity and transparency. Today they must prove it. The minister must give us a straight answer.

Yes or no, did he tell the Ethics Commissioner that he was in a direct conflict of interest?

• (1430)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was no conflict of interest, because the Minister of Finance met with the Ethics Commissioner as soon as he took office to make sure he was following all of the rules that govern us. All of her recommendations, including putting a conflict of interest screen in place, were followed from day one.

Last week, the minister went even further by announcing that he would divest himself of his shares in Morneau Shepell and place all of his assets in a blind trust so he could continue the important work he does for all Canadians, the work of putting the Canadian economy back on the path to growth and prosperity for all.

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are the facts as we know them.

As executive chair of Morneau Shepell, the minister lobbied on behalf of targeted pension plans. When he became the minister, he brought legislation in to make these law. He also collected dividends from the company because he still had shares.

Now the hon. member mentioned an ethics screen, and that may very well be in place. However, I want to know something specific. Given all of these conflicts around this issue, did the minister recuse himself from any of the discussions around Bill C-27?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance did put in place an ethics screen, which was recommended by the Ethics Commissioner. She described it as the best measure of compliance possible.

He has always followed the recommendations, will continue to do so, and work in a forthcoming and transparent manner with the Ethics Commissioner, going above and beyond her recommendations.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, did the ethics screen enable the minister to have discussions on a company that he controlled, that he received \$65,000 a month from, that he himself lobbied for in the past?

The minister would say to us, "Oh, you're so concerned about my personal finances." Actually, we are not. We are caring far much more about exactly what ethical screen he had in place, and if he did the right thing.

This is not about Bay Street; this is about Main Street. Canadians want to know this. Did the minister recuse himself when we had these discussions on Bill C-27?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the Minister of Finance, from the get-go, has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure he is in full compliance with the rules that govern us all as parliamentarians, and respected her recommendations. He has gone even further, going above and beyond her recommendations.

Working for Main Street is exactly what the Minister of Finance has done for the last two years, lowering taxes for nine million Canadians and steering the Canadian economy back into the direction of growth and prosperity for all. We can be very proud of our finance minister.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, share prices for Morneau Shepell went up by 5% the day after the Minister of Finance tabled Bill C-27.

The bill directly affects pensions, which Morneau Shepell is in the business of selling. This is a clear conflict of interest. The minister promised the House, the Ethics Commissioner, the media, and anyone who would listen that he would recuse himself from decisions involving Morneau Shepell, but he has not done that.

Did the minister receive written approval from the Ethics Commissioner to introduce pension legislation that turned out to be a windfall for the minister and for Morneau Shepell?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that the Minister of Finance will always work with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure he is in full compliance with all of the rules that govern us.

Oral Questions

Last week, he announced that he would be going even further to avoid any distraction from the important work he does for Canadians. His work has led to the creation of 400,000 jobs over the past two years, the vast majority of them full-time, as well as the fastest growth rate in the G7. That is a track record the Conservatives cannot boast of, after 10 years of failing on the economy.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. The minister has introduced legislation that directly benefits the company in which he owns millions of shares. In fact, his shares have increased by a whopping 33% since the minister was sworn in.

While in charge of Morneau Shepell, he lobbied for the exact legislation that he now proposes in Bill C-27. The minister is right about one thing. His conflicts of interests are in fact serious distractions.

Does the minister actually believe it was ethical of him to table Bill C-27, knowing it would further feather his own nest?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner is there to preserve the integrity of this institution and of parliamentarians. We believe in the Ethics Commissioner and in her recommendations. The Minister of Finance has always followed her recommendations in order to be in full compliance with the rules.

Last week, he said he would go the extra mile to continue his important work. I invite hon. members to come here at 4 p.m. to listen to the Minister of Finance confirm that the Canadian economy is doing well and is working for all Canadians.

* * *

• (1435)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, many Quebec stakeholders gathered at the Quebec National Assembly to talk about the NAFTA negotiations.

The Premier of Quebec and these socio-economic stakeholders were clear. They will not back down when it comes to supply management and the cultural exemption. The Premier of Quebec even said that the American administration's demands were extreme and unacceptable.

When will the Minister of Foreign Affairs be firm with Donald Trump and tell him that supply management and the cultural exemption are non-negotiable?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question and assure her, my colleagues, Quebecers, and Canadians that the cultural exemption is a priority for our government.

Supply management is also a priority for our government. These are tough negotiations because we are dealing with a most protectionist administration, but we are working and will continue to work to defend Canada's national interests.

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have yet to stand up to the bullying tactics by the Trump administration. U.S. trade representative Lighthizer has said it is “unreasonable to expect that the United States will continue to... guarantee U.S. companies to invest in...Canada primarily for export to the United States” in NAFTA. This is a serious swipe at our manufacturing supply chains in Canada and our jobs. Enough is enough. Even the Liberal member for Kenora agrees that being charming and polite is not working. We need a stronger approach.

When will the minister stand up against these blatant and extremely aggressive U.S. threats?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member opposite and all Canadians that at the negotiating table, I absolutely stand up for the Canadian national interests.

I believe that it is right to be polite and when we say “no”, we say “no” with a smile. However, I want to say for Canadians that we will always stand up for our national interests and we will stand up for Canadian values.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is collecting dividends from his family business, Morneau Shepell. Yesterday we learned that Morneau Shepell does business with Bombardier. As everyone knows, Bombardier got millions of dollars from the government. When a subsidized company contributes indirectly to Morneau Shepell's bottom line, that clearly puts the finance minister in conflict of interest.

My question is a simple one: did the minister recuse himself from all discussions about subsidies with Bombardier?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner and will continue to do so transparently and proactively to make sure he is in full compliance with the rules that govern us all and to avoid any conflict of interest.

By virtually every economic indicator, the Conservatives gave us our worst 10 years since the Second World War, and they neglected the middle class, so I can understand why they might not like it when we compare their record to ours.

Our finance minister's record speaks for itself: 400,000 jobs, a 40% reduction in child poverty, and 900,000 seniors with more money in their pockets thanks to the guaranteed income supplement.

Oral Questions

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government does not like the fact that we are focusing on the Minister of Finance's conflict of interest. The government does not like it because what we are saying is true: the minister is working for his own personal interests, when he is in a conflict of interest, and not the interest of all Canadians. We have a number of examples, including Bill C-27 and the Bombardier deal. In any case, the most flagrant is the fact that the minister said he was going to put his assets in a blind trust, but he failed to do so for two years. He misled the House about that.

How can the Minister of Finance continue to act as the government's bagman while being in a conflict of interest because of his personal affairs?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance can fulfill his role by acting on the recommendations of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and working with her, as he has done from the very beginning, to ensure full compliance with the laws and rules that govern us in the House. That is what he has been doing since he was elected and what he continues to do. He did even more than what the commissioner recommended.

Now the Minister of Finance is focusing on working for all Canadians, for the Canadian economy, as he has done brilliantly for the past two years.

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we have learned that Morneau Shepell is managing Bombardier's insurance and pension plans. As former chairman, the Minister of Finance would have known about this contract. Clearly, the finance minister's family company has a huge interest in Bombardier's survival. Last year, the Liberals gave a bailout of over \$300 million to this company.

Did the Minister of Finance recuse himself from all discussions around the Bombardier bailout?

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and acted on her recommendations, one of which was to set up an ethical screen early on to prevent any conflict of interest. That screen has been in place since his election and still is. Last week the minister announced that he would go even further in order to avoid any distraction and continue the work he is doing for Canadians, which is to ensure growth and prosperity for all Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as much as the Liberals are hoping to just move along, the fact is that these are very serious conflicts of interest. Canadians have questions. The Minister of Finance, whether he likes it or not, answers to Canadians.

Regarding the connections with Bombardier that the Minister of Finance has, did the finance minister inform the Ethics Commis-

sioner that Morneau Shepell did business with Bombardier, or did he forget about that just like he forgot about his villa in France?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can reassure the member that the Minister of Finance has, from the get-go, worked with the Ethics Commissioner in a transparent, forthcoming, and proactive manner to make sure he respects all the rules and follows all the recommendations, namely, to put up a conflict of interest screen, which he has done.

The Minister of Finance will keep working for Canadians, as he has done with remarkable results, growing our economy at the fastest pace in the G7. We are the envy of the world under the stewardship of the finance minister.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year, the Human Rights Tribunal found the federal government guilty of discrimination against first nations children. An internal memo confirms that Health Canada knew about this serious problem and had no intention of making any changes. After two years and three compliance orders, the Liberals have done nothing.

When will the minister address this major problem that has been lingering in her department or does her government's most important relationship not include indigenous children?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the documents the member opposite is referring to are based on Jordan's principle, which was passed in the House in 2007. Tragically, there were zero cases approved under the previous government. As soon as our government came into power, we got the resources, hundreds of millions of dollars, to fully implement Jordan's principle.

I am pleased to report to the House that now 20,000 cases have been approved. Children are getting access to the care they need, and we will continue to do this work.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so speaks the woman who is fighting Cindy Blackstock in federal court. The government has fought Cindy Blackstock for 12 years tooth and nail, and now it is fighting her in court.

Internal documents show that when the ruling came down, her top officials did not even know what Jordan's principle was or how children were being routinely denied services. Health Canada did draw a line in the sand, that it would not accept the definition that would "ensure that First Nations children have access to the same publicly funded health and social services".

Will the minister please explain why indigenous children do not have that right under her government?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by correcting the record. In fact I am working very closely with Dr. Cindy Blackstock. I meet with her on a regular basis, including yesterday, and my staff meets with her regularly as well.

We are determined to bring justice to indigenous children in this country. We know that there are absolutely unacceptable gaps that exist in child and family services and that children are being apprehended at rates that are the highest in the world.

We will work with Dr. Cindy Blackstock and first nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders to bring justice for indigenous children.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning I met with female university presidents. We discussed the challenges of social media messaging, opportunities to increase diversity in university leadership, and their plan moving forward.

Could the Minister of Status of Women update the House on how this government is leading by example and delivering results for gender equality?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from New Brunswick Southwest knows that gender equality is fundamental to our collective success as a country and is at the core of our government's feminist agenda, and we are seeing the results: more economic growth.

In this pursuit, our words matter just as our actions do, so when members across the aisle label our daughters as feminazis, as Barbies, it sets us all back. Our sons and daughters are watching. Let us all lead by example.

* * *

•(1445)

TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberal government is doing everything it can to protect the finance minister with his conflicts of interest and his nine numbered companies with links to Barbados, villas in France, pension plans for Morneau Shepell, and now Bombardier, it is reaching into the pockets of disabled people to pay for its spending problem.

Diabetes Canada says it is concerned that 80% of diabetics making applications are now being denied, whereas a year ago 80% were being approved.

Why do the Liberals care more about protecting the wealthy finance minister than people with type 1 diabetes?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits to which they are entitled. The concerns raised by the groups are important. We have

already met with these groups and we will continue to work with them.

In contrast to the previous government, our government, in budget 2017, made this credit more accessible by allowing specialized nurse practitioners to fill out their patients' applications.

I asked the agency to improve the collection of data on the credit in order to have a better understanding of the applications and the agency's decision-making process.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, disability tax credit applications for type 1 diabetics have gone from 80% approval to 80% rejection since May 2017. Yesterday, the minister denied that she had anything to do with this, but we have obtained a letter that she wrote in July defending these rejections and confirming that CRA changed the forms for doctors. She wrote that "adults who independently manage their insulin therapy...are unlikely to meet the 14-hours...requirement".

Why did the minister defend these rejections?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits to which they are entitled. As I said, in contrast to the former government, we simplified the forms. Our government made the credit more accessible by allowing specialized nurse practitioners to fill out their patients' forms. We will always work on ensuring that people receive the credits to which they are entitled and that Canadians are protected.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now that the Liberals have gouged small business owners and retail employees, they are going after people with type 1 diabetes.

Yesterday, the Minister of National Revenue said that she had not given any specific instructions and that she did not know what was happening in her department. The Minister of Finance, on the other hand, sees everything that is going on as he looks down from his throne. He has put himself above the law and he is throwing his colleague under the bus.

Can the Minister of National Revenue tell the House that people with type 1 diabetes will be retroactively entitled to the tax credit?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fully understand the concerns of people with diabetes.

My husband died of diabetes-related complications. We met with diabetes advocacy groups and doctors, and we are continuing to work with public servants. We simplified the forms and we have hired specialized nurse practitioners.

As I was saying, unlike the previous government, we will continue to work to make the disability tax credit even more accessible.

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals cut off diabetics from the disability tax credit with a stroke of the minister's pen. Meanwhile, they allow the finance minister to use loopholes so he can hide millions of dollars of investments from Canadians. However, when Canadians suffering from diabetes try to access the tax credit, the Liberals claim that they are somehow cheating the system. Why are the Liberals working so hard to protect the finance minister from paying his fair share while they go after Canadians suffering from diabetes?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fully understand what diabetes can mean for diabetics and their families. As I was saying, my husband died of diabetes-related complications.

We worked with diabetes advocacy groups last year. We met with people from the diabetes association, and we worked with doctors. We remain focused on simplifying the forms and making the disability tax credit more accessible.

* * *

● (1450)

[English]

SCIENCE

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the first actions taken by the Minister of Science was to recruit Professor David Naylor to review federal science funding. That is a great move. Our leader, Jagmeet Singh, who has a degree in biology, supports the Naylor report, as does most of Canada's scientific community.

Can the minister tell us how many of the 35 report recommendations the government intends to implement, and most importantly, will it bring forward legislation to establish an independent national advisory council on research and innovation?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government was elected on a promise to put science at the heart of decision-making. After a decade of neglect, I am working to put people, our researchers, at the heart of how we think about science and how we fund science. Whether that is by ensuring our young researchers have the supports they need to succeed or by addressing the chronic under-representation of women and visible minorities, our government will ensure that people are at the forefront of Canadian science.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday night the 90-foot vessel, the *Anapaya*, sank in Ladysmith Harbour, leaking oil into the ocean. In 2014, Transport Canada identified this 100-year old boat as a vessel of concern. The government knew it posed a threat. However, it took no action until it sank. We are grateful for the Coast Guard's swift action. However, this is yet another example of the Liberal government's failed boat-by-boat approach on abandoned vessels.

Why did the government do nothing to prevent this vessel sinking, and will the government support my legislation to solve abandoned vessels once and for all?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of having announced the oceans protection plan. In relation to vessels of concern, we announced the \$6.8 million abandoned boats program last May. We also announced a small craft harbour federal fisheries boat cleanup program. We will be acceding to the Nairobi protocol, and later this year we will be introducing legislation dealing with vessels of concern.

I think we are covering the waterfront.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance does not seem to like discussing his personal finances. However, he is free to discuss them with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, as stated in the Conflict of Interest Act. With regard to Canada's tax treaty with Barbados, Canadians want the Minister of Finance to avoid getting into another conflict of interest.

Yes or no, has he recused himself from all discussions about this tax treaty?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, and he will continue to do so very transparently, openly, and proactively to make sure he is following all of the laws that govern us and following her recommendations as well. That is something he has been doing from the get-go, including putting a conflict of interest screen in place. Another thing the Minister of Finance has also been doing very successfully for the past two years is growing our economy.

I understand why the Conservatives are reluctant to compare their track record with ours, because they would lose on all counts.

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Morneau Shepell is a financial services company with operations in Canada. We now know that it also holds a tax shelter corporation in Barbados. For two years, the finance minister secretly owned millions of dollars of Morneau Shepell shares. For two years, the minister resisted calls to address problems with the Canada-Barbados tax treaty, saying "we're not going to throw the baby out with the bathwater"—some baby, some bath water.

Did the minister declare his Morneau Shepell Barbados tax treaty conflict of interest to the Ethics Commissioner, yes or no?

Oral Questions

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two years the finance minister has worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure all recommendations are followed. For two years, the finance minister has grown our economy at its fastest pace in the last decade; has reduced unemployment to its lowest level since 2008; has created 400,000 jobs, most of them full-time; has reduced child poverty by 40%; and has helped 900,000 seniors. That is what the finance minister has been doing for the last two years. Members should take note.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us try again. The finance minister secretly held millions of dollars of Morneau Shepell shares for the last two years. The same company has a tax shelter corporation in Barbados. The minister is responsible for negotiating the Canada-Barbados tax treaty. A good deal for Morneau Shepell in Barbados could mean a good deal of money for the minister. Did the minister declare his conflict of interest on the Morneau Shepell Barbados tax treaty file, did he recuse himself from the negotiations, or do ethics rules like this not apply to Liberals like him?

• (1455)

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that, as I said, the finance minister has always acted on the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's recommendations, including her recommendation to set up an ethics screen to prevent any conflict of interest. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner said that was the best way to handle things. Last week, he took yet another step to keep doing his important work for Canada's economy and for all Canadians, to reduce inequality, and to bring prosperity to everyone in this country.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cherish our democracy. Yesterday, they went to the polls in Lac-Saint-Jean in Quebec and Sturgeon River—Parkland in Alberta. Two new MPs were elected to represent their constituents with us here.

Can the minister update the House on what our government is doing to strengthen our democracy?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Alfred-Pellan for his question.

I was proud to introduce Bill C-50, which will make fundraisers for the prime minister, cabinet members, leadership contestants, and opposition leaders more open and transparent. I am pleased that the committee reported the bill back to the House yesterday.

While I am up, I would like to congratulate the members for Lac-Saint-Jean and Sturgeon River—Parkland as well as all of the candidates and the volunteers who played an active role in our democracy.

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier the Minister of Status of Women made some insinuations around Barbies and feminazis. I could stand here and point out that the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary, in 2007, posted “hahahaha..... I'm sure you cleaned it up nicely, with you being a woman and all!!! It's in your DNA...”.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. Will he get his female cabinet ministers to stand here and have an argument about who is more sexist than the other, or will he start doing actual things for women, like protecting Yazidi sex slaves, like correcting the sham of the missing and murdered indigenous women, like condemning the ruling around—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister for the Status of Women.

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleagues pointed out, we have a great deal of work to do to address and prevent gender-based violence—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask members to not be yelling when someone else has the floor. They know better than that. It is not appropriate.

The hon. Minister of Status of Women has the floor.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleagues mentioned, we have a great deal of work to do to address and prevent gender-based violence. Our government, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, is doing just that. As I said before, our actions matter, but so do our words, and words like “feminazi”, words like “Barbie”, and words like those my hon. colleague mentioned are not helping us advance the shared cause of gender equality.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite having doctors' certifications of eligibility, large numbers of diabetics are being denied the disability tax credit. With first employee discounts and now diabetics, I wonder who is next. Canadians deserve better than the talking points that we have heard in this chamber. The onus is not on the application process; it is on the Minister of National Revenue. I ask today. Will the Minister of National Revenue tell the House that she will fully restore the meaning of this tax credit for type 1 diabetics?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that everyone receives the tax credits and benefits to which they are entitled.

Oral Questions

I want to assure my colleague opposite that the law has not changed. There have also not been any changes to the way the law is interpreted. Our objective remains to ensure that people receive the tax credits to which they are entitled. Contrary to what the member said, we are making the process easier for people with disabilities by appointing specialized nurse practitioners who will be able to complete the forms because we know that it is difficult to see a doctor in some regions. That is what we have done for Canadians.

* * *

• (1500)

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, improving energy efficiency is one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to address the global climate change challenge.

Today we celebrate the second annual ENERGY STAR day in Canada. Could the Minister of Natural Resources please tell the House about this program and the benefits provided to Canadians?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for King—Vaughan for her advocacy and the excellent work she does as chair of the House's environment committee.

Our government is proud to collaborate on ENERGY STAR, along with more than 1,500 organizations, to help Canadians save money on their utility bills while protecting our planet. Energy efficiency benefits everyone, reducing costs, improving competitiveness and productivity, and creating good, middle-class jobs.

On ENERGY STAR day, we encourage all Canadians to make a commitment to save energy and protect our environment.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal Bill C-51 would eliminate Criminal Code protection for clergy and places of worship across Canada.

Last week, the minister either accidentally or deliberately misled Canadians when she insisted that rabbis and imams were not defined as clergy. That is nonsense. CRA, border services, and Statistics Canada have always included them in the government's definition of clergy.

The number of attacks and incidents are increasing. These provisions are still being used in court. When will the minister stop putting faith communities at risk and leave these protections in the Criminal Code?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians, regardless of their religion, must be able to practise their religion's faith without fear or interference.

I would like to assure the member opposite that the Criminal Code contains comprehensive provisions, including or regarding disturbances that protect all Canadians, including clergy. Existing offences of general application will remain available to respond to the conduct targeted by such offences. These offences are easier to prove and

broader in scope, and will provide protection to religious leaders of all faiths.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is up to the National Assembly and the National Assembly alone to legislate in areas under its jurisdiction.

It is not up to Calgary, Toronto, or Ottawa to make the rules for life in Quebec. It is within the rights of the National Assembly to decide that people cannot receive Quebec government services unless their face is uncovered.

Is it asking too much of the Minister of Canadian Heritage to respect the Quebec National Assembly's jurisdiction, or does she believe that she is above the law, as she did in reaching an agreement with Netflix?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our position on the issue of diversity has always been clear.

We have always maintained that we will defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that it is not up to the state to tell someone what they can or cannot wear. We will follow the discussions in the coming days and have a good look at how the law is applied.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a recent study by the OECD found that countries that decided to tax Netflix have had good results.

When the Minister of Canadian Heritage says that no country in the world has managed to find the right way to do so, she is talking nonsense. Not only are those alternative facts, but experts agree that all it takes is political will.

Does the minister realize that her lack of political will and lack of vision are putting the future of Quebec television at risk?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the concerns of the cultural sector regarding funding and the protection of francophone culture and Quebec culture.

That is why we have reinvested in the Canada Media Fund to support Quebec television. That is also why we have made massive investments in arts and culture, over \$2.2 billion to be precise. That is also why, when I presented my vision two weeks ago, I announced some reforms to bring our laws up to date, particularly the Broadcasting Act, to protect our culture in the digital age.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ivo Bischofberger, President of the Swiss Council of States.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[English]

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Laura Boldrini, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Republic.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—MINISTER OF FINANCE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:05 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

[English]

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to the House]

• (1515)

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

(Division No. 370)

YEAS

Members

| | |
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| Albas | Albrecht |
| Allison | Anderson |
| Angus | Arnold |
| Aubin | Barlow |
| Barsalou-Duval | Beaulieu |
| Benzen | Bergen |
| Bernier | Berthold |
| Bezan | Blaikie |
| Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) | Block |
| Boucher | Boudrias |
| Boutin-Sweet | Brassard |
| Brosseau | Brown |
| Calkins | Cannings |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Christopherson | Clarke |
| Cooper | Cullen |
| Davies | Deltell |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Dreeshen | Dubé |
| Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) | Dusseault |
| Duvall | Eglinski |
| Falk | Fast |
| Finley | Fortin |
| Gallant | Garrison |
| Genuis | Gill |

Gladu
Gourde
Harder
Hughes
Johns
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Leitch
Lobb
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Mulcair
Nicholson
Obhrai
Pauzé
Quach
Ramsey
Reid
Richards
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 131

Business of Supply

Godin
Hardeastle
Hoback
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kelly
Kitchen
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
Lukiwski
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nater
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Raitt
Rayes
Rempel
Saganash
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Stubbs
Tilson
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Amos |
| Anandasangaree | Arseneault |
| Arya | Ayoub |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baylis |
| Beech | Bennett |
| Bibeau | Bitte |
| Blair | Boissonnault |
| Bossio | Bratina |
| Breton | Brisson |
| Caesar-Chavannes | Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) |
| Casey (Charlottetown) | Chagger |
| Champagne | Chen |
| Cormier | Cuzner |
| Dabrusin | Damoff |
| DeCoursey | Dhaliwal |
| Dhillon | Di Iorio |
| Drouin | Dubourg |
| Duclos | Duguid |
| Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Dzerowicz |
| Easter | Ehssasi |
| Ellis | Erskine-Smith |
| Eyking | Eyolfson |
| Fergus | Fillmore |
| Finnigan | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fragiskatos | Fraser (West Nova) |
| Fraser (Central Nova) | Freeland |
| Fry | Fuhr |
| Garneau | Gerretsen |
| Goldsmith-Jones | Goodale |
| Gould | Graham |
| Grewal | Hardie |
| Hehr | Holland |
| Housefather | Hussen |
| Iacono | Joly |
| Jordan | Jowhari |

Points of Order

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Khalid | Khera |
| Lambropoulos | Lamoureux |
| Lapointe | Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) |
| LeBlanc | Lebouthillier |
| Lemieux | Leslie |
| Levitt | Lightbound |
| Lockhart | Long |
| Longfield | Ludwig |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | Maloney |
| Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) | |
| May (Cambridge) | |
| McCrimmon | McDonald |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Mendès |
| Medicino | Mihychuk |
| Monsef | Morrissey |
| Murray | Nassif |
| Ng | O'Connell |
| Oliphant | Oliver |
| O'Regan | Ouellette |
| Peschisolido | Peterson |
| Petitpas Taylor | Philpott |
| Picard | Poissant |
| Qualtrough | Ratansi |
| Rioux | Robillard |
| Rodriguez | Romanado |
| Rota | Rudd |
| Ruimy | Rusnak |
| Sahota | Sajjan |
| Sangha | Sarai |
| Scarpaleggia | Schiefke |
| Schulte | Serré |
| Sgro | Shanahan |
| Sheehan | Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand |
| Simms | Sohi |
| Sorbara | Spengemann |
| Tabbara | Tan |
| Tassi | Tootoo |
| Trudeau | Vandal |
| Vaughan | Virani |
| Whalen | Wilkinson |
| Wilson-Raybould | Young |
| Zahid— 163 | |

PAIRED

Members

Carr

Thériault— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PETITIONS

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise on a point of order to apprise the House of an issue that I recently came across when attempting to have a petition certified by the clerk of petitions.

A few weeks ago, I received a number of petitions from constituents in my beautiful riding of Haldimand—Norfolk, calling on the government to remove clause 14 from Bill C-51 so that the rights of individuals to freely practise their religion will continue to be protected. Now, while most of these petitions were certified and sent back to my office for tabling, there was one petition that was not approved. According to the office of the clerk of petitions, this petition was rejected, because it did not meet the usual paper size requirement under Standing Order 36(1.1)(c). While the petition contained all of the required information as stated in the Standing Orders, it was printed on ledger-size paper and was determined to be not of the “usual size”, which is why it was rejected.

What exactly does “usual size” mean? Some people would interpret it as letter or legal-size paper, which is exactly what was decided upon by the clerk's office. However, “usual size” does not mean the same to all Canadians. As I am sure members are well aware, people who have a vision impairment use a larger font and paper in order to read the text. To them, ledger-size paper may be the usual size.

As someone who was legally blind at one point, and as the former minister for disabilities, I regularly encourage many institutions and organizations to adopt more accessible-friendly policies. Therefore, it is very disappointing that the House has not taken the same approach.

Not only does this guideline fail to provide accessibility to Canadians who are visually impaired, but we are the only jurisdiction in the Commonwealth that has this requirement. I looked into how the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and the Province of Ontario handle their petitions. In each of these jurisdictions, they have no paper size requirements. The closest is the Province of Ontario, where the clerk's office recommends that the paper size be 8 1/2” by 11” or 8 1/2” by 14”. However, as long as it contains the prayer and at least one name, address, and signature, the petition can be tabled by any member of the legislature. Even our very own Senate does not have requirements on the paper size of the petition that is tabled.

On page 1,166 of O'Brien and Bosc, footnote 32 states, “Prior to the adoption of this rule, petitions of unusual style were presented from time to time and judged by the Clerk of Petitions to be in accordance with the prevailing requirements as to form.”

The *Annotated Standing Orders* at page 110 seem to suggest that this requirement and definition of usual style came to be in 1986. In 2004, after the election of Steven Fletcher to the House of Commons, the first quadriplegic to be elected, a new Standing Order was adopted, Standing Order 1.1, which states:

The Speaker may alter the application of any Standing or special Order or practice of the House in order to permit the full participation in the proceedings of the House of any Member with a disability.

While I appreciate this Standing Order addresses specifically a member with a disability, the spirit of this relatively new Standing Order could be applied to me, since I am prevented from representing my constituents in participating in proceedings of the House of Commons, not because of my disability, but because of the disabilities of my constituents.

● (1520)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk for raising her point of order, which touches on some interesting subjects.

Points of Order

As members are aware, in order for petitions to be presented, they must meet specific rules, including technical requirements about size. As the hon. member read, Standing Order 36(1.1) states, "In order to be certified, pursuant to section (1) of the Standing Order, every paper petition shall...be written, typewritten or printed on paper of usual size..." That, as the member said, has been interpreted since the time she mentioned to mean letter or legal size. That is an important point.

In fact, I know some members, on their websites, will actually set out the requirements so their constituents can see them there and can refer them, when they call about a petition, to that site. However, not every person is going to call before he or she prepares a petition, so that is something for people to consider.

The book the member referred to, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 1166, states that only petitions printed on 21.5 centimetres by 28 centimetres, better known as 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches, or 21.5 centimetres by 35.5 centimetres, or 8 1/2 inches by 14 inches, sheets can be certified.

Having said this, I can understand the member's frustration. Thus, I suggest she could raise the matter with the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which could, if it sees fit, consider changing the requirements for petitions.

I thank the member for having raised this interesting point.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: There are five minutes remaining for questions and comments following the speech of the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by commending the member for Brandon—Souris for the effort he put into going to his constituents. I am aware that he conducted several town halls and constituent consultations which were very helpful. I also want to offer my personal thanks for sharing the results of those consultations. I am very grateful for the effort the member made and I commend and thank him for that.

With respect to the remarks he made on Bill C-46, I believe he would agree with me that we currently have a problem with road safety inasmuch as Canada has the highest rate of cannabis use in the world, and evidence and research have told us that many people do not understand the risks that using cannabis or other drugs can have when they operate motor vehicles.

Would the member agree with me that there is an urgency, that Parliament has the responsibility to act, that by bringing this legislation forward, by ensuring law enforcement has access to the training, tools, technologies, and authorities it will need to keep our roadways safe, we have an opportunity to move forward and make

our roads safer, and that the provisions contained within Bill C-46 have the potential to save very many Canadian lives?

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his thanks for the work I did in my constituency and the five public meetings we held.

Whether people at those meetings were in favour of or deadly against the use of marijuana, the consensus was, if there was one, that we should defer this for some time, not necessarily a year or whatever, until training could take place, and I question whether the bill actually says it has to. However, my constituents felt that whether people were habitual users or not, the government should take more time to ensure the enforcement was put in place. That involves training taking place outside of the country. It was pointed out by one of my colleagues earlier today that only about 600 people out of 65,000 on the police forces in Canada were currently licensed to deal with cannabis.

While I commend the member for his question, I want to acknowledge that a lot more time is needed to ensure road safety is upheld. There is nothing to determine whether increased usage will ever reduce the impact of deaths and accidents on the roads.

● (1525)

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

Mr. Speaker, one of the questions I posed to a number of the member's colleagues is about recognition. For many years, we know that many individuals have been driving on roads in all our communities when they are, unfortunately, high or when they should not be driving because of cannabis or marijuana. If this legislation were passed, it would be an effective tool going forward in terms of trying to make our roads a safer place.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer will be similar to what I just said. There is a definitive time frame that the government wants to move forward, which is next July 1. The people who spoke to me in my constituency, as well as police chiefs of Canada, have indicated there needs to be more time. In fact, some of them do not want it licensed at all. There needs to be more time for training and to make sure the roads can be made safer. We have law enforcement people who can make those decisions with the credibility of being able to go to court, because this will be challenged in court. There is no doubt about it, as I said in my speech today.

We have to look at the United States. The people I have spoken to in several states in the U.S. have indicated that when it is allowed to be licensed there is a sharp increase in usage, but it plateaus off and then it is a matter of whether there are fewer accidents on the roads at that point or not. Their situation has indicated there is not a reduction in accidents.

Points of Order

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to this important bill, which deals with impaired driving. Impaired driving is a major problem on our roads and a very serious issue that we must consider.

That is why the NDP chose to support Bill C-46 at second reading, even though we still have some unanswered questions. Personally, I must admit that I have not yet decided what my final vote will be after report stage and third reading.

Second reading is often the step where members decide whether the underlying principle of the bill is important. This bill deals with impaired driving. It seeks to do more to prevent impaired driving and to go after those who choose to drive while under the influence. There is no doubt that the underlying principle of this bill is important. At third reading and report stage, members must determine whether the bill really supports that principle. Right now, I have my doubts, and I will explain why by talking about the medical concept of drug tolerance.

For instance, when one drinks alcohol, one's body becomes habituated, but it does not develop a tolerance. We cannot say, for example, that if someone does not drink alcohol and then starts drinking every day, he will be able to drink 40 times more without any effect because he is habituated.

Alcohol does not produce a tolerance effect; the same dose will always have the same effect. For example, we can expect someone who drinks three beers to present certain symptoms, and we can expect someone who drinks five or six alcoholic beverages to display other symptoms. The clinical picture is pretty clear. There can be small variations from one person to the next, but they are minor.

Some drugs, however, can produce a tolerance effect. This means that the body becomes habituated and that larger and larger doses are needed to produce the same effect. Morphine and fentanyl patches are good examples of these types of drugs. A cancer patient will be given a certain dose, a fentanyl patch, and this should relieve the symptoms. However, as the illness progresses and the patient takes the drug over a longer period of time, the body becomes habituated and the patient needs larger and larger doses to obtain the same relief.

A test was conducted on a cancer patient. He was given fentanyl patches until he felt relief. If he was still in pain, he was given a larger dose. Eventually, he was able to tolerate 140 fentanyl patches. I can assure the House that if anyone here were given a dose that size, he or she would die on the spot. That is an example of the tolerance effect.

That is why it is difficult to establish a dose of medication or any other substance that produces a tolerance effect because the results change depending on the person, the dose, the time and the causes. It is extremely difficult to establish dosage limits to determine at what point a person will be impaired or at what point it would be dangerous to increase the dose, because the tolerance effect changes for the patient during treatment.

Marijuana appears to have somewhat of a tolerance effect, which means that its effect will be completely different depending on the person.

● (1530)

So, even if you set serum level limits, a person who took a legal dose may be completely unaffected, while another person who took the same dose may be totally dysfunctional and impaired. Some people could take a quarter of the legal dose and be extremely dangerous on the road. So, if we set an arbitrary limit, we might not be able to convict drivers who did not exceed the legal dose but who are still impaired and in no condition to drive. We also risk convicting drivers who are not impaired because their body has developed a tolerance.

By establishing a serum level limit, I think this bill will cause problems with cases that go to court. I spoke with a few defence attorneys, and they told me that no scientific studies have been able to establish a specific dose that can determine whether a person is impaired.

In my opinion, if we want to prove that a person is impaired, we might have to consider other avenues with respect to drugs such as marijuana that produce a tolerance effect. For example, we could use the same tests and tools police officers use to detect the presence of drugs. That is a good test. If we suspect that a person has used marijuana, we could administer the test and determine if we are correct.

In this case, the level does not matter. We would merely have to detect the presence of drugs, which we could prove, then we could administer standardized tests like the ones used for drunk drivers. For example, we could ask the person to walk a straight line or recite the alphabet backwards. There are a number of similar tests that we could use to prove that the person is impaired.

If we relied more heavily on these tests, which, incidentally, can be filmed using body cameras, we would be able to prove that a person is impaired because he or she does not have the cognitive or physical ability to perform certain tasks that a person who is not impaired could. This might be an option that would carry more weight in court.

That is why I question this bill, because it appears obvious that we cannot pass a bill without knowing whether the cases that make it to court will lead to accusations and convictions. There is no point in passing a law if we are going to get clobbered in court. We are in a situation where cannabis is legal and we do not have the tools we need to get convictions when someone is caught driving under the influence.

Points of Order

These questions are the reason I still do not know how I am going to vote in the end. We cannot ignore the fact that THC effects individuals differently. We must also consider the fact that people are already using marijuana for medicinal purposes and that regardless of whether or not legalization occurs, we still do not know how to determine whether a medicinal marijuana user is impaired. It is clear that blood levels are not a reliable measure. We need to consider other tools that would more effectively help determine if a person is impaired and would give crown prosecutors a better chance of getting convictions.

We have a lot of work to do to get a better grasp of this issue and I think we need to base our decisions on science, as with anything else. So far, the science is telling us that there is no blood test that can determine with 100% accuracy that a person is impaired by marijuana since there are too many interindividual variations. We have to find another way to determine whether a person is impaired.

● (1535)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask a question about the member's last point concerning science.

First of all, I want to assure the House that the government very much desires to introduce evidence-based policy. To that end, we have relied on the advice of the scientific community, as represented by the Canadian Society of Forensic Science, which has established a drugs and driving committee made up of scientists. We have asked for their advice on the establishment of per se limits and the approval of devices, namely oral fluid test kits, that can test for that.

We have made a commitment to seek evidence based on the science, not on news accounts of science or people's opinions. We have gone to the scientific community. In this country there is a bona fide recognized body, the Canadian Society of Forensic Science, with a drugs and driving committee that gives advice to government on the approval of devices and standards. We have sought their advice. They have established a committee and done the research. They are providing us with that evidence.

Would that address the concerns expressed by the member opposite with respect to the importance of science informing this debate?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that the experts do not agree when it comes to serum level limits. It is extremely difficult to prove that a specific dose will cause a person to be impaired.

In other scientific tests, in the case of cognitive tests, for example, if you ask a person to perform a task that he or she cannot do, you can prove scientifically that the person is not fit to drive. It might be simpler for the government and the police to use these types of tests to prove that a person is unable to drive, because there would be a direct link between the task and the person's ability to drive. Let us say that a person is required to have certain reflexes. If we test the person's reflexes and determine that they are too slow, we are making a direct link between substance use and reflexes that are

slow enough to raise questions about the person's ability to drive. It is also much easier to prove in court than obtaining a blood test.

Also, you may have to wait an hour or two before you can do a blood test in some rural regions. As an emergency nurse, I am resuscitating someone, so my priority is not to do a blood test to determine a patient's serum THC level. My priority is to save a life.

When we administer a standardized test, we do it right away and we get the proof we need. It is far more difficult to challenge, because we have a video of the person failing to perform physical tasks that show that he or she is unable to drive.

● (1540)

[*English*]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to build on my colleague's previous question about what happens after this piece of legislation goes forward and we ask law enforcement to be the ones to detect the ability of individuals to drive.

Our government is investing over \$270 million to support law enforcement, to be better able to detect drug-impaired driving, and another investment of \$160 million to train front-line officers to recognize the signs and symptoms of someone driving under the influence.

Does the hon. member think these initiatives, along with what my colleagues said previously, strengthen the ability of law enforcement to detect impaired driving?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, personally, I would say that we could invest billions of dollars in drug detection, but if we do not have the appropriate tool, the money will not do any good.

That is why I would like to know what tools we are going to use, which ones are most effective, which ones will get a conviction and which ones are most reliable. It is not a question of money. It is a question of asking what will work and what will allow us to prove beyond a doubt that a person is drug impaired. That is the question at hand. It is not a question of budgets. It is not a question of saying that, with this much money, it will be effective and, with that much money, it will not. It is a question of what we are using. That is why I have concerns about the bill, any why I am still deciding how I will vote in the end.

*Points of Order**[English]*

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-46. I want to commend my colleague for her great speech and her responses to the questions she received.

As everyone knows, Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances), is a piece of legislation I have quite a number of concerns about.

I would like to echo a comment I have been hearing from a number of my constituents in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. It is that the government's arbitrary and self-imposed deadline for marijuana legalization needs to be abandoned. Many find it reckless on the government's part to be moving at such a rapid speed on a very sensitive issue. There are many unanswered questions when it comes to the legalization of marijuana, many of which deal with the topic at hand in Bill C-46, impaired driving.

I want to point out that if a person is impaired and is going to drive, it does not matter whether it is alcohol or whatever. A lot of people think that someone who is impaired must have been drinking. No. The use of marijuana or any other drug impairs a person. Anyone impaired like that should not be driving. These concerns, of course, are valid.

Canadians are looking south of the border at states like Colorado and are seeing an immense increase in the number of traffic deaths attributed to the use of marijuana. I would like to present the House with some statistics from Colorado on marijuana-related traffic deaths.

Marijuana-related traffic deaths have increased 48%, in the three-year average, since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana. In the year following legalization, marijuana-related traffic deaths increased 62%, from 71 to 115 persons.

In 2009, before legalization, marijuana-related traffic deaths in Colorado involving operators testing positive for marijuana represented 10% of all traffic fatalities. By 2015, after legalization, that number had doubled to 21%. There has been a 67% increase in the number of operators testing positive for marijuana involved in fatal accidents since recreational marijuana was legalized in 2013.

Therefore, we can see that Canadians have a legitimate reason to be concerned about how the legalization of marijuana will affect impaired driving in Canada. Canadians understand how important it is for the government to take its time and leave no stone unturned when it comes to ensuring that we are prepared as much as possible for when legalization becomes a reality.

We all know that the government promised to legalize marijuana. Whether one agrees with it or not, the government said that. However, I think it is obvious, from all the experts and from the observations made by members in this House, that the government is not ready.

Sometimes we have goals that we hope can happen at a certain time. Sometimes we have to just sit back and say that the right thing to do is delay it a bit and do it right. That is where I am coming from. This includes ensuring that police have the right tools and other resources to do their jobs and the proper training to identify the

presence of marijuana use at the roadside. This should also be complemented by a public awareness campaign to educate Canadians about the dangers of marijuana use and driving.

The key question is about readiness, as I said. Will police agencies be ready when the time comes? Police themselves say that the answer is no. The July 1, 2018, deadline is way too soon. No number of legislative initiatives like Bill C-46 will be able to prepare the police for when marijuana becomes legal in July next year. The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights heard this loud and clear when the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police appeared during its study of the legislation.

Here is what Mario Harel, president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, had to say about the readiness of police forces across Canada in terms of resources and training.

• (1545)

He said:

While funding has been announced, details regarding how the funding will be allocated through the provinces and into the municipal police services' hands remain unclear. We need that to meet the training and implementation objectives. We clearly require many more officers trained in standard field sobriety testing and as drug recognition experts. Quite frankly, the capacity currently is not there to deliver the amount of training required.

Furthermore, police forces across Canada, including the RCMP, are still in the process of determining the best way forward when it comes to screening devices for roadside tests. Again, I will cite the testimony of Mr. Harel:

Standards for oral fluid drug screening devices are being developed.

He said, "being developed." They are not there yet. Mr. Harel continued:

Devices are yet to be screened against standards approved by the Attorney General of Canada and made available to law enforcement to allow for implementation and training.

We can see that there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that our police forces have the tools and training they need to be ready to keep our roads safe from impaired drivers.

It is also vitally important that drug screening devices respect the rights and freedoms of Canadians. This leads me to another aspect of the bill that I have a great deal of concern about, and that is mandatory alcohol screening. Proposed subsection 320.27(2) of Bill C-46 would go further than current Canadian law and would allow a police officer with an approved screening device to demand that a driver provide a sample, whether a breath test or another kind of sample, without any grounds whatsoever.

Points of Order

Recently, the House rejected Bill C-226, which created the same type of conditions. In Bill C-226, this was known as random breath testing. Bill C-46 would essentially recreate this practice. I had a great deal of concern about random breath testing with Bill C-226, and that concern remains with Bill C-46.

The Canadian Bar Association said this about the reincarnation of random breath testing:

The revised title does not change its essence and it remains a random test that can be administered without any grounds. Police now must have a reasonable suspicion that the person has alcohol in their system before making a demand, and even that is a low threshold.

Under Bill C-46, there would not even be a need for an officer to have any suspicion of the presence of alcohol. He or she could simply demand that a sample be provided. This runs counter to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and could very well make this bill unconstitutional.

This provision could potentially create difficult conditions for some minority groups. I have heard of a number of cases where first nations groups and African Americans, of course, south of the border, have been forced to provide samples without reasonable grounds. These types of provisions only encourage an increase in these types of situations.

We can all go back a number of years, to a remote northern native community in The Pas, Manitoba, I believe. I have a lot of respect for police, and most policemen and policewomen have the highest integrity, but in this community, there were a couple of officers who had a disdain for native people in some ways. They would pick up intoxicated natives and take them to the edge of town, and it was only after someone froze to death in a snowbank that the issue was brought out. The reason I mention this case is that if we allowed random breath testing, it would open the door for abuse like that, where the wrong kind of officer or officers could target communities. That is the last thing we want. Again, it goes against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Therefore, I stand with the Canadian Bar Association when it recommends that this section be deleted from the bill altogether.

With that, I will conclude my remarks by stating that I strongly encourage the government to slow down and re-evaluate this bill. Slowing down and doing it right is not a bad thing. It is not about saving face or whatever. It should just do the right thing. We want to make sure that police have the tools and training they need and that we are protecting the rights and freedoms of Canadians. With that, I am glad to take questions.

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: We will get to questions and comments for the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound in a moment.

Before we do, 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 Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, Ethics; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope, Natural Resources.

We will now go to questions and comments, the hon. member for London North Centre.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard in the summary that my colleague is more concerned about the progress of the bill in terms of “getting it right”, as he put it. I wonder if he could comment, because from that I take that he in fact is in favour of the legalization of cannabis, and if so is it because Canada has the highest use of cannabis use, when it comes to our young people, in the industrialized world? I wonder if he could touch on that, please.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague heard, I am opposed to this bill for a number of reasons. There are parts of it that have to come out.

In response to his claim that we have the highest use of cannabis by young people, it is obvious he does not really want to hear the answer. However, if that use is as high as he implies, this will only encourage that and make it worse. Why on earth would we want to do that? There are too many flaws in this where the government is not ready to enact it. I accept the fact that it has the numbers to pass this bill, but it is not doing it right. It is pushing it ahead just for the sake of getting it through the House, and that is not right.

• (1555)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of Conservative members today have expressed concern about mandatory screening and cited the Canadian Bar Association's brief. We at the committee heard from multiple witnesses who said it was indeed constitutional. The Conservative Party supported the recent private member's bill of the hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, Bill C-226, which included mandatory screening. I am wondering why that position has changed.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, as a point of clarification, maybe there were some Conservative members who supported the bill that my colleague referred to. However, he is looking at one who did not support that at all. I have never been in favour of random breath testing. I think it goes way too far. I am all for reducing impaired driving and increased penalties, etc., but random breath testing is not one of them. I never did support it, and I never will support it.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it. I declare the motion defeated.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion No. 1 negatived)

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[Translation]

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I request that the division be deferred until tomorrow, Wednesday, October 25, at the end of the time provided for government orders.

• (1600)

[English]

The Speaker: The recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 25, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to table a notice of a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

* * *

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's fall economic statement.

[English]

Middle-class Canadians expect their government and the economy to work for them, not the other way around. It is why two years ago they asked for real change.

They asked us to invest in them, in their communities, and in the economy to create jobs now and to build a better future for them, for their children, and for their grandchildren. They asked us to protect the air that they breathe and to make sure that every child has access

to clean drinking water. They asked us to help their families make ends meet and to provide equal opportunities for women and men and children in our country.

[Translation]

Canadians asked us to invest in their future and to put more money in their pockets, to give them a little more breathing room at the end of the month.

[English]

When I was door knocking in my riding of Toronto Centre just before being elected, one of my volunteers, a 13-year-old girl, handed me a note. On it was a list of her family members, all of whom needed to find permanent housing, a place to call home.

This little girl had been helping me all day long and now she was asking me to help her and her family to find a safe place to live. Like millions of other Canadians, she asked us to keep our focus on them so that they have the tools and the resources they need to succeed. When Canadians succeed, they grow our economy, they create jobs, and together we build a better future.

We came to office with a plan to help those who are working hard to be successful, not just those who already are. We came to office knowing that growing the middle class is how we grow the economy. Today, we are doubling down on that strategy because it is a strategy that is working.

In just two years, over 450,000 new jobs have been created and youth unemployment is the lowest on record. Economic growth has spiked from the meagre 0.9% when we took over from the previous government to the highest we have seen in over a decade.

[Translation]

The Canadian economy is performing well. In fact, jobs are being created at the fastest pace in over a decade.

• (1605)

[English]

In just two years, we have lifted 26 long-term boil-water advisories on reserve. Over 350,000 more students get help each year to afford books, tuition, and to earn a degree. We have effectively doubled the Canada summer jobs program, helping 65,000 students find work during the summer months.

[Translation]

We have given 9 million Canadians a tax cut. With the Canada child benefit, we are lifting 300,000 children out of poverty, and we have put more money in the pockets of nine out of ten families. These families contribute to their community and to the Canadian economy by in turn investing in their family through new skates, piano lessons, or healthier food.

[English]

In just two years, we have secured better retirements for Canadian workers today and for future generations with a stronger Canada pension plan.

For that little girl and her family in Toronto and 1.6 million other families in the country, we have invested in the national housing strategy to help make sure they have a safe and affordable place to live.

We have put more money in the pockets of 900,000 seniors living on a fixed income, with increases in the guaranteed income supplement, allowing them more freedom and less worry.

What it boils down to is that in just two years we have built up confidence in the economy and in our middle class. We know when we make these investments in Canadians they grow our economy. That is the fundamental difference between our plan and what happened in the previous decade. In just two years, we are seeing results, very positive results.

Thanks to the hard work of Canadians, our country leads the G7 countries in growth this year and is positioned to continue to lead those countries next year. As our economy grows, the bottom line improves. In this fall economic statement, Canada's fiscal outlook has improved by over \$8.5 billion this year compared to what we were expecting in March. In fact, Canada's net debt to GDP ratio, the size of our debt relative to the economy, will continue to decline.

[Translation]

Not only is our plan working, it is working better than expected. Our strong fiscal position allows us to do what other countries would like to do, but cannot afford to do. We are investing in ourselves and in our future.

[English]

Our strong fiscal position allows us to do what other countries would like to do but cannot afford to do: we are investing in ourselves and our future. It allows us to take full advantage of the kind of strong economic performance we are seeing now by reinvesting in the middle class, while maintaining the flexibility needed to manage global uncertainty.

Nonetheless, as members on this side of the House know, a thriving economy and a solid bottom line are only half the answer. As the economy grows, we need to make sure that the benefits of that growth are shared with the middle class and all those working hard to get into the middle class.

As we invest directly in Canadians and their families, we have an immediate impact on the economy. On July 20, 2016, nine out of 10 Canadian families began receiving more money, tax-free, from the Canada child benefit. When families like mine stopped receiving benefit cheques, our government was able to put more money directly into the pockets of the moms and dads who needed it most.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1610)

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, the important point here is that when we invested in Canadian families through the Canada child benefit, we saw right away that they in turn invested in their families. They paid off debt, sent the kids to summer camp, bought healthier food and maybe even a few more children's books. Right away, we

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saw a spike in consumer confidence and a rise in household spending that continues to underpin our strong economic success today. It is no wonder that the International Monetary Fund's Christine Lagarde says she hopes Canada's economic policies will go viral.

Now, with a little more wind in our sails, we are doubling down on the plan that has worked.

[Translation]

We are reinvesting in the middle class.

[English]

Our government will strengthen the Canada child benefit by making sure it keeps pace with the cost of living. Starting next July, two years ahead of schedule, tax-free Canada child benefit amounts for families with two children will go up by approximately \$200. It does not stop there. The next year, those families will see about \$500 more.

For those Canadians who are working hard to join the middle class, many of whom are living alone, we will offer even more help, with an increase in the working income tax benefit. This increase will give an important boost to over one and a half million low-income workers so they can keep more of their pay as they work long hours, sometimes in more than one job, to advance their careers, advance their situations and, in some cases, the situations of their families.

We know that for young single workers just getting a foothold, shouldering the rising cost of living alone can sometimes be a crushing responsibility. Living alone is now the most common type of household in Canada according to the latest census. Here I would add, thanks to the latest census, it is always good to have information on which to make decisions.

For someone living alone, this could mean not having to make the choice between buying groceries and paying the rent. For a single mom, a stronger Canada child benefit and a more generous working income tax benefit means more peace of mind when the bills come due at the end of the month.

Finally, we are investing directly in Canada's small businesses by lowering the small business rate from 11% in 2015 to 9% by January 2019.

• (1615)

[Translation]

I greatly appreciate the frank discussions I have had with Canadian entrepreneurs over the past few weeks.

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If the last few months have taught me anything, it is the strength and resilience of entrepreneurs and small business owners across our country. It has been humbling and inspiring to meet with so many passionate business owners from coast to coast over the past few weeks.

I called a woman in St. John's who was concerned about her situation, after she told her premier about it. He told me, and I called her the very next day.

Our caucus heard from a town hall in Kelowna, including personal stories from young women physicians who needed added flexibility.

Just last week I went to Erinsville, Ontario, where I met with John, Lori, and their son Angus to learn about their family farm. Angus wants to take over the farm someday. He will be the seventh generation of his family to have that honour. We are committed to making sure that Angus and other people like Angus across our country can take over their family farm.

I met Brittany and Rebecca in a café in Hampton, New Brunswick, and the Rampulla family in their family restaurant in Markham, where I committed to coming back for food sometime soon.

These are the people who drive me to do better and, I can say, drive all of our caucus to do better, to try to make sure we get things right. I can say to them that I heard them. We heard them. We made a point of ensuring that we got the system right.

We held a consultation to fix a system that is not working the way it was intended. That, we know, is critically important.

[Translation]

Before we could lower taxes for small businesses, I had to be sure this investment would be going to help the Cerrelli family in Montreal design and build their dream kitchen, rather than giving tax advantages to the wealthiest.

[English]

As the Prime Minister said last week:

Canada is a country where we celebrate our collective contributions rather than protect the interests of a privileged few.

It is in that spirit that we are moving forward to fix a system that currently allows someone making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to pay a lower tax rate than someone making far less, just because they are incorporated and have children over the age of 18.

For incorporated professionals and business owners, we will preserve the flexibility to save up for a rainy day, for parental leave, or for retirement, while not allowing individuals to have unlimited tax-advantaged savings accounts over and above what is available to everyone else. That is where we got it right.

As I said, we will work with farmers, fishers, and business owners to make sure they can pass down the family business to the next generation.

[Translation]

Our approach is to give all Canadians a real chance at success.

[English]

In everything we do, our government knows that, when Canadians are given a real and fair chance at success, they will make the most of it.

That is how we grow an economy, sustainably. That is how we manage finances, responsibly. As we continue with our plan, we will continue to do what is hard. We will continue to do what is right. Our ultimate goal is nothing short of an economy that rewards the very people who contribute to its success.

As we look to budget 2018, we will continue our work to build on the gains we have made over the last two years, always with the middle class and those working hard to join it as our key focus. We will make sure Canadians have the skills, the training, and the learning opportunities they need to compete and to thrive in a rapidly changing global economy.

We will drive forward our innovation and skills plan, making big bets on the most competitive sectors of our economy, making Canada a world leader in sectors like agrifood, clean tech, and digital.

● (1620)

We will continue investments in our transit, in our roads, and in clean water, to keep our cities moving and to keep our children safe.

As always, we will invest in Canadians and give them the tools, skills, and resources to create jobs and to grow our economy.

In just two years, we have done a lot together, but we know that there is much more to do. Working together, we will make sure Canadians have every opportunity to succeed and to build their future and a country of which we can all be proud.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, moments ago the finance minister had the audacity to say that families like his are not getting any benefit cheques in Canada. This is from the finance minister who, we learned only days ago, has been taking \$65,000 dividend cheques from a company he regulates, and those are on a monthly basis, not to be confused.

This is from a finance minister who says that a “privileged few” should pay more, yet nothing in today's proposal would see the family fortunes of the finance minister or the Prime Minister touched by any taxes at all. Once again, they have sheltered themselves.

Now I'll go on to the bigger picture.

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The Prime Minister promised a small \$10 billion deficit. Do members remember that? Today we learn that the deficit is double that. He promised the budget would be balanced by 2019. Now we learn that the deficit will be almost \$17 billion in that year and there are no balanced budgets projected by the government, ever. There is literally not a single year into the distant future when the Liberal government projects ever eliminating the deficit, apparently believing that the government can borrow its way out of debt into prosperity.

The pattern here is a government that does exactly the opposite of what it says. The Liberals said they would raise taxes on the rich, and now, according to the finance minister's own department, the rich are paying \$1 billion less in taxes.

They claimed they would lower taxes on the middle class. The Fraser Institute confirmed that 87% of middle-class taxpayers are paying more income tax today than they were when the Prime Minister took office—on average \$800 more. Middle-class people like farmers, plumbers, and electricians pay \$800 more in tax while millionaires like the Prime Minister and the finance minister are actually paying lower tax.

The Liberals claimed that they would close loopholes; meanwhile the Prime Minister puts his money away in trust funds that avoid paying any new tax under his proposals. The same Prime Minister puts funds in numbered companies so that he can avoid paying tax.

The finance minister stuffs away his \$20 million investment in Morneau Shepell in a numbered company in Alberta. He lives on Bay Street, yet his companies are in Alberta, Barbados, and France, all of which allow him to pay lower taxes than everyone else pays. He is the very definition of the privileged few, the aristocratic, old money elite, who have taken generational wealth handed down from those who came before them, like the Prime Minister, who took his wealth from the petroleum empire of his grandfather and yet now wants to protect his own benefits from additional taxation while he forces others to pay more.

Such is the system of government that the Liberal Party creates.

The government gave nearly \$400 million in handouts to Bombardier—a company, by the way, that has hired the finance minister's family business. Now, that company is selling its intellectual property and its next generation aircraft to a European company, effectively a subsidy from the federal government to protect the wealthy and the well connected—in particular, this time, the billionaire Bombardier Beaudoin family. It is the old feudal economy, where the rich get richer and the working class pay the bills.

• (1625)

This is the new trickle-down government, where it takes money from the working class, puts it in the hands of politicians who give it to the wealthiest corporations, and expects us to believe that a few drops will trickle down to the people who earned it in the first place. The ultimate concentration of wealth is the government. The bigger the government gets, the more business invests in lobbying for a larger share of that money.

Various definitive research shows that, if government gets bigger, then businesses spend more on lobbying. They understand that the

way to get rich in a government-run economy is by having the best lobbyist, and the way to get ahead in a free market economy is by having the best product or service.

On this side of the House of Commons, we believe in a free enterprise economy where one can only get better off if one sells a product or service that is worth more than the people have to pay for it. It is where one cannot force people to buy a product through a government edict or subsidy or taxation, and where one has to convince people that the thing at offer is actually worth more to them than the dollar they part with to buy it.

The government wants to leave behind that free enterprise tradition that has created all of the prosperity that Canadians enjoy. We believe in an economy based on meritocracy. The Liberals believe in an economy based on old money and privilege. It is no surprise, because that is the experience. It is what they have known. It is what they have always understood.

On this side of the aisle we will continue to champion the underdog, the striver, the upstart, and the challenger, while the Liberals look for new ways to put up obstacles in the way of those who try to get ahead, in order to protect the privilege of those who already have lots of money. We will knock down those barriers so people can keep building, growing, and getting ahead, where they will be judged not by their connections or their family pedigree but by what they have to contribute, and where we see the dignity of work inside every single Canadian and the potential for them to play out that dignity with their own merit and their own contributions. That is the free enterprise, merit-driven vision we have for the economy.

While the Liberals continue to expropriate billions of dollars from entrepreneurs and workers in order to spend on complicated schemes such as superclusters and Bombardier bailouts, we will leave that money in the hands of the people who earned it, because they are always better at spending it than those politicians who tax it.

That is the approach the Conservatives have always taken. It is the reason why, under then prime minister Harper, we had the biggest drop and the lowest levels of poverty in recorded Canadian history. Poverty fell from highs in the mid-teens under the first Trudeau government to 8.8% in the last full year that then prime minister Harper served. He did it by raising the personal exemption, to free a million low-income Canadians from taxation. He brought in the working income tax benefit, to give a pay increase to low-income working people trying to escape from social assistance. He eliminated red tape, so small upstart businesses that could not afford accountants and crafty consultants could start their businesses without the shackles of government holding them back.

We opened up the economy so that people could strive hard, work hard, and get ahead on their own merit. That is the opportunity economy that we will create, that is the vision we will present, and that is the vision Canadians will choose in 2019.

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• (1630)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to quote the finance minister from his speech a few minutes ago when he said that we will continue “investing in ourselves”. I think the finance minister should choose his words with a little more caution. If he is desperately trying to change the channel from the scandal he is entangled in, if he continues to say stuff like that, people will just remember that maybe he benefits himself from some investment or legislation he personally tabled in the House of Commons.

The document in front of us is called the “Fall Economic Statement”, but I think it should be entitled the failed economic statement. Some journalists are saying that this is an economic update, but to be called an update, they have to bring something new to the table. They have to update it. What we see right now is an exercise in buzz words and the recycling of some decisions that were already put in the last budget or in statements from ministers in the last months. There is nothing new there. Members may remember a play by Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

If members are looking for the big news, which was everywhere yesterday, that the Liberals will boost the child benefit, in fact, it is the indexation, which is something the Liberals already said they would do six months ago. They are making a big show about something they have already announced. When we look carefully, this indexation will maybe give, more or less, \$80 to \$100 per family per kid. This is two days per year in kindergarten. This is the fall economic update. This is what they are talking about: two days. We thank them very much. It is so generous. There is really nothing there.

The Liberals said they would do a real national child care program. This is something the NDP has been asking for for years. However, these measures will not create a single place in public kindergarten.

This is what we are facing right now. Families are struggling. They have difficulty making ends meet, and there is nothing the Liberal government can give them to make their lives a little easier.

We still have 250,000 seniors living in poverty in this country. What is in the update? Nothing. There is nothing new.

For unemployed people, when they are asking for EI benefits, six out of 10 are still refused by the system, a system that was kept in place by the Liberal government. There is nothing here to help all those workers. There is nothing about the minimum wage or creating the conditions for better wages and good jobs in this country. I will be specific. Under the current Liberal government, 2016-17 has seen the lowest average increase in wages in this country in the last decade. The government is creating jobs, yes, but they are a lot of Walmart jobs and cheap labour.

On tax havens and loopholes for CEOs, there is nothing new. It is the same old Liberal business. I think on tax havens, there are three lines. They will continue to study that and maybe one day do something.

On the infrastructure investment bank, there is half a page saying that everything is fine, everything will be all right, and the government will invest and create some infrastructure. What will

be the part of the private sector? What are the guarantees the bank will give to private investors? How much will it cost Canadian taxpayers and the users, who will now have to pay fees to use the infrastructure?

Earlier I poked fun at the Liberals with a reference to a title by Shakespeare. I do not do this often, but now I want to quote Blaise Pascal who said: “The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me.” It seems to me that the Liberal economic update is the eternal silence of infinite spaces. No matter how hard we listen, there is nothing to hear.

Apart from a few buzzwords to convince us that everything is fine, and some recycled announcements on items from the previous budget and things we have heard from other ministers recently, there is absolutely nothing new or concrete to help families and workers. This is a PR exercise meant to draw attention away from the fact that the Minister of Finance is in hot water because he introduced a bill in this House that directly benefits one of his companies, Morneau Shepell, in which he still holds shares, shares that he forgot or did not bother to put in a blind trust, I might add. That is not the only thing the Minister of Finance forgot or overlooked. Remember, he also forgot that he owns a villa in Provence, in France. I doubt that is the kind of thing that ordinary Canadians would tend to forget.

For families, the big announcement in this economic update, which was not much of an update, was that there will be no improvement to the Canada child benefit, as they had been led to believe over the past few days. All they can look forward to is the indexation of the Canada child benefit, which should have been done two years ago.

The Liberals screwed up and were chastised for it in the court of opinion and the media, so their big announcement today consists of saying they are going to do what they should have been doing all along. This is not a national daycare plan, which could genuinely help families, help fathers and mothers in this country who have young children.

Indexation will give families between \$80 and \$100 a year per child starting in 2018. That is better than nothing, but it is only enough to cover two days of daycare, or possibly one if you live in Toronto. This is not a plan that creates spots in daycare or helps families with young children. It is a smokescreen.

When we look at all of the measures that were announced, we see that they are just a bunch of old, recycled announcements and ideas, or that they are measures that will not be implemented until 2019. The document is interesting if we want to get an idea of what the 2019 Liberal election campaign is going to look like. The working tax credit will be implemented in 2019. It is being announced today, but it will only come into effect on the eve of the next election campaign.

There are many things missing from this economic update. There is nothing for the 250,000 seniors living in poverty. There is nothing for the 60% of unemployed workers who do not have access to employment insurance benefits. We could also talk about the infrastructure privatization bank. The Liberals are moving forward with that and saying that everything will be fine. The private sector is going to make money at the expense of users and Canadian taxpayers. There are also no measures to address the tax loopholes for CEOs or tax havens.

I do not know why this fall economic update is all smoke and mirrors, but people are going to become disillusioned very quickly and realize that the Liberals are continuing down the same path. They continue to work for Bay Street and the elite. I believe that Canadians deserve better.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that today's economic update is just a red herring. I have to hand it to the Liberals. They certainly know how to create a diversion.

Supply management is threatened and farmers are concerned? The government invites people to take a selfie with the Prime Minister. Canadians have a problem with the Prime Minister's vacation on the Aga Khan's private island? A photo op with Barack Obama at a trendy restaurant should do the trick. The Minister of Finance forgot to disclose that he owns a villa on the French Riviera? That is nothing that a quick economic update cannot solve.

Today, we are witnessing quite the diversion. The government is trying to make us forget that the deficit is lower than expected because it was paid off using the money of EI contributors. There was a \$1.4 billion surplus in the EI fund that was quietly transferred to the consolidated revenue fund. Money that should have been used to improve the employment insurance system is instead being used to try to restore the rather tarnished image of the Minister of Finance from Bay Street. The government is trying to make us forget that the deficit is not as high as expected because debts were being repaid at the expense of our sick. We will not forget. We will remember.

Ottawa decided to cut health transfers because there was a huge federal deficit. Now that we know that that is not the case, will the Liberals review the funds for Quebec and the other provinces to support health? Oh no. They prefer to increase the finance minister's popularity by giving gifts to everyone. The Liberals give gifts with money that should have been used for the unemployed and the sick.

At some point, the spin has to stop. Everyone knows the trick of announcing major deficits in the spring and announcing in the fall that, thanks to the finance minister's sound and responsible management, the deficit is lower than expected. It is always the same old thing. The difference today is that instead of improving the government's image, this update seeks to improve the Minister of Finance's image.

Let us settle one thing right away: there is some good in what has been announced. We would have preferred that the amounts be transferred directly to the Government of Quebec, which has all the necessary jurisdiction in family policy, but we in the Bloc Québécois

Private Members' Business

are still happy to see the indexation of the Canada child benefit, as it will benefit less fortunate families in Quebec. We are pleased with that, as I said. We are also happy to see that the government has decided to move ahead sooner than expected with the tax cuts for SMEs.

Here, they are delusional. The purpose of this diversion is to rehabilitate a star minister who is up to his neck in scandals and in his failed tax reform. He wanted to reform taxes, but in the end, he deformed taxes. That is what we see in the update. Nothing is right, it is badly done. They back up, they change the dates, they review, they change their mind, they strike out. It is worse than an essay by a young college student who did not study on the subject and who tries to hide from the professor that he is just writing anything. That is today's exercise.

The finance minister presented himself as the great defender of the middle class. The term "middle class" shows up 61 times in his document. The Liberals could repeat it 200 times and it would change nothing. The class that they favour and defend is still the rich. In what we see today, the rich are still untouched. They can continue to avoid paying taxes using tax havens. The fact that the finance minister does so himself through his family company, Morneau Shepell, will only increase the public's cynicism regarding the political class. It is deplorable.

I recognize that the minister has tried really hard, but a diversion remains a diversion. That is what we see today. That is what this economic update is, and nothing more. We have noted it.

The Speaker: It being 4:45 p.m., according to the order made on Friday, October 20, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1645)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from April 4 consideration of the motion that Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (drug-impaired driving), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking against Bill S-230. I want to acknowledge that the bill is well intentioned and its sponsor in the chamber, the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska, is to be applauded for the aim of the bill, which is to address drug-impaired driving. Similarly, the sponsor of Bill S-230 in the other place, the senator from Mille Isles, must be recognized for having had the same laudable aim when he initiated this bill.

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Our government understands the significant impact that impaired driving, including drug-impaired driving, has on the safety of our roads and highways. We are firmly committed to strengthening appropriate laws and enforcement measures to deter and punish serious offenders on the road. That is why, while we support the intentions behind the Senate public bill, our government has brought forth its own comprehensive regime to drug-impaired driving, which as we know, is reflected in Bill C-46. It is part of our approach and consistent with the work we are doing with regard to strengthening the strict regulation and legalization of cannabis.

The issues to be resolved in developing a comprehensive strategy to combat drug-impaired driving are complex and too difficult to address through amendments to this non-government Senate public bill. Bill C-46, on the other hand, fully addresses the concerns we have with Bill S-230. Bill C-46 would create one of the toughest regimes against drug and alcohol-impaired driving in the world. It would improve the detection and prosecution of drug-impaired drivers and build on existing measures by authorizing the police to use new tools to better detect drugs in drivers and by creating new driving offences for being over the legal limit for certain impairing drugs. Police would also be able to demand an oral fluid sample at the roadside if they suspect a driver has a drug in the body. This will be similar to the current method of testing for alcohol at the roadside with an approved screening device.

In this light, the Senate public bill's proposals are flawed and would be highly problematic for a number of reasons. Bill S-230 proposes to authorize police to demand from a driver an oral fluid sample on a drug screener at the roadside. The officer, following a lawful stop, first must reasonably suspect that there is a drug in the driver's body. Of course, the Criminal Code already authorizes police to demand a breath sample from a driver on an alcohol screener at the roadside if the officer suspects that there is alcohol in the driver's body.

It is easy, therefore, to understand the interest in a similar screening device for drugs. However, the reason why the alcohol screener is so very useful is precisely because we have the crime of "driving with a breath alcohol concentration exceeding 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood". A fail on the alcohol screener leads to further police investigation of a possible over-80 offence. However, unlike our government's Bill C-46, Bill S-230 proposes no similar legal limit for any drug. Therefore, the only charge available to police would be driving while impaired by a drug, which requires strong evidence of actual impairment. An oral fluid drug screener does not provide any evidence of impairment, but only the presence of a drug. For this reason, I believe the bill's usefulness is minimal.

To explain further, an oral fluid drug screener proposed by Bill S-230 could only be used, among other factors, to help police develop the reasonable grounds to believe that a drug-impaired driving crime has occurred. The drug screener result could not be used, as it is in the U.K., for example, to further investigate a drug legal limit offence because, until C-46 is adopted, there is no drug legal limit offence in Canada.

In the U.K., drug screeners are very helpful in investigating the legal limit offences for THC, the active chemical in cannabis, and for cocaine. These are the two drugs that are most prevalent in drivers

and that are screened by the U.K. drug screeners. In contrast, under Bill S-230, a drug screener could only be used in Canada as an investigative tool in an investigation into driving while impaired by a drug.

Despite the fact that Parliament had enacted the offence of driving while intoxicated by a narcotic in 1925 and the offence of driving while impaired by a drug in 1951, drug-impaired driving investigations remained a huge challenge for police until 2008. This challenge of investigating a drug-impaired driving offence was not unique to Canada. In the 1980s, in the United States, a series of tests was developed that helped to show impairment. This knowledge was used to develop a standardized field sobriety test for screening at the roadside plus a drug-recognition evaluation, or what we commonly refer to as a DRE, which is a broader series of tests that is conducted at the police station.

● (1650)

In the early 1990s, some officers from British Columbia were trained in SFST and DRE and commenced using these tests on those suspected drug-impaired drivers who were willing to participate on a voluntary basis. In time, many drug-impaired drivers simply declined to participate.

In 1999, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights recommended that experts consider what tools might be used by police to better investigate drug-impaired driving, and SFST and DRE were put forward. After several unsuccessful attempts, Parliament in 2008 enacted authority for police to demand that SFST tests be performed by a driver at the roadside. Before making the demand, the police officer must have reasonable grounds to suspect there are drugs or alcohol in the driver's body.

The 2008 legislation also authorized the police to demand the DRE series of tests at the police station if the officer at the roadside had reasonable grounds to believe that the driver was impaired by a drug. This belief is based on observations at the roadside, including the driver's performance of the standardized tests.

The DRE testing is conducted by a specially trained officer called an "evaluating officer". It includes tests of the driver's balance and ability to perform divided attention tasks, and physical measurements of pulse, eye reaction to light, and muscle tone. If the evaluating officer at the police station identifies a drug as causing impairment, that officer may demand a bodily sample of urine, saliva, or blood to confirm or eliminate the possibility of the presence of a drug.

Private Members' Business

At best, under Bill S-230, a drug screener might help police form the necessary grounds to make a DRE demand. This would be a tool that could be used at the roadside, with or without SFST. Again, the police would be investigating a driving while impaired by a drug charge. This contrasts with Bill C-46 and experiences in the U.K., where drug screeners are very helpful in investigating the legal limit offences for THC and cocaine.

[*Translation*]

No one here will be surprised that drug-impaired driving is a growing problem in Canada. This trend is confirmed in the Juristat report entitled "Impaired driving in Canada, 2015" from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, published in December 2016. The number of charges for drug-impaired driving has increased fourfold or almost in the few years since the adoption in 2008 of new tools under the Code to help police investigate drug impaired driving.

As cannabis reform draws nearer, drug-impaired driving is a growing concern for Canadians. According to what I have been told, surveys show that the idea that cannabis does not affect driving is particularly widespread among young drivers. Young drivers may compare the effects that alcohol and cannabis have on their driving.

However, it is important to know that the human body absorbs, distributes and eliminates the two substances in very different ways. They also do not have the same effects.

[*English*]

We have a project that is being successfully completed on the government side. Bill C-46 looks very constructively at how we can use these new devices, like the oral fluid drug screeners, in the field. We are using the bill and the robustness of the regime it proposes to ensure that we keep our roads safe and, at the same time, reduce access to cannabis by our children.

As I have indicated, having drug screener legislation without drug legal limit legislation does not take us very far. Therefore, I intend to vote against Bill S-230. I support our government's far more comprehensive approach in Bill C-46 and encourage all members in the chamber to do the same.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my speech by thanking the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, who sponsored this bill from the Senate. I had the opportunity to sit with him on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. I also know his history as a school principal. Regardless of the political or ideological disagreements that we may have from time to time, I believe in his sincere efforts to improve public safety and national security.

First, we need to be clear: regardless of our opinion or our approach to eliminating the scourge of impaired driving, we agree in the House that it is something that must be done. It is particularly important and we all recognize that. Statistics show that there is an increase in impaired driving, particularly from marijuana.

For that reason, I support sending the bill to committee so we can hear more about it, because my past experience has not been very convincing. I refer here to another bill that we studied, but I forget

the number; I apologize. I refer to the bill regarding random breath testing sponsored by a Conservative member. Many testimonies that we heard during the study of that bill can apply to the discussion of the bill before us today, in addition to other factors that we must consider.

First of all, one of the problems the parliamentary secretary just spoke of is that the bill only mentions the criteria already specified in the Criminal Code relating to alcohol-impaired driving and applies them to drugs. This is about the signs that police officers pick up on. Nothing much would change in that respect.

The maximum allowed blood alcohol concentration in the Criminal Code is .08, and in some provinces, it is set at .05 in matters of traffic safety. There is no mention in the bill, however, of a THC concentration that would allow us to determine how much marijuana a person has actually consumed. That is a major flaw in the bill. Why? Because we would need to rely on a person's behaviour, on what visual and physical cues might be present.

It is problematic because it is clearly a lack of training. We certainly believe that the men and women in uniform who ensure our safety are able to do this work. However, according to the study of the legalization bill and the government's plan for impaired driving, we know that there is a lot of work to do to offer more training to the men and women in uniform to ensure that they can properly recognize the physical symptoms—if I can use that term—to properly detect cases of drug-impaired driving. That is certainly something that is extremely important in this case.

As well, the bill refers to a saliva test. The problem is that experts tell us that the presence of THC can be detected in bodily fluids several days and even several weeks after the drugs in question have been consumed, particularly marijuana.

The problem with that is that, without a fixed limit set out in the law, we could see situations where the presence of THC could be detected in the blood of someone who had, for example, smoked marijuana several weeks earlier—or several days, maybe; I am not sure about the scientific issues surrounding that, but that is a problem that we will face. So the presence of THC could be detected in someone's blood, but the concentration would not be high enough to deem someone to be a criminal. For example, the state of Colorado has set a specific limit for the THC levels in people driving while impaired. That is a problem in itself because we could end up in a situation where someone is arrested who is actually not impaired, but who simply used marijuana at some point in the past. That is very concerning.

Private Members' Business

•(1655)

The other element that I refer to is the ability of these tools to properly measure what we want to measure, namely the level of THC in a person's body. In the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security's study of the bill regarding random breath testing, some members raised this question, knowing that the government was preparing a plan for the legalization of marijuana. Several experts, including police representatives, told us that a lot of discussion was still needed and that, at this time, no method was more reliable than another in measuring what we want to measure to ensure that drivers are arrested who are truly impaired.

If we want to solve a problem, we have to do it properly. That is why I want to talk about one of the shortcomings of Bill S-230, which is the same one that was raised in our debate on the bill I mentioned about random breath tests. The issue is that this approach is not comprehensive; it does not address all aspects of the problem. When the committee studied this bill, important stakeholders such as MADD pointed out that it has the same shortcoming.

We have been trying to figure out whether all these tests should be random, and we have talked about the burden that places on the law enforcement agencies responsible for keeping our roads safe, but each of those elements addresses just one aspect of the problem. If we really want to keep our roads safe, we have to look at a broader set of elements.

People often talk about education, for example. Some have suggested that we can figure out the best approach by looking at how things are handled by other countries with more all-encompassing marijuana legislation and some of the U.S. states that have already legalized marijuana.

Washington State and Colorado have rules about exact THC concentrations in blood, which must be measured before an individual can be arrested. Oregon does things differently. There, an officer who stops a driver uses visual cues to determine whether the driver is impaired before proceeding to other tests like the ones the parliamentary secretary listed. Other countries, such as Great Britain, have more specific measures related to blood THC concentration.

Again, I want to congratulate my colleague for sponsoring this bill in the House of Commons. What I said from the outset bears repeating. There is no doubt that every member of the House wants to eradicate this scourge. Too many lives have been lost to impaired driving. We need to do more to raise awareness. We need to give our police forces the tools they need to keep the public safe and do their job properly in order to improve the ever more staggering statistics. However, this needs to be done in a comprehensive manner. We cannot simply rely on meaningless indicators. We must set a very specific and discernible concentration level. That will be even more important in the context of legalizing marijuana.

Finally, I would remind hon. members that we need to have private members' bills from senators or members. Even so, the Liberals have had a hard time with the legalization bill. Even though we are in favour of legalization, the fact remains that the Liberals have botched this process in a number of ways, including when it comes to consulting the provinces. That speaks to the complexity

and scope of such a bill. A lot of work remains to be done to ensure that everything is done properly. Nevertheless, I will vote in favour of this bill so that we may study it in committee. I look forward to seeing the end result.

•(1700)

Again, I will vote in favour of the bill to ensure that we can study it in committee, and I look forward to seeing the end result.

•(1705)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to speak to Bill S-230, an act to amend the Criminal Code (drug-impaired driving).

This bill is critically important for protecting Canadians from the growing epidemic of drug-impaired drivers, people who take the wheel while impaired.

It is becoming increasingly urgent to deal with this problem, especially with the Liberals' bill to legalize marijuana looming on the horizon. In fact, this bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code in order to allow police officers to use a drug detection device, not unlike a breathalyzer, which is not possible under current legislation.

[*English*]

It is obvious today that drug-impaired driving is just as important an issue as drunk driving, if not more important. It would be understandable to believe that the number of arrests of drug-impaired drivers is similar to the number of arrests of drunk drivers. That is not the case, and that is where the real problem lies.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, despite the fact that the number of drug-impaired drivers is about the same as the number of drunk drivers, the number of arrests is not.

According to the Government of Canada, in 2013, 97% of prosecutions for impaired driving were alcohol related, while only 3% were drug related. We know that the numbers for alcohol- and drug-impaired driving are the same, but 97% of prosecutions are related to alcohol while only 3% of prosecutions are related to drugs. That is a problem.

Why do we have this discrepancy?

Private Members' Business

Simply because there is currently no roadside screening device to detect drug-impaired driving. For example, as we all know, police officers who suspect a driver of being under the influence of alcohol can easily ask that person to take a blood alcohol test to check his or her level of intoxication. However, unfortunately, a police officer who believes that a driver is on drugs cannot use such a device because current legislation just does not allow it. In the absence of a device similar to a breathalyzer, which would allow police officers to easily determine at the side of the road whether or not a driver is impaired by marijuana, the process is far too complex, not to mention the cumbersome administrative procedure that follows.

Of even more concern is that not all police stations in Canada have drug recognition experts. That therefore leaves the door wide open to drug-impaired drivers. The hope is that there will be at least one or two such experts at every police station in Canada.

Without instruments to easily and quickly detect impaired drivers, the problem of drug-impaired driving will persist and will continue to cause many deaths in Canada. That is why Bill S-230 is timely. It directly addresses this problem by making the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code.

First, Bill S-230 will give the Attorney General of Canada the power to authorize the use of a device or several types of approved devices to identify the presence of drugs in the system at the roadside.

Such a device will be approved by the Attorney General of Canada following consultations with forensic science experts. The same process is used to approve devices for detecting alcohol.

The bill would also ensure that police officers who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a driver is drug impaired could ask them to undergo a test with a drug detection device. The device would therefore not be used without reasonable grounds.

This is no different from what the police do in cases involving alcohol. It is quite simple. We are not asking for a lot.

With drugs, time is an important factor. That is where it differs a bit from alcohol. The sooner the driver is identified, the sooner the level of impairment can be accurately determined, as drugs are quickly absorbed into the body. It is also good to note that Canada will not be the first country to adopt such a method.

In effect, countries that are not considering legalizing marijuana have already been using this tool for about 10 years.

• (1710)

That includes Australia, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, France, Finland, Germany and several other western countries. In those countries, this tool allows police to do their work better and prevent many accidents and deaths. Ultimately, public safety is improved and lives are saved.

Even more important, the use of such a drug detection device by the police discourages drivers who consider driving their vehicle after consuming drugs. Indeed, many people currently use drugs instead of alcohol because they believe they have less chance of getting caught. With the possible legalization of marijuana, this problem will become even bigger. That said, if the risk of being

caught increases for users with the advent of a drug detection device, that would very likely be a deterrent that would help reduce the number of drug-impaired drivers, as was the case for alcohol when breathalyzers were introduced into the system.

While awareness campaigns and education are important, the risk of being arrested and charged with a criminal offence for endangering the safety of the public is certainly more convincing than an ad on television. Furthermore, a document prepared for the federal justice minister and obtained under the Access to Information Act reveals some troubling facts. The minister's briefing document states:

For example, in Colorado, in the year following marijuana legalization, there was a 32% increase in marijuana-related traffic deaths.

We on this side of the House are not making this up. Police officers are asking for screening devices. However, they do not want them on July 1, 2018. They want them now, or as soon as possible, before the government legalizes marijuana. That is why this bill is needed right now. That is why I am asking my colleagues across the aisle to set partisanship aside and support this life-saving bill.

The Deputy Speaker: I invite the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska to exercise his right of reply. He has up to five minutes.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues.

It is an honour for me to rise in the House today to speak to Bill S-230. This legislation is critically important, and passing it is becoming increasingly urgent. I would like to point out that this piece of legislation is also the result of a collaborative, non-partisan approach among senators who unanimously passed it across party lines. I would like to thank and congratulate Senator Claude Carignan and his entire team who worked extremely hard on drafting this bill and had the vision to get out ahead of the House of Commons.

The purpose of the bill is simple. It seeks to amend the Criminal Code to authorize police officers to use a drug screening device, not unlike a breathalyzer, which is simply not possible under current legislation. This bill is just as important as the startling problem it is meant to address. At present, the percentage of drug-impaired drivers who are killed or injured in vehicle crashes is 40%. This now exceeds the percentage of alcohol-impaired drivers who are killed or injured, which is currently 33%.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would like to remind members that drivers who have used marijuana are six times more likely to have a motor vehicle accident than sober drivers. Drug-impaired driving is just as much of a hazard as drunk driving, if not more so. However, the number of arrests is not at all comparable. According to the Government of Canada, in 2013, 97% of prosecutions for impaired driving were alcohol related, while only 3% were drug related. This does not at all reflect the actual number of accidents.

The reason is that there is currently no roadside screening device to detect drug-impaired driving. For example, as we all know, police officers who suspect a driver of being under the influence of alcohol can easily ask that person to take a blood alcohol test to check his or her level of intoxication. However, unfortunately, a police officer who believes that a driver is on drugs or under the influence of marijuana cannot use such a device because current legislation just does not allow it. Without a screening device to help easily and quickly detect errant drivers, the problem of drug-impaired driving will persist and continue to be a major cause of fatal accidents in Canada.

Last week we found out that the federal government does not have any reliable scientific data on the quantity of cannabis an individual can consume before their ability to drive a vehicle becomes impaired. I just wanted to point that out. Marijuana is set to be legalized in 10 months, which is fast approaching, but the government does not have a single study to indicate how long a person should wait after smoking marijuana before driving a car.

The solution to this lack of data and answers would be to prevent anyone who has used marijuana from taking the wheel. The lack of scientific studies and the lack of tools available to our police forces to help them do their job makes the importance of this bill crystal clear.

It is also very important to mention that Canada is lagging behind many other countries that use roadside drug detection devices, countries such as Australia, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom, as well as some states in the U.S. Those countries and states are not even planning to legalize marijuana and they have already been using these devices for over a decade and helping police officers prevent countless accidents and deaths.

Even more important, the use of this kind of drug detection device by police would deter drivers who are thinking of driving their vehicle after using drugs. When surveys show that over 50% of the people who report consuming marijuana think they do not pose a risk behind the wheel, that is cause for great concern.

The Liberal government's marijuana legalization bill, set to come into force on July 1, brings this issue to the fore and makes passing Bill S-230 even more urgent.

● (1715)

If the numbers are alarming now, imagine how much more alarming they will be once Canadians can legally buy and consume marijuana. That is why I am asking my colleagues across the aisle to set partisanship aside for today and support Senator Claude Carignan's bill, which, I should point out, is non-partisan and received unanimous support from all parties at every stage of the process in the Senate.

We need to take steps to deter drivers from getting behind the wheel after using drugs. This bill is essential. I am asking everyone in the House to set partisanship aside and give our police officers the tools they need to do their job well and with integrity.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 25, 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.

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we know, the topic of ethics has come up a lot lately. Today, we witnessed a fine piece of theatre as the Minister of Finance tabled his fall economic statement as a diversion.

I have a good memory, and I am pleased to tell you what we on this side of the aisle have been seeing for almost a month. We believe that all parliamentarians, regardless of professional background, must obey the rules and publicly disclose their private financial interests.

We have repeatedly asked the minister to do so, but unfortunately we have never gotten a straight answer. The finance minister did the right thing last week when he decided to disclose his information, more than two years after taking office. Everyone in the House was under the impression that he had already disclosed his assets and placed them in a blind trust. His colleagues in the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, and the NDP were all convinced that he had already done the right thing two years ago.

Adjournment Proceedings

Unfortunately for us, in light of certain information, it became apparent that that was not at all the case. In my mind, that is unacceptable. It is unacceptable for such a person, a minister in charge of billions of dollars of public funds and government bonds, a minister responsible for all the government's savings at the Bank of Canada, for hundreds of billions of dollars of mortgage insurance, a minister involved in his government's financial discussions about Barbados. I find it beyond belief that he would not have realized that he had a conflict of interest when he was elected two years ago.

This is the Prime Minister's right-hand man we are talking about. He has access to all the information, he drafted Bill C-27, and he owns assets. I find that unacceptable.

The question we have always asked, that we are still asking today, and that we will continue to ask is the following: did this Minister of Finance recuse himself from discussions that could have placed him in a conflict of interest?

I am asking this question again and I will continue to ask it. If necessary, I will keep asking it for two years. I will continue to ask it until this side of the House receives a clear-cut answer.

• (1720)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will give the member an A+ for assistance, but an F when it comes to what is important to Canadians.

At the end of the day, the Minister of Finance has done the right thing. The 338 members of the House are all obligated to go to the commissioner of ethics, just like Minister of Finance. I have some breaking news for the member. The commissioner's office will look at what all of us are doing and will provide recommendations and advice to each and every one of us on our personal affairs and on what we need to do to be compliant with the act. It is no different than the Minister of Finance. For Liberal, NDP, and Conservative members, letters of concern are addressed to all political parties.

What really gets me, and I have said this before, is that the Conservatives and the NDP are so closely knit on this issue. They have this sense that because things are going so well with respect to the Government of Canada and with so many initiatives, every chance they get, they want to criticize the Minister of Finance, today included.

The Minister of Finance delivered great news for Canadians. He talked about the cut in the small business tax, from 11% to 9.5%. This will generate and create more good, solid, middle-class jobs. However, the Conservatives and NDP together say that this is bad.

We talked about an enhancement. Look at how many children we have lifted out of poverty in 18 months. We are talking about tens of thousands of children in every region of Canada. The Minister of Finance announced that this was not good enough, that we could do better. This government is committed to doing better going forward.

The NDP and the Conservatives want to focus their attention on the Minister of Finance and his personal finances. He is doing what he is obligated to do, just like the member across the way, which is to listen to what the commissioner has to say and to act accordingly. In

fact, last week, the Minister of Finance said he would go even further by putting certain things into a blind trust and divesting himself of some shares. This is not required of him. The commissioner did not say that he had to do this. The commissioner did not go to other members and say that they had to do this. He is in full compliance.

As opposed to trying to assassinate the character of the Minister of Finance, by recognizing what he has done in contributing to the well-being of Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, I think we would see a much more productive opposition. When hundreds of billions of dollars are spent, members will find many areas to look at. There are many suggestions the opposition parties can look at and maybe they can even generate some ideas of their own. We are not afraid of accepting good ideas. If members have something of value to contribute, by all means, present it.

However, the Minister of Finance is following the commissioner's advice. To try to give the impression that he is in conflict and has not followed the laws is a false impression.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell my colleague that his timing is perfect, because I am really not in a good mood today. When I listen to him, it really makes me angry. We are not here to be told what they did for the middle class or for children, as he claims. We are here to talk about the integrity of the Minister of Finance.

When one carries the finance portfolio and manages millions of dollars that belong to Canadians, the very least one can do is make sure to avoid any conflict of interest. One needs to use common sense. We realized what was going on on this side of the House, as did the media, but unfortunately the Minister of Finance no longer wants to answer them—

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

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what we know is that the Minister of Finance is in complete compliance with the Ethics Commissioner. My suggestion to Canadians, the media, members opposite, or anyone else who is following this is to understand that we have the independent office of the commissioner. It is independent. Contrast that to what the Conservatives and the New Democrats are saying, and it is night and day. We have the independent officer saying that the Minister of Finance is in compliance, and we have the members of the opposition, who have nothing good to say about the Minister of Finance and never have, saying that they do not like this about the Minister of Finance.

At the end of the day, if they have concerns, they should raise them with the commissioner and wait until the commissioner comes down and provides a report. The minister himself said that he will have a meeting with the commissioner and that he will look for any other advice or recommendations that Mary Dawson—

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Adjournment Proceedings

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come before the House tonight with a weighty issue. The question I originally asked was some months ago, and it related to the fact that the government bought Broadway tickets for a representative of the corrupt government of Maduro in Venezuela. That was wrong, but I want to get to the heart of the matter. What is the Liberal government going to do to help the people of Venezuela? What material action is the government going to take?

Why is this important? I have a large Venezuelan community in my riding and in the broader community of Calgary. It is very vibrant. There was just a Venezuelan Cultural Day celebration. My friend, Miguel Arturo, is a proud member of that community. What gets to my heart is that when I talk to him and members of his community, as much as they are proud of their heritage, they are panicked. They are beside themselves because of what is happening in their country.

What is happening in Venezuela right now should light the world on fire. We should not be looking at this as a partisan issue. What this corrupt dictator has done to that country should be a concern to all Canadians who believe in democracy, the rights of parliamentarians, and human rights in general. Economic collapse aside, the reality is that parliamentarians are being violently harassed. The parliament now is illegitimate.

My friend told me that there were regional elections for the governor of each of the states on October 15. The elections were held without supervision or audits, and anyone who might have been elected from an opposition party basically had to swear fealty or be approved by the illegitimate parliament.

I was at the Inter-Parliamentary Union meetings that took place last week. It was astounding to watch what happened to the woman from Venezuela who brought forward a motion for an emergency debate on this crisis, in a multilateral situation. I am speculating, but I think she was harassed into removing that resolution from the floor.

If Canada is going to have a place in the world, we have to respond to Venezuela, and I would like the government to do this. I would like the government to stand up at the United Nations and ask it to appoint a humanitarian aid coordinator. It is a sort of back-door, easy way of getting the United Nations to acknowledge that there is a humanitarian crisis. It would also acknowledge the fact that aid organizations cannot deliver aid to Venezuela right now. Any aid shipments are either being turned away or expropriated and distributed to people who are loyal to the government.

We have to realize that this is not just a quasi-crisis. There is no food in Venezuela. There are no human rights. People who are any sort of political dissident are being rounded up. This is happening in a country that was once economically viable and that was once marginally peaceful. It is in our backyard.

There is a huge community of Venezuelans in Canada who expect us to put our money where our mouths are as legislators. When we stand up and say that Canadians or Canadian legislators support human rights, it is not about nice words. We have to take action. My plea to the parliamentary secretary, who is a reasonable human

being, is to show the Venezuelan community what the government is going to do as a tangible action to support them.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague will know well that this government stands up for human rights, the rule of law, and constitutional order around the world. That informs all of our multilateral efforts, and that is the case when it comes to Venezuela as well. In fact, Canada has been a leading voice denouncing the deteriorating economic and political situation in Venezuela.

In addition to bilateral actions, Canada is working with hemispheric partners who are keen to do whatever they can to help resolve the suffering of the Venezuelan people. This is the Lima Group, which will meet for the third time later this week in Toronto, hosted by our Minister of Foreign Affairs. This is a body that is coordinating support for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela.

Just let me reiterate. We have been strongly and repeatedly raising our concerns to the Government of Venezuela and its ongoing campaign of political repression, including politically motivated imprisonment and house arrests of political opposition members.

We are committed to working with those hemispheric partners that I just referenced, to pressure the Maduro government into meaningful and effective negotiations with the opposition, and we will continue to stand in solidarity with the Venezuelan people as they struggle to restore democracy.

We know that this has been an issue and that Canada is leading with like-minded partners to help resolve that and put the focus on restoring constitutional order, democracy, and respect for human rights back to Venezuela.

We have taken a multi-pronged approach to our engagement. We feel that is most important in helping to address what we know is a deteriorating situation.

Again, we have actively participated and led in all three Lima Group meetings, the first of which was on August 8, the second on September 20, and the third being prepared to take place this Thursday in Toronto.

We have been vocal in a number of different declarations that have come out of the Lima Group, including a declaration on the situation in Venezuela, the statement by the Lima Group on the takeover of the functional competencies of the Venezuela national assembly, and the declaration of the second meeting of the Lima Group on the situation in Venezuela.

In addition to our forceful work within that group and through other multilateral channels, our actions under our sanctions measures in Canada have been a priority for us in our ability to promote and defend democracy and human rights, which as I mentioned, are central to our international foundation.

We imposed sanctions on 40 top Venezuelan officials in September, including President Maduro himself, again under the Special Economic Measures Act. Those sanctions impose prohibitions on dealings in property, and they freeze the assets of those listed persons.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our minister has been intimately engaged with this file. She has hosted a group of like-minded meetings in May in Washington and attended the OAS general assembly in Mexico in June, which is where she called for a return of democratic order. In September at the UN General Assembly, the minister hosted a meeting of CARICOM foreign ministers to rally support for our view of how to resolve the situation in Venezuela. In October, she spoke with Spain's minister of foreign affairs on how Spain could engage. She has had conversations with the U.S. Secretary of State.

It goes without saying that the Government of Canada and Canadians are deeply concerned with this deteriorating situation—

• (1735)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the confines of multilateralism, and I understand that the government is raising the issue in multilateral formats, but to be honest, the people of Venezuela and the people of Venezuela who are in Canada right now expect us to do more than just provide decorations and statements. That is great, but we need to advocate for concrete action.

I am wondering if my colleague would commit to at least taking the suggestion back to his minister, both for the Lima Group meetings and also for a position that could be taken to the UN, to at least look at Canada advocating for the United Nations to appoint a humanitarian aid coordinator specifically for Venezuela. This would acknowledge the fact that there is a humanitarian situation in Venezuela but would also hopefully help coordinate the efforts of NGOs that are trying to deliver aid in the region and get food and supplies to the people of Venezuela who are suffering.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that my colleague raises that point. Tomorrow I will have an opportunity to host a round table with a dozen or so NGOs, academics, and other people who are engaged in the situation in Venezuela, and ask for their advice on how Canada can continue to engage and play a leadership role on this file.

Again, I will reiterate that Canada has provided humanitarian support. We are engaged with our peace and stabilization operations program in the region. We are leading through the Lima Group. We have placed sanctions on 40 members of the Venezuelan regime, and we continue to stand up for human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and the return to constitutional order in Venezuela. Canadians and Venezuelans in Canada can count on our continued leadership.

• (1740)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to follow up on a question I asked of the Minister of Natural Resources back in May. I asked him about the review process he had set up for the National Energy Board, which has come up with some very offensive recommendations, quite frankly, including basically alleging that Canadians and the people of Alberta are unable to operate ethically as National Energy Board members and that the board's functions should be moved to Ottawa closer to politicians and lobbyists.

I am grateful that as a result of the work of the official opposition and others, it has backed down from that recommendation. However, the question I asked in May was why the Liberals were making it harder for job-creating energy projects to proceed. Since May, we have seen several major multi-billion dollar projects not proceed in Canada, in part because of the red tape and interference in those projects by the Liberal government.

When looking at the investments necessary to create an LNG processing facility, to create a pipeline that crosses multiple provinces to deliver Canadian oil to Canadian refineries, investors need certainty before they are willing to spend tens of billions of dollars to proceed with their investments.

The government has sent signals to these international investors and Canadian investors in energy projects that these are not secure investments. When it rejected the northern gateway pipeline, what message did that send? It signalled that even if one can get a project through the National Energy Board process, even if one can get a permit from the government, even if one can get cabinet approval for a project with 209 binding conditions, a change in government can mean that a multi-year process is upended with the snap of a finger. If the political whims of the Prime Minister are such that he is opposed to a pipeline going through a forest he is fond of, that project can be cancelled, even if three-quarters of a billion dollars has been spent getting it to approval.

What message does it send if the rules are changed in the middle of the application process, or the goal posts are continually moved as they were with energy east? We saw a process that was restarted, with a new board being appointed. We saw the rules change, with the National Energy Board being forced to examine the upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions of the product that would flow through the pipeline, something that has never been done before in Canadian history and is certainly not required of the foreign tankers coming into Canadian ports, whether in New Brunswick, Quebec, or even Vancouver.

The Liberals changed the rules of the game, and that is bad for investment and competitiveness. What we lost was a \$55 billion increase in our GDP. We lost 15,000 construction jobs when energy east was killed.

I know that from the parliamentary secretary's prepared notes, she will talk about the Trans Mountain pipeline, and that is great. That was approved using the Harper government's process, with the same 157 conditions that were imposed by the Harper government. The Liberals layered on another ministerial process onto that, which did not change a single recommendation and did not really do anything except add to the cost. That is what the government has done.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Chilliwack—Hope's question is both timely and important. Unfortunately, it is also very uninformed.

Adjournment Proceedings

When the member first raised this issue in the House last spring, the Minister of Natural Resources hoped that all sides could at least agree that the National Energy Board we inherited was not perfect. He hoped the member opposite could see how significant reforms could benefit Canada's energy sector, with greater predictability and clearer timelines for the proponents and investors of major energy projects. The minister reminded the member opposite that our new approach for reviewing major resource projects already in the queue was delivering results.

However, it seems the member opposite has chosen to ignore all of that, to ignore the resource projects we have approved and to ignore the thousands of good, middle-class paying jobs these projects represent.

I will talk about those projects, projects like the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline that will create 15,340 jobs and open new markets overseas; the Line 3 replacement pipeline that will create 7,000 jobs and allow more Canadian oil to reach markets in the United States; the Woodfibre LNG facility; the Towerbirch expansion pipeline; the Côte gold mine, the Black Point Quarry, and Sisson mine. How have we done all this? We have done it by engaging meaningfully with indigenous communities, listening carefully to Canadians, and restoring public confidence in our environmental and regulatory processes.

Our goal is to ensure the conditions that will allow us to get Canadian resources to market sustainably, create good, long-term jobs in the energy sector, and maintain Canada's energy security in tomorrow's low-carbon economy.

We saw a great example of that earlier this month when the Minister of Natural Resources capped a six-month national conversation by Canadians by hosting the generation energy forum in his home city of Winnipeg. The forum attracted more than 600 top experts, industry representatives, and indigenous and community leaders from across the country and around the globe. It built on the input from more than 350,000 Canadians who had participated online in the generation energy virtual conversation, the single largest public engagement ever undertaken by Natural Resources Canada and one of the largest in Canadian government history.

The very sad part is that not one of the members of the Conservative Party came. Not one member of the Conservative Party was interested in having a conversation with Canadians about Canada's energy future. It was very disappointing.

The message is clear. Canadians are engaged in our energy future. They value innovation and they are optimistic about our country's ability to be a global leader in the energy transition to a clean growth century.

Our government is laying the foundation for long-term sustainable jobs and a cleaner, brighter future than anyone might have possibly imagined.

● (1745)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member did not have any interest in addressing the competitiveness concerns I raised.

When energy east was killed by government regulation, Denis Coderre, a former Liberal minister and the Liberal mayor of Montreal, celebrated. He took credit for it and said that this was a great day for Canada, which he had helped bring about. Not a single Liberal stood to counter that. I want to give her the opportunity right now to condemn the remarks of Denis Coderre, who celebrated the death of 15,000 energy jobs and tens of thousands more in the energy sector.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, the global energy markets are rapidly changing. The energy transition is already under way and the energy mix will change. However, the pace and scope are uncertain, so long-term, predictable, inclusive policy direction will be critical. That was an indisputable take-away from generation energy earlier this month. It is also an approach we have set into motion with an open, transparent, and inclusive new way to review projects, which is yielding thousands of good, new jobs.

Our government's efforts have launched Canada on its way to a stronger economy, which we heard earlier today from the Minister of Finance, with healthier communities, and a more sustainable future for generations to come.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*English*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:49 p.m.)

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