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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: We will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

RENÉ LÉVESQUE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, René Lévesque passed away 30 years ago today. I think we can all agree that he played a key role in building Quebec.

We can all honour his memory because our regard for him transcends party lines. He was a democrat who convinced Quebecers that we really could represent ourselves. He loved Quebec and Quebecers and recognized in them a great people. He also loved the Gaspé and was a staunch defender of our regions. He was cultured, he appreciated the good things in life, and he loved being alive. He was the sort of progressive who was able to lead the charge while remaining in step with his fellow Quebecers. He was a proud man, and he invited us all to be proud of our culture, proud to defend it, and even prouder to share it with the world.

His gift to us was a tangible and indestructible sense that we are complete as we are, that we share a common destiny, that we exist. That is why we consider René Lévesque to be the father of the Quebec nation.

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WORLD DIABETES DAY

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month and November 14 is World Diabetes Day.

This date was chosen because it marks the birthdate of Dr. Banting, who made crucial breakthroughs in research that led to the

discovery of insulin. In fact, his work earned him the Nobel Prize in Medicine. He was the first Canadian to receive the award.

This disease affects about 3.4 million Canadians of all ages. This year the Government of Canada announced a historic \$30-million investment in partnership with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of Canada to support specialized treatment.

I am very proud that, thanks to those investments, groups like the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre and the Wabano Centre can now deliver services that are better suited to those who suffer from this disease.

I want to thank Health Canada for improving the lives of Canadians living with diabetes.

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[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has introduced a carbon tax, raised payroll taxes, proposed higher taxes on businesses, added an escalator clause to the beer tax, tried to tax employee discounts, and cancelled children's arts and fitness credits, textbook and tuition credits, and public transit credits. It even denied disability tax credits for most type 1 diabetics. These higher taxes hurt Canadians and weaken the economy. Do not take my word for it, listen to my constituents:

Shelly incorporated to get bonding and insurance and resents being called a tax cheat.

Dennis said that higher taxes will kill investment and prevent job creation.

Bill's retirement is in his company. Since he does not get a pension, the higher taxes will threaten years of planning and saving.

Dr. Kim used her company to save for her maternity leave.

John cancelled a proposed Canadian expansion of his business and will go to the United States instead.

Instead of spin-and-damage control, the government needs to apologize, listen to Canadians like these, and stop raising taxes.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

ROHINGYA

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am aghast at the brutal violence perpetrated by Myanmar's military against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority. Over the past few months, the region has witnessed villages burned to the ground; hundreds of thousands of defenceless men, women, and children driven from their homes; and physical and sexual assaults that are breathtaking in their cruelty and scale.

At times like these, when Canadians witness the suffering of our brothers and sisters abroad, our reaction defines who we are and what our nation values. As such, I am moved that the Government of Canada has chosen to match donations to registered charities, such as the Canadian Red Cross Society and Islamic Relief Canada, by establishing a Myanmar crisis relief fund. This move confirms what I already knew in my heart to be true: that Canada is a country that cares, that we are a generous people, and that we are ready and willing to fight against the evils of this world.

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INDIA

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, “It was not riot, it was genocide”. These are the words of Rajnath Singh, India's home minister.

Today, and for the next three days, Sikh Canadians and human rights advocates will mark the 33rd anniversary of the 1984 Sikh genocide. Sikh men were burned alive. Women were subject to unthinkable sexual violence, and children were murdered in gruesome fashion. Many, including former Indian Supreme Court justice G.T. Nanavati, have pointed out that state resources were instrumental in these premeditated killings.

I am reminded that thousands of Canadians live with this pain as survivors and bearers of intergenerational trauma. Both the Delhi Assembly and the Ontario legislature have recognized these atrocities as genocide. I stand in this place in hope that someday soon, the House of Commons and this government will do the same.

The path to reconciliation will not be easy, but for the victims and survivors, today we remember.

* * *

CANADIAN PATIENT SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third leading cause of death, behind cancer and heart disease, is patient safety incidents, with just under 28,000 deaths across Canada. This is equivalent to a patient safety event occurring in Canada every 13 minutes. Medication incidents are one of the leading causes of patient safety harm in health care. Most of these can be prevented.

Patient safety is very important to our government. This week, we recognize Canadian Patient Safety Week.

[Translation]

Canadian Patient Safety Week is a campaign launched by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute to raise awareness and educate the

public on best practices in patient safety at the national, regional, and local levels.

[English]

By placing a spotlight on opioids and medication safety—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Niagara Falls.

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CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to address the importance of religious freedom in Canada. I am concerned, because the government has introduced Bill C-51, and while I generally agree with many of the revisions to the Criminal Code, repealing section 176 is not one of them.

Section 176 is the only section of the code that directly protects the rights of individuals to freely practice their religion, whatever that religion may be. I am reminded of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who proudly said:

I am a Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, or free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

I call upon all Canadians to join me in asking the government to keep section 176 in the Criminal Code. The unhindered right to worship is one of the foundations of our democracy and should have the support of everyone.

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*[Translation]***NEL MCCHRISTIE**

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to an upstanding citizen in my riding who, sadly, died in a car accident on July 6 at age 90.

Affectionately known as “Nel”, she was very involved in her Deux-Montagnes community and loved by all. Her involvement in the 4 Korners organization and as a yoga instructor and speed walking instructor earned her the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal in 2012.

●(1410)

[English]

As we celebrate her life today, we remember also Nel's top five lessons: first, it is never too late to make a positive change; second, it is always a good time for scones; third, make your bed every day; fourth, be humble; and fifth, love.

While we celebrate Women's History Month, I want to thank Nel for all the great memories.

[Translation]

Deux-Montagnes will cherish you forever.

*Statements by Members**[English]***SACKVILLE COMMUNITY FOOD GARDEN**

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the air is cooler, the leaves are changing colour, and fall has certainly arrived in Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. To celebrate harvest time, community members in Lower Sackville gathered for the Acadia Park Garden festival on the weekend. There was a community BBQ, locally produced healthy snacks, and plant exchanges. However, the cream of the crop was produce from the Sackville Community Food Garden.

This was the first season for the garden. Families have been using it to grow their own fruits and vegetables, all while contributing towards making a stronger, greener community for all.

I want to thank the gardeners of the Sackville Community Food Garden, and everyone across Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, who make our community stronger and healthier.

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TUBERCULOSIS

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the WHO released its annual global tuberculosis report. Once again, tuberculosis remains the world's deadliest infectious disease.

TB is an ancient airborne virus that still claims almost two million lives every year.

The Global Health Caucus on HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria had the privilege this week to speak with an incredible tuberculosis survivor. We had an eye-opening conversation about the human impact of this global epidemic.

Nandita Venkatesan is here today to watch our democratic proceedings, but cannot hear our discussion, because the medication that was used to treat her tuberculosis has left her permanently deaf. The medication is toxic, but patients often need to take it for up to two years, and in many cases, patients cannot even complete the gruelling treatment.

We want to encourage Canada to continue to take a leading role, and support the development of new and better drugs to treat TB to improve and save the lives of people across the globe.

* * *

ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year I stood in the House to speak about the protection of the Porcupine caribou calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Today, I restate these concerns.

This refuge is one of the most fragile ecosystems left on earth. It is also the main calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd, which is fundamental to the culture of the Gwich'in nation of the NWT, Yukon, and Alaska.

The U.S. Senate recently passed a budget resolution that puts these sacred calving grounds at risk. I have written to legislators on both sides of the border as have Gwich'in leaders, who will soon join others in Washington, D.C., to inform legislators of the importance of protecting this pristine area. I hope this message is heard.

I thank the Canadian Embassy in Washington for its work to support the protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

* * *

TOURISM

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, as the new chair of the all-party tourism caucus, it was my pleasure to host a breakfast. We heard updates from TIAC, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, as well as from Destination Canada.

As many of us know, we have had a banner tourism year so far. The hard work of industry, Canada 150 celebrations, and free Parks Canada Discovery passes all contributed to the momentum. The results are astounding. In the the first eight months of 2017 we welcomed more than 14.6 million visitors, an increase of more than 4% over 2016. The tourism sector is the number one employer of Canadian youth and it represents over 1.7 million jobs.

There will be a great opportunity to grow the industry from coast to coast to coast in 2018, the Canada-China Year of Tourism.

In my riding of Long Range Mountains, I am proud to say that I have over 540 tourism businesses that employ just under 5,000 people.

● (1415)

[Translation]

Hon. colleagues, let us talk tourism. It is part of every one of our ridings. Let us keep growing our industry together.

* * *

*[English]***SERGEI MAGNITSKY LEGISLATION**

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Sergei Magnitsky was a Russian lawyer, accountant and whistle-blower. While working on behalf of Bill Browder, he uncovered an elaborate tax fraud being carried out by the Russian government. For this, Sergei was arrested, beaten, tortured, and murdered in a Russian prison.

On October 18, the work of parliamentarians of all parties came to fruition when Senator Raynell Andreychuk's Bill S-226, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Sergei Magnitsky law, received royal assent.

This legislation ensures Canada will not be a safe haven for foreign officials responsible for corruption and gross human rights violations. It is a tool to project our values abroad while protecting our own sovereignty.

Oral Questions

Visiting Ottawa today is Sergei Magnitsky's widow Natalia and son Nikita. They are accompanied by Magnitsky's champion and human rights defender, Bill Browder. They wish to thank all parliamentarians for our unanimous support of Bill S-226.

On behalf of everyone here and in the Senate, I thank Mr. Browder and the Magnitsky family for their tireless efforts in defending human rights on the world stage.

* * *

[Translation]

MOVEMBER

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Movember campaign begins today.

[English]

The purpose of this campaign is to raise awareness for prostate cancer, testicular cancer, men's mental health, and suicide prevention. These are important issues for all of us, considering that one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, and one in of 10 men will suffer from serious depression. That is over 24 men in the House of Commons alone.

What can we do? We need to talk, ask, listen, encourage action, and check in.

[Translation]

I invite all my colleagues to take part in this campaign to raise awareness of men's health issues.

[English]

I challenge all the male members of this House to “grow a mo and save a bro”.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he is a feminist whose most important relationship is with indigenous peoples, and yet he believes that the basic human rights of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women, are subject to consultation.

One hundred and fifty years of colonization has dismantled the family unit in indigenous communities and stripped women from their traditional roles. We saw the Liberals voting down an amendment to Bill S-3 that called for the full and final removal of sex discrimination from the Indian Act. As such, the government believes it has the right to decide who has status. It is unthinkable that, in 2017, basic human rights can be so easily dismissed.

Our laws need to be in harmony with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The basic human rights of indigenous peoples are not for negotiation. They are universal and must be treated as such.

* * *

ATTACK IN NEW YORK CITY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the foreign affairs committee was at the United Nations in New York

City. New York is one of the world's great cities with diversity, opportunity for all, and a unique combination of business, arts, and culture. It is the city that never sleeps and never fails to impress. That is why the Conservative opposition and all Canadians were horrified by the attack yesterday.

Our hearts are with the families of the eight people killed in that terror attack. Our prayers are with the families of 11 people injured in that senseless act of violence. It was a violent attack in the name of terrorism, in a city that knows that only too well.

In 1961, President Kennedy in this place described the relationship between our two countries, stating:

Geography has made us neighbours. History has made us friends.

Today, to my American friends, we send our deepest condolences for their loss and our strongest resolve to stand with them as we fight against acts of terrorism.

* * *

ATTACK IN NEW YORK CITY

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians last evening were shocked to learn about the senseless terrorist attack in New York City that caused a terrible and unnecessary loss of life.

We in this place stand with all Canadians in offering our sincere condolences to those mourning the loss of family and friends. Innocent people doing nothing more than going about their daily lives or visiting Manhattan had their lives extinguished, with others injured and their lives changed forever. We condemn such senseless acts by those who attack democracy, our values, and our freedoms.

Much like the city itself, New Yorkers are resilient. Tragic events like yesterday will not deter them from going about their lives, nor should they. Stories of heroism and strength of community are already emerging. As before, the city and people of New York will not be shaken.

To our American friends, our allies and neighbours, we share in their grief, extend our prayers, and stand with them on this day.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance tried to give the opposition a lecture yesterday, but it did not go well for him.

Did he also lecture his Prime Minister? Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians why it is okay for the minister to control personal assets in a family company, when he is also responsible for passing laws that affect this company?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the House we have Canadians from all backgrounds and with diverse experiences. It is important to be able to discuss freely and openly the things that matter to Canadians.

Our Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner ensures that all the rules are followed and that there are protocols in place to protect the integrity of our parliamentary institutions. On this side of the House, we support and honour the work done by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner can only do her job if the government ministers actually provide her accurate information. We know that that did not happen, because the Minister of Finance was fined for breaking the law.

Yesterday he said that the problem is that other people just do not understand how it works. We know how it is supposed to work. Finance ministers should not be able to have direct control over assets that they own while they regulate and legislate in those very areas that their companies operate in.

I have a very simple question for the Prime Minister. When was he made aware that the finance minister still owned shares in Morneau Shepell?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the members of this House of Commons rely on the excellent work done by the commissioner to ensure that all the rules are followed and that all the safeguards are in place to uphold the highest level of trust that Canadians have given to each of the 338 members who sit in this House.

The personal and nasty attacks by the members opposite to try to lower Canadians' confidence in our institutions is, quite frankly, what they rejected after 10 years of that.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we rely on the Ethics Commissioner to do her job. She relies on ministers of the crown to be honest and open with what they hold in assets. That is something this finance minister has failed to do.

Again, to the Prime Minister, on what date was he made aware that the finance minister failed to disclose his corporation in France?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we hear, from these Conservatives, thinly veiled attacks on the quality of work done by the Ethics Commissioner, which, quite frankly, is no surprise.

For 10 years, those members were part of a government that attacked the elections commissioner, that attacked Supreme Court justices, that attacked information commissioners, privacy commissioners, that attacked a parliamentary budget officer, that attacked anyone who got in their way of ramming through their views of things.

We respect Parliament.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie and others not to be talking or yelling when someone else has the floor.

● (1425)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only people in this House right now who do not respect the work of the Ethics Commissioner are the ministers of the crown and the Minister of Finance who failed to disclose, who hid his corporation in France, and who has now been fined for breaking the law.

He has failed to be open about his many assets. He has failed to answer simple questions about what he owns, and why he structured it in the way he has.

We are still going to ask a very simple question. Can the Prime Minister tell us if the Ethics Commissioner has been informed of the finance minister's recusals from the two meetings he claims he recused himself from?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have done a couple of times, I think it is important, particularly today when so many young people are in this House watching the workings of our Parliament, to explain that it is perfectly normal and even important for the opposition to be asking difficult questions of a government. That is at the core of what we have as a government.

However, it is also, because of the nature of those attacks, important to have independent commissioners in whom we can all have confidence to ensure that the rules are followed in the appropriate manner. That is what we are always doing. What is coming from the opposition is noise.

[Translation]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps claiming the Minister of Finance was not in a conflict of interest. We now know that assertion is not true.

However, questions still remain regarding Bill C-27, a bill that could directly benefit the finance minister's family business.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the Minister of Finance met with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner before tabling Bill C-27 in the House?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members of Parliament, when we are elected, we work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to make sure we are following the rules and principles that are in place.

The Minister of Finance has offered to go above and beyond what the commissioner originally asked him to do, because we know how important it is to have the respect and trust of voters.

We are going to keep working with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and with all commissioners here in Parliament to make sure that we respect and defend the institutions of this House.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have the utmost respect for the commissioner, but here is the thing: she cannot block those loopholes. The government could, and chooses to block efforts to do so.

The Prime Minister might think otherwise, but Canadians' trust has been betrayed by the finance minister's ethical failings. Someone once said, "The Prime Minister has to show leadership and take responsibility for the actions of the people he chose." Who said that, one might ask? It was this very Prime Minister during the Duffy scandal.

Clearly, the Prime Minister does not understand what a conflict of interest is. Does he also need help understanding leadership and responsibility?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has always chosen to raise the bar on openness and transparency, and has continually worked with and respected the commissioners, whether they be the Ethics Commissioner, the Information Commissioner, or the Privacy Commissioner. That is part of what Canadians asked us to do when they chose us as government two years ago, after 10 years of a government that had completely disrespected the institutions that protect our democracy. That is what we continue to focus on while we focus on the concerns and the issues that matter to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that during the Senate expense scandal in 2013 the current Prime Minister tweeted, "Conservative ethics abuses have shaken Canadians' faith in Parliament. It's time to #raisethebar on accountability".

After the cash for access scandal, the investigation into the Prime Minister's vacation on the Aga Khan's private island, and the scandal involving his finance minister and Bill C-27, does the Prime Minister still believe that he did "#raisethebar" on accountability?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to demonstrate the openness and transparency that Canadians asked for two years ago. We will continue to have an open government that is directly accountable to Canadians. As I do every Wednesday, I will answer all of the questions I am asked.

We have often shown how well we understand that a government must maintain the confidence of Canadians in order to function properly.

● (1430)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe but, just four years ago, this Prime Minister did not hesitate to criticize the Conservative government for its ethical lapses, particularly in the case of the Senate expense scandal.

We know that the Liberals like using the hashtags #realchange and #raisethebar, but we are less certain about whether they really believe in those things.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and really raise the bar on accountability?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do just that. In 2013, the Liberal Party brought openness and proactive disclosure to Parliament. I must admit that it was surprising when the Conservatives immediately got on board and the New Democrats were the ones who were not interested in proactive disclosure. Given the situation with the satellite offices, we now see why, and we understand their approach to ethics.

[English]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister once said, "Canadians asked for open and honest government; instead they have been saddled with secrecy, cynicism and rampant ethical scandals." He was talking about the Duffy scandal, but I understand your confusion, Mr. Speaker, because he could have said the exact same thing about his own government.

When exactly does the Prime Minister think his sunny ways are going to clean up the government's secrecy, cynicism, and scandals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party and this government have always believed that sunshine is the best disinfectant. That is why we have moved forward on openness and transparency in ways that, yes, perhaps open us to a few more attacks from the members opposite, but ultimately create the confidence that Canadians must have in their democratic institutions—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I have to wonder if some folks had too much sugar last night.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to take very seriously the trust that Canadians placed in us by remaining open, transparent, and accountable to the opposition and to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for three weeks now the Prime Minister has been telling us that his Minister of Finance is not in a conflict of interest. Just yesterday, he even repeated it several times throughout question period. Now that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has sanctioned his finance minister for conflict of interest, the conclusion is clear: we know that the Prime Minister was aware of it.

I have a simple question. At what point did the Prime Minister know that his finance minister was in a direct conflict of interest and was breaking the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I already said many times, the Minister of Finance has worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that he is always in full compliance; he has even gone beyond what the commissioner originally asked of him.

If the member opposite would like to talk numbers, I have numbers for him. Fully 20,060 children in Richmond—Arthabaska received on average \$580 per family thanks to the Canada child benefit. That is what the finance minister brought in. We are making a difference for them and for everyone.

Oral Questions

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to the day when the Prime Minister learns to answer simple questions. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner confirmed that the Minister of Finance broke the law. She even confirmed that the penalty for the offence had been paid, proving that the Prime Minister was already aware of the commissioner's decision yesterday.

The Prime Minister can do whatever he wants in an attempt to deny the facts, but his efforts will change absolutely nothing: his minister broke the law.

Is the Prime Minister telling us that his Minister of Finance is above the law? Would he like to say that directly to Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we understand that the opposition has to ask difficult questions and even level baseless accusations to do its job and keep the government on its toes. That is important. That is how our democratic system works. However, we must also remember that we have commissioners like the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that everyone is following the rules and that respect for our institutions and their rules transcends the kind of partisanship we are seeing from the opposition. We will continue to demonstrate our faith in the commissioner and the fact that Canadians deserve to have faith in us.

• (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ironically, I think this is the only time that the Prime Minister is not trying to make something about himself.

For two years, the finance minister led Canadians to believe that his assets were in a blind trust, and that was untrue. For two years, the finance minister has led the House to believe that he complied with the rules of the Ethics Commissioner. That was also untrue. The minister has been fined. The minister broke the law. Is this the higher standard that the Prime Minister says he is holding his ministers to? When will the Prime Minister tell us when he knew that the minister had broken the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right: this House should not be about any individual one of us, but about the impact we have on Canadians. Let me talk about Canadians. Let me talk about young people in Milton. Let me talk about the 25,630 children in Milton who are receiving an average of \$520 per family because of the Canada child benefit. We gave them that benefit because, unlike the Conservatives, we believe in helping those who need it.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister indicated earlier that we are just throwing noise at him. Well, I speak on behalf of the parents of those 25,630 children and they want to know exactly what is going on with the finance minister breaking the law. The finance minister's mandate letter from the Prime Minister said, "I expect you to embody these values in your work and observe the highest ethical standards in everything you do." It is kind of like what we as parents teach our children, but here is the difference. When did the Prime Minister know that the minister broke the law and was not abiding by the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that those parents in Milton, like other parents across the country, will be pleased to know that there is an Ethics Commissioner who takes her job seriously and ensures that the rules are followed, just as they are being followed by all of us in this House. Those parents also know that since the government changed, since our government has been in place, they have been receiving larger benefit cheques every month tax free, because the Conservatives chose to send those child benefit cheques to millionaire families and we send them to the people who actually need them. The economic growth we have seen in this country—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is sending child care benefits to one millionaire: himself.

Earlier today, he said that sunshine is the greatest disinfectant, yet the finance minister's myriad numbered companies are shrouded in darkness. We do not know what other conflicts he has hidden among the assets in those numbered companies. Therefore, will the Prime Minister agree to tell the finance minister to throw open the shutters and let in the sunshine so we can see what is inside those companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have had a difficult time with this concept. For 10 years, the member opposite was part of the most secretive, opaque, untrusting, and untrustworthy government Canada has ever seen. The level of openness and transparency we have shown, the level of respect we have offered the commissioners of parliament, the Elections Canada commissioner, and justices of the Supreme Court that the previous government never showed is partly why Canadians have trusted us to deliver the kind of growth that 10 years of Conservatives never could.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am sure the hon. member for Foothills has a fabulous voice, but I encourage him to sing perhaps at a different time.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has gone so far as to suggest that somehow it would be disrespectful to the Ethics Commissioner if the finance minister were to tell us what he is hiding in his numbered companies. I wonder if the Prime Minister can tell us, did the Ethics Commissioner ban the finance minister from sharing with Canadians what assets he holds in those numbered companies?

Oral Questions

●(1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wants to talk about numbers, and I know he is wondering just how many young people in Carleton have been receiving the Canada child benefit. I can tell him that 16,200 kids in his riding have been receiving an average of \$430 per family a month to help with the high cost of raising families, of buying new clothes, and after-school activities. These are the things that are making a difference for families in his riding, that we have increased because, unlike the former government, we do not—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Jonquière.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the unions have sounded the alarm regarding Bill C-27, a bill that puts the Liberals' rich corporate friends first, ahead of our workers and pensioners.

The risk associated with pensions is going to shift from employers to employees. Today my colleague is going to move a motion calling for the withdrawal of that bill, which is the right thing to do.

The Prime Minister is fond of saying that he is working for the middle class.

Will he do right by our workers and pensioners and withdraw Bill C-27?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of what we have accomplished for our workers and pensioners. To support our workers, we lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them for the wealthiest 1%. We are currently cutting taxes for small businesses so that they can hire more workers.

We are also working to support our pensioners. We increased the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors by close to \$1,000 a year and we enhanced the Canada pension plan, because we know that providing pensions to present generations is crucial. That is what we will continue to do.

[English]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, maybe he can answer this question since he did not answer the others.

How can the Prime Minister say his government is working for the middle class when it has put forward a bill with the sole intent of shifting the risk of pension plans from the employer to the employee? That is not working for the middle class; that is working for the wealthy and well-connected.

The fact that the Prime Minister is still considering going forward with this bill, which would have huge impacts on middle-class workers, proves that he is completely disconnected from the middle class.

I have a simple question. Will he do what is right and withdraw Bill C-27?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a week ago, we announced that we were going to be increasing the working income tax benefit by about \$750 million in 2019. That is going to put more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians and make a huge impact in the economic growth and opportunities that hard-working Canadians have.

We are always looking for ways to continue to help workers and their families and prepare them for their retirement. That is what we are going to continue to do. This government is focused on the middle class and those working hard to join it.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that one of the talking points the Prime Minister is using today is “we believe in helping those who need it”. I am just wondering if he could clarify, when he said that, if he meant helping the Minister of Finance, who holds stocks in a company that saw a share price increase after he introduced Bill C-27.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous government delivered Canada child benefits that went to every family across the country, including the wealthiest families. We did not think that was fair, and we got a lot of grief from the Conservatives who disagreed with us on that.

We think doing more for the families that need it and less for the families that do not is a way of growing the economy. It worked. The Canada child benefit, lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%, and now lowering small business taxes and increasing the WITB work.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is why the GDP has shrunk and the deficit has increased I am sure—sorry, the other way around.

The Prime Minister has also said that we rely on the excellent work of the Ethics Commissioner, but the reality is that the buck stops with him with all his cabinet ministers. Day after day, the Prime Minister has been standing up and saying that nothing has been done wrong. Today the Ethics Commissioner said that the Minister of Finance broke the law.

Why is the Prime Minister continuing to stand up and cover for his minister?

●(1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, day after day I stand up and defend the Ethics Commissioner and talk about the fact that everyone in the House works with her and respects the work and the advice she gives. That is one of the foundations of the functioning of this place.

Despite the back and forth we have, we do have someone independent of partisanship who actually ensures the rules are followed. When mistakes are made, they are rectified. That is the role of the Ethics Commissioner and that is exactly what I have been standing up, time and time again, and trying to explain to the members opposite.

Oral Questions

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there we have it. Rather than raising the bar on the ethics of Liberal cabinet ministers, as the Prime Minister mandated in his letters, the Minister of Finance, with the Prime Minister's help, has lowered it.

The Ethics Commissioner has now confirmed that the finance minister broke the law and was fined. The minister has broken the law and the Prime Minister turns a blind eye to it.

Since there are so many young people here today, I would like to ask the Prime Minister one simple question. Is breaking the law now the new normal for the Prime Minister of Canada and his cabinet ministers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the member for Barrie—Innisfil brought up the young people in this place today. It is important for them to know that despite the back and forth that gets quite robust sometimes, particularly on Wednesdays, we do have a system that ensures that beyond partisanship, everyone in this place follows the rules. If mistakes are made, there are consequences for it.

We have a commissioner in place to defend the institutions of Parliament and democracy. Unfortunately, for 10 years, the members opposite spent their time attacking those folks who were defending our democracy.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): The rules were not followed, Mr. Speaker; they were broken.

The Prime Minister's letter told the minister he had an obligation "that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law". Also, he must live up to the "highest standards of honesty and impartiality". Now we know the minister broke the law.

Where I come from in Barrie—Innisfil, one is either accountable or one justifies. How can the Prime Minister keep making excuses for the Minister of Finance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I am demonstrating that we respect, work with, and follow the advice of the Ethics Commissioner.

However, I know the member for Barrie—Innisfil wants to know how kids in his riding are doing. There are 19,730 children in his riding who are doing better because of the Canada child benefit. This is an average monthly cheque to families of \$540. This money is being delivered to those families.

The Conservatives gave cheques to everyone. We are giving them to those who need it the most.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PENSIONS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in late 2015, the president and CEO of Morneau Shepell said the company viewed transferring pension risk from employers to employees as one of its biggest business opportunities.

By a strange coincidence, Bill C-27, a bill designed to do just that, was tabled a few months later by the Minister of Finance.

If the Prime Minister loves the middle class so much, why did he let his finance minister table a bill that attacks workers' pensions in order to line his cronies' pockets?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to talk about what we are doing for the middle class, for workers, and for our pensioners.

We reversed the previous Conservative government's decision to increase the retirement age from 65 to 67. We are currently giving almost \$1,000 more a year to our most vulnerable seniors, and we have made major improvements to the Canada pension plan for the first time in generations, because we know that investing in our workers' retirement funds is important for the future.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, why has Morneau Shepell been asking for legislation to enable targeted benefit pension plans for years? Because these plans are good for its clients and the employers, but not so good for the employees.

Tabling a bill that places the burden of risk and accountability on pensioners is not working for the middle class; it is working for corporate interests.

Will the Prime Minister stop spewing talking points about the middle class and really help them by withdrawing Bill C-27?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this government's mandate, we have focused on helping the middle class in concrete ways, whether it was lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1% or delivering the Canada child benefit, which helps families directly, including in North Island—Powell River where 14,350 young people will be receiving larger cheques every month. It will help with the high cost of raising families. This is a \$600 cheque, on average, to families every month, and it is making a real difference for the folks in the member's riding.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our oceans are central to our Canadian heritage and identity. With the longest coastline in the world and bordering three oceans, Canada is truly a maritime nation. However, our oceans are under threat from climate change, overfishing, and pollution. This is why we promised Canadians in the last election to protect 5% of our oceans by the end of this year and 10% by 2020.

Could the Prime Minister update the House on the status of this commitment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Cloverdale—Langley City for his hard work.

Oral Questions

In 2015, we promised to protect 5% of Canada's oceans by 2017, and we have delivered: 5.22% of our marine and coastal areas are now protected, up from less than 1% two years ago. These protections are based on sound science, extensive consultation, and transparent decision-making.

We will continue to work toward our goal of protecting 10% of our marine and coastal areas by 2020, and we will all work together to protect our oceans for future generations.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the *Financial Post* reports, "Sufferers of autism, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental health issues are the latest victims of a clampdown on access to the disability tax credit". Families I met with told me how the Liberals had taken thousands of dollars from RDSPs used for saving for their disabled children's future.

Could the Prime Minister please explain to Canadians exactly how shaking down our most vulnerable citizens is a fair and balanced approach on taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to supporting our most vulnerable citizens. That is why we are moving forward with a national disability act that will remove barriers through access and success for all Canadians who live with disabilities.

On top of that, with regard to mental health, I can tell the hon. member that we are delivering record numbers of support and tax breaks through the disability tax credit to sufferers of mental health, more last year than any previous year.

We are continuing to focus on supporting the most vulnerable. That is what Canadians expect of this government.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are moving heaven and earth to try to find more money to pay for their out-of-control deficits.

The victims are many: farmers, employee discounts, small businesses, and so on. They stop only when they are caught red-handed.

Now they are picking the winners and losers. They are determining who deserves support. Shayne, a diabetic from Alberta, is very upset. He says that he is no longer considered disabled by the government, but nothing in his life has changed. It makes no sense.

Instead of letting the Minister of National Revenue play doctor, when will the Prime Minister give Shayne his tax credit back?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are still in the process of ensuring that everyone who is eligible for benefits is receiving them. It is important to recognize that far too many Canadians are struggling and need help. That is why our government has always taken a compassionate approach and helped individuals and families in need.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable will be pleased to know that in his riding, 14,890 young people are benefiting from the

Canada child benefit, which is really making a difference in their community.

[English]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unimaginable that any government could be so heartless as to take away from people suffering with diabetes the benefits they have just to save a few bucks. However, now we are hearing reports that the Liberals are also targeting Canadians with mental health illnesses and autism to help pay for their out-of-control spending. Enough is enough.

When will the Prime Minister stop treating Canada's most vulnerable as if they are tax cheats?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits to which they are entitled. We have made it easier to access services with the support of the disability tax credit.

It is important to note that the approval rate for this tax credit in relation to mental health was actually at an all-time high for 2016 and 2017. We are investing \$5 billion to ensure mental health supports for over 500,000 Canadians under the age of 25.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, eligibility for the disability tax credit for diabetics depends on whether they require 14 hours of life-sustaining therapy per week, according to section 118 of the Income Tax Act. A doctor certifies whether they meet that requirement. However, the Prime Minister's revenue minister wrote a letter, in which she said that it was unlikely for diabetics to reach that requirement. She is overriding the decision of doctors.

Will he tell her to stop interfering politically and cancel this tax increase on our most vulnerable Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Canadians do not believe Conservatives when they come forward with these sorts of things. It is the Conservative government that cut health benefits for refugees. The Conservatives are the ones who shuttered nine veteran services offices. That was one of the things Canadians asked us to fix, that we restore those benefits and that we demonstrate the kind of compassion Canadians expect of their government, which they went without for 10 years. That is exactly what we are focusing on doing. We are ensuring that all Canadians who have access to these credits and benefits get access to them.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the scandal surrounding the Minister of Finance has become the Prime Minister's kryptonite.

Oral Questions

The minister introduced a rotten bill, Bill C-27, which made shares in his company, Morneau Shepell, go up. When the minister was caught red-handed making money while in a conflict of interest, he admitted his guilt and said that he would pay everything back.

Is that what life is like in the wonderful world of millionaires? When you get into trouble, you get out the cheque book and assume that \$5 million will make everything go away?

If the Minister of Finance is not living on another planet far away from middle-class Canadians, he will withdraw Bill C-27.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we recognize that opposition members have an obligation to try to make personal attacks on government members, but in our democratic system, our parliamentary system, we have commissioners who are responsible for ensuring that rules are followed and to fix any issues that come up.

Canadians have confidence in this system and all parliamentarians can have confidence in it. This is how our political system operates.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the head honcho at Morneau Shepell told investors in 2013 that legislation was required to open up that lucrative Canadian market to attack defined pensions. As minister, he gave them Bill C-27 and, voila, stocks in Morneau Shepell went through the roof. He made “gazoodles” of money, and now he has been found guilty of what, a \$200 fine?

The Prime Minister calls that raising the bar. That is more like an open bar for Morneau Shepell. Meanwhile, Canadian pensioners remain at the mercy of that privatized pension king of Bay Street.

Will the Prime Minister withdraw Bill C-27 and put his minister in his place?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to our seniors, it is this Minister of Finance who negotiated a historic strengthening of the Canada pension plan within his first months of being in office. This is a minister who increased the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors by close to \$1,000. This is the minister who ensured the retirement age would decrease from 67 to 65 for all Canadians, because that was the right thing to do.

We have been focused on supporting our seniors and pensioners, and on this side of the aisle we always will.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just introduced their budget bill, which joins Canada to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The government is going to transfer up to half a billion dollars into this bank for infrastructure outside of Canada, while at the same time the PBO reports the government is behind on infrastructure spending within Canada.

Why is the government spending money on infrastructure projects halfway across the world when it is behind on fixing our worn out bridges, roads, and highways right here at home?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, our party ran on a platform of investing in our communities, of putting forward record amounts of infrastructure investments—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I know it is Wednesday, and members are really happy to be here and are excited. They want to all get in on the action, but they have to wait their turn.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we chose to invest in our communities, to invest in infrastructure, bridges, roads, public transit systems, and wastewater systems that our municipalities and provinces needed, that our citizens needed.

We are going to continue to do that. We are going to continue to do that in the right way to benefit the growing of the economy, and support the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Hon. Alice Wong: Canada is our home.

The Speaker: Order. I would encourage the hon. member for Richmond Centre not to be yelling in the House when she does not have the floor.

The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRIVACY

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very worried about the creation of a high-tech neighbourhood in Toronto.

This data centre will house a lot of personal information about Canadians, and we are very worried about this data collection.

In similar cases in the U.S., stored data is governed by the Patriot Act. However, what guarantees do we have that this information will be kept confidential here in Canada, in Toronto?

Who will make sure that the personal information of Canadians remains confidential, and where will this data be stored?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government takes the responsibility of protecting Canadians' privacy and personal information very seriously.

That is why we are working hard to improve and modernize our systems to show that Canadians control the information of Canadians. We know that it is important on this planet, in the era of globalization, to make sure our information is safe. That is why we are working hard on this.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently, the Prime Minister was in Toronto with Google to announce the construction of a high-tech neighbourhood. The Google experiment will use data gained from cameras, smart phone apps, and sensors to design and maintain the project. However, Canadians are concerned and want to know who owns the data, and what will be done with it.

What guarantees will the Prime Minister give that the privacy of Canadians will be protected?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the world is changing in a rapid way. It is important Canadians not just be part of it but help shape the way the world is going to change in a way that respects people's rights and freedoms and privacy. We need to ensure the right balance between innovation, economic growth, and opportunities are matched with the defence of our charter rights and the inherent rights of Canadians.

That is why we are so excited about the fact the world is looking to Canada as a place to innovate, and to build the cities of the future in ways that benefit all of our citizens, not just the wealthiest 1%.

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*[Translation]***BUDGET**

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, our government tabled Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 2.

[English]

Budget 2017 is the next step in our government's ambitious plan to make smart investments that will create jobs, grow our economy, and provide more opportunities for the middle class in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and across Canada.

[Translation]

Could the Prime Minister tell the House what we are doing to put the middle class first?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his question and I congratulate him on his bilingualism.

Canadians are at the heart of our plan for a more innovative economy that creates jobs for the middle class. We are helping Canadians working in federally regulated industries better balance their professional and personal lives by making their working conditions more flexible. These changes will help them better adapt. As the parliamentary budget officer said, our investments aimed at Canadians and our economy are working.

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*[English]***ETHICS**

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have become accustomed in this House to Liberal ministers violating the written and unwritten laws and rules of the House. In every case,

after obfuscation and stonewalling, there is an admission of wrongdoing, with various excuses and justifications.

We have photographic evidence that the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities improperly used parliamentary resources, campaigning for his dad in a recent Calgary election.

Does the Prime Minister support what the minister did, or does the Prime Minister think the minister should follow the rules?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of a government that paid no attention to its rules, chose secrecy, obfuscation, and partisan advantage over just about everything else, Canadians are relieved to have a government that takes transparency, accountability, and openness as seriously as we do.

We will continue to follow the rules. We will continue to demonstrate that Canadians were right to place their trust in us. We will continue to demonstrate we are worthy, day in and day out, of the trust Canadians placed in us.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is truly amazing is he can say all of that with a straight face.

We did some quick research as to how many Canadians in the riding of Toronto Centre benefited from the introduction of Bill C-27. We found one. It was the finance minister. He gained \$2 million in four days. It is remarkable.

The Prime Minister says he respects Parliament so much that he looks at serious ethical violations and calls them noise. He is worried about the young people so much that he just spent an hour not answering a single direct question from the opposition.

Will he end all of this, and this is the only way to do it, will he end his attack—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe in sunny ways. I believe in staying focused on Canadians, and that is exactly what we are doing. I believe that sunshine is the best disinfectant. Openness and transparency is what Canadians expect. That is what we will always stand for.

I respect the member opposite tremendously for his responsibility to ask difficult questions, and to press the government on it. I am going to stay focused on doing the right things the right way, and ensuring our team is doing that, and always respecting the Ethics Commissioner for the work she does to ensure we all follow the rules.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, derelict vessels are a problem for many coastal communities, including in my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets. That is why I introduced Motion No. 40, and was very proud when the House adopted the motion unanimously.

Oral Questions

Earlier this week, our government introduced Bill C-64 in Parliament to address this important issue. Could the Prime Minister please update Canadians on the new measures included in this unprecedented legislation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for South Shore—St. Margarets for her advocacy on this important file.

Following up on our oceans protection plan, which I announced a year ago, we introduced legislation regarding vessel owners responsible for wrecked, abandoned, or hazardous vessels. This legislation is the first of its kind in Canada, and with it we are delivering on our commitment to better safeguard the environment, increase the safety of Canadians, and strengthen local economies. Coastal communities across the country can continue to count on our support.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the workers at Donnacona Institution were protesting simply to ask us to pay them. This government set itself the goal of fixing the problems with Phoenix by October 31, 2016. One year later, nothing has been fixed. One employee has suddenly been forced to live on \$300 because the government chose to recover overpayments, although it is still not paying her properly.

We are in 2017. Why has the Prime Minister not found a solution to properly pay the honest workers who serve the government? When is our Prime Minister's new deadline?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public service pay problems are totally unacceptable. A report by Goss Gilroy Inc. confirms that the government underestimated the project's complexity in the planning and initial preparation stages.

Our priority stays the same, namely ensuring that public servants are paid on time and accurately. Our government-wide efforts focus on four areas: governance and oversight, process improvement, capacity, and partnerships. We will continue to work very hard—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Nunavut.

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[English]

NUNAVUT

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

While touring my riding, many constituents expressed concerns about Nunavut's low standard of living. Currently, we are heavily dependent on federal transfers. However, access to own-source revenues would go a long way in improving this standard. The recent moratorium on oil and gas, although beneficial for the Arctic environment, also removes this potential own-source revenue.

How will the Prime Minister work with the new territorial government to improve our standard of living, and achieve a stable and self-sustaining economy in Nunavut?

● (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in real collaboration to support families, to build sustainable communities, and to create robust economies.

We are committed to working with the newly elected officials of Nunavut on a new Arctic policy framework which will replace the outdated northern strategy.

We will continue to support the people of Nunavut in their decision-making over resource development and conservation that affects their communities, culture, and well-being. We are putting northerners in the driver's seat to drive their economy now and into the future.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Reza Moridi, Minister of Research, Innovation and Science for the Province of Ontario.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott Duvall: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask for unanimous consent for the following motion:

That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the order for second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Finance of Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, be discharged and the bill withdrawn from the Order Paper.

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

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is customary under the Standing Orders for members to table in the House of Commons documents they have made reference to during debate or question period. Earlier on, I explained that the requirement to receive the disability tax credit was for someone to require 14 hours a week of life-sustaining therapy and that the minister had denied people whose doctors had certified that they had met that.

I have in my hand a letter in which she actually writes that people suffering from diabetes are not eligible to meet that requirement, even when their doctors have certified that they are. I know that the Prime Minister will want to read this—

The Speaker: The hon. member is asking for unanimous consent to table the document.

There is no unanimous consent.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

•(1515)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 94(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the “2017 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration”.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 15 petitions.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the bilateral mission to the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of The Gambia, at Accra, Ghana, and Banjul, The Gambia, from August 25 to 30, 2017.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this 4-H day, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 43rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the order for the second reading of private members' bills introduced in the Senate and recommended that the item listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

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[English]

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a very timely petition, in light of the discussion about the potential unfairness, allegedly, of income splitting. I have constituents who believe that income splitting that

was taken away by the government should be restored for all Canadians. They write that the government's elimination of the family tax credit has stripped thousands of families of a much-needed tax break and that it is imperative that the family tax credit, or a similar effective vehicle for income splitting, be reinstated so that Canadians, not the government, can decide how to spend their hard-earned money.

The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to act quickly to reinstate income splitting for all Canadians.

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a long-time advocate for safe cycling, I am pleased to present petition e-957, which calls on the government to establish minimum standards for quality and safety through the Trans Canada Trail act to ensure that the trail is a true world-class greenway.

More than 2,000 Canadians showed their support and signed this petition. I am very pleased to present it here today.

WILD SALMON

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to present a petition from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands. It calls on the House of Commons to use the precautionary principle and to finally go ahead and enact the 75 recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry headed by Mr. Justice Bruce Cohen on wild salmon in B.C.

KILLER WHALES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, is about protecting the very endangered southern resident killer whale population. This population is now down to 76 animals, and the concern is that vessels approaching, noise, and other threats imperil the survival of the species.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, petition e-1054, initiated by a gentleman I know, whose name is Dean Penton, from Joe Batts Arm, talks about the fishery. He states that the undersigned, citizens of Canada, call on the government to conduct a public inquiry to examine all aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries management, the roles of DFO and FAW, the groundfish moratorium, and all science and management related issues.

I present this with a total of 1,090 signatures.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

ALGOMA PASSENGER TRAIN

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by people who say that the Algoma passenger train is still not on track, and that this is having a serious impact on residents, businesses, and passengers. They say that 75% of properties are unaccessible. Other means of access are not reliable; either they are not open year-round or they simply do not exist. Industrial roads that people may use are often not accessible.

The petitioners are calling on the government to restore the Algoma passenger train so that Transport Canada can fulfill its mission.

• (1520)

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from residents of Burnaby South, and of course, residents all across British Columbia. The petition is entitled “Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline is not in our national interest”.

The petitioners go on to list that they are opposed to increased tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet as well as that bitumen is very hard to clean up. They are especially upset because Kinder Morgan has installed anti-salmon spawning nets and fencing all across rivers in British Columbia. Kinder Morgan has not removed this fencing, and the petitioners are calling on the government to make sure it is removed. I call on the government to make sure it takes action.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1103 and 1113.

[Text]

Question No. 1103—**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:**

With respect to the characterization of persons in the care, custody or control of the Canadian military as “PUCs” and “Persons Under Control,” or use of like categories, whether or not such terms were or are used officially or unofficially: (a) was there, at any point between 2001 and 2011, a government policy, formal or informal, to characterize or label Afghans detained by the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan as “Persons Under Control” and “PUCs”; (b) was there, at any point between 2001 and 2011, a Canadian Forces policy, either formal or informal, to characterize or label Afghans detained by the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan as “Persons Under Control” and “PUCs”; (c) if the answer in either or both (a) and (b) is affirmative, what was the nature of that policy; (d) if the answers in (a) and (b) are negative, were there circumstances under which the Canadian Forces, or Canadian Forces members, (i) could nonetheless engage in a practice, versus implement a policy, of categorizing or labelling a detainee as a “Person Under Control” and “PUC”, (ii) did engage in a practice of categorizing or labelling a detainee as a “Person Under Control” and “PUC”, and, if so, with what purpose and in what periods; (e) if the answer in (d)(ii) is affirmative, has the government attempted to determine whether such “Persons Under Control” and “PUCs” were ever transferred to the control of other states and, if so, how many and in what periods; (f) if the Canadian Forces, or Canadian Forces members, did transfer some “Persons Under Control” and “PUCs” to the control of other states, what efforts have been made to determine the identity and fate of those transferred persons; (g) if the Canadian

Forces, or Canadian Forces members, wished, at any point between 2001 and 2011, to characterize or label ‘detainees’ as “Persons Under Control” and “PUCs”, either to engage in a practice or to create a policy allowing for such a characterization or labelling, could they have done so without the approval of (i) the Minister of National Defence, (ii) the Chief of Defence Staff; and (h) if the Canadian Forces, or Canadian Forces members, wished now, in any theatre of war in which Canada may find itself present, to characterize or label ‘detainees’ as “Persons Under Control” and “PUCs”, either to engage in a practice or to create a policy allowing for such a characterization or labelling, could they do so without the approval of (i) the Minister of National Defence, (ii) the Chief of Defence Staff?

Mr. Jean R. Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government acknowledges that several terms were used to refer to persons detained by the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, during their operations in Afghanistan. Regardless of the term used, the CAF treated all persons in their care, custody, or control humanely in accordance with the established Government of Canada process for handling, release, transfer, or post-transfer monitoring, and in a manner consistent with the rights and protections of the Third Geneva Convention. As such, detainees were provided with food, shelter, and required medical attention. The terms used to characterize detainees did not in any way affect the CAF’s appreciation or exercise of their obligations toward these persons, nor did it affect Canada’s process for handling, release, transfer, or post-transfer monitoring of persons under CAF care, custody, or control.

Question No. 1113—**Ms. Tracey Ramsey:**

With regard to Canadians affected by the Canadian Red Cross tainted blood scandal prior to 1986, and who only received approximately one third of their settlement because the Canadian Red Cross claimed bankruptcy before the victims were paid, will the government: (a) reconsider their decision to not help the victims and instead provide these Canadians and their families with a financial settlement to recognize their pain, suffering and losses equivalent to the payments made to those government-compensated victims between 1986 and 1991; and (b) consider paying them the difference of the two-thirds that the Canadian Red Cross did not pay them due to claiming bankruptcy?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada considers it a tragedy that so many Canadians contracted hepatitis C and/or HIV from the Canadian blood system. While the Government of Canada acknowledges that nothing can truly compensate for the loss of life or health, it was the right thing to provide compensation to victims through the extraordinary assistance plans for HIV-infected individuals, EAP-1 and EAP-2, as well as the 1986-90 and the pre-1986/post-1990 hepatitis C settlement agreements.

In 1990, the Government of Canada established the extraordinary assistance plan, EAP-1, which provides financial assistance to individuals infected by HIV through blood or blood products received in Canada. It consists of one lump sum payment of \$120,000, tax-free. The estates of deceased persons who would have met the eligibility criteria may also apply to the plan. To date, financial assistance has been provided to 1,105 persons who contracted HIV from the blood system, for a total amount of \$132.6 million. The EAP-1 has no official closure date and new applications are still being received. Please see www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/extraordinary-assistance-plan-financial-assistance-individuals-infected-hiv-through-canadian-blood-system.html.

Routine Proceedings

The federal/provincial/territorial assistance program for HIV secondarily infected individuals, EAP-2, was announced in 1998. It provides financial assistance to persons who are first-order relatives (spouse, partner, or child) of EAP-1 recipients, and who are HIV-positive resulting from the relationship with the primary EAP recipient. It consists of one lump sum payment of \$240,000, tax-free. The estates of deceased persons who would have met the eligibility criteria may also apply to the program. Crawford Class Action Services, a third party organization that operates at arm's length from governments, administers the EAP-2. To date, financial assistance has been provided to 91 persons for a total amount of \$21.84 million. The EAP-2 has no official closure date and new applications are still being received. Please see www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-concerns/diseases-conditions/federal-provincial-territorial-assistance-program-hiv-secondarily-infected-individuals.html.

The Government of Canada has set aside approximately \$2 billion in compensation for individuals who, tragically, contracted hepatitis C from the blood system. This was done via two court-approved settlement agreements to compensate individuals who contracted hepatitis C from the blood system. Both the 1986-90 hepatitis C settlement agreement, as well as the pre-1986/post-1990 hepatitis C settlement agreement, were approved by the courts and are being administered by Crawford Class Action Services at arm's length from the federal government.

The Canadian Red Cross Society, CRCS, was granted protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, Canada, and subsequently proposed a plan of compromise and arrangement to settle litigation arising from contaminated blood. The plan of compromise and arrangement was voted upon, approved by its creditors, and sanctioned by the court on September 14, 2000. The plan of compromise and arrangement included the creation of a number of trust funds for HIV, hepatitis C, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease claimants, "CRCS settlement". The CRCS settlement totalled \$79 million and was contributed by pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, physicians, and insurers. The federal government was not a party or contributor to the CRCS settlement.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Furthermore, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1107, 1109, 1110, 1112, 1115 to 1117, and 1119 to 1121 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1107— **Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to current diplomats: (a) what are the start and expiry term dates for every current (i) Ambassador, (ii) Special Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, (iii) High Commissioner, (iv) Chargé d'affaires, (v) Consul General; (b) which diplomatic postings are currently vacant; and (c) since what date has each of the postings in (b) been vacant?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1109—**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, for each period between November 4, 2015, to March 31, 2016, April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, and April 1 2017 to June 19, 2017: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they applied for funding under, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (i.e. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1110— **Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With respect to the recipients of Honours and Recognition for the Women and Men of the Canadian Forces, for each period divided between April 1, 2001, to March 31, 2002, April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003, April 1, 2003, to March 31, 2004, April 1, 2004, to March 31, 2005, April 1, 2005, to March 31, 2006, April 1, 2006, to March 31, 2007, April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2008, April 1, 2008, to March 31, 2009, April 1, 2009, to March 31, 2010, April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011, April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2012, April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014, April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2015, April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016, April 1, 2016, to March 31, 2017, April 1, 2017, to June 19, 2017: who are all the recipients by date awarded by (i) name, (ii) rank, (iii) unit or sub-unit, (iv) Regiment, (v) Battalion, (vi) battlegroup where relevant, of the Commander-in-Chief Unit Commendation, Canadian Forces Unit Commendation, and the Command Commendation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1112— **Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to agreements for buildings or offices rented or leased by the government: (a) how many buildings or offices are currently leased by the government in each of the electoral ridings of (i) Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, (ii) Kenora, (iii) Timmins—James Bay, (iv) Nipissing—Timiskaming, (v) Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, (vi) Thunder Bay—Superior North, (vii) Thunder Bay—Rainy River, (viii) Sault Ste. Marie, (ix) Nickle Belt, (x) Sudbury; (b) what are the names of the companies or individuals who own the buildings or offices leased by the government, for each of the properties in (a), broken down by address of the property and department; and (c) what is the monetary value of each lease or rental agreement in (a), including for each lease or rental agreement the details thereof, including, but not limited to, its expiry date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1115—**Mr. Brian Masse:**

With regard to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) signed between Canada and the United States: (a) what is the list of all organizations that have received funding from the government related to this agreement; (b) what is the list of programs that are funded by the related funding; (c) what is the total of all funding, broken down by fiscal year, from the government under the GLWQA; (d) what is the total of all future approved funding for this fiscal year under Budget 2017; and (e) how does the Government of Canada's funding compare to that of the United States Government over the same period of time?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1116—Mr. David Tilson:**

With regard to irregular migration and the arrival of asylum seekers and refugee claimants at Canada's southern border since November 8, 2016: (a) what is the total number of border crossings; (b) at what geographic locations have these crossings taken place, broken down by (i) number of individuals crossing, (ii) province; (c) what has been the average time for individuals who have crossed Canada's southern border since November 8, 2016, from their crossing to obtaining a hearing at the Immigration and Refugee Board; (d) what has been the cost to the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to process these arrivals; (e) how many arrivals have been refused by the CBSA on security grounds; (f) how many asylum claims have been approved to date; (g) how many asylum claims have been rejected to date, and of those individuals, how many have been removed; (h) what contingency plans have been put in place by departments and agencies to deal with the phenomenon of irregular migration at Canada's southern border going forward; (i) how much funding has the government provided to other levels of government and to settlement agencies to handle this increased demand for services; and (j) what are the details of all meetings, discussions, reports, emails, and other documentation regarding the status of the Safe Third Country agreement and other relevant bilateral agreements and international conventions in light of irregular migration at Canada's southern border?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1117—Mr. David Tilson:

With regard to visa requirements for citizens of Mexico entering Canada since the removal of Canada's visa requirement for Mexican nationals on December 1, 2016: (a) what is the number of asylum claims made by Mexican nationals to date; (b) what is the number of rejected asylum claims for Mexican nationals to date; (c) what is the number of removals of failed refugee claimants from Mexico to date; (d) what is the total cost to date of processing asylum claims from Mexican nationals; (e) has the government established a certain threshold of failed asylum claims that must be reached to require the re-imposition of a visa requirement for Mexican nationals traveling to Canada and, if so, what is the threshold; and (f) what are the details of any formal visa exemption reviews undertaken by the Department or the Immigration and Refugee Board?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1119—Mr. David Tilson:

With regard to the government's commitment to land government-assisted and privately-sponsored Syrian refugees in Canada: (a) what is the total number of government-assisted Syrian refugees who landed in Canada between November 4, 2015, and June 30, 2017; (b) what is the total number of privately-sponsored Syrian refugees who landed in Canada between November 4, 2015, and June 30, 2017; (c) what was the total cost to process applications and provide security clearance for those streams of applicants, to date; (d) how much did the government spend on (i) transportation, (ii) food, (iii) accommodation, (iv) healthcare, (v) clothing, (vi) furnishings, (vii) language instruction, (viii) miscellaneous or incidental allowances, (ix) supervision and support services, (x) all other associated costs related to Syrian refugees landed between November 4, 2015, and June 30, 2017; (e) with regard to both government-assisted and privately-sponsored Syrian refugees who have landed in Canada between November 4, 2015, and June 30, 2017, how many of these refugees are 14 years of age and younger and how many are over the age of 14; (f) of those Syrian refugees who have landed in Canada between November 4, 2015, and June 30, 2017, from all streams, how many are employed either full-time or part-time; (g) of those Syrian refugees from all streams, how many have accessed social assistance programs, including social housing, since arrival and how many continue to do so; and (h) with regard to both government-assisted and privately-sponsored Syrian refugees who have landed in Canada between November 4, 2015, and June 30, 2017, how many have either (i) returned to Syria voluntarily, (ii) been removed by the Canada Border Services Agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1120—Ms. Tracey Ramsey:

With regard to the International Decade for People of African Descent which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly by resolution 68/237 adopted on December 23, 2013: (a) when will the government officially recognize this decade in Parliament; (b) what actions will the government take to promote respect, ensure protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African descent, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (c)

how will the government focus specifically on (i) strengthening national action in relation to the full enjoyment of all rights, and full and equal participation in all aspects of society for people of African descent, (ii) promoting greater knowledge of a respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution to the development of societies for people of African descent, (iii) adopting and strengthening national legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and to ensure their full and effective implementation; and (d) what actions will the government take to actively adopt the Programme of Activities for the International Decade which details concrete, practical actions to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1121—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to trapped wild finfish in fish farms on the BC coast: (a) has the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) observed an increase in trapped fish in pens and, if so, has DFO (i) quantified this increase, (ii) determined this increase to be problematic, (iii) recommended measures, (iv) implemented measures and, if so, what are they and what is the status of these recommendations; (b) what are the most, commonly identified trapped fish; (c) what is the protocol for the release of trapped fish; (d) is DFO aware of wild fish dying in pens and, if so, (i) on how many occasion, (ii) what species, (iii) what caused the fish to die; (e) is DFO aware of wild fish being disposed in a land dump and, if so, (i) on how many occasion, (ii) what species; (f) when was DFO first made aware of trapped wild fish; (g) did DFO know at the time of granting licenses that trapped wild fish could be a risk; (h) was there ever a policy directive or regulation changes to mitigate trapped fish; (i) what studies have been undertaken to determine the chain reaction of trapped fin fish on the surrounding ecosystem (i) by DFO, (ii) under contract by DFO, (iii) by independent researcher; (j) what are the conclusions and recommendations of the studies in (i); (k) what are the recommendations the government made with respect to the use and the management of trapped fin fish; (l) have the recommendations in (k) been followed or are there any failures in the implementation of these recommendations; (m) why has DFO not studied the phenomenon of fish farms acting as major fish attractant; (n) how did DFO make the determination that wild fish are minimally preyed upon by farmed fish; (o) how does DFO make the determination that wild fish are minimally preyed upon by farmed fish; (p) are trapped fish susceptible to spread viruses and parasites and, if so (i) how has DFO determined, (ii) have independent researchers confirmed DFO findings, (iii) what are the conclusions and recommendations of these studies, (iv) what are the recommendations the government made with respect to the use and the management of this resource, (v) have these recommendations been followed or are there any failures in the implementation of these recommendations; (q) is the government providing measures aimed at preventing trapped fish; (r) since 2009, has there been an increase in monitoring made by DFO; (s) has DFO identify any (i) monitoring gaps within the regulations, (ii) license conditions violation, (iii) operational policies violation; (t) has DFO officials seen the video of trapped wild fish produced by the Sea Shepherd and, if so, (i) what was DFO recommendation, (ii) has DFO investigated and, if not, why not, (iii) what action were undertaken by DFO, (iv) how many times has this topic been discussed with the government and has the question been raised with the Minister or Deputy Minister and, if so, has the Minister provided a response and, if so, what was it; (u) has there been any briefing with detailed information on the matter and for every briefing document or docket prepared, what was (i) the date, (ii) the title and subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number; and (v) how many calls has DFO received in regard to trapped wild fish and (i) has this number increased in the last ten years, (ii) what is the follow up associated calls, (iii) how many investigations have occurred in respect to these calls?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**CANNABIS ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There are 10 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-45.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 1 and 4 to 10 will not be selected by the Chair because they could have been presented in committee.

[*English*]

All remaining motions have been examined, and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at the report stage. Motions Nos. 2 and 3 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 2 and 3 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP), seconded by the member for Joliette, moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-45 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-45 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his support for my amendment.

[*English*]

I stand before you, Mr. Speaker, in a position at report stage that were it not for a motion passed at committee that is identical to ones passed in every other committee to reduce my rights as a member of Parliament, I would be able to submit today at report stage

substantive and detailed amendments such as I have had to do before committee. Previous Speakers have ruled on this discriminatory procedure, the first time in the history of Parliament that a majority of MPs in the House, at the request of a Prime Minister's Office, have reduced the rights of individual members of Parliament who have this artificial threshold. Only Canada among the Westminster parliamentary democracies has this rule that there is such a thing as a recognized party, so that if a party has fewer than 12 seats, it is not not a recognized party. It is unique to Canada, but I digress.

These PMO-directed motions, identical in every committee and dreamt up under former Prime Minister Harper's PMO and repeated under the current Prime Minister's PMO, reduced the rights of MPs like me to present detailed substantive amendments at report stage. This is called an "opportunity". This is not an "opportunity". This is a coercive process in which my amendments are deemed to have been presented. Therefore, I do want to make note of the fact that this procedure has become increasingly difficult, requiring me to run from committee to committee. Sometimes clause-by-clause consideration happens at exactly the same moment in different committees.

In this case, my amendments at committee went forward and I regret very much that my substantive opportunity to speak to these amendments was precluded by illness, so I want to put on the record that I had more detailed, targeted, substantive amendments. They were all defeated in my absence. I think they would have been defeated even if I had been there, but I did want to thank the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway who, in my absence, attempted to argue that my amendments had merit and attempted to help some of them get through. At report stage, I am precluded from putting forward substantive amendments, as the Speaker will know, and I am bringing forward deletions of those sections of the bill that are most difficult.

Let us step back and explain what the difficulty is for members such as me. I lead the Green Party of Canada, the first party in Canada to call for the legalization of cannabis. That is for the very reason cited so often by government members in explaining why the Liberal Party campaigned for the legalization of cannabis, which is that it is very clear that prohibition of cannabis is a failed policy. It is very clear that prohibition of cannabis profits primarily organized crime and fuels an underground economy whose main beneficiaries are people in organized crime. It is clear that it takes people who are otherwise honest, law-abiding Canadians and gives them a criminal record. There are many ills that come from the failed policy of prohibition. One of them in particular is that it fuels grow ops, which take up residence in otherwise calm, quiet, residential cul-de-sacs, and fuels the gang wars that break out. In some cases, criminals have broken into the homes of innocent people because they think they are running rival grow ops. In some cases, police have kicked down the doors of people who are completely uninvolved in grow ops. There have been cases of mistaken identity because quiet neighbourhoods can breed grow ops. Therefore, I am entirely in favour of anything that would take away the profit-making criminal activity in trafficking and growing cannabis.

Government Orders

This legislation, therefore, is something that I should be able to support 100%, but the reason I cannot is that it appears that in drafting this legislation, the governing Liberals were seized with somewhat of a schizophrenia. On one hand, they want to legalize cannabis. On one hand, they recognize the overwhelming scientific evidence that there is nothing, for instance from the World Health Organization or other organizations focused on health, that would make the case that cannabis is more dangerous or more addictive than otherwise legal substances that we also know are health hazards, such as tobacco and alcohol.

● (1525)

The Liberals approached the drafting of their cannabis legislation with the apparent intention, as publicized during the election campaign, of legalizing cannabis. However, at the same time, they seemed to be carrying a prohibition mindset into the drafting of the legislation legalizing it.

Accordingly, I want quote one of the witnesses who was before the committee, Michael Spratt, a well-known and respected criminal lawyer. He has appeared a number of times before parliamentary committees, and I have drawn on his evidence in the past. I find his views compelling. However, this is from an article he published under the title “Marijuana bill another example of Liberals’ broken promises”. It reads:

When it comes to legalization of marijuana, it seems that the Liberals will keep their promise—sort of. They pledged to legalize marijuana because it “traps too many Canadians in the criminal justice system,” because illegal weed funds criminal organizations and because legal but regulated cannabis better keeps drugs away from our children. So, in 2015, the Liberals promised to “remove marijuana consumption and incidental possession from the Criminal Code.”

The article continues:

...the Liberal's proposed cannabis bill actually doesn't do any of those things very well. Sure, the new legislation does legalize some marijuana—some of the time, under some circumstances—but it does not “remove marijuana consumption and possession from the Criminal Code.”

In reality, the new bill is an unnecessarily complex piece of legislation that leaves intact the criminalization of marijuana in many circumstances.

Therefore, the intent of my amendment to delete clause 9 is to remove the distribution risk of cannabis being given to anyone under 18 years old. Distribution is defined as not selling cannabis but basically giving someone else a cannabis substance, which in some situations is legal but in others is not.

Now, I understand that it is illegal to sell alcohol, depending on the province, to a minor. It is illegal to sell cigarettes to a minor, and so it should be. However, this proposed legislation is sending out a signal that cannabis is far more dangerous than cigarettes or alcohol, but there is no evidence for that. It is also sending a message that it is legal for an 18 year old to ingest cannabis, but if that same 18 year old passes it to a friend who is in the same year in high school and whom he or she thinks is also 18 but is not, the onus is on that 18 year old to try to find out how old the friend is before passing the joint to them. Otherwise, that 18 year old could spend 14 years in jail.

This is an extreme punishment that is completely tone deaf to the Liberal campaign to legalize cannabis. It is out of sync with all of the evidence. I would hope that judicial discretion would step in, but I cannot imagine for a moment why we would think that someone

who, without a profit motive, without any idea that what they are doing is illegal, distributes some cannabis, that is, gives it for free to someone whom they know and who also happens to be under 18, should be subject to a very harsh criminal sanction of 14 years in jail.

There are other parts of the legislation that I attempted to amend in committee, including the treatment of edibles. In terms of assistance to people who need medical marijuana, it is a safer way of ingesting cannabis for many people than smoking it. We are making a little progress on that at committee. I have to say that it was good to see the majority of Liberals accept amendments to remove some of the sillier provisions, such as a height restriction on plants. Some progress was also made in increasing the amount that could be possessed before one hits the criminal mark. Also, on the good Samaritan exception, again, I give credit to the Liberals for accepting that amendment, as well removing the height restriction of 100 centimetres.

That said, much more could have been done to fix the bill in committee, but we can still make progress here at report stage by accepting this amendment. I applaud the Liberals for their intent to legalize cannabis, but I decry the fact that this legalization is contaminated with a prohibition mindset that would undo a lot of what was promised.

● (1530)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have have substantive differences with the member's assessment of the risks, and I think the medical evidence clearly bears out the significant associations between marijuana use and mental health challenges, which we want to avoid.

I want to ask the member about her comments with respect to the Standing Orders. I do not go out of my way to agree with the government, but the way the Standing Orders work in combination with the motions passed by committees, and the way that most, if not all, committees work now, is that every member has an opportunity to bring forward substantive amendments at committee. Thus, they cannot bring amendments at report stage that they could have brought forward at committee.

The member in question wants to have the right to bring forward substantive report stage amendments, I understand that. However, as a member of a major recognized party, I am not able to bring forward substantive amendments at report stage either, except in certain very particular circumstances, which would apply to the member as well, where the Speaker judges the measure to be of great importance and makes an exception in its case.

Can the member clarify if, in this case, what she is asking for is actually a right that other members do not have? No one can bring forward substantive amendments at report stage if those could have been brought forward at committee.

Government Orders

●(1535)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for allowing me to amplify this point. The reason members of large recognized parties do not have the right to bring forward substantive motions at report stage is relatively new. It was in response to the over 700 amendments to the Nisga'a Treaty moved by what I think was the Reform Party. At that point, the majority Liberals took it to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, where, generally speaking, if we are to change the way legislation moves to the House it gets done. This reduced the rights of every Liberal, NDP, and Conservative member of this place, because if one their colleagues sits on a committee they do not get the chance to bring forward amendments here. Again that is a derogation of the individual right of every MP. We are all equals. We are not elected here as blocks of different parties. It is an unfortunate provision, but it did go through the procedure and House affairs committee and did change the Standing Orders.

For members such as me who are not allowed to sit on any committee, we are given a fake opportunity, a false opportunity, to have amendments brought forward in our name and deemed moved. Members in positions such as mine are not allowed to sit on the committee or put forward questions to witnesses. It is a fake, lesser opportunity for the sole purpose of depriving me of a right that I would have had but for the motions passed at every committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health for being able to deal with what is a very important issue. If I were to best describe it, it is to minimize the impact of cannabis on our young people. Today, we have more young people than virtually any other country in the western world consuming cannabis in some form or another. We finally have a government that recognizes that we need to do something to deal with the criminal element, the hundreds of millions that go toward crime as a direct result.

That said, the leader of the Green Party indicates that she has a problem with the legislation. She is concerned that an 18 year old sitting in a high school could possibly go to jail for 14 years for passing a cigarette to a 17 year old. I am repeating what the leader of the Green Party said.

If that same 18 year old possibly passed it off to someone who was 13 or 14 years old, does she not believe that would also be problematic, if her amendment had passed?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the reality of the way this bill has been drafted is that the sentencing is extreme. This was the expert testimony we heard at committee by those representing the Criminal Lawyers' Association, individuals with day-to-day experience defending people. There are a lot of people in this country whose personal reputations continue to be stigmatized because they are charged with a crime. As the hon. parliamentary secretary pointed out, a far higher proportion of our population than other populations has used recreational cannabis. Many people who are otherwise law abiding have used recreational cannabis over the years and are stigmatized with a criminal record.

This legislation should remove that risk of stigmatization, but it perpetuates it. To my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, the medical evidence from the World Health Organization and the report by the Canadian Senate are really clear. By the way, as I stand here, I am someone who would never want my kids either to ingest cannabis or to smoke cigarettes or access alcohol. These are health risks, but cannabis is no worse a health risk than the others.

●(1540)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here today in the House to address Bill C-45, the cannabis act, and the amendment I brought forward, which has been grouped together with the amendments from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I would have preferred to delete the whole bill, because it is a seriously flawed piece of legislation. However, in addition to deleting the section that I will talk about today, which is the section on home grow, I would point out that the government is rushing ahead with this legislation.

There are 243 days left before the Liberals are going to arbitrarily legalize marijuana, even though the provinces, municipalities, and police have said they will not be ready. There are numerous provinces and territories that have not even come out with a plan on how they will implement it. This legislation has not gone through the House or Senate. There has been no public awareness and education campaign launched. Therefore, I would again encourage the government not to rush forward with an arbitrary date as there are serious implications to this bill.

One of the many flaws in the bill is with respect to the subject of home grow. I will read from the bill what its intent was, and then show how this does not align. The bill states its goal are to:

- protect the health of young persons by restricting their access to cannabis;
- provide for a...[reduction in] illicit activities in relation to cannabis;
- deter illicit activities...
- reduce the burden on the criminal justice system in relation to cannabis;
- provide access to a quality-controlled supply of cannabis; and
- enhance public awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis.

In this legislation, the government is allowing the growth of four plants. We heard testimony at the health committee stating that those four plants, at a height of 100 centimetres, could produce up to 600 grams of marijuana in a house with no provision for storage and lockup. That was when there was a height restriction of 100 centimetres on those four plants, which has since been removed. I am not sure how the 600 grams of marijuana even lines up with the possession maximum of 30 grams. However, failing that, this will absolutely not keep marijuana out of the hands of our children.

In addition, we heard testimony from Colorado and Washington states, which had legalized marijuana. Colorado allowed home grow and the State of Washington did not, except in the case of medical marijuana users who were too fragile to get to a dispensary. In Colorado, where home grow was allowed, organized crime was involved in home grow, and it was a huge factor.

Government Orders

Obviously, if the intent of the bill is to keep it out of the hands of children, and to deter organized crime, home grow is not the way to go about it. The State of Washington saw that, by not allowing home grow, children and young people were having difficulty getting their hands on marijuana, and the organized crime portion of the marijuana trade had been reduced to less than 20% in less than three years. Therefore, with respect to keeping it out of the hands of children and deterring organized crime, we can see that removing home grow is absolutely essential.

Some of the testimony we heard was from the folks who grow medical marijuana. This is a very regulated process that traces all of the production, distribution, and who it goes to. There is also rigorous quality control testing to ensure there is no mould, to look at the potency, and numerous other factors with respect to cannabis. We can see that one of the goals in this bill is to provide access to a quality controlled supply of cannabis, and medical marijuana, as it is regulated today, meets that.

However, let us talk about that criteria with respect to home grow. There is absolutely no quality control testing in home grow. In fact, there are serious issues related to mould and ventilation. We heard testimony as well that home grow-type operations are 24 times more likely to have a fire. Therefore, there are hazards associated with these operations.

● (1545)

I had people from the Real Estate Association come and visit me in my office, to talk to me about what is required for them today when they sell a house that has had a marijuana grow op inside of it. They have to do a certification to make sure there is not any mould, and to address any of the issues that may have arisen. Their question was around what would be required when the bill passes. They wanted to know if they had to do that on every house where somebody had grown marijuana.

Those answers do not exist, because this flawed legislation is not well thought out, and nobody has the implementation plan that will occur at the provincial and municipal detailed levels. Of course, with 243 days left to go, we would think those answers and that information would be well in hand, but they are not. These issues continue not to be addressed by the government by having home grow in the bill.

With respect to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, her amendment is talking about all of the extra criminal charges that exist in this bill. For example, if people have four plants, they are well within the law; if they have five, they then are criminals. If people possess 30 grams, they are okay; if they have 31 grams, they are criminals.

The member talked about some of the sentences of up to 14 years, which are not in alignment with other judgments on the possession of alcohol and drugs, which are more like two to three years. There are a huge number of issues with respect to that criminality, but all of those different charges will continue to plug up the courts. One of the things this bill was supposed to do was to off-load the courts, because there are murderers, rapists, and all kinds of court cases being dismissed because the Minister of Justice has not appointed enough judges. The courts are clogged up with these minor possession-type charges.

Again, this legislation is not meeting its goal in any way, but especially within the home grow area. I am really disturbed the government thought it was going to improve the legislation by removing the height requirement on home grow plants. Originally, it was a maximum of 100 centimetres, and if a plant got to 150 centimetres, then of course, that meant another criminal charge. The government took that away.

It is really disturbing, because right now there are videos out on YouTube that will show people how they can grow their marijuana plants with chicken wire, so that it can be stretched out and moved around. We saw pictures of trees from the folks who came and testified at committee. If four plants of 100 centimetre-size could bring 600 grams of marijuana, then how much more could we get if we grew four trees of marijuana. There is no specification now in the bill to restrict that amount.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is quite correct when she said there were issues with break-ins. There is a lot of evidence of that from Colorado, where organized crime would break into and raid various grow ops. The police have testified they are unable to police this home grow section. They cannot see into people's houses. They believe they will receive a lot of nuisance calls from Joe, the neighbour, saying his neighbour has five plants not four plants, or there is a smell, or there is a mould problem.

All of these kinds of things will put a lot of burden on the police force. They did not feel this should be part of the bill. The testimony they provided was that it was not enforceable, and they did not have the resources.

For the numerous reasons I have stated, this home grow section of the bill that I would like to see deleted does not protect children. It does not keep marijuana out of the hands of children. I would argue it makes it easier for children to access. It certainly does not keep organized crime out, as we saw in Colorado. It certainly does not provide access to a quality controlled supply of cannabis, which we see with the medical marijuana business, but not in home grow. There was no public awareness done.

The time is ticking away. There are 243 days remaining before the arbitrary legalization of this flawed bill by the government.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton for her actions and activities on the committee, to which she is a well-contributing member.

Under Bill C-45, the act would create an offence in criminal law for the cultivation of more than four plants. It would also create an offence for the distribution of any portion of that. It is only for personal cultivation, and any attempt to commercialize it, sell it, or distribute any of it to other persons would result in a criminal charge. Those controls are in place.

Government Orders

The law would also allow for provinces, territories, and municipalities to implement such regulations as they deem appropriate for their jurisdictions and circumstances which may be necessary to exercise control on the circumstances under which those plants may be grown, to place additional limits on the number of plants, to put in regulations and requirements with respect to safety, security, sanitation, air quality, and its access to children.

There is also provision within provincial regulations for restrictions on where that can take place, whether it can take place, for example, in multi-use dwellings, such as apartment buildings or condo buildings. Given that, the criminal law addresses an offence for growing more plants, and contains provisions to prevent people from selling what is being produced, along with the appropriate level of legal jurisdiction for other restrictions and controls at the provincial, territorial, or municipal levels.

Does the member feel that level of control could be appropriately exercised to address the concerns she raised in her speech?

• (1550)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, there was a lot in that question, and I will try to address all the points.

First, in the discussion about landlords of apartment buildings, one point that ought to be raised has to do with homeowners in Ontario and Quebec. Today, with the existing laws, people who own homes and rent out part of or the entire home to somebody else, under the provisions of this bill, would not have the right to prevent tenants from growing or consuming marijuana in the house. That would be a concern to many homeowners.

In terms of the criminality in the bill, we know that organized crime has a \$9 billion industry in Canada. It is a typical naïveté of the government to put laws in place when it is clear that criminals are not going to obey the laws. They are going to do what was done in Colorado. They are going to have multiple grow ops, break into grow ops, and that is the way that is going to go.

With respect to the provinces and municipalities being able to put their own extra criteria in place, it is a total abdication of leadership on the part of the Liberal government. This was its campaign promise. This was its promise to Canadians, and it has totally not nailed down the details of anything on how this should be done in a standard way across the country in order to protect our children.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague touched on an issue that was a major focus of this bill. It emanates from section 7 of the bill, which sets out the purposes of the legislation, one of which is to transfer the production and distribution of cannabis from the illegal world, and bring it into the legal, regulated world. My hon. colleague commented on her concern of organized crime still being involved in this industry.

My question has to do with edibles and concentrates. This legislation, once passed, would still leave illegal edibles, concentrates, and other non-smokable forms of cannabis. Leaving aside the health issues, those products would be left to the black market and organized crime, which will not be distributing cannabis products in child-proof packages, let me assure everyone.

Does my hon. colleague have any comments on the wisdom of the Liberal government leaving those products to the illicit market when

one of the purposes of the bill is to actually stop the illegal black market production of cannabis products?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, if the purpose of the bill as stated is to get organized crime out of the picture, then it should be noted that if we look at all the jurisdictions where marijuana has been legalized and we look at the one that has had the best outcome with respect to getting organized crime out, it would be Washington State. That state had a very regulated system, with state dispensaries, that included edible products. It could control the amount of marijuana in the edible products as opposed to homegrown products, such as baked brownies, where one could not be sure how well distributed the marijuana would be through the brownies and whether children would eat them.

A lot of hazards were not addressed by the government.

• (1555)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the motions before us. I will focus my remarks primarily on the motion from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, that Bill C-45 be amended by deleting clause 9 in its entirety.

I would like to first begin by acknowledging and thanking the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her thoughtful contribution to this ongoing debate and to this important issue. She has made a very significant contribution, and I very much value her opinion and her advice.

I would also like to commend the work of all members on the Standing Committee on Health for their study of Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other acts.

The health committee returned to Ottawa in advance of the commencement of our fall session of Parliament, worked extensively throughout the month of September, and heard from many learned witnesses who provided their perspective on a wide range of issues from law enforcement to public health.

I would remind all hon. members that Bill C-45 would provide a legislative framework for legal and regulated access to cannabis when it would be provided by authorized sources. Beyond that, cannabis would be subject to certain prohibitions.

With that in mind, I would like to point out a number of important features of the bill that relate to the criminal law.

The architecture of the legislation is such that cannabis remains a controlled substance. It cannot be accessed legally by youth and it can only be accessed legally by adults by way of an authorized source.

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Division 1 of part 1 of Bill C-45 shows that many of the offences that currently apply to cannabis under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act will continue to exist under the proposed cannabis act. This is very much in keeping with the final report of the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation, which recommended to the government that criminal offences should be maintained for illicit production, trafficking, possession for the purposes of trafficking, and possession for the purposes of importing and exporting cannabis.

Clause 9, the proposed distribution clause, is also consistent with the task force's recommendations that our government seek to limit criminal prosecution for less serious offences and create exclusions for social sharing. The proposed clause allows adults to share cannabis privately and to share up to 30 grams of cannabis in a public place. It exempts young persons from criminal liability for sharing very small amounts, up to 5 grams of cannabis.

It is important to recognize that every province and territory will also enact provincial legislation, which will enable those jurisdictions to enforce an absolute prohibition for the possession, purchase, and consumption of cannabis by a person under the age of majority in those jurisdictions. However, the enforcement of that will result in a provincial offences ticket and not a criminal record for that child, thereby eliminating one of the significant harms the task force and Canadians have recognized can be occasioned upon our young people as a result of enforcement of the current law.

I will discuss momentarily how the penalties proposed in Bill C-45 are already less stringent than the current penalties for cannabis offences under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Before I do that, I would like to review how clause 9 is designed to operate.

Clause 9 of Bill C-45 provides for the distribution offence. The term "distribute", as defined in clause 2 of the bill, includes administering, giving, transferring, transporting, sending, delivering, providing or otherwise making available in any manner, whether directly or indirectly, and offering to distribute.

Subclause 9(1) sets out prohibitions respecting the distribution of cannabis. Unless authorized under the act, for instance under a license or permit, the legislation would prohibit an adult 18 years of age or older from distributing more than 30 grams of any dried cannabis or its equivalent to another adult, any amount of cannabis to an individual who is under 18 years of age, any cannabis to an organization or any cannabis that he or she knows to be illicit cannabis.

The proposed clause 9 will also prohibit a young person from distributing more than five grams of any dried cannabis or its equivalent to another person or from distributing cannabis to an organization.

Subclause 9(1) includes prohibitions related to the distribution of plants as well as distribution by organizations.

Subclause 9(2) would prohibit the possession of cannabis for the purpose of distributing it contrary to any of the prohibitions described above, and again, unless such possession would be authorized under the act.

● (1600)

The penalties for adults who commit an offence under clause 9 would range from a ticket up to a maximum of 14 years imprisonment, depending entirely on the circumstances. Young persons who offend would be subject to a youth sentence under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The distribution provisions, along with other offence provisions in the proposed cannabis act, represent a marked departure for how cannabis is currently dealt with under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Whereas most cannabis related offences under the CDSA are straight indictable offences, including the offence of trafficking, which includes most of the activities contained in the new definition of "distribute" under the cannabis act, and are punishable by up to life imprisonment, the criminal offences proposed in Bill C-45 are all what are commonly referred to as "hybrid offences". This means they can be prosecuted by way of an indictment or as a summary conviction offence. In most cases under the proposed legislation, the maximum penalties, when prosecuted by indictment, will be up to 14 years imprisonment and up to six months imprisonment for prosecution on summary conviction.

It is very helpful for the members to understand that the maximum penalty, up to 14 years, is not for those circumstances that have previously been described as some young person passing a joint to another person who they mistakenly believe to be of age but might be under the age of 18. It is for those offenders and those offences that are deemed to be the worst case. The worst offence would be distribution to a very young child and the worst offender would be a repeat offender, someone who has done it many times.

The maximum penalty in our criminal justice system is deemed to be appropriate for those individuals who are the worst offenders and for those offences which are deemed to be the worst. In an overwhelming majority of circumstances, and certainly in the one described earlier by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, those would be dealt with in a more appropriate and proportional way by the police, the prosecutors, and the criminal justice system.

I would also point out that the cannabis act proposes, as an alternative to the summary conviction and indictment procedures contained in the Criminal Code, a ticketing scheme for minor violations of certain criminal offences, including some of the distribution offences. This is entirely consistent with what law enforcement asked us in 2013, by its resolution at the CACP convention seeking such a ticketing scheme.

During clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-45, clause 9 was the subject of seven motions to amend, none of which were carried. Several of these clause 9 motions sought to lower the penalties proposed for the distribution offences. One of these motions sought to remove the defence of mistake of fact where the mistake was as to age. These defences are necessary. They ensure that an accused who wants to raise the defence of mistake of fact as to age must show that he or she took reasonable steps to ascertain the age of the young person. Removing these defences would be contrary to the bill's purpose of protecting the health of young persons by restricting their access to cannabis.

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The present motion from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands proposes simply to remove all prohibitions and accompanying penalties. If passed, it will serve to defeat many of the key objectives of Bill C-45, which is to deter illicit activity in relation to cannabis through appropriate sanctions and enforcement measures, and to protect the health of young persons by restricting their access to cannabis.

By removing the offence of distribution, this amendment would allow for the unlimited distribution of cannabis between adults. Perhaps more concerning, it would allow adults to distribute cannabis to young persons under the age of 18.

I urge all hon. members to oppose the amendment. It is contrary to the purposes of Bill C-45. It would create a means whereby children and young persons could legally access cannabis from adults. It would result in what could only be described as a free-for-all in relation to cannabis in Canada. That is not the intent of Bill C-45 and it does not accord with our government's intentions.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question with regard to the possession amount. We know in the bill 12 to 17 year olds are allowed to possess up to five grams. We know that adults over 18 are allowed to possess up to 30 grams. We know that a single dwelling, a single person living in a house, could grow four plants, which could be of any size because there is no limit to that now. We heard testimony at committee that even four plants at 100 metres high could grow up to 600 grams. One could conceivably have quite a number of grams. Therefore, if someone is only allowed to possess 30 grams, or if one is 12 to 17, only five grams, and that person is in his or her house, he or she actually can possess way more than that. I am not sure how that could be reconciled.

Also, I wonder why the member ignored the input of representatives of the police at committee who said they opposed home grow.

•(1605)

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, let me address the first thing the member said. It was not only completely incorrect, but, with respect, it was also a dangerous thing to say. The law is very clear. Under the cannabis act, we will not be creating a criminal offence for young people between the ages of 12 and 18 to possess cannabis. We have also been crystal clear that a prohibition for the possession, purchase, and the consumption of cannabis will be enforceable through provincial legislation.

We have worked very closely with our provincial and territorial counterparts. We have met with their justice officials and their first ministers. There is a common agreement and understanding that the appropriate level of control to keep cannabis out of the hands of our kids is not to criminalize them, not to give them a criminal record that can have devastating effects on their futures and their outcomes, but rather to enforce that law through provincial regulation, exactly, by the way, as we do with alcohol.

I will simply remind the member opposite, and all members of the House, that every province and territory has a liquor licence act. It contains provisions to prohibit the purchase, possession and consumption of alcohol for persons under the age of majority. That offence is enforceable under the provincial offences act and it does

not result in a criminal record. This is the appropriate level of governance to enforce that prohibition.

I am very concerned when a rather misleading statement is made, I am sure completely unintentionally, by the member for Sarnia—Lambton. To leave the impression with young people that the law will allow them to possess is a dangerous proposition. I would remind all young people that there are very serious health and social consequences for the use of cannabis. The possession of that cannabis will be contrary to provincial regulation, which will be enforced.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister Health just pointed out something that was very true. Criminal convictions, particularly for young people, have, in his words, “devastating effects” on their lives. The Prime Minister has admitted to smoking marijuana while he was an elected official. His brother did so and through family connections was not charged. Notwithstanding the fact that the NDP has called on the government to instruct prosecutors under federal jurisdiction to not prosecute Canadians right now for simple possession when a bill will come forward to make that behaviour legal, the government has refused.

If criminal records are so devastating, why is the hon. member and his government so content to let 50,000 Canadians be charged in the last 12 months for simple cannabis possession, which will have devastating effects? Why does the bill not have a single provision that deals with pardoning those people once the bill becomes law?

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway for his very strong contribution to the health committee and the discussions around this issue and this debate.

I pointed out in my earlier remarks that cannabis was a controlled substance. With the passage of Bill C-45, it will remain a controlled substance. We propose to control it through strict regulation rather than criminal law. However, until we have lifted the criminal prohibition and put in place a well-structured framework of strong regulation for the production, distribution, and the consumption of cannabis, until we replace that current prohibition, the law remains in effect so we maintain control.

The member has suggested that we should also deal with issues of record suspension and pardons within this bill. With great respect to the member opposite, there is other legislation. I have heard him speak against omnibus bills, and I am confident he would want us to deal with the cannabis control regulations in this bill separately. If he wanted us to turn to a different discussion on legislation that would control licence suspension and pardons, that would be a discussion for a future date.

Government Orders

●(1610)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start with the general context within which this bill comes before this House. That is that we in Canada, like other states, have spent the better part of the last 150 years pursuing a criminalized and prohibitionist model toward the regulation of cannabis. Colloquially, it is known as the war on drugs, where successive governments have regarded cannabis as a substance that is dangerous and that citizens do not have a right to access, possess, or use in any way. The official policy of successive Liberal and Conservative governments for the last 150 years has been to make it a crime to possess or use cannabis.

We all know, through long experience and reams of data, that this approach to regulating cannabis is a completely failed policy and it failed for a variety of reasons. Some people believe that what folks choose to ingest is fundamentally an individual decision, that as long as it does not affect others, the state really does not have a right to tell citizens what they should or should not put in their body. Others believe that if it is a crime it is a truly victimless crime. If someone chooses to smoke a joint on a Friday night, people have great difficulty regarding that in any way, shape, or form as a crime.

Canadians can legally ingest alcohol or tobacco, both substances that overwhelmingly and demonstrably have more serious adverse health effects when compared to cannabis. Most people have long believed it is an unacceptable contradiction to allow the state to criminalize cannabis while leaving these other substances that are carcinogens and substances that when used exactly as directed can cause death. I want to pause for a moment and speak about one of the most stark moments of testimony heard when we were studying this bill in committee. A person said that people can walk into a liquor store and walk out with a 26-ounce bottle of liquor and there is enough liquor in that bottle to kill them, to kill a child. I do not think we have to remind any members in this House of the effects of tobacco, which is a carcinogen that kills Canadians unacceptably every year.

The other thing that lies behind this context is that, I would argue, every harm associated with illegal drug use stems from the criminalization of the drug use, not the drug itself. That is because people who choose to smoke a joint on a Friday night or have a drink of scotch on a Saturday or share a bottle of wine do not feel that it is inherently a criminal act. There are problems associated with those substances because they are serious substances that have mind-altering properties. Obviously, regulation of these substances is in order. When people have a problem with cannabis and other substances like that, we in the New Democrats do not see that as a criminal justice issue; we see it as a social justice issue. Therefore, when we see a person with a drug problem, we see a health issue or an addictions issue or a poverty issue; we do not see a criminal issue. If experience has taught us anything after spending billions of dollars in Canada and the United States and other jurisdictions to try to stamp out drug use, we know that it does not work. In fact, the statistics before our committee were very clear that Canadian youth are among the first- or second-highest users of cannabis in the world. That is in a context where it is totally criminal and we have life sentences for trafficking in the Criminal Code, so in that context it has not done a darn thing.

Most important, we live in a democracy. The vast majority of Canadians, across party lines I would argue, overwhelmingly see the criminalization of cannabis as an unjustified approach. They want it changed. Last election, some 65% voted for parties that explicitly campaigned on decriminalizing or legalizing cannabis. Even some Conservatives believe, on individual liberty grounds and other such philosophies, that cannabis ought to be legalized. After the 2015 election, Canadians were entitled to assume that their expectation that marijuana would be legalized would finally be enacted. They are disappointed because this act would not legalize cannabis, and I will speak to that in a moment.

●(1615)

When we examine Bill C-45, I would describe it truly as a horse of two colours. On the one hand, it is a definite improvement over the status quo. Finally, Canadians would no longer be criminals simply for possessing and growing small amounts of cannabis. Second, it would create a production and retail market for legal cannabis, albeit highly regulated and controlled by the state.

On the other hand, it is a great disappointment for all those who believed that the Liberal government was going to legalize cannabis, because this bill would not. It would create more cannabis offences than we have at present. It would maintain the criminalized prohibitionist model of cannabis policy, would fail to capture the huge economic potential of cannabis as a sustainable, high-value product worth billions of dollars to our economy, and would be informed by and perpetuate many of the worst, unfounded myths of cannabis. This is truly unfortunate, because the Liberal government had an opportunity and the mandate from the Canadian people to bring in comprehensive legislation based on evidence and science to fix this long-standing social and legal injustice, but it failed to do so.

What would Bill C-45 do? It would allow the personal public possession of cannabis up to 30 grams. It would allow every household to grow up to four cannabis plants, originally limiting it to 100 centimetres in height. It would create a process for those who want to grow cannabis for commercial recreational production to obtain licensing from the federal government, would set the legal age for possessing cannabis at a minimum age of 18 years, and would delegate to the provinces the ability to design the retail distribution model they want to apply in their particular jurisdictions. This bill fails to eliminate criminal penalties for a host of offences, with many subjecting Canadians up to a maximum 14 years of imprisonment.

Government Orders

It would continue to make edibles and concentrates illegal in stark contradiction to the recommendations of the McLellan report and the purpose of the bill, which is explicitly to bring the production of cannabis products outside of the black market and into the licit world. It would prohibit the importing and exporting of recreational cannabis products and perpetuate the discriminatory application of criminalized cannabis laws to the most marginalized Canadians, including poor, racialized, indigenous, and young people. Finally, it fails to deal with pardons for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who bear convictions for simple possession offences, which, as the Liberal government acknowledges, has devastating consequences for Canadians employment-wise, travel-wise, socially, and economically.

The NDP believes strongly in the legalization of cannabis. In fact, no party in this House has the record of consistency on this issue than the NDP has, working since the 1970s to decriminalize cannabis use in Canada. New Democrats set out to work proactively and positively to examine this bill and improve it. We called the most diverse and informed witnesses before the health committee to obtain the best evidence we could to inform committee members, and we moved 38 amendments at committee to improve this bill. Unfortunately, the Liberals joined with the Conservatives to defeat every single NDP amendment. In fact, it was so bad that the NDP amendment to remove the ridiculous 100-centimetre limit on plant height was voted down by the Liberals, only to have them introduce the identical amendment so they could take credit for passing it. That is okay, progress is progress.

Liberals rejected the NDP amendments to add pardons to this bill. They were ruled outside the scope of the bill. Can anyone imagine ground-breaking cannabis legislation to change 100 years of a criminal approach to cannabis and the Liberals forgot to put in the bill any provision that would allow Canadians with simple possession records, to have at least a streamlined approach to obtain pardons after this bill becomes law? A Canadian could be convicted on June 30, 2018, for simple possession of cannabis for doing exactly the same thing that will be legal on July 1, 2018, and the current government is content with that.

New Democrats want to work proactively with the government and support this bill because it absolutely is an improvement over the status quo, but we will continue to work for legislation that actually reflects the science, the evidence, and the huge economic potential of this.

• (1620)

I will conclude by saying that the restriction on importing and exporting cannabis is absolutely going to hamstring Canadian business. We could be a global leader with first market access with high-quality cannabis products, as the rest of the world comes to the same conclusion that Canada has, which is that criminalizing cannabis is a mistake and poor public policy, and they will be moving to legalize cannabis in their jurisdictions as well. The NDP will continue to work towards those ends.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for my friend and colleague across the way, but I must have run in a different election in 2015, because I do not think that there was one issue that made a clearer definition of

positions than the marijuana issue. The government's position at the time was very clear: legalize it.

I remember the former Conservative minister of justice at the time, Peter MacKay, saying that marijuana was the currency of organized crime. I thought to myself that he was right, and so we should take it out of their hands and make sure that we know what is in the marijuana on the market.

However, in an article in *Maclean's* that laid out the positions, it was clear that the NDP had crafted a position between the main rivals and called for decriminalization but not for legalization. Therefore, when the member across says that NDP members have been proponents for legalization, I think he is gilding the lily a little on that. Both the late Jack Layton and former leader, Thomas Mulcair, spoke in favour of decriminalization, but nowhere did they support legalization.

There are other issues around this, yes, but will the member support the bill for legalization?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind members that just because someone is not a leader of a party any more, it does not mean that they are not an MP, and they should be referred to by their riding title and not by their name.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, there is so much hypocrisy packed into that question, I do not know where to start.

Since 1972, and the Le Dain commission, the New Democrats have campaigned on decriminalization always as a first step towards legalization, which is what we have always said. My hon. colleague neglected to mention that second step. We have to decriminalize before we can actually legalize, and that is what we thought we would do.

Here is the real hypocrisy. The Liberals, just like their promise on electoral reform, seem to have gone backwards on this. They said they would legalize marijuana, but they will have to explain this to Canadians as soon as this happens. Canadians will start asking them why someone who has 31 grams of marijuana in public would be criminally charged and face 14 years in jail; why someone with five plants, not four plants, would face criminal conviction and would go to jail for that; and why an 18-year-old passing a joint to a 17-year-old would go to jail for that offence.

If cannabis is legal, the Liberals will have to explain to Canadians why Canadians are going to jail under Liberal legislation that promised legalization. I guess that is liberal legalization.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Vancouver Kingsway for his speech and for his work on the health committee.

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Does the member think that Bill C-45 meets the stated objectives, which were restricting children from access to cannabis, getting rid of organized crime, reducing the burden on the criminal justice system, and enhancing public awareness of the health risks?

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I think mostly no.

The purpose in clause 7 is set out to do seven things. One is to remove the criminalized production of cannabis and one is to provide Canadians with a regulated source of cannabis supply. However, the Liberals forgot edibles and concentrates.

Anne McLellan, the former Liberal cabinet minister who chaired the task force to recommend to the government, told the government that it should legalize edibles. Why? It was to take them out of the hands of the black market and make sure that Canadians had access at least to safe, regulated, quality-controlled edible products. The government did not do that. Therefore, once cannabis is legal, Canadians are still going to get edible products produced by the black market. The bill did not meet that purpose.

In terms of education, the government, at the time we studied the bill, had committed \$9 million over five years for the education of Canadians on cannabis. Just yesterday, the Liberals announced another, I think, \$32 million over five years, bringing us up to about \$45 million over five years, which is about \$9 million a year. However, we heard from Colorado and Washington State officials at our health committee that this is what they spend every year, \$9 million, for populations one-fifth the size of Canada. Therefore, in terms of educating Canadians and especially young people seven months before this becomes law, it is a poor job done by the government.

• (1625)

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak in support of Bill C-45, the cannabis act, and the amendments that I and my fellow colleagues on the health committee introduced.

Back in August, I held a town hall in my riding regarding the legalization and regulation of cannabis. Not only am I in support of this legislation, but so are many of my constituents. Teachers, parents, and seniors, groups the loyal opposition regularly lists as being concerned about the legalization of cannabis, have all approached me either at my town hall or by contacting my office about their concerns.

They have concerns that a youth who makes a mistake by possessing a small amount of cannabis may be thrown in prison; concerns that this youth will have to carry a criminal record for the remainder of his or her life and that it will hinder the ability to find employment and lead a regular life; concerns that fellow citizens are unknowingly ingesting products that could be laced with dangerous substances; and concerns that the prohibition of cannabis is not helping to fight drugs but instead allows criminal elements to terrorize communities and profit, just like they did during the American prohibition of alcohol. These are the concerns of my constituents.

As a member of the health committee, I spent several weeks intensely reviewing this legislation. This included a week of back-to-back meetings where we heard testimony from over 100 witnesses.

Most of these witnesses were in favour of legalizing and regulating cannabis.

This legislation strikes a balance between addressing the need to end prohibition while addressing the challenges other jurisdictions faced when regulating cannabis.

Bill C-45 would allow an adult to possess up to 30 grams in public, a measure that would ensure that no one would be criminalized for possessing a reasonable amount of cannabis, while ensuring that those who continue to illicitly sell cannabis on the street would be charged.

The legislation would allow home cultivation, with up to four plants per residence, an amount that is within reason for an individual while making it unfeasible for criminal elements to profit. This bill would also protect consumers by implementing industry-wide rules and standards for basic things such as sanitary production requirements, restrictions on the use of unauthorized pesticides, product testing, and restrictions on the use of ingredients and additives. We would create a framework so that Canadians could trust that the products they purchased would be safe and free of dangerous chemicals or substances, without having to take a criminal's word at face value.

As a physician who has spent over 20 years in the emergency room, I have treated patients who unknowingly ingested what they thought was just cannabis. This is indeed a concern worth resolving, and I applaud the government's commitment to the health and safety of Canadians.

This legislation would also protect youth by creating a framework for a minimum age of purchase of 18, through licensed retailers; requiring childproof packaging and warning labels; and providing for public education and awareness campaigns about the dangers associated with cannabis.

I will add that yesterday the government announced a new investment of \$36.4 million over the next five years for an education and awareness campaign. This investment is in addition to the funding announced in budget 2017, bringing the total investment in education and awareness to \$46 million.

The act would also prohibit products or packaging that were appealing to youth; selling cannabis through a self-service display or vending machine; and promoting cannabis, except in the narrowest of circumstances where the promotion could not be seen by a young person.

This act would also create two new criminal convictions to protect youth by making it illegal to give or sell cannabis to a youth and to use a youth to commit a cannabis-related offence. This bill also has a provision that would protect youth who made a mistake when in possession of five grams of cannabis or less to ensure that they would not carry a criminal record for the rest of their lives.

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I want take a moment to address the notion raised by the opposition that we are normalizing cannabis use among youth. The truth is that cannabis use in Canada has already been normalized. With the second highest rate of youth usage in the world, it is obvious that the current system does not work. We need to stop focusing on a prohibitionist model for cannabis, hoping to get a different result in the future. We need to use an evidence-based approach that restricts access to youth while removing the financial incentives that embolden criminal elements.

I would like to touch on another item the opposition regularly states, which is that vehicle collisions and fatalities in jurisdictions that have legalized recreational cannabis have increased. This statement is incorrect. While statistics before and after legalization indicate an increase in impaired driving, public safety officials in the states of Washington and Colorado are in agreement that this apparent increase was the result of improved detection methods.

● (1630)

In a letter from the Governor and the Attorney General of the State of Washington addressed to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, they wrote:

...several of the statistics quoted in your letter on the increasing incidence of marijuana DUIs are distorted by the fact that the testing regime has changed with state legalization. Any amount of drugged driving and collisions is too high. Prior to marijuana legalization, blood testing for THC at suspected DUI traffic stops was substantially less common. Consequently, comparable statistics do not exist.

Additionally, in a letter from the Governor and Attorney General of Colorado, again to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, they stated that they have enacted new laws, giving state and local law enforcement additional tools to prosecute individuals driving under the influence of marijuana, and have significantly increased the number of law enforcement officers who are trained to detect drug-impaired driving, allowing the state to identify and detain more individuals who are driving impaired than previously. More importantly, they wrote that the number of impaired drivers went down. The letter states:

In the first six months of 2017, the number of drivers the Colorado State Patrol considered impaired by marijuana dropped 21 percent compared to the first six month of 2016.

If the House wishes, I can table these two letters from Washington and Colorado for review.

It is evident that any amount of impaired driving or collisions is too high, and that is why I am pleased that the government is progressing with Bill C-46 in an effort to address and curtail impaired driving. It has also committed up to \$161 million to train front-line officers in how to recognize the signs and symptoms of drug-impaired driving, to provide access to drug-screening devices, and to raise public awareness about the dangers of drug-impaired driving.

In May of this year, I had the honour of rising and speaking in favour of this legislation at second reading. Since then, the legislation has been amended by my fellow colleagues and I on the health committee. Many were technical elements to strengthen the bill, but there were several amendments of consequence as a result of our witness testimony during our intensive review.

One of the more consequential amendments made was the removal of height restrictions on cannabis plants for home cultivation so that no one who let a plant accidentally overgrow would be deemed a criminal. Additionally, the legislation was amended to ensure that it was in line with the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act, which was introduced by my fellow health committee colleague, the member from Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, and which I was proud to second, to ensure that an individual who committed a cannabis-related offence would not be charged if he or she called the police or medical services to report an overdose.

I should add that I was disheartened when the Conservative members on the committee unanimously voted against this amendment that would save lives.

Additionally, our committee amended the legislation to ensure that edibles and concentrates would be entered under schedule 4 of the legislation as a class of cannabis that an authorized person could sell. It would be entered by either an order in council or a clause that would allow it to come into force on the first anniversary of the day on which clause 33 came into force. Essentially, this would ensure that edibles and concentrates would be legalized and properly regulated within a one-year time frame of when this legislation was enacted.

Given the transformative nature of this legislation, our committee introduced an amendment to require the minister to conduct a review of the act after three years and to table a report before Parliament. This would enable us, as parliamentarians, to determine if changes to the legislation were necessary to ensure the protection of public health and safety.

Our committee also amended clause 139 to provide the Governor in Council with the authority to make regulations that would restrict the characteristics of certain items, set limits on the amount or concentration of chemical compounds, and ensure that regulated products under the legislation would be consistent with the provisions found in Bill S-5.

The opposition has been constantly counting down to remind us how many days until legalization and have today reminded us that it is 243 days. While I am glad that my colleagues across the aisle can count backwards on a calendar, I think we should look at it in a different way.

In 243 days, we can end a system that victimizes ordinary Canadians and emboldens criminal elements in our society. In 243 days, we can end a system that ruins lives through lost opportunities and social stigma. In 243 days, we can end a system that should never have been put in place.

● (1635)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Scarborough Southwest said he did not want to mislead people, but then he did mislead people.

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If we have an apartment building, with maybe 100 units, that could mean 400 plants. Under the Criminal Code, and under law in Canada, one's dwelling is one's dwelling. The member said that the municipality or the province could change that rule. That is not correct.

Would the member like to comment on that?

Mr. Doug Eyolfson: Mr. Speaker, municipalities have the right to make rules regarding real estate, and if they wish, could make such laws.

I should add that many of these dangers with respect to large units are suppositions. When I asked a member of the Ontario Provincial Police at the health committee, who surmised exactly that number, a 400-unit block that might have 200 units growing cannabis, what information had been used to make that supposition, the answer was that he had no facts to back that statement up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for his knowledge on this matter.

He was very involved in the study of this so-called legalization of marijuana bill, if I can call it that. My colleague mentioned that the possession of more than 30 grams of marijuana will be an offence under the Criminal Code, and that anyone in possession of more than the limit set by the government will be liable to imprisonment. This is the equivalent of saying that being in possession of more than 100 litres of alcohol is a crime. Fortunately, this topic is not being discussed here, since we do not want to go back to prohibition days.

I would like to know whether the government plans on fixing this flaw at a later date and to truly legalize marijuana.

Does my colleague think that marijuana is truly being legalized, when there is still a Criminal Code offence for marijuana possession?

[*English*]

Mr. Doug Eyolfson: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, this is subject to review in three years. We have been advised by many jurisdictions that it is best to provide it in a stepwise pattern.

One of the things we are addressing is making legal a substance that is illegal, and one of the problems is that there is a substantial black market. We need to put firm criminal penalties on those who might be dealing. Thirty grams is a limit that someone might reasonably carry without dealing. One might say that this is arbitrary, but every criminal offence such as this has a limit. If I am driving a vehicle and my blood alcohol level is 0.079, I am within the law. If I am at 0.08, I am now a criminal. This is similar, and we must set these rules. Again, this is subject to review, and if we find that in the interest of public safety this needs to be changed, it can be.

• (1640)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with other members to share my personal experience and what it has shown me, as well as what experts have told many members of the House, which is that the decision to legalize marijuana is being rushed and that it is the people of Canada who will pay the price.

I support efforts to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana, which would free up our courts and reduce the law enforcement resources otherwise required, and prevent persons with minor possession offences receiving a criminal record. Those minor offences could be dealt with by way of a provincial procedures act ticket and a fine. However, legalizing marijuana is a move in the wrong direction, in my opinion.

As I have said before, it is the top priority of members of the House and elected officials everywhere to place the safety and security of Canadians first. I expect nothing less of my colleagues on either side of the House.

Instead of helping, the bill would place an extra burden on provinces, municipalities, and police agencies. It could potentially allow organized crime to use legitimate licensing for trafficking. It would put the health and safety of Canadians at risk. It would jeopardize the development of our youth. It would increase the mental health of those who are most at risk and, subsequently, the demand on mental health services. In addition to these problems, there will be significant red tape and taxes, a theme of the current government as it makes life more difficult for the middle class and those working hard not to leave it.

I would like to address a few of the public misconceptions about marijuana before I address the government's misaligned agenda. Canadians often believe that marijuana impacts users much like alcohol. However, in speaking with experts, we know that marijuana takes seconds to impact the brain. The user feels and exhibits the effects immediately. That means that impairment can begin seconds after use. The peak effects are reached within 10 to 30 minutes. Marijuana users feel and exhibit the effects of marijuana for two to three hours. They feel normal again after three to six hours. However, when that feeling ends, unlike alcohol, the impact of the drug continues. It can take up to 24 hours for the effects of marijuana to stop impacting critical functions, depending on the strength of the THC in the drug and the frequency of use.

What are those critical functions? First, obviously, marijuana use is dangerous, as the user or others interacting with them do not recognize the impairment. Marijuana use has an impact on the complex system of critical thinking skills and reflexes. It impairs perceptions, like balance, motor coordination, reaction times, and it narrows the vision. It also delays decision-making. All of these things would have a broad-ranging negative impact on everyday life in Canada.

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I asked my constituents for feedback on this issue over the summer. The results were overwhelmingly opposed. Eighty per cent of my constituents surveyed opposed legalization, 73% saw it as a threat to our public safety, and 75% said it would be an added cost to taxpayers in the years to come.

Listening to my constituents and the evidence of experts, I know that voting against the bill is the right thing to do. Many in my riding and across the country question the government's decision to rush the legislation forward, given that the Canadian Police Association and many others are urging patience and preparation. It would seem reasonable that good policy-making would make sure that all the necessary tools and research were in place first before moving forward, and yet we hear loud and clear from the police, provinces, and municipalities that they are just not ready.

The government has failed to address numerous issues around policing and how this legislation would work. First is the issue of how officers would manage drivers impaired by drugs such as marijuana. The chiefs of police have noted that 6,000 officers would require a three-phase training program that could take up to 100 days to complete, and yet there is not nearly enough time to complete all of that training before next July.

We know today what the legal limits and impacts of impairment related to alcohol are, and there are clear guidelines and testing for that. However, we do not have a clear idea of the impact of marijuana. With the potential 24-hour period in which impairment could exist, how will testing take place at roadside? There are a limited number of officers and equipment that could be deployed, if we have detection that is going to be court approved.

• (1645)

What if drivers have consumed both alcohol and marijuana? As experts pointed out to me, they may be able to pass a drug test and an alcohol test, but the two substances combined will mean significant impairment. In fact, smoking marijuana can increase impairment by 28% when combined with alcohol.

As pointed out by the Insurance Institute of Canada, there are disconnects between drug-impaired driving arrests and convictions. There is a precedent. An Ontario man was recently acquitted twice of drug-impaired driving because the evidence was deemed inadmissible. Consequently, police need time and equipment to get ready for legalization. We need research to know what the limits should be and how the testing needs to be accomplished. The risks are real. Thanks to the statistics from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, we know there were more roadside fatalities due to drugs than to alcohol in 2012, but almost all convictions remain alcohol related.

Canadians are left to wonder if insurance companies are ready for the challenges and their customers are ready for the increased fees. Legalization would most certainly impact business, automotive, and private health care coverage. Drunk drivers face an immediate cancellation of their policy. We can guess the same may be true for marijuana users, but do users and insurers know about this drug's 24-hour impact, including impairment? In workplaces, would an accident caused by a worker impaired by marijuana impact the owner's personal liabilities? Would a workplace accident mean that the company could not get insurance any more or would have to pay hefty premiums? If marijuana is legal, can workers be punished for

being high at work? Has the government thought through these ramifications and potentially increased costs for Canadians?

Most Canadians would be surprised to learn that the government has listed protecting youth as a reason for advocating and advancing this legislation. Governments have worked for over three generations to reduce smoking, a major killer in Canada. Recently, the use of marijuana by youth between the ages of 15 and 24 has dropped to 24%, yet today we are introducing access and conditions to allow more youth to use this addictive substance.

Changing the law to allow households to grow their own marijuana would undermine the government's intent of limiting access by youth. Putting plants in homes provides an opportunity for easy use. Allowing youth aged 12 to 17 to possess less than five grams of marijuana, which is 10 joints, would make it easier for them to acquire and possess the drug. To suggest that access would drop seems absolutely ludicrous. For youth aged 12 to 17, possession should be zero, not up to five grams. Marijuana is addictive and its use is linked to increased psychotic illness in those who are vulnerable. By making it accessible and readily available to our youth, we would decrease the possibility for success of our next generation. Can we learn nothing from today's opioid crisis? Teenagers are being hurt and killed by the illegal manufacture and distribution of this substance. How would legalization help our youth today?

Finally, I need to comment on the government's commitment to shift money away from organized crime by legalizing marijuana. Tackling organized crime does not involve making the criminals' activities legal and regulated. Legalizing gambling did not eliminate the mafia in Nevada and it did not stop the Hell's Angels in Canada from obtaining a permit to grow marijuana here and then sell it illegally. These are not simple, small organizations. They are complex and multinational, with extensive resources. To quote the government's own 2016 documents:

As the experiences of other jurisdictions and of the regulation of alcohol and tobacco in Canada have shown, regulating a substance does not automatically remove it from illicit markets as evidenced by importation and sales of contraband tobacco.... Given the degree to which organized crime is currently involved in the marijuana market, they could continue to produce marijuana illicitly and may attempt to infiltrate a regulated industry.

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In conclusion, the government has said it is embarking on this path of legalizing marijuana to protect our youth, reduce the burden on the justice system, and reduce the flow of organized crime and money. The testimony and evidence suggest this bill would fail to deliver on all of these objectives. The question remains, will the government listen to the many groups pointing to the clear problems? Will it listen to police and to its own officials? Will it listen to those in the communities saying this is a bad idea?

It is rushing the process and it goes against the recommendations of police and medical professionals. It is our youth, our most vulnerable population, who would pay the price because of the current government's incompetence.

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am a bit confused. If I understood my hon. colleague's basic presentation, the status quo should remain. Right now, marijuana is ubiquitous in our society. Our youth are some of the heaviest users of marijuana in the developed world, so in his own riding right now people are driving drug-impaired, people are consuming cannabis whose source and contaminants they do not know, and the police are under-trained and under-equipped to deal with these problems. Our government has committed \$274 million to support law enforcement, including \$161 million for training front-line officers to solve these problems today. We are investing significantly in education to make sure that youth understand the risks and the hazards of marijuana use, and we are taking active steps to get marijuana out of the hands of youth.

Why would the member be so happy with the status quo when there are known abusers in his own community?

•(1650)

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I am not proposing the status quo, but decriminalization of minor possession. I support the whole concept behind giving police extra powers and the opportunity to do drug testing with the proper equipment.

My concern is that the government seems so intent on rushing the legislation with a magic deadline of July 2018 that no one is ready for this. I do not support the legalization of marijuana at all, but if the government is so intent on legalization, it should at least attempt to put in place the mechanisms and equipment and training ahead of time before we get an onslaught, because it will affect public safety. It would be naive to suggest that we are all going to be ready by July 2018 and that everything will be fine because we are all going to have it under control. That is a little fairy tale, to be honest.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the points of clarification I would like to have is regarding something that is important to border ridings like mine. Here I refer to the issue of criminal records and continuing criminalization of possession. Say, for example, I represent a number of truck drivers who were caught with marijuana at 16 or 17 years of age and charged with a federal criminal offence, which is now on their record. They have gone through the rest of their lives with no other records but still have this one hanging over them. This is causing problems at the border despite the fact they drive for one of the big three and have no other record.

Would the member and the Conservative Party support decriminalization and pardoning of these people so that those records from

something that might have taken place 20 or 30 years ago do not cause unnecessary traffic tie-ups at the border and problems for someone who has had no subsequent criminal record? For these cases, would the Conservatives support making sure that those individuals no longer have a criminal record?

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, there is a mechanism that exists in law today whereby anyone convicted of a criminal offence can apply for a pardon. My suggestion would be that individuals whose previous records create problems for them in their occupation when crossing the border, and for their employment generally, should apply for a pardon.

It would be irresponsible for any government to suggest that we completely wipe away the records of the past. When these offences were committed five or 25 years ago, it was the law of the land. People in that day made a choice to commit an offence and they live with the consequences of those criminal offences.

Moving forward, as I said at the onset of my presentation, I firmly believe that we can lighten the load on our courts. We can make things easier on our law enforcement resources and can decriminalize the minor possession of small amounts. The latter could be subject to a fine or be dealt with as a provincial procedures act offence and not result in a criminal record. For those who might not understand how the provincial offences procedures act works, it could be dealt with much like a speeding ticket. We can eliminate criminal charges for minor offences.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): 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 Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Infrastructure; and the hon. member for Windsor West, The Environment.

•(1655)

[English]

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise and speak in support of Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code, and other acts.

Government Orders

The principal objectives of the bill are to prevent young persons from accessing cannabis, to protect public health and public safety by establishing strict product safety and product quality requirements, and to deter criminal activity by imposing serious criminal penalties on those operating outside the legal framework. My constituents of Oakville have expressed that these concerns need to be addressed and Bill C-45 does exactly that.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Health, I would like to report the committee undertook a comprehensive review of this legislation. We took a focused week, meeting for five full days to hear testimony from a wide array of individuals and groups. We heard from over 100 witnesses on this legislation. Witnesses ranged from lawyers, law enforcement, department officials, tenant associations, community groups, activists, medical professionals, researchers, producers, retailers, and provinces. This built on the work of the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation, which travelled for six months and received over 20,000 submissions. The committee heard from most witnesses that they supported the direction the government was taking with Bill C-45.

Based on this background I would like to focus on why a new approach to cannabis is needed, why we need to act now, and how well suited we are to moving forward.

The evidence is clear. The current approach is simply not working. All that we have managed to achieve is to criminalize Canadians for possessing small amounts of cannabis, encourage Canadians to engage with criminals, and require Canadians to consume products of unknown origin, potency, and quality. It has also allowed criminals and organized crime to profit.

The committee heard quite clearly that the current model has not protected our youth. Despite the prohibition that has been in place for decades, Canadian youth use cannabis at some of the highest rates in the world.

We cannot allow this to continue. A new approach is required as soon as possible to better protect youth and to make sure that adults have access to products that are quality controlled, have a known origin, and no longer run the risk of having a criminal record for possessing small amounts.

During the committee hearings, Mr. Ian Culbert, the executive director of the Canadian Public Health Association, said:

Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury of time, as Canadians are already consuming cannabis at record levels. The individual and societal harms associated with cannabis use are already being felt every day. The proposed legislation and eventual regulation is our best attempt to minimize those harms and protect the well-being of all Canadians.

That is why our government is committed to bringing the proposed legislation into force no later than July 2018.

Upon the coming into force of Bill C-45, Canadians who are 18 years of age or older would be able to possess, grow, and purchase limited amounts of cannabis for personal use. This would mean that the possession of up to 30 grams of cannabis in a public place would no longer be a criminal offence.

The bill would, for the first time, also make it a specific criminal offence to sell cannabis to a minor and create significant penalties for those who engage young Canadians in cannabis-related offences.

Canada is more than ready for a new approach that would better protect the health and safety of Canadians. Our existing model that provides access to cannabis for medical purposes is recognized as one of the best in the world.

Let me tell members more about some of the features of that system that we can build on.

Under the existing regulations that have been in place since 2014, Health Canada is responsible for licensing and overseeing cannabis producers. These producers are required to operate within the regulations to provide quality-controlled cannabis to registered patients. This rigorous licensing process ensures, for example, that entrants to this market have gone through a thorough security check and that producers have appropriate physical security infrastructure around their facilities.

Canada also has a world-class compliance and enforcement regime intended to ensure that licensed producers fully comply with the rules in place. Over the course of last year, a licensed producer in Canada was inspected an average of seven to eight times for a total of approximately 274 inspections.

In May 2017, Health Canada announced that it would require all licensed producers to conduct mandatory testing for the presence of unauthorized pesticides in all cannabis products destined for sale. This adds to the system of controls in place that oversee the quality of federally regulated cannabis products.

The commercial industry now has more than four years of experience and serves over 200,000 active patient registrations. This licensed production under the existing medical regulations provides a solid basis to support recreational cannabis production under this legislation.

Industry representatives have indicated that they are getting ready to support the timely implementation of the new regulations and to ensure that high standards are met in the production of regulated product.

● (1700)

The committee also heard that while the government has been working very closely with provinces, territories, and municipalities to support the implementation of the new framework, more work is needed. The collaboration will be critical to ensure that all levels of government are ready to support the new legislation.

We were pleased to note that progress is being achieved by our provincial and territorial partners in developing their respective approaches. Provinces and territories have a key role to play in the success of the new system. They are responsible for the oversight and regulation of the distribution and retail sale of cannabis.

Government Orders

The timely passing of this federal law is important to provide clarity to our provincial and territorial partners. In circumstances where provinces or territories do not have a functional retail system at the time of coming into force of the bill, adults would be able to purchase cannabis directly from a federally licensed producer by ordering online with secure delivery at home by mail or courier.

A representative for the Cannabis Canada Association, Colette Rivet, pointed out:

Licensed producers are eager to work in collaboration and compliance with the federal and provincial governments to quickly establish effective, low-risk distribution and retail models that are well regulated, highly secure, and tailored to the needs of each province.

Upon the coming into force of the bill, adult Canadians would have access to a range of quality controlled products including dried cannabis, fresh cannabis, and cannabis oil, which could be consumed in a number of different ways including smoking. The committee heard from health groups that limiting legal cannabis to forms primarily suited to smoking had negative health impacts. They identified the need to permit the legal sale of edible cannabis products as part of the federal framework as soon as possible.

The committee also heard expert testimony that experience in other jurisdictions, such as Colorado, underlined the unique health and safety challenges associated with edible products.

It is important that the government takes the time to enact appropriate regulatory controls to address the health and safety risks posed by edible products. In this regard, I was pleased to introduce an amendment to Bill C-45, which clarifies the timelines for the government to develop regulations and legalize the sale of edible cannabis products and cannabis concentrates.

The amendment stipulates that the sale of edibles and concentrates would be permitted no later than 12 months following the coming into force of Bill C-45. Under this proposed timeline, the government would have the time to safely develop regulations and mechanisms to put these edible cannabis products on the market correctly.

I think it is important that we let Canadians and the industry know that we are listening and that these products will be coming. However, we must heed the advice from other jurisdictions, get this right the first time, and not put the health and safety of Canadians at risk.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the purposes of Bill C-45 is to prevent youth from accessing and consuming cannabis. Yesterday, the government announced a \$36.4-million investment for cannabis education and awareness campaign aimed, in particular, at Canadian youth, to ensure that they understand the health and safety risks of using cannabis. Young Canadians need to know the facts.

The bill contains a range of provisions that would restrict promotion or packaging that could make cannabis appealing to youth. For example, the bill would ban the advertising and promotion of cannabis, except in limited and restricted circumstances, as well as set out requirements for packaging and labelling of products.

As I have outlined, protecting the health and safety of Canadians, and most importantly the health of our youth, is at the centre of the

government's approach to legalizing, regulating, and restricting access to cannabis.

The Government of Canada is committed to a comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate, and evidence-based approach to drug policy, which uses a public health approach when considering and addressing drug issues. I believe that is consistent with the wishes of the people in my riding of Oakville. I am confident that this public health approach, which focuses on reducing harms and risks of cannabis, rather than on criminalizing Canadians for possession, is the best path forward.

● (1705)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his work on the health committee.

He talked about how the Liberal government decided to delay the introduction of edibles by a year because of the health and safety risks. Why would the Liberals be willing to delay and slow down when they recognized the risks? They said they will follow the advice from other jurisdictions about public awareness and education before legalization, that police need to be trained, and that provinces and territories should be ready. While these things have been announced, they are not in place.

Will the government delay the implementation until it is ready to address the health and safety risks?

Mr. John Oliver: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for her excellent work on the health committee as well.

We heard very clearly from other jurisdictions such as Colorado and Washington that tried to introduce legalized cannabis and edibles at the same time, that it had been a major mistake for them. They highly recommended we go slowly with edibles. There is a whole other set of laws, regulations, and requirements around the safe production of edible products. The best advice we had from experts was to move forward with legalization in slow, steady steps, and add the edibles at a later date when we are ready. We really were following the best advice from the experts we heard from at committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech in the context of this debate. I would like to talk about how the government has treated the provinces throughout the marijuana legalization process.

Does my colleague think that the provinces' reaction to his government's marijuana legalization agenda and the burden they will have to bear in terms of regulation, distribution networks, and costs to the health care system are appropriate?

Does he think the government is going in the right direction? What does he think is the best way to resolve this situation, which the provinces see as problematic?

Government Orders

Here in Ottawa, we are amending the Criminal Code, but the provinces feel that it is all moving too quickly and that they will not have enough money to deal with the tremendous burden being downloaded onto them.

[English]

Mr. John Oliver: Mr. Speaker, at the provincial level there is the bill, which looks to the province to regulate distribution and retailing of the product. However, if a province or territory is not ready at the time the bill comes into force, as I said in my remarks, in those provinces or territories Canadians will be able to procure directly from licensed manufacturers through online systems and receive products confidentially by post. That is exactly the model we use across Canada today for medical marijuana.

The government campaigned on this in 2015. The task force travelled for six months, and their recommendations have been out for at least a year. The draft legislation has been before the provinces and territories for some period of time now. Some of the provinces and territories are already responding and making good progress on this, and others are still working through the situation. There will be a legally available retail distribution model available at the federal level if a province or territory is not ready when the bill comes into effect.

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oakville for his excellent speech. He is a member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, and he spoke about what has happened in Colorado and Washington.

Could he elaborate on the experiences the committee analyzed and studied in order to inform its recommendations prior to putting them forward?

• (1710)

[English]

Mr. John Oliver: Mr. Speaker, the biggest sound bite I can give from the expert testimony from Washington and Colorado is that they have moved organized crime out of the business. Close to 80%, 70% to 80%, of the product sold now in those states is done through licensed control distribution methods, as we are proposing here in Canada, and organized crime is being pushed out. The advice we are taking in this bill follows exactly that advice, and I think it is the right course of action to get organized crime out of our neighbourhoods.

[Translation]

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-45.

[English]

As a pediatric surgeon, I spent most of my professional career putting children back on the playground to play. This bill does exactly the opposite of taking care of kids. This bill will make it easier to put marijuana in the hands of Canadian children. Liberals like to talk about evidence-based decision-making, and the importance of science. The science on this issue is clear: marijuana is a dangerous drug for our young people. It affects their developing brains.

We know that children's brains develop until the age of 25, and that marijuana can have an impact that is negative on that development. The results lower graduation rates from high school, fewer opportunities as adults, as well as high rates of mental health challenges. These are the evidence-based facts.

I accept that in limited circumstances marijuana can and should be prescribed by a qualified physician for purchase in a pharmacy for those who need it for medical purposes, whether that be someone with cancer, or a veteran with PTSD. However, as I stated earlier, I disagree with the Liberal government's proposed legislation. The government should be working on making sure marijuana is less accessible to our youth, not increasing its availability.

I have had the opportunity to meet with children in clinic regularly, and as a parliamentarian. I am always amazed at how well informed they are about current issues. Young people know about the proposed changes, and the reaction has been clear. They say they do not understand, as they have been told not to do drugs, but now want to know if they can do this drug.

[Translation]

Young people know that marijuana is a drug. They know that it is dangerous for them, and yet we now have a government that is telling young Canadians that using drugs is okay.

[English]

After years of respecting the science, and telling kids that drugs are harmful for their growing bodies, the Liberals are simply throwing these evidence-based facts out the window. Kids are confused. They know that marijuana is bad for their health, but they are now wondering if it is okay to do this based on the messaging from the government and the Prime Minister.

These are the kinds of messages Canadian parents do not want portrayed to their kids. Leaving aside the mixed messages the government is sending out to youth, as a physician I want to focus on the science of this issue.

Human bodies develop continually into their 20s. As I mentioned earlier about the science, the brain experiences the same development schedule until the age of 25. We do our best to ensure that youth are making healthy choices for their developing bodies.

[Translation]

Giving kids access to marijuana in their homes and throughout society is putting them in danger.

[English]

Let us begin with some disturbing statistics. The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse reported, in 2013, on the Canadian tobacco, alcohol, and drug use survey that 10.6% of Canadians aged 15 and older reported cannabis use in the last year. It also reported that cannabis use is generally more prevalent among young people, with 22% of youth from 15 to 19, and 26% in young people 20 to 24. Approximately 28% of Canadians aged 15 and older, who used cannabis in the last three months, reported daily use.

Points of Order

In addition, in 2014, a study published by *The Lancet* found that youth who utilized marijuana on a regular basis have a 60% lower chance of graduating from high school or university.

Fergusson, in a 1996 study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*; Ellickson, in a 1998 study in the *Journal of Drug Issues*; and Lynskey, writing in the journal *Addiction* in 2003, all found a strong and direct correlation between the increased use of marijuana in teenagers and an increase in dropout rates in high school.

Talk about limiting the opportunities for young Canadians in the future. Let us give them marijuana, so they can dropout of school.

Gilman, writing in *The Journal of Neuroscience* is also very clear on the impacts of marijuana on the developing brain. In a study published in 2014, Gilman demonstrated that people between the ages of 18 and 25, that used cannabis on a regular basis, will experience structural changes to the brain.

• (1715)

These are not temporary changes that happen when people are high. These are permanent structural changes to their brains for the future, which correlate with the negative impacts that I have been talking about.

The Canadian Medical Association has done some excellent work compiling and conducting research on marijuana use. It includes its submission to the government's 2016 task force on cannabis legalization and regulation. It talks about its long-standing concerns of the health risks to Canadian youth, given that their brains are undergoing rapid and extensive development. The CMA has also noted that the lifetime risk of dependency on marijuana is estimated at about 9%. That means about one in 10 Canadians, who use marijuana, has a chance of becoming dependent, with all of the serious negative health ramifications and social consequences of this drug use.

The CMA went on to further note that the risk of dependence actually doubles to 17% if this is initiated in adolescence. Again, we see that the earlier children start to use marijuana, the higher the chance of addiction, and the higher the chance of lifelong structural brain changes. Further, the CMA has also warned Canadians of the increased risks of anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia in marijuana users, particularly among youth. Those who are already prone to psychosis, for example, if they have a family member suffering from a psychosis, are especially at risk of developing psychosis with cannabis use.

Andreasson's extensive 15 year follow-up study of over 50,000 men, published again in *The Lancet*, reported that those who tried cannabis by the age of 18 were two to four times more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia than those who had not. The study further estimated that 13% of schizophrenia cases could have been averted if cannabis use had been prevented. Just imagine what would happen if we did not allow children to have access to marijuana, as this legislation would allow. Do we want to protect Canadian kids?

There is also a public safety concern with this legislation. First, regarding young people, cross-Canada student alcohol and drug studies show 13% to 21% of students who try this are actually driving within an hour. Hall found, in his study in 1994, that short-

term memory, attention deficits, motor skills, and reaction times are impaired while intoxicated with cannabis, but the evidence shows, and it is no surprise, that associated with this is a higher risk of motor vehicle accidents.

These are serious situations that place individuals and the public at risk. However, despite this substantive evidence, as I have outlined in multiple journals so far, the Liberals are pushing ahead with this legislation.

Now let us look at some additional evidence from Colorado, the state that was mentioned earlier. This includes a rise in traffic-related deaths, increased hospitalization, and cyclical vomiting syndrome. Most disturbing are the overdoses in children due to marijuana use in edibles, and those that are accidentally ingested. Negligence by caregivers is leading to increased overdosing in kids.

I wonder how many young people might have access to marijuana now that it is being grown in their own homes. Save for these shocking facts in Colorado, all of this research has primarily been done in places where this is actually illegal, not legal. I shudder to imagine how those statistics will escalate with this legislation.

[Translation]

Now the Liberals will say that this is not going to happen, and that this approach is better for children. I completely disagree.

[English]

As this legislation states, children would be allowed to possess, and parents to grow marijuana in their homes. Access would be easy, and that access is harmful to young Canadians. Young Canadians and children know they should not do drugs, and there is good reason for that. We do not allow children aged 12 access to alcohol. We spend millions of dollars telling children not to do drugs. Why is our society flip-flopping now? It is because we have a Prime Minister who has to justify his own use. By doing this, he is putting all Canadian children at risk.

I encourage all members of the House, especially those in the Liberal Party opposite, to have a hard look at the science and their consciences, because they are putting the children in their own ridings at risk with this legislation.

* * *

• (1720)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING ORDER 69.1—BILL C-56

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to follow up on the point of order raised by my colleague from Portage—Lisgar, the House leader of the official opposition, about omnibus bills.

Government Orders

In June, we as parliamentarians adopted a number of changes to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. Among them, the following was added with regard to omnibus bills under clause 69.1, which stipulates:

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.

O'Brien and Bosc, our bible, notes the following:

The use of omnibus bills is unique to Canada. The British Parliament does enact bills that are similar in type, but its legislative practice is different, specifically in that there is much tighter control over the length of debate.

[English]

We are elected to represent our constituents on various matters, and it is important that the rules and the application of those rules allow members to do that freely. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, is correct when it says that omnibus legislation is unique to Canada. It allows the government to group together a wide variety of very different issues into one package, requiring support or opposition on a single question.

Because the matters grouped together are so different, it is sometimes impossible to allow members of Parliament to represent their constituents in a way they want, without the provisions of Standing Order 69.1, the new regulation that governs our House. Bill C-56 was a clear example that was cited by the House leader from the official opposition earlier this week.

[Translation]

In the case of Bill C-56, it is true that the bill deals with two very distinct subjects. It proposes amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Abolition of Early Parole Act.

On one hand, the government wants to set a 21-day limit on administrative segregation and eventually reduce it to a maximum of 15 days. On the other hand, it wants to reintroduce the possibility of early release for non-violent offenders serving a first federal sentence.

These are two very different and unrelated subjects. The problems with administrative segregation that have led to tragedies like the death of Ashley Smith have nothing to do with the possibility of early release.

[English]

Why should we as parliamentarians have to choose which way to vote on both these propositions when the possibility of voting on each is available, and better reflects our role as elected representatives?

I was impressed with the argument from my fellow House leader relating to the historical usages of a similar practice in Westminster, and the references to the rulings during the great flag debate in the early 1960s.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a plea concerning your approach to this new rule, because this is the first time you have been

approached on this new rule. Be generous in your application of Standing Order 69.1. Allow the maximum ability of each MP to represent their constituents separately on each legislative issue by dividing up the issues in omnibus bills as much as is necessary to allow an independent vote on each question. Give the benefit of the doubt to the need for parliamentarians to be able to represent their constituents.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders evolved over time, and generally along the lines of the needs of parliamentarians. Parliamentarians, all of us, need greater ability to represent our constituents on individual issues.

• (1725)

We have given you the ability, Mr. Speaker, with Standing Order 69.1, to determine separate votes so our constituents can be better represented. We now hope you will give a positive response to these points of order, my own and that of the official opposition House leader, and that you will allow all of us as parliamentarians to better represent our constituents with the new Standing Order 69.1.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for the argument he has raised today and yesterday, as well as the arguments raised by the hon. opposition House leader on this topic. I will come back to the House with a ruling on this in due course, having in mind the need for some alacrity.

* * *

CANNABIS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was very interesting to hear the member's speech and have that tour through science. It is good to know that science has come back in vogue over there.

The fact is that Canada has among the highest incidence of cannabis consumption among youth in the world, and that is also science. What is also science is that we are able to measure the impact with the recent efforts of states to the south, Colorado and Washington notably, where cannabis consumption among youth in a new legalized regime has actually diminished. The other fact, now that we are talking about facts, is that the member cites the impacts on youth, which is precisely why the bill sets out new measures to regulate and constrain the use of cannabis among young people.

These are things that the previous government, in that other regime where science was perhaps not as in vogue, never contemplated, such as efforts to constrain marijuana consumption.

As the member reflects on her long history of advocacy on this issue, would she inform the House of the measures she brought forward in the previous government to constrain the use of cannabis, about which she now seems so concerned?

Government Orders

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last I checked, we were debating a bill that the Liberals brought to the House, a bill that puts forward a message that young people under the age of 18 can possess marijuana.

As I mentioned in my speech, I actually meet individuals from one year of age to 18 years of age in clinics regularly. When I ask the older ones what they think of this legislation, they are confused. They have told me that they thought they were not supposed to do drugs. When I ask them if they think marijuana is a drug, they say yes, but they are being told now that they are allowed to use it.

What is the right answer? If people do not want to have a long-term impediment to their future, if they do not want to put themselves in a position where they drop out of high school, or have an anxiety disorder or schizophrenia, do not go near it. However, the government thinks that children should be allowed to possess it, that children should be allowed to share it with their classmates, and that their parents should be allowed to grow it at home and provide opportunities for children to have access to it.

Let us be serious. This is a dangerous drug. It should not be in the hands of children. The best way to do that is to ensure they are not allowed to have access to it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am a bit surprised to hear my colleague's comments.

The health problems associated with the use of marijuana are very real and have been documented. My colleague mentioned that. The same is true of alcohol and tobacco, whose effects have also been documented. However, we have never heard the Conservatives saying that the use of alcohol and tobacco should be made a criminal offence.

I have a very clear question. What does my colleague think would be the best strategy for effectively meeting the objective of reducing marijuana use?

● (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but there is no time left for an answer now.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed from October 31 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 Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, October 31, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-49.

Call in the members.

● (1810)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 384*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Holland
Housefather	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Morneau
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson

Private Members' Business

Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Trudeau
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskij
Young	Zahid — 164

Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Wauugh
Webber	Weir
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 139	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseau	Duvall
Egliniski	Falk
Fast	Finley
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Johns	Jolibois
Julian	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kniec	Kusie
Kwan	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Moore
Motz	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Obhrai	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Plamondon	Poillievre
Quach	Raitt
Ramsey	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Sansoucy	Saroya
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Trudel
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

ACT RESPECTING THE FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL ACTS

The House resumed from October 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-343, An Act to establish the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Criminal Acts and to amend certain Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division at second reading stage of Bill C-343 under private members' business.

● (1820)

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

(*Division No. 385*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseau	Duvall
Egliniski	Falk
Fast	Finley
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Johns	Jolibois
Julian	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kniec	Kusie
Kwan	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb

Private Members' Business

Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nater
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Rayes
Rempel
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 139

MacGregor
Maguire
Marcil
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Nantel
Nicholson
O'Toole
Pauzé
Poilievre
Raitt
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Stubbs
Tilson
Trudel
Van Loan
Vierson
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mihychuk
Soeurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
Ng
Oliphant
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Philpott
Poissant
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Maloney
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morneau
Murray
Nault
O'Connell
Oliver
Paradis
Peterson
Picard
Qualtrough
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Spengemann
Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid — 166

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Brisson
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hehr
Housefather
Iacono
Jordan
Khalid
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig

Alghabra
Amos
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Gameau
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Holland
Hutchings
Joly
Jowhari
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)

PAIRED

Members

Lemieux

Thériault — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[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.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-315 under private members' business.

● (1825)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 386)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Anderson
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Benzen

Albas
Allison
Angus
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Bergen

Private Members' Business

Bernier	Berthold	DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Bezan	Blaikie	Dhillon	Di Iorio
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block	Drouin	Dubourg
Boucher	Boulerice	Duclos	Duguid
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Brousseau	Brown	Easter	Ehsassi
Calkins	Cannings	El-Khoury	Ellis
Caron	Carrie	Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Chong	Choquette	Eyolfson	Fergus
Christopherson	Clarke	Fillmore	Finnigan
Clement	Cooper	Fisher	Fonseca
Cullen	Davies	Fortier	Fragiskatos
Deltell	Diotte	Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Donnelly	Dreeshen	Freeland	Fry
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Fuhr	Garneau
Dusseauult	Duvall	Goodale	Gould
Eglinski	Falk	Graham	Grewal
Fast	Finley	Hajdu	Hardie
Fortin	Gallant	Harvey	Hehr
Garrison	Généreux	Holland	Housefather
Genuis	Gerretsen	Hutchings	Iacono
Gill	Gladu	Joly	Jordan
Gourde	Hardcastle	Jowhari	Khalid
Harder	Hoback	Lambropoulos	Lametti
Hughes	Johns	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Jolibois	Julian	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Kelly	Kent	Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Kitchen	Kniec	Levitt	Lightbound
Kusie	Kwan	Lockhart	Long
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière	Longfield	Ludwig
Leitch	Liepert	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Lobb	Lukiwski	Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
MacGregor	MacKenzie	May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
Maguire	Malcolmson	McDonald	McGuinty
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)	McKay	McKenna
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman	Mendicino	Mihychuk
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Moore	Motz	Monsef	
Nantel	Nater	Morneau	Morrissey
Nicholson	Obhrai	Murray	Nassif
O'Toole	Paul-Hus	Nault	Ng
Pauzé	Plamondon	O'Connell	Oliphant
Poillievre	Quach	Oliver	Ouellette
Raitt	Ramsey	Paradis	Peschisolido
Rankin	Rayes	Peterson	Philpott
Reid	Rempel	Picard	Poissant
Richards	Sansoucy	Qualtrough	Rioux
Saroya	Scheer	Robillard	Rodriguez
Schmale	Shields	Romanado	Rota
Shipley	Sopuck	Rudd	Ruimy
Sorenson	Stanton	Rusnak	Sahota
Ste-Marie	Stetski	Saini	Sajjan
Stewart	Strahl	Samson	Sangha
Stubbs	Sweet	Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Tilson	Trost	Schiefke	Schulte
Trudel	Van Kesteren	Serré	Sgro
Van Loan	Vecchio	Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Viersen	Wagantall	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Warawa	Warkentin	Simms	Sorbara
Waugh	Webber	Spengemann	Tabbara
Weir	Wong	Tan	Tassi
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 140	Trudeau	Vandal
		Vandenbeld	Vaughan
		Virani	Whalen
		Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
		Wrzesnewskij	Young
		Zahid— 165	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff

PAIRED

Members

Lemieux Thériault— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

Private Members' Business

• (1830)

[English]

PORTUGUESE HERITAGE MONTH

The House resumed from September 20 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has two minutes remaining in his comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my colleagues on both sides of the House, in particular the member for Davenport who has done an outstanding job in recognizing the importance of Canada's Portuguese community in all regions of our country. I applaud her efforts in reaching out to all sides of the House to build unanimous support for a fantastic idea.

We often hear the Prime Minister of Canada say that the greatest strength we have as a nation is our diversity. That diversity shines through in many different ways. The Portuguese community is one of those communities that has helped build our nation to the way it is today.

With the efforts of the individuals who had the member for Davenport engaged on this very important issue, to colleagues who have already spoken to the resolution, I stand in my place today to highlight the importance of the Portuguese community. The idea of designating a month to the Portuguese community is well-merited and deserves to be supported by all members.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the member for Davenport's Motion No. 126. It seeks to declare June 10 each year as Portugal day and the entire month of June as Portuguese heritage month. This, I believe, would pay tribute to the important contributions of Canadians of Portuguese descent in building the Canada that we know today.

In my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood, there are approximately 815 citizens of Portuguese descent. Granted, it is not a huge population, but they are a vibrant, close-knit community with very strong ties to their heritage.

According to the Canadian Encyclopedia, Portuguese explorers were among the first Europeans to see Canadian soil way back in 1852. Subsequently, Portuguese fishermen fished for cod on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, but the big wave of immigration to Canada began in the 1950s, with immigrants coming mostly to work on farms and CNR railway back then.

I am going to cite a number of people from my city of Saskatoon. I know there are different pockets of Portuguese around this country and we welcome them all here. One such man from my city of Saskatoon was Mr. Manuel Neves. He said the first Portuguese immigrants to Saskatoon came in 1957. They came from the Azores and mainland Portugal to work on the railroad. It was the CNR back then. It was a terrible situation at first. Let us face it: they came from Portugal to Canada, they were homesick and missed their families,

and they had difficulties back then with the language and different customs, and the isolation caused many of them to go back home. Manuel still remembers the hardship and bitter tears, but the will to succeed was great.

He said he had left his wife, along with his two daughters, back in Portugal. Can anyone imagine his first winter? It must have been miserable. The temperatures in Saskatchewan in the winter are usually in the -30s and -40s. He was working in those temperatures and said that they were unbearable. He said none of them had imagined those temperatures and that they had felt demoralized. However, back in 1959, more families arrived from the Azores and, according to Manuel, the first roots of the Portuguese community started then and became stronger. In fact, by the late 1960s, there were about 45 Portuguese families in my city of Saskatoon.

The Portuguese community continued to grow in my city and in 1988 the Saskatoon Portuguese Canadian Association was formed. The association generated a lot of interest, holding social events and celebrations. One of the goals of the association was to plan the annual religious event, the Our Lady of Fatima celebration. Sadly, Mr. Manuel Neves passed away a few years ago. However, he did leave us with this interesting history of those precious Portuguese immigrants who came to my city of Saskatoon. We certainly thank him for his contribution and tonight I salute him and all Portuguese in my city of Saskatoon.

I also heard from two sisters, Maria Zalashak and Edweena Silva, who arrived in Saskatoon when they were very young. They were only 12 and nine at the time and arrived in Saskatoon with their parents, Juszai and Maria Silva, and their brother, Juszai Carlos. They started their lives here living in their uncle's basement. Imagine that. They were only nine and 12 years old. Maria wrote that at school they were forced to go out during recess, but just stood by the building because they did not know anyone and, of course, they could not speak English. They wanted to stay inside the school, but the teachers would not allow that. They arrived toward the end of September, and we know what happens in September: school starts right away, and then winter arrives.

• (1835)

They had never seen snow or experienced this kind of cold. It was very hard to adapt, especially since they did not have a car. They walked or took the bus. They remember that when they rode the bus, they never made eye contact. Maria said she looked down. She was afraid if someone started talking to her she would not understand, and not be able to answer.

Maria went on to say it was in grade 10 that she learned proper English. Her teacher was a nun. She did not remember her name but it was due to her professional dedication as a teacher that she learned the language properly and was able to become a teacher. Maria teaches English as an additional language. What a wonderful story to hear of a teacher and her student, and then the student becoming a teacher.

Private Members' Business

Another member of my Saskatoon Portuguese community, Tony Bairos, shared his family's story of immigration to Canada saying that his parents, Jose and Ines Bairos, came to settle in Saskatoon in the fall of 1970. They wanted to make a better life for themselves and their future children. They came with two suitcases. That was quite common back then.

He said that it was his mother's sister and her husband, Jose and Emilia Cabral, who sponsored his parents and helped them get on their feet. They came filled with hope for a new life in a new world with opportunities. They came from a small island called Santa Maria in the Azores Islands belonging to Portugal. They brought very little with them, but they did bring a willingness to work hard, a strong sense of family, and a faith in God.

His father Jose found work as a labourer with a construction company, while his mother found work as a seamstress in Saskatoon. Shortly after their arrival, they started their family and raised three children, Antonio, Dino, and Nelia. They worked hard to build a life in their new country. They would often work two jobs to provide for their family and their continued success. We often see this today. Jose developed his skills in the construction industry and soon become a skilled mason and foreman for the jobs that he would take on in Saskatoon.

Family is an extremely important part of Portuguese life. As well, the Portuguese work ethic is outstanding. The Portuguese family story is no different than that of many other immigrants who have adopted Canada as their new home. They are very proud of being Canadian and Portuguese.

Manuel Neves, Mrs. Zalashak's family, and Tony Bairos' family came to Canada hoping for a better life. They went through went through many hardships, but persevered. They have contributed greatly to Saskatoon and their Portuguese community, similar to many other Portuguese from coast to coast to coast.

At least two past members of Parliament, Dr. Keith Martin from Esquimalt — Juan de Fuca, B.C. and Mario Silva, from Davenport, Ontario were of Portuguese descent.

Two popular singers in this country, Nelly Furtado and Sean Mendes, are also of Portuguese descent.

Two professional hockey players, John Tavares of the New York Islanders and Drew Doughty, a talented defenceman from the Los Angeles Kings, are both of Portuguese descent and currently playing in the national hockey league.

Those people are just a small representation of the Portuguese community who have made contributions to entertainment, politics, and sports. They even have their own walk of fame in downtown Toronto.

The Portuguese are very proud of their culture and have a strong work ethic. Their family and their faith are the cornerstones of the Portuguese culture. They love to sing and dance when they get together for religious festivals.

It is my belief that we should have a Portugal day and a Portuguese heritage month to celebrate these and the many other contributions they have made to make Canada a better place for us all. I hope my colleagues will support this motion.

● (1840)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the NDP critic for multiculturalism, I am pleased to rise in this House to support Motion No. 126, Portuguese heritage month.

I have always been proud of the NDP's support of multiculturalism in Canada. My colleagues and I always welcome the opportunity to celebrate the unique heritage of Canada and the contributions made by so many different ethnic and religious groups.

Portuguese Canadians have a rich cultural history and heritage, with many traditions brought over continuing to flourish in the various Little Portugals in Canadian cities today. With nearly half a million Canadians having Portuguese heritage, the tie created between Canada and Portugal is significant.

This motion provides Canadians with the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and join in the celebration of the traditions and heritage of the Portuguese community. I believe this also gives us an opportunity to look at what Portugal is doing today that Canada can learn from.

During the 1990s, Portugal was experiencing a national crisis regarding heroin addiction. At its height, one in 100 Portuguese citizens was using heroin, overdose deaths were robbing families of their loved ones far too soon, and dirty needles were contributing to the highest level of HIV infection in Europe.

A little over 15 years ago, with the realization that the current approach simply was not working, Portugal made a decision that things needed to change. Portugal embraced the harm reduction approach, understanding that addiction issues were better suited to being addressed by the health care system and the social welfare system, rather than the criminal justice system.

Portugal took what seemed like a radical step to many peer nations: it decriminalized minor possession of all drugs and dramatically shifted resources away from the criminal justice system towards health and social services. Now if people are caught possessing what is deemed an amount equivalent to individual possession, they are sent to report to a warning commission on drug addiction. Here they are assessed by social workers and other health care professionals and are referred to treatment centres, if appropriate. Instead of criminal charges tying up the courts, and criminal records with lifelong impacts, individuals are referred to services that will actually help them and are given fines equal to parking tickets.

Those against these ideas suggested that it would be the end of Portugal, that people from all over the world would flock there simply to use and abuse drugs, and that this would simply make things worse. Nearly two decades later, that fearmongering has been shown to be just that. Drug-caused deaths in Portugal have fallen well below the European Union's average. New HIV infections due to IV drug use have dropped from over 1,000 cases in 2001 to fewer than 100 in 2013. Overall drug use has actually gone down.

Private Members' Business

As I have said in the House before, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The Portuguese model has saved lives, reduced infection rates, and alleviated the burden on the criminal justice system that drug use and addiction causes in countries like our own.

It is clear that as Canada grapples with the current opioid crisis, there is much we can learn from Portugal. The success of harm reduction in east Vancouver, most notably with the establishment of Insite, is indisputable. However, that is not enough. We need more sites. We need more funding for treatment options, including expanded heroine maintenance programs and services. We need to make more use of the health care system and less use of the justice system. We need to support the front-line workers and first responders. We need to call it what it is: a national health emergency.

In his first visit to the west coast after becoming leader of the NDP, Jagmeet Singh stated:

Thousands of people are dying in our country as a result of this crisis and it needs to be named a national crisis first.

He also noted that the Portuguese model of harm reduction resulted in a dramatic decrease in overdose deaths and a reduction in addictions. He said:

That should be the focus if we really want to address the opioid crisis, and really want to reduce the significant and terrible deaths.

Canada can and should learn from the Portuguese model.

Aside from the opioid crisis, Portugal is also concerned about climate change. Portugal's geographic location on the Iberian Peninsula has brought the impact of climate change to the forefront. It is believed that this region will be hit hard by climate change impacts. This past summer, Portugal, like Canada, experienced devastating wildfires. It is believed that the impact of climate change has lengthened Portugal's wildfire season from two months a year to up to five months of the year.

● (1845)

The European Environment Agency reported this year that Portugal has lost 6.8 billion euros as a result of climate change from 1980 to 2013 alone. Portugal has committed to the Paris agreement and made ambitious goals to combat climate change.

The climate change performance index, which is an index by Germanwatch and the Climate Action Network Europe, ranked Portugal 11th in the world for 2017 compared to Canada at 55. It was noted that Portugal was one of the only two countries that leapt from "moderate performance" into "good performance", whereas for Canada they wrote:

Without significant movements in either direction, Canada remains in the bottom group of most CCPI categories. The only sector where the country ranks in the middle field is the emissions development but even there it lost some ground...

In June, the Portuguese prime minister reported that Portugal had already achieved over 87% of its 2020 goal. Unfortunately, our Prime Minister cannot say the same. Despite the government's sunny ways, it has only committed to reach the former Conservative government's climate targets for 2030, targets which were hardly considered world-leading then or now. Unless a dramatic change of course occurs, Canada will not meet its targets for 2020 or 2030.

Finally, coming out of the global financial crisis, many countries, Canada included, adopted an austerity mantra. Social services were cut, and in some cases deeply. Austerity measures have always clearly had the biggest impact on the vulnerable segments of our population, and this true in Canada or anywhere abroad.

In much of Europe, where the crisis hit harder than here, even deeper cuts and austerity demands impacted the lives of countless people already struggling to get by. The Portugal government, elected in 2015, determined that it would not take that approach. Much like the reaction to Portugal's harm reduction measures, many said this would prove to be a disaster.

Portugal's government has moved to increase minimum wages, reverse regressive tax measures, reinvest in the public service through wages and pensions, increased social security for lower-income families, and introduced a luxury charge on homes worth over 600,000 euros. After one year with these changes in effect, GDP was up, corporate investment was up, deficit spending halved to the lowest point in 40 years, and the economy grew for 13 straight quarters and counting.

Portugal is investing in its people to grow its economy, and it appears to be working.

Canada can and needs to do more to invest in our people to grow our economy. Too often we put vulnerable groups against vulnerable groups. Instead of tackling tax havens and loopholes in our tax system used by only the wealthiest people to avoid paying their fair share, the government floated tax measures that would have impacted small business owners, and even measures that would impact minimum wage retail workers.

Portuguese Canadians should be proud not just of their Portuguese heritage and history but also of the present. While celebrating Portugal day in June, Canadians with or without Portuguese heritage should not just learn more about the history but learn more about today. It is through this exchange of dialogue that Canada can continue to push to be as great as we possibly can. This is one of the great aspects of Canada's multiculturalism policy and it is one of the reasons I am proud to support this motion.

● (1850)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the motion by the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth to declare June 10 as Portugal day and the month of June as Portuguese heritage month. In doing so, I know I would have the support of many Portuguese Canadians in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler and throughout the Waterloo region. I know that members for Kitchener Centre, Cambridge, and Waterloo would fully support the motion as well.

Private Members' Business

I send my condolences to all those in Portugal affected by the fires this past summer. We can relate to them, given the fires that happened in British Columbia and Alberta. We know that many families and properties were affected in Portugal, and around 30 people were killed by those fires. Our condolences go out to all those family members who have been affected.

Canada has become home to many people of Portuguese heritage, with the Portuguese language ranked as Canada's 10th most common immigrant mother tongue in 2016. One of the first large waves of Portuguese migrants arrived in Canada in 1953. Since then, many people of Portuguese origin have come to Canada in search of greater opportunities for themselves and their families. Today, there are approximately 483,000 people of Portuguese birth or descent living in Canada, and a significant number of them live in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler. According to the 2016 census, Waterloo region is home to just over 21,000 people of Portuguese ethnic origin, with a little over 7,000 born in Portugal.

In Waterloo region, the Portuguese community is welcoming and vibrant. Whether I am celebrating Portugal day on Saturday morning at Escola Lusitana with students, teachers, and parents, or watching and celebrating the 2016 European championship final at the Kitchener Portuguese Club, I am always welcomed with open arms and walk away with a rich sense of community. I have been at the club on numerous occasions, whether for my close friends' engagements and weddings, or community fundraisers and festivals. I always enjoy the company of the members of this great community. I am proud that the Kitchener Portuguese Club is in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler, adding to our cultural mosaic since it was established in 1969. Part of the club's mission is to be a positive influence on the local community, and it does this very well. On its part, Cambridge is home to two Portuguese clubs serving our region.

Together, all of these institutions support Portuguese Canadians in preserving their cultural heritage and traditions, and sharing them with the community as a whole.

My support for the motion is of personal significance to me. I was privileged to grow up with many Portuguese Canadians in Kitchener. In fact, my very first job in high school was working at restaurant owned by a Portuguese Canadian. Before I started university, I worked for another Portuguese Canadian, an entrepreneur in the construction field. With great certainty I can say that both of these individuals helped lay the foundation for the person I am today. These two employers instilled in me their values of hard work, ambition, and dedication, the values that I stand for each and every day as I fulfill my duties as an MP.

Earlier this year during the second week of June, I spoke in the House about celebrating the day of Portugal, Camões, and the Portuguese communities. Every year on June 10, Portuguese Canadians across Canada celebrate what is popularly known as Dia of Portugal. The date marks the anniversary of the death of the greatest Portuguese poet who ever lived, Luis de Camões, who captured the essence Portugal, its history and its people. It is a day for the diaspora to celebrate their cultural heritage.

In Waterloo region, I have celebrated this day at the Portuguese school and in the annual Portugal day parade in Cambridge, alongside the members for Kitchener Centre, Cambridge, and

Waterloo. This past June, woven into the day's celebrations at the Portuguese school was Canada's 150th anniversary since Confederation. It was a celebration of their cultural heritage and this country that is their home.

● (1855)

Portuguese Canadians have contributed greatly to fields such as politics, business, arts, science, and much more in Canada. This community has helped shape an exceptional Portuguese Canadian culture that is an integral component to the Canadian mosaic. This motion recognizes the important contributions of Portuguese Canadians in building Canada and to Canadian society in general. Motion No. 126 celebrates the cultural diversity of the Portuguese community in Canada, and the importance of education and reflection upon Portuguese heritage and culture for future generations.

I want to close with this. A lot of the Portuguese who have immigrated to Canada from Portugal immigrated a long time ago in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and many years beyond that. They came for better opportunities for their families and for themselves. With this, they came here and helped build the foundation of our communities and our cities that we live in today. For that, we want to thank and honour the Portuguese with this motion. I believe that this is a motion we can all get behind and support. We want to ensure that we honour the Portuguese who have contributed so much to the social fabric, to our communities, and to everyone around this nation.

● (1900)

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Motion No. 126. I want to commend the member for Davenport for recognizing June as Portuguese heritage month and for her passion and commitment to the community.

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

[English]

The story of the Portuguese presence in Canada dates back to the age of discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries. It is well documented that Portuguese explorer Gaspar Corte-Real landed in Newfoundland in 1501. His statue stands proudly in St. John's today.

Evidence of the Portuguese presence is manifest in the many places and names of Portuguese origin in Atlantic Canada. Most notably perhaps is the name Labrador, which is believed to be named after Joao Fernandes Lavrador.

Portuguese-born Mateus da Costa was Samuel de Champlain's interpreter with our indigenous peoples, and in the early 1600s might be considered the first Portuguese person to have lived in Canada.

Canada's first letter carrier was Pedro da Silva, "Le portugais", here from 1647 to 1717. He paddled his canoe between Montreal and Quebec City delivering mail.

We have to jump 300 years to our modern day multicultural immigration system that turned a trickle of Portuguese immigrants into a veritable flood of people that would follow.

Private Members' Business

Sixty-nine men boarded the *Saturnia* which arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax on May 13, 1953. This marks the date that opened the doors to large-scale immigration from Portugal to Canada: 17,000 men and women of Portuguese heritage in the 50s; 60,000 in the 60s; and 80,000 in the 70s. Canadians of Portuguese heritage settled throughout our great country.

Today, 500,000 people of Portuguese birth or descent live in Canada, making it one of the largest ethnocultural communities, with the largest Portuguese communities being in the greater Toronto area and Montreal. They worked hard, with their hands, *com as maos*, in construction, farming, forestry, mining, and manufacturing.

My dad Joaquim “Jack” dos Santos Fonseca left Portugal for Canada a month after I was born in 1966 to escape a dictatorial government, and make a better life for his family. He had *saudades*, a longing, to have his family join him, and two years later my mom Maria Ernestina Fonseca and I arrived. My sister Nancy was born a year later here in Canada.

I grew up in the member for Davenport's riding in what is today called Little Portugal. My dad, who was an airline mechanic in Portugal, worked in Canada as a foreman at the Inglis plant near the CNE. My mom, who was an administrator, worked at the Toronto Western Hospital as a clerk. We found ourselves almost every weekend at Kensington Market buying fresh fish and produce for our traditional meals, enjoying an espresso coffee and reading the Portuguese papers. We belonged to the Portuguese Democratic Association and the First Portuguese Club in Toronto.

Portuguese Canadians have enriched our arts, sports, politics, business, science, cuisine, and much more. It can be said that Portuguese living here have put down their roots, and created a wonderfully unique Portuguese-Canadian culture. The community is one of the many gems that make up our great Canadian mosaic.

I want to thank the many Portuguese clubs, news outlets, specialty stores, settlement organizations, businesses, the first immigrants who, because of them and through their sacrifices, we can stand on their shoulders. These organizations allowed the community to survive and thrive in a land with a very different climate, when we get into the months of January, February, and March, with weather 10 or 20 below, and a very different culture and food. Through that community, they were able to provide all of that, and preserve that familiar culture again that they brought from the old country of Portugal that allowed them to thrive and survive.

● (1905)

The Portuguese community in Mississauga, and in my riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, has contributed to the culture, heritage, faith, sports, social services, and business development of our community. Whenever the Canadian-Portuguese in Mississauga saw there was a need that needed to be addressed, they got it done. They rolled up their sleeves, raised the precious funds, and fulfilled the need. That happened when the community came together in the 1980s to build the Portuguese Catholic church, Cristo Rei, Christ the King, at Confederation and Central Parkway.

In the 1990s, they built the Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga. The Portuguese club hosts functions every week of the year, where delicious caldo verde, bacalhau, and pastel de nata are

served and Portuguese music, like fado, and traditional dance are performed. The club hosts the Carassauga Festival of Cultures. It is the biggest multicultural festival in all of Canada, sharing the Portuguese culture with all the communities in our great city of Mississauga.

It is with great pride that I announce the most recent project. Freshly opened this year is the Luso home for the disabled. This centre, run by the Portuguese community, is providing services to all citizens of Peel Region with disabilities.

These organizations are only viable through the lifeblood of our volunteers. They are people like Jack Prazeres, Joe Botelho, Lena Barretto, Armindo Silva, Frank Alvarez, and Tony de Sousa, and I could go on and on. I know it is a slippery slope, but there are so many unsung heroes, and I would love to name them all.

Many of these worthy community initiatives take many resources to build and operate, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the many contributors. There are some organizations, like LiUNA 183 and 506 and their business manager, Jack Oliveira and his executive, that have been stellar in their support of the community.

The Federation of Portuguese-Canadian Business & Professionals and its members have also been instrumental in helping raise funds for many causes. Under the dynamic leadership of Michelle Jorge, the current president, her executive and the many past presidents and boards have come together. They understand that investing in our young people, that investing in scholarships for the community, will allow future generations to succeed and continue to keep the culture and heritage of Portugal alive in Canada.

There have been three Canadian parliamentarians who have had the opportunity to sit in this chamber: Mario Silva, who served the riding of Davenport from 2004 to 2011; the present member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert; and me. We all know it is because of the Portuguese community and its support that this has been possible. We are all very proud to be a voice here in Parliament for that community, for the many Portuguese, 500,000, across our great nation. We have ridings such as Davenport, Cambridge, Streetsville, the Brampton ridings, Kitchener, Sault Ste. Marie, London, and Hamilton. I am sure I could name every riding in the House and all would have at least a number of Portuguese who live within their communities.

It was a proud moment for all of us on the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group to hold the first ever Portugal Day on the Hill last year. We had another one this year, and I am sure that next year, with the proclamation of June as Portugal heritage month, it will be fantastic. We encourage everyone to come out for some really delicious food and festivity.

Private Members' Business

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

[English]

I encourage all members in the House to come out and enjoy the festivities as we enrich our country. I congratulate the member for Davenport on Motion No. 126, which is long overdue.

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure for me to be wrapping up the debate for my private member's Motion No. 126. It is so great to see that we have cross-party support for the motion. Indeed, the Portuguese community is well represented right across the province and the country.

● (1910)

[Translation]

I am so very proud, and I feel so privileged to speak to Motion No. 126, which pays tribute to the contributions of Canadians of Portuguese origin to this magnificent country. I want to thank the members of all parties for supporting my motion.

[English]

From my Conservative and NDP colleagues, we are reminded that the Portuguese are well known for their hard work, entrepreneurial spirit, and that they are not people who shy away from facing and overcoming challenges. They are warm and generous people who are fanatical about soccer, who are proud of their explorer past, who love their gardens and growing things like food and flowers, and who are so well known for their bacalhau, pasteis de nata, Vinho Verde, and port wines. I want to thank my colleagues on the opposite side of the House for their support.

I want to acknowledge the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the member of parliament for one of my neighbouring ridings in Toronto, who has reminded us that the Portuguese language is the tenth most spoken non-official language in our country and that at the heart of our nation is the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, enacted in 1988, a groundbreaking, historic act that preserves and enhances the multicultural heritage of all Canadians, stating that each culture is upheld as equal in our economic, social, cultural, and political life. Indeed, it is this policy that allows us to proclaim loud and clear that one can be a proud Portuguese and a proud Canadian and there is no conflict. It is also this policy that has allowed diversity in Canada to become our strength.

I want to also thank the members of the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group. Many of them have spoken today and many just a month ago. They are colleagues from ridings right across the country and they truly love and honour the Portuguese communities of which they are so proud to serve. I give them a huge thanks.

Finally, I want to once again thank the many Portuguese leaders from Portuguese clubs and associations, and the Portuguese media. They have come to me over the last few weeks and have told me how important this motion is to them and the community and how proud they are that it has been introduced at the national level.

Indeed, I dedicate this private member's motion to all those who have tirelessly promoted the Portuguese culture, language, and community. I am standing on their shoulders.

We would not have reached this moment without their hard work, persistence, and love of their culture, language, and traditions. I give them them heartfelt thanks. Our nation is stronger because of their efforts, and our Canadian society so much richer.

Last, I did not get a chance to truly recognize all the heroic work of the Portuguese clubs right across the country. Over 150 clubs exist in Canada, and 20 to 25 are in my riding alone. Week after week, they tirelessly work to celebrate all that is Portuguese. I want to recognize their accomplishments.

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

[English]

Finally, what a personal privilege it is for me to present the motion. Culturally, I am half Hispanic and half Ukrainian, but represent the largest Portuguese community in Canada. What a beautiful reflection this is of Canada and how wonderful it is that I am able to do so. It shows that it does not matter what a person's background is, or the colour of a person's skin, or what religion a person practises. In this country, if people work hard and take advantage of the opportunities before them, they can succeed and achieve their potential.

The second reason is because it truly shows that diversity is indeed our strength and that all cultures that make up our great country make us a more beautiful and stronger population. It is in the differences that our beauty lies and in the heroic efforts we make each day to understand each other, live with each other, appreciate each other, and ultimately see that no matter how different we may seem on the outside we have so much more in common. We are drawn together by a common humanity, one that says we are all equal.

It is an honour to present my private member's motion, Motion No. 126.

● (1915)

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 8, 2017, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I rose in the House on May 31, it was to mark a tragedy. It had been reported in the news that a woman had died attempting to make the irregular crossing from the United States into Canada around Emerson, Manitoba.

Since that time, we have seen irregular crossings continue. Up to the end of September, a total of just over 15,000 individuals have been intercepted at irregular crossings. Through regular and irregular entries to Canada, there have been upwards of 35,000 asylum claims filed in Canada this year alone.

Today, the government tabled the immigration levels plan for 2018. In its multi-year plan, the government has shown once again that it is failing to treat the current asylum claim trend seriously. The 2018 plan increases the target for protected persons in Canada and dependants abroad only by 1,000, to 16,000. This target includes those crossing regularly and irregularly.

As reported, there is currently an acceptance rate of 69% for asylum claims that have come before the IRB by irregular crossers. Should that trend continue or even if that rate decreases marginally, the targets put forward by the government today have no basis in reality.

There is nothing to suggest that asylum claims to Canada will be reduced over the next three years. There are 65 million people globally who are forcibly displaced. There is no sign that the current anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric and policy in the United States will improve.

When I spoke with the IRB chairperson in the spring, it was clear then and it is clear now that rhetoric and those policies are helping drive people from the United States to Canada. Experts on the matter have been clear since January. The issues in the U.S. asylum system such as lack of access to legal counsel impact a person's ability to build his or her case, resulting in legitimate claims being denied. We now know this to be true. Sixty-nine per cent of irregular crossing claims have been accepted in Canada so far.

Let me remind the parliamentary secretary of Seidu Mohammed. He lost most of his fingers to frostbite making the crossing. He was put in immigration detention by the United States. He was unable to adequately prepare for his asylum hearing. His claim was denied. In Canada, he was able to adequately prepare. As a member of the

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LGBTQ community from Ghana, he faced a serious threat of persecution and violence on the basis of his identity. His claim was accepted.

He was just one case of those 69% of successful claims. I have been informed of the details of other similar cases as well.

Why has the government been so reluctant to proactively deal with this situation? On what basis do the Liberals believe that levels announced for this category of claim are realistic? Are we going to be turning away legitimate refugees as a result of the government's failure to act?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this issue. The question she had submitted dealt mainly with the Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement. She wanted to know whether we planned to revisit that agreement. My speech will therefore focus primarily on the Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement.

Asylum claims are governed in part by international treaties Canada has signed on to. As such, we have a legal responsibility to assess asylum claims made under these international conventions. That is why the asylum system is fundamentally different from all other areas of immigration.

The Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement is a treaty that was negotiated between Canada and the United States. It is premised on a principle accepted by the United Nations Refugee Agency that individuals should seek asylum in the first safe country they reach. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act requires the continual review of the U.S. to ensure that the conditions that led to its designation as a safe third country continue to be met.

Recent changes to U.S. immigration policy have not affected the functioning of the U.S. asylum system. In fact, as the head of the UNHCR in Canada has indicated on several occasions, the conditions that prevailed at the time of the agreement in 2004 remain the same today, and it would therefore be irresponsible to withdraw from it. The agreement remains an important tool for Canada and the U.S. to work together on the orderly handling of refugee claims made in each of our countries.

That being said, entering Canada illegally between designated points of entry is very dangerous and is considered a violation of the law. Individuals who are intercepted by the RCMP or local law enforcement after crossing the border illegally are brought to an immigration officer who will conduct an examination to determine the identity of the person and their admissibility to Canada. An initial security screening is also conducted to ensure that the individual does not pose a security threat to Canada and to determine whether they are eligible to make a refugee claim.

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The Government of Canada recognizes that the increased number of asylum seekers in Canada is putting pressure on the provincial governments' social assistance budgets. If an asylum seeker wants to apply for an open work permit, he or she must first attend the initial interview to determine whether he or she has an eligible asylum claim. The claim must then be sent to the Immigration and Refugee Board.

We have expedited the processing of all applications for work permits submitted by asylum seekers across Canada. This allows them to look for work as soon as possible, so that they can take care of themselves and their families. We will abide by our 30-day service standard.

The Government of Canada is aware of the tragic incident the member mentioned in her speech, and we offer our condolences to the family and friends of the woman who passed away.

I assure my hon. colleagues in the House that our government takes illegal border crossings into Canada very seriously. We are monitoring this situation closely with our colleagues from the Canada Border Services Agency. We will continue to ensure that the Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement is honoured. We will also work with our American counterparts on this matter.

● (1920)

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the government's own levels plan that was just tabled today shows that it is not taking this situation in a serious way. The government's failure to adequately staff and fund the IRB shows that it is not taking this situation seriously, unless the plan is just to create what we call "legacy claims 2.0" and have those asylum seekers wait and wait with their lives held in limbo.

The IRB is currently facing a backlog of over 40,000 cases, which increases by 1,400 cases per month. These lengthy backlogs will leave people's lives in limbo for years as they wait for their hearings. However, the backlogs might also allow the government to delay claim acceptances long enough to stay within its annual targets.

Is the Liberals' plan simply to not deal with the issue and stick their heads in the sand so that people's lives could be held in a situation of uncertainty?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, just to clarify, the data we presented today and the data on asylum claims the hon. member is referring to are not related. Those asylum claims are very different. They are not part of our immigration levels plan, which is completely separate from those asylum claims. The Immigration and Refugee Board will handle those asylum claims.

To come back to the Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement, it is currently being upheld. We will continue to work with our U.S. counterparts on this file to ensure that the agreement is respected.

● (1925)

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, one month ago, I asked whether the Liberal government would make some of the public transit infrastructure fund available to restore needed bus service between Saskatchewan communities. The context for this question is that five months ago the provincial Sask Party government eliminated the Saskatchewan Transportation Company in hopes that private enterprise would fill the void, but there is still no bus service, even between Saskatchewan's largest cities, Regina and Saskatoon. This lack of bus service has caused many problems.

My original question highlighted the difficulty seniors were having getting to medical appointments. Just today the media reported on a message from Saskatchewan's deputy minister of health, which stated, "Do we co-ordinate medical taxis or other transportation with federal [government] that mitigates STC loss...?" It would be interesting to know how much the Government of Canada has had to spend on medical taxis in Saskatchewan since the closure of STC. Would that money not be better spent sustaining bus service?

This brings me to the public transit infrastructure fund. Of course, this fund is mostly about public transit in urban areas. However, when the Liberal government unveiled this program, it included a lot of language about meeting the unique infrastructure needs of rural and remote communities. This leads me to believe that some of this money should be available to support intercity bus service in Saskatchewan to connect our communities.

This year's budget provided \$20 billion to the public transit infrastructure fund and allocated it between provinces according to a formula of 30% population and 70% existing transit ridership. Saskatchewan has more than 3% of Canada's population, but we have less than 1% of Canada's existing transit ridership. According to this formula, we receive only about 1.5% of federal transit funding, in other words only about half of our per capita share of the money. Most federal transfer programs to provinces are allocated on a purely per capita basis.

Therefore, the good news is that Saskatchewan will receive about \$320 million from the public transit infrastructure fund. The bad news is that according to our population, we should be receiving more like \$640 million. However, at the end of the day, both of those numbers vastly exceed the \$85 million that the Sask Party says it will save by getting rid of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

Therefore, it should be possible for Saskatchewan to receive our fair share of the public transit infrastructure fund and to use a portion of that money to sustain and restore needed bus service between our communities.

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his advocacy for the people of Saskatchewan.

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The Government of Canada is delivering on our historic infrastructure plan. As the member well knows, it is the investing in Canada plan, which is investing more than \$180 billion over 12 years. We have made public transit infrastructure a priority through our infrastructure plan.

The first phase of the plan focused on the repair and rehabilitation of public transit systems. It also funded the design and planning stages of new large-scale projects.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

In the first phase of our infrastructure plan, we provided more than \$29 million for public transit projects in Saskatchewan, such as fleet renewal and upgrades in Saskatoon, the replacement of 17 buses and 9 paratransit buses in Regina, and the replacement of conventional transit buses in Moose Jaw.

[*English*]

Since November 2015, under all of our programs, we have supported 154 projects worth more than \$515 million in combined funding with our provincial and municipal partners in Saskatchewan.

[*Translation*]

We are working in close co-operation with the provinces to fund the priorities they identify. Our programs are intended to support the modernization and improvement of public transit systems in communities across the country. They are not intended to support the operation of public transit systems, or to support provincial public transit systems run by the private sector or by provincial agencies.

[*English*]

It is, in fact, the responsibility of the provinces to decide how to provide inter-municipal bus services in their jurisdictions.

In the case of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, the service was provincially run, and the decision to terminate was made by the province, as the member well knows. We are working closely with the province of Saskatchewan to finalize new partnership agreements for the next stage of our long-term plan, which will commit just over \$307 million in capital investments for Saskatchewan's transit system and, more importantly, the population of Saskatchewan.

These agreements will clearly outline how we will support the province's priorities through our new funds, the transformative infrastructure projects that will improve mobility, increase economic opportunity, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

[*Translation*]

In addition, the provinces will have the option of applying to the infrastructure bank of Canada to finance their public transit projects. The bank will concentrate on projects that have revenue-generating potential and are in the public interest. This is an innovative new tool the Government of Canada has created to build more infrastructure in Canadian communities. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan and to supporting its infrastructure priorities.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir: Madam Speaker, when I asked my question about federal funding for bus service a month ago, the parliamentary secretary responded by speaking in very general terms about federal infrastructure funding in Saskatchewan. Given a month to further study the issue, I am somewhat disappointed I am getting the same level of response this evening.

What I would like to get a clear answer on is, if the Government of Saskatchewan were to request funding from the public transit infrastructure fund to provide bus service between communities, is that something that the Government of Canada would provide?

I certainly take the point that it was the provincial government that decided to get rid of STC, and it is the provincial government that would have to define its priorities, but if the province were to request money for the purpose of intercity transport, would the Government of Canada provide it?

Mr. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the advocacy of the hon. member. It sounds like his advocacy would be well placed in the Saskatchewan legislative assembly.

I will reiterate that under phase one of the investing in Canada plan, the Government of Canada committed \$29 million of public transit infrastructure to fund public transit in Saskatchewan. The program is designed to fund upgrades and improvements to transit systems in communities across the country, including Saskatchewan. However, it is not intended to fund the transit systems' operations, nor is it designed to support province-wide transit systems operated by the private sector or provincial agencies.

Thanks to the public transit infrastructure fund, cities like Moose Jaw and Saskatoon have now been able to renew their transit fleets and modernize their existing systems. This is something of which we should all be immensely proud. The Government of Canada has and will continue to work closely with Saskatchewan to support similar eligible public transit infrastructure projects that are identified as its community's priorities.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise again today to bring an issue to public attention and to try to seek clarity and at least some direction from the Liberal government with regard to the environment and the storage of nuclear waste, and respect for municipalities, including aboriginal communities, and another nation, the United States. I am talking about an idea that was conceived more than a decade ago to store low-level and intermediate nuclear waste within limestone one kilometre from the Great Lakes, something that has never been done before and is certainly very controversial.

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The fact that we need to understand is that the Great Lakes and the fresh water it supplies to the trillion dollars in industry in the region, including shipping, and the surrounding environment and the basin of civilization that developed out of the Great Lakes are at risk from this proposal. It is no surprise that 23 million people have participated in motions and hundreds of municipalities in official objections to this proposal.

Most recently, we were able to delay this process enough to have Ontario Power Generation complete an alternative site selection process for its original submissions. The type of work it came back with is indicative of the entire process. I say this because it had GPS locations for alternative sites that included a bridge in Burlington, Ontario, and second, a store that was actually in the United States off the Minnesota border in Grand Portage. The mere fact that those two locations were identified by GPS by the OPG should say something about its entire philosophy of storing nuclear waste for the next 100,000 years underground in what is basically a new type of venture next to the Great Lakes. This is certainly not with the competency one would expect for the legacy that we will, as a result, stuff into the backpacks of future generations, including the costs for our children.

I would also say that given the record of environmental stewardship that Canada likes to claim on the international front, we should make sure that we actually live up to some of those commitments. I know that the United States Congress, Senate, and other bodies have objected to this, as well as municipalities. Lo and behold, it was Joe Clark as Canadian foreign affairs minister at the time who asked the United States to back away from it and not to put nuclear waste and disposal facilities off the Great Lakes, which the United States agreed not to do.

Again, I rise with the objective of finally getting the government to live up to its stated philosophy of protecting the environment first. The mere fact that this idea continues to have some type of breath to it is unacceptable. I am hoping not to hear a canned response by the parliamentary secretary, but a good debate as to why the Liberals would even want to consider going down this path and not just end it once and for all now.

• (1935)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to address the question raised by the hon. member for Windsor West regarding the deep geologic repository project.

Our government is ensuring environmental risks that are linked to development are addressed by industry before projects proceed. We are committed to restoring confidence in the environmental assessment process, and ensuring decisions are based on the best available scientific evidence and traditional knowledge, and take into consideration the views of indigenous people, the public, and other stakeholders.

Ontario Power Generation is proposing to construct and operate a facility for the management of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste at the existing Bruce nuclear generating site in Ontario. The project would be constructed in the bedrock beneath the Bruce nuclear site.

Low-level radioactive waste may be safely handled by workers using normal industrial practices and equipment without any special radiation protection.

Intermediate-level waste is radioactive to a level where more protection is required to protect workers during handling. It should be noted, and very clear, that disposal of high-level waste, including used fuel, is not part of this project.

The nuclear waste management office with the oversight of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, is developing a proposal and working to identify a willing host community for the disposal and long-term care of high-level waste.

The environmental assessment of the DGR project was carried out by a joint review panel that included the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. In its findings, the joint review panel concluded that the project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects, taking into account recommended mitigation measures.

After considering the joint review panel's report, the minister directed Ontario Power Generation to provide her with additional information concerning potential alternate locations for the project, cumulative effects, and Ontario Power Generation's commitments with respect to mitigation, in order to fully inform her decision.

Our government also believes indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their rights and that indigenous governments, laws, and jurisdictions must be respected. We are aware that Ontario Power Generation has committed to not proceed with the deep geologic repository project if it does not have the support of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation's communities.

In July, the Saugeen Ojibway Nation wrote to the minister asking for more time to complete its community consultation process. In light of Ontario Power Generation's stated commitment and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation's letter, the minister requested that Ontario Power Generation update its analysis of the potential cumulative effects of the project on physical and cultural heritage.

The update must include a description of the potential effects of the project on the Saugeen Ojibway Nation's spiritual and cultural connection to the land, and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation community process must inform the analysis and be incorporated into Ontario Power Generation's analysis.

Informed decision-making requires all available and relevant information to be gathered, considered, and taken into account. Following the submission of the updated cumulative effects assessment, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, assisted by other federal authorities, will prepare a draft report containing its analysis.

Indigenous groups and the public will be invited to review and comment on the agency's draft report, including the potential legally binding conditions with which Ontario Power Generation must comply, if the project is allowed to proceed.

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In closing, I want to assure the House that, as with all projects, the final decision in this case will be made based on evidence, science, traditional knowledge, and public input.

• (1940)

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, if it is based upon science, then maybe, perhaps, the parliamentary secretary will explain why Ryden's Border Store, located just across the border in Minnesota, was one of the coordinates that was actually looked at for the alternate location for this particular project.

I will leave my comments specifically to that, because the other location that was identified was a bridge in Burlington, Ontario. However, let us just find out why it is that this review process came back with Ryden's Border Store, just across the border in Minnesota as one of the coordinates in the area as identified by OPG.

Let us talk specifically about the science of how that meets the minister's test of mettle in this case.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, obviously any assessment process requires evidence and science on which to actually base decisions.

The joint review panel heard from a range of different interests and was informed by significant scientific evidence in coming to its decision. The minister made the decision that there were additional pieces of evidence and input that were required before she would be able to render a decision. We are in the process now of receiving that information. Some information is still to be received, and once that is there, the minister will take all of that into account in rendering an appropriate scientifically based decision.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:43 p.m.)

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