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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 31, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 31, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region”, done at Lisbon on April 11, 1997. An explanatory memorandum is included with the treaty.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR OF CANADA

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 2016-17 annual report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, as required under section 192 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

[*English*]

I am also tabling a response to one recommendation in the report to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, as well as the responses to the 16 recommendations directed to Correctional Services Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JUDGES ACT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-381, An Act to amend the Judges Act (bilingualism).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce a second bill, an act to amend the Judges Act with regard to bilingualism. This bill is very important and it responds to the recommendations of Graham Fraser, the former official languages commissioner, who

issued a report in 2013 entitled “Access to Justice in Both Official Languages: Improving the Bilingual Capacity of the Superior Court Judiciary”. When I met the commissioner in early 2015, he told me that he had tabled this report but that the Conservatives had shelved it. He asked me to dust it off and do something with it.

I decided to move forward. I am therefore introducing this bill and hoping that the Liberals will implement it, since it seeks to replace the existing system in which judges evaluate their own mastery of the two official languages with an evaluation by the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, as recommended by the Commissioner of Official Languages. Everyone knows that self-evaluation does not work and that a formal assessment is needed.

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

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP) moved for leave to introduce C-382, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act (Supreme Court of Canada).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat less pleased to introduce this bill because, last week, the Liberals defeated Bill C-203, the bill that would have required Supreme Court justices to understand both official languages, despite the fact that they had previously voted in favour of it three times. This time, unfortunately, they defeated the bill, so now we have to do something else.

Now, we can amend the Official Languages Act, which may help the situation but will not resolve everything. It would be a good step forward anyway, and that is why I am introducing Bill C-382, an act to amend the Official Languages Act (Supreme Court of Canada). This bill would amend section 16 of the Official Languages Act so that it also applies to the Supreme Court of Canada. If this bill passes, all federal courts will be responsible for ensuring that judges hearing a case understand the parties' official language of choice without the help of an interpreter. This is a good step forward, but it will not resolve everything. We will have to form government ourselves and introduce another bill like Bill C-203 to fix the problem, so that everyone can access the Supreme Court in the official language of their choice.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

[English]

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Chief Government Whip, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe if you seek it you will find consent for the following.

That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, at the conclusion of today's debate on Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, all questions necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the said Bill be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

That being said, Happy Halloween.

The Speaker: The same to the member and to all members.

Does the hon. member have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by campers who stayed at the Grandview Cottages & Trailer Park in Renfrew, Ontario, located on the majestic Ottawa River in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The petitioners call on the government to ensure that campgrounds with fewer than five full-time, year-round employees continue to be recognized and taxed as small businesses.

[Translation]

MINIMUM VOTING AGE

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française that seeks to lower the minimum voting age to 16. Lowering the voting age to 16 would give young people a voice, restore some balance, and encourage politicians and political parties to take their concerns into consideration.

• (1010)

[English]

The voting age is already 16 in other parts of the world, including Austria, Nicaragua, Brazil, Argentina, and Ecuador.

It is my pleasure to present this petition on behalf of the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française.

EATING DISORDERS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition to the government concerning a pan-Canadian strategy for eating disorders.

The petitioners indicate that among mental illnesses, the highest mortality rate is with people suffering from eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. They also indicate that eating disorders can cause brain damage, changes in hair and skin, and loss of bone mass. Eating disorders can cause the heart to shut down. The first cause of death is cardiac arrest, and the second is suicide.

The petitioners ask that the Government of Canada support Motion No. 117 and initiate discussions with the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for health, and all stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian strategy for eating disorders to include prevention, diagnosis, treatment, support, and research.

SHIPPING INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by hundreds of British Columbians who are concerned that the government's intended adoption of the Emerson report will dismantle the established rules respecting cabotage in Canada. The petitioners fear that up to 12,000 Canadian maritime jobs across our nation will be lost through dismantling cabotage. They say that it will allow the industry to hire cheaper, more vulnerable foreign seafarers without local knowledge of the waters they sail.

The petitioners call upon the government to hold full and open debate on the Emerson report; hold a national multi-stakeholder maritime round table with the aim of developing a national maritime strategy that keeps cabotage rules in place; and make sure that we have good, family-sustaining, unionized jobs in the maritime industry here in Canada.

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present three petitions. All three petitions have to do with climate change.

[English]

The petitions are all from constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The first petition calls upon the government to work with provinces and territories to upgrade our building code to ensure a 15% improvement in energy efficiency.

The second petition calls upon the government to bring into place meaningful actions to meet the Paris accord target of global commitment to ensure that global average temperatures do not exceed 1.5° Celsius. The petitioners draw particular focus on decarbonizing our electricity sector.

The last petition has the most signatories, also from my constituency, and it calls for the House of Commons and Parliament to work to achieve the goals set out in the Leap Manifesto.

* * *

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?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING ORDER 69.1—BILL C-56

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to ask that you divide Bill C-56, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Abolition of Early Parole Act, pursuant to Standing Order 69.1.

Standing Order 69.1 states:

In the case where a government bill seeks to repeal, amend or enact more than one act, and where there is not a common element connecting the various provisions or where unrelated matters are linked, the Speaker shall have the power to divide the questions, for the purposes of voting, on the motion for second reading and reference to a committee and the motion for third reading and passage of the bill. The Speaker shall have the power to combine clauses of the bill thematically and to put the aforementioned questions on each of these groups of clauses separately, provided that there will be a single debate at each stage.

There are two parts of Bill C-56 that I believe should be separated through the application of Standing Order 69.1. One of those parts would be the section that amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. These proposals are meant to address the findings of the inquiry into the death of Ashley Smith, which resulted in a set of recommendations, including the restricted use of administrative segregation. The other part aims to amend the Abolition of Early Parole Act to reinstate the accelerated parole review at one-sixth of the sentence for non-violent offences.

Further, the segregation proposals deal with the introduction of firm deadlines regarding days spent in solitary confinement, as well as the inclusion of oversight or review measures, i.e., independent external reviewers, whereas the one-sixth issue is quite separate and touches on the ability for non-violent criminals to be released on parole and into community much sooner than previously allowed.

Both are related in that they deal with prisons, but they tackle separate issues. In fact, it is my understanding that the Correctional Service Canada would deal with the segregation issue, whereas the Parole Board of Canada would deal with the other.

As you know Mr. Speaker, there is no jurisprudence for the House on this new practice of dividing bills, since the standing order granting you this authority was only adopted in June. Since we do not have any precedents for dividing bills in the manner proposed through Standing Order 69.1, the Speaker has always had the authority to divide motions. Perhaps we can look at these precedents for some guidance on this.

Points of Order

On page 562 and 563 of O'Brien and Bosc, it states:

When any Member objects to a motion containing two or more distinct propositions, he or she may request that the motion be divided and that each proposition be debated and voted on separately.

On June 15, 1964, Mr. Speaker Macnaughton ruled on a request to divide a government motion regarding a new Canadian flag. The Speaker made the following statement:

I must come to the conclusion that the motion before the house contains two propositions, and since strong objections have been made to the effect that these two propositions should not be considered together, it is my duty to divide them....

The Speaker, in this particular ruling, gave a summary of proceedings in the British House with regard to the division of complicated questions. He gave, for example, a ruling from April 19, 1888, where the British Speaker said:

It may be for the convenience of the house that the hon. gentleman's two propositions should be put together, but if any hon. gentleman objects to their being taken together, they will be put separately.

Another illustration came in a ruling from July 17, 1905. The Speaker said:

A member raised a point of order asking the Speaker to rule as to whether when a resolution contains various different propositions it should not be divided and each put separately. It will be seen that the Speaker decided that, in his opinion, it should be divided.

A ruling from October 8, 1912, was also cited:

If the noble lord finds himself in any doubt as to how to vote upon it I shall be very glad to put it as two questions.

That same year, on November 13, the Speaker said:

...the rule, of course, is that if any hon. member feels embarrassed in voting upon a resolution, that the Chair shall divide the resolution....

While the Speaker in 1964 went on to reference more British examples, such as a case from July 1920 and December 10, 1947, he relied on the ruling of November 13, 1912, when he said:

Taking into consideration the references and quotations just cited, and more especially the view expressed by the Speaker of the British house on November 13, 1912, where he said, "the rule, of course, is if any honourable member feels embarrassed on voting on a resolution that the Chair shall revise the resolution in order that the member may, if he wishes to vote "Aye" on the one part and "No" on the other not be embarrassed by having to vote "Aye" or "No" on the whole of it,"

● (1015)

Accordingly, Speaker Macnaughton concluded:

...the motion before the house contains two propositions, and since strong objections have been made to the effect that these two propositions should not be considered together, it is my duty to divide them....

The common guidance here would appear to be strong objections, which I am expressing to you in regard to Bill C-56 and the discomfort members would have voting against a motion containing two parts they support, and vice versa.

Points of Order

On April 8, 1991, members argued that a motion to amend the Standing Orders contained more than one proposal, and the option of passing only one vote on the various proposals in the motion posed a problem for some members. Some members favoured certain proposals and were against others.

On April 10, 1991, Speaker Fraser made a ruling more in line with the new standing order regarding bills when ruling on a request to divide a government motion to amend the Standing Orders of the House.

Citing Speaker Fraser, Speaker Milliken said:

Rather than intervening to divide the motion, he ruled that a single debate would be held on the motion, and its components would be separated into three questions for voting purposes.

He continued:

After having carefully examined the precedents and after having reviewed the arguments on both sides of the question, I am inclined to agree that Government Business Item No. 2 does, indeed, present an instance where the Chair is justified in taking some action.

On October 4, 2002, the hon. member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar raised the matter that a motion for reinstatement of House business contained four separate and distinct parts. She objected to the fact of having only one debate and one vote, when the House was being asked to decide on four subjects, and she asked the Speaker to divide the motion, which he did.

I would argue that the reasons to support the division of the second reading motion of Bill C-56 are the same as those cited from the British House and from the Canadian House in 1964, 1991, and 2002. Members cannot speak for their constituents responsibly by casting one vote that covers various issues. Standing Order 69.1 was meant to relieve members of that impediment.

I suspect that the majority of the House supports the sections of the bill that address the findings of the inquiry into the death of Ashley Smith. I know that a great number of the members disagree with the section in Bill C-56 that reinstates accelerated parole review at one-sixth of the sentence for non-violent offences. Many members, and the constituents who elected them, believe that this would be good news for those convicted of white-collar fraudulent crimes and drug dealers who might get out of prison early.

I believe that Bill C-56 is a good test for Standing Order 69.1, since the division of this bill, along the lines I have described, would address the omnibus nature of Bill C-56 and the problem members have with casting one vote on distinct, separate, and conflicting areas of public policy.

The author of this new standing order, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, should agree with me, since during debate on the motion proposing this change, on June 19, 2017, she said:

We want to ensure that MPs are not faced with the dilemma of how to vote on a bill that is most supportable but contains a totally unrelated clause, a poison pill, that they find objectionable. We want flexibility for MPs in these instances. Under the proposed change, the Speaker would have the authority to divide bills for the purpose of voting for second reading, third reading, and passage of a bill. The Speaker would also be authorized to group a bill thematically. There would be a single debate at each stage, and members would then be able to vote on parts of a bill separately.

The minister's intentions for the use of Standing Order 69.1 are in line with the predicament my colleagues and I are in, with casting only one vote on Bill C-56.

• (1020)

Further, the minister's concerns would appear to echo the concerns contained in the ruling I presented with respect to the Speaker's authority to divide motions, in particular the November 13, 1912, ruling stating that if a member wishes to vote for one part and against another part of a motion, the member should not be embarrassed by having to vote for or against the whole of it.

This new Standing Order was put forward to address the problem of omnibus bills. The fact that it exempts budget implementation bills makes it somewhat of a farce. However, in the case of Bill C-56, there may be some merit in its application.

I look forward to your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will not repeat the arguments made by my colleague, the official opposition House leader. However, I do believe, as she does, that this is a very important point in the life of this House.

Standing Order 69.1 was established and put into place to give you, Mr. Speaker, the power to separate these unrelated elements within omnibus legislation and to provide to the House the ability to vote in favour of or in opposition to specific elements in legislation.

This is a real test. There is no doubt. It is an important point of order raised by the official opposition House leader. I would agree with her that the test of Bill C-56 is essentially met within Standing Order 69.1. These are unrelated clauses that should be treated as separate within the framework of the House. That can only enhance democracy.

We may come back later with further arguments to contribute to this, but we hope that you, Mr. Speaker, will be deliberating on this in a timely manner. It is extremely important for the life of this House, and we believe, for democratic values in Canada.

• (1025)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. opposition House leader and the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for their interventions. I particularly appreciate the thorough review, going back as far as 1888. Those here who have studied law know that judges, of course, in their jurisprudence, often call upon precedence older than that. It is entirely valid. I would not have expected anyone responding to the point of order to have that kind of review, but I appreciate the interventions of both members who have spoken.

Speaker's Ruling

I gather that I will be hearing more on the subject from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, hopefully in the near future. I do not know if the government will be bringing forward an argument on this, but perhaps it will respond when the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby comes back. I thank the members for their interventions.

Now it is time for a ruling on a different matter.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on May 12, 2017, by the hon. member for Winnipeg North concerning the possible requirement for a royal recommendation with respect to four private members' bills, two from the House of Commons and two from the Senate.

The Commons bills are Bill C-315, an act to amend the Parks Canada Agency Act, conservation of national historic sites account, standing in the name of the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, and Bill C-343, an act to establish the office of the federal ombudsman for victims of criminal acts and to amend certain acts, standing in the name of the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix. Both bills are currently in the order of precedence at second reading.

The two Senate bills are Bill S-205, an act to amend the Canada Border Services Agency Act, Inspector General of the Canada Border Services Agency, and to make consequential amendments to other acts, standing in the name of the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, and Bill S-229, an act respecting underground infrastructure safety, standing in the name of the hon. member for Guelph. Both of these bills are currently awaiting first reading.

[*Translation*]

Members will recall that on May 9, 2017, I made a statement in which I invited arguments in relation to these four bills. I would like to thank the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the hon. member for Guelph, and the hon. member for Perth—Wellington for their detailed interventions.

Of the four bills, Bill C-315, in proposing to establish a separate account as part of the accounts of Canada from which disbursements could be made, raises most clearly a question about the possible need for a royal recommendation. The other three bills, C-343, S-205, and S-229, are different. While they present schemes that could lead to new spending, all contain coming-into-force provisions designed to make such spending conditional on separate parliamentary appropriations. I will address Bill C-315 first, and then the other three.

[*English*]

Bill C-315 establishes a distinct account for the conservation of national historic sites, called the conservation of national historic sites account. The funds for this account are to be raised exclusively through private donations and from the interest generated from them. I should note that this fund seems to be separate from the pre-existing new parks and historic sites account, which serves a similar purpose and is also based, at least in part, on donations.

Bill C-315 also provides that the funds may be spent for specific purposes in relation to national historic sites. The parliamentary secretary contended that the creation of such a new account, and the authority to spend its funds on national historic sites, would be a new and distinct purpose that is not specifically authorized by any statute, thus clearly requiring a royal recommendation.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

In making his case, the parliamentary secretary drew a parallel to the employment insurance fund. While nominally its own account, all amounts received and dispersed from the EI fund are deposited in and drawn from the consolidated revenue fund. Because these monies are part of the consolidated revenue fund, a royal recommendation is necessary to authorize any expenditure from it.

[*English*]

Although the situation with Bill C-315 is not entirely analogous to the EI fund, I believe that a similar principle still applies. Even if the monies are accounted for separately and raised exclusively through donations and interest generated from those donations, once collected, they become public funds deposited into the consolidated revenue fund. Any payments from this fund would also be drawn from the CRF. As the bill authorizes this spending for a specified purpose, it must be accompanied by a royal recommendation. Therefore, I find that the objections raised by the parliamentary secretary are well founded.

However, as is consistent with our practice with respect to Commons bills, Bill C-315 can continue through the legislative process as long as there is a possibility that a royal recommendation could be obtained before the final vote on the bill. Alternatively, the bill could perhaps be amended in such a way as to obviate the need for a royal recommendation. Absent one or other of these options being exercised, the question at third reading of the bill will not be put.

[*Translation*]

Let me now turn to the issues raised in the three other bills, namely S-205, S-229, and C-343. The parliamentary secretary argued that the bills in question were proposing new and distinct expenditures and that the accompanying coming-into-force provisions did not alter this fact. In support of this argument, he cited a Speaker's ruling from November 9, 1978 about clauses in bills that seek to elude the requirement for a royal recommendation. Accordingly, it was his contention that the question could not be put at third reading on Bill C-343. Moreover, with respect to Bills S-205 and S-229, which originated in the Senate, both should be removed from the Order Paper since any bills appropriating public funds must originate in the House of Commons.

Speaker's Ruling

[English]

The member for Guelph argued, on June 20, 2017, that Bill S-229 is in order and should be allowed to proceed. First, he contended that no procedural authority exists to remove Bill S-229 from the Order Paper. To do so, the Chair would be relying exclusively on constitutional principles set out in sections 53 and 54 of the Constitution Act, which, in his view, is contrary to the principle that the Chair does not rule on matters of constitutionality. He also contended that even if a royal recommendation were needed, the Chair should allow the bill to continue until the end of the debate at third reading, as is done for private members' bills first introduced in the House.

[Translation]

The member then turned to more substantive arguments about the bill, claiming that the coming-into-force clause ensured that it did not appropriate any part of the public revenue, as such appropriations would have to be granted through subsequent legislation. He further contended that it was not a “money bill”, but, and I quote, “merely contemplates the minister entering into an agreement but does not directly involve any expenditure”.

[English]

The hon. member for Perth—Wellington, on September 19, 2017, made a similar argument in relation to Bill C-344. In his view, it was clear that no money could be spent for the purposes set out in the bill unless and until such funds were appropriated by Parliament in a separate measure. He argued that the bill merely established the machinery under which some future expenditure might be made and that for this reason it did not require a royal recommendation.

As Speaker, I am mindful of my responsibility to provide members with the widest amount of latitude possible in bringing forward measures for consideration as long as these conform to our rules and practices. Their proposals may take the form of either motions or bills. The Chair would only intervene to prevent consideration of such items when they are clearly defective in some procedural way. One of the most important tests when it comes to bills that authorize spending is that they must first be introduced in the House of Commons and must be accompanied by a royal recommendation prior to final adoption. The key question in relation to these three bills is whether they authorize any spending. That is to say, would their adoption result in public funds being appropriated for new and distinct purposes?

•(1035)

[Translation]

The Parliamentary Secretary pointed out measures in each bill that he felt required a royal recommendation. Bill C-343 provides for the appointment of a federal ombudsman for victims of crime, with remuneration and associated expenses for the appointee, and the hiring and remuneration of the necessary staff.

As the member for Perth—Wellington mentioned in passing, this office already exists as a program within the Department of Justice and the ombudsman is appointed as a special advisor to the Minister of Justice pursuant to the Public Service Employment Act. What Bill C-343 proposes, I would argue, is different, insofar as it seeks to establish the ombudsman as a separate and independent office

outside of the department. In such circumstances, a royal recommendation would be needed to properly implement the creation of this office and authorize spending to this end.

[English]

Bill S-205 proposes the appointment of a new inspector general of the Canada Border Services Agency, the appointee's remuneration, and associated employment benefits. These provisions, if implemented, would require new and distinct spending not currently covered by existing appropriations.

Bill S-229 seeks to authorize the designated minister to make regulations allowing for, among other things, the establishment of a funding program to enable notification centres and damage-prevention organizations to exercise the functions assigned to them under this act, potentially involving new expenditures not currently authorized. Excepting that certain clauses of each bill seem to involve potential spending for which a royal recommendation would ordinarily be required, the critical question is the impact of the coming-into-force clause.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Guelph and the hon. member for Perth—Wellington cited certain authorities and precedents to justify why a royal recommendation is not required. Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, sixth edition, at page 186, citation 613 reads:

A bill, which does not involve a direct expenditure but merely confers upon the government a power for the exercise of which public money will have to be voted by Parliament, is not a money bill, and no royal recommendation is necessary as a condition precedent to its introduction.

The same publication, at page 185, citation 611, addresses the issue of Senate bills containing a clause that states that no money will be spent as long as the necessary parliamentary appropriation is not secured. Specifically, it states:

A bill from the Senate, certain clauses of which would necessitate some public expenditure, is in order if it is provided by a clause of the said bill that no such expenditure shall be made unless previously sanctioned by Parliament.

•(1040)

[English]

All three bills explicitly provide that they cannot be brought into force until funds are appropriated by a subsequent act of Parliament, which would have to be initiated in the House of Commons and be accompanied by a royal recommendation. The adoption of these bills, then, does not authorize the appropriation of any funds from the consolidated revenue fund. They would establish a framework in law to establish the new offices proposed by Bill C-343 and Bill S-205, or to develop the system proposed by Bill S-229.

However, the crown is in no way obligated to spend money for these purposes. If, in the future, Parliament granted the necessary funds for these purposes, it would be doing so in the full knowledge that it would allow these measures to come into force. Such a granting of funds would have to be done pursuant to our normal financial procedures. This being so, the financial prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of the House of Commons are entirely respected.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

It must also be recognized that the House has not had to deal with bills providing for conditional spending in recent years and certainly not since the significant changes to our practices surrounding private members' business made in 1994.

[English]

After careful consideration, I am of the view that a royal recommendation is not required, and that these three bills may continue along the usual legislative process. With that said, I believe it might be useful for the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to consider the matter of private members' bills that contain what I would call, for lack of a better term, non-appropriation clauses. The House would likely welcome any views that the committee would have to offer on this subject.

[Translation]

I thank hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (for the Minister of Transport) moved that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I want to start by thanking all the members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities for convening a week early, before Parliament was scheduled to resume, to allow for intensive study of Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act.

I would also like to thank all the witnesses who appeared before committee, along with the many other stakeholders who have shared their views. This includes the feedback provided by Canadians, industry stakeholders, provinces and territories, and indigenous groups, as part of the government's extensive consultation process undertaken last year leading up to the announcement of transportation 2030, our strategic plan for the future of transportation in Canada.

[Translation]

While there were some differences of opinion during the committee's proceedings, we also heard on a number of occasions how important this bill, as a whole, is for Canadians, the transportation system, and the economic prosperity of our country.

It is important for this bill to strike the right balance, which is why the committee adopted some important amendments in response to concerns that were raised during its in-depth study of the bill. This balance is a reflection of the collaboration that was achieved during the committee's study.

[English]

The minister, and I also, was happy with the progress and the review of this bill and the extent of collaboration, which demonstrates the importance accorded by committee members to this bill.

Bill C-49 promotes transparency, system efficiency, and fairness. It is an important legislative step towards delivering on concrete measures in support of transportation 2030, our government's vision for the long-term future of Canada's transportation system.

Canada is a vast country with a very complex transportation network. It is therefore critical to ensure that our laws and regulations position our country to thrive as a high-performing economy that can respond to changing conditions and to Canadians' expectations when they travel.

This proposed legislation aims to provide a better experience for travellers and a transparent, fair, efficient, and safer freight rail system to facilitate trade and economic growth. In particular, the bill would strengthen air passenger rights; liberalize international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers to provide travellers with more choice and encourage greater competition; develop a transparent and predictable process for authorization of joint ventures between air carriers; improve access, transparency, efficiency, and sustainable long-term investment in the freight rail sector; and enhance the safety of transportation in Canada by requiring railways to install voice and video recorders in locomotives.

- (1045)

[Translation]

Together, these proposed initiatives advance a strategic and integrated plan for the future of our country's transportation system.

Our government's focus on inclusive growth for the middle-class and greater safety and security for Canadians led to the introduction of some key amendments to the Canada Transportation Act in Bill C-49 specific to the air traveller.

What does this mean for Canadians?

[English]

Bill C-49 would mandate the Canadian Transportation Agency to develop, in collaboration with Transport Canada, a set of clear regulations to strengthen air passenger rights that would apply consistently to all carriers. The regulatory process would allow broad consultation with Canadians and industry stakeholders to develop world-leading regulations, which is what Canadians expect and deserve.

Canadians and passengers travelling to, within, or from Canada would be provided with rights that address current irritants faced by air passengers. These rights would be easy to understand and uniform across all airlines and all flights, domestic and international.

Government Orders

Canadians understand that in certain circumstances airlines do not have full control over events, such as weather, emergency, and security incidents, or even medical emergencies, but even then Canadians have a right to a certain level of protection when they travel. In other circumstances, when the carrier makes commercial decisions that may have an impact on the passenger, Canadians expect fair compensation for any inconvenience they experience.

Should Bill C-49 receive royal assent, the minister has received assurances from the agency that they are committed to establishing the regulations on air passenger rights as soon as possible.

Bill C-49 specifies that the regulations would include provisions addressing passengers' most frequently experienced irritants: providing passengers with plain language information about carriers' obligations and how to seek compensation or file complaints; setting standards for the treatment of passengers in the case of denied boarding due to overbooking, delays, and cancellations, including compensation; standardizing compensation levels for lost or damaged baggage; establishing standards for the treatment of passengers in the case of tarmac delays over a certain period of time; seating children close to a parent or guardian at no extra charge; and requiring air carriers to develop standards for transporting musical instruments.

[*Translation*]

The minister has been clear that the regulations would include provisions ensuring that no Canadian is involuntarily removed from an aircraft due to overbooking after they have boarded the aircraft. He has also been clear that airlines will be expected to fulfill their obligations to the passenger and, in cases where a passenger cannot fly as a result of overbooking, the air carrier would be obligated to fulfill its contract with that passenger.

● (1050)

[*English*]

We intend to monitor the air passenger experience. This bill proposes requiring data from all parties in the air sector. This data would not only allow for monitoring of compliance with the proposed air passengers' bill of rights framework, but also inform any future policy or regulatory actions to ensure that the air travel experience to, within, and out of Canada is efficient and effective.

Bill C-49 also proposes to increase the foreign investment limit from 25% to 49% in Canadian air carriers, with associated safeguards. No single international investor would be able to hold more than 25% of the voting shares of a Canadian air carrier, and no combination of international air carriers could own more than 25% of a Canadian carrier. The ownership restrictions at 25% would remain for specialty air services, such as heli-logging, aerial photography, or firefighting.

Liberalizing the international ownership restrictions would allow Canadian air carriers, including all passenger and cargo providers, access to more investment capital, which they could use for innovation. We expect this to bring more competition into the Canadian air sector, providing more choice for Canadians, and generating benefits for airports and suppliers, including new jobs.

[*Translation*]

By allowing higher levels of foreign investment, Canadians would have access to better connectivity, and more frequent access to air travel.

Another improvement proposed in the bill is that it would allow the Minister of Transport, in consultation with the commissioner of competition, to consider applications for joint ventures between two or more air carriers. As it now stands, joint ventures are only subject to review as collaborations between competitors under the Competition Act.

[*English*]

Joint ventures are an increasingly common practice in the global air transportation sector. They enable air carriers to coordinate functions, including scheduling, pricing, revenue management, marketing, and sales. This would benefit Canadian passengers, giving them access to more destinations without needing to book separate tickets with different carriers.

This bill would open a process in Canada to both competitive and public interest considerations. This transparent and predictable assessment process would take into account the characteristics of the air transportation sector, as well as the wider public interest and competitive factors. It is expected that this approach would lead to better connectivity, less process, and a better overall passenger experience.

[*Translation*]

In Canada and around the world, airports are investing large sums of money and resources to simplify and improve the air travel experience for their passengers. Municipalities and businesses are also seeking new or additional passenger screening services as part of their economic development plans.

[*English*]

The proposed amendments to the act of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, would create a more flexible framework whereby industry stakeholders could enter into agreements with CATSA on a cost-recovery basis. This flexibility would allow airports to increase screening services at their facilities, strengthen their competitiveness, and attract new commercial routes, which would enhance the traveller's experience without compromising aviation security.

Government Orders

Bill C-49 also proposes significant measures to strengthen the safety of Canada's rail sector. Proposed amendments to the Railway Safety Act mandating the installation of voice and video recorders in locomotives across Canada's railway industry would provide a clear safety benefit and improve rail safety overall. Locomotive voice and video recorders would provide essential information to better understand the causes and contributing factors leading up to an incident or an accident relating to human factors, which are often impossible to obtain by other means. The proposed regime does raise complex issues regarding the rights of employees to privacy. This is why the proposed framework carefully balances the safety benefits derived from locomotive voice and video recorders with the privacy rights of employees. This approach builds on 10 years of careful studies of the technical and privacy-related implications, and would address the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's recommendation in this regard.

•(1055)

[*Translation*]

Bill C-49 advances historic measures to promote transparency, fair access, efficiency and investment in the rail sector.

[*English*]

First, major new data requirements on the railways' service and performance would come into force more quickly. Railways would begin reporting specific service and performance metrics 180 days after royal assent, rather than one year. As well, the amendments would require that this data be reported more quickly. Railways would be required to report their service and performance metrics five days after each reporting period, rather than the 14 days originally recommended.

Finally, the Canadian Transportation Agency would have to publicly post that data within two days of receiving it, rather than the original seven days. Together, these measures would ensure that shippers have access to more timely data. Bill C-49 already provides the agency with the power to require even more data if needed, underscoring our commitment to a more transparent rail system.

[*Translation*]

Second, captive shippers in British Columbia, Northern Alberta, and Northern Quebec, in sectors such as forestry and mining, would have better access to the proposed new long-haul interswitching remedy. These changes reflect the spirit and intent of this new remedy.

The committee's amendments would still maintain a critical balance by minimizing congestion in the Quebec-Windsor and Vancouver-Kamloops corridors. Extensive congestion could ultimately slow down the rail system to everyone's detriment.

[*English*]

Third, another amendment at committee reinforces the point that a railway's removal of an interchange for interswitching would not affect its service obligation toward a shipper. Railways would also be required to notify the agency of their intent to remove an interchange and provide more advance notice to shippers, namely 120 days rather than 60 days. These amendments speak to a concern we heard that interchanges could be closed without any recourse for shippers.

Finally a technical amendment made by the committee would allow the new majority shareholder ownership limit for Canadian National Railway to become effective upon royal assent. This amendment would simplify the process for Canadian National and help ensure investment in a network that is critical to Canada's economic performance.

Bill C-49 would establish the right conditions for our rail network for years to come. The amendments the committee proposed would help advance our goal of a transparent, efficient, and safe Canadian freight rail system that meets the long-term needs of users and facilitates trade and economic growth.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-49 also addresses marine-related infrastructure. The legislation proposes amendments to the Canada Marine Act that would allow Canada port authorities and their wholly-owned subsidiaries access to loans and loan guarantees from the newly created Canada infrastructure bank.

The bank will invest \$5 billion for trade and transportation related priorities. Allowing port authorities to access the bank would support investments in Canada's trade corridors and the infrastructure needed for our long-term economic growth and the creation of good, well-paying jobs for the middle class.

[*English*]

Bill C-49 would change the Coasting Trade Act by allowing all shipowners to reposition their owned or leased containers between locations in Canada without a coasting trade licence. Removing the licensing requirement for foreign vessels to reposition empty containers is expected to help improve the competitiveness of Canada's supply chain in support of Canada's exports, and enhance the attractiveness of Canadian ports as gateways to the North American market.

•(1100)

A strong and modern transportation system is fundamental to Canada's continued economic prosperity. All Canadians benefit from a competitive, reliable, and efficient transportation system.

[*Translation*]

The committee has proposed important amendments to ensure the bill achieves a fair balance. Collaboration helped in finding solutions that will contribute to modernizing our laws and regulations in order to increase investment in Canada and promote the long-term growth of our transportation system.

*Government Orders**[English]*

The proposals included in Bill C-49 are designed to achieve tangible improvements to our national transportation system that will serve and benefit Canadians for decades to come.

I would like to again thank the members of the committee for working together to ensure that Bill C-49 achieves a fair and balanced approach in fostering a more efficient and safer transportation system.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her speech. Even though it went on for quite a while, I do not believe it will do much to change my position or my vote at third reading. We have seen over the past few weeks how much influence major lobbies exert on this government.

Considering the many inconsistencies between what we find in this bill and some of the Liberals' campaign promises, for example, it seems to me that the Liberals switched their focus. During the campaign, they were talking to consumers, and yet with this bill they seem to be talking to large corporations, or rather to be acting under their influence. This is apparent in the sections dealing with the passengers' bill of rights, among others.

In the 41st Parliament, the Liberals voted in favour of an NDP bill that would have created a real passengers' bill of rights. Now, Bill C-49 is taking us a step back by proposing guidelines for consultations that might eventually lead to regulations on the matter. That said, it is easier to amend regulations than legislation.

In conclusion, then, is Bill C-49 the government's way of saying that it gives the interests of large corporations precedence over those of consumers?

[English]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure the hon. member that we have found that balance. The committee worked hard to bring in witnesses to tell both sides of the story and make sure it could come up with something that would work for everyone.

We need our enterprises to thrive. We also need our passengers and Canadians to be well served. I think the bill has found that balance, and will work out for both equally well.

● (1105)

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Madam Speaker, some provisions of the bill attempt to respond to a specific situation. Sometimes, two airlines may be compelled to streamline their operations. For example, if there is a flight between Toronto and Atlanta, Delta Airlines and Air Canada could decide to merge their operations and offer a single route instead of two separate ones. That means that when a customer books a plane ticket, either Air Canada or Delta Airlines will get the contract.

When airlines merge their operations, even if it is just for one particular route, the competition commissioner must determine whether so doing will reduce the competition on the market and he must also ensure that this will not drive up prices for consumers.

Under this bill, the minister would have the final say as to whether this sort of action is in the public interest or not. I would therefore like to know how the Liberals define the notion of public interest when airlines want to merge routes.

[English]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, again, we see it in the same way, because we need both. We need competition, but we also need the Competition Bureau to be a part of the process. That is what this legislation does. It involves the Competition Bureau right from the very beginning.

In the current process, the Competition Bureau is not involved until near the end of the process. We said we wanted the Minister of Transport to work with the competition commissioner right from the very start, to come up with ways to ensure that whatever is being proposed would actually serve Canadians better. It is a change to how the process itself was designed, but getting the Competition Bureau involved earlier in the process would be a positive step.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-49 is about bringing transportation into 2030 and the future. The bill would be an expansion of economic opportunities for the airlines, our shippers, and our railways. Much of this focuses on the economic side.

Would the parliamentary secretary elaborate a bit more on the passenger bill of rights, which we all know is extremely important as we move forward with more transportation challenges? How would that better protect the interests of Canadians when they book flights with airlines?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, most of us have heard in the media about some unfortunate incidents in the recent past, some of them in Canada and some elsewhere around the world, when passengers did not receive the kind of treatment they deserved. When we have talked to people, we have heard that having a passenger bill of rights is very important to them. In the consultations, people said that when they made a contract with a transportation company, they wanted the company to fulfill the contract and treat them in the way they deserve to be treated.

By legislating this in the bill and then having the details in the following regulations, Canadians will have all the information they need and they will get the protections they deserve.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I carefully listened to the parliamentary secretary's speech. She presented the bill as a product of bipartisanship among all parties, but she must know that of all the proposed amendments, the vast majority of them were voted down by the Liberal members of the committee. The three amendments supported by the Conservatives dealt with date changes in the bill. Actually Liberal subamendments were delivered on those amendments.

Government Orders

This is not so much a question as it is a comment. The Liberals cannot present the bill as a product of co-operation between the two parties. The vast majority of ideas that opposition members heard from witnesses and then tried to implement through amendments were not taken at the later stages of the bill.

• (1110)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, it is true that we heard many different witnesses at committee and the witnesses did not always agree. They came to the committee, which is what we wanted. We wanted to ensure we heard both sides of the story. Having a complete witness list allowed us to have the kind of discussions we needed. We will always disagree on some amendments. We will not always see things the same, but there was a very collaborative, consultative kind of spirit through the committee's work.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I meet with my constituents from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, I tell them how honoured I am to rise in the House to vote on their behalf. The question that I would like to ask my colleague is this: how can I properly fulfill that role when I am being asked to vote on an omnibus bill like Bill C-49, which seeks to amend 13 pieces of legislation.

The bill may contain one or two worthwhile measures, but I cannot properly represent the people of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot by voting in favour of an omnibus bill that amends 13 pieces of legislation. How can my colleague justify asking members to vote on an omnibus bill that changes so many aspects of our society?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, the aim of the bill is to end up with a safer, more secure, and fully integrated long-term strategic plan Canadian transportation system that serves everybody. Ninety per cent of the bill would amend one act, the Canada Transportation Act. However, we all know that often there might be enabling or supporting elements located in other legislation, and that is the other 10%. Everything in the bill is aimed toward coming up with a better transportation system to serve Canadians.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join this debate at the last stage of the bill, affording my last opportunity to mention a few things.

I did not get a chance to stand once more to make another comment for the parliamentary secretary. She used the word "historic" in her speech. It would be incumbent upon me to point out that today is a historic day. It is 500 years since the great reformation when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses in the Wittenberg Cathedral. That is a true historic day.

The bill is interesting, and it is an omnibus bill. However, before I go into the nature of omnibus bills, I want to mention a unique part of my riding of Calgary Shepard, and I am very honoured to represent the residents there.

The community of Ogden is on the north side of my riding. It is where my constituency office is located. The head office of one of Canada's major railways is also located there. It is called the Ogden stockyards for a reason. CP moved its headquarters to Ogden, a

community that was historically set up and named after CP's vice president at the time, Mr. I.G. Ogden. There is a deep relationship between the railroad, Calgary Shepard, and the area in which the riding finds itself. It hosts a spectacular Legion Remembrance Day celebration, commemorating all those who were employees of the railroad and their family members who served in World War I and World War II. It serves a lunch to the community afterwards. It is a fantastic thing. It started after it moved to the area, with which it historically has a relationship. CP used to have its headquarters in downtown Calgary at the Gulf Towers, but moved it in 2012.

Another interesting part is that because CP cares so much about its history and has such a deep relationship with the community, early in June it moved the 91-tonne Locomotive 29 from downtown. If people have been to the Calgary Stampede, they would see this locomotive on TV, as the parade route passes by it. It is a 130-year-old locomotive, and was moved to commemorate CP's history.

The bill, because it deals with railroads, airlines, and transportation, is omnibus legislation. The minister said yesterday that 90% of the bill dealt with one facet. However, it would go on to amend so many other pieces of legislation, some of which really do not deal so much with safety as with competition and the relationship between a consumer and producer of a good or service provider. Therefore, when the minister says this, then it is an omnibus bill. It is kind of like introducing an infrastructure bank in a budget implementation bill. That makes the budget implementation bill an omnibus bill. Therefore, the Liberals cannot deny that this is another broken Liberal promise.

Yesterday I called it a trick or treat bill. It is offering something that supposedly will resolve an issue or problem in the marketplace, a user-experience problem, but it is not so much the treat but the trick. It would not resolve the issues the Liberals believe it would.

The general opinion I have heard on the bill, from editorialists and critics on passenger rights and the service provided by different railroads, is that the proposed legislation will not meet the goals set out by the government. It might be a step in the right direction sometimes, but it is one step forward and two steps back.

As I had mentioned in my commentary for the parliamentary secretary, all the reasonable amendments put forward by Conservative members were voted down. The three that were not were subamended by Liberal members. I had put forward very similar ideas. The Liberals had heard a very similar concept from witnesses. They are actually changing it from seven to two days and one year to 180 days. These are highly technical date and number amendments done at committee. It is not the type of work I have seen with other pieces of legislation, such as the Senate private member's bill that dealt with the Magnitsky Act. There was far more back and forth and substantive amendments were made.

Government Orders

I know many members expect this, so I have a Yiddish proverb. “To every answer you can find a new question.” I will lead off the rest of my intervention on this proverb.

The more I hear answers from the government and various members on all sides, the more questions I have about the goals of the bill and where it will go. With every answer, I have even more questions. Therefore, I have some rhetorical questions that I will share with the House.

● (1115)

I read a *May Globe and Mail* editorial called the bill “a strange beast”. Yesterday, I called it the “demogorgon” from *Stranger Things*, a show I highly recommend for all members of the House, although not for young children.

The bill works at cross-purposes. Editorialists mentioned that the costs might be reduced on one end but would go up on the other end. Hopefully, competition will increase, which is a goal of this legislation. I do not think it will achieve that. The government hopes more people will be enticed to use airline services and choose to fly instead of drive.

Security fees will go up, which is a disincentive for air passengers. However, cost is only one issue for passengers. There is also the user's experience and accessibility. Access, in general, is a point we should always remember.

The bill talks about a higher max amount for foreign ownership being changed for Canadian airlines. Although it is a step in the right direction, it is only one step.

Higher equity stakes by themselves do not lead to more competition, and that is important to remember. Allowing international investors to own a bigger portion of current companies will not lead necessarily to more competition. It is a goal. What we need is a level playing field to allow an opportunity for new airlines and joint ventures.

I have much more to say about joint ventures because the bill gets that balance wrong. It puts the onus on the wrong person. More government involvement in the private sector in business is not the correct way to structure the economy in general.

As well, new entrants will look at taxation and a solid, stable business environment. That is something the fall economic statement does not envision for the future of Canada. GDP is going down every year. There is a gap between the first budget the Liberals tabled in the House and the following budgets, such that GDP growth goes up one year and the next year it goes down drastically. Today is Halloween, so I find these GDP growth numbers spooky.

A few provisions in the bill directly affect how joint ventures will be agreed to. It gives the minister of transport a role in approving applications for airline joint ventures, where two independent companies arrive at a negotiated agreement to provide a service to customers in Canada. Injecting the Minister of Transport into such a process is the wrong way to go. We already have the Competition Bureau to ensure there will be an increase in competition. We should not be involving more ministers of the crown in business decisions. There should be less government involvement in the business sector and the private economy.

The Government of Canada's answer has been that this will be good for business. This brings back the Yiddish proverb that it begs more questions. If the solution is that more government involvement will create more competition and thus be good for customers, then why politicize the process by putting a minister of the crown in the position where he or she has to decide whether a joint venture goes forward? Why inject the minister into a business decision?

The exact reverse is being done in the energy infrastructure approval process where everything is being delegated down to the National Energy Board. We can see the results of this. There is a complete paralysis in companies going ahead with the approval and construction of new projects. A lot of companies are concerned about going forward with new projects being considered in their shops and offices. They have not yet gone to the regulator to propose them. They are concerned that they will be unable to meet the new rules the NEB keeps creating, or that the costs of meeting them will be high.

This does not improve the business environment. Rather, it is worsen it. It would be much better to level the field, reduce political involvement, and ensure business certainty is provided. I do not think injecting the minister into joint venture provisions and allowing him or her to have a say over whether a joint venture can go ahead is the right way.

● (1120)

Most of the amendments were put forward after the committee had heard from witnesses, but I really want to dispel the notion that this bill, as it stands, is a product of bipartisanship or collaboration between the parties. Although I am sure there is collaboration at committee in terms of the discussions back and forth and that everything is cordial and collegial, there still have to be substantive differences between the opposition and the government, and there were on this issue. The opposition parties provided substantive amendments that could have been considered more seriously by the government caucus members for approval. Then we could say the bill was truly due to a collegial bipartisan effort and that the product is good.

What do passengers care about? That is the goal of the bill. Members were asking themselves what passengers and producers care about when dealing with railroads, but especially asked this question with respect to air passengers, because more and more Canadians are travelling by air. Cost, access, and user experience I think are the three most important things. Cost comes down to the dollar amount. There is opportunity to shop on different websites and I think everyone considers how many points they will get. We know that Canadians love their points, whether from Mastercard, Visa, Aeroplan, or Air Miles. Whatever they are, people in this country like to collect points, and it goes into the total cost.

Government Orders

Access comprises the ease of the travel, the convenience, and the airport services. Who can travel and how are other considerations. I choose an airline based on my ability to sit with my kids. I have three young kids and I want to make sure that I do not have to rush to the airport early to get them assigned seats. I want to make sure that they will all be sitting with me, so other passengers and I have an easier time travelling. I actually pick an airline based on the one that will give me the easiest time dealing with my three kids to make sure they can get through their experience.

As for the total user experience, Bill C-49 focuses only on user experience. This is not just my point. Massimo Bergamini, president of the National Airlines Council of Canada, says that the bill focuses too much on air carriers and fails to recognize that the air traveller experience, as I mentioned, does not just start at the check-in phase and then end at baggage pickup. It is the total experience one has. That is far more difficult to get right in one piece of legislation and the bill before the House does not quite achieve that point, because it does not consider the end costs or the access component of it.

We should not sacrifice customer expectations. That point was raised by others, and I agree with it. We are always purchasing difference services and products, and critics of the bill have said that the passenger bill of rights is a band-aid solution. To the point of the Yiddish proverb, the government caucus says this will resolve customer expectation and service-delivery issues, but it begs the question of why we are doing this if critics are saying this is only a band-aid solution. What then is the best remedy? The best remedy is always more competition in the free market, which leads to more consumer choice. The solution is not more government, yet this bill would create more government. By setting out expectations, the government would be able to deliver on more fairness and would be able to police the airlines more effectively. On the railway side, the government would also be more involved in setting prices and telling the railroads how to deal with their customers.

The passenger bill of rights has a section called “Ministerial Directions”, and says, “The Minister may issue directions to the Agency to make a regulation under paragraph (1)(g) respecting any of the carrier’s other obligations towards passengers.” This is after listing a whole series of obligations. In the bill, “obligations” is a very general term. It says, “The Agency shall comply with these directions.” If, in the future, the minister decides that airlines have a new obligation they need to meet, whatever it could be, whether providing a certain type of meal, a certain type of seat, or a certain type of service beyond those enumerated, then the minister can give that direction.

Again, in a free market, we can shop around. That would be the best way to go forward. We have already seen this in the tech sector. There are apps on our iPads and phones and when an app does not deliver what we expect, we delete it. We get rid of it and move on. Whatever costs we have sunk into it, we ignore them. Hopefully, it was free, though it is not always free, and then we move on.

• (1125)

The same thing applies to smart phones. There is broad competition phones between all of the different smart phone providers and software types offered. People pick and choose which

ones they want based on the services offered, the functionality, cost, and ease of use of the phones, and sometimes the ease of transferring to another device when it comes time for an upgrade.

The same concept should apply to airlines and the services they provide, particularly if people are not satisfied with them. It is not necessarily just a matter of choosing between airlines, but also about choosing other modes of transportation. Depending which part of the country someone lives in, people will have different modes of transportation to choose from. If someone lives in the Windsor, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa corridor, they will have more choices. I have taken advantage of that and taken Via Rail in the past. As a westerner, it is quite an experience because we do not have those types of service levels. The distances are far greater. I could have flown but chose not to. I wanted to experience Canada, as well as the travel time it would take using passenger rail.

I have travelled throughout Europe using passenger rail as well. It is very convenient. Again, their governments are sometimes involved in setting prices, but mostly in dealing with disputes. There is far more competition in Europe. Encouraging competition and new entrants is more than just about the equity stakes allowed. It is a matter of the regulatory environment, fees, and taxes that new entrants will face. At the end of the day, it is about the ease of doing business.

I remember my time working at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, where people would not come to us complaining about taxes or to verify a specific regulation, although that would happen, but more about the total package. For example, there was the issue of how complicated it was for them as business owners to comply with regulations. That applies to the owners of small-, medium-, and large-sized businesses. If the large businesses are publicly traded companies, the owners will be looking at the quarterly bottom line, and their executive team will be looking at how easy it is to comply with different rules and whether they have the people to do it. Can they meet the expectations of both their customers and the government, and can they deal with their competitors?

I know that the equity stake issue has been used. Vancouver’s Jetlines have said they want a higher equity amount in their specific case to capitalize their company. This is because airlines face cash flow crunches and need large volumes of passengers to make ends meet, and profitable routes are quite limited. To have a new entrant come in, companies need to be well capitalized to be able to compete. Therefore, in their particular case, it would be beneficial to them.

Government Orders

As I mentioned before, I think about this Yiddish proverb, and every answer we hear from the government caucus and members leads to more questions. More generally, why do we continue to worry about foreign ownership in airlines? I want to draw a parallel. We are not as worried about the devices we use that are not manufactured in Canada, with operating systems not made in Canada, or that sometimes have data that is not even stored in Canada. I do not hear vast amounts of complaining about that, because people generally like the services they receive from their smart phone providers and the different software they use on the phones, whether it be operating or business software, or other recreational features they use. We are not as concerned about where those components come from, where they are ultimately made, but at the end of the day we care about the user experience and the cost. Foreign ownership in that respect is not as important.

However, with airlines, we could achieve far more if we provided much looser foreign ownership rules. In the legislation itself, the government goes into a lot of detail trying to change it. It has been said that airlines are not at the commanding heights of the economy. I know the government changed some of the definitions of what being Canadian means.

I have been signalled to wrap it up, so I have one last point. The problem thus far is that the answers I get from government caucus members lead me to have more and more questions. The bill is incomplete. Its goals for air passengers will not be met. Amendments offered by my colleagues at committee would have vastly improved this proposed piece of legislation.

I will continue to oppose this bill. I hope that every answer I give during questions and comments leads to even more questions, just as I used the Yiddish proverb to illustrate.

● (1130)

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, questions are absolutely beautiful things. They are fantastic. We love asking questions because when we ask questions, we get answers. Doing so is an exploratory thing. As a philosophy graduate, I think questions are absolutely positive. With this bill in particular, there has been excessive consultation. We have consulted, asked tons of questions and received great answers, which is where this bill is coming from.

I would like to focus on one part of the bill that the member talked about, passenger rights. For us, passenger rights are very important. We want to ensure that passengers are comfortable. We have all heard horror stories with respect to passenger rights.

Does the hon. member agree that passenger rights are important, and does he have a problem with enhancing and protecting those rights? That is exactly what this bill would do.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite, who spent quite a bit of time on the procedure and House affairs committee during late night debates, as I did too.

Of course, we support the concept of passenger rights, just as we support taxpayer rights, but we have a taxpayer bill of rights that is not enforceable. We have risen in the House before to propose a motion, which I co-seconded, that would give it teeth.

That is one of the problems with the bill. It enumerates passenger rights, but does not really provide a mechanism for true enforcement. Critics have called this a band-aid solution. At the end of the day, with more competition we would have more choice, and that is how passenger rights are secured. Consumer rights are secured through choice and competition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know that the Minister of Transport does not like it when we refer to Bill C-49 as an omnibus bill, but I think the fact that I have questions for my colleague on a number of different subjects when we are talking about just one bill further illustrates the omnibus nature of it. Since I have to pick and choose, I will refer to a part of his speech that dealt with these joint ventures in Bill C-49 and in which the competition commissioner's authority has been diminished. As we saw in the way the Minister of Heritage handled the Netflix file, lobbies have a considerable influence on this government. My question is quite simple: can my colleague tell me whether the competition commissioner can be lobbied as easily as a minister?

● (1135)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Trois-Rivières for his question. Of course I agree that this is an omnibus bill and that one could easily ask questions on a number of topics. As in the proverb I shared earlier, to every answer one can find new questions about the point of this bill. As far as joint ventures and how the competition commissioner does his job are concerned, of course it is much more difficult to lobby the commissioner than it is to lobby the minister, since the commissioner is responsible for something very specific. First, it is hard to get a meeting with the commissioner and, second, as a public servant the commissioner does not have the authority to amend legislation in someone's favour as the Minister of Transport would. Indeed, I think the hon. member has a very good question to ask the government.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, listening yesterday and today, it is clear that the Conservatives are lining themselves up in opposition to the legislation. That is obvious. The other obvious thing is that they seem to disagree on what degree of co-operation there was at the standing committee.

I applaud all of the standing committee members for the fine work they did. Not all the amendments brought forward by opposition members were accepted, but it is noteworthy that at least six were, which is six more than during the last four years of the Harper government on any piece of legislation. I believe there is a sense of greater co-operation on the standing committees.

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Would the member not agree that Canadians want to see something related to air passenger rights, and whether we agree or disagree on the details of the legislation, would the member not at least concur that this legislation would enable something that Canadians want to see, which is air passenger rights?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his intervention, because I enjoy sparring with him in the chamber, because one of the purposes of Parliament is exactly to disagree, and sometimes profoundly.

I would not construe co-operation as agreement at the committee stage. Collegiality is a factor in committee deliberations, but we should not confuse that with agreement on the contents of a proposed piece of legislation returning to the House.

To his greater point of what Canadians want to see on passenger rights, more generally, Canadians want to see good legislation that is complete and that would actually meet the goals set out by the government in fulfilling its promises instead of ragging the puck endlessly in achieving those goals. Legislation should achieve a specific goal and be written in such a way as to allow its enforceability. That is what Canadians want to see.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague on the excellent speech he gave, in which he very ably summed up what happens when we discuss a bill in committee and when we return it to the House afterwards.

Naturally, we try to work with the government in a different, more collegial atmosphere when we are in committee, to try to get amendments passed. Unfortunately, in the case of Bill C-49, many of the amendments proposed by the opposition parties were voted down by the government.

I will remind members that our committee convened a week before Parliament resumed, to allow for intensive study of Bill C-49. We had to absorb a lot of information in a very short time, because the government wanted to rush this bill through. This unseemly haste was vividly illustrated by yesterday's time allocation motion, which was introduced to prevent members who had something to say about Bill C-49 from speaking.

Would my colleague agree that Bill C-49 amends so many acts and will have so great an impact on various sectors that we should have taken as much time as we needed to study it and that each member should have had a chance to speak on every option and part of this omnibus bill?

In fact, given what the Liberals promised on the campaign trail, this government should not be tabling any more omnibus bills.

• (1140)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

In fact, yesterday the government moved a time allocation motion with respect to this omnibus bill. My colleague is right in saying that we could continue to talk about several aspects of this bill. As I stated earlier, I could spend several minutes of my speech talking

about the ministerial directions that the minister could issue to create new carrier obligations towards passengers.

This legislative measure lists all the obligations of air carriers towards passengers, and then states that the minister can create new obligations without providing any guidance as to the kinds of obligations. In addition, the agency is then required to abide by these directives. Not only can new directives be issued, but the airlines can be forced to comply, without there even being an opportunity for members to study them or to debate whether they should be an obligation or not.

As I stated, we could continue to debate every clause of this bill on specific obligations to ensure that they are what Canadians want. Ultimately, the bill gives the minister the full authority to make decisions about future obligations without coming back to the House and confirming that that is indeed the direction we want to take.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would really like to say that I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-49, but that is not the case. In fact, I rise because I have an interest in this bill and because it is my privilege to do so. As my party's transport critic, I have the privilege of rising first today, which will not be the case for my colleagues who are directly affected by this bill but who will not have the chance to rise in the House because the bill is under time allocation. This is the first serious mistake.

The Minister of Transport told us that this is not an omnibus bill since it only affects transport legislation. However, we could be talking about an omnibus, mammoth, or even a Trojan horse bill, since it contains a number of intentional gaps.

For young people who do not yet have the right to vote, a good metaphor would be a chocolate Easter bunny. Everyone remembers biting into their first Easter bunny only to find it hollow, sadly. What a disappointment. Bill C-49 is kind of like that, especially when it comes to the passengers' bill of rights, which I will come back to.

In speeches from the government side, we hear a lot about Bill C-49 striking a balance, but nothing could be further from the truth. Hearing everybody's point of view is a good thing, but it does not mean that the middle ground the Liberals are proposing strikes that balance. I would suggest it is just the opposite.

It is no secret that I am fond of my fellow Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, but we rarely see eye to eye. It would be a shock if one of my Conservative colleagues were to run as a New Democrat in the next election or vice versa. Having heard the same witnesses and the same evidence, they and I have managed to get ourselves on the same page with respect to quite a few amendments. If the right and the left have found a way to agree, how is it that the Liberals, who have positioned themselves as the extreme centre, are not listening to reason? We have to ask ourselves some serious questions about why that might be.

Government Orders

The chair of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities was particularly skilled at getting us to work together in a spirit of co-operation. However, unfortunately, the end results do that reflect that. I cannot believe that none of the amendments proposed by the opposition parties were good enough. Obviously, instructions came down from on high that the bill should remain as is, with no changes. That is not what the witnesses we heard from wanted, but that is what the ministers wanted, for their own reasons, which coincidentally are not consistent with the agenda they announced during the election campaign.

To give just one example, during the election campaign, the Liberals promised not to amend the Coasting Trade Act. However, Bill C-49 makes three major amendments to coastal trade. As far as I know, Canadian shippers did not storm the transport minister's office to tell him that he absolutely had to make changes to the Coasting Trade Act because it makes no sense.

The government is therefore responding to other lobby groups. We are seeing that more and more often. I have mentioned it in some of the questions I have had the opportunity to ask since debate began this morning. Lobby groups are having a growing influence on this government, and the outcome always seems to be the same: big business profits at the expense of consumers.

• (1145)

This debate is taking place under time allocation, and yet debate in the House is the only means we have left to try to shed some light on a given situation and change it, if possible.

There are probably dozens or even 100 or so members who wanted to speak in this debate but could not, and yet in a few hours, all 338 members will be voting either yes or no to express their support for or opposition to Bill C-49 as a whole, which is all over the map. This does not say much about our democratic process.

Furthermore, if we look at the Minister of Transport's legislative record, I have to say that after two years, I am not very impressed. There has been talk of a high-frequency train for decades, but nothing is happening on that file. On top of that, during the campaign, the Liberals promised to reverse the terrible amendments the previous government made to the Navigation Protection Act. Instead, we are heading in exactly the same direction as before, and the list of protected waterways in Canada is going to stay exactly as it appears in the schedule of the act, even though many witnesses, if not the majority, wanted the government to abolish that schedule altogether.

However, we are not there yet when it comes to protecting navigation, when it comes to developing rail transportation, or with respect to Bill C-49.

I want to talk about what is not in Bill C-49. After all, it is an omnibus bill that is supposed to cover just about everything that has to do with transportation.

At the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, we had the chance to conduct a study on aviation safety and we had a significant number of studies on rail transportation. One thing that kept coming up in both files was fatigue among both pilots and train conductors. Fatigue is the cause

of most accidents or incidents. We never want accidents to happen, or at least we hope to keep them to a minimum.

What does Bill C-49 propose to combat fatigue or to take a new approach to air or rail transportation? It seems to me that this also falls under transportation. Guess what? There is not a word. There is nothing in Bill C-49 to address this major issue.

Let us now talk about some of the dubious aspects of this bill. The first one that I want to address has to do with airport safety, especially as it relates to the potential development of regional airports.

Security measures at Canada's major international borders are working well, although there are still questions, mainly about direct costs charged to passengers. Under the former government, a lot of money was charged for security. It is clear that there has been no improvement in this practice under the Liberals, because even more money is being charged for security. According to the most recent data from Statistics Canada, \$636 million was collected from passengers and \$550 million was actually spent on security measures. That is a difference of \$100 million. Where is that money going? It goes into the consolidated revenue fund and apparently is used for other measures. Once again, just like employees' employment insurance contributions that were used for other purposes, passengers are being charged more money for air security than is being invested into the security network.

Furthermore, while millions of dollars are being raked in, regional airports are told that they can certainly expand, but they will have to do so on a cost recovery basis.

• (1150)

What that means, for example for a regional airport such as the Trois-Rivières airport, is that it can obtain CATSA services, but it will have to foot the bill. Oddly enough, Bill C-49 makes no mention of a great report that I have here called "Expanding Passengers Security Screenings at Regional Airports". This report is signed by no less than nine of the largest airport authorities in three Canadian provinces, namely Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta. The report proposes measures other than cost recovery. Even after the document and research findings were presented in June 2016, which is not that long ago, we have heard nothing from Transport Canada. It is still going with a cost recovery model.

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I will give an example of what this can mean for an airport like the one in Trois-Rivières. The Trois-Rivières airport was originally a very small airport, mainly intended for what I would call recreational flying. It offered flying lessons and skydiving, but it was really tiny. Then the city of Trois-Rivières decided to massively expand its airport facilities to turn them into a major economic driver. This involved making numerous investments, such as extending the runway so any jumbo jet could land there. The airport also invested in high-intensity approach lighting so planes could land at any time, day or night. The area's economic activity was diversified, creating a major aerospace cluster in Trois-Rivières. The city has welcomed several aerospace companies, such as Premier Aviation, which is now contracted to maintain much of Air Canada's fleet at its facility in Trois-Rivières. As a recent \$500-million investment shows, this company is thriving. Trois-Rivières' aerospace market, specifically its airport, has come a long way from its original recreational niche. It is now a centre for economic development and a major regional hub for business people flying to other destinations in Canada or internationally.

Over the last few years, partnerships have also been developed with aviation companies that offer charter flights to southern destinations. Market studies have been done and Trois-Rivières is clearly the heart of Quebec for a reason. We are the metaphorical heart but also the geographic heart of Quebec. If someone wanted to take a charter flight for a trip down south and had the choice between going to Trois-Rivières with traffic jams that easily last five to six minutes, or to the airport in Montréal, the choice would be quite easy. However, that whole study, that whole potential and all of those agreements already negotiated with carriers have fallen through because CATSA security measures are only available for regional airports through cost recovery. That is totally ridiculous. If an airport like Trois-Rivières, Sherbrooke or any other regional airport has to cover the cost of security measures alone, that drives up air ticket prices considerably. That means that the company is no longer able to compete on the market and the agreement collapses.

However, other options are considered in the report I referred to earlier. In particular, there is the possibility of all amounts collected for security being allocated to security expenses and not returning to the government's consolidated coffers. We could also consider the possibility of all transportation costs being distributed among all passengers on the flight.

• (1155)

Flying south, whether from Trois-Rivières, Québec City or Montreal, involves the same business and the same security services. The cost could therefore be divided between all travellers annually, instead of the number of passengers related strictly to one airport or another.

There are many possible solutions that should have been heard, discussed, and questioned, but Bill C-49 sweeps all that under the rug, a fitting image today for Halloween.

I just want to say a word about cabotage. I would remind members that the Liberal government committed during the election campaign to not touch the Coasting Trade Act. However, there are three amendments in that regard. There are not one, not two, but

three major amendments regarding coasting trade that directly affect the Canadian marine industry.

What are those three amendments in a few words? There is the repositioning of empty containers, dredging activities, and the transportation of bulk products between Montreal and Halifax.

Those are three important areas of economic activity that systematically fell to Canadian shipowners and that could now be offered to foreign shipowners. Because of the market opening under the terms of the economic agreement that we signed with Europe, they are saying that European companies cannot be prevented from conducting dredging in the waters of the St. Lawrence River. Oddly, however, no one can confirm that the opposite is true and that Canadian shipowners would be able to bid on dredging contracts in Europe.

Beyond what might be seen as relatively unfair competition, it is important to realize that European dredging companies, for example, that operate all year long and are much larger, may be better able to consider crossing the Atlantic and remaining in our waters, where they can be competitive, while the opposite is quite hard to imagine.

Trois-Rivières is also a port city. It is impossible to understand this without having visited an organization like the Foyer des marins in Trois-Rivières, where shipowners come from all around the world, but it only takes a few exchanges, sometimes with the help of hand gestures because my knowledge of foreign languages is limited, to realize that there are fundamental differences between foreign-flagged vessels and their crews and Canadian-flagged vessels and their crews. I mention no country in particular as to not single anyone out, but first, we are talking about very different salaries, working conditions and expenses. These amendments to the Coasting Trade Act will therefore create unfair competition that no one ever asked for, certainly not in Canada.

I would like to read one or two quotes. St. Lawrence Shipoperators said, "The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement entered into with the European Union opened an unprecedented breach in the Coasting Trade Act by giving ships of all flags access to certain parts of the Canadian market. Bill C-49 widens that breach. We are witnessing the erosion of the Coasting Trade Act."

Maritime Magazine said, "After years of underfunding of port infrastructure, disengagement from dredging, and inaction on renewing the fleet of icebreakers, it is now coasting trade that is being sorely tested. It is important for decision-makers to understand the scope of the economic, social and environmental role of maritime transportation and the importance for the country of having a strong and health maritime industry and domestic fleet."

Those are just two examples about coasting trade. I could also have talked about the Infrastructure Bank that is once again being quietly included in Bill C-49. I could have talked about the passengers' bill of rights. I could have talked about joint ventures.

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•(1200)

I could have talked about so many subjects that it shows once again that we are dealing with an omnibus bill and that it is a total disgrace to ask all parliamentarians to vote yes or no on an omnibus bill. It is one more thing that the Liberals committed to stop doing during the election campaign. They seem to have a short memory.

[*English*]

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the member started by talking about concerns of time allocation used on this particular bill. If the member is concerned that not everybody had the time to speak, why did his party, the NDP, give up spots yesterday in terms of speaking to this bill?

Second, the statement was that the member is concerned about lobbying in favour of big business at the cost of consumers. I am quite curious about that because Bill C-49 is about consumers. It is about establishing rights so that travellers can be assured safe and comfortable travel. Would the member not agree that Bill C-49 is an effort, and a very good one, to ensure that travellers are protected and made comfortable in their travel?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her questions. I will try to answer both.

First, the passenger rights issue perfectly illustrates just how empty Bill C-49 really is. It does not propose a passengers' bill of rights. To be clear, it only proposes guidelines that may lead to potential consultations by Transport Canada, who will then invite the minister to accept or not accept the recommendations made by Transport Canada. Moreover, if that ever actually happens and recommendations are made, they will only be applied through regulation. Once again, that is much easier for a minister to undo than legislation, which can only be amended by Parliament.

On the issue of protected rights, we are miles from what was needed. Though the member may not have been with us in the previous Parliament, I remind her that the Liberals voted in favour of a passengers' bill of rights proposed by the New Democrats, and yet, we were never shown what was now wrong with that bill before throwing out the baby with the bathwater and embarking on consultations.

As for my colleagues, if I can so easily answer questions about Bill C-49, it is only because I have been working on it for months, so I can understand if some of my colleagues need a little more time to prepare than they are given under a time allocation motion.

•(1205)

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly have appreciated working with my hon. colleague on committee. Later last week, in my remarks during report stage of the bill, I addressed an amendment, supported by both the Conservative caucus members and the NDP members of the committee, that would allow the first interchange point, which the shipper would be required to use in order to access LHI, to be in the reasonable direction of the shipper's destination. This was an amendment that was recommended by numerous shippers when they

provided testimony to the committee. I wonder if my hon. colleague would like to comment on that amendment and why the members across the way did not support it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I remember her speech last week very well, and I share the same pleasure in working with her on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

I will now give her the same answer she gave me last week, that it is very hard to get into a Liberal member's mind to understand why the Liberals have not seen the light. While the Conservative and New Democrat members who are seen as polar opposites on the spectrum, agree on the merits of a measure like the one my colleague mentioned regarding interswitching, I struggle to understand why those members who say they are firmly in the centre cannot see the merits of such an amendment.

This all shows beyond a doubt that we are dealing with an eminently partisan bill that serves the interests of the lobbies with whom the Liberals are looking to curry favour. That is probably the best way to say it.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my first time to rise at this stage of Bill C-49, and due to the time allocations applied, I was not able to have a chance to speak to the bill at all.

I do want to say that I am disappointed that so much has been lost in what is the potential for a transportation act. To give an overarching statement before I go to my quick question to the member, it is as though the Government of Canada decided, for efficient transportation on our highways, we should figure out ways to attract capital investment to privatize sections of road, and hope that people from other countries want to invest. To paraphrase, this is no way to run a railroad.

[*Translation*]

I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières very much for his efforts to highlight the importance of fatigue. I would like to ask him if he wants to add a few elements, because it really is a priority issue for the safety of our transport system.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments.

We may have wanted Bill C-49 to do more, although I am not sure, as we are already dealing with an omnibus bill. Quite certainly, Bill C-49 could have done better, particularly on the issue of fatigue. Most witnesses were independent. No one would be surprised to learn that the union representatives who came to speak about employee fatigue among their members probably leaned a certain way. Similarly, no one would be surprised to learn that the employers claimed the issue was not really a priority and that it is already being addressed by an all-party committee.

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However, neutral witnesses, such as the Transportation Safety Board, came to say that there was a problem with pilot fatigue and that it needed to be addressed. That was not done. Bill C-49 completely misses the mark on the issue of fatigue, even though many joint committees are already working to find solutions.

How can the Minister of Transport not be sensitive to this issue? Unfortunately, I still have no answer.

• (1210)

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for having explained so clearly the main problems with a bill that, as he said, is a mammoth omnibus bill, a Trojan horse. This bill amends 13 pieces of legislation and we are also under time allocation.

I will not even have the time to speak about this bill that will affect my riding. There is a port in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. The Liberals claim to stand up for Canadian jobs. The part on coasting trade does not even favour our maritime industries for the transportation of bulk products, for example, or goods that go through Salaberry-de-Valleyfield.

What also worries me is everything related to passenger rights. We have seen very alarming videos lately of passengers being dragged from their seats because the companies overbooked. That is still happening and could continue to happen.

What does my colleague think about that? Could he discuss the NDP's amendments that were defeated and that should have been accepted by the Liberals?

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît for asking this truly broad question.

Indeed, in this magnificent maritime corridor that is the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, all members affected will not have the opportunity to speak. Spokespersons are sent to Ottawa to defend their part of the country, and they are not given the opportunity to speak on bills that affect them directly. That is ridiculous.

As for the passenger bill of rights, the main amendment by the NDP was very simple. It sought to include in Bill C-49 the passengers' bill of rights that was tabled by the NDP in the previous Parliament, and to have us vote on a true passengers' bill of charter, not guidelines for consultation.

[*English*]

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure working with my colleague on the transportation committee.

In 2002, the United States had a form of a passenger bill of rights, and in 2005, Europe did. We are actually playing 15 years of catch-up to our counterparts. I was wondering if my colleague could comment on the fact that, in Canada, we are actually playing catch-up to our counterparts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and I would like him to know that I also enjoy working with him in committee.

He raised some essential points. When it comes to a passengers' bill of rights, we do not have to reinvent the wheel here in Canada because good models already exist, including the European Union's bill of rights, which many witnesses mentioned in committee. They said that Europe's bill of rights was good, that it worked, and that we should use it as a model.

[*English*]

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year the Minister of Transport presented his vision for the future of transportation in Canada, also referred to as transportation 2030. This vision reflects thorough consultation with Canadians, stakeholders, provinces and territories, indigenous groups, and academics, following the release of the final report on the Canada Transportation Act review, also known as the Emerson report.

Transportation 2030 is made up of a series of initiatives under five themes: the traveller; safe transportation; green and innovative transportation; waterways, coasts, and the north; and trade corridors to global markets. These themes encompass various modes of transport and allow the government to take a holistic approach in ensuring the transportation system is equipped to support our broader priorities.

Canadian travellers and their experiences are top of mind for our government. During consultations conducted by the Minister of Transport, we asked Canadian travellers for their feedback, and they were clear. They want lower-cost air travel, more opportunities for leisure and business travel, and they want to see Canada become a more attractive travel destination for visitors. Canadians told us that they want long-term sustainable competition, which will allow for the introduction of additional air services, improved air connectivity, and more choice.

The government has listened, and it is committed to achieving tangible improvements to the traveller experience. As a result of the feedback we received, a number of proposals have been introduced in Bill C-49 to help improve the traveller experience. For example, the government intends to liberalize international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers. What does this mean for Canadian travellers? Allow me to briefly describe this initiative.

The legislation proposes to liberalize international ownership restrictions from 25% to 49% for Canadian air carriers, with associated safeguards. For example, a single international investor would not be able to hold more than 25% of the voting interests of a Canadian air carrier, and no combination of international air carriers could own more than 25% of a Canadian carrier. The policy change would not apply to Canadian specialty air services, such as aerial photography or firefighting, which would retain international ownership levels at 25%. Liberalizing international ownership restrictions means Canadian air carriers—and this includes all passenger and cargo providers—would have access to more investment capital that they can use for innovation. This would bring more competition into the Canadian air sector, providing more choice for Canadians, and generating benefits for airports and suppliers, including—

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•(1215)

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think, if you check, you will find we have lost quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for bringing this to my attention. I will begin to count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: Indeed, we do not have quorum. I will ask that the bells be rung.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: Quorum has been reconstituted, and we will carry on with the debate.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 2016, the Minister of Transport exempted from the 25% ownership restrictions two companies that wanted to enter the Canadian market supported by increased foreign investment. This decision is now permitting Enerjet and Jetlines to pursue their intention to create low-cost carrier service to Canadians. With liberalized foreign investment provisions, Canadians would have more frequent access to air travel within and from Canada to transborder and international locations.

Like most countries, Canada limits international ownership and control of domestic air carriers. As I mentioned, under the Canada Transportation Act, non-Canadians currently cannot possess more than 25% of the voting shares of a Canadian carrier. Additionally, Canadian air carriers must also be controlled by Canadians, which means they may not be subject to controlling influence by international investors.

Limits on foreign ownership and control of air carriers are the norm around the world. For example, in the United States, the limit is 25%, while the European Union, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand allow up to 49%, and Japan allows 33.3%. Limits vary depending on the circumstance of each region. However, Canada's current ownership limits may be acting as a barrier to new services and enhanced competition.

Earlier I mentioned that the two prospective ultra-low-cost carriers, Canada Jetlines and Enerjet, have already applied for and received exemptions to the current limits on international ownership from the Minister of Transport. This was granted because both companies successfully argued that, under the current 25% limit, there is insufficient risk capital in the Canadian market to support the launch of new services.

Reflecting on this reality and the Canada Transportation Act review recommendations, the government is proposing changes that would allow international investors to own up to 49% of the voting shares of Canadian air carriers, by introducing legislation that would amend the act and other relevant acts. As I mentioned earlier, countries have different approaches to international ownership of air carriers, and our government wants to make sure that Canadian air carriers compete on a level playing field.

To protect the competitiveness of our air sector and support connectivity, no single international investor or any combination of international air carriers would be allowed to own more than 25%,

but how would this benefit Canadian travellers? The direct impact of higher levels of international investment is that Canadian air carriers would have access to a wider pool of risk capital. This would allow air carriers to be better funded and could allow new carriers, which are otherwise not able to find sufficient risk capital, to enter the Canadian market.

New carriers, including ultra-low-cost carriers offering extremely competitive prices, are expected to bring more competition into the entire Canadian air travel sector. This could, in turn, reduce the cost of air transportation and open new markets to Canadian consumers and shippers. Small markets currently underserved by existing carriers could also benefit from services by new carriers. For example, airports in smaller cities that currently offer services to a very limited number of destinations could benefit from the addition of new services since we know that ultra-low-cost carriers use these smaller airports as their hubs. All of this could lead to more choice when purchasing airline tickets, more travel destinations for all travellers, including those from smaller cities, and lower prices for Canadian travellers. Additionally, there could also be benefits for airports and suppliers and the entire country, as more jobs are added to the Canadian economy.

Another improvement to the air travel sector in this bill is that it proposes a new transparent and predictable process for the authorization of joint ventures between air carriers, taking into account competition and wider public interest considerations. Joint ventures are a common practice in the global air transport sector. They enable two or more air carriers to coordinate functions on specific routes, including scheduling, pricing, revenue management, and marketing and sales. In Canada, air carrier joint ventures are currently examined from the perspective of possible harm to competition by the Competition Bureau under the Competition Act.

•(1220)

Unlike many other countries, notably the United States, Canada's current approach does not allow for the consideration of the wider public interest benefits other than competition and economic impacts. Furthermore, the bureau's review is not subject to specific timelines. This raises concerns that the current approach to assessing joint ventures may make Canadian carriers less attractive to global counterparts as joint venture partners and may limit the ability of Canadian carriers to engage in this industry trend.

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The bill before us in the House proposes amendments that would allow the minister to consider and approve air carrier joint ventures, taking into account competition considerations. On this latter concern, the current transport minister would work in close consultation with the commissioner of competition to ensure that he or she was properly informed regarding any concerns he or she may have with regard to competition. Air carriers that chose to have their proposed joint ventures assessed through the new process would be given clear timelines for an expected decision.

Providing Canada's air carriers with such a tool would also benefit the air traveller. By joining up networks, air carriers could allow seamless travel to a wide range of destinations and could reduce the duplication of functions. For Canadians, this could mean more seamless access to key global markets, easier inbound travel in support of tourism and business, and increased transiting traffic through our airports, thus increasing flight options.

Globally, airports are making unprecedented investments in passenger screening to facilitate passenger travel and to gain global economic advantages. Canada's largest airports have expressed interest in making significant investments in passenger screening, either through an additional workforce or technology innovation. Smaller airports have also shown interest in obtaining access to screening services to promote local economic development. In the last two years alone, 10 small airports across Canada have requested screening services.

The proposed amendments to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act are important, as they would create a more flexible framework to allow CATSA to provide these services on a cost-recovery basis, which would in turn allow Canada to maintain an aviation system that is both secure and cost-effective. It would also strengthen Canadian communities' competitiveness as they attracted new commercial routes.

That is not all the transportation modernization act would do. Bill C-49 proposes to mandate the Canadian Transportation Agency to develop, in partnership with Transport Canada, new regulations to enhance Canada's air passenger rights. These new rules would ensure that air passenger rights were clear, consistent, and fair for both travellers and air carriers. When passengers purchase an airline ticket they expect and deserve that the airline will fulfill its part of the transaction. When that agreement is not fulfilled, passengers deserve clear, transparent, and enforceable standards of treatment and compensation for such situations.

Under the proposed legislation, Canadians would benefit from a uniform, predictable, and reasonable approach. The details of the new approach would be elaborated through the regulatory process, which would include consultations with Canadians and the air stakeholders. My objective is to ensure that Canadians have a clear understanding of their rights as air travellers without negatively impacting access to air services and the cost of air travel for Canadians.

Bill C-49 specifies that the regulations would include provisions regarding the following most frequently experienced irritants: providing passengers with plain language information about carriers' obligations and how to seek compensation or file complaints; setting standards for the treatment of passengers in the case of overbooking,

delays, and cancellations, including compensation; standardizing compensation levels for lost or damaged baggage; establishing standards for the treatment of passengers in the case of tarmac delays over a certain period of time; seating children close to a parent or guardian at no extra charge; and requiring air carriers to develop standards for transporting musical instruments.

● (1225)

The minister has been clear that he intends that the regulations include provisions ensuring that no Canadian is involuntarily removed from an aircraft due to overbooking after having boarded. The minister has issued a challenge to Canada's air carriers on this matter, on seating arrangements for minors, and on moving to strengthen air practices even before new passenger rights are finalized.

The bill also proposes that data could be required from all parties in the air sector to monitor the air traveller experience, including compliance with the proposed passenger rights approach. This data would also inform any future policy or regulatory actions taken by the Minister of Transport to ensure that the air traveller experience to, within, and out of Canada was efficient and effective.

To finish, I will underscore that the experience of Canadian air travellers is a priority for the Government of Canada. We know that it is also a priority for Canadians. This is why we have proposed to increase international ownership restrictions for Canadian carriers. It is why we are proposing new rules on joint ventures that would help create greater efficiencies and more choices for Canadian travellers. It is why we are proposing some modest changes to the provisions of CATSA screening services that should help air passengers transit through airports more quickly. Finally, it is why we are creating a legislative framework so that Canadians can finally benefit from an air travellers' bill of rights.

Once these new measures were in place, they could help lower prices, support increased competition among air carriers, provide more choice to Canadians when it comes to purchasing tickets, and improve service and connectivity for all Canadians and Canadian travellers.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, coastal communities rely on jobs in the transportation industry, especially in shipping. During the last election campaign, the Liberal Party promised not to change the Coasting Trade Act, yet the bill before us would allow foreign registered vessels to compete unfairly with Canadian shipowners. We are requesting that Canadian registered vessels continue to have preferential access to government contracts, to carrying goods by container, and to repositioning of empty containers. In addition, the government did not consult the stakeholders affected by this measure.

Government Orders

Why is the government going back on its word and now opening the door to unfair competition by foreign registered vessels?

• (1230)

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that anything this government does takes into account Canadians. We surely do not intend that any change affects Canadians in a detrimental way. At the same time, we have to recognize that we operate in a global economy and a global marketplace, which is why we should not be very protectionist. We should actually work with foreign investors to increase our economy and benefit all Canadians.

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have had a lot of debate in the House already on the bill, which seems to be, and in fact manifestly is, an omnibus bill. It would amend 13 different pieces of legislation. At the same time, the much-vaunted expression to the Canadian people was that this was going to solve a lot of passenger issues. It was going to be the passenger bill of rights, yet there is very little in the bill that is about passengers.

I wonder whether the hon. member can give his perspective on why he is supporting this piece of legislation when it does not do what the Liberals said it was going to and it would have all this impact on 13 other pieces of legislation.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I find it curious to have that charge, knowing that the previous government was notorious for using omnibus bills.

If members look at what we are putting forward, it all deals with one piece of legislation, or 90% of it deals with one piece of legislation. Having said that, I am quite confident that this bill would help Canadians, especially with the aspect of air passenger rights. We are 15 years behind the United States and 12 years behind Europe, so it is about time we put something forward Canadians can rely on.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has worked very hard on the transportation committee for the last couple of years, and it certainly shows.

Could the hon. member comment on how this legislation would affect the overall strategic plan with respect to the minister's comments on transportation 2030?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, the approach is looking forward to 2030, and the approach has been to look at the entire transportation system holistically, as it is vast and quite intricate.

I applaud the minister for the work he has done and for all the consultations he has had with stakeholders and Canadians.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, listening to the Conservatives accuse the Liberals of introducing omnibus bills is a little rich. The Harper government introduced omnibus bills to such an extent that Canadians became quite engaged and enraged about it, but that does not excuse the current government for doing the same thing, and it is doing it here. The Liberals stood in the House, along with New Democrats, and criticized the previous government for introducing omnibus bills, and here they have introduced one bill that would amend 13 different acts. It is by every single measure an omnibus bill.

My question is about Canadians, not about what we are doing in the House. I would like the member to explain why his Liberal colleagues voted against an NDP amendment that would have, among other things, required airlines to reimburse passengers for the full price of a ticket when a flight was cancelled. It would seem to me that this would be a very logical and reasonable request of airlines. Why did the Liberals not support that NDP amendment?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I was not here in the House when the previous government was here.

Speaking to the first part of my colleague's question, we cannot compartmentalize such a vast transportation system. When 90% of Bill C-49 deals with one act, I do not see that it is an omnibus bill.

To the second part of the member's question, we worked quite collaboratively in committee. If specific amendments were rejected, it could have been due to duplication or a number of other reasons. There was no malice there. We worked really well together.

• (1235)

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when David Emerson did a review of the act many years ago and put forward his report, he had a vision for transportation in the country. Obviously, this legislation falls well short of his vision.

With respect to the passenger bill of rights, the government has left it to regulations. Virtually everything is being left to regulations instead of being put in the bill, into law, so members of Parliament know what they are voting on. Why did the government fail to put these penalties, which would provide support to passengers, in the bill and instead are leaving it to the department to do through regulations?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, this, quite frankly, leaves a lot of flexibility. Going forward, everything will be stipulated in the legislation. The important thing is to get the ball rolling now. As I said, we are playing catch-up with our counterparts in Europe and the United States. Once we get this in place, everything else will be stipulated in the legislation.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as stated earlier, the Liberal government ran on a platform that it would not ram omnibus bills through the House. The government has put 13 acts together in this one bill. It says that 90% of it is covered in one act. Why did the government not separate the one act and put that piece of legislation forward separately?

This legislation talks about joint ventures between airlines, a passenger bill of rights, and protecting the marine industry through transportation, which the government has not done. This legislation is jam-packed with many different issues that need to be debated separately.

Government Orders

The member pointed out that the Conservative government rammed through omnibus bills. The Liberals opposed them during the campaign, yet they are doing it themselves. I would like the member to explain why the government is ramming through omnibus bills. What is the threshold? Is it 15 acts, 20 acts, 25 acts? What is the threshold for the Liberal government in ramming through omnibus bills?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree. We are not ramming through anything. With such a vast, intricate system, we cannot compartmentalize it. We need to look at it holistically, otherwise we would be duplicating the work we are doing here, which would not make sense. As I said, we are playing catch-up, especially when it comes to the air passenger bill of rights. We are over a decade behind, which speaks for itself.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is trying to justify an omnibus bill. This bill deals with grain transportation, video and voice recorders in trains, a coastal trade act, port infrastructure, joint ventures between airlines, and a passenger bill of rights. Other than the common thread of transportation, these are all entirely separate and discrete areas that all warrant specific debate on separate legislation in the House. I really do not accept the member's justification of this omnibus bill.

However, my question is about coastal trade. We know that the previous government pursued negotiations with the European Union in CETA, and one of the concessions we gave European shippers was to allow European-flagged vessels to ply internal Canadian waterways between Halifax and Montreal and to move empty containers and take loaded containers back and forth, and to dredge. Canada got no reciprocal right to do so in internal European waterways. Can my hon. friend justify that?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I do not think this is a matter of justification. There are nuances when we are dealing in a global market space, and this government will act and has acted in the best interests of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauport—Limoulu, and I look forward to hearing his thoughts on this issue.

I also want to thank our transport critic, the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, for the excellent work she has done on Bill C-49. I had the pleasure of working with her on this file for a while. I know that she worked very hard on this and that she shares many of the opinions that I am going to express here today. I also want to thank Patrick, my intern from the parliamentary internship program, for his assistance in writing the speech I will be giving today. He witnessed the magnitude of this omnibus bill first-hand.

The scope of this bill is huge; it makes significant changes to 13 different acts. It will substantially affect air, rail, and sea transport. This bill will affect most of the trains, planes, and ships that travel around and across our immense country. It is what is known as an omnibus bill.

I would remind members that, in 2015, the Liberal government promised to change the rules of this place to prohibit omnibus bills. The Liberals made that promise to Canadians over and over again. In

its election platform, the Liberal Party said that it would no longer resort to legislative tricks to avoid scrutiny. It added that it would bring an end to this undemocratic practice by changing the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

It was a very convenient promise to make during an election campaign. Now it is more convenient to ignore it. What is even more interesting is that the minister who sponsored the omnibus bill we are talking about today has repeatedly criticized the use of these political games in Parliament. In a motion the transport minister moved in the House in 2012 when he was the Liberal House leader, he suggested that the intentions of omnibus bills were so varied that a single vote on so many matters would put members in conflict with their own principles.

The sponsor of the omnibus bill we are talking about today said those things in 2012. That is a totally different perspective than the one the minister and his government are taking on Bill C-49.

Why did the Liberals change their minds? Where are their principles now that they are in power? Let us not forget that this is not the only political stunt the Liberal government has pulled in order to circumvent the democratic process here in the House. Omnibus bills are not the only trick up the Liberal government's sleeve. To top it off, yesterday it decided to use time allocation to limit the debate on all these proposals. As a result, even though the government's list of proposed changes remains quite long, the time we will have to debate those changes has been shortened considerably. This is the same government that likes to talk about being open and transparent. It claims to be a government that listens, but after having worked with this government it is clear that it really does not.

By all accounts, a bill that changes our transportation system, that weakens the legislative protections for shippers and farmers, and creates a passengers' bill of rights that does not even have the support of passengers' rights advocates, deserves a more thorough and engaged debate. However, yesterday's decision to use a time allocation motion does not really surprise me or any of the other opposition MPs. It certainly did not surprise Canadians who have been watching for weeks as the Liberal government tries to defend their tax reform and the Minister of Finance's decisions in question period.

What is becoming very clear is that Canadians are losing faith that this government has a moral compass. That is another unintended consequence for the Liberals. What is not clear is the bill we are currently debating. After months in committee, and debates and studies on this bill, there are still very few details and explanations.

Government Orders

Let us talk about Bill C-49. The Liberal government says that the measures it is proposing will establish a new air passenger rights regime; loosen international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers; enable Transport Canada to examine and approve joint ventures by two or more airlines; update the Canadian freight system; require railway companies to install voice and video recorders in locomotive cabs; expand the authority of the Governor in Council to require major railway companies to provide information regarding rates; and amend the Canada Marine Act to permit port authorities to access the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

● (1240)

All of that is in the same bill. Whether one is for or against certain of those measures, voting is impossible. One may like some of them, but if one dislikes others, there is no way one can logically vote for this bill.

There is a fundamental lack of respect and clarity in all these measures, including the passengers' bill of rights that the government promised. The Liberals say the measure is a document that will protect travellers, but upon closer examination, one can see that is not necessarily the case. Precious little is known about this bill of rights. Nobody knows what it will look like or what penalties will be imposed on airlines if they break the rules.

Instead of putting forward something very clear, the government decided to let the Canadian Transportation Agency make the decisions. The agency will decide what is in the document and will flesh out the details, details that will affect every air traveller and every airline in Canada.

How can we have an intelligent discussion about a passengers' bill of rights without all the necessary information? How can we avoid other unexpected consequences of the sort that seem to be this government's trademark and that arise, when we are not given details about what it is proposing?

We must not forget the unintended consequences of tax reform on farmers and on small and medium-sized business owners. We must also not forget how this government attacked our most vulnerable citizens by clawing back the disability tax credit. As members of the opposition, what can we do to seek solutions to a bill under the current circumstances? For that matter, we are not the only ones sounding the alarm. We cannot support measures that are unclear. The government is asking us to trust it blindly, but it would be irresponsible of us to do so.

Let us move on to the other proposals in the government's bill. Bill C-49 would permit port authorities and their wholly-owned subsidiaries to receive loans and loan guarantees from the Canada Infrastructure Bank. However, this is somewhat paradoxical because, as members may recall, the Infrastructure Bank does not exist yet. This measure therefore makes no sense.

This bill would allow port authorities to receive loans from a soon-to-be-created Infrastructure Bank. In other words, they are getting immediate permission to do business with an entity that does not yet exist. What a great opportunity for the Liberal government to create even more unintended consequences with a new bank that has yet to be approved by Parliament and that will cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

As we continue to consider the impact of this bill on other industries, we find more examples of its lack of clarity. For shippers who use the railways, this bill proposes new 30-km interswitching rates that, according to the government, would be set every year and take into account railway infrastructure needs for the entire system. However, the lack of information about how the bill will implement these rates is leading shipper organizations and producer groups to be cautious regarding their position on long-distance interswitching. Like us, they are not really sure how this is going to affect them.

Shippers like Greg Cherewyk, Pulse Canada's COO, reminds us that the devil is always in the details. In May, he told the *Manitoba Co-operator*, and I quote, that "every word does matter, and the order of the words matters". He pointed out that he was not sure about the exact impacts of the government's new proposals.

Today, we are going to vote on this matter because we have to vote on the omnibus bill as a whole. We cannot study this component more thoroughly because the government decided to make it part of one huge bill. We tried to make this part of the bill less vague, but the Liberals voted against those changes, even the administrative ones. It is clear that they do not understand the consequences of these measures, and that will create even more unintended consequences.

The two major railway companies in Canada have also expressed their concern regarding the impact of the new regulations, especially with respect to investments in the Canadian railway system. The president of CN thinks this is an odd decision, especially since NAFTA is still being negotiated and we do not know what impact the negotiations will have on trade. Why then give American companies even greater access to Canada? These are the questions we are asking.

In conclusion, everyone in Canada knows how important transportation issues are. Bill C-49 is an omnibus bill that is forcing us to take a position on measures that might have seemed acceptable but that we cannot support, because there are other, totally unacceptable measures in the bill.

● (1245)

For these reasons, I cannot support Bill C-49. There are too many unintended consequences that we can already foresee.

Once again, I would like to thank my intern Patrick for his assistance writing this speech, and I am ready to answer my colleagues' questions.

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned “unintended consequences” a number of times. He has probably heard that from our side. The Minister of Finance has used these words repeatedly in the last couple of months. This is why we engaged in that level of consultation. This is why the Liberals think it is so important to engage in wholesome consultation to ensure we do not have unintended consequences.

Therefore, just as we engaged in consultation with respect to Bill C-49, we did the same in finance with the proposed tax changes. As a result of that consultation, we made substantial changes, and I am proud of that. We listened to do exactly what the member addressed, which was to avoid unintended consequences.

The member said that he liked certain parts of the bill, and I appreciate that honesty. It is fantastic when members in the House can talk about the positive things on which we all agree. Could the member at least mention one or two things he likes in the bill?

• (1250)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, one of the unintended consequences of an omnibus bill like the one before us today is that I cannot answer my colleague’s question, because she is asking me to vote on a series of measures. Some of these measures may be positive, but others are undoubtedly negative.

Unfortunately, because the government cannot plan properly, because it improvises and wants to ram this down our throats, a major unintended consequence is the tax reform, an unprecedented attack on all small businesses and farmers across Canada. That is what happens when you take power before you are ready to govern. They try to consult without really consulting. They try to ram decisions down Canadians’ throats. We therefore have to deal with unintended consequences that prevent us from making the best possible decisions in the House, since the government is not allowing us to do so.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government signed CETA with the European Union. Under that agreement, ships registered in an EU member country will be permitted to perform dredging operations, carry goods by container, and reposition empty containers in Canada, while Canadian vessels will not receive reciprocal treatment by EU countries.

In my riding, in my community, and in coastal communities, such as Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet, Hornby Island, Denman Island, French Creek, jobs and local knowledge are really important. Is the member concerned about the impact the opening up the Coasting Trade Act will have on jobs in Canada’s marine industry and in his community?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, obviously, the riding of Mégantic—L’Érable is pretty far from the coast, but I do understand the concerns of citizens who live near the coast and who must live with the measures contained in Bill C-49. I am convinced that there

are many people in my colleague’s riding who would have liked to testify and who would have liked us to take more time to discuss this situation, which is highly problematic, especially for people who live on the coast and are very concerned about it. Unfortunately, the way in which the Minister of Transport chose to present the measures that will affect the people in my colleague’s riding prevents us from taking the time we need to consider all possible consequences. This will lead to unintended consequences.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Mégantic—L’Érable has done a good job of listing all of the unintended consequences of this bill. We cannot be certain these will occur. I think that the hon. member once sat on the Standing Committee on Transport, but I do not know if he still does. If he was on the committee, he may have seen this bill beforehand. I would like him to tell me what exactly happened in committee. I was told that all of the amendments proposed by the opposition, whether the Conservatives or the NDP, were flat-out rejected and that there was no collaboration on this bill.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, it is an open secret today that very few amendments were accepted by the Liberal government. I was, indeed, a member of the Standing Committee on Transport when it first began discussing Bill C-49. The government wanted it passed as soon as possible. As we have seen, it even brought in a time allocation motion yesterday to speed up the process even more. Worse yet, the time allotted for all of the testimony on Bill C-49 was compressed into a single week, which was clearly too little. We heard testimony all week. People came in to share their comments. Unfortunately, most of the comments heard in committee that week are not included in the version presented by the government here today. The government says that it consults, that work is done in committee, but in the final analysis, whatever is said is ignored. It was therefore a useless exercise aimed solely at passing the bill the way the Liberals wanted it to be passed.

• (1255)

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by mentioning the 60 or so seniors in my riding who suffered a tragic loss two days ago. There was a major fire in a retirement home in Beauport Sunday evening. The people on Joncas street, who are older than those living in other retirement homes, had to leave in the middle of the night and get on a bus. Incidentally, I would like to thank the city of Quebec for sending buses as quickly as possible. My thoughts are with these seniors and their families in these difficult times. I hope that most of them have family who can take them in. I have visited the home twice since I was elected.

Government Orders

I would now like to express some of my general concerns about this government, which has shown time after time that it is serving special interests, be they Liberal interests or multinational interests. The small and medium-sized business tax hikes it announced this summer are just one example of that. Another is the current crisis concerning the Minister of Finance's conflict of interest, which involves \$20 million worth of shares in his family company, Morneau Shepell, that he was supposed to sell off two years ago.

Yesterday, we found out that five more government ministers apparently used the same technique as the Minister of Finance to avoid selling their shares or putting them in a blind trust. I hope we will all keep asking who those ministers are today. I am beginning to have some serious doubts about the behaviour of this government and the Prime Minister. The latter is responsible for ensuring that his government is complying with the law and is not using all kinds of loopholes to circumvent the spirit of the Conflict of Interest Act. I am very concerned about this.

This government is not working for Canadians; it is working for the multinationals. We saw a good example of this this morning in a Radio-Canada article written by Philippe-Vincent Foisy. It says that the government and the Minister of Canadian Heritage met with representatives of Amazon 99 times in the past 12 months. They met 37 times with representatives of Google and 16 times with representatives of Netflix, including 5 meetings with the Minister of Canadian Heritage a few months before she announced her extremely controversial agreement with Netflix.

In contrast, the minister met only once with representatives of ADISQ, whose gala I attended as a representative of the Conservative Party of Canada on Sunday evening. The minister met only twice with representatives of the Association québécoise de la production médiatique, and did not even meet once with representatives of ACTRA. This really gives the impression that the government is giving priority to the multinationals and that it has no time for organizations and Canadians.

Since we began debating Bill C-49, the government has boasted that it wants to focus on railway, aviation, and maritime safety. I, too, believe that railway safety is important, but 90% of this bill has nothing to do with railway safety.

Here is what I have done about railway safety since I was elected. First, I met with authorities at CN, since there is a railway serving Limoilou, in particular the port facilities in my riding, the port of Quebec and the Quebec railway station. I had a great meeting with a CN police officer. The CN has dozens of police officers that ensure railway safety. The police officer answered all the questions and concerns raised by citizens in my riding. My constituents wanted to know why trains often stayed at the two railway yards for several days, and they were also concerned about the trains' speed. It is very important.

If railway, aviation and maritime safety is so important, why was discussion in committee constantly stifled, and why were the amendments proposed by the official opposition rejected out of hand?

● (1300)

Most of the amendments proposed focused on the improvement of certain aspects of safety and competition.

The omnibus bill includes amendments to 13 different acts affecting the three main modes of transportation in Canada and the rest of the world. As I said, most of the content of this bill has nothing to do with safety, despite the fact that the parliamentary secretary's speech was all about transportation safety. It is unfortunate.

Last night before I fell asleep, I happened to be reading the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, a very interesting review of everything happening in all provincial and federal legislative assemblies across Canada. An academic wrote that he had conducted a study of the past 30 years and that, over the past two decades, there was a pattern of using, more often than not, time allocation for bills, in particular omnibus bills.

His study shows that efficiency and a need to act quickly are often cited as the reason to use omnibus bills. Parliament needs to be more efficient, since Canadians expect the House to act efficiently. In reality, in the past 30 years, the use of omnibus bills has not increased the number of bills passed in the House, regardless of the government in power. The academic goes so far as to say that we should let Parliament follow its natural course and allow members to thoroughly debate each bill. Thus, Bill C-49 should have been split into several bills so that we could get a more detailed understanding of every change the government is trying to make, as the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable so eloquently argued.

This being said, there are five aspects of the bill that caught my attention and that I would like to mention. First, with respect to allowing airlines to form international joint ventures, the bill will enhance the role of the Minister of Transport. How? Consider Delta Airlines and Air Canada, for example, each of which offers flights between Toronto and Atlanta. For the purposes of productivity, operations or efficiency, these companies could decide to merge the Toronto-Atlanta route in order to provide better service.

Normally, when two companies decide to form an international joint venture on a given route, they must obtain the approval of the Competition Bureau. With this bill, the Minister of Transport will have far more influence, because, at the end of the day, he will decide for the commissioner of competition whether the two companies can move forward with the international joint venture. The minister will act in the public interest. So far, neither the Liberal members or the parliamentary secretaries have been able to define the public interest in the context of the minister's analysis.

The second issue I am interested in are the new security fees. The Minister of Transport has often mentioned the problem at Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau International Airport, where there are very long lines because there are not enough gates to ensure the safety of passengers as they embark on their flight. He said he wanted to make sure that there were more security checkpoints to make the lines shorter, but he will allow airports to charge additional fees. It is an open secret that the customers will end up paying these additional fees.

Government Orders

This specific clause of the bill shows us right away that Canadian consumers will have to pay more for their plane tickets when this bill comes into force. That is interesting because, every time the Liberals want to solve a problem, in this case wait times at airport security, they solve it by making Canadians pay more. The Liberals wanted to address the problem of climate change, so they created the carbon tax. They wanted to reduce their huge structural deficit by \$20 billion, so they cut tax credits for Canadians, including tax credits for public transit, school supplies, sports, and arts.

● (1305)

Third, they want to change the act to give international shipping companies access to coastal trade thereby creating competition for Canadian shipowners between Halifax and Montreal. This will create an enormous amount of unfair competition for our shipowners because Canadian employees receive decent wages while other foreign companies do not pay their workers very well at all. This will create a lot of unfair competition for our shipowners.

This bill should not have been introduced as an omnibus bill. We should be given the opportunity to carefully examine each measure, which is something that we cannot do today. That is shameful.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know we have had a couple of members from the opposition talk about the size of the legislation and how relevant it is. I would have to say that I adamantly disagree. I was in opposition for many years, am very much familiar with what omnibus bills look like, and this is not one of those bills.

This is a bill that deals with our transportation industry. Canadians understand and appreciate just how important that industry is, whether it is the shipping of cargo through our ports or the shipping of cargo and passengers on our rail system or in our airlines. In fact, with this legislation, yet another campaign commitment, the commitment to provide an air passenger bill of rights dealing with the issue in respect of passengers on airlines, is in fact being dealt with.

My question for the member is this. Would he not at the very least acknowledge that, whether it is in the legislation or regulation, at least now, for the first time, we are actually moving forward on protecting airline passengers?

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree.

There has been this kind of pattern with the Liberals for 40 years. It is a paradigm of always increasing the rights of people by creating and enhancing a judicial relation between individuals and companies, between individuals and the state. I think we should let the market regulate problems between citizens and companies. If people are not satisfied with the services given by a company, we can certainly count on them to stop using the services.

Again, the Liberal government wants to implement this kind of relationship of judicial protectionism. Will the Liberals introduce protection for bilingualism respecting Air Canada in this bill of rights for consumers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his remarks. It is fitting that we are talking about Bill C-49 today, on Halloween, because it is a real Liberal horror show.

[*English*]

It is a horror story, not only because of the rudely imposed time allocation, which the Liberals opposed so passionately in their days as the third party in this House, not only because it is a monster of an omnibus bill, but because the contents of the omnibus bill have nothing in common, piece by piece, except for the fact that they involve, one way or another, the word “transport”.

The Liberal government has made much of the fact that there are six amendments proposed by the opposition. I would like to ask my colleague whether six amendments on a bill this large represent anything of significance.

● (1310)

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, it is significant because it is an amendment coming from the official opposition. That is for sure. At committee, as well as in debate at the House of Commons, if the bill had been separated, because it touches on very large, different sectors of activity in Canada, probably we would have had 30 amendments. Probably the Liberal government in opposition did not want to see us, in this great House of Commons, opposing, debating, and introducing dozens of amendments. We would have been able in committee to analyze the details of each component of this bill. It is very sad.

Members on this side have never had any issue with this kind of omnibus bill. We assume it. However, the Liberals said during the election campaign that they would never go to this kind of practice. This does not change much, actually, in hastening the process of the House or increasing the number of bills going forward.

Also, why do they give us only four or five days to debate such an important bill, when we spent the past three days overseeing Bill C-24 to change a minister of state's title to that of a minister? It is a ridiculous bill that does not give anything more to Canadians, which is what we should be doing: giving something more to Canadians. Rather, Bill C-24 gives more to ministers and the government benches. That is ridiculous. We should spend more days in debate on serious bills and stop joking around in the House, which they do.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to this important bill, Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, on behalf of my constituents in Saint Boniface—Saint Vital.

Government Orders

In his mandate letter to the Minister of Transport, the Prime Minister stated that his overarching goal is to ensure that Canada's transportation system supports the government's agenda for economic growth and job creation. To carry out that mandate, it is essential to look ahead, and today, I would like to reflect on that by focusing on some of the key amendments in Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, that would help ensure that our transportation system can continue to help build this country for future generations.

In particular, it is essential that our transportation system be fluid in its operation and responsive in meeting the needs of our society and economy. To meet these goals, we need to lay the groundwork for a transportation system that will be safe and secure, innovative and green, adaptable to changing trade flows, and sensitive to the needs of travellers. Following a comprehensive consultation process with Canadians, industry stakeholders, provinces, territories, and indigenous groups, we have established a foundation to realize these goals through transportation 2030, the government's strategic plan for the future of transportation in Canada.

For this government, the transport portfolio is critical to economic growth. Transportation in Canada must continue to be a single interconnected system that drives the Canadian economy. In February of last year, the Minister of Transport tabled the report of the review of the Canada Transportation Act, also known as the CTA review, which was led by the hon. David Emerson. It had been 15 years since the last such review. The review report looked ahead to position our transportation system to continue to support Canada's international competitiveness, trade, and prosperity. As Mr. Emerson noted, our transportation system is the connective tissue that binds us together as a nation, that enables us to participate in the global economy, and that helps us ensure our economic and social well-being.

The review pointed toward many of the goals to which we need to aspire in building the transportation system of the future. We, as a country, must take the long view. We must develop a long-term vision of Canada's transportation system that is focused on the future, on the outcomes of what we want to achieve: better growth, more competition, and better service. When we mention economic potential, we must remember that we can have the best-quality products in the world, but it will not matter if we lack in efficient ways to get those goods to international markets.

Improving our trade corridors is a key requirement in building our future transportation system. That is why Bill C-49 focuses on promoting transparency, system efficiency, and fairness. The bill proposes legislative amendments that would better meet the needs and service expectations of Canadian travellers and shippers, while creating a safer and more innovative transportation system that would position Canada to capitalize on global opportunities and thrive on a higher-performing economy.

In particular, Bill C-49 recognizes that a reliable freight rail network is critical to Canada's success as a trading nation. Many of our commodities, from minerals to forest products to grain, depend on rail to move to markets, both in Canada and abroad. Canada already enjoys a very efficient rail system with the world's lowest rates. Bill C-49 would sustain this by addressing pressures in the

system so that it can continue to meet the needs of users and the economy over the long term.

There is no clearer example of the importance of our freight and rail network than the prairie provinces. Each year, over \$280 billion worth of goods move through our freight rail system throughout Canada. It is the backbone of our export trade, allowing goods to move efficiently throughout the country and to our export markets.

• (1315)

Bill C-49 builds on our already strong freight rail system by safeguarding its continued reliability and efficiency. Bill C-49 seeks to create a more competitive environment for shippers and producers by introducing long-haul interswitching, a new mechanism that would be available to all captive shippers in Canada across all sectors. Long-haul interswitching would allow shippers access to competing railways at rates and at service terms set by the Canadian Transportation Agency. This measure would allow better service options while improving system efficiency. It would ensure that shippers across industries would be able to bring their products to market.

There has been much discussion of the plan's sunseting of an extension of the interswitching mechanism created in 2014 with the passing of the Fair Rail For Grain Farmers Act. This system only applied to captive grain shippers within the prairie provinces. In the year prior to the act's implementation, there was a record prairie grain crop, which was immediately followed by a devastating winter. This act was introduced to address this unique situation and the conditions in the grain handling and transportation system at the time. These no longer exist. It is important to emphasize the temporary nature of the previous legislation. Bill C-49 would replace this temporary legislation with a stronger and permanent mechanism that would apply across various sectors, including the grain sector in various regions in Canada. It would apply to a much longer distance of 1,200 kilometres or more, far greater than the 160 kilometres in the previous act. It is critical that this new mechanism apply to all commodities over a much longer distance throughout this great country. At committee, changes were adopted to the exclusion zones, opening the interswitching mechanism to captive shippers in northern Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta, which will have a favourable impact on the mining and forestry industries in those regions. By extending the interswitching system, we would strengthen multiple industries while still supporting the grain industry.

Government Orders

It is also important to note the stronger benefits and protections that Bill C-49 would provide to prairie grain shippers and farmers. These include the ability of shippers to seek reciprocal financial penalties in their service agreements with railways. These include a better definition of what adequate and suitable rail service means, and improved access to final-offer arbitration. Bill C-49 better defines adequate and suitable rail service. Previously within the Canada Transportation Act, the terms “adequate and suitable” were not defined and had been the subject of various definitions over time. By better defining the term and providing better clarity to both shippers and rail companies, we reduce the potential for service disputes that can be both costly and disruptive to both parties.

It is also important to balance the shipper's service entitlements while taking into consideration the railway's broader obligations across the network. The act strongly affirms that railways must provide shippers with the highest level of service they reasonably can provide within the circumstances. Factors for the Canadian Transportation Agency to use in assessing what is reasonable will also be identified. These would include the service that the shipper requires, the railway's obligations under the Canada Transportation Act, and the operational requirements of both the railway and the shipper, among others.

The act also addresses penalties for delays, which currently are one-sided. While railways currently can impose penalties on shippers for delays, shippers are not able to impose penalties on the railways unless the railway agrees to these as part of a confidential contract. This causes an inequity between the rail lines and the shippers. Reciprocal penalties would ensure that the responsibility for efficient and timely movement of goods would be shared between the shippers and the rail companies.

● (1320)

With Bill C-49, shippers will be able to pursue reciprocal financial penalties through the service level agreement process under the CTA. The process will allow a shipper to obtain an agreement on service through CTA arbitration when negotiations with the rail company fail. The CTA arbitrator will ensure that the penalties both balance the interests of the shipper and the railway and encourage efficient movement of goods. This is of vital importance to grain farmers on the Prairies and was one of the big asks of stakeholders in the period leading to the tabling of the bill.

The bill would also increase transparency by increasing the amount of publicly available information on the performance of the rail transportation supply chain. Of note is that Bill C-49 requires railways to provide a report assessing their ability to meet their grain movement obligations prior to the start of a crop year. The state of the year's crop and forecast for the upcoming winter will be reviewed annually. This will ensure that should a similar scenario occur like the one seen in 2013-14, a contingency plan can be put in place by the railways to ensure the movement of grains.

In addition, railways will need to report service, performance, and rate metrics publicly. The bill will require railways to provide service and performance information on a weekly basis to the Canadian Transportation Agency, which in turn will make this information public by publishing it on its website.

Rate data will be required from the railways as well for Transport Canada. The rate data will be used by the agency to help calculate long-haul interswitching rates. It is important that this information be available in a timely manner to ensure the efficiency of the supply chain.

Bill C-49 would encourage the long-term growth of the freight rail system by encouraging investments. It would change the provisions of the maximum revenue entitlement regime by making adjustments to intensify hopper car investments and reform the MRE methodology. These reforms will better reflect individual railway investments and encourage investments by all supply chain partners.

One only has to think of Lac-Mégantic, where people are still recovering from the tragedy that took the lives of 47 residents in 2013. This and other events like the derailment at Gogama remind me that the most crucial thing the Minister of Transport can do is to keep the people who use our transportation system safe. Nothing else is as important.

Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, would further this goal. It would do this by implementing in-cab video and voice recorders, commonly referred to as LVVR, as recommended by the CTA review panel and the Transportation Safety Board. These recorders would further strengthen rail safety by providing objective data about the true actions taken leading up to and during a rail accident. This technology would also provide companies with an additional safety tool for analyzing trends identified through their safety management system.

Finally, the transportation system of the future needs to better meet the needs of travellers who seek greater choice and convenience at a reasonable cost. For example, passenger traffic at Toronto Pearson airport has almost doubled in the past three decades and the airport marked its 40 millionth passenger in 2015. Just cast our minds ahead to 2030 when Toronto Pearson forecasts that it will serve some 66 million passengers per year. That is a lot of people to manage, and our airports need to be up to the task.

Along with connections, we must also consider the air traveller experience and the need for new tools to assist consumers. The traveller needs to know how decisions are made when flights do not go as planned and what recourse they have. That is the very reason that Bill C-49 proposes the creation of new regulations to enhance Canada's air passenger rights, ensuring that they are clear, consistent, and fair to both travellers and air carriers.

Government Orders

•(1325)

The Canadian Transportation Agency would be mandated to develop, in consultation with Transport Canada, these new regulations, and would consult Canadians and stakeholders should royal assent be given. The overriding objective of this new approach is to ensure that Canadians and anyone travelling to, from, or within Canada understands their rights as air travellers without having a negative impact on access to air services and the cost of air travel for Canadians.

The simple fact we must address for all travellers is this: Canadians are spending more on transportation in all forms. In the past 30 years, household spending on transportation has more than tripled, up to 16% of expenditures, second only to shelter. Our government's vision for the Canadian traveller experience is one in which we have more integrated and seamless connections between air, rail, and transit to reduce the overwhelming reliance on the automobile.

These are some big issues, and sorting through the implications of what I have just talked about is a tall order that requires many conversations with Canadians.

The CTA review started this engagement. The report is a comprehensive source of independent advice to government. As I said earlier, I see transportation as essential to driving this country's economic growth and future prosperity for all Canadians. We must also design and manage the transportation system so that we continue to protect passengers, communities, and our environment.

I challenge all of us to think about how we can achieve all of these goals so that we can develop a transportation system that is even more safe, efficient, and green, and which supports both our economy and our country.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my remarks last week at report stage, I addressed an amendment proposed by numerous stakeholders during testimony at committee. It was supported by both Conservative and NDP members of the committee. It would have allowed the first interchange point the shipper is required to use to access long-haul interswitching, LHI, to be in the reasonable direction of the shipper's destination. The amendment would have brought some practicality to this new regime the Liberal government has introduced, and, if passed, would have meant that shippers would not have to send their product potentially hundreds of kilometres in the wrong direction to reach the nearest interchange point.

Could the member comment on that and why he believes his colleagues at committee did not want to support this very practical amendment?

•(1330)

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I do not sit on that committee, but I do know that the Conservatives were able to move nine amendments. Not all of them were adopted, but I understand that six of the nine were approved by both parties. I do not have precise information as to why that amendment was not supported.

Amendments are judged on the merits of the arguments that are made, and I believe there was a good, rational, logical reason not to

approve it. However, six of nine amendments were approved. They cannot all be approved.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that we need clear measures to discourage airlines from overbooking and forcibly removing passengers from aircraft.

The NDP introduced a bill in the last Parliament that clearly set out the steps needed to establish a passenger bill of rights to do just that. We put forward amendments with concrete proposals in the bill so airlines would have to offer passengers the choice between a full refund and rerouting under comparable conditions when a flight was cancelled. If the airline did not comply with this, it would have to pay \$1,000 in compensation to every passenger in addition to the refund. Also, if an aircraft were on the ground for more than an hour, the airline would have to provide passengers with adequate food, drinking water, and other refreshments. For each additional hour that the airline failed to comply with this, it would have to pay each passenger \$100 in compensation. It seems very reasonable.

Canadians have concerns. We have looked at Europe, which has good regulations. It has a cancellation rate of 0.4%, which is four times lower than flights are subject to in Canada. The government has turned a blind eye to testimony heard and findings of studies on this issue. In fact, the government has ignored the call to study these issues.

Why is the government choosing not to study these concerns and not support the requests of Canadians to back travellers in the air industry so we can be more competitive and treat Canadians with respect, like they do in Europe?

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, the minister has been quite clear that we are committed to a passenger bill of rights. This is going to happen; the discussions will occur.

I believe the key to this whole bill is achieving a balance between the passengers, airlines, and carriers, although there is some flexibility built into it. Our minister has been crystal clear, on every occasion I have heard him speak on this, that we will move forward on a balanced, responsible, and fair passenger bill of rights.

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear my colleague's intervention because so much comment has been made about various aspects of the bill. I want to ask about the larger aspect of the bill with regard to my friend's comments.

In the Toronto area, one could probably have endless discussions about the air traffic at Pearson or, in my case, about one of the busiest rail junctions in North America, known as the Bayview Junction. With regard to interswitching and so on, the bill also addresses issues that affect vast areas of our country, even smaller regions.

Could my friend add a little more discussion to the notion that the bill addresses serious problems in less populated areas of the country, which are also in dire need of good transportation legislation?

Government Orders

• (1335)

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, one of the more popular initiatives coming forward, at least in western Canada, is the whole initiative of long-haul interchanging. We are replacing what is currently a 160-kilometre interchange with a long-haul interchange, something that can go upward of 1,200 kilometres or more for shippers that need to get their goods to market. This is very popular with the grain shippers in western Canada. We are expanding beyond grain shippers to other industries such as mining and forestry. This initiative will allow for increased competition and has been welcomed by shippers across Canada. It is especially popular with grain shippers in western Canada.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a point of clarification. In his answer to one of our colleague's questions, the member stated that members of the opposition were allowed to move nine amendments. To be clear, members of the opposition have the opportunity to move as many amendments as they would like to a bill. In fact, the NDP and the Conservative members moved over 30 amendments, which was a boiling down of over 100 amendments that stakeholders introduced during their testimony.

The amendments that were accepted by the Liberal members happened to be duplicate amendments that both the Conservatives and Liberal members put together. What the member would like to represent as a very magnanimous approach to amendments in committee is false.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, of course, as elected officials we know we can move as many amendments as we like, both at committee and in the House. It is a cornerstone of our democratic system. What I meant to say was that not every amendment moved had merit. Not every amendment has the support of all political parties. I like to think an amendment is based on the merit it has and is judged accordingly. Our party has always believed that through committee, we can make an existing bill stronger and fairer. That is how the system is supposed to work.

I commend the hon. member and her party for bringing forward amendments that were reasonable and were supported by all parties. Hopefully, that will continue through the debate on the bill.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I asked the member earlier, but I will ask him again. Could the member explain why he and his Liberal colleagues voted against the NDP amendment that would have, among other things, required airlines to reimburse the full price of a ticket when a flight was cancelled? It is a simple question. It is about protecting consumers and respecting air travellers.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, as a first-time member of Parliament, and as a parliamentarian who did not sit on that committee, I believe he is referencing something that was brought forward in the previous Parliament. Nevertheless, we wholeheartedly support the spirit of a passenger bill of rights. Our minister, on every occasion I have heard him speak to this issue, has come out 100% for a passenger bill of rights. We are fully committed to it. We will consult, we will ensure that it is fair and transparent, and that it benefits all Canadians.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise to speak to Bill

C-49. I will be splitting my time with the member for Yorkton—Melville.

We have before us what is very clearly an omnibus bill. It is a transportation bill that deals with many different pieces of legislation. It is more involved, more complex, and deals with more topics than perhaps the 95 theses. If the government wants indulgence today, it will not get it from members of the opposition.

I will continue to pontificate on this for a bit. We are seeing the government's total unwillingness to take its past commitments with respect to omnibus legislation seriously. It criticized the previous government for covering a range of different topics in the same bill. This was allegedly a big part of its push for changes to the Standing Orders. The Liberals said that the Standing Orders had to be changed because of the big problem of governments bringing forward omnibus bills. They said that a solution had to be found for this.

If the Liberals thought it was such a problem, the simple solution would have been for them to simply not propose omnibus bills. In so many different areas, whether it is Bill C-46, a bill that covers a range of different proposals on the issue of impaired driving, or a transportation bill, or budget bills they have brought forward, there is a real abundance of what clearly are omnibus bills even by their own definition.

The Liberals have said that an omnibus bill is a bill that members might want to vote for parts of it, but oppose other parts of it. Again, there is no credibility. Their policies and platform in the spirit of the season really is ghosted. Nothing is left but a ghost of the commitments the government made with respect to omnibus legislation.

I would like to talk specifically about some of the different pieces of the legislation.

Much of the discussion by members of the government has been about an alleged passenger bill of rights. I am sorry to report to members, but this is more trick than treat. The passenger bill of rights is skeletal at best. It is a framework for legislation that others will be asked to eventually develop, but the House is in no position to evaluate its substance. We are expected to theoretically consider a passenger bill of rights that somebody else might develop without any kind of clarity on its structure or how that would be approached or operationalized in practice. Again, it is more trick than treat even if passengers were expecting something more substantive.

As members of Parliament, we often fly. We could probably all share stories of less than ideal experiences we have had with air travel. It behooves the government to be more clear about what it is talking about when it brings these kind of measures before us. This is the Liberals' idea of being able to check a box for something they want to say they done but really is lacking in meat.

Government Orders

Many provisions in the bill come from a lot of different directions.

I also want to address the issue of joint ventures. If airlines want to propose a joint venture for a route, at present, the proposal is reviewed and ruled on by the competition commissioner, and that is appropriate. The competition commissioner evaluates the impact of proposals on competition. When a joint venture is in place, that can have a negative impact on competition, because companies work together. Therefore, there is less competition that can be beneficial to consumers.

● (1340)

As a party that believes in the importance of functioning free markets, our caucus is very concerned about ensuring there is as much competition as well. We recognize if we want to get good outcomes for consumers there is a place for regulation. The best way to get to that end is that if we have robust competition, we are going to have good outcomes for consumers. Consumers can drive through the market the kinds of treatments and services they want by choosing between the different available options.

Unfortunately, this omnibus bill makes some changes to the framework in place for joint ventures. It gives authority to the minister instead of to the competition commissioner to make those decisions. In that context, it gives him a fairly wide discretion to make these determinations on the basis of public interest criteria. “The public interest” is the sort of concept that everybody is in favour of, but the devil is often in the details. When the minister has a wide discretion to make a determination on the basis of a concept of public interest, that really gives him the ability to do what he wants with respect to these joint ventures, and he may well be subject to influences and questions which are not in the public interest. We have regularly had concerns raised in this House about ministers who find themselves in conflicts of interest. When we have cases of ministers who have been able to circumvent the law with respect to blind trusts, we should legitimately be raising concerns about the minister taking an authority that had previously been exercised through the commissioner.

One other issue that I want to address is with respect to interswitching for rail. The issues that I have addressed in the short space of my speech today again underline the breadth of transportation measures in this bill. That should be concerning to members. In the existing framework, the previous government brought in something that was called “extended” interswitching, which allowed for the use of another company's rail line. That would be done on a cost-plus framework, so the rates would vary depending on the costs that were in place for the company. It was fundamentally a competitive framework, because there was no fixed rate across the board for interswitching, rather there was a cost-plus framework, so it still encouraged some degree of flexibility and competition. However, the long-haul interswitching provisions the government has in place in this bill do not encourage competition. The way in which the rate is structured for that interswitching is based on an average rate, so it is the same rate that would be charged across different companies. It reduces the pressure for competition vis-à-vis different cases of interswitching. Our view is that competition is important, and that facilitating competition in the transportation sector and other sectors is beneficial for consumers. It leads to choice and innovation.

In conclusion, I would like to say that when we asked the minister about this during time allocation earlier, he said that he did not think we should be hearing more opposition speeches because they kept talking about the carbon tax. Since the minister does not want us to talk about the carbon tax, I think we actually have a duty to talk about the carbon tax in this context. Of course, the government does not want to talk about how negatively it is impacting the transportation industry by trying to impose a carbon tax, which is literally a tax on everything. It is trying to compel provinces, in a way that is profoundly disrespectful to provincial jurisdiction, to impose this carbon tax. I had the pleasure of presenting a petition for my constituents on this yesterday. Many of my constituents are very concerned about the negative impacts to the transportation, energy, and other sectors associated with the carbon tax.

To summarize, we have in front of us an omnibus bill. Again, the Liberal government is showing a disregard for its commitments. There are some specific things that I take issue with. The most publicized element, the air passenger bill of rights, is not at all clear. We would be much better off encouraging competition to help consumers have the flexibility to drive improvements in quality and innovation themselves.

● (1345)

The Liberals are in the process of taking choice away from consumers, talking about an air passenger bill of rights that is not clear or defined in any way. Of course, the government is proceeding with other measures that are very harmful for the transportation industry, such as the carbon tax.

On that basis, we oppose this bill.

● (1350)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. The member across the way wants to focus on one of the issues that clearly demonstrate just how out of touch the Conservative Party is with Canadians.

The member talked about the issue of the carbon tax and the detriment to the industry as a whole, yet it is fairly well accepted, with 80% of the population already participating in a price on carbon. No matter what the issue of debate might be inside the chamber, the Conservatives want to focus their attention on an issue that is not overly relevant to the bill itself.

My question is for my colleague across the way. Within the legislation, we have yet another election platform commitment being fulfilled, that of protecting air passengers. The legislation is going to enable that to take place.

Would the member across the way not agree that that is a good thing for Canadians? This is something Canadians have wanted, and it is being delivered in good part through this legislation. Would the member not at the very least acknowledge that that aspect of the legislation is good?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, first of all, with respect to the carbon tax, I gave a 10-minute speech on this bad piece of legislation and spent about 60 seconds on the carbon tax.

Government Orders

Clearly, it is a sore point for the member, but that is why I feel it is important for me to bring it up. Not only is the government clearly embarrassed to talk about the agenda to impose new taxes on Canadians, but it is very important to my constituents. That is precisely what I was elected to do, bring the concerns of my constituents to this House. We will continue to oppose the government's agenda with respect to imposing new taxes on Canadians at every turn, including the carbon tax.

I spoke about the air passenger bill of rights, and in the spirit of the season I would say that the Liberals may think it is a promise kept, but the devil is in the details. This passenger bill of rights is a phantom. It is very skeletal. It is more trick than treat. Members will observe, if they look at the legislation, that it does not at all create a passenger bill of rights, it is simply a framework to ask somebody else to create a passenger bill of rights.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual, I loved listening to my colleague's comments and his speech. I am sure that, with all the experience he has acquired in the House in recent years, he is capable of recognizing a government tactic when he sees one.

Bill C-49 strikes me as a perfect illustration of how the Liberal government is trying to run the country. The Liberals are trying to put everyone to sleep with a bill that deals with practically everything we talked about in a committee meeting. They are putting everything together in one bill. They are throwing all kinds of different things together, so that the opposition would not be able to support one aspect and oppose another. They are using tricks that prevent members from being able to vote properly on each aspect of the bill and to walk away with their heads held high. The Liberals know this is going to create some unintended consequences, but it does not matter. Canadians are used to seeing them govern like this.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, thank you to my colleague.

I completely agree. The government introduced a bill that contains many different elements. The opposition has not had an opportunity to discuss all of them, because the government has shut down the debate twice, once before the committee study and once after. It is not fair. It is not honouring the parliamentary process.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: We are going to resume debate with the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, but I will let her know that we will need to interrupt her shortly before two o'clock for the usual Statements by Members. She will have the remaining time when the House gets back to debate on the motion that is before the House.

• (1355)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act. This bill would amend a number of different bills, I believe 13 in fact, with many significant changes being more than just technical in nature. My focus will be on the issues around grain transportation as this portion of the bill is of great concern to those who farm in my riding of Yorkton—Melville

and ship their products from Saskatchewan to multiple destinations by rail.

I look at this omnibus bill and wonder what the rationale was for creating such complex legislation. It could have been more effective on many levels to split Bill C-49 into rail shipping, rail safety, air, and marine to target consultation to expedite the best legislation for each. My colleague, representing Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek and the transport shadow minister, put forward such a motion in response to the Liberal member for Niagara Centre, who raised the idea of expediting the passage of this bill in order to provide grain farmers a greater amount of certainty as they negotiate contracts for future shipping seasons. It is telling that the member did not have the support of his Liberal transport minister or his colleagues, as the Liberal vote was unanimously against splitting the bill.

The Minister of Transport's silence and inaction on critical and time-sensitive transport issues over the past two years, especially on rail transport, has fuelled uncertainty with both shippers and the railroads as they negotiate shipping rates for the coming season. The previous Conservative government introduced Bill C-30, which gave the Canadian Transport Agency the power to allow shippers access to regulated interswitching up to 160 kilometres, mandated that CN and CP both haul at least 500 tonnes of grain per week, and introduced a new definition for adequate and suitable service levels. With this extension, the number of primary grain elevators with access to more than one railroad with the extended interswitching limits increased from 48 to 261. These measures were met with universal support from the shipping community because, even if shippers did not use interswitching, they could use it as a tool to increase their negotiating position with the railways, as the shippers knew exactly how much the interswitch portion of the haul would cost them. At the same time, the former Conservative government had announced that the Canada Transport Act statutory review would be expedited. It began a year early in order to provide long-term solutions to the grain backlog of the 2013-14 shipping season and other problems in the transport sector within Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville will have seven minutes remaining in her time when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

[Translation]

OCTOBER 1970**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker,

When Justice meets chaos
in unheated homes
at five in the morning

When government reasoning ignites
at five in the morning

Some became wounded
at five in the morning
Some became chilled
at five in the morning

That is what Gérald Godin wrote on the eve of the October Crisis, on October 16, 1970, when Pierre Elliott Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act and had 500 innocent people arrested in front of their families, people like Gérald Godin, a humanist if ever there was one, the epitome of an open and modern Quebec, people like the great Pauline Julien and Gaston Miron. Can you imagine? That would be like putting Leonard Cohen in jail. There was also Michel Chartrand, ultimate champion of social justice, who was put in jail for four months. That too is what Canada 150 means to Quebec. Those 500 people were arrested without grounds for daring to love their people enough to make it known. I remember October 1970.

* * *

[English]

WE SCARE HUNGER

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School, in my riding, for the We Scare Hunger campaign. We Scare Hunger is an amazing initiative. Students from St. Thomas More, as well as students from across the city, will be collecting canned goods tonight for the local Neighbour to Neighbour food bank.

We Scare Hunger is an initiative that started over 18 years ago with 20 students from St. Thomas More, and now it has grown into one of the largest initiatives led by students in the country. Tonight, more than 850 students from St. Thomas More alone will be out knocking on doors to help those most in need. This year's ambitious goal is 100,000 pounds of canned goods.

I wish to congratulate the students and staff at STM, as well as the high schools across my ambitious city of Hamilton, as they carry out this fantastic initiative. I believe that STM will reach its goal of raising 100,000 pounds of canned goods tonight and will indeed scare hunger.

Go, Knights, go.

* * *

● (1400)

THE REFORMATION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mass literacy and the separation of church and state are

both products of the great reformation. In fact, it is impossible to understand modern history without an understanding of the impact of the reformation.

Five hundred years ago today, a young man named Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. This set off a series of events that changed the spiritual, theological, and political trajectory of the western world. Critical to the reformation was the conviction that nothing could compel an individual to violate his or her conscience.

Central to the reformation are the Five Solas of salvation: *Sola Scriptura*, by scripture alone; *Sola Fide*, by faith alone; *Sola Gratia*, by grace alone; *Solus Christus*, by Christ alone; and *Soli Deo Gloria*, to the glory of God alone. *Sola Scriptura* led to the improvement of literacy rates, which came from the idea that everyone should be able to read the Bible. It resulted in the translation of the Bible into nearly every language around the globe.

Today we commemorate 500 years of reformation and proclaim, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

* * *

HALLOWEEN**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):**

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

Niwakomacuntik Tansai Nemeaytane Awapamtikok.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, some politicians have skeletons, others bodies. Today is a very special, scary day. Today is Halloween, but it is also the birthday of my son Jacob Joseph Ouellette. He is 11 years old today. I miss Jacob very much and love him also. I am very sorry that I am often absent, but his mother and I are always thinking of him. I ask that he please continue working hard, smiling, helping others, keeping a positive attitude, and giving everything he has to the task at hand. He should remember that we love him and also his brothers and sisters: Xavier Gabriel, Edouard Real, Julien James, and Abigaëlle Rose.

I also congratulate the people who have made Winnipeg a safe place in our inner city to trick or treat on Halloween. Organizations like Ma Mawi, AYO, and Meet Me at the Bell Tower have made an incredible difference in our inner city. Thanks to Michael Champagne, Chris Clacio, Grace Scott, Samuel Trout, Mark Wright, Mary Jane Daniels, Fred Flett, Shirley Bear, Wayne Roberts, and Chickadee Richard. They are our heroes. They are Winnipeg.

[Member spoke in Cree]

*Statements by Members***HEALTH**

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in early September, my wife was admitted to hospital due to significant and serious concerns with her pregnancy. For the next six weeks, the hospital became a second home to our family. This was a difficult and scary time, but we made it through because of the dedication, love, and compassion shown by the entire staff of the hospital: the doctors, the nurses, and of course, the lovely people who brought in the meals.

Therefore, I stand here to express my personal and everlasting gratitude to the men and women who helped our family. I do not think any of us can quite truly appreciate the national treasure we have that is our public health care system until we need it. Because of this system and the people who worked so hard to care for my wife, my family was able to celebrate and welcome the birth of our baby girl, Isla, two weeks ago.

* * *

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Bill 62, which was recently passed in the Quebec legislature. We know that diversity is one of our country's greatest strengths. Unfortunately, too often we are forced to repeat this statement. I share concerns such as those highlighted in the *Ottawa Citizen* by Suzanne Doerge and Fathiya Warsame, of the City for all Women Initiative. We need to ensure that all rules across the whole country unite Canadians instead of creating an "us" and a "them".

As the Prime Minister has said on numerous occasions, we do not believe that the government should be telling people what they can and cannot wear. Canadians rightfully expect that their government will take the necessary steps within its power to ensure that everyone's rights are protected under the charter.

* * *

● (1405)

COMMUNITY BUILDERS VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 2017 marks a significant milestone for Canada. This year we celebrated our 150th anniversary since Confederation. What better way to commemorate this occasion than to recognize the amazing contributions made to our country by outstanding Canadians who give their time, talent, and resources to positively impact others and make our nation great?

The Community Builders Volunteer awards were created to recognize and celebrate the many volunteers in the Lethbridge riding who go above and beyond to give back. On October 20, I had the honour of recognizing and celebrating 18 amazing individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and businesses for their remarkable contributions to our community. The place I call home would not be the same without these individuals.

Today, in the House of Commons, I take this moment to formally recognize and honour those women and men of my riding who were granted a Community Builders Volunteer award.

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN THE OUTAOUAIS

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few days I have had the pleasure of announcing two exciting projects for Gatineau. First, we are going to begin re-cladding the Terrasses de la Chaudière complex, which is a group of federal government buildings where the largest contingent of Canada's public servants work. Together with my colleague from Hull—Aylmer, we are taking this opportunity to revitalize public spaces inside and outside the complex for our community and for the 6,000 public servants who work there every day.

This morning, I also announced the construction of a second complex for the Library and Archives Canada Preservation Centre, a \$400-million project that will create good jobs and preserve Canada's historic treasures. The federal government is working to ensure its presence in Quebec and the Outaouais.

* * *

JEAN NICOLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are some initiatives that deserve to be commended. For the second year in a row, I had the immense pleasure of swearing in the grade 6 student council at Jean Nicolet elementary school in Montreal North. In an exercise led by their teacher, Ms. Kerline François, 20 students campaigned for seven councillor positions. During their well-run campaign, they worked to sway voters while learning about the democratic process and group management. This inspiring initiative also gives the students a chance to get involved in school activities. I therefore wish these aspiring leaders every success in government, and I also commend the administration at this school in my riding of Bourassa, which has been running this exercise every year for eight years.

* * *

[English]

100TH INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the highlight this fall in Huron—Bruce was found in Walton, Ontario, which played host to 76,000 people for the 100th International Plowing Match. I thank Jack Ryan, Joe Ryan, and the entire Ryan family and their surrounding neighbours, who made it such a great venue.

I congratulate Jacquie Bishop on being named the first female chair of the plowing match in that 100-year history. I thank the thousands of volunteers, sponsors, and exhibitors, the musical entertainment, and the talent of Huron East and the surrounding municipalities. Special thanks go to the plowing association. What a fantastic, great event.

We are proud of our rural roots in Huron—Bruce and south-western Ontario. This was a fantastic plowing match, and I want to sincerely thank all the people involved. What a tremendous show we put on.

*Statements by Members***WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we conclude Women's History Month, let us pay tribute to the trail-blazing women who have shaped our country and our way of life. Today I would like to highlight some of the organizations in Brampton West, and the women behind them, that bring positive change to the women in our community.

The Lady Ballers Camp is an organization that develops girl-centred programs that encourage physical, emotional, and educational development. Led by Toyo Ajibolade, this camp has touched the lives of hundreds of young girls.

Hope 24/7 is an organization that assists victims of sexual and domestic violence. Laura Zilney, the CEO of Hope 27/7, has been a tireless advocate in her pursuit of ensuring that these essential services are available to all women who are in need.

I want to encourage young women across Canada to follow in the footsteps of these inspiring women and claim their place.

* * *

● (1410)

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to students for taking action against poverty. The students at Confederation Secondary School in Val Caron have come together to collect funds to provide food, clothing, laundry services, and public transit for their peers. They surpassed their goal in one night by collecting over \$3,900, which is truly amazing.

[Translation]

Champlain Catholic high school held a "Homeless for a Night" event that raised \$5,270 for the Chelmsford food bank. For the 17th year in a row, the students of Franco-Cité Catholic high school held a Thanksgiving fundraiser, and this year a total of 20,000 pounds of food was donated to the West Nipissing food bank.

[English]

All people deserve to have fresh food on the table and clothing on their backs.

[Translation]

I want to thank the faculty and parents for supporting these students' efforts.

[English]

I thank all staff, parents, and students for caring for their community.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we welcome the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Volodymyr Groysman, to Canada. This being his first visit to Canada, Prime Minister Groysman will be meeting with policy-makers and business leaders to discuss and improve upon existing projects and new partnerships between Canada and Ukraine.

Our previous Conservative government initiated many economic, diplomatic, and security agreements, to the benefit of both our nations. The strong historical and cultural links between Ukraine and Canada were strengthened by Conservative initiatives such as the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, the bilateral defence co-operation agreement, and more than \$100 million in aid to promote economic growth, democracy, and humanitarian assistance.

Canada still has much to offer Ukraine. Conservatives have called on the government to restore Radarsat imagery, to add Ukraine to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List, and to provide it with the lethal defensive equipment it has requested. We continue to call on the Liberals to work with Prime Minister Groysman to continue Canada's legacy of unequivocal support for Ukraine.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past August 24, Canadian soldiers marched in Ukraine's Independence Day parade carrying the Canadian flag in downtown Kyiv, which was a clear message to Ukrainians that Canada and NATO stand with them during this time of Russian military invasion and daily aggression.

The liberal democratic west faces a global hybrid war against our foundational values and a rules-based international order. Ukraine's largely volunteer army is in the hot conflict in the Donbas fighting Kremlin soldiers and proxies. Defending Ukraine's territorial integrity, these brave soldiers are a living shield for NATO and the west. Through Operation Unifier, Canada has trained 5,500 Ukrainian soldiers. Let us make sure that these brave men and women are properly trained and equipped to deter further aggression.

Today on the Hill we welcome Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman, and we extend to him a heartfelt greeting of *Slava Ukraini i Slava Kanadi*.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the Oromo people who are being persecuted by their own government in Ethiopia. Popular protests began in earnest against the government's master plan in November 2015. The plan seeks to dispossess Oromo people of their land in order to expand Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa. The plan followed on the heels of a number of development projects that had already displaced many Oromo farmers over the past decade.

The government has disregarded the Oromo people's right to peaceful assembly, using brutal force against its own people to quell protests across Oromia. The number of arbitrary arrests and untimely deaths continues to rise for Oromia's farmers, opposition politicians, academics, journalists, and students, among others.

Oral Questions

I urge the Canadian government to respond to this situation, voice Canada's concerns about the Oromo people in Ethiopia, and work with our allies in the international community to create consequences for the Ethiopian government's violation of its citizens' human rights.

* * *

•(1415)

TAXATION

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks it has come to our attention that the Liberal government has been unfairly raising taxes on Canadians suffering from diabetes. I now hear reports that the government is also targeting Canadians with mental illness.

Living with disease or disability is not easy. The government should not be making it even more difficult by forcing these Canadians to pay even more to deal with or treat their various conditions.

As the shadow minister for youth, sports, and persons with disabilities, I want to make it absolutely clear to those suffering from disease or disabilities that the Conservative Party is listening to them and we are fighting on their behalf. We will not let the government turn its back on them. We will not be silent. We will stand beside them and with them to undo these injustices.

* * *

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year's celebrations for Women's History Month have once again underscored the immense contribution of women and girls throughout our country's history. Each day this month stories were shared of trail-blazing women and girls who embodied the spirit of this year's theme, #ClaimYourPlace.

[*Translation*]

Their stories sparked a dialogue and inspired Canadians to get actively involved. On October 11, we celebrated the International Day of the Girl, reaffirming our role as a leader in the fight for girls' rights and gender equality around the world.

[*English*]

One week later, we honoured Persons Day and the five women who fought tirelessly to have women legally recognized as persons in Canada.

As Women's History Month draws to a close, let us channel this powerful momentum and rededicate our efforts to empowering women and girls here in Canada and around the world.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Minister of Finance secretly held his Morneau Shepell shares in a numbered company for two years. He

also introduced legislation on pensions that would benefit him personally. A former House of Commons law clerk stated that his conduct was, and I quote, a “huge error of judgment”.

Does the Prime Minister agree?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members and ministers are almost always required to do, the Minister of Finance worked with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that he was following all the rules and laws. He also put in place a screen to ensure he did not make decisions where he was in a conflict of interest, a step also taken by a former leader of the opposition, former minister Denis Lebel, and many people on both sides of the House who entered into similar arrangements.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a former law clerk of the House of Commons is astounded that the finance minister thought he was complying with the spirit of the Conflict of Interest Act by holding assets through numbered companies and that, at the same time that he was introducing pension legislation, he owned a company whose business is pensions. The former law clerk says that the finance minister “should've known better”. We agree completely. Does the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House works with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that their personal dispositions are in line with the rules in place. I can assure everyone that the finance minister followed that advice, and I am absolutely certain that the leader of the official opposition also followed the advice of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in accordance to his own personal tax dispositions.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the key difference here is that I disclosed everything to the Ethics Commissioner and the finance minister did not.

[*Translation*]

This is not a backbencher we are talking about. We are talking about the Minister of Finance, one of the government's most prominent ministers.

When did the Prime Minister find out that the Minister of Finance was in conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone on this side of the House works with the Ethics Commissioner. We comply with the Ethics Commissioner's decisions and advice.

In truth, it is not surprising to see the Conservatives attack the commissioner, because during their decade in government, they attacked the Chief Electoral Officer, the Information Commissioner, and the Privacy Commissioner. They also axed the national science advisor position. They were constantly going after the institutions that safeguard our democracy.

Oral Questions

• (1420)

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the finance minister who just cannot be trusted. He hid an offshore company from Canadians for two years. He secretly managed his Morneau Shepell stocks in an Alberta numbered company. He tabled legislation that could benefit him personally. The finance minister still owns another five numbered companies that are unaccounted for. When will the Prime Minister order the finance minister to disclose what he is holding in those numbered companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians and indeed all members opposite know that the finance minister worked with the Ethics Commissioner and followed her advice. What is not surprising is to see the Conservatives yet again attacking the integrity and the work of an officer of Parliament. For 10 years in government they attacked the Information Commissioner, they attacked the Official Languages Commissioner, they attacked the Privacy Commissioner, they took potshots at Supreme Court justices, and attacked Elections Canada every step of the way. The fact is that the Conservatives need to respect the institutions that defend Parliament.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government needs to respect Canadians who are demanding transparency. Only a Liberal would think it is a petty attack to ask a finance minister, who has responsibility to regulate and legislate the economy, to disclose what he owns in his numbered companies. This has nothing to do with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner herself. This has to do with the finance minister who has withheld information from Canadians. When will the Prime Minister order his finance minister to come clean?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, it is all a bit rich coming from the Conservative Party, who spent 10 years attacking and dismantling the institutions that protected our Parliament. It is the only government in the history—

Mr. Mark Strahl: That dog will not hunt, Justin.

The Speaker: Order.

I ask the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope, and others, not to be heckling and talking when someone else has the floor. We do not call attention to the absence of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: However, I can assure members he did heckle.

The hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party is the only one in the history of the Parliament of Canada to be held in contempt of Parliament as a sitting government. The members opposite have shown no respect for transparency and openness. That is why Canadians elected a better government two years ago. That is why we continue to raise the bar on transparency and openness, despite their attacks.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my problem with this defence is the fact that, when Liberals campaigned, they asked Canadians to vote for

them because they were nothing like the Conservatives, and now they are saying not to blame them because they are doing what the Conservatives did before.

[Translation]

My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley had a motion adopted yesterday at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to invite the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to discuss the changes that will be needed to close the loophole in the Conflict of Interest Act. We moved the motion last week and the Liberals voted against it. Everyone agrees that the loophole is a problem.

When will the Prime Minister finally come around to closing it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I respect the independence of the committees. I am happy that the committee in question will be studying the legislation that governs conflicts of interest and inviting the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. I think it is good to hear what parliamentarians have to say on the matter. That is part of what this place does in a constant effort to improve itself. However, we on this side of the House have always shown openness, transparency, and respect for Canadians.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that multiple ministers are benefiting from a loophole in the Conflict of Interest Act, and the Ethics Commissioner has been calling for this loophole to be closed since 2013.

For a government that held itself to such a high ethical standard, why is the Prime Minister refusing to do the right thing: take the Ethics Commissioner's advice and close the loophole?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that this information has been available for a long time on the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's website; indeed two ministers had controlled assets held indirectly. The finance minister has announced that he is moving forward, going above and beyond what was originally asked. In the case of the other minister, those assets were divested 18 months ago.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is a confusing response.

Let us try this one. Leading into next week's climate meeting in Bonn, the United Nations is raising concerns with the growing emissions gap. It has called for deeper action by all nations. The environment commissioner has reported that the Liberal government is failing to even meet Stephen Harper's targets.

Given the UN's concerns, and reports that Canadian methane emissions may be double those forecast, will the Prime Minister commit today to more substantial cuts to our greenhouse gas emissions?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect leadership from this government that both builds and grows the economy while protecting the environment. Indeed, Canadians know that is the only way forward, where the Conservatives are very clear that they do not care about protecting the environment, and the economy suffered as a result. The NDP does not particularly care about the economy at all, it seems, with its approach.

What we have demonstrated is a responsible pan-Canadian framework and a real plan to reduce emissions, unlike any previous government of any political stripe in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. The commissioner of the environment confirmed it in her report a few weeks ago. Now the UN's head of the environment is also sounding the alarm with regard to the need to reduce greenhouse gases.

The Liberals adopted Stephen Harper's weak reduction targets and, obviously, contrary to what the Prime Minister said, the Liberals will not meet the Copenhagen targets or even the Paris targets. Canadians deserve a real plan to combat climate change.

When will the government present such a plan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives and the NDP want to force Canadians to make a false choice between the economy and the environment.

The Liberals, like all Canadians, know that the only way to build a better future for our children and grandchildren is to protect the environment and create economic growth at the same time. That is why we are introducing a Canada-wide plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that includes carbon pricing, protecting our oceans, investing in the middle class, and creating economic growth for everyone, because that is what Canadians want.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance spent months calling small business owners, farmers, and everyone who creates jobs in our regions tax cheats while he was peddling his tax reforms. Today we are learning that it was the Minister of Finance himself who has been exploiting tax loopholes for his own personal benefit. To make life easier for the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, who is currently investigating the finance minister's case, will he disclose the assets he has hidden in 2254165 Ontario Inc.?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of my assets have been fully disclosed to the Ethics Commissioner. That is absolutely clear. Saying it many times will not actually change the fact.

The question for me, though, is for the 21 members on the other side of the House who have private corporations, and whether they have in fact taken the same approach. For example, has the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington disclosed what is in 782615

Ontario Inc. or what is in 2412420 Ontario Inc., or, for example, has the member for Niagara Falls disclosed what is in—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me explain the difference between the members of this side of the House and the Minister of Finance. First of all, no one on our side hid a villa in France. Second, no one took two years to report their assets, which is just outrageous. Third, no one over here created a law that would benefit themselves personally.

Coming back to the main question, will the Minister of Finance tell us what he is hiding in the companies numbered 2070689 and 2254165?

● (1430)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, I worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to make sure she fully understands my personal situation. She made some recommendations on how to avoid putting myself in a conflict of interest. That was very important.

The reason the members opposite are so interested in my personal situation is that they know that it is very important to continue to focus on the finances of Canadians. It is very important to improve the lives of Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while he was executive chairman of Morneau Shepell, the current Minister of Finance advocated for policies he later implemented when he became the minister.

Only when he got caught did these policies that benefited his shares come to light; only when he got caught did he meet with the Ethics Commissioner; and only when he got caught did he agree to sell his shares because of the conflict.

If the minister will not disclose the contents of his other mysteriously numbered companies, maybe he could tell us what is in 1446977 Ontario Inc., so that we will know he is not in conflict yet again?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have confirmed to the House before, I have reported all of my assets to the Ethics Commissioner, 100% of my assets. I hold no controlled assets whatsoever in any of my holdings or the holdings of my family.

What I can say is that rather than focusing on my finances, it would be nice if the members opposite focused on the finances of Canadians. That is what we are focused on. To the member for Milton, we are focused on her constituents and their situation, helping them with an increase in the Canada child benefit, for example, and helping them with an increase in the working income tax benefit, so they are better off.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order. I do not think the House constantly needs to hear from members who do not have the floor when someone is asking or answering a question. I would ask members to try to restrain themselves.

The hon. member for Milton.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we did this summer when we brought to light the fact that small business owners in Canada were being called tax cheats by this Minister of Finance. For two full years, this minister drove the economic policy that benefited not only his personal wealth but also the wealth of his friends and his family. Who knows how many other policies this minister was part of and implemented directly benefit his holdings. When will the minister quit his game of hide and seek, come clean, and tell the House the contents of numbered companies 1446977 and 2135042?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what do we know right now? We know that 21 members on the other side of the House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Most members of all parties are able to sit through question period without reacting to things they do not like to hear, and that is bound to happen around here. Members, I know, can behave in a restrained manner and can control themselves, so I encourage them to do so.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, what we know is that 21 members on the other side of the House have private corporations. We also know that the members on the other side of the House argued vociferously against the changes that we wanted to make to make sure that our tax system was fair. Therefore, while we were working on behalf of Canadians, working to make sure that we could lower tax rates on small businesses across this country, they were focused on the advantages that 1.7% of those privately incorporated individuals might have. While they protect their interests, we will protect the interests of Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have asked members a few times—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I know members would sooner be trick or treating, but we need to get on with things.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): The minister wants to know what is in my company. I am one of the 21 he just listed. It is a rental property. How hard was that?

What is in 2254165 Ontario Inc.?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1435)

The Speaker: I know members will want to hear another question, probably by the same member, so they would want to be quiet to hear the answer to this question if they want to hear the next one.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, all of my assets are disclosed and none of my assets are controlled assets. It is important to make sure that we disclose everything to the Ethics Commissioner. What I would like to know again, as I said, is whether that is actually happening on the other side of the House, including whether the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge has disclosed everything in 638484 Alberta Ltd., or whether the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has disclosed everything in 615783 Alberta Ltd. at DBK Holdings.

These are questions that are quite interesting, but I will say that for me what is more important is that we actually think about what is going on for the constituents in those ridings, whether they are actually seeing the advantages that we are trying—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the minister was speaking, I had an opportunity to confirm with the 21 members in the caucus to whom he referred. They have all confirmed that none of them owns stocks in a company that he or she regulates. Only the finance minister has that distinction. Therefore, can he just tell us, what is he holding in 2254165 Ontario Inc.?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only assume that the continuing obsession with my personal finances is because the members on the opposite side do not want to think about what is actually happening for their own constituents. If they went out and knocked on doors, what they would find is that 450,000-plus people now have jobs who did not have jobs two years ago. They would find that we have the lowest rate of unemployment in a decade. They would find that our economy is doing well and that people in their ridings are finding themselves and their families in a better situation. That is what we are going to continue to focus on. That is what we were elected to do.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we now know that Netflix is not the only digital giant from Silicon Valley getting special treatment. Google had 37 meetings with members of the government, Microsoft 35 meetings, and Amazon almost 100 meetings. Microsoft hired a former Liberal Party director, and worse, the heritage minister's own chief of staff used to work for Google. Not only is the Canadian industry playing by a different set of rules, where is its Facetime with the Minister?

I have a simple question. When will the minister get to work for Canadian companies instead of just American ones?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a chance to have great creators in this country and we need to stand up for them. While Canadians have access to these platforms and they are a part of our everyday lives, we need to be able to present the views of creators when discussing these platforms. That is exactly what we did.

Oral Questions

That being said, we had a chance to meet with artists across the country and to hear from 30,000 Canadians. We have had more meetings with the Writers Guild, with the CMPA, with CIMA, and in general with ACTRA than any other platforms.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Clearly they are selling out our culture, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

The curtain is being pulled back on the snarl of lobbies funded by California and Silicon Valley. When we think of Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Netflix, and all these people, we understand why the minister of heritage is now talking about the business model for our culture. We naturally have no opportunity to hear from the cultural coalition, and the minister has not responded to the letter from the Quebec government, which was sent a month ago. That is pathetic.

Microsoft hired a former Liberal Party director and the heritage minister hired a former Google executive as her chief of staff.

Are conflicts of interest contagious?

• (1440)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the coalition. I had the opportunity to meet with its representatives and also to meet with different stakeholders on various occasions.

I am always pleased to meet with industry stakeholders, as I did last Sunday, when I attended the ADISQ gala with my colleague. It is also important to meet with representatives of digital platforms because instead of hiding from this reality we realize that these platforms are part of our lives.

It is our role, as members of government, to present the views of artists and our creators to ensure that there is Canadian content on digital platforms.

* * *

[*English*]

ETHICS

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner is raising new concerns about the finance minister's conflict of interest. Canadians have lost confidence in him because he hid his Morneau Shepell shares in a numbered company in Alberta and failed to disclose his offshore corporation in France. Canadians are wondering just how many more assets and conflicts of interest he is hiding in his other numbered companies.

I ask the finance minister this. What assets is he hiding in 2254165 Ontario Inc.?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can do this Bingo game too. What about 615783 Alberta, 782615 Ontario, 1149976 Ontario? Or, I could actually focus on the important numbers: 300,000 children lifted out of poverty; a 9% small business tax rate as opposed to 11% when the previous government was in power; or maybe we could think about the fact that we have 450,000 new jobs, or perhaps the 3.7% growth in the economy over the last year.

These are the kind of numbers that matter. They are the numbers that matter to Canadians.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking that the finance minister cannot see the difference between a member of Parliament owning shares and a member of cabinet who owned pension shares and advocated for and introduced Bill C-27, which is pension reform legislation. It is a completely different story. He is the one in the conflict of interest. No one on this side has introduced legislation that would put us in a conflict of interest.

Will the finance minister come clean and tell Canadians what else he is hiding in 2070689 Ontario Ltd.?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is really shocking is that members opposite do not really understand how it works in this country. We have—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am sure members understand that they need to hear the answers and I need to hear the answers. We need some order.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, for the 338 members of this House, for the ministers of this government, for the ministers of the previous government, and for the ministers of the government before that, we work with the Ethics Commissioner to disclose all of our assets, as I have done. We get recommendations from the Ethics Commissioner on how we can ensure we do not have conflicts of interest, which I did. Then we follow the recommendations of the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that we actually execute that on an ongoing basis, without conflicts of interest, which is what I did. That is—

The Speaker: The hon. members for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance does not know how our government works, and this is why we are in deep problems now.

[*Translation*]

Canadians are interested in knowing what assets the finance minister holds for the simple reason that he is the finance minister. That is all. The finance minister is the man behind all of these tax measures. That is why, before he sold his shares, every decision he made placed him in a conflict of interest. The problem is that he still owns companies we know nothing about.

Can the minister tell us what he is holding in 1446977 Ontario Inc.?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I will continue to focus on the numbers that really matter to Canadians, such as the 300,000 children no longer living in poverty, and the fact that we have the highest growth rate in the G7 and the lowest unemployment rate in the past decade. These are the numbers that matter to our country and to us as a government.

Oral Questions

●(1445)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this minister's government is running a deficit of over \$20 billion, which is twice as much as the Liberals promised during the election campaign. We know that this minister takes action only when he is caught. That is what he did with his shares and his private companies, and that is what he must do now with his numbered companies.

I have another question. Can the finance minister tell us what he is holding in 2135042 Ontario Inc.?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the same answer to the same question. It is very important for us to consider how we can improve the lives of Canadians. That is our goal. It is a very important goal. Fortunately for Canadians, our economy is in great shape. As we said, we now have the highest rate of economic growth and the lowest unemployment rate in a decade. That is very important for us now and for our children's future.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the current government lobbies the Senate to pass Bill S-3, indigenous women and the Feminist Alliance for International Action are again calling on the Liberals to accept a Senate amendment to end all sex discrimination. This amendment, similar to one proposed by my NDP colleague but voted down by the Liberals on National Indigenous Peoples Day of all days, would fully remove sex discrimination from the Indian Act. Why would the feminist Prime Minister, whose most important relationship is with indigenous peoples, not remove all sex discrimination from the Indian Act?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring gender equity for all women in Canada. We are committed to ensuring adequate time for a meaningful debate of Bill S-3, particularly in the context of the new court deadline of December 22. Our government is committed to working with first nations communities, impacted individuals, experts, and parliamentarians to remove all sex discrimination from the registration provisions within the Indian Act.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, legal discrimination against women is unacceptable in 2017, unless apparently they are indigenous women, because colonial Ottawa still maintains the power to decide who has indigenous rights in this country and it has disenfranchised thousands of women. Now the courts have ordered a remedy, and what a sight. Our feminist Prime Minister is saying he needs more time to consult. Come on, governments have had 150 years of time to obstruct the rights of indigenous women. Time is up. Will the Prime Minister amend Bill S-3 and end sex discrimination against indigenous women once and for all, yes or no?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, we are the first government ever in the history of Canada to make all efforts possible to eliminate sex

discrimination for women within the Indian Act. That is our intention. That is our commitment. We are working with first nations, with individuals, and with Canadians to ensure that we remove all sex discrimination from the registration provisions of the Indian Act. That is a commitment that we stand by as a government.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have watched in horror as hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people have been forced from their homes and murdered in Myanmar over recent months in what is being described as ethnic cleansing.

[Translation]

Last week, the government announced major initiatives to help put an end to the violence in the region.

Can the minister give us an update on the additional measures our government has taken to allow Canadians to help the Rohingya?

[English]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge Park for his involvement in this important issue.

Our government remains deeply concerned by the crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya. That is why I just launched a Myanmar crisis relief fund, a matching fund.

[Translation]

The government will match every dollar Canadians donate between now and November 28 to support the efforts of our humanitarian partners on the ground. I urge Canadians to be generous and to visit Canada.ca/myanmarcrisis.

• (1450)

[English]

TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister continues to insist she has made no changes to the policies that govern the disability tax credit. We have letters that prove that is not right. However, the most convincing proof is that 80% of those with type 1 diabetes who used to be approved for the credit are now being denied. Who told the minister to raise taxes on those suffering from type 1 diabetes?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no changes have been made to the eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit and for people with diabetes. The concerns raised by the groups are important, but I can say that for 10 years, the former Conservative government made cuts to scientific research. Our government has invested \$41 million in research into diabetes. We will continue to work with our partners to eradicate diabetes in Canada.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the new documents, and 80% of applicants for the disability tax credit were approved before May of this year. Now, that same 80% who were approved are being denied.

The revenue minister continues to say that Canadians will get the disability tax credits they deserve. Therefore, my question is, does she think people with type 1 diabetes deserve the disability tax credit, yes or no?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, no changes have been made to the eligibility criteria for the tax credits. Our objective remains the same. We want people to receive the credits and benefits to which they are entitled.

We are working with our partners. We have invested \$41 million in research. We have simplified the forms for the tax credit. We have hired clinical nurses. We are doing the work the public is asking us to do.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Minister of Finance says, we know how the Liberal government operates. The Minister of National Revenue has to find money to pay for the Liberals' deficits.

Unfortunately for Canadians, she is taking her mandate a bit too seriously. She has chosen to take money from the most vulnerable, people with diabetes, mental illness, and other health problems.

On this side of the house, instead of defending ministers who hide their family fortunes, like in an episode of *Dynasty*, we will always stand up for the least fortunate.

Which side will the minister choose? Will she finally stop attacking the most vulnerable?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former social worker, I am very proud to say

Oral Questions

that I have always worked for society's most vulnerable and least fortunate.

I have some good news for my colleagues opposite too: total tax credit approvals for people with mental illness reached unprecedented levels last year.

We are making mental health care credits easier to get, we are simplifying the forms, and we are hiring clinical nurses. We are continuing to work with our partners. That is what our government promised, and we intend to continue delivering on that promise.

[English]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in question period, the revenue minister continued to pat herself on the back by saying "Our government is fully committed to ensuring that everyone receives the tax credits to which they are entitled".

These words are cold comfort to those who suffer from type 1 diabetes, mental illness, or autism who are suddenly being denied disability tax credits, all because these Liberals need more money to fund their out-of-control spending. Is the denial of the disability tax credit on a massive scale this minister's idea of ensuring that all Canadians get the tax credits to which they are entitled?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians should get the tax credits they are entitled to. I would suggest that my colleagues opposite stop telling Canadians things that are not true. We invested \$41 million in diabetes research. We invested \$5 billion in mental health. That money will enable us to help 500,000 young people under the age of 25. We have simplified our forms, we are hiring clinical nurses, we are working with our partners, and we will keep doing all those things because that is what we promised Canadians.

* * *

• (1455)

[English]

LABOUR

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, reports from *The Globe and Mail* state that this government is failing to track workplace fatalities in Canada. It is critical that the Liberals lead and collect new data to support evidence-based interventions in dangerous work to protect Canadian workers. Does the government know how many worker fatalities there have been in Canada this year? Of course not, as they do not have the information.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberal government work with us, take leadership, and collect data to keep Canadian workers safe and alive?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree with the member opposite that it is tragic whenever a worker loses their life in the workplace. That is why we are taking action to make sure that the health and safety of Canadian workers is first and foremost in what we do. Everyone has the right to a safe workplace and a healthy working environment.

In budget 2017 we announced new compliance and enforcement tools that include new administrative monetary penalties and the authority to publicly name violators. We are also currently working with provinces and territories to harmonize occupational health and safety regulations.

We agree data is important. We will move forward.

* * *

[Translation]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after the troubling revelations of harassment at CSIS, the Correctional Service Canada is now at the heart of a scandal at the Edmonton jail. The assaults and threats against female correctional officers are unacceptable.

[English]

We know CSC has suspended the offending individuals, but my question to the minister is this. Can he assure us that such behaviour is not happening in other federal establishments, and will he undertake investigations to be absolutely certain?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, the situation at the Edmonton institution is under investigation by a number of agencies, including the police. Accordingly, the commentary with respect to that particular situation needs to be careful to avoid any interference with the investigation.

However, I want to absolutely assure him that the concern that he has expressed is shared by the government. I have asked the commissioner of Correctional Services to ensure that this problem is contained and goes no further.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's immigration system should be compassionate, safe, and fair. However, this Prime Minister ignored for months the desperate pleas from genocide survivors. He has no plan to support the integration of tens of thousands of refugees. He has refused to close the loophole in the safe third country agreement, instead prioritizing those who have entered Canada illegally. He has also created massive wait times for everyone else who is trying to enter Canada by playing the rules.

How can the Prime Minister bring in 300,000 more people while having no plan to fix the mess that he has created?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of the mess that is being created, the party opposite brought a grand total of three Yazidi refugees out of genocide. We have brought almost 800 survivors of Daesh to Canada.

The party opposite gutted settlement services for newcomers. We are investing more than \$1 billion in settlement services.

The party opposite gutted health care for refugees, who are the most vulnerable people in the world. We will take—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government often forgets that immigration is not about numbers. It is about people. Last week, I met with Mirabel. She entered Canada—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. This time I need to hear the question.

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

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, last week, I met with Mirabel, and she is watching us today. She entered Canada as a live-in caregiver and has played by the rules. All she knows is that every time the Prime Minister prioritizes a person who has illegally crossed the border, her application to bring her kids here seems to drop to the bottom of the list, and that is not fair.

Is the Prime Minister going to fix the system that he broke, or is he going to continue to let Mirabel and everyone else like her pay for his arrogance?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so happy the member opposite has finally found a priority in reducing backlogs. We inherited a system under that party, where we were waiting for 24 months for citizenship. We cut that down to 12 months. Under the Conservative members' party, when it was in power, it was taking 48 months for spouses to be reunited. We now have a new standard of 12 months. We eliminated 20,000 cases from the spousal backlog. That means 20,000 spouses are now reunited because of our efforts.

I am so proud the member has finally joined us in enthusiastically embracing and reducing—

● (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister appears to be attacking my colleague when he is the one who is off base; in fact, I would say he is way out in left field.

Oral Questions

With respect to illegal asylum seekers arriving at the Quebec border, the processing time has been dropped from the usual eight hours to one hour. The officers do not have enough time to do their work.

Now the government wants to welcome 300,000 new Canadians.

That is fine, but what are we going to do to help our immigration and border services officers?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we faced an extraordinary situation in the summer, but I am proud of the fact our agencies responded. We were able to move around resources to make sure we responded to the pressure points. We made sure we dramatically improved processing times for work permits so asylum seekers could support themselves and eliminate pressure on provincial health and social programs.

We have established a task force to make sure we collaborate across all levels of government. Our response has been efficient and has made sure we move forward together.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as tomorrow begins a month-long awareness campaign on the impacts of diabetes on Canadians, I stand in the House today to acknowledge and recognize the profound impact this disease has on patients and their families.

In addition to supporting programs that prevent diabetes, including healthy eating and physical activity, could the Minister of Health please inform us how our government is supporting the researchers who are tirelessly working to find new treatments and hopefully a cure for this disease?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Brampton South for her tireless advocacy on this issue, as she chairs the all-party caucus on diabetes.

Our government recognizes the impact diabetes has on the health of patients. That is why we are making investments in research, prevention, and early detection of diabetes. In 2015-16, alone, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research invested over \$41 million in diabetes research.

Tomorrow is the beginning of Diabetes Awareness Month and we will continue to work hard to support people living with diabetes.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister should be restoring the tax credit for diabetics.

This past Friday in Abbotsford, within a 10-hour period, five different residents died of opioid overdoses. This kind of tragedy is playing out in hundreds of communities across our country, yet the federal government's silence on this health crisis has been deafening: no response, no strategy, no plan.

When will the minister wake up and realize Canadians are dying on her watch? When will she act?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that we are in a public health crisis and we are responding in a way that is comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate, and also evidence-based.

We recently announced \$7.5 million that will enhance the development of evidence-based practices that could be used by those dealing with the crisis on the ground. This builds on our investment in budget 2017 and many actions to date.

We will continue to bring forward evidence-based solutions to help save lives and turn the tide of this national public health crisis.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Senate opted out of the Phoenix pay system to find another service provider. However, trying to fix the Phoenix boondoggle with even more contracting out is like the Prime Minister trying to fix his government's lack of vision by putting on fake glasses. The government will fail to meet collective bargaining deadlines because of Phoenix.

Rather than spooking our struggling senators and delaying collective bargaining with actual public servants, will the Liberal government rebuild a publicly administered payroll system for all federal employees?

● (1505)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure everyone that resolving this issue is my top priority. People deserve to be paid properly and on time.

When the previous government irresponsibly treated pay modernization as a cost-cutting measure instead of the complex, enterprise-wide business transformation that it was, it set the project up to fail and exposed it to enormous risk.

We are taking the steps that the previous government did not take. We are improving governance, putting in place business processes and training, addressing technological challenges, providing emergency support for workers, and working with partners, in particular, public sector unions. While we did not create this problem, we will fix it.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SPORT AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear that our government is going to increase funding for the athlete assistance program. It is especially important in light of the fact that the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, will open in 100 and 128 days, respectively. We hope that our athletes will do their very best.

Can the minister tell us what impact increased funding for the athlete assistance program has on Canada's high level athletes, many of whom are from Laurentides—Labelle?

[English]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to seeing our carded athletes succeed at the highest level.

That is why I am very pleased we are investing \$25 million over the next five years in our athletes. This will allow us to put \$265 more a month in the pockets of these athletes. This will allow them to pay for rent and food, so they can concentrate on their athletics. This is their first raise in 14 long years.

Our government is committed to seeing them succeed in PyeongChang and beyond. We are committed to our athletes.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are forever rolling out the red carpet for foreign lobbyists who constantly influence this government's decisions and are brushing off the interests of Canadian companies.

This government has had 99 meetings with Amazon, 37 with Google, and 16 with Netflix, all companies that we know for a fact are seeking changes to our copyright and broadcasting laws.

It makes us wonder if the heritage minister is just a puppet for American Internet giants. How can the minister stand by and let American corporations rewrite our laws?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, instead of ignoring the problem like the previous government did, we decided to tackle this issue head-on so we could protect and promote our culture in the digital era. That is why it is important to have a chance to present the views of our artists and creators to digital platforms, to make sure our arts and culture can thrive on those platforms.

I would also like to say to my colleague that, unlike the previous government, we also meet frequently with cultural groups. We are involved. We are in discussion with dozens of representatives of the cultural community, including—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

ETHICS

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how we are supposed to protect our culture without any guarantees regarding francophone content, but fine.

The Minister of Finance is introducing a bill on pension plans, when his company manages pension plans. Morneau Shepell manages a pension fund for Bombardier, and yet he negotiated a \$372-million loan. The minister is proposing a tax reform that makes businesses pay more taxes, but he included a grandfather clause for his own company. Something does not add up here. If the minister does not have the judgment needed to step back when his own personal interests are at stake, he should simply withdraw from cabinet.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. Unfortunately, I do not agree with him.

[English]

We support the aerospace sector, and we will continue to engage with Bombardier and the suppliers. This is so important to our economy. We will make sure that we invest in research and development. We will make sure that we defend the sector when it is attacked by companies in the U.S. We will continue to support the workers in the aerospace sector.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what we have here is the same old sponsorship scandal party, the same old Liberal culture of entitlement.

Week after week, every time that government answers a question, Canadians feel more cynical and politicians as a whole look worse. With everything that has been going on, we are going to need another Gomery commission.

Will anyone in that government acknowledge that being a shareholder in a human resources company like Morneau Shepell and introducing a pension fund bill amounts to a potential conflict of interest?

● (1510)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I worked with the Ethics Commissioner to be certain I was not in conflict of interest.

I believe it is very important to give Canadians a chance to have a dignified retirement. That is one of our main goals. That is why we improved the pension system for all Canadians and the guaranteed income supplement for seniors. We will continue to make things better for our seniors. That is an important goal.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to order made Friday, October 27, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-46.

Call in the members.

• (1520)

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

(Division No. 383)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
 Alleslev
 Anandasangaree
 Arya
 Badawey
 Bains
 Baylis
 Beech
 Bittle
 Boissonnault
 Boudrias
 Breton
 Caesar-Chavannes
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chen
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 Dhaliwal
 Di Iorio
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Ferguson
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Freeland
 Fuhr
 Gill
 Goodale
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Hehr
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Joly
 Jordan
 Khalid
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lebouthillier
 Leslie
 Lighthound
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)

Alghabra
 Amos
 Arseneault
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Bibeau
 Blair
 Bossio
 Bratina
 Brison
 Carr
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fry
 Gerretsen
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Grewal
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hussien
 Iacono
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Khera
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Levitt
 Lockhart
 Ludwig
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)

Maloney
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
 Monsef
 Morneau
 Murray
 Nault
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Pauzé
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Plamondon
 Qaltrough
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Trudeau
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Weir
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young

Government Orders

Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Morrissey
 Nassif
 Ng
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poissant
 Rankin
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Samson
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Stewart
 Tan
 Tootoo
 Trudel
 Vandenbeld
 Virani
 Wilkinson
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 Zahid — 186

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albrecht
 Anderson
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Bernier
 Bezan
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Boucher
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Calkins
 Caron
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Clement
 Cullen
 Deltell
 Doherty
 Dreeschen
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Falk
 Finley
 Garrison
 Gladu
 Gourde
 Harder
 Hughes
 Johns
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Kusie
 Lake
 Laverdière

Albas
 Allison
 Angus
 Aubin
 Benson
 Bergen
 Berthold
 Blaikie
 Bouleric
 Brassard
 Brown
 Cannings
 Carrie
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Cooper
 Davies
 Diotte
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Eglinski
 Fast
 Gallant
 Gagné
 Gendreau
 Godin
 Hardcastle
 Hoback
 Jeneroux
 Julian
 Kent
 Kmiec
 Kwan
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Leitch

Government Orders

Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Moore
Motz	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Poillivie	Quach
Raitt	Ramsey
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Sansoucy	Saroya
Scheer	Shields
Shiple	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 126

PAIRED

Members

Lemieux

Thériault — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

[English]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded division, government orders will be extended by nine minutes.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

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

The Speaker: The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has seven minutes remaining in her speech.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 2016 of the Liberal mandate, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities undertook a study of Bill C-30 and held a number of meetings on the merits of these measures and whether they should be allowed to sunset. The vast majority of the testimony heard was supportive of maintaining the 160-kilometre regulated interswitching limit. That is why the committee's first recommendation was the following:

That the Canadian Transportation Agency retain the flexibility provided under the Canada Transportation Act by the Fair Rail For Grain Farmers Act to set interswitching distances up to 160 km, in order to maintain a more competitive operating environment for rail shippers with direct access to only one railway company.

The current government ignored the committee's main recommendation. Basically, what the government is proposing with this new legislation is to replace 160-kilometre extended interswitching with the creation of a new long-haul interswitching on hauls of up to 1200 kilometres or up to 50% of the length of the entire haul.

Shippers would be charged the regulated interswitching rate for the first 30 kilometres of the haul and then a rate determined by the Canada Transportation Agency, which would be determined on a case-by-case basis based on the price of a similar haul for the remainder of the distance to the interswitch point. Shippers would only be able to interswitch at the first available interswitch point within the zone. What the government has done is effectively taken a little-used existing remedy called a competitive line rate and renamed it long-haul interswitching.

When Bill C-30 was first introduced, there was universal support among shippers for the extended interswitching. The recommendation from stakeholders was to retain the interswitching distances up to 160 kilometres in order to maintain a more competitive operating environment for rail shippers with direct access to only one rail company. Again, the Liberals went through the motions of appearing to consult, and once again deaf ears prevailed.

To make up lost time and opportunity, the transport committee began special hearings on Bill C-49 in the week prior to the House's return from its summer recess. A total of 44 hours of testimony from dozens of stakeholders and expert witnesses was heard in each of the sectors touched by Bill C-49. Also on record are briefs and letters consisting of thousands of pages of data with more than 100 suggested technical amendments from those whose lives and livelihoods would be affected by this bill. From these incredible witnesses, there was unanimous agreement that Bill C-49 was a good start and that, if their suggested amendments were made, the bill would actually accomplish its stated objectives.

After only giving two weeks to review this mountain of information, the Liberal members of the transport committee defeated more than two dozen reasonable technical amendments. Again, these amendments were suggested by a wide range of stakeholders and experts and were written to make the act a workable solution for all involved.

Once again, the Liberals have a skewed definition of consultation—in other words, they pretend to listen and then blah blah blah—and prove again that it is only a buzzword that they used to get elected. With the introduction of long-haul interswitching, the Liberals sought to create their own solution to a problem that had already been addressed with a reasonable Conservative solution. In the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, the previous Conservative government created a regime of extended interswitching that worked so well in the prairie provinces that shippers of all kinds from across Canada requested that it be extended to the entire country. Instead, the Liberals are committed to their complicated, inefficient long-haul interswitching regime that has such poor conception and so many exceptions that it would be basically useless to many shippers.

Government Orders

For example, a minor technical amendment proposed by both Conservative and NDP members of the committee would have changed the wording of the provision to allow the first interchange point to be in the reasonable direction of the shippers' destination. Under the legislation as it is, shippers may have to send their products potentially hundreds of kilometres in the wrong direction to reach the nearest interchange point, increasing their costs.

• (1525)

What happened to this very reasonable amendment? The Liberals defeated it. They ignored the advice and recommendations of even the the most competent, experienced, and concerned Canadians in regard to extended shipping lines.

Canadians have been ignored by this Liberal government. The laudable and credible efforts of Canadians to contribute in meaningful ways to improving the weaknesses of the Liberal legislation have again fallen on the deaf ears of the government.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, regarding transportation 2030, what are the member's thoughts about improving our system, modernizing it, increasing its safety and reliability, as well as making it cleaner and more efficient so we can be competitive? What does she have to say about that?

We want to ensure that Canada has a competitive transportation system, but safety is paramount. Does the member not want to see an improvement, a modernization, of our transportation system to ensure the resulting economic benefits, as well as the system's safety, which is paramount to our citizens?

• (1530)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, as I have stated in regard to interswitching, the Liberal government already had a really good recommendation to continue with what was already in place, something that the people of the Prairies saw as very valuable. As a matter of fact, shippers across this country said they wanted it to remain in place for them.

This new approach is complicating things to the point where they will probably have to send their products in the opposite direction from which they need to send them. A simple recommendation to fix that was denied by the Liberal government. To me, that is not putting the interests of our shippers first.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I was sitting in opposition, we had a serious problem out west on the Prairies in getting wheat to market. Many farmers felt frustrated with the government of the day, the Harper government, not responding with necessary legislative changes to provide additional assurances of service to them. The best example I can give is that we had piles of wheat in the Prairies, empty ships on the coast, and a Harper government doing nothing to address the issue.

Does the member not, at the very least, acknowledge that the government is moving forward on some important issues that will have a positive impact on our farmers out west and, in fact, on farmers in general?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, actually, many shippers feel that the new approach to long-haul interswitching to be created by Bill C-49 will merely be a renamed version of the current and hardly used competitive line rates. There must be reasons that system is hardly used. This new long-haul interswitching rate would be more difficult for shippers to use and would also not serve as a useful tool in negotiations with the railroads, which Bill C-30 did. That bill was greatly appreciated by our farmers, to the point where they said to the government that they did not want to see it changed. They wanted to see that good policy continue.

There is another issue with this long-haul interswitching remedy. It will increase U.S. railroad access to Canadian traffic at regulated rates without reciprocity. When NAFTA is being renegotiated, it is unwise for Canada to be making this concession before those negotiations have gotten to where they need to be on this issue.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend represents a riding in the Prairies, I represent a riding on the coast, and we have a real connectivity problem in getting grain from the fields to container ships and out of the Port of Vancouver.

Does my hon. colleague agree that Transport Canada could do more to better coordinate the shipment of grain by rail to connect with the large container ships when they reach our west coast?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I know this is of deep concern to the hon. member and her riding. There are a lot of ships that come in and pick up a certain amount of grain, but based on quota and whatnot, they have to wait for the next amount to come in before they can fill their ship. This is causing issues on the coast.

Clearly, Canada has a lot to do to improve the way we network internationally. However, the first step is doing everything we can to ensure that our products that are landlocked on the Prairies get to those ports in a timely manner.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, does not live up to its name. Many aspects of this bill represent, quite simply, a step backwards.

The government announced its air passenger bill of rights and many other great measures as part of this bill. Not only is the bill of rights not there, but there is nothing to enhance our security. We see this as a missed opportunity. Bill C-49 could have really addressed some of the concerns of Canadians, like the people in Lac-Mégantic, for example, who are still waiting for their bypass. This omnibus bill is problematic in many ways. Unfortunately, once again and as usual, the government is introducing a bill that is far too big to be examined effectively. This omnibus bill includes a lot of measures, and we did not have time to comb through it and discuss it properly.

Government Orders

As well, in the Bloc Québécois, we have fewer rights than members of the other parties in the House. There are not enough of us. We cannot sit on committees, ask questions to experts who come testify, or debate the bill in depth in the House. My comments today will therefore be the only ones by my party on this bill, which will have major repercussions on transportation as a whole and affect many of our laws.

For example, Bill C-49 gives the minister the authority to allow airlines to circumvent the Competition Bureau as he sees fit. That is something. Call a spade a spade: it makes no sense. The government is politicizing a process that currently a judicial one. Come on. We can already see the lobbyists in the minister's office, and almost lining up one by one to get the green light to act on plans that will reduce competition. We can even imagine that they will obtain that by attending a fundraising cocktail party. It seems to be a model that works.

How can the Minister claim that that is for the good of passengers? We are not fooled. Everyone in the House understands that the government does not want to repeat the situation we saw in 2011 and 2012, when Air Canada and United Continental wanted to coordinate their activities on 19 transborder routes. The Competition Bureau studied the matter and determined that, on 14 of those routes, Air Canada would have far too much market share, which would have greatly reduced competition. The bureau found that a near-monopoly on certain routes would lead to an increase in the rates paid by travellers. Its role is to block that, and that is what it did.

For some routes, like Montreal to Washington or Montreal to Houston, Air Canada and United Continental together would have held the entire market. That is a near-monopoly for sure. In the end, travellers would have paid the increase in ticket prices, which is obviously unfair, because of the rules of trade. The Competition Bureau stated that, if the situation changed, it would be reassessed. That is logical and fair, even though Air Canada did not like the decision, as they wanted to line their pockets.

It was the right decision for travellers and other businesses. The Competition Bureau committed to reassessing the situation if there were any changes. In our opinion, there was therefore no problem. If we do not want that to happen again, why would we want to politicize something that is not politicised? Why give the Minister the authority to circumvent the Competition Bureau? That is what we are asking here, and that is one of the elements that we deplore in Bill C-49.

What purpose will the Competition Bureau and the Competition Tribunal serve if the government gives the minister the authority to circumvent them as he sees fit? We can see that, with the Liberals, the interests of travellers take a back seat to those of big business and party cronies. We can think of Air Canada in particular.

Another thing I would like to mention is foreign ownership. This bill seeks to increase the foreign investment limit for air carriers from 25%, or one-quarter, to 49%, which is basically half. A single corporation or individual cannot own more than 25% of voting shares. The idea here is to give airlines more cash flow and to promote the creation of low-cost carrier services. The government is saying that Canadian air carriers will not be subject to the controlling influence of international investors. That seems fine at first glance,

but it creates an opening that allows the government to get its foot in the door and make major changes to the way things are done. We are worried about the future. What will the next step be? The next time a company like Air Canada is on the verge of bankruptcy, will it meet with the minister to say that it wants to be sold to a foreign company?

• (1535)

We already know that the government did not even make Air Canada obey the law when it decided to hand over its maintenance division to Aveos. The government even changed the law after the fact, and announced it the Thursday before an Easter recess. I remember. I was very angry with the transport minister that day. That is why these measures being announced in an omnibus bill is not very reassuring.

It is the same thing when it comes to shipping and coasting trade. The government is taking a number of steps backward in that regard. Bill C-49 will allow ships registered in other countries to reposition empty containers, when currently only Canadian shipowners have that right. Way to go. It is already clear that good jobs will be lost here in Canada and that they will be replaced by cheap foreign labour. Why? The government is putting large foreign corporations ahead of Canadians. That is not even to mention the different training standards, which means that there will not only be fewer jobs here in Canada but that there will also be a decline in the quality of work and a significant increase in the risk of accidents. That is no small thing.

We also have concerns over the part of the bill on transporting products on our river. The bill allows ships registered in European Union countries to transport bulk commodities between the ports of Montreal and Halifax in accordance with the Canada-EU agreement. We are concerned about this announcement and the pilotage legislation that is being discussed. By all accounts it looks to us as though our seaway pilots will no longer be the only ones to navigate the St. Lawrence River. That is one of our major concerns and we see an opening in it. We know that it takes a real expert to navigate our river. It has challenging winding routes and many obstacles.

It is more than our jobs being threatened, but our very safety. The pilots' role is not just to pilot their ship, but also to assess whether the ship that enters the seaway presents an environmental or security risk. Our pilots are also responsible for protecting the public's safety and well-being and can decide that a certain ship is not to enter our river.

The day this role is no longer reserved for seaway pilots is the day we have serious problems. A foreign pilot hired by a foreign country that instructs the pilot to do their job without concern for the environment or safety will have no choice but to follow orders. Why take this chance? This should not be allowed. We have to remain vigilant and speak out against such practices. We are unnecessarily exposing ourselves to huge risks.

Government Orders

There are many elements in this mammoth bill. We do not have the time to study them all, but we would like to draw the attention of the House to the issue of the infrastructure bank. Bill C-49 shows us once again that the federal government is backing away from infrastructure. The bill opens the door wide to the funding of ports and other federal infrastructure by the infrastructure privatization bank. Investors will expect to make a profit, the infrastructure will not be maintained as well, and there will be more charges and fees. Taxpayers will have to pay more. As we have said, with this bank, profits are privatized while losses are socialized. It is too bad that this is in Bill C-49. Once again, the Liberals are helping their friends.

As I said in my introduction, there are many reasons why the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this mammoth bill and we do not have time to cannot mention them all. This bill just does not address Quebecers' concerns. As I said at the beginning, we were expecting that there would be something for the people of Lac-Mégantic, but there is absolutely nothing. There is no mention of the bypass.

The government has made it a habit to put everything into a single mammoth bill, even though it is breaking an election promise by doing so, and then making sure that we cannot study it thoroughly. That is not the best approach to take and we are against it.

This bill politicizes a process by giving the minister the authority to circumvent the Competition Tribunal. That is a step backwards, a step in the wrong direction. It will contribute to the loss of our businesses. It is the withdrawal of the state for the benefit of the private sector. The government is potentially jeopardizing safety on the St. Lawrence River and sacrificing our jobs for the benefit of foreign companies.

As everyone may have guessed, the Bloc Québécois will be opposing this bill, which we found severely disappointing.

● (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure the member often travels by plane or rail. When we get on a plane, we want to know that there are always continuous improvements and that employees are always looking after our safety. That is paramount. On a plane, voice recorders are in the cockpit and data is being collected. All of that is put into place. That does not happen today when it comes to rail safety.

We have seen some tragic incidents take place over this past year, and in prior years. The former government shirked its responsibility to address that safety. We want to ensure that safety is there, by looking to those continuous improvements to ensure data and the voice recordings are captured in the cockpit so we can use it to improve our systems. Therefore, we are bringing safety, modernization, and innovation together to ensure passengers are as safe as they would be in a plane.

We do not want to see any kind of incidents happen with respect to our planes. It is the same with our rail safety. Does the member think this is a good thing? Would that help his community and his citizens?

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mississauga for his question. First, I would remind him that I travel by bike more than by train or plane. Living in Joliette allows me to get around using active modes of transportation such as walking and cycling.

I must say I find the actions of the Liberal government deplorable. It is the same for almost all issues. If we listen to their speeches, like the one my colleague just gave, we hear fine statements about about train safety and about how we need to do more and what the government is doing is fantastic. In speaking about the budget and finance, the government constantly refers to the middle class. The mini budget repeated that phrase 61 times. In reality, however, both it and the budget contained virtually no measures for the middle class.

In our opinion, the rail safety measures set out in Bill C-49 are completely inadequate. Yes, putting black boxes on locomotives and recording what is done is another step, but people in Quebec just lived through the Lac-Mégantic disaster. The subcontractor must have its own maintenance and monitoring plan. Everything is being left up to the private sector. That is the ultimate in complacency. Rail cars that are no longer up to standard are being used to transport oil. Companies are pressuring employees. We are still dealing with the same toxic combination that previously ended in disaster, and that is shameful. This would have been the time to present a real comprehensive rail safety plan so that a tragedy like that never happens again. The government should have given the people of Lac-Mégantic something, like a rail bypass, and made sure that a situation like that never happens again.

Right now, all we have is a black box for rail passengers who are travelling. The government is out of touch with reality. Once again, we agree with what the Liberal Party is saying, but it is not backing up its words with action. The Liberals cannot govern using only a communications plan.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member across the way when he tries to give the impression that very little has been done. The minister has indicated a commitment to safety on a number of occasions. Within two years, we brought legislation forward to deal with safety. The member might have wanted to see a lot more done in that area, but having sat in opposition for a number of years, the Harper government did nothing with respect to that. It did not give it the attention necessary.

Therefore, I am a bit surprised that, at the very least, the member would not recognize we are moving in the right direction. There is always room for improvement. In fact, we saw that at the standing committee. A number of opposition amendments were accepted and incorporated into the legislation.

Government Orders

Would the member not agree that the actions of the government to date are far greater than what we witnessed in the previous 10 years under the Harper government? Yes, there is some room for improvement, but at least we have a minister that has currently said that this is of the utmost importance and that we will continue to do what we can to ensure our railways are safe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, in Quebec, between high school and university, students attend CEGEP, where they take mandatory philosophy classes. In those classes, they learn about sophisms, which are false arguments. One can condemn what the previous government did, but one cannot justify one's own actions on the grounds that those of the other government were worse.

The idea of a black box in passenger trains is a step in the right direction, but it is a very, very small step. I just talked about the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. There is a lot to be done, and we see this as urgent.

My colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, said the Liberals are taking a step in the right direction, but the problem is that all of the other elements in this mammoth bill are big steps in the wrong direction. On seaway safety, I am sorry, but this is anything but reassuring, and the situation is getting much worse. On air transportation and the Competition Bureau, why is the minister giving himself the power to just ignore the analysis of transactions? What was wrong with the existing system? I think there has been too much pressure from lobby groups. We need a government that can stand up to businesses and do a better job of ensuring safety and keeping prices down to benefit consumers. Bill C-49 is certainly a step in the right direction in some cases, but it is not nearly enough considering everything that needs to be done.

● (1550)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member across the way made reference to air travel. We know the legislation will enable the minister to provide to all Canadians throughout every region of our country a sense of more accountability from airlines by putting in place rights for air passengers. Constituents who I represent perceive this as a very strong thing. It was part of the election platform we put forward to Canadians. We are fulfilling another commitment.

Would my friend across the way not agree that his constituents would be pleased to know we have forward momentum in dealing with the very important and sensitive matter of ensuring airlines are more accountable for the services they provide? At the least the opportunity is there today for government, after this legislation passes. The opposition can then hold the government and the minister accountable if it feels they have in fact dropped the ball once the regulations are in place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, we wanted a passenger bill of rights. We wanted passengers rights to be guaranteed, but we wanted that from concrete measures, and not from some window dressing in Bill C-49. It does not even contain the minimum standards.

It seems to me that the government reached a consensus with airlines through some great deal. It is as though the industry were the government's boss and told the government what to do so it would not be angry. It almost seems as though the government is lobbying on behalf of the companies. As for consumers, they need much stronger measures, like the measures found in other countries, such as the United States. We were told we would have a great passenger bill of rights, but when we look more closely at this omnibus bill, we see that it contains very little. It is really disappointing.

[*English*]

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Red Deer—Mountain View.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-49 has a number of legislative gaps.

[*English*]

This bill is simply an omnibus bill. It is a whole bunch of random ideas tossed together to make one large omnibus bill.

Obviously, the transport minister looked around his department and asked if anyone had anything he or she wanted passed in legislation. He took a list of requests, put them in this bill, and that is what we have. Besides having some loose connections to transportation, there is little common among the items in this bill.

One component of the bill outlines a passenger bill of rights, but there is nothing concrete, no details outlined in the bill, that truly protects passengers. The reception of this bill by passenger rights advocates has been the political equivalent of standing for three hours on the tarmac on a hot summer's day. It is really terrible. That is because the Liberal government is proposing a passenger bill of rights that fails to actually do much for passengers. However, the one thing it would do is allow the Minister of Transport and the Canadian Transportation Agency to set monetary compensation for passengers on their own, with no oversight, yet again another constant theme of the Liberal government.

We all know that the last thing Canadians want is the Liberals having an easier time spending tax dollars. Along those lines, there is more.

The Liberals have also suggested possible increases to the cost of airport security charges.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

The Liberals also opened the door to possible increases in security service fees at airports. To top it all off, the minister also gave himself the power to approve or reject risk ventures between airlines, which could diminish the role of the Competition Bureau, which is independent and non partisan.

[*English*]

This is yet another scenario under which the Liberal government has placed more power in the hands of the minister and less power and control in the hands of Canadians, where it rightfully belongs.

Government Orders

Not to be outdone by other omnibus bills, the government has also decided to tackle the issue of grain shipping by rail. I am certain prairie producers, just like those in the riding of the member for Brandon—Souris and other members who represent grain farmers, were delighted when they heard the Liberals would tackle this grain shipping issue. As part of the previous Conservative government that supported the Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act, greater opportunities were provided for grain farmers. The Liberals are not focused on that.

What have the Liberals done? They have proposed major changes to shipping policies that were introduced by a former great minister of agriculture and member of the House, the Hon. Gerry Ritz, and the very capable minister of transport at that time, the member for Milton. By changing the interswitch rate, the Liberal government will make it more difficult for shippers and farmers. We will also see an increased use by American railroads without reciprocal rights for Canadians. Again, I am not sure what the logic of that is. Last I checked, the Canadian government should be putting Canadians first.

One hopes this is not the Liberal negotiating strategy for NAFTA, literally giving the farm away. The Liberals could and should keep the Conservative policies in place, policies that were designed by people who actually have experience in this area and who are working, or have worked, with grain farmers. Instead, they have chosen to side with the industry, making life far more difficult for shippers and farmers.

Another part of this omnibus bill, and, as I said, this is just a laundry list of things, is a proposal for the railways to have locomotive voice and video recorders. This has already been mentioned in the House today. I believe this initiative is designed to help prevent further rail accidents, but, again, this is another item that has been added to the list and the legislation has not been thoroughly thought out.

There is not a person in the chamber who does not want to improve rail safety. We want our railways to be as safe as possible. As a former minister of labour, I understand the call for locomotive voice and video recorders, the LVVR, to be installed, but I do not think this legislation has been thoroughly thought through.

First, Transport Canada just launched a review of the Railway Safety Act in May. Why would we not wait until that review comes back before moving forward?

Further, the public has not seen the analysis of the privacy aspect of this initiative. Regulations mandate that airline cockpit voice recorders keep only a record of the last two hours of a flight. Thus far, all we have heard is that an entire transport trip would be recorded with respect to rail. The minister needs to clarify this, and fairness is important. As I have mentioned before, details are important, and the details of this legislation simply do not exist.

There have also been concerns raised about the use of this data. The legislation states that it would only be used for Transportation Safety Board accident investigations and for rail corporations to inform their safety management systems. However, there are concerns that there would be no limit on LVVR usage in the legislation and that the rail industry would use it for employee

discipline beyond the intended purpose. This initiative clearly needs to be better thought out, and quite frankly, clarified. Workers need to know what is happening, and the rail industry needs to understand as well.

If all these loose ends do not demonstrate the weakness of, and the concerns about, this omnibus bill, I have decided to save the best for last. In one of the two marine-related clauses, the minister is proposing to amend the Canada Marine Act to allow port authorities and their wholly owned subsidiaries to receive loans and loan guarantees from the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

As members know, I have some strong views on this bank. First of all, it seems like just another classic example of an ill-thought-out component of the Liberal omnibus bill. Despite calls from every party and every sector in Canada to separate the Canada Infrastructure Bank from omnibus Bill C-44, the Liberals ignored everyone and rushed ahead with this flawed initiative. Even the bible of the Liberal elites, the *Toronto Star*, demanded further parliamentary review. This \$35-billion slush fund, as the *Star* says, “should not be railroaded through Parliament as a mere footnote in a 300-page omnibus budget implementation bill”.

The only people in Canada who seemed to have been in a rush for this infrastructure bank to be created and the legislation passed were those who use their connections with the Liberal Party to make a few more dollars. The infrastructure bank has been a boondoggle from day one. The budget in 2017 revealed that \$1 billion of lapsed infrastructure funding from 2016 will not be reallocated until fiscal year 2022-23. If that is not bad enough, we learned that \$15 billion will be taken away from community infrastructure projects to finance the infrastructure bank.

Municipal leaders in my riding and others across the country, particularly in small communities like my own, are wondering why they never seem to benefit from the Liberal government. I wonder if part of it is that the Minister of Transport comes from a large urban area, and the Minister of Infrastructure comes from a large urban area, and they just do not seem to understand that small communities like Collingwood or Alliston, or others across the country, actually need help as well. Small municipalities may never benefit from the infrastructure bank, because even if they scraped together all the money for a large proposal, they would be competing for the minister's approval. While folks like the Minister of Infrastructure and the transport minister live in large cities, small-town Canada actually has no place in the Liberal infrastructure plan.

Government Orders

If the clear favouritism toward big cities over the rest by the Liberals is not clear enough, the governance of the infrastructure bank is so vague and open-ended that we can see a governance scandal on the horizon. I will start with the mandate of the bank. What mandate? There does not seem to be a clear one. The mandate of the Canada Infrastructure Bank is so vague that we are not sure what it is actually supposed to target, and there is no policy directing the bank's investments thus far.

● (1600)

[*Translation*]

There are also no criteria to determine whether the bank has made investments that benefit Canadians, or whether it has been a huge waste of money and resources.

[*English*]

It will certainly be the latter, as the bank duplicates the work of the P3 Canada fund, which is a completely independent crown corporation.

Alarm bells have also been rung about the bank and its potential for political interference, and there is good reason for this. Final sign-off on the project will be in the hands of the minister, and we know that this is a flawed initiative.

We have learned that foreign companies are able to apply for it. Let us say that a Chinese donor to the Liberal Party applies to the bank and receives \$100 million as a loan, and the project goes bust. Who is on the tab for that? It is Canadian taxpayers, people in my riding and yours, Madam Speaker.

Like Bill C-44, Bill C-49 is an example of a poorly thought-out omnibus bill. It would do little to improve transportation.

I will be opposing this legislation, as will my colleagues on this side of the House.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when we look at this vast country, with a pretty small population, what we have seen are a lot of monopolies and oligopolies when it comes to transportation in our rail system and our airlines. We have few, and that has caused a lot of concern, a lot of challenges, and a lot of difficulties for our shippers.

The member should listen to the experts and read the science on modernizing our transportation system and making a better transportation system.

I listened to University of Saskatchewan professor James Nolan, who said that this is good news for our grain shippers. He said, "The bill is surprisingly pro-shipper. Shippers have got a fair number of concessions that they wanted".

This legislation would meet shippers' requirements when they have only one or two transport companies in their area they are able to negotiate with. This legislation would enable them to move away from that, maybe the primary carrier, and have another carrier take care of their needs. That has not been possible, and that has been a challenge for farmers. We must listen to the experts.

Would the member for Simcoe—Grey not agree that bringing in more competition through Bill C-49 would help our industry, our

farmers, and our businesses compete in what we find in our country, which is a transportation system with few players?

● (1605)

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Madam Speaker, we had a former minister of agriculture in the House who put forward a bill in 2011 called Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers. It was overwhelmingly supported by grain farmers and those who support them in what they are doing throughout western Canada.

There is a reason there are a lot of Conservative members on the Prairies. It is because we actually support grain farmers and the people who support them. This legislation would not do that. I look forward to the Liberals going back to what we put in place in 2011.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, in her speech the member for Simcoe—Grey mentioned how uncomfortable it is to sit on the hot tarmac for hours, and then she spent a lot of time talking about all the good things the previous government did.

In nine years of government, why did the Conservatives not bring in a passenger bill of rights, when it is clearly what Canadians want to see?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Last I checked, Madam Speaker, we are debating Bill C-49, and it would do nothing for passengers.

I was very clear in my remarks. The bill is a hodgepodge of a number of ideas, but there are not a lot of details. The devil is in the details, and passenger advocates have been clear that this legislation does not cut it.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there has been a big boom, and we are getting a lot more tourists coming to Canada. The tourism association of Canada has lauded this legislation, because it would bring assurance that those who are coming from outside, and domestic tourists, could get on our rail system, get on our planes, and feel safe.

That member's party, for 10 years, did not do anything. The Conservatives shirked that responsibility. They left it aside. Why did they not do anything for 10 years on something that is so important to the safety of our citizens and our travellers?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Madam Speaker, the member began by talking about individuals actually being able to come to this country for tourism. Jacking up the fees for security and making it more expensive to enter the country, and more expensive for passengers, is not the way to increase tourism. We on this side of the House are about creating jobs. That means not increasing fees.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part today in the debate for Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act. This Liberal omnibus bill would substantially amend 13 different acts and have a profound effect on three major modes of transportation: rail, air, and water.

Government Orders

These are big changes, and it does not look as if the Liberals would be changing the rules for the better. Bill C-49 is the first legislative response to the 2016 Canada Transportation Act review. While we welcome the commitment to a modernized and safer transportation strategy, we are concerned that the proposed changes would have costly unintended consequences.

While I would like to discuss all the complicated sets of changes from Bill C-49, such an undertaking would be impossible, given the time constraints of this debate. Today, I would like to particularly talk about the changes to rail transportation and what this means for our Canadian farmers and producers.

Our biggest concern on the changes to rail transportation has to do with the changes to the long-haul interswitching that this bill would make, in replacing the provisions introduced by the previous Conservative government with Bill C-30. Bill C-30, or the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, extended interswitching distances to 160 kilometres. Those provisions expired on August 1.

While new interswitching provisions were anticipated, this bill is far from meeting its objective of improving shipper and producer options with the new 1,200-kilometre interswitching tool. The system introduced through Bill C-30 was popular with shippers. It provided the certainty of a regulated rate up to 160 kilometres, and it is key that they dealt with the regulated rate for that full 160 kilometres.

With Bill C-49, the Liberals are putting forward a new long-haul interswitching tool on hauls of up to 1,200 kilometres, or up to 50% of the length of the entire haul. Shippers would be charged the regulated interswitching rate for the first 30 kilometres of the haul, and then the rate determined by the Canada Transportation Agency, which is determined on a case-by-case basis based on similar pricing hauls. That goes for the remainder of the distance to the interswitch point.

Shippers would only be able to interswitch at the first available interswitch point. The nearest interswitching location for many shippers and producers in northern Alberta and British Columbia would be in the Kamloops–Vancouver corridor, and the other exclusionary zone is from Quebec City to Windsor. Interswitching is not allowed beyond 30 kilometres in these areas. For captive shippers, the new interswitching provisions would do nothing to encourage more competitive rates or improve competition.

This is a serious problem. It is important to remember that railways in Canada operate in a near monopoly situation. Captive shippers and producers have no choice but to use one company, to which they are effectively held hostage. This situation could put shippers and producers at a real disadvantage.

While there are provisions in Bill C-49 that would allow shippers to request a contract from a railway with reciprocal penalties, the penalty needs to be designed to acknowledge that the railways have much greater economic power than the shippers. We can also see that Bill C-49 is intended to encourage the efficient movement of shippers' traffic while creating a system that is fairly balanced between the shipper and the railway, but this original intention is eclipsed by the many uncertainties of Bill C-49, which are also present on this issue. To achieve the intended outcome, the

government must improve and clarify its provisions for both issues of interswitching and penalties.

Bill C-49 also proposes changing the 30-kilometre interswitching rate so that the interswitching rate over 30 kilometres would be decided by the CTA on an ad hoc basis, as I mentioned earlier. This 30-kilometre interswitching rate would be set each year. It purports to take into account the railway's infrastructure needs across the entire network, which could increase the rate paid by shippers.

The rate-setting regime this bill introduces needs to be designed to ensure shippers always have access to competitive rates. As it stands, the rate would be derived from comparable traffic that is subject to captivity. This system needs to concentrate on a concrete review mechanism to ensure it is actually working for shippers.

● (1610)

However, the Liberals cannot just design this system and leave it to simply administer itself. It is not a budget. Without a sunset clause or predesignated review dates in two to three years, there are absolutely no guarantees for shippers and producers that they will benefit from it.

To remain competitive, shippers and producers rely on clear provisions to ensure efficient access to competing railways. The Liberals are failing to provide clarity and assurances for our Canadian shippers.

In addition, the new long-haul interswitching rates would be more difficult for shippers to use and will not serve as a useful tool in negotiations with the railroads. The proposed slew of changes to the long-haul interswitching rate present very vague outcomes. The sheer number of the regulatory changes and the administrative cost will put Canadian carriers at a disadvantage, especially against U.S. carriers.

Some argue that implementing these changes will increase U.S. railroad access to Canadian traffic at regulated rates without reciprocity. The government has expressed a desire to increase agricultural exports exponentially in the coming years, but has come up short with policies that would help achieve this. If we want to help the agricultural sector increase production and expand its global market share, we need to do more to increase its competitiveness in the global market, not restrict it. One of the ways to do that is to make sure they have efficient and reliable ways of moving their products.

Transportation needs to work much better and the bill must strive to improve rail transportation, because increasing the amount of produce that our amazing farmers produce will be useless if getting it to market becomes a substantial business cost for our producers. Canadians need and expect great rail service. We need an efficient system that ensures the cars show up and grain gets shipped on time.

Government Orders

An article in the Manitoba Cooperative states:

Western Canada's bigger-than-expected crop is moving to export slower than at last crop year's record pace, and while grain companies aren't panicking, Keystone Agricultural Producers' (KAP) president Dan Mazier says it's costing farmers....

For most of the current crop year, which began Aug. 1, Mazier said CN Rail hasn't delivered as many cars as it did a year ago, based on data published by the Ag Transport Coalition (ATC). It reports weekly on the number of cars most grain companies order and the number the railways deliver.

I have the Ag Transport Coalition numbers here for week 12 from October 15 to 21, showing that CN supplied 51% of the hopper cars that were ordered for shippers for that week, which resulted in an unfilled shipper demand of 2,614 hopper cars; and CP supplied 94% of the hopper cars ordered by shippers for grain in week 12, resulting in unfulfilled shipper demand of 281 hopper cars, with nearly 3,000 in total not making it in week 12.

In addition to that, speaking of competitiveness, we are also aware of the ongoing NAFTA negotiations. It is therefore remarkable that the government would allow the new 1,200 kilometre interswitching distance to increase U.S. rail access to Canada at regulated rates, allowing the U.S. to access this Canadian traffic without reciprocity. It seems like weak negotiating on the part of the government to give up this leverage before the NAFTA negotiations are concluded. It is another head scratching idea by the Liberal government to propose such changes even as NAFTA is being renegotiated. No wonder people think that the Prime Minister is napping on NAFTA, because Canadian competitiveness seems to be at the bottom of his priority list. Policies like this directly hurt our competitiveness and are yet another hurdle for producers and shippers to clear.

As it stands, there is simply too much uncertainty about the impact of the newly redesigned interswitching provisions. They need to be reviewable and timely.

Unfortunately, all of this uncertainty and unintended consequences stem from the Liberals' inability to actually consult and listen to industry experts and Canadians. The Liberals are quick to spend taxpayer money to travel around the country to consult and take selfies with Canadians, but when it comes down to it, the Liberals only listen to themselves.

•(1615)

Members from this side of the House have spoken to many stakeholders and experts. Many of these experts believe that what the Liberals are proposing is a convoluted remedy with unknown consequences.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my friend opposite is a fellow member on the international trade committee. We often talk about ensuring our transportation system is smart, efficient, effective, and secure. We can agree that we are a trading nation and we have to get our agricultural products or other industry-type products to our markets.

The member cites a number of experts and articles, etc. Business Vancouver indicates that this "legislation aims to put grain shippers first". It continues to say, "Grain shipping industry stakeholders and analysts are applauding the federal government's move to modernize Canadian transportation law and streamline regulations in the sector."

Vancouver, which is one of our biggest ports, wants to ensure it continues to prosper as a business. To do so, it needs a modernized transportation system. We must move forward. For 10 long years under the previous government, we were stalled. We were not getting our goods to market as quickly as we would have liked.

The member knows full well that we are trying to expand our markets in Canada and around the world. We need our transportation system to do that. It is the lifeblood of getting those products to market.

Why would he not want to move forward? Business Vancouver has said that we should streamline regulations and modernize Canadian transportation to get these products to market as quickly as possible and help Canadian business.

•(1620)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, part of what the hon. member said was that regulations needed to be streamlined. That is fine, but we need to ensure the basis of the legislation is sound and that any regulations that come into are useful. That is key.

Both the member and I sit at the trade committee and have spent time in the U.S., talking to producers there. Of course, CN and CP are big players in the U.S. However, we lack that same type of reciprocity in Canada.

We can think about the opportunities of having U.S. lines coming into Canada. This would help our producers compete. It does not exist now. We do not go into negotiations between the two countries and put something like this on the table, saying that this is how we want to deal with it. I doubt it would be worthwhile to do that.

On his point with respect to what happens in Vancouver, in the same report, we talk dwell times and how long it takes to get loaded without the cars. Obviously, it is a problem on the other end as well.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I wish to notify you that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Windsor West.

When I look at this bill and examine some of the debate surrounding it, I think about some of the Liberals' key messaging over the last two years, specifically how they like to talk a lot about helping the middle class and those working hard to join it. However, when we look at some of the measures contained within Bill C-49, I believe that some of them are indeed designed to help the corporate class and not the middle class.

I want to concentrate my speech, because to give a 10-minute speech on such an expansive bill makes is nearly impossible to do in the detail it deserves, but there are a few key areas I wish to touch on that I believe have incredible significance for the constituents I represent and, indeed, many Canadians across this great country.

Government Orders

We have opposed some of the principal amendments proposed in this bill. I have to give great credit to my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his incredible work on the transport committee, and the way he has informed our caucus of the work he is doing. He did a lot of great work on this bill. He attempted to shift it, to amend it, to change it, and to make it more amenable. We can see that those efforts came to naught when the Liberal-dominated committee chose to reject them.

The first measure in the bill that we oppose is with respect to the arrangements between airlines. This bill amends the Transportation Act to give the Minister of Transport the power to approve joint venture arrangements between airlines even if the Commissioner of Competition finds an arrangement to be anti-competitive and one that could increase the price of airline tickets. Again, this measure is not really designed to help middle-class Canadians, who will have to suffer through this if prices are increased.

Next, the Transportation Act is amended to increase the limit on foreign ownership of Canadian airlines from 25% to 49%. I believe there was even a study cited on Transport Canada's website showing that this would have absolutely zero effect on increasing the competitiveness of Canadian airlines. Therefore, we have to wonder why that measure is in here.

Another point is with respect to the amendments to the Railway Safety Act that would will force railway companies to use video and voice recorders.

Of course, there is also the attempt to create some sort of passengers' bill of rights, wherein the Canadian Transportation Agency is ordered to propose and make regulations to establish a new passengers' rights regime. Indeed, this last issue is one that is very near and dear to our caucus. In previous parliaments, several members have fought long and hard to codify a passengers' bill of rights through private members' bills. Therefore, although we are glad to at least see the attempt made here, we are certainly unhappy with the end result.

This bill primarily protects the interests of foreign investors and violates the right to privacy and workers' rights. That is specifically with respect to railway workers.

We are certainly in favour of improving the rights of air travellers and protections for grain shippers, but we want to call upon the government, and indeed we have called upon the government, to separate those specific measures out of this omnibus bill so they could be studied as separate pieces of legislation and passed into law. I think the government side would have found a lot of co-operation from the Conservatives and NDP if those measures had been left to standalone bills so they could be examined in the detail they deserved.

We opposed Bill C-49 at second reading, and certainly made attempts to amend the bill at committee. Many amendments were put forward by both the Conservatives and the NDP, but ultimately many of them did not make it. We moved amendments specifically to establish far more concrete air passenger protection and compensation measures, to make the interswitching routes more accessible to grain farmers, and to protect the labour rights of train conductors, which were all rejected by Liberal members of Parliament.

Now I would like to talk about the joint venture agreements between airlines. Currently, the Commissioner of Competition has the power to determine whether these joint venture arrangements are anti-competitive and whether to apply to the Competition Tribunal. It gives me great pause to now know that the minister is in fact going to have final power over these measures.

• (1625)

The bureaucracy is supposed to be non-partisan and not influenced by outside events. However, cabinet is lobbied extensively by many different companies and private interest groups. In the current government and in previous governments, once corporations try to bend the ear of government, legislation sometimes is changed in their favour. To give the minister this kind of power, a person who can be lobbied by industry, and who perhaps gets a greater voice than the average Canadian citizen does, gives me cause for concern.

If Air Canada proposed an arrangement to merge its operations with those of an American company, even if the commissioner were to find that agreement would lessen competition among airlines and would increase ticket prices for passengers, the minister could still approve that arrangement. We are quite concerned with this.

With the amendments to the Railway Safety Act, Bill C-49 would force railway companies to fit their locomotives with video and voice recorders. The government wants us to believe this measure will improve rail safety, but we are worried that Canadian National and Canadian Pacific could use the information to discipline their employees and measure their productivity.

We believe the bill is far too vague and does not specify how the private information of train conductors would be accessed, collected, and used by the minister and the railway companies. Therefore, we proposed amendments to limit the use of these video and voice recorders to the Transportation Safety Board. Of course, that was rejected by the Liberals. We have concerns this may violate those workers' charter protections, specifically under section 8 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The vice president of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference stated:

We think the bill in its present form is contrary to our rights as Canadians. To exempt 16,000 railroaders from PIPEDA, we believe is not appropriate, and this legislation would call for a specific exemption for the purpose of our employers, the people who have been found to foster a culture of fear, to watch. We have a problem with that.

I would like to move on to the part that has the most significance for people all across Canada, the venture to try to establish some sort of rights regime for passengers.

In the previous Parliament, the NDP introduced Bill C-459, which would have codified many of these measures and put them explicitly into an act. It was a far stronger effort than what we see in Bill C-49. The measures in Bill C-49 give the minister the power to make regulations.

Government Orders

Regulations can be well and good for certain measures. For certain legislation, we want the minister to have that leeway to change rights and so on. However, we again have to raise our concerns that if airline companies start lobbying the minister really hard on these, how are the regulations eventually going to turn out? Are the regulations going to start benefiting airline companies, or are they honestly going to be on the side of passengers? That is why we feel codifying these in the actual bill rather than leaving them to regulations would have been a far stronger measure.

My concerns are not unjustified with respect to Air Canada. I would like to remind members of when we were busy debating Bill C-10, which was the government's attempt to legislate outsourcing for Air Canada. It was an amendment to the Air Canada Public Participation Act. Air Canada definitely had the ear of the government during that time. It brought forward a bill that specifically benefited that company and left many workers out in the cold. It gave Air Canada the ability to outsource jobs if it so wished.

Half measures are not what we were expecting after this length of time. Two years have passed. We would have liked to have seen some greater efforts in many of these areas. We are disappointed that this bill is the final result.

• (1630)

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for too long the transportation industry has worked under the cloak of darkness, and it has not been as accountable and transparent as consumers would like and as those in industry would like to see. We want to ensure that those standards are set, that there are standards for passengers, for the airlines and the rail industry, to ensure that we can hold them to account. Right now, that is not possible. Right now we hear anecdotally that people get bumped, that things are not working well with the rail, that there is not the competition that we want to see, but it is all anecdotal. What we want to do is make sure we leave that darkness, shine the light on our transportation industry, and bring forward those standards and then be able to share those and make them public for consumers. Does the member think that would be a wise thing to do, to be able to bring accountability and transparency to our transportation industry?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Of course, Madam Speaker, I do not think anyone in this House can disagree with that laudable goal. Unfortunately, we simply do not see that level of detail in this bill. We do see a lot of words in this bill that would authorize the minister to make regulations. We have all known for quite some time what the problem is. The stories that passengers have with regard to their experiences on airlines, being stuck in airports, and being stuck on the tarmac, these have been told continuously over many years now. We know what the problem is. In a previous Parliament we brought forward suggestions for concrete proposals for something that could have been codified rather than left to regulatory environment.

When this bill gets passed, we are still going to have to wait even further for the regulations to come after who knows how many consultations and after who knows how much influence the airline industry is going to exert on the minister. Therefore, I ask why, after two years of the current Liberal government's mandate, are we still waiting? Why are passengers still waiting? Why is the middle class that the government likes to talk about so much still waiting?

• (1635)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to provide some comment at third reading on Bill C-49. I represent a part of the country that has a lot of rail workers, and I have heard concerns from the workers themselves and from their union about Bill C-49 and what it would mean for their privacy rights when they are working on trains across Canada and the ability for employers to access footage and audio recording of those workers working on trains pretty much for just about any purpose.

The government says that the real rules are going to come in regulation, but we have seen that it is a government that has a pretty cozy relationship with some of the major transportation companies in Canada, and frankly, its track record has not been very good.

We heard already from my hon. colleague about some of the concerns around privacy, which are very real and ought to be addressed in the same way they are for the airline industry, where only the Transportation Safety Board has the authority to look at those recordings. I wonder if the member would want to expand his comments to the question of why Canadians should have faith in the government to leave it all to regulation, without legislating in favour and ensuring the privacy protection for railway workers in this country.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, my riding is not home to a great railway expanse. We are certainly making efforts to expand our rail system on Vancouver Island, but that is a very slow process. The member raised some excellent points about the very real fears and concerns that workers have, working in that kind of environment. We were not necessarily opposed to the video and voice recorders, just to who is going to use that data and if it would in fact be protected.

That is why my colleague on the transportation committee, the member for Trois-Rivières, brought forward that amendment. He attempted to move the power of data collection to the Transportation Safety Board. Inexplicably, the Liberals did not agree to it. I wonder why that is.

Another concern that workers have in the railway industry is the level of fatigue they suffer from being overworked. If we are to prevent these kinds of accidents, it should not be after the fact, by looking at the video and voice recordings of how a crash happened. Why do we not look at worker health and safety? Are railway workers being overworked and do they have the safety mechanisms to actually return to their family every night in a safe and sound manner?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, National Defence; the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope, Government Advertising; and the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore, Natural Resources.

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to raise issues on Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, which is a long bill with many different components in it. I am going to focus on one important component. There are a number that speak to all Canadians and communities, but one specifically speaks to an issue in my community that is very troubling, very sad, and very disturbing. This bill would give the powers that be, those who are appointed, who lurk in the shadows, and who do not have to have accountability, the strength and more empowerment to do what the public does not want. Specifically, Bill C-49 would allow port authorities to have more clandestine borrowing practices through the Canada infrastructure bank and allow the ports to do more environmental and other community damage with less accountability.

People at least appreciate the context of what a port authority can or cannot do. Port authorities across Canada are stewards of the land of the people. That is, first and foremost, what we need to get straight, especially for the people who feel they do not have the power to speak against the powers that be. The reality is that ports, with their control and their power, at the end of the day, are responsible to the Minister of Transport, the Prime Minister, and cabinet, full stop. The use of the lands and relationship with communities are still, at the end of the day, controlled by the Prime Minister, the cabinet, and the people of Canada. They are not private businesses or enterprises that have no responsibility or no moral compass as they go about their business. They are, in fact, having to answer accountably to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport.

In my situation, what is very peculiar is that the bill would create additional powers that cause me concern related to a place called Sandwich Town. It is basically the oldest European settlement west of Montreal. It was settled by the French, then the English, and now is the home of many immigrants, new Canadians, students, populations that, quite frankly, have challenges because of the geography. For those out there who feel compelled to understand the story of the underdog, this is it in Canada.

Imagine living in an area where Canada was defended during the War of 1812. This was where it happened on the front lines of southern Ontario. This was where the decisive battles occurred that formed this nation. Aboriginal communities, the British at the time, the militia, and the local populations bonded to defend Canada. Since that time, we have seen the most unusual of circumstances for this small settlement that eventually became part of the City of Windsor, which marks its special foundation today.

I am talking about a small community being trapped next to the Ambassador Bridge, which is owned by a private American billionaire, who in his operations on the U.S. side actually went to prison because of practices related, ironically, to government contracts on the U.S. side, where homes were being bought up, boarded up, and eventually demolished or left to decay. People have lost businesses, schools, and places of faith. All of those things have happened in the shadow of an empire that has 10,000 trucks per day, 40,000 vehicles in total, of pure profit. Some 30% to 35% of Canada's daily trade with the United States, nearly \$1 billion, is within earshot of some of the people most disenfranchised because of the repercussions from what has taken place.

Why Bill C-49 is important is that most recently there has been hope, an extended opportunity, with the fight for this area, for a new border crossing. It took place over a decade and a half. The original idea was to allow the development next to this place to destroy it.

• (1640)

However, we have a new border crossing, the Gordie Howe international bridge, which will be built as a result of a compromise among the community, the environment, business, and two nations to finally add border capacity. In this capacity, there will be a community benefit fund. We actually voted for that in Bill C-344, a Liberal member's bill that the House recently passed at second reading, including with the support of the Minister of Transport and the Prime Minister, to at least send it to committee. The community benefit fund is for infrastructure projects such as this to get some relief, planning, and opportunity. That bill, in spirit, is what is taking place. We are finally getting some community benefits to come to this area.

What has happened, and why Bill C-49 is so important, is that the port authority wanted to develop a piece of its property, called Ojibway Shores, against the wishes of the community. This port authority property is pristine environmental acreage, 33 acres in total, with endangered species, flora, fauna, species at risk, amphibians, wildlife, birds, and all of those things that are so important. It is right on the Great Lakes, and one of the last places on the Great Lakes that is undisturbed in this era.

The port wanted to bulldoze Ojibway Shores, it wanted a way to clear it, and it actually got at one time a private partnership that would have done so. The private developer with the port at that time, despite knowing they would have made a lot of money, said no, because it was the wrong thing to do. When they backed out, the port no longer considered Ojibway Shores to be developable. However, the port has asked for \$12 million from the community benefit fund to not develop Ojibway Shores for 30 years. They do not just want the land to remain undeveloped, in terms of turning it over to the public in perpetuity, but have asked for \$12 million for a 30-year lease not to bulldoze it.

It is almost unconscionable to think that a board member would request this of the public. By the way, board members are representative of the city, province, federal government, and the users. They are citizens like anyone else. Part of people's education today, including the the people of Sandwich, Essex, and beyond who care about the environment, is to understand that people are paid to represent them on these boards and to make decisions. They need to understand that power and their ability to connect with those individuals, and not just in Windsor, but in other ports across this country. This is the first step in actually taking back land and stewardship for the people, which should belong to them.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-49 now proposes to give more power to the infrastructure bank to allow the ports to develop things. We are concerned about that, because it would potentially open up another revenue source for the port to go ahead and bulldoze the property.

It is interesting right now that when we think about this situation, a choice has to be made for the people. A simple clause would allow this property to be divested to Environment Canada. It is a simple thing that we have asked for. It would just take a two-signature process, and has been done before. We have done the research, and it is actually part of a legislative process, and part of what I think was drummed up with regards to the transfer of properties for situations like this in the public interest.

As I conclude today, we have a choice on this. Right now, Bill C-49 would give more powers, but in the meantime, let us save this situation. Instead of the port getting that \$12 million, it can go to poverty reduction, students' education, housing, or employment in one of the most disadvantaged areas of Ontario.

•(1645)

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talked about how much legislation is in Bill C-49. The member is quite right. It is a very comprehensive piece of legislation. For 10 years we were dormant on this. When we looked at modernizing our transportation network, we looked at rail and air and saw what was happening around the world, and we were just not keeping pace.

I know that the member feels strongly about the Ambassador Bridge but more so about getting that Gordie Howe International Bridge complete. We know that there is \$2 billion a day going across our border every single day. It is goods, people, etc. It is really a lifeline, if we think about our trade in this country. That bridge is probably the number one spot for trade.

Does the member not feel strongly that we have to get on with this and move forward? We have to modernize our transportation network for the health of his community as well as our country.

•(1650)

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I know that the member also supported Bill C-344.

He is absolutely correct. When we look at the effects of transportation, no place knows it better than Sandwich Town. This place was the home of the underground railroad. It was the destination for freedom. In fact, bounty hunters used to come to this area to grab Americans fleeing slavery to bring them back. We used to fight against that. That is the culture and heritage of this location.

The member is correct about the Gordie Howe International Bridge. It was a compromise. In it was the concept of community benefits. Imagine the perverse ending this would be if the port authority took the money that was supposed to go to uplifting children, persons with disabilities, education, housing, and community capacity development and wanted a 30-year lease on a piece of property. It would go against the Prime Minister's arguments and objectives on greenhouse gas emissions reductions and would increase the Canadian footprint on environmental standards.

All we need now is the courage of the Minister of Transport to simply transfer the management to the Minister of Environment and

Climate Change. A two-signature process would guarantee an environmental footprint for our legacy, and most importantly, would provide justice, hope, and opportunity for people who deserve it.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague for explaining to us some of the hidden dangers in this very poorly crafted omnibus bill so that we know that the bill would primarily protect the interests of foreign investors and would violate the rights of workers in terms of their privacy.

We know the hypocrisy when we look at other institutions, such as CATSA. We have underfunding on one end for monitoring and safety at airports, and on the other end, we would put in legislation that would seem to undermine that work.

The member obviously had to look at some of this and explore it to find out a little more about the implications of the relationship with the port authority. Does the member know any other aspects we should be alarmed by?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, on the airline passenger bill of rights, I have a quick and simple answer. Gerry Byrne, a Liberal who was in this House for many years, more than a decade, I believe, passed a motion calling for a passenger bill of rights that was equal to that of the Europeans and the United States. If my memory serves me correctly, the Liberals supported that Liberal. This bill does not even include that basic element, which is a shame.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate. Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the question on the motion is deemed to have been put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you would canvas the House you would find unanimous support to call it 5:30 p.m. at this time so we can begin private members' hour.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

PARKS CANADA AGENCY ACT

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Parks Canada Agency Act (Conservation of National Historic Sites Account), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to stand in the House to speak to the bill and in the spirit of the day, I will mention I do not quite have 95 theses to contribute to this debate and I am not going to nail my speech at the end of it to the chamber doors, but I do have a Yiddish proverb I want to share. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes would appreciate it. “Without money, there is no world”.

We understand that it takes money if we want to preserve things and purchase things, just like our buildings are a national treasure. Our national historic sites need money in order to continue to attract visitors, students, and teachers so they can learn about our national historic sites and better appreciate these great assets that Canada has as part of our cultural and national heritage.

I am very pleased to support Bill C-315 and I want to thank the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for tabling it once again for debate.

It calls for an establishment of an account to which all donated funds would be attributed when the donor indicates a desire that the funds be devoted to conservation at a given site. Parks Canada administers 171 federally recognized historic sites and defines over 970 more as historically significant.

I used to work in a historic site because Alberta had its own designation for it. What is very unique about the building is that it used to be the old Calgary Chamber of Commerce building. It used to be an Odd Fellows temple that was converted for use by the Chamber of Commerce. The entire building was not a historic site. Only the ballroom was considered a national historic site. What was unusual about the building as well was that it had two pubs built into it on two different floors. Working in a historic site like that, I came to appreciate the money that goes into maintaining it to keep it at the level where the building does not fall down and to make it usable for new generations to take advantage of, to use it for the purpose it was built for originally and for new purposes designed for it. Today, it is owned by an oil and gas company that also owns the Bow Tower across the street and is used for trading.

Bill C-315 would create a system that would basically manage donations and promote future donations. That is really important. A dedicated fund would not displace federal support that national historic sites receive today, but would complement, a point that was made by the member. We are not looking to replace federal or provincial government support for these sites but to complement and give Canadians and international visitors an opportunity to participate in the stewardship of national historic sites.

We as Conservatives believe in subsidiarity, which is the government closest to us is the one best placed to serve us. The principle involved in subsidiarity is that those closest to an action, item, or a place know it best and will be able to take care of it best.

When it comes to stewardship and conservation, they are both very conservative principles. We are stewards of our historic sites as we are stewards of Parliament and of the seats we are privileged to have on behalf of residents of our ridings, so we pass them on to the next generation. We are judged on how well we have done, by how well we have maintained them, how well we have used them, and

whether they are still there for future generations to take advantage of.

I want to reserve the rest of my comments specifically on some of the points the parliamentary secretary made when presenting the government's position on this. The parliamentary secretary mentioned that this is already done by Parks Canada and a lot of this would be duplicative in some way. I do not believe that is the case. I do not believe it would limit donors in any way. The limits that Bill C-315 proposes on how the account is spent, meaning only the interest be spent on conservation of works, would give certainty to donors.

Having worked in the non-profit sector, that is an important concept. When donors give money, especially when we create a principal account to raise interest and only the interest is to be used for a purpose or goal, donors want to know that the money will be there 10, 20, 30, or 40 years afterward. The same principle applies when people are endowing a chair or professorship at a university. Donors want to have certainty that the money will be there in the future to sustain the initial purpose the money was given for. The same principle applies here.

•(1655)

Members of our communities and international visitors will have the certainty of knowing that of the dollars they give today and into the future, only the interest will be used to finance the operations and the maintenance of a national historic site.

The parliamentary secretary said that the bill specifically required that only the interest be used and that the principal itself would remain in the account in perpetuity. That is an important feature of the bill, an important bonus in the bill. It is not a defect in the bill; it is an advantage of the bill. This is a purposeful act by the member to ensure the principal will always be there and will accumulate over time, with only the interest being spent.

The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund works exactly on this same principle. Although it has yo-yoed in the past because of market conditions, only the interest has been spent to finance government operations.

Last year, the parliamentary secretary said that the public donated a little more than \$56,000 to national historic sites for various activities and programs. That is not a defect of the bill itself; it is an opportunity. It is a floor from where we can grow. It is a place to start getting Canadians to donate to national historic site maintenance, to increase the stewardship and the conservation goals of the specific sites they want to support. I do not think the amount somehow detracts from the goal of the bill, which is very laudable, it just creates a floor. We would have a metric to set ourselves by which would tell us if we had improved year over year and if we had made things better. The this is being cost effective.

Private Members' Business

The parliamentary secretary went deeply into details about how much money would actually be generated in order for it to be useful. The amounts are not as important as the goal. We can build a principal account over time. A dedicated account would achieve that goal. It could even be tracked over time. Donors could be told that if they donated an extra \$50,000, \$100,000, or even \$100, it would help build up the account into the future. They would be helping a national historic site meet its goals.

We do the same thing when endowing professorships or chairmanships at schools, colleges, and universities. I have worked with human resources professionals. I remember considering endowing a chair in human resources labour relations in Alberta to further the professional goals of the association, much like what we are trying to do here, which is improving conservation and stewardship of national historic sites. The mechanism we do it by will give certainty to donors. They can be repeat donors and keep giving into the future. The \$56,000 are just a floor. There are vast areas for improvement.

The last point I want to make is about international aid and government programs that provide matching funds.

The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, or Burma, was mentioned again today in the House. The government will be matching funds. During the Fort McMurray fires, the government matched funds as well. This is just a comparison as we reflect on the contents of the bill.

A really good argument can be made that the amounts involved will not have a sizeable impact on the government's response to the Fort McMurray fires or the crisis in Myanmar, or Burma. However, it is not necessarily the amount of money that is given or the amount of money that will be matched by one side to another; it is the purpose and the goal. It gets people involved in taking meaningful action, with a meaningful goal and a purpose to it. The Rohingya crisis provides Canadians with an opportunity to play a part in making a better world. In the case of the Fort McMurray fires, it was an opportunity for Canadians from coast to coast to contribute to the recovery efforts, to contribute to the emergency aid that was being provided by the Red Cross.

It is not the amount that matters so much. It is the mechanism by which we provide donors with the certainty that their donation will be put toward that goal, and in this case, the conservation and stewardship for national historic sites, which is laudable.

This is a great bill. It is an excellent idea from a financial administration point of view. I heartily support it and I invite all members to do so as well.

• (1700)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be speaking today to Bill C-315, but I want to start by reminding the House and Canadians that today is a day of prayer for peace in Ukraine and throughout the world. Initiated in 2014, Prayer for Peace is organized to pray for an end to the undeclared but active war on the eastern boundary of Ukraine as well as an end to conflicts around the world. As members know, there are more than 1.2 million Ukrainians in Canada, and some day there may actually be a national historic site, hopefully, recognizing the contributions of Ukrainians to Canada. That is where Bill C-315 comes into play.

Bill C-315 is one of three heritage bills to be introduced in this Parliament, and it is one of the reasons why the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development has been looking at heritage issues this fall. While the committee's report is not yet finalized and therefore not public, I will draw on some of the testimony the committee has heard over the last few weeks.

First, though, I would like to speak about the background to this bill. I find it interesting and hopeful, quite frankly, that the bill was introduced by a member of the Conservative Party, because it was the previous Conservative government's cuts to heritage funding that contributed to the need for this legislation.

In the 2012 federal budget, the Conservatives cut \$30 million from Parks Canada's budget, much of it aimed specifically at Canada's heritage programs, and 1,600 Parks Canada workers were told their jobs potentially would be cut. For the Rideau Canal, this meant shorter operating hours, longer lineups for boats waiting to get through the 23 lock stations, the possibility of higher user fees, and critical maintenance and repair work delayed or cancelled. The Rideau Canal is 202 kilometres long, stretching from Kingston to the Ottawa River just below Parliament Hill. Many communities along its route consider it a major tourist attraction and depend on the money the canal brings in from boaters and other tourists.

That is why, when the cuts were announced, the group called the Friends of the Rideau made an offer to the government that the group would fundraise and privately pay for necessary repairs. The previous Conservative government refused the group. It said there was no mechanism that allows a citizen or group of citizens to donate money to the government and have it spent on a specific heritage site. That is what Bill C-315 intends to remedy. It would allow an individual or a group to fundraise toward the upkeep for improvement of a federal heritage site and the money spent specifically on that site. The bill would also encourage donations through a tax credit.

The government's current position is that this is all possible under current legislation, but it has yet to inform the House what that mechanism is or where it can be found. In fact, when the Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women spoke to this bill on October 6, he lamented that public donations, "when spread over as many as 171 national historic sites across the country...would not be enough to make a meaningful contribution to conservation efforts." The parliamentary secretary is clearly missing the point of this bill. Bill C-315 would not encourage donations to be used in the National Parks general account, but to be targeted specifically to a single historic site of the donor's choosing. That is the mechanism currently lacking in existing legislation.

Private Members' Business

This is a small bill that would have very little if any impact on the government's finances, but would help communities and individuals like those around the Rideau Canal to ensure that heritage sites are preserved. We have 18 UNESCO World Heritage sites across Canada, including the Rideau Canal, and each of them is a source of local and national pride and a place for Canadians to visit, to learn, and to enjoy.

The study we are undertaking in the environment committee shows there is much to be done to protect heritage in Canada. In fact, the standing committee has heard that Canada is one of the few developed nations that does not have a law to protect our world heritage sites, nor do we have comprehensive legislation to protect historic sites or historic places. Therefore, we certainly hope to correct that through our study and our recommendations to the House.

The result of this gap in legislation is clear: sites like the Rideau Canal and Wood Buffalo National Park end up neglected by government until, to our national shame, UNESCO has to step in and recommend corrective actions. That is unacceptable, and it must be addressed.

• (1705)

While Bill C-315 would not provide all of the funding or the willpower to protect and preserve our national sites, it would give Canadians the opportunity, which does not exist under current legislation, to support those specific sites that are important to them. That is a good thing.

I am happy to support Bill C-315. It is well worth the support of all members of this chamber.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, on this October 31, 2017, I want to wish a Happy Hallowe'en to all members of Parliament and their families. Unfortunately, since we are here we will not be trick or treating with our children, but they are in our thoughts.

I am honoured to rise in the House today to support Bill C-315, an act to amend the Parks Canada Agency Act (Conservation of National Historic Sites Account), a private member's bill. Today I want to talk about the positive impact that this bill will have on tourism in the many communities in Canada that are home to our national historic sites. Local and international visitors are the bread and butter of those communities.

Through donations, this account would complement Parks Canada's budget for restoring, rehabilitating, and maintaining national historic sites, which would help the agency improve the appearance and draw of these sites, in some cases considerably.

I would like to mention that I am a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development where we are working on a report on historic site conservation. It is an important element that is in the same vein as this bill.

These newly restored sites would attract a growing number of visitors, and the revenue from admission fees and merchandising would enable Parks Canada to pay for more national and international advertising. It is important to understand that the

development stage requires money. We know the government members opposite have money to burn and no concern for the deficit they are accumulating, but we on this side of the aisle feel it is important to secure the funding to finance our projects in accordance with the wishes of our generous donors.

Essentially, donations help improve the aesthetic appearance of these sites, drawing in more visitors. The increased admission fee revenue, in addition to new donations, will help Parks Canada maintain these sites, freeing up funds that could be used for more advertising, to give these sites greater international visibility. This is a winning cycle we cannot afford to pass up on.

Furthermore, our national historic sites give Canadians a powerful link to our rich history and our national identity. They also tell our story to the international community. Many foreign tourists are interested in learning about the history of our young country. Our historic sites are one of the best ways to tell everyone what made Canada the great and beautiful country it is today. They also symbolize the progress we have made over the past 150 years.

As a free and democratic nation, we have a duty to tell our story and share how we have overcome many challenges to get to where we are today.

Not many visitors will say that they have come to see us or are drawn to Canada because of our four seasons. Our greatest assets in the tourism industry are the rich history we have to share, our diverse culture, and our marvellous and beautiful sights. Not many Canadian destinations can count on sunny days or the perfect surfing conditions, so we need to be creative and make sure that the experience we are offering to tourists is worth it for them, both in terms of travel time and financial investment.

That is why we need to do everything we possibly can to ensure that our national historic sites are maintained, restored correctly, and refurbished based on how they are actually used. We need to ensure the Parks Canada has sufficient resources to adequately market our sites across Canada and around the world in order to attract visitors from all over.

Creating a legacy fund for each site will achieve that and will encourage new donations thanks to a comprehensive and transparent accountability framework that will provide future donors with peace of mind based on the assurance that their money is being used to maintain the sites that they know and love.

Increased donations will help improve the general appearance of the sites, and ultimately, will allow Parks Canada to promote our national historic sites through persuasive marketing thanks to increased revenues from a larger number of visitors.

• (1710)

All organizations need to do business development. I see this as an extra tool to help Parks Canada and the sites do business development and become even more competitive at attracting tourists. In addition to benefiting Parks Canada directly, more tourists visiting national historic sites will help the surrounding communities grow.

Private Members' Business

Tourists who visit any of these sites need transportation, accommodations, food, and entertainment during their stay. That means significant economic spinoffs for our local communities.

Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier has some amazing sites, including Saint-Raymond's internationally renowned vallée Bras-du-Nord in the RCM of Portneuf. Everyone is aware of the economic benefits it brings to the region. Lac-Beauport, another destination in my region, has the Sentiers du moulin, an enchanting site that is great for fat biking and national competitions. We are currently working on attracting international interest. It is important for our rural regions to be able to survive with help from the economic impact of tourist attractions.

Every family that visits will spend a significant amount of money just by being in our communities. That money will go to the small businesses that are the pillar of our tourism industry. Nearly 98% of the tourist industry is made up of small and medium-sized businesses that, unlike the major chains, depend on seasonal tourism to stay in business and feed their families. Although these companies are smaller, they are a big draw for international tourists who are discovering the beautiful regions of Canada. Local businesses are recognized for their ability to work with major destination marketing companies. These companies work to attract international tourists and encourage them to come and try our restaurants and hotels, see shows, and visit our national historic sites, which make our country a popular destination.

By helping Parks Canada to improve the general appearance of its sites and by ensuring that they are well maintained, we can promote Canada's history and help these small businesses promote themselves.

By growing tourism through the promotion of our national historic sites, we will also promote neighbouring communities and contribute to their success. That means we will be supporting the 1,700,000 people who work in the tourism industry every year, many of whom are women, young people, immigrants, and members of other groups who, unfortunately, have no job stability because of the seasonal nature of the business. Over 50,000 youth between the ages of 15 and 24 work in the tourism industry, which accounts for over one-third of youth employment opportunities. Tourism provides full-time and part-time job opportunities in a wide variety of areas, including transportation, lodging, entertainment, and the food industry.

Furthermore, Parks Canada provides many of these jobs. During the peak season, it employs more than 2,100 workers in full-time indeterminate positions, 1,900 in seasonal jobs, and hires some 1,100 students. In addition to employment and other direct benefits for Canadians, tourism is also a source of revenue. For example, tourism revenues totalled \$21.4 billion in 2011. This is important when the government is looking for revenue streams and sources of revenue. According to estimates, every \$100 spent by a foreign visitor generates \$30 in taxes compared to \$26 generated by domestic spending.

There is no better time than the present to promote our historic sites to Canadian and international tourists. International tourism is booming and it is very important to provide this industry with the tools it needs to grow.

If we want Canada to be considered an attractive destination and not just a bargain, we must support the maintenance, restoration, and rehabilitation of many historic sites. That means that Parks Canada must have the resources needed to maintain and promote our historic sites and to entice visitors to come and see them.

Bill C-315 will do just that. By encouraging donations to be used for maintenance and everything that goes with it, we will make it possible for Parks Canada to attract more visitors by making its sites more attractive tourist destinations. For all these reasons, I hope members will join me—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but the member's time has expired.

Resuming debate. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has the floor and five minutes for his right of reply.

• (1720)

[English]

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the members for Calgary Shepard, Kootenay—Columbia, and Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for their support for this bill.

I am pleased to speak once again to Bill C-315, an act to amend the Parks Canada Agency Act. It is a bill to amend the act with regard to the conservation of national historic sites. As I mentioned the last time I spoke to this bill, it would establish separate accounts for individual Parks Canada sites, to which people could donate money and be issued tax receipts for. That money could be kept in a fund, similar to a foundation, and the interest earned on it would be used for the preservation of particular sites.

Again, as I mentioned before, this idea was brought forward during intense discussions about the Rideau Canal a few years ago. When researching the possibility of being able to donate money, we found some interesting things. There was no mechanism for people to donate to specific historic sites managed by Parks Canada. In the last hour of debate on this bill, government members said there already was, but we have done significant research on this and found that not to be the case.

We know there are many people who want to donate. We already heard from the member for Kootenay—Columbia about people along the Rideau Canal who wanted to give money during the significant discussions on the future of the Rideau Canal. The Conservative government at the time announced over \$40 million toward infrastructure, and in fairness to the current government, it made announcements after the election supplementing that funding, which is all good news. I think all members support national historic sites and this bill would create a mechanism for those who want to donate to do so, despite several speakers suggesting during the last hour that it is not possible.

There are a number of national historic sites in my riding that are managed by Parks Canada, including Fort Wellington. For example, if a wall were crumbling at Fort Wellington and a friends group wanted to raise money from the public to help repair that wall, it could be organized and accomplished if this bill were to pass. Right now, people can donate to Parks Canada. However, that money goes to the overall Parks Canada budget and does not allow people to donate to specific sites. Many Canadians have an affinity to national historic sites. They visited them as children, they are in their regions, and they have a personal affinity to those sites and want to contribute to them. Right now, there is no mechanism to do that.

I conducted a Google search to see what would happen if I asked how to give money to Parks Canada, and these are some of the sources that I found: “Understanding The Parks Canada Entry Fees”, “Working at Parks Canada”, and “Parks Canada’s diversified accommodation reservation policies”. I found a number of different suggestions. On page 4 of the search results, there was a link to the speech I gave just a few weeks ago, but by page 9, the search engine began to refer to peripheral mentions of Parks Canada in speeches and other documents that had little or nothing to do with Parks Canada.

I tried the same search but identifying the Rideau Canal as the only recipient, instead of Parks Canada. By the end of the first page, I found, “Observations on the Inland Navigation of Ireland”. Many members would be familiar with the Redpath Sugar company. It retains in its museum a silver cup that was given to Mr. Redpath by Lieutenant Colonel John By when he was building the Rideau Canal. They are very proud of their connection to the Rideau Canal’s heritage and representatives of Redpath wrote a letter in support of this bill. They have also made substantial donations to programs and projects along the canal, but they have not been able to do it specifically for the canal itself.

Earlier today, the Speaker ruled that this bill needed a royal recommendation to be passed. Members come here with private members’ bills and we hope they all have an opportunity to look at them. I am encouraging members to vote for this bill and send it to committee so we can find a better way to support Canada’s national historic sites.

• (1725)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Adjournment Proceedings

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 1, 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*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, during question period, I asked the Minister of National Defence a question about sexual assault in the military and how victims are treated, and unfortunately I did not receive the clear answer I was hoping for.

I would really like to know if everything is being done as it should for victims. The military justice system is very different from the civilian justice system. The fact that the conviction rate in the military system is much lower is something I find especially troubling.

When the Standing Committee on National Defence met this week with the judge advocate general of the Canadian Armed Forces, we were able to glean a few more details. The judge advocate general explained that since sexual assault is harder to prove, a decision is sometimes made to seek lesser charges that could, for example, be heard at summary trial, such as inappropriate conduct with a subordinate or other offences that do not actually exist in civilian law.

With a summary trial, the victim has less chance of being able to testify because this is a quicker type of trial. Essentially, the accused is escorted into the commander’s office, there is a general discussion of what transpired, and sometimes the whole matter is wrapped up within half an hour. Sentencing happens, followed by a conviction. I wonder if the victim gets everything they need for the healing process. We know that in sexual assault cases quite often the ability to testify and taking the time to explain what happened is, for many women, a good first step on the path toward healing.

Adjournment Proceedings

Unfortunately, if at a summary trial the charge of sexual assault is reduced to inappropriate conduct with a subordinate, that can be problematic for the victim.

I still do not know whether the forces have decided to improve the victim support process. What actually occurs on the ground? Are victims having to face their abusers every day and serve with them in the same unit, in the same division, for example? What are we actually doing for these women and men? Indeed, men are sadly also victims of sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces.

When these people decide to speak out, to file a complaint, do we really support them or do we simply try to close the book as quickly as possible by proceeding with a summary conviction and bringing lesser charges against the accused because those charges are easier to prove?

In the end, victims are left alone on the path to healing.

I would like to know more about what is actually being done to help victims. I do not just want to hear generalities that do not really answer the question. I sincerely hope that I will be given more information today because I think that victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment in our armed forces deserve better treatment and better answers.

• (1730)

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for raising this important issue.

I can assure the House that our government and the Canadian Armed Forces take the matter of sexual misconduct very seriously. Every member of the Canadian Armed Forces has the right to work in a harassment-free environment. Every member has the right to respect and dignity. The Minister of National Defence and the chief of defence staff have made this a priority.

As part of Operation Honour, the Canadian Armed Forces are working to ensure that all military members receive responsive, personalized support. We have urged commanders at all levels to be even more vigilant in identifying problems and working with victims of sexual misconduct or sexual assault.

In Canada's new defence policy, the government reiterated its commitment to instigate a positive and permanent change of culture. In all cases of alleged sexual misconduct involving soldiers, an investigation is launched to establish the facts, examine the evidence, and if necessary, lay the appropriate charges. The Canadian Forces National Investigation Service has created 18 new military police investigator positions to facilitate the process. That team is mandated to ensure that victims are aware of the support services available to them.

That said, any and all sexual misconduct charges are the subject of a public inquiry, and that inquiry is led in such a way that protects victims, while also ensuring that the rights of the accused are respected.

In her question, my colleague talked about the difference between civil court and military court. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces are subject to a stricter code of conduct than their civilian counterparts. For instance, a soldier can be charged with a sex

offence that is not necessarily an offence under the Criminal Code, such as making inappropriate sexual comments.

My colleague also mentioned the conviction rate in military tribunals. From 2014 until March of this year, the Canadian Armed Forces prosecuted 18 cases of sexual misconduct. Ten of them resulted in guilty verdicts, which is a 56% conviction rate. Of those 10 cases, five involved sexual assault, and the other five involved other types of sexual misconduct. Those are the numbers the Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Armed Forces gave the Standing Committee on National Defence yesterday.

The efficiency of the military justice system cannot be measured solely by the number of convictions. Convictions under the Code of Service Discipline are not administrative consequences; they are guilty verdicts that can result in significant prison sentences and a criminal record.

In the military justice system, unlike in the civilian justice system, when there are allegations of sexual misconduct, an administrative review of the individual's career is carried out to determine whether the accused is still eligible to serve the country. Harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour is not tolerated. Since Operation Honour was launched, the Canadian Armed Forces have released 24 individuals found guilty of sexual offences. These results are in line with the objectives of Operation Honour, and we continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the positive cultural shift we have in our sights is happening.

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I believe that what victims want first and foremost is for members to set aside the talking points and give some real answers. Sometimes talking points are not what matters to them.

The Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Armed Forces said that lesser charges unrelated to sexual offences are sometimes used to obtain a conviction because it is too difficult to prove a case. Does that happen often? I did not hear the answer in my colleague's speech. I believe that victims should be front and centre in the interventions.

Is there compensation for victims who wait a certain amount of time before speaking out and whose military careers suffered? Are there remedial measures in place, for example, for victims who were not promoted? Are their careers reassessed to ensure that they are on track and that they were not affected because of sexual misconduct?

We need to understand the real situation and we need much more detailed answers than the platitudes we hear daily. I believe that victims deserve it and I would like my colleague to comment on that.

• (1735)

Mr. Jean Rioux: Mr. Speaker, the government has full confidence in the Canadian military justice system. We consider it to be sound and fair.

Adjournment Proceedings

This system ensures that any charge of sexual misconduct is subject to a public inquiry in accordance with the charter, as the Judge Advocate General said yesterday before the Standing Committee on National Defence. As part of Operation Honour, concrete measures are being taken to support the victims and to ensure that any inappropriate behaviour is reported and that leadership is held responsible when they fail to adequately intervene.

What is more, offenders face administrative measures that can affect their career and are required to undergo extensive training on victim support, as well as the type of legal action a person exposes themselves to when they commit a sexual offence.

Since Operation Honour, we have also noticed an increase in reporting and increased confidence in the chain of command, the military police, and the military justice system. There is still a lot of work to be done, but everything will be put in place to ensure that the victims receive the support that they need.

[English]

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to follow up on a question that I had asked the government about the revelation that it had spent over \$212,000 on the design work for the 2017 budget cover.

I first of all want to thank Blacklock's for its good work in persevering to get this information. If it was not for its dogged determination to pursue that information through the Access to Information Act, that never would have seen the light of day. The government fought it every single step of the way. Blacklock's had to file a complaint with the access to information commissioner because it was being stonewalled by the current government, which clearly was embarrassed by this figure, at least I hope it was. However, the responses from cabinet and the parliamentary secretary before would cause one to think that they had no problems with it and that the \$212,000 was a bargain for Canadians, even though it was \$36,000 more than the \$176,339 it spent in 2016. That was the one where the government hired models posing as middle-class Canadians. I guess that is fair, since the government poses as a government that actually cares about middle-class Canadians and takes their interests to heart. However, we know that it clearly does not care about the tax dollars of middle-class Canadians. It justifies, and does not even apologize for, the fact that it spent over \$200,000 on just the photos on the hard copy of a book that I have never seen anyone, other than parliamentarians, with a physical hard copy of. Everyone else reads it online nowadays. After all, we are in 2017. Still it saw fit to include \$89,500 for talent fees for the four photos that grace the cover of that.

I know that the parliamentary secretary is keyed up and cued up to give me an answer about how much the Conservatives used to spend to promote their budgets. We spent \$600 on the actual budget cover. We used stock photography and paid the \$600 licensing fee. Then again, we were a government that actually cared about balancing the budget, which is something that we did. The parliamentary budget officer confirmed that a budget surplus was given to the current government.

However, since this has come out, I did not notice how much the cover of the economic update that was recently tabled will cost.

Maybe we will find out later. We know that in that document there was an admission of a broken promise by the current government. It said that it would run a modest, temporary, \$10-billion deficit, and we now know that it is twice that. We also know that when it said it would return to balance by 2019, that was fake news as well and that is not going to happen. It now has no plan to ever balance the budget.

Therefore, my question to the parliamentary secretary is this. Is he proud of the fact that the government spent \$212,000 of hard-working Canadian tax dollars for some glossy photos for the hard copy of the budget?

• (1740)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope for his interest in the 2017 budget cover. This gives me an important opportunity to address some of the misconceptions regarding the production costs for budget 2017, including for the book's cover. Once I have cleared things up, I believe the hon. member will see that his question paints a less than full picture of how our government has approached the presentation of this historic document.

First, it is important to note that our government has actually succeeded in keeping costs low in the presentation of our budgets, as compared to the previous government, and I have some very interesting numbers for the member at the end of my presentation. That is because, unlike the previous government, we made the conscious decision not to roll out major advertising campaigns to publicize the presentation of our budgets. The result is that we have spent less than half of what the honourable opposition spent on the promotion and production of its budgets under the Harper Conservatives.

I find it regretful that the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope has conspicuously omitted our substantive savings in advertising from his question. Unlike the previous government, we wanted Canadians to see the facts presented inside the budget and understand what they mean for them. Advertising around our budget was geared towards pointing Canadians to these facts.

Rather than spending taxpayers' money on multi-million dollar television campaigns, we used more cost-effective digital creative material as the foundation of our outreach to Canadians.

The cost specified in his question included all of this, along with the budget cover. In fact, it included the creative content for all communications activities, marketing, and promotional initiatives related to budget 2017. In addition to the cover, the advertising elements covered by this figure included the cost of production of videos and various social and digital media initiatives, all of which pointed Canadians to the full details of our long-term plan to create jobs and strengthen the middle class.

Adjournment Proceedings

In the absence of a multi-million dollar television advertising campaign, this fresh, new digital creative material continues to be a key part of outreach to Canadians and how the government informs them about changes that could have a major impact on the way they make decisions. In addition to the budget cover, photos were used for the budget website, budget documents, social and digital media, and a paid Internet campaign. Moreover, the finance department followed standard Government of Canada procurement contracting policies for this work throughout, including TBS guidelines.

The bottom line is that we are not spending the huge amounts of money the opposition spent on advertising, at the expense of Canadians, back when they were in government. We are spending less than half that.

I will conclude with a few numbers. Let us look at years past. Budget 2017 cost \$157,120. Budget 2016 cost \$183,046. If we look at 2014-15, back when the opposition was in government, for two budgets it was \$1,064,601. In 2013-14, for one budget, it was \$419,004. In 2012-13, again for one budget, it was \$552,500. In 2011-12, \$1,023,963 was spent on budget advertising by the previous government.

As the members have observed, over the course of the last two years, the last two budgets, we have spent half of what the previous Conservative government spent in promoting the budget. We have done it in a more efficient manner through the initiatives I have just mentioned.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, referring to the 2017 budget as a historic document I guess justifies to the member the \$212,000 artwork package for the budget.

The member mentioned advertising. I want to point out to him that the Liberal government has spent over \$13.7 million on social media advertising for promoted Facebook posts, Twitter, and Instagram, more than the entire Harper government combined. If the member wants to talk about advertising, perhaps he should include digital advertising.

Again, should we expect next year, if it has gone from \$176,000 to \$212,000, that the 2018 budget will be \$250,000 for the cover?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the opposition member that it will always be less than what they spent in previous budgets.

The amounts they spent were astronomical. We do not need any lessons from an opposition that, if memory serves, spent more than \$750 million in total on self-promotion during its time in government.

I can tell him that there is no doubt the 2017 budget is a historic document. It is a document that confirms that Canada is on the path to growth, with initiatives for helping the middle class and reducing inequality. Thanks to this document, Canada is now in a vastly better economic position than when the Conservatives were in power. The Conservatives never met the targets we are reaching in terms of growth and reducing inequality. We take pride in that record.

This is indeed a historic document that, incidentally, was promoted purely to help Canadians see what a difference it makes

to have a government that handles taxpayer dollars in a responsible way, and this was done for less than the previous government did it for. That is something to be proud of.

● (1745)

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 5, TransCanada announced the cancellation of the energy east pipeline. Its general counsel confirmed that this was as a direct result of the existing and likely future delays resulting from the regulatory process, the associated cost implications, and the increasingly challenging issues and obstacles facing the project, all obstacles put in place by the Liberal government.

The project had the opportunity to provide 15,000 jobs across Canada in areas such as Alberta or the Maritimes, which are in dire need of jobs. Energy east would have been able to increase our access to other markets, including exporting to eastern Canada, which currently imports its oil from Saudi Arabia.

Let us think about that. The Liberals would rather Canadians pay Saudi Arabia for oil than invest in their own country. I am sure there is more than one example of a Maritimer travelling to work in Alberta's oil fields, while his or her home is being heated by Saudi oil. This does not make on bit of sense to me.

Energy east had the potential to bring about not only jobs and economic growth, but great national unity and pride in Canada's natural resources. The Liberals had the opportunity to champion this nation-building project, but they failed to do so.

The government puts the interests of foreign oil companies and foreign despots ahead of Canadian interests by implementing new regulations on Canadian energy projects that are not required for foreign companies that export oil to Canadian markets.

The fact is that under the government, the approval process for pipelines has become increasingly unpredictable, making it a hostile environment for companies to invest in their future through infrastructure projects. The energy industry has recognized the severe lack of support by the Liberals, and is the reason for TransCanada abandoning the energy east pipeline project.

The Liberals claim they recognize the importance of the energy sector in Canada, but their actions prove otherwise. If the government had faith in Alberta, then why did the minister say in January that the country needed to phase out the oil sands? It is an industry that accounts for 7.6% percent of Canada's GDP and hundreds of thousands of jobs. If the government has faith in Alberta, why does it keep implementing policies designed to diminish investments in Canada's natural resources?

Adjournment Proceedings

Why do the Minister of Natural Resources and his government continue to make decisions that hurt Canadians?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government does fully appreciate the importance of Canada's energy sector to our economy. We know that it supports good, middle-class jobs and generates vital revenues for governments at all levels to pay for our hospitals and schools, sustain our cherished social programs, and support our quality of life. This is why we have been working with the energy sector to ensure its future is built on the three pillars: economic growth, environmental stewardship, and indigenous partnership. It is why, from day one, we have been working hard to restore public confidence in the way major resource projects are reviewed.

We have taken an approach to resource development that will grow our economy while taking real action to protect our oceans and the environment. These are not competing interests, but shared priorities, and the results speak for themselves.

Vital pipelines are being approved, which includes the Trans Mountain expansion and the Line 3 replacement pipelines.

The decision we took on the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline, for example, was based on facts, science, and the national interest. In addition, the National Energy Board, an independent quasi-judicial regulator, reviewed the Trans Mountain expansion proposal. We stand by our decision to approve this federally regulated project and the 15,000 good, middle-class jobs it will create.

However, the member opposite prefers to play the blame game. On the energy east pipeline, she wants to turn a business decision into an opportunity to reawaken historical tensions, arguing rules were changed midstream when no such thing happened.

When the National Energy Board announced it was expanding the scope of its regulatory review, we did two things. First, we offered to conduct the upstream and downstream GHG assessments to avoid added costs to the proponent. Second, we made it clear that we would still use the same process that resulted in the approval of the TMX and Line 3 pipelines. Nothing changed from our perspective.

Perhaps the member opposite will consider the learned opinion of Andrew Leach, an associate professor at the Alberta School of Business, who wrote a well-informed piece in *The Globe and Mail*. Professor Leach says that the main culprit in energy east's demise was the re-emergence of TransCanada's Keystone XL project, which

he called "an 800,000-barrel-a-day express line to refining centres in the United States" and "which presented a more attractive option for shippers than Energy East".

Professor Leach asked:

Was TransCanada making a business decision when they cancelled Energy East?

He continued:

Of course. It was a decision that will likely allow them to save Keystone XL.

Those are the facts.

• (1750)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I would conclude that the current government is not committed to the natural resource sector, and, in fact, TransCanada's decision to not go forward with the energy east pipeline was the result of several political decisions that resulted in this final action. This resulted in the loss of 15,000 good jobs.

As I always say, we cannot recycle if we cannot eat. I think it is well time that the government recognized the immediate crisis of the Alberta economy instead of the bogeyman that we see here on this day.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my hon. colleague, saying it is so does not make it so.

When a business decision is made, it is called a business decision for a reason. The reality is that global energy markets are changing rapidly. The global energy transition is already under way, and our energy mix will indeed change with it. This is the reality. We just do not know what the pace and the scope of that transition will be, which is why our government has focused on ensuring long-term, predictable, and inclusive policy directions that will help to build a stronger economy, healthier communities, and a more sustainable energy future for generations to come.

This is our record, and we are very proud of it.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:53 p.m.)

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