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Friday, November 3, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 3, 2017

The House met at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)
[English]

TOBACCO ACT

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (for the Minister of Health) moved that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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 very pleased to be here to begin the second reading debate on Bill S-5, an act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Bill S-5 was introduced into the other place last November by Senator Petitclerc. My sincere thanks to the senator for helping advance this legislation, and to the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for their work in reviewing this bill.

All members of this House are aware of the dangers associated with tobacco use. They also know that reducing the use of tobacco has been a primary public health goal of governments, at all levels, for decades.

My colleagues should also know that tobacco use is a significant economic burden on this country as well. It cost Canadian society approximately \$16.2 billion as of 2012, the last year for which figures are available. That is \$466 for every Canadian. These costs are for health care, responding to tobacco-related fires, policing contraband tobacco, research and prevention, and include lost productivity due to disability and premature death from tobacco use.

Bill S-5 will advance key elements of our government's comprehensive plan to strengthen tobacco control in Canada. These include the establishment of a new framework for regulating vaping products and facilitating the implementation of plain packaging for tobacco products.

Before I lay out details of the bill, I want to set out some broader context, so that members may appreciate the need for strengthening tobacco control and how the bill fits in within the broader health agenda.

When the federal tobacco control strategy was launched in 2001, Canada's tobacco control approaches were regarded as innovative and world leading. As a nation, we established an impressive track record in driving down tobacco use. Indeed, we established ourselves as a world leader in this area. Overall, our smoking rate has fallen, from 22% in 2001, to 13% in 2015. Since the launch of the federal strategy, all the provinces and territories have enacted their own tobacco control legislation and approaches. The combined efforts of federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments in tobacco control have been crucial to Canada's success to date. The decline in tobacco use in Canada means that fewer Canadians will die as a result. This is something we can all be proud of. However, we can always do better.

The sad fact is that 4.5 million Canadians still use tobacco. In 2015 alone, 115,000 Canadians became daily smokers. Approximately, 45,000 Canadians will die every year from tobacco-related illness, representing 18% of all Canadian deaths. That is one person every 12 minutes. By the time we finish with this speech, another Canadian will have passed away from a tobacco-related illness. The toll of tobacco-related preventable deaths is unacceptable. Our goal recognizes the need to establish a new regulatory framework, one that is firmly grounded on public health imperatives.

Canada has ceded the mantle of world leader in tobacco control to other countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom. They have been quicker to adapt their tobacco control efforts to address the always-changing strategies that tobacco companies use to recruit new smokers. It is our government's intention to once again make Canada a world leader in tobacco control. That is why we have launched an ambitious tobacco-control agenda. This agenda has four main components.

First, our government published an order amending the Tobacco Act to ban the use of menthol in most tobacco products sold on the Canadian market. Evidence has shown that the use of these products makes tobacco more palatable. Tobacco companies have acted on this by introducing menthol products in far greater numbers. By implementing a ban on menthol, we have acted on the evidence as well. The changes we made expanded flavour restrictions to 95% of the entire tobacco market in Canada, helping to make tobacco products less appealing to youth. With Bill S-5, we are proposing to go further and ban it in 100% of tobacco products.

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Second, our government has initiated work to modernize Canada's approach to tobacco control. The federal tobacco control strategy was set to expire on March 31, 2017. We have extended this deadline to March 2018 to allow more time to consult broadly and to fully examine all of the options. This past March, we convened a national forum, at which more than 150 stakeholders and partners discussed the future of tobacco control in Canada. We launched the forum by asking participants how we could best modernize Canada's approach to tobacco control. We also conducted an online public consultation on the future of tobacco control. Reaching our goal will require the support of all Canadians, including stakeholders, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, and indigenous peoples.

• (1010)

We heard from more than 1,800 individuals and organizations from across Canada. We heard that Canadians are tired of having their health and the health of their loved ones adversely affected by this highly addictive substance. They are ready to take action to prevent young people from taking up smoking, and they are ready to make a commitment to living healthier lives.

Third, our government has committed to implementing plain and standardized packaging for tobacco packages and products and to make them less attractive to our youth and other Canadians. This commitment was identified in the Minister of Health's mandate letter, and its implementation is a priority for our government.

Fourth, we have committed to addressing the growing market for vaping products. Regulating vaping is important to the health of Canadians, particularly in terms of protecting youth and preventing the potential renormalization of smoking. As I said earlier, our tobacco control strategy must remain up to date with the changing product trends.

Having provided details on our government's agenda for tobacco control, I would like now to take this opportunity to provide more details on the key aspects of Bill S-5.

Bill S-5 supports our commitment to implementing plain and standardized packaging for tobacco products. Tobacco packages are powerful promotional vehicles for the industry to communicate brand imagery. Research has shown that plain packaging measures, including the removal of logos, textures, colours, and brand image, help make tobacco products less appealing, especially to youth.

I firmly believe that tobacco companies should not be able to use attractive packaging to market a product that causes devastating, indisputable, and well-documented damage to people's health. Canadians agree, and they are ready to support action by the federal government that would discourage youth from starting to use tobacco products. As such, the bill would support the implementation of plain packaging of tobacco products by providing the authority to develop regulations to enable and facilitate this.

Bill S-5 will also help us respond to the rapid increase we have seen in the popularity of vaping products. Evidence has suggested that these new products, while harmful, would be less harmful than traditional tobacco products, and consequently they have the potential to bring about public health benefits if they reduce tobacco-related death and disease.

For smokers who are unable to quit, switching to a vaping product could be a way to reduce the harm that smoking has on their health and the burden that it places upon society. However, these products could also potentially lead to nicotine addiction to the use of tobacco products, and to the renormalization of smoking behaviour, reversing the gains we have made over the past 30 years.

Recent surveys conducted by Health Canada indicate that 26% of Canadian youth aged 15 to 19 have tried an e-cigarette. This is a concern. Early exposure to nicotine can render an individual more susceptible to nicotine addiction and may have adverse consequences for brain development. Sadly, young people may not recognize the lifelong implications of experimenting with these products. Bill S-5 aims to strike a balance, allowing adult smokers to use vaping products which may provide them with a path away from the more deadly cigarette, while also protecting youth and non-users from being recruited into a lifelong addiction to nicotine.

The legislation proposes to regulate the manufacture, sale, labelling, and promotion of vaping products with and without nicotine, including vaping devices and substances such as e-liquids. The bill would amend the Non-smokers' Health Act to protect those in federally regulated workplaces from the potential harms of second-hand vapour. The bill would also harmonize compliance and enforcement authorities for both tobacco and vaping products with other modern statutes administered by Health Canada.

Bill S-5 also contains provisions aimed specifically at protecting young people from vaping products. For example, the bill would restrict youth access to vaping products by prohibiting the sale of these products to youth under the age of 18. It would protect youth from inducements to using vaping products by prohibiting marketing practices known to be effective at targeting youth.

In these ways, Bill S-5 responds to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Health in its report entitled "Vaping: Towards a regulatory framework for e-cigarettes".

Some people have been critical of Bill S-5 because they want to be able to promote vaping products as reduced-risk products. To address this concern, the other place proposed amendments to Bill S-5 to allow the government, through regulations, to set out exceptions for certain evidence-based statements regarding the relative health risks of vaping products. Once these regulations are in place, manufacturers and retailers would be allowed to use these statements in their promotions for vaping products. At the same time, Canadians would continue to be protected from deceptive or misleading claims on the health hazards of using vaping products.

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We will also continue to invest in scientific research to better understand the health impacts of vaping and to gather data on how Canadians are using these products. In fact, Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research are already collaborating to regularly generate data on vaping products which is used to inform policy and regulatory decisions.

Let me be clear. The evidence we have today indicates that while it is true that vaping products are less harmful than cigarettes, they are still potentially harmful. Bill S-5 would enable us to have stronger federal oversight to better protect Canadians from the negative health effects associated with using these products. Should Bill S-5 become law, Canada will join the ranks of some 60 countries that have already taken action to specifically regulate vaping products.

• (1015)

These international approaches range from minimal regulation to full bans. Despite these differences, many jurisdictions, including the European Union and the United States, are taking similar approaches to protecting youth from the dangers of nicotine addiction while allowing adult smokers to access vaping products.

In conclusion, the proposed legislation would allow our government to protect the health of Canadians by establishing a new framework for regulating the manufacture, sale, labelling, and advertising of vaping products in a flexible way that could be adjusted as our knowledge of these products evolves.

I would like to reiterate that vaping products are not harmless, and that the evidence on nicotine is clear. It is particularly harmful to young people. Given these facts, our government is committed to taking action and to balancing the needs of Canadians through this legislation.

Bill S-5 takes into consideration both the health harms, and the potential public health benefits of vaping products. It aims to protect youth and non-users of tobacco products from inducements to use tobacco, and it would allow adults to legally access vaping products as a less harmful alternative to tobacco.

Bill S-5 also supports our government's efforts to implement plain and standardized packaging requirements for tobacco products. It is a critical piece of our government's tobacco control agenda. If passed, Bill S-5 would contribute to reducing tobacco use in Canada and allow for the regulation of vaping in a way that protects the health and safety of Canadians.

Our government is committed to charting a new course of action in tobacco control that contributes to our overall vision for a healthy Canada. It is critical that we work together to address one of our most challenging and enduring public health problems. Accordingly, I encourage all members to support Bill S-5 at second reading and refer it to the Standing Committee on Health for further study.

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this bill would require plain packaging for all cigarette products, not just the box in which it comes, but also the tube. There would be no identifiable markers as to who made the product or what brand it is. Consumers would have no idea what they were buying. There is nothing there for consumer protection so that consumers will know

that what they are getting is what they are paying for and believe they are buying.

More importantly, it opens up what is already a very lucrative and extensive contraband market within this country. It is estimated that in some parts of the country up to 80% of cigarettes are already contraband.

Without any identifiers or branding, this market could balloon and consumers would have no protection. Could the parliamentary secretary comment on this in light of his background prior to arriving in this House?

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, contraband tobacco is a significant concern, particularly the risk it poses to our kids. From my experience in my previous jurisdiction, where I was responsible for the safety of those kids, I am aware of the studies indicating that almost half of the cigarettes consumed by young people are produced by criminal enterprise and that these are a great health risk.

However, plain and standardized packaging is about protecting the health of Canadians. Illicit tobacco products are an important issue, and these illegal lower-priced cigarettes undermine the need to reduce tobacco use. With respect to counterfeit tobacco, cigarette packages sold in Canada will continue to be required to carry pictorial health warnings and to display both overt and covert compromising security features. These measures reduce the opportunity for organized crime.

Assessing contraband tobacco activities and enhancing compliance with the Tobacco Act is a priority of the federal tobacco control strategy. Funding through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canada Border Security Agency, Canada Revenue Agency, and Public Safety Canada to specifically address this issue has been made available.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that more independent research needs to be done on the health effects of e-cigarettes and related devices, as well as on the impact the introduction of these nicotine products is having on young people and on other tobacco control efforts.

I would like to know whether the Government of Canada will commit to allocate funding to these independent research projects.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, we agree that evidence-based policy is the best policy and that research needs to be done.

We certainly have some indication that these products may be less harmful, but there is an equally serious concern that they may also be used to introduce young people to nicotine. That is why the provisions of this act will make that an offence.

Government Orders

We recognize the importance of research. As I indicated in my earlier remarks, the government has made a commitment to make funds available through its work with the CIHR to enhance and increase research into the health implications. We will continue to closely monitor that research and the evidence as we go forward.

However, we are taking a precautionary approach. While we recognize that these products may be less harmful, until the science fully evolves and there is a clear understanding of the potential harms from vaping, we want to make sure that Canadian legislation is sufficiently cautious to protect the overall health of our citizens.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to ask him whether Bill S-5 provides for plain packaging for all tobacco products or whether he thinks exceptions will be made for certain products, such as cigars weighing more than 1.4 g, as is done in some other countries that have plain or standardized packaging.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, the health implications of tobacco use are very clearly documented and completely unacceptable. We believe that plain packaging will assist us to further reduce the attractiveness of these products to consumers, particularly young people.

The proposed regulations are for all tobacco products.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard the parliamentary secretary clearly iterate that the government wants to reduce absolute harms, and that smoking is harmful. Therefore, could he comment on the hypocrisy of saying this at the same time the government is legalizing the smoking of marijuana, which has already been proven to be harmful?

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question because it gives me an opportunity to explain the importance of being able to regulate these substances. Currently, cannabis is under no control other than criminal sanction.

Over a third of our kids between the ages of 18 and 24 are now using this drug. It has become almost ubiquitous in our society, and the cannabis they are using is produced by criminal enterprises. It is not tested. It is not regulated in any way. It is very difficult to enforce the rules, and they remain unenforced.

Something that is prohibited cannot be regulated. By lifting the criminal prohibition and replacing it with a very restrictive and comprehensive system of regulation for the production, distribution, and consumption of cannabis, we can enhance the health environment for all of our citizens, do a much better job of keeping this out of the hands of kids and other vulnerable populations, and bring some science and evidence to what is being consumed by Canadians very regularly today, to make sure they know the potency, purity, and provenance of what they are consuming.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not see anything about e-cigarettes in all of that information.

Does the government intend to make a distinction between e-cigarettes and regular tobacco products when it comes to advertising and branding?

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. When we are referring to vaping, we are including regulatory control of the e-cigarette. There are a number of different ways in which this vapour is being consumed, including e-cigarettes. The proposed regulations or restrictions being put in place will also encompass that method of consuming vaping products.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has visited my riding in the last few months to talk about different pieces of legislation. He knows that Whitby is a bedroom community. There are a lot of young people there.

Could the parliamentary secretary expand on how this piece of legislation would further allow parents in my community to understand the government's responsible and very targeted approach to handling vaping and e-cigarettes?

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, the protection of children, quite frankly, is our greatest priority and greatest responsibility.

We recognize the risk of early and frequent tobacco use. The use of tobacco in various potencies can also present a risk to our kids. That is why we are bringing forward this legislation.

We have achieved some extraordinary results, significantly reducing the incidence of tobacco use among our young people. In fact, tobacco use is significantly lower among our young people than cannabis use. However, we still have more work to do, as we know the health risks of tobacco to our young people. That is why we are taking these steps.

Parents can be reassured that we are taking steps to make sure that these packages will not be sold in an enticing way or as an inducement to young people to begin to use this product. We also want to make sure they have information. Many young people believe that because vaping is less harmful, it cannot be harmful to them. As an introduction to nicotine, it can also lead, at a very early age in their young lives, to nicotine exposure. We know that early exposure to nicotine and nicotine addiction can very often encourage young people to turn to other forms of nicotine consumption, in particular cigarettes.

The steps we are taking will reassure parents that the government takes the health, safety, and security of their kids very seriously. We are taking steps that are necessary to protect them, and also to inform all Canadians. The more success we can achieve in reducing tobacco use among all of our citizens, particularly our kids, the more lives will be saved. It is worth doing.

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•(1025)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here today to speak to Bill S-5, an act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. There are two parts to the bill. One speaks to the plain packaging issue and the rest to vaping.

I am going to take my usual approach and say what I like about the bill and what I do not like, and then discuss things I think we should consider as we move the bill forward.

I am very proud of the Conservative Party's record on reducing tobacco smoking. When the Conservative government implemented measures in this area, the number of young people in Canada smoking tobacco was cut in half. That is admirable. Smoking rates overall under our government fell to an all-time low of 13%. I think everyone in the House would admit that we know that smoking is harmful. We want to reduce the number of people smoking and the harmful effects associated with it. However, that is not the only consideration in the bill. We also need to make sure that we reduce the crime involved in all of the things the bill addresses. We need to be concerned as well about any of the economic impacts we might see as the bill is implemented.

With respect to the vaping industry, it is possible that people are not very familiar with vaping. I had a number of people in the industry come to me and demonstrate all the neat devices one can use to take either glycol, water, or some additives and heat them to a vapour that one can inhale. A number of things are being vaped. In some cases, people use vaping to get off smoking. They start with a concentrated nicotine liquid and over time reduce the concentration of that nicotine liquid. The act of vaping sort of satisfies their smoking need, and over time they actually can quit smoking.

In addition to that, there are different flavours that have been allowed. People are vaping flavours for different reasons, some to get off smoking, and some to address other situations. Folks who are diabetic or morbidly obese apparently prefer to vape something that has a sweet flavour to it, because then they are not really receiving any calories but are addressing one of their compulsive needs.

This is the information that has been shared with me by the vaping industry. On the other hand, the vaping industry today is totally unregulated. That is a problem, because in Canada we regulate pretty much everything else: food, drugs, etc. We are also concerned about vaping products getting into the hands of children, so we would like to see the industry regulated. That is a part of the bill I do like. We need to regulate this industry. The recommendation to only make making vaping products available to those over 18 is a very good idea.

We also need to make sure that as we deal with this, we take into consideration all of the different types of devices. This is an area where the technology is changing. One of the points raised earlier was that e-cigarettes need to be in this category. However, even within the tobacco industry, there is growing science to reduce harm. Therefore, one of the products that is not currently addressed by this legislation, but needs to be addressed somewhere, is nicotine sticks, the actual tobacco sticks that are heated. They are not being combusted. It is not a smoking phenomenon; it is a heating phenomenon. The research that has been done by that industry

shows there is a 75% harm reduction from these products. Somewhere, these products need to be addressed, but they are not really addressed today by this legislation. I have heard some conversation suggesting that they would remain under the tobacco part of the legislation, but that would not give them a fair playing field, because they would be competing with the vaping products.

The vaping products that are out there need to be regulated. We need to be concerned about how these things will be promoted and sold. Today, unregulated vaping shops have arisen. The regular convenience stores are not able to get into that market, so the input from the Canadian Convenience Stores Association is that whatever rules are put in place, they would like to be able to partake and participate in that market. That is a reasonable concern.

•(1030)

One of the studies done in the U.K. on vaping shows a 95% reduction in harm from vaping over smoking regular tobacco. This is definitely moving in the direction of reduced harm. I am concerned that if we are too restrictive about advertising those benefits, it might be a mistake. We want people to stop smoking. That is one of the main drivers of all the things we are talking about today, so that is something that needs to be considered as well.

I will move on to the plain packaging side of the story. The history of that is an implementation that was done in Australia. The outcomes were twofold. One, there was a slight reduction in the number of people smoking tobacco. I believe there were 100,000 fewer people smoking tobacco over a three-year period. However, there was an increase in contraband. Australia does not produce its own tobacco. It imports everything. Within that, contraband grew from 10% to 26%. That is concerning, especially when we look at how that compares to Canada.

We have quite a contraband problem in the tobacco industry in Canada. In fact, in Ontario, it is estimated that 40% to 60% of cigarettes sold are contraband. I know in my own riding, there are smoke shops literally everywhere where people can buy illegal contraband tobacco. It is simply not being enforced by the police today. Many of the first nations in my riding are the ones putting forward this product. I understand the sensitivity of that.

If we are going to go to plain packaging, there are consumer health considerations, because there have been numerous complaints about the content of some of this contraband tobacco. We have heard stories about dirt, sweepings, and animal manure. From a quality control point of view, as was pointed out earlier, if a cigarette has absolutely no markings on it, we have no idea if it was made by a well-regulated industry or if it was made in someone's barn. That is a concern for me. We have a lot of regulation in every other area of food and drugs, and this should be no different.

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The other thing that is sort of hypocritical on the part of the government has to do with a discussion I participated in on the health committee with respect to marijuana and whether plain packaging would be appropriate for it. To start, organized crime is already participating in this market. There is lovely packaging, with all kinds of colours, and people are becoming brand loyal, especially in the edibles market. The idea was that if plain packaging was introduced, it would not be competitive with what is already in place from organized crime. The discussion was that they would not move to plain packaging.

I do not know how one could make that argument on that side and not on the tobacco side, with a 40% contraband market in Ontario, and I believe, about 30% across the country. That bears a bit of discussion, because what we are really talking about is competing harms. There is the harm reduction we are going to get from going to plain packaging for smoking versus the harm increase from not having quality control for that product, plus the harm from the organized crime interactions. We have to take a bit of a holistic view when we look at that.

A number of organizations are weighing in on this legislation. We looked to the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation for their input on this.

• (1035)

The Canadian Cancer Society said, “We applaud the federal government's commitment to implement plain and standardized packaging for tobacco and are writing to encourage speedy adoption of the regulations. Plain packaging for tobacco products would prevent tobacco companies from using packs as mini billboards promoting tobacco.

“Despite the fact that smoking rates have declined by more than half, tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of disease and death in Canada, killing 37,000 Canadians every year. We're deeply concerned by Canada's unacceptable high rates of smoking, especially among youth.

“Health Canada's tobacco strategy expires in March 18. I urge you to strengthen this strategy through better funding to allow for stronger initiatives and greater impact through modernization of the outdated federal Tobacco Act, that is almost 20 years old, and through the speedy adoption of plain-packaging regulations.”

We see that these organizations see some merit in plain packaging, but obviously, they share similar concerns about controlling quality. It may be that we want to have some kind of government-approved mark on cigarettes that would at least allow the consumer to differentiate between something that is contraband and something that is not. That said, we know that those in organized crime are quite clever, and if we put a mark on something, they could easily copy it. We see that we even have counterfeit money, so that may not fix that concern.

Some of the other things I want to talk about have to do with the recommendations specific to packaging. There was discussion about having an optional alphanumeric code used for product identification. I think it should actually not be optional. It would mean there would be a number system on each cigarette, with letters referring either to Canada or to the province or territory where it is sold, such

as AB for Alberta, or CA overall, or CA-ON for Canada-Ontario. Having a set of numbers would be another prevention tactic that could be used to try to keep contraband out of the market. It is worth considering.

Bill S-5 also would not allow the tobacco industry to introduce the harm-reducing products it is coming forward with under the vaping legislation. They would be required to be under the tobacco legislation, which is more onerous, from a product introduction point of view. That includes getting products approved, getting products added to the list, and the amount of scientific evidence businesses have to bring about health and other impacts, including environmental. I would say that there needs to be a fairer playing field between them.

Let us talk a bit about marijuana, because the government is intending to legalize marijuana in July 2018. It seems to me that it is a totally hypocritical approach. We are trying to modernize regulations about smoking, and the Liberals, even though they want to reduce smoking, have added marijuana smoking to the list of things they want to do.

I am certain that the Liberals would want to bring amendments to this bill that would include marijuana so that it is clear, because people are vaping marijuana, and they are smoking marijuana. Both are harmful. The Canadian Medical Association has come out with studies that show the harm to young people as their brains are developing. They see a 30% increase in schizophrenia, psychotic disorders, depression, anxiety, and addiction in young people who consume marijuana once a week. If we are talking about reducing overall harm, it would be a concern to me to bring marijuana into this whole thing. That speaks again to having measures in place to make sure that young people do not get hold of these products.

At convenience stores today, cigarettes are kept behind the counter. People cannot see them. I am not sure that on top of that we actually need plain packaging. People cannot see the packaging, so I do not think those who are smoking are really buying cigarettes on brand loyalty. Considerations that might be important are actually more about regulating size. Companies have started to come out with slender packs of cigarettes, with cigarettes that are skinnier and that come in little ladylike packages. Even if they make the package plain, allowing that different size gives the illusion that somehow smoking will make people skinny. I do not know that this is always true, although we do see quite often that when people stop smoking, they gain weight, so there might be something to it.

• (1040)

I think that is certainly an enticement, and for women who want to carry cigarettes around in their purse, it is quite convenient. It is an incentive to smoke. We want to look at all those things and say that perhaps that is not the right idea.

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We also need to give consideration to the existing industry. In Canada, we have a number of tobacco producers, and they have seen job losses over the years. They recognize that eventually we want to eliminate all smoking. However, they have an export business, and there is a demand out there. Therefore, we need to be sensitive to the impact on jobs. One of the questions their representatives asked me when they came to visit had to do with their ability to produce a colourful package to export. It is not clear in this legislation whether that would be allowed, because we would only allow the production of plain packaging. There would have to be some sort of exemption to allow them to continue to supply cigarettes for export. Otherwise, it would hurt their businesses, and obviously there would be job reductions. That is an economic concern.

There are also members who have tobacco growers in their ridings who will be concerned about the impact of any changes that come out of this bill. We need to give consideration to that as well.

There is a lot to consider and discuss in this bill. There are some good things in the bill, such as the fact that the vaping industry would be regulated, and we would be able to put in some protections to make sure that children were not accessing vaping products. We would be able to make sure that retailers that cannot participate in the industry could start to participate, which could be a good outcome.

However, we see that on the plain packaging side, there are a lot of inconsistencies. There is inconsistency in the approach we would use for marijuana versus tobacco. There are concerns about quality control and how we would make sure to protect consumers from contraband versus the well-regulated and quality-controlled production of cigarettes. There is the whole area of the new technology and trying to create a fair playing field for that.

I am impressed to see the tobacco companies coming forward with multiple generations of new products that are not smoked tobacco that are used to get people to ultimately reduce their nicotine intake and get off this drug. However, right now the constraints on them, because they are regulated as smoked tobacco products, are not helping them move in the right direction, which is the direction we want to see people go. We want people to stop smoking. We know that smoking is one of the leading causes of death in Canada. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to help the industry as we transition to products that transition Canadians from smoking.

At the same time, we need to make sure that we do not incentivize young Canadians with the marijuana legislation that is being introduced, which includes the message that kids aged 12 to 17 can possess up to five grams. That is the wrong message. There are a lot of children and young people who do not understand that marijuana is harmful to them. We need to get that public education message out there. We need to make sure that we control all these products so that when they start to be used with marijuana, there are not unintended consequences. I do not think there is a lot of research, for example, on the concentration of marijuana one can vape safely. I think that is an area of concern, especially when we see some of the contaminated supplies of marijuana that exist and that probably will continue to exist.

For all of those reasons, I think there is enough good in this bill that it is worth talking about. However, as members can see, there are a lot of areas of concern that would have to be sorted out at

committee. As one of the members of the health committee, I look forward to helping sort through them to see whether we can address these issues and come out with a bill that, at the end of the day, will do more good for Canadians than harm.

• (1045)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support of my hon. colleague from Sarnia—Lambton and what she has said with respect to what she likes and does not like. As well, she supports the need for regulation, especially when we are talking about protecting our children.

While eight provinces have passed vaping legislation, the approach does not provide a uniform level of protection for Canadians. I am wondering if you can comment on the need for federal leadership to ensure that there is protection across the country, especially when we are considering our children.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): If I could interrupt for a second, I want to remind the hon. member that I am sure she does not want me to reply. I am sure she meant the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton. I will let her reply.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, as in many of the areas in health where the federal government has a role in leadership, the provinces begin to march away. They are all well-intentioned, but they end up putting in place things that are different, things that become confusing to folks, those who may be trying to sell products across provinces that have rules. All of these things drive higher costs.

We see this as well even in palliative care, and the member is well aware that I brought in a palliative care bill. The provinces are all starting to implement it, but in different ways. This is where the federal government needs to get involved. We see that now with the vaping market. People are bringing in regulations. We need to bring in regulations and work with the provinces to ensure that we have a clear, standard set of rules to protect the children, that will allow fair competition in this market, and that regulate the market, as we would with anything else.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. We all know of her interest in health-related issues. I was therefore very surprised to learn that the Conservatives made no mention of tobacco and smoking in their 2015 election platform. I would therefore like to know whether the official opposition thinks it is necessary to strengthen the federal tobacco control strategy, which expires in March. We need to address this issue immediately. If so, what does my colleague believe we should do to strengthen that strategy?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. I am very committed to health and health issues. I think that is one of the reasons our new leader has put me in this role.

While I cannot change the past, going forward, we need to continue to work at reducing the number of people who are smoking. I am very proud that over our term, the Conservatives cut in half the number of young people who smoked and reduced the overall levels to where we are today at 13%. That is great progress, but there is always more to do.

We can use all kinds of innovations to get there. The things that we are talking about today, the vaping products and the reduced harm tobacco products, are all part of that.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intelligent presentation from my colleague and the many places she went in that discussion.

One of the areas she touched a little on was marketing. As we have seen with marijuana, it has been marketed and labelled in many different ways. Here is an example of legislation that would market it differently and control it from a federal level.

As the marijuana piece is being rolled out and the provinces, as the member said, are doing things in different ways, would this be an opportunity to say to the government that it has done it one way with that piece of legislation, so why would it not do it another way with the legislation in front of us?

● (1050)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, that excellent question points out that we are in a situation where we need some consistency in our message.

I talked about the discussion on marijuana and that we could not have plain packaging because it was not competitive with organized crime. Therefore, to have a different view on tobacco is totally hypocritical.

It even expands beyond that. Pieces of legislation are coming forward in which we will want to talk about whether we can advertise pop or unhealthy foods. However, at the same time, we are advertising alcohol products, such as beer ads, where children are located. Alcohol is allowed to be advertised much more freely.

There is no consistency in the government's approach, and there ought to be. We ought to put some thought and consideration into that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things we need to emphasize during the debate is that there has been significant progress over the years. A lot of that progress has been taken by young people who have become engaged in the debate.

Today, I could go to the high schools of R. B. Russell, Maples, Sisler, St. John's High School, or Children of the Earth and talk to some of these students and they would be very aware of issues such as this. We can never do enough to encourage young people to get engaged on this debate.

Would the member provide some of her thoughts on the positive impact of young people understanding the importance of the health risks of smoking, and acknowledge and applaud the many efforts of so many of those young leaders who do a fantastic job in getting peers to recognize the health consequences of smoking?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is absolutely right. Public awareness and education directed at young people is very effective. I am not sure if any members in the House are old enough to remember the ads that used to be run. They showed pictures of red healthy lungs and really dark black smoker's lungs. Those ads were presented to us in health class, and it was very effective education for me as a young person about what would happen to my lungs if I smoked.

We need to embark on that same kind of public education. A consistent effort needs to be put into educating the public. We might have put in a lot of effort into at the beginning, but we have moved away from it now.

It is time to bring that forward, and this is an excellent opportunity to do so. The government just awarded a contract to create public awareness and education for the marijuana rollout. It needs to happen before marijuana gets legalized, so we can ensure people have the new mindset that smoking is harmful and that they understand the harm before we go ahead.

This is absolutely a key way to keep young people now and in the future from wanting to smoke at all.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the speech by my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton seemed to cover the gamut of the issues here.

One of the concerns she has raised, and I share it, is the contradictions in the government's message to young people. Maybe she could elaborate a bit more on this.

For decades now, the Government of Canada has invested millions of dollars in educating young Canadians on why they should not smoke. Most young Canadians learned in high school, junior high school, and even in primary school, that smoking was bad for them.

However, the government has a contradiction on the books, which is how it deals with marijuana. The government would allow young Canadians to possess at the age of 12. To the best of my knowledge, children are not allowed to purchase cigarettes at that age.

How can my colleague, and hopefully encouraging the government to follow suit, ensure that young Canadians are best educated on how marijuana, just like cigarettes, is bad for them? How can we make them understand that for their long-term future, they should not follow the lead of the government in thinking marijuana is okay? It really is a dangerous drug.

● (1055)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I was astounded when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health waxed philosophically about how smoking was absolutely harmful. I asked him how the government could introduce legislation concerning marijuana if it was harmful and it was trying to reduce harm. There seemed to be absolutely no answer.

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

● (1100)

[*Translation*]**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Simon Marciel (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec dairy producers get nervous whenever the subject of free trade comes up because this government never misses an opportunity to betray them.

They have not forgotten that the government used their businesses as bargaining chips in its negotiations with Europe. They have not forgotten how the government made such a big deal out of its compensation package or how that money ran out in a week this summer. The Bloc Québécois is worried because the trans-Pacific partnership, which everyone thought was dead and buried, has risen again. This is the same government that scoffs at our producers and negotiates in secret with Asia.

All signs point to Canada reaching an agreement with 10 other countries next week at a meeting in Vietnam. One thing Quebecers are sure of is that they will not stand for opening up supply management to strangers. We are proud of our producers, and we are glad we can find their high-quality products in our grocery stores. Unless supply management is 100% protected, we will say no to the TPP.

* * *

[*English*]**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for more than our 150 years as a nation, Canada has grown and prospered, as people from around the world have chosen this land to build better futures for their families. This week, our government moved to ensure that better future with a new strategy for our immigration program, one that is practical and compassionate, one that ensures we will have new workers to fill the jobs employers cannot fill, the expertise our innovators need to grow new businesses and create new jobs, and the families to strengthen our communities. That is what has helped build Fleetwood—Port Kells into the vibrant, diverse, and forward-looking community we enjoy today.

I am extending an invitation to everyone at home who wants to keep that momentum going to check our riding social media channels for links to a discussion on Canada's immigration strategy under way now on our PlaceSpeak forum. Together, we will toward that future so many of us came to Canada to achieve.

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[*Translation*]**MARIJUANA**

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *J.E.*, an investigative reporting program on TVA, confirmed last night that all of our concerns about the Liberal bill to legalize marijuana are not only valid, but also accurately reflect the concerns of stakeholders and Canadians.

From a public education point of view, it is clear from jurisdictions that have legalized marijuana, the targeted education is to young people, to very young people, and to parents and influences of young people. Those three demographics are targets. We need to educate young people before they get into the 12 to 17 years when they can possess up to five grams. I am really hammering that five grams because it is the wrong message to be sending. Zero grams is the right amount.

We need to have all of those things brought forward. Parents need to be educated as well. I do not think they are aware of what is in this legislation or what is in the marijuana legislation, but there are definitely unintended consequences in both.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree that plain packaging is important and we need to move forward on that.

Does the member have an opinion on flavoured tobacco, to which young people in particular are attracted? In my province and in my community, this is of grave concern. Would the member agree that the government needs to give attention to the issue of flavoured tobacco, so young people do not end up becoming addicted to cigarette smoking?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the health committee studied the issue of flavours previously. I talked to one of the members of health committee. With respect to tobacco, the committee recommended that we should get rid of all the flavours kids would like, such as bubble gum, cherry, those sorts of flavours.

The theme was the same on the vaping side of the equation. The vaping association and those involved in that industry told me that there was a well-intentioned health benefit to people who were morbidly obese or had diabetes. They liked to vape a sweet flavoured product.

More discussion will be needed on that to find the right balance on how to protect children. Education is a key point. If there were a good educational program, perhaps the flavours would not be such a big problem. There is a balance in those two and I am not sure exactly where to go on that, so it bears more discussion at committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief.

Once again, does my colleague think the government is really moving too fast on this?

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member is referring to the marijuana issue. If I have not been clear enough, 239 days are left until marijuana is legalized. The government is rushing, the police are not ready, and the provinces and municipalities do not have their plans or legislation in place, creating huge unintended consequences.

With respect to this bill, the urgency is less because there are so many competing considerations. It is more important to think this one through. We should regulate the vaping industry, but as there are both harms and benefits, we should weigh it more carefully.

Statements by Members

Our border officers, our police forces, and the provinces have all said time and time again that the Liberal government is not taking their warnings seriously. They are certain that utter chaos will ensue if it decides to go ahead with this bill in its current form.

It is shameful that this government would rather increase taxes and its own revenues than keep Canadians safe. To this government, money is more important than our young people, more important than people's health, and more important than common sense.

Instead of looking for better ways to combat the scourge of drug trafficking, the Liberals are throwing in the towel and trying to justify their lack of courage with empty rhetoric and senseless platitudes. The Liberals can make a mockery of our questions here in the House, but reality awaits them outside these walls, and the entire country is going to pay the price.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

It is a day to show solidarity with the millions of women who are victims of violence in Canada and around the world.

[English]

It is a subject that is incredibly important to my wife and me, and I know that is a sentiment shared by all members of my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. That is why from now until November 25, I am inviting all members of my community to learn more about La Passerelle, a shelter supporting women and their children fleeing violence at home in Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

[Translation]

I encourage anyone who can to donate items to La Passerelle through my constituency office in order to help the women and children who need it the most, especially during the holiday season.

Lastly, I encourage everyone in my community and all Canadians to go online and learn more about what we can do to educate young men about what violence against women really means and how they can be strong allies in ending it.

* * *

● (1105)

[English]

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE HEART OF THE CITY FESTIVAL

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 14th annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival in my riding. The festival runs from October 25 to November 5.

Heart of the City highlights the talents of our community through a wonderfully diverse range of multimedia art that connects and speaks to the diversity of life in the Downtown Eastside. This year's theme, "Honouring Women of the Downtown Eastside", showcases the chamber opera piece *MISSING* and the sound installation *Summoning*. The theme is especially close to the hearts of our

community, as we continue to fight for and stand in solidarity with families of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

The festival offers over 100 events at over 50 venues in our community. Please come and be in awe of these beautiful, artistic expressions and talent in my community.

* * *

ST. THOMAS TOMMIES

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 18 long years, the St. Thomas Tommies are Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association women soccer champs. In semi-final action last Saturday, our green and gold ran away with a thrilling 2-1 victory over Mount Saint Vincent University. With a second half marker from league scoring champ Nikita McCartney and a hard-fought game winner from Moira Kinney, the Tommies moved on to face King's College in Sunday's final.

On the strength of another Kinney game winner, and a marvellous shutout performance by goalie Mary Cronin, STU earned its long-awaited conference title, its first since 1999.

As they prepare to battle for a Canadian title next week in Halifax, all of Fredericton and all of STU alumni pass along their congratulations and best of luck to head coach Michelle DeCoursey, assistants John-Ryan Morrison, Vanessa Petterson, and Amy Whyte-wood-Hughes, herself a member of the '99 banner team.

To all the players, I wish good luck at nationals, and "Go Tommies, go!"

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[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this November, as members of Parliament, we have the duty and privilege to say a few words in the House to acknowledge the extraordinary dedication that our veterans and active military members show to our country, day after day, from one military conflict to the next.

We must not forget that these men and women in uniform often serve on Canadian soil, as we saw most recently during the unfortunate flooding last spring.

Therefore, in addition to remembering their many sacrifices, we must also develop legislation that helps improve their lives. I have taken action, and in May, I introduced Bill C-357 to fix a bureaucratic injustice that affects veterans.

During this time of remembrance, I urge my colleagues from all parties to take a serious look at this bill and to help me pass it, to guarantee that our veterans will be respected in their transition to civilian life.

Statements by Members

[English]

MYANMAR

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Rohingya population in Myanmar continues to face unspeakable suffering. Many of my constituents are gravely concerned, and the international community has issued an urgent call to end this humanitarian crisis.

Last month, I joined fellow delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's general assembly in St. Petersburg, Russia in passing a resolution that sharply denounces the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Myanmar regime.

[Translation]

We must persevere and maintain pressure, and I am proud that, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, the Government of Canada is stepping up to do its share.

The Prime Minister recently appointed Bob Rae as special envoy to Myanmar, and this week, Canada announced the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund.

[English]

Our government will match donations.

Advocacy and action must continue. I call on my colleagues, the government, and all Canadians to do their part, and all they can, to end the suffering of the Rohingya.

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SUMMERSIDE CHIEF OF POLICE

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of women and men in police services who, every day, dedicate themselves to ensuring that our communities across the country continue to be safe places for Canadians to live, work, and raise families.

I am honoured today to recognize one officer in particular, Chief David Poirier of the Summerside Police Department, who as of October of this year has dutifully served the people of Canada for the past 40 years, and was awarded a second bar to his police exemplary service medal from the Governor General. His service to the community continues even when he is out of uniform, as he has been recognized for his leadership, volunteer work, and community involvement with local organizations including Credit Union Place and the Lions Club.

On behalf of myself and the people of Summerside, I would like to thank Chief Poirier and extend to him our sincerest gratitude for his many years of service to the community, both on and off duty.

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TAXATION

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the high-tax Liberal government continues to make life more difficult for Canadians. Now it is attacking people with disabilities. Constituents with type 1 diabetes are being denied the disability tax credit. Treatment can cost up to \$15,000 a year, requiring multiple

daily blood tests and regular insulin treatments. Without this, diabetics may face amputation, coma, and even death.

In 2016, 80% of applications for the tax credit were approved, but now 80% are being rejected. The cash-hungry Liberal government has suddenly decided that people with type 1 diabetes are not actually disabled. Even worse, the Liberals are now robbing these people of funds legally put aside in disability savings plans. This is not right. As deputy shadow minister for health for the official opposition, I am standing up for the 3.4 million diabetic Canadians, even if the Liberals will not.

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● (1110)

OCEAN FRONTIER INSTITUTE

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to congratulate the Ocean Frontier Institute on a successful first year. A pan-Atlantic Canadian collaboration between Dalhousie University, the University of Prince Edward Island, and Memorial University of Newfoundland, the OFI will help international experts on both sides of the northwest Atlantic harness the vast potential of our oceans by delivering transformative research.

The institute is a critical node in a vast network of internationally renowned academic- and industry-led research centres clustered in my riding of St. John's East. Along with eDNAtech, NRC, COASTS, C-CORE, the Marine Institute, the Ocean Sciences Centre, the Canadian Healthy Oceans Network, Petroleum Research Newfoundland and Labrador, and our fishery industry partners, OFI is helping Canada establish 5% marine-protected areas by the end of this year and 10% by 2020.

To OFI, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and their many industry partners, we wish them good luck. We are counting on them for the sustainable development of our oceans-based economy.

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JIM FLAHERTY AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weekends ago, the Abilities Centre in my riding of Whitby awarded the first-ever Jim Flaherty award for leadership, inclusion and accessibility. The award was established to recognize an individual who has made a major contribution to the promotion, development, and advancement of accessibility and inclusion. I am proud to announce that the first recipient of this award was our very own Minister of Public Services and Procurement. As the former minister of sport and persons with disabilities, she led in the development of a Canada disability act to effectively improve programs and services and the lives of Canadians who face significant barriers.

Statements by Members

This award is given in memory of Jim Flaherty, who over the course of his career worked to support initiatives for persons with disabilities. On behalf of our government and the minister, I want to thank and congratulate his wife Christine; his sons Quinn, Galen, and John; the Abilities Centre for its work; and his sister Norah for continuing his legacy to enrich the lives of people of all ages and abilities.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Sunday is municipal elections day in Quebec. This fall, elected officials in more than 1,100 municipalities will undergo the ultimate test as they face judgment by the people. I have been lucky enough to work in all three orders of government, as an MP here in Ottawa, as a political aide in Quebec City, and as mayor of Thetford Mines for seven years.

I can say with certainty that municipal elected officials are the closest to the people and can move the quickest to change lives. I used to get calls on Saturday mornings about snow on the roads and some days at noon about people going hungry. We built parks, helped entrepreneurs create jobs, and influenced higher levels of government.

Mayors and councillors are indispensable to our society because they manage our communities day to day. I guarantee these people are not in it for the money, especially in small towns and villages. They are simply engaged citizens who are passionate about making a difference.

I urge all citizens of Quebec to go to the polls this Sunday and choose the best person to represent them. Voting is the best cure for potholes and high taxes.

I would just like to say good luck to all the candidates, thank you to the outgoing officials, and welcome to the new municipal councils.

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NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the government unveiled the second national action plan on women, peace, and security. Today I want to thank everyone, including public servants and civil society groups, who were tasked with developing this plan. At the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, we heard that women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence and conflicts, and that security interventions and peace initiatives produce better results when women and girls are involved.

[English]

The committee recommended that women, peace, and security be a core priority of Canada's foreign policy. I am happy to say that recommendation is reflected in this new plan which touches upon every aspect of our engagement, from our diplomatic efforts and international assistance to the deployment of our armed forces and

the RCMP. No society can reach its full potential when half of its population is held back. We are committed to making the involvement of women a priority, both at home and abroad.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL KINDNESS DAY

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to draw attention to my Motion No. 146 to instate a national kindness day. Through this motion we want the federal government to recognize November 13 as national kindness day. The primary goal of this initiative is to build a just, open, and respectful society.

This citizens' initiative, driven by the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées, the AQDR, is the result of much hard work.

Several members of the AQDR are here on the Hill today. I want to acknowledge the president of AQDR, Jacqueline René, the vice-president, Daniel Mailhot, Louise Rajotte and Lucie Rajotte, strong champions, as well as all the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the AQDR.

We hope that we can work together to have November 13 recognized as national kindness day.

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●(1115)

[English]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three-quarters of the world's population live without the absolute freedom to believe and follow their religion. Thankfully, here in Canada, we have the right to practise and worship as we please.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Yesterday, when asked about comments that belittle religious belief, the Prime Minister passed on the opportunity to defend the rights of religious communities. It is extremely disappointing that the Prime Minister failed to stand up and support indigenous peoples, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Christians, and other faith groups, who all believe that there is truth in their religion.

Respect for diversity includes respect for the diversity of religious beliefs, and the Prime Minister offended millions of Canadians with his comments yesterday.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship tabled the 2018-2020 immigration levels plan.

This multi-year plan will grow the number of permanent residents Canada welcomes annually. Today being the last day of National Francophone Immigration Week, I am pleased that we have a plan that will promote economic growth and help us address our aging population and slowing growth in the labour force. In Madawaska—Restigouche, these demographic phenomena are already jeopardizing the economic vitality of our regions. Businesses are struggling with a labour shortage that is having a negative impact in a number of sectors.

I feel it is important to acknowledge the parliamentary secretary, the member for Acadie—Bathurst, who is working so hard to promote immigration to the Atlantic regions.

Rural francophone majority regions like ours, like mine, face a lot of issues, but there is no doubt that immigration is vital to the future of our economies.

On another note, I would like to wish all Canadians a happy November.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance announced his tax increases on small businesses and family farmers over the summer, he was meticulous in sheltering his assets from any higher taxes. If we only knew what holdings he had, we would know what taxes he will not raise. However, we do not know what holdings he has because he is hiding them in a myriad of numbered companies.

Will the finance minister tell us what holdings he is hiding in these numbered companies, so Canadians can surmise the small list of taxes that he will not raise?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my hon. colleague that the Minister of Finance has always done what all MPs do, by working with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to make sure he is always fully transparent with her and follows the rules.

The Minister of Finance has always followed the Ethics Commissioner's recommendations, and he announced that he would go even further to make sure he can continue the important work he does for Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we could all have a little more confidence in the truth of that statement if the finance minister would just come clean about the holdings he is

Oral Questions

sheltering in his vast network of numbered companies and trust funds.

It took investigative journalists to find out that he was hiding \$20 million of holdings in Morneau Shepell, a financial company that he regulates, and a financial company on which he very carefully avoided imposing any new taxes.

Will the finance minister tell Canadians what holdings he is hiding in his numbered companies and trust funds, so they can know that he is acting in their interest and not his own?

• (1120)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, acting in the interests of Canadians was lowering taxes for nine million Canadians, lowering taxes for small businesses from 10.5% to 9%, helping 300,000 kids be lifted out of poverty with the Canada child benefit, and growing this economy at the fastest pace in the G7, something the Conservatives were never able to achieve.

That is working in the interests of Canadians. That is Conservatives playing politics. That is Liberals working for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Liberals raised taxes on 87% of middle-class Canadians. Second, their child poverty claims were declared, even by The Canadian Press, to be a lot of baloney. Third, while the Liberals raised taxes on everybody else, the finance minister was very meticulous in ensuring that none of the tax increases applied to him or Morneau Shepell.

Once again, will he finally reveal what he is hiding in this vast network of numbered companies and trust funds, so Canadians can be assured that their finance minister is acting in the public interest, not for his private profit?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has always been transparent and forthcoming with the Ethics Commissioner. He has always followed the rules and followed the recommendations, and he has announced he will go even above and beyond.

I understand why the Conservatives do not want to talk about the economy and prefer to talk about the finance minister. If we remember, and I will give the number, 1.6% was the real annual GDP growth for a decade. That was the worst since Mackenzie King, the worst in 69 years. Let us compare that to today, when Canada is growing its economy at the fastest pace in the G7, and it is 3.7% over the last year. That is what we are doing.

That is, again, Conservatives playing politics, and Liberals working for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is one distraction after another.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister, his cabinet, the parliamentary secretaries, and the Liberal caucus are the only ones who refuse to acknowledge the obvious fact that the Minister of Finance was indeed in a conflict of interest. He paid a fine for hiding his villa in France, and now he is casting doubt on the Ethics Commissioner's word.

Instead of being complicit in this sad affair where the rich can cut a fat cheque to get themselves off the hook, will someone in the government stand up and ask the finance minister to tell us what he is hiding in his numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner and will continue to do so with full transparency to make sure he is following the rules. He has announced that he will go even further by divesting himself of his shares in Morneau Shepell and placing all of his assets in a blind trust so he can continue the important work he does for Canadians.

He has been doing this work very successfully for the past two years, which has led to the strongest growth in 10 years—much stronger than anything the Conservatives achieved for Canadians during their 10 years in office.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always lived in a world where money can fix everything. He thought he could buy some peace and quiet by writing one big fat cheque and one small cheque.

While the big fat cheque is impressive, it is the small cheque that says it all. It confirms that the Minister of Finance was caught red-handed.

Knowing that, does the Minister of Finance understand that paying \$5 million and \$200 does not excuse what he did? Canadians deserve more transparency from their finance minister.

When will he tell Canadians what he is hiding in his numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the institution responsible for preserving the integrity of Parliament, an institution that we have the utmost faith in and the greatest respect for, is the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

The Minister of Finance has always worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and he continues to work with her to ensure that he continues to act on her recommendations and go even further to have the full confidence of Canadians and continue the important work he does for all Canadians.

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite the Liberals' promises to be more open and transparent, what we have is an Information Commissioner who is getting a growing number of complaints for requests for information that are being denied before Bill C-58 is even passed by the House. It is completely unacceptable. The bill has not even become law yet. However, the commissioner is proposing amendments to improve the bill.

Will the Liberals keep their promises and work with us, the NDP, and with the Information Commissioner to truly improve access to information?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are the first government in more than 30 years to modernize the Access to Information Act. As I said in my first speech on Bill C-58, our intention is to raise the bar for openness and transparency. We are open to amendments for improving the bill and we look forward to working with all hon. members to improve this bill. We will continue to raise the bar—

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps repeating that his government is the first in 30 years to make improvements to access to information. However, the Information Commissioner was very clear when she said the Liberals' Bill C-58 is regressive and that the status quo would be better than what the Liberals are proposing, meaning that Stephen Harper's government was more open and accountable than the current government.

Canadians were promised more accountability and transparency. Will the government work with us and help themselves by actually keeping an election promise?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are the first government in 34 years to act to modernize access to information. In fact, we are the first government to provide the Information Commissioner with real order-making power. We are applying the act, through proactive disclosure, to ministers' offices and the Prime Minister's office. We are applying the act to 240 federal entities, from the courts to the ports. This is a significant advancement.

We are raising the bar on the transparency and openness of government, and we will continue to do so.

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PRIVACY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week the Privacy Commissioner highlighted that the lack of heavy fines and legal penalties for privacy breaches means companies holding personal information on Canadians are unlikely to do everything they can to make sure that the data stays safe. The NDP has long advocated for stiffer penalties and to give the Privacy Commissioner actual teeth.

As more and more information is in the cloud, we need to put proper legal protections in place. Will this government commit to imposing severe fines on companies that fail to protect consumers' private information?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, privacy is very important to this government, particularly with respect to the digital economy and the fact that we have more data available.

Oral Questions

We want to make sure that data is managed in a way that respects the concerns that consumers may have. That is why we recently published draft regulations for amendments made to the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA. We believe that this will empower consumers and encourage businesses to have better security practices.

These are the steps we are taking to protect consumers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, regulatory power and good intentions are all well and good, but if we really want companies to be more vigilant in protecting the private lives of Canadians, the reality is that the government has to go after what is most important to them: their wallets. That is exactly what the Privacy Commissioner is asking when he talks about fining businesses, like Equifax, that compromise the privacy of Canadians.

Will the minister follow up on the Privacy Commissioner's recommendation and take the necessary steps to actually begin fining large corporations that compromise the privacy of Canadians?

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking action to protect the privacy of Canadians. As mentioned by the member opposite, Equifax recently confirmed a cyber-attack that resulted in a data security breach. We are obviously working very closely with the Privacy Commissioner. As I mentioned, the Privacy Commissioner understands the steps our government has taken to strengthen the provisions for consumers. That is why we recently published draft regulations and amendments under PIPEDA. We will continue to take steps to make sure that consumers and small businesses have their privacy protected, because it is important for our government and important as we move forward in this new digital economy.

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ETHICS

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are doing everything they can to keep their secrets under wraps. The finance minister hid details of his offshore companies and assets from the Ethics Commissioner while making decisions about companies he owns and regulates. He got caught and she fined him. He is in multiple conflicts, including with legislation, a government loan, and at least one tax treaty. It seems that other ministers are in the same mess.

When will the Liberals come clean with Canadians? What else are they trying to hide?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister, just like any other minister or parliamentarian, met with the Ethics Commissioner at the very beginning of his mandate to make sure that he would follow all of the rules and all of her recommendations. He has announced that he will go even above and beyond those.

What I see the Conservatives doing is everything they can not to talk about the economy. If we look back at the decade when they were in power, they had 1% growth in employment, the worst since the Second World War. If we look at the job numbers today, we have

added 35,000 jobs in October. That puts us at half a million jobs created since we took office, most of them full time. I get that they do not want to talk about it, but that does not mean we should not talk about it.

• (1130)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister got fined exactly because he did not follow the rules. The Information Commissioner said that it is harder to get information out of the current government than any other before.

The reality is that the finance minister used his power to enrich himself and his family's company. He is still hiding other assets within different holding companies, and there are other ministers in the same conflict, but the Liberals will not say who or how many, and the Prime Minister says there is nothing wrong.

The Liberals talk a lot about sunshine, but why are they still keeping Canadians in the dark?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has always been transparent and forthcoming with the Ethics Commissioner. From the very beginning, he has followed all of the rules and all of her recommendations, just like any other minister or parliamentarian is expected to do. On this side of the House, we respect the work of the Ethics Commissioner, we respect her recommendations, and we will always work with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that we live up to the highest standards.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance was so nice to the Ethics Commissioner that he was found guilty and made to pay a \$200 fine.

Two years ago, the Minister of Finance said that he would put his shares in a blind trust, but he never did. He also said that he did not have a controlling interest in Morneau Shepell, but he had a controlling interest in a company that controlled the former. He was playing semantics. He forgot to mention that he had a villa in Provence, until the CBC brought it to light.

This minister takes action only after he is caught red-handed. In fact, he was again caught red-handed with his numbered companies.

When will the Minister of Finance finally tell Canadians the truth?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance worked with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that he is following her recommendations and the rules of the House. He will continue to do so and has announced that he would do even more.

Oral Questions

What the Minister of Finance did was something that the Conservatives and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, whom my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent admires so, never managed to do. The Minister of Finance has managed to to grow our economy and create more than half a million jobs.

According to the latest figures, 18,000 new jobs were added in Quebec in October. We are proud of this record, and that is not a claim they can make. I understand that they do not want to talk about the economy, but that does not mean that we should not.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the law is the law, but the finance minister's motto seems to be, "do as I say, not as I do".

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest Act is to prevent any abuse by people who may have something to hide in numbered companies, for example. In this case, the Minister of Finance really seems to believe that he is above the law, as though the law does not apply to people like him and the Prime Minister.

How many other numbered companies does the Minister of Finance own, and what is he hiding in them?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every parliamentarian is expected to work with the Ethics Commissioner, who is responsible for preserving the integrity of Parliament.

That is what the Minister of Finance has always done, and that is what he continues to do. He met with the Ethics Commissioner recently and announced that he will go the extra mile.

If my colleague wants numbers, I can give him some. Real GDP growth was 1.6% during the past decade when he was on this side of the House. That is the worst record in 69 years, since the time of Mackenzie King. Since we took office, real GDP growth has been 3.7%. It was dropping in 2015 and people were wondering whether we were in a recession.

Now, no one is asking that question. Canada has the highest growth in the G7, and half a million jobs have been created. That is the finance minister's record.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, the PBO says that growth will drop to 1.6% next year, which is not exactly fulfilling Liberal promises.

During the last election, the Liberal Party released a great literary work of fiction called "Real Change". Perhaps a better title would have been "Surreal Change". On page 3 of that great masterpiece, the Prime Minister asserted that transparent government is good government. Transparent government means a government open to public scrutiny.

When will his finance minister finally walk the walk and live up to every single election promise and reveal all of his personal holdings in every single one of his numbered companies?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member obviously is interested in Bill C-58, our government's landmark legislation to modernize Canada's Access to Information Act. This is really important, because for 30 years governments have talked about modernizing access to

information but have not done it. The Conservatives promised it in 2006. They did not do anything. In fact, they were the only government in the history of the British Commonwealth to be found in contempt of Parliament for not providing information. Our government is raising the bar after 10 years of darkness under the Conservatives.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go to the next member who will ask a question, out of respect for that member, I want to remind everyone that he deserves to hear an answer. I will let him ask his question, and I am sure no one will shout out so that he will not be able to hear what comes back. By the same token, when someone is asking a question, I am sure that the hon. minister or the parliamentary secretary will want to hear that question.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister misled Canadians by hiding his assets from the Ethics Commissioner. He made millions off the company he regulates. He broke the law. Now he is hiding from Canadians his assets in multiple numbered companies.

What does this minister have to hide? Why will he not disclose his assets?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has nothing to hide. He has always worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner with the greatest transparency to make sure he is in full compliance with the rules that guide us in the House, and that govern us as ministers, as parliamentary secretaries and as members. He will continue to do so, and that is why he has decided to go further by divesting himself of his shares in Morneau Shepell, placing all of his assets in a blind trust, and donating the difference in value of his assets from the day he was elected to today.

This Minister of Finance has been brilliantly serving Canadians for two years and has managed to accomplish more in those two years than the Conservatives ever did in 10.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week we learned that the backlog caused by the Phoenix pay system is getting worse.

The Liberal government announced that, because of this fiasco, it will not be able to honour the new collective agreement implementation dates for over 100,000 public servants. Many of them have already been affected by Phoenix, and now their new collective agreement will be delayed. That is unacceptable.

Will the government at least promise to pay these employees damages and interest retroactively?

Oral Questions

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we have always worked closely with our federal public service union partners. We respect our federal employees, and we are working to resolve the problems with the Phoenix pay system. We have invested huge sums of money and human resources, we have created satellite pay centres, and we have done much more to solve this problem. We will solve this problem.

[English]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the Liberals have invested enormous sums in Phoenix, and this week was the one-year anniversary of the government's self-imposed deadline to fix it. However, more than half of public servants are still having pay problems. In fact, 265,000 pay transactions are past due. That is unacceptable. Also, because of the Phoenix delays, the Liberals will not meet deadlines to negotiate new collective agreements with our public servants.

When will the Liberals stop finding excuses and find a solution to the Phoenix boondoggle?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we take these problems very seriously. We have invested and taken a vast number of measures to resolve the problems associated with the Phoenix pay system. Because I know the hon. member shares my belief that we must fix these problems, I am sure he will join me in asking one of these Harper cabinet ministers how they could have left us with such a fiasco. Maybe he will ask the leader of the opposition why these Harper senators now want to slink away from the problem they helped cause.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have had two years to fix it and have done nothing.

Let me read part of a letter that the Minister of Revenue sent to someone with type 1 diabetes who was refused the disability tax credit. The minister wrote:

The CRA...made a change to the questionnaire it sends to medical practitioners. The questionnaire now sets out more clearly the information the CRA needs to determine if an individual meets the DTC criteria.

When I asked about the 80% who were previously approved and are now being rejected, the minister told the House that no change had been made, but in her letter she says a change was made. Which is it?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House that our government is absolutely committed to ensuring that all Canadians receive the credits and benefits they are entitled to.

We are moving forward with a national disability act that would remove barriers and improve access for all Canadians who live with diabetes. We have made the disability tax credit more accessible than ever before. We have simplified the forms required to apply for the credit. We have added nurse practitioners to complete the applications for their patients. We have just started, and we will continue to focus on supporting the most vulnerable in our country.

• (1140)

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will be talking about access again.

After trying to pull a fast one on small businesses with their tax reform, the Liberals are trying to save themselves a few bucks at the expense of families of people with autism and people with type 1 diabetes. If they really want to find more cash, they should just go look in the Minister of Finance's pockets.

Why did the Minister of National Revenue say that she knew nothing and that nothing had happened? Funnily enough, a letter that she signed shows that she has been ignoring doctors' advice since May.

When will the minister get control of her department, and when will she restore the tax credit for courageous Canadians with incurable diseases?

[English]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are the government that has been working extremely hard for the last two years to ensure that the DTC is accessible to Canadians who are entitled to it. We have done so by simplifying the disability tax credit forms, by allowing nurse practitioners to certify the DTC forms, by working with medical practitioners to ensure they have all the resources to assist their patients with the DTC, and by rehiring nurses at the front lines of the review process. We have just started, and let me assure Canadians that we will continue to work hard for the most vulnerable in our country.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to insulin therapy, the CRA has confirmed that a new direction was given at the beginning of May. This unannounced change has resulted in hundreds of type 1 diabetics receiving less money, amounting to hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of dollars.

As a doctor who has treated patients with diabetes, I am confident in saying that my physician colleagues are better qualified to decide who should be receiving these benefits than CRA bureaucrats.

People are suffering and the minister has the power to make it stop. My simple question is: Will the minister immediately issue a directive to her department to revert back to the April 30 policy?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to assure all Canadians that our government is absolutely committed to ensuring that all Canadians receive the credits and benefits they are entitled to. Let me be clear that the eligibility criteria for the DTC for people with diabetes have not changed.

Oral Questions

It is also important to recognize that far too many Canadians are struggling and need help. That is why we are allowing low-income workers to keep more of their hard-earned money from every paycheque by further enhancing the working income tax benefit by an additional \$500 million per year, starting in 2019. Helping the most vulnerable in our country is our top priority, and we will continue to deliver for them.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. member for Simcoe-Grey asked a question. I am sure she was having a hard time hearing the answer, as was I. I just want to remind the hon. members that the hon. member for Simcoe Grey wants to hear the answer.

The hon. member for Simcoe—Grey.

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HEALTH

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also shocked by another revelation. We have a Liberal government that wants to legalize marijuana, and yesterday we learned that the Liberals may be planning to decriminalize all drugs. In my clinic, kids are asking, “Is it okay to do drugs now?”

Young Canadians know drugs are bad for them. The Liberal drug policy is damaging to Canadians, especially to Canadian kids. Could the minister confirm if decriminalizing hard drugs is Liberal policy, and what dangerous drugs are on that list?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. Before I go to the parliamentary secretary, I just want to remind everyone that what I said about hearing the answer also went to hearing the question. It got kind of raucous on both sides. I just want everyone to take a deep breath. I realize it is Friday. Just listen to each other and we will get much further ahead.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, those members are making this up. We are in a national public health crisis. Unlike the members opposite, we are bringing forward solutions to deal with this crisis and responding in a way that is comprehensive, compassionate, and evidence based.

While we have made it very clear that we plan to legalize, strictly regulate, and restrict access to cannabis in a careful way to keep it out of the hands of children and youth and to stop criminals from profiting, we have been equally clear that we are not considering legalizing any other substances.

We will continue to work with our partners to bring forward innovative solutions to battle the opioid crisis and to save lives.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Official Languages tabled a report yesterday that calls on the government to give the Commissioner of Official Languages greater powers to enforce the law.

That was suggested by our former commissioner, Graham Fraser. It is clear to him and to the committee that we cannot simply rely on the willingness of institutions and Air Canada. The commissioner's current powers are definitely inadequate.

Will the government act on the committee's recommendations for once and strengthen the commissioner's powers?

● (1145)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the committee, including the member for Drummond, for the report. We will give it careful consideration.

Our two official languages are at the heart of Canada's history and identity. Air Canada must respect both the letter and the spirit of the Official Languages Act. The application of the Official Languages Act is a priority for our government. We are working with the Minister of Transport to ensure that Air Canada is meeting its obligations under the Official Languages Act. We take this whole issue very seriously.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage why she did not respond to the letter sent to her by the Quebec ministry of culture on September 3, which asked for more information about the agreement with Netflix and the lack of francophone content. That letter was sent exactly one month ago, and Quebec has still not received any answers.

I have not received any answers either. The minister's press secretary was embarrassed to have to tell journalists later that she would get back to them soon. Come on. Let us be clear. Our cultural industries are in crisis and the government needs to wake up. It is dragging its feet on critical issues, especially where Quebec is concerned.

Is that how the government treats the Quebec ministry of culture?

Is it so hard to answer an email?

Does the government not know how to answer or does it just not care?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we hear the concerns of stakeholders in the francophone cultural industry. We want to reassure them and remind them of the historic investments we have made to support our francophone culture.

That is why we invested heavily in arts and culture. We invested over \$2.2 billion in the Canada Media Fund to support French-language television, and we invested \$675 million in Radio-Canada. These investments are having a real impact on the lives of our artists.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the former Conservative government implemented a policy called “conditional permanent residency”. This policy required sponsored partners to live with their sponsors for at least two years in order to maintain their status in Canada, forcing those who were experiencing domestic violence or sexual abuse to stay silent or risk losing their status. This put vulnerable spouses, especially women, at risk of additional abuse and violence.

Could the minister update the House on what our government is doing to support newcomer women who are being trapped by this Conservative policy?

[Translation]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for her question.

[English]

Our government is deeply committed to gender equality and combatting gender-based violence. The former Conservative government ignored women's rights groups, it ignored experts, and it ignored immigrant women's groups, which denounced the conditional permanent residency as a wrongheaded policy that trapped vulnerable women in abusive relationships. No survivor should ever feel afraid to come forward.

That is why I am proud that on this side of the House we have fully eliminated conditional permanent residency.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government promised a 600-member peacekeeping mission for the United Nations. It has had three trips to Mali for reconnaissance. It has spent thousands of hours planning for a mission to Mali. It has consulted both France and the U.S. on this mission. However, this week we heard we were only sending some helicopters to Mali.

Will the minister confirm to the House today that Mali has been ruled out for Canada's UN peacekeeping mission?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government firmly believes in the important role that Canada can play in peacekeeping operations. This week, our government was proud to launch a new and ambitious national action plan for women, peace, and security.

Canada's feminist foreign policy will enable women and men around the world to play an equal role, have an equal voice, and have equal rights when it comes to opportunities for safety and security. We have committed to making the involvement of women a priority

Oral Questions

in all of Canada's activities and fragile states. The action plan will ensure that gender equality will never be an afterthought.

Women's rights are human rights, and we stand by that.

● (1150)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Mali three or four times in my earlier question, but what was absent from that answer was Mali.

The past platitudes of the government never match their present performance. We remember that Canada is back rhetoric. Well, Canada is back at the bottom of UN peacekeepers right now around the world. We are back to cutting the military back to the decade of darkness under the Chrétien government.

When will the member stand in the House and let us know where we are sending our troops?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country remember the contribution of Lester B. Pearson toward peacekeeping. We are proud of our history and the role we played in peacekeeping operations. We know that Canada—

Hon. Erin O'Toole: We have to go that far back?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. In all respect to the member for Durham, he asked a question. I think he deserves to hear an answer.

I will let the hon. parliamentary secretary continue.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, it is important for Canadians to know, even if the opposition does not want to hear it, that this government believes firmly in the role that Canada will play in peacekeeping operations. That is why we committed a half a billion dollars and 600 troops to re-engage in peacekeeping operations. Our women, peace, and security agenda is an important part of that commitment. We will make sure that women in Canada and around the world play a role in military and civilian peacekeeping operations.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hundreds of soldiers at CFB Valcartier back home are currently on standby waiting to find out if they will be deployed to Africa or elsewhere.

This week we learned that six helicopters would be sent to Mali. It was the media that informed us. The minister has said nothing about it. The minister went on three reconnaissance missions in Africa. Officers at headquarters in Ottawa lost two years making plans. We are still being kept in the dark.

Are we sending troops to Mali or not?

Oral Questions

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week we were proud to announce an ambitious action plan for gender equality in the peace and security sector. Our feminist foreign policy will allow women and men the world over to speak with equal voices, have equal rights, and live in security—

Hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadian men and women have an important role to play on the international stage. When it comes to peacekeeping operations, Canadians will play a leadership role in building a more peaceful world.

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[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to invest in Canadian infrastructure. However, the parliamentary budget officer said that the Liberals were not even close to getting the money out the door. Now we learn that Canadians and Canadian taxpayers will be sending a half a billion dollars to China for infrastructure projects everywhere else in the world except Canada.

Why are the Liberals borrowing more money to send to China instead of building roads and bridges in Canada?

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud to have approved more than 4,000 projects since taking office, with a combined investment of more than \$35 billion. Federal investments are enabling these projects to move forward. As the hon. member would know, the federal contribution is not paid until the expense claims are submitted by our partners.

We will continue to work with our partners to move their priorities forward and provide the flexibility necessary to meet these requirements.

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LABOUR

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, four temporary foreign workers have won the right to a class action suit against Mac's and the immigration consultant companies owned by Kuldeep Bansal. The migrant workers paid as much as \$8,500 to Bansal to obtain jobs with Mac's, only to arrive in Canada and find that those jobs did not exist.

An FOI revealed that LMIA's were issued for 486 positions for Mac's. The CBSA has investigated this case for five years and recommends that charges be laid. Why has the government not acted on the recommendations of the CBSA?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken concrete to steps to correct the temporary foreign workers program. Part of that is strengthening the LMIA's, the labour market impact assessments, that ensure employers are doing a thorough job of

hiring Canadians first and then proving the need for temporary foreign workers. We have also implemented new on-site inspections. We are working on a regime to ensure that all temporary foreign workers have their human dignity and their rights respected.

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• (1155)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the wake of the Chalk River nuclear disaster, 300 brave volunteers committed themselves to cleaning up radioactive material in their community. After several days of tireless effort and maximum exposure to radiation, the military showed up to help finish the job.

Those military heroes have since received compensation for radiation exposure, yet nothing has been done for those local heroes who stepped up when their community needed them.

Will the government compensate the volunteers who went above and beyond to help after the Chalk River disaster?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the former Atomic Energy Canada Limited employees who assisted with the cleanup of the NRU reactor in the 1950s played a critical and important role, and we do thank them very much for their service.

We understand that those employees and their families are working to have their contributions recognized. We are aware of the Senate motion brought forward last year.

At this time, while there is no program similar to the atomic veterans recognition program, our department is continuing to consider the motion and is looking at how we can move forward to recognize the contributions of these individuals.

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HOUSING

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the government's watch, the dream of home ownership has been slipping away from thousands of Canadians. High prices, new mortgage rules, and new regulations all make home ownership less affordable. Now media reports say that the Liberal government is planning a new national building code that will impose higher costs on new homebuyers and existing homeowners as well.

When will the government realize that every time it adds a new regulation, it increases costs and reduces choices? When is the government going to stop punishing homebuyers?

Oral Questions

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, energy efficiency offers a significant opportunity to help realize Canada's obligations to address climate change while supporting economic growth and the health of Canadians.

We are working with our provincial and territorial partners to develop a model code for existing buildings by 2022. This code, which provinces and territories can adopt, would help guide energy efficiency improvements. Investments like our \$2-billion low-carbon economy fund will help support provincial and territorial energy efficiency projects that will generate clean growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We are working to build a clean energy future.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, imagine senior citizens who have worked hard their whole life and are ready to start the next chapter in retirement. Their kids have moved out, they are empty nesters, and they want to sell their houses and downsize. Now the Liberals want to make people pay more for that too. New building code requirements will require them to complete costly mandatory renovations when they sell their houses.

Why do the Liberals want to ruin the retirement plans of middle-class Canadian seniors?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, energy efficiency offers a significant opportunity to help realize Canada's obligations to address climate change while supporting economic growth and the health of Canadians. We are working with our provincial and territorial partners to modernize existing building codes by 2022. Investments like our \$2-billion low-carbon economy fund will help support provincial and territorial energy efficiency projects that will generate clean growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We are working to build a clean energy future by investing in innovation and delivering economic growth and clean jobs while protecting the environment.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our previous Conservative government created the recreational fisheries conservation partnership program, which improved the habitat of millions of fish. However, the Liberals are not accepting a single new application for this program and are thereby ignoring many worthwhile conservation efforts. This includes projects such as installing an aerator to improve the water quality in Killarney Lake located in my constituency.

Will the Liberals commit today to support Canada's recreational fishers and start accepting proposals for this very worthwhile program?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand in the House and share with members what we are doing for recreational fishers from coast to coast to coast.

In fact, I met with recreational fishers just this week, and I was able to share with them the fact that we are investing in coastal restoration. We are putting money into implementing the wild salmon policy. We are making sure that the Cohen commission recommendations are done, 32 last year, and up to 64 out of the 75 now.

For far too long, Canadians were tired of a government that took our oceans and waterways for granted. That is why this government is making sure that we protect the resource for the benefit of future generations.

* * *

• (1200)

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recognition of rights, and in particular the inherent right to self-government and the right to self-determination, is fundamental to advancing reconciliation in Canada.

Could the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs update the House on the concrete measures Canada is taking with its indigenous partners to promote self-determination and facilitate self-government?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that good governance and self-determination are the most important factors in a community's economic and social health.

This past summer, we signed the Agreement on the Cree Nation Governance, a nation-to-nation agreement based on our partnership and respect for the traditional Cree way of life. The agreement is an important step in expanding the governance system from the earlier agreement.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has taken Canada out of the fight against ISIS. It has eliminated the office of religious freedom. Now we learn that Canada's peacekeeping efforts are at an all-time low.

We know that in Iraq today, Christians are still being killed simply for their belief.

When will the Liberal government wake up to the plight of Christians in the Middle East and take concrete action towards stopping this genocide?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government stands for human rights around the world, and we stand for calling out human rights abuses. Our government takes allegations of all violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law seriously. We strongly condemn any and all action—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I do not know what it is about the parliamentary secretary, but I am having a hard time hearing him because of the noise. I want everyone to take a deep breath and allow the parliamentary secretary to give his answer.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, we strongly condemn any and all actions that violate international human rights. We have raised concerns directly with the Government of Iraq, both in Baghdad and here in Ottawa.

As Canada continues to re-engage on the international scene after 10 dark years, we will make sure that the protection of human rights and international law is a priority in all of our engagements.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these past few months, I have had the great opportunity to visit with many students and employers in my riding of Don Valley North through the Canada summer jobs program.

Even though summer has come to an end and students are back in the classroom, young Canadians across the country are continuing to look for ways to put their skills to use, and learn new ones in the workplace.

Could the minister update the House on other ways that we are supporting students gaining skills and work experience throughout the school year?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Don Valley North for his incredible advocacy for young people in his riding and all across Canada.

As a former nuclear chemist, he knows that Canada's prosperity depends on young Canadians getting the skills and experience they need to prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

We have listened to students and to post-secondary institutions, and that is why we are creating up to 60,000 new paid student work placements over the next five years. That is 60,000 more work experiences that will put our young people on the path to success.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House once again to ask the Minister of Natural Resources about his plans to stop the pine beetle from attacking our forests.

Last year alone, the beetle increased tenfold. Even though science and research has been done, the beetle has moved from Jasper Park into central Alberta and is heading east. All of Canada's pine forests are at risk. We need financial assistance to cull the trees.

What is the Liberal government doing to stop this infestation?

• (1205)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the critical importance of forestry to the economies of eastern and western Canada as a source of jobs, prosperity, and opportunity.

We are acutely aware of the threat that forest pests, like the mountain pine beetle, emerald ash borer, and spruce budworm, pose to Canada's forests. In budget 2016, we invested \$87 million to support scientific research and infrastructure, including funding to combat destructive forest pests such as spruce budworm and mountain pine beetle.

We are working closely with our partners, provinces, universities, and industry, all with a common goal of finding a solution to this problem.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at yesterday's meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the minister sought to defend Netflix by trotting out the same old empty phrases, bogus arguments, and tired lines.

Instead of standing up for Quebec creators, the minister chose to go after any parliamentarian who had the gall to disagree with her. I have some news for the Minister of Canadian Heritage: contrary to what she seems to think, singling out Netflix for a tax break its rivals do not get is a tax policy.

Why the preferential treatment?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the concerns of the francophone cultural sector.

We want to reassure and remind the cultural community of the historic investments we have made to support francophone culture. We have made massive investments in arts and culture, over \$2.2 billion to be precise. We have reinvested in the Canada Media Fund to support French-language television and committed \$675 million to CBC/Radio-Canada. These investments have a tangible impact on our artists' lives.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member is still missing the point, but this is nothing new.

When we talk about ethics and integrity, the Prime Minister tells us that his ministers are following the rules. The \$200 fine paid by his Minister of Finance proves otherwise. The Prime Minister's trip to the Aga Khan also proves otherwise.

One of the problems is the legal framework around the rules. This limits the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's scope of action.

Instead of finding ways to get around the rules, why does the Prime Minister not agree to strengthen the legislation?

Points of Order

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times before, the Minister of Finance has the utmost respect for the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. He has always worked with her with the greatest transparency since he took office. He has followed her recommendations to ensure full compliance with the rules that govern us.

Last week, he announced that he would go further by divesting himself of his shares in Morneau Shepell and by placing all his shares in a blind trust so that he could continue serving Canadians as he has been so successfully doing for two years, with strong economic growth. Also, today, he announced the creation of 35,000 new jobs in Canada, including an additional 18,000 for Quebec in October.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's program to modernize the dairy industry is moving at two speeds: quickly when it comes to denying applications, and slowly when it comes to handing out money.

Last summer, surprisingly, the program shut down after seven days, but four months later, for the lucky few who were eligible, the money has yet to be paid out. The minister cannot blame Phoenix this time.

Does the minister's minion realize that the cost of materials has skyrocketed in four months and that his tardiness poses a real threat to projects?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is a strong proponent of supply management and supports producers and their families.

We are pleased to have invested \$350 million in the industry in order to modernize and innovate producers' and processors' facilities. Our government will continue to defend our supply management system.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance often talks about the Conservative government's record. In order to set the record straight for Canadians, I seek the consent of the House to table the following document from the Bank of Canada. It is a speech given by the Governor of the Bank of Canada, which reads: "...the country's economic prospects have improved since the crisis....In fact, coming out of the recession, Canada is a leader among the G-7 countries".

●(1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: No.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is the practice of this House that when members inadvertently misspeak they have an opportunity to correct the record. On October 31, the Minister of National Revenue stated there was no change with respect to the disability tax credit. Therefore, I would like to seek unanimous consent to table this letter where she clearly states there was a change.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Do we have unanimous consent to table this letter?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING ORDER 69.1—BILL C-63

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 69.1 in regard to omnibus bills. The Standing Order reads:

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.

I point your attention now to a recently introduced omnibus budget implementation act. The proposal was tabled in the House of Commons on October 27, 2017. That act combines a number of unrelated provisions that were not included in the original budget presentation. The long title is the first clue: A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures. The summary notes indicate that the bill also implements a GST/HST measure announced on September 8, 2017. Other items include the income tax amendments, part 1, related to farmers and fishers selling to cooperatives; part 3's amendments to the Excise Act related to beer made from concentrate; division 5 of part 5, which amends the Bank of Canada Act concerning loans and advances made to members of the Canadian Payments Association; division 11 of part 5, which makes a series of amendments to the Judges Act; and division 13 of part 5, which amends the Financial Administration Act in respect of payments to discharge a debt.

Returning to the original Standing Order I cited at the outset, you, as Speaker, have the ability to break this bill into separate bills if its various provisions concern unrelated matters and if they are then linked in the same bill. Clearly, the matters I have just mentioned, their merits or demerits notwithstanding, are not directly related to each another. For example, the Judges Act is not related to the Financial Administration Act, the Judges Act is not related to the Excise Act, and the Bank of Canada Act is not related directly to the Income Tax Act. Therefore, the bill combines a number of different acts in one single bill, which gives you, Mr. Speaker, the power to separate the various component parts of the act.

Points of Order

In fairness to the government, there is an exception to that role. Under 69.1 of the Standing Orders, budget implementation roles can be excluded from the Speaker's power to divide a bill that contains numerous unrelated parts. Standing Order 69.1(2) reads:

The present Standing Order shall not apply if the bill has as its main purpose the implementation of a budget and contains only provisions that were announced in the budget presentation or in the documents tabled during the budget presentation.

I have just finished listing at least five provisions that were included in the omnibus budget implementation act but were not included in the original budget presentation. Therefore, this BIA and its component parts are not exempt from the Speaker's authority to divide into separate bills matters that are unrelated to one other but, nevertheless, were introduced as one piece of legislation.

• (1215)

There is another matter that was included in the budget implementation bill that was not fully included in the original budget presentation. I refer now to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. As I said at the outset, the Standing Order calls for bills to be separated into their component parts if a provision in a budget implementation bill had not been fully present in the original budget presentation. Now, the budget presentation did provide for funding for the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. However, it did not provide for the same amount of money that was later included in the budget implementation bill.

Let me quote directly from the presentation the minister made on March 22, 2017:

Budget 2017 proposes to invest \$256 million over five years for Canada to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

It was \$256 million. That was the provision the government made for the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in the budget presentation of last March. However, the legislation introduced just last week has a different and much larger provision. It provides for an amount of not more than \$375 million U.S., which equals \$480 million Canadian.

The word "provision" comes from the root word "provide". The original budget presentation would provide \$256 million. This omnibus budget bill provides \$480 million. In other words, there is roughly \$230 million provided in the budget implementation bill that was not provided in the original budget presentation. In other words, the BIA, the omnibus budget bill, attempts to provide something that was not provided for at the outset. Therefore, it is not exempt from your powers, Mr. Speaker, to divide the bill up in separate component parts so that the measures can be debated on their separate merits.

The government has introduced a very complex web of legislative amendments to the statutes of Canada that are unrelated and disconnected, all in one single bill, after having promised to end omnibus bills forever. The government also gave you, Mr. Speaker, the power to end those omnibus bills for them. I described how you can use that power and why it would be appropriate to do so in this particular case.

Let me say, on behalf of the official opposition, that while we are concerned that the government has broken its promise to end all omnibus bills, we are not particularly troubled by the fact that some of these measures are being voted on together.

It is your power to divide them up, but it is not necessarily of substantive importance to us that all of them be divided up, if the Speaker were to find that it would be in the interest of efficiency for them to be voted on and debated together. Some of these measures would not be troublesome to marry into one such vote and one such debate, except one. That one is the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. It is particularly important, and its quiet and surreptitious inclusion in this bill is particularly concerning for multiple reasons.

First, in less than half a year, the amount the government wants to spend on this initiative has gone up by almost 100%. Originally it was \$250 million; now it is almost half a billion dollars. That is an eye-popping increase in an expense for a new initiative on which no Canadian government has ever spent money in the past. Less than a year ago, the Government of Canada was committed to spending zero on this initiative. Then it was \$250 million, and now, quietly, that amount has been raised to half a billion dollars.

• (1220)

The second reason why this is particularly objectionable to the official opposition is this. The government is behind on all of its commitments to build infrastructure in Canada. Now it is proposing to spend Canadian tax dollars to build infrastructure in another continent. In fact, the legislation that the government proposes is explicit, that the purpose is to build infrastructure in a different continent than our own.

Let me read directly from the bill that the government tabled. It states:

The purpose of the Bank shall be to: (i) foster sustainable economic development, create wealth and improve infrastructure connectivity in Asia by investing in infrastructure and other productive sectors;

It then defines Asia not to include Canada, it goes without saying, which means that this half billion dollars will be paid by Canadians but will not be spent to their benefit. This very unusual use of infrastructure money is worthy of some debate on the floor of this House of Commons, particularly given the fact that, prior to even implementing the initiative, it is almost 100% over budget.

Therefore, we call upon you to exercise the legitimate authorities vested in you by the Standing Orders, in particular Standing Orders 69.1(1) and 69.1(2), to divide the Asian infrastructure bank from the rest of the budget implementation act, so that Canadians can witness a debate in this chamber on the merits of sending a half a billion dollars to build infrastructure in Asia, and on the merits of giving loans and loan guarantees to extremely wealthy titans of finance on the world stage, all at the expense of Canadian taxpayers.

So far, the House has had no stand-alone debate on this massive new and unprecedented expenditure. The government seems to want to keep it that way by burying this measure at the back of a very large omnibus bill, making no mention of it either in the minister's original speech in the House of Commons or in subsequent ministerial declarations that we have been able to find in the *Hansard* record. It is clear that the government did not want this measure to even be noticed. That is why it was buried, almost like a secret, at the back of the bill.

You now have the authority to remedy that problem, to separate out this section, and allow Canadians to debate this half-billion dollar expenditure on the floor of the House of Commons and at committee, and then to exercise the will of all of our constituents by voting on it here in this chamber and then later in the other place.

Therefore, we call upon you, Speaker, to exercise the powers vested in you in the Standing Orders to uphold the principle of no taxation without representation. That is, Canadians must have the ability to rely on Parliament to approve every expenditure that the government taxes fund, independently and separately from other matters, and to instill a sense of integrity in the budget process so that all Canadians can have confidence in how their money is spent.

●(1225)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to thank the hon. member for his intervention. We will take it under advisement.

We have another intervention on this. The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I listened with great interest to the hon. member from Carleton.

The NDP is also concerned about the abusive use of omnibus bills that we have been seeing from this government over the past two years, despite the promises that it made. As a result, we have an interest in speaking to this point of order. I simply want to tell you that we will do so as soon as possible.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would like to thank the members for their comments. We will take what they said under advisement and come back to this issue at a later date.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND CANADIAN FORCES OMBUDSMAN

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, two copies of the 2016-17 annual report of the Office of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman.

* * *

[*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 14 petitions.

Routine Proceedings

PETITIONS

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. Jim Egliniski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition calling upon Parliament to permit Christians to exercise their religious beliefs and conscience rights, both in their private and public acts, without coercion, restraint, or discrimination, by amending section 241 of the Criminal Code, and to enact a policy to provide a review of any new legislation that may be brought forward by the government to ensure it does not impinge upon the religious rights of Christians, in accordance with the Canadian Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

* * *

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. 1125 to 1128, 1133, 1134, 1144, and 1148.

[*Text*]

Question No. 1125— **Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to the government's plan to legalize marijuana: (a) will it be a violation of the Criminal Code for 18 or 19 year old students to bring marijuana to high school; and (b) what specific measures is the government taking to prevent the usage of marijuana by high school students?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Government of Canada's position is clear: youth should not have any amount of cannabis. Under Bill C-45, there would be no legal means for a young person under 18 years of age to obtain recreational cannabis. C-45 would also, for the first time, make it a criminal offence to sell cannabis to a minor and create significant penalties for those who engage youth in related offences.

As such, if a person is convicted of selling or distributing cannabis or possessing it for the purpose of sale or distribution, in or near a school, on or near school grounds, or in or near any other public place usually frequented by young persons under 18 years of age, such would be an aggravating factor that the court must consider upon sentencing of the individual.

Furthermore, under the proposed cannabis act, provinces and territories, under their own authorities, would be able to set additional restrictions and local requirements related to cannabis. Additionally, school boards would continue to have the ability to set their own policies in relation to the possession of cannabis on school grounds.

With regard to part (b), protecting the health and safety of Canadians is a top priority for our government. This commitment recognizes that the current approach to cannabis is not working. In 2015, the highest use of cannabis in Canada was among youth, 21%, and young adults, 30%.

Routine Proceedings

The proposed cannabis act contains a number of specific provisions designed to help keep cannabis out of the hands of children.

The cannabis act would establish serious criminal penalties with maximum sentences of 14 years in jail for those who sell or provide cannabis to young persons under the age of 18 years, and new offences and strict penalties for those who exploit youth to commit a cannabis offence. The provinces and territories would have the flexibility to raise the minimum age should they wish to do so.

The law would prohibit advertising, sponsorships, endorsements, or other forms of promotion that might encourage young people to use cannabis, and serious penalties for those who break the law, especially those who advertise to youth. The cannabis act, like the Tobacco Act, would also prohibit any products, promotion, packaging, or labelling that could be appealing to youth. The government would moreover be allowed to make regulations that would require such things as childproof packaging and a universal THC symbol.

Penalties for violating these prohibitions would include a fine of up to \$5 million or three years in jail or both. The government has been regularly engaging with provinces and territories to encourage them to create administrative offences, a ticketing regime, to prohibit youth from possessing any amount of cannabis, similar to what is now done for alcohol and tobacco. This approach would provide police with the authority to seize cannabis from youth with small amounts.

In addition, the government is undertaking a broad public education campaign to inform Canadians of all ages about the new proposed legislation, including the penalties for providing cannabis to youth, and the risks involved with consuming cannabis. This public education campaign is focused on helping young Canadians make the best possible choices about their future and will help them to understand the risks and consequences of, for example, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. To that end, the government has committed, through budget 2017, \$9.6 million to public education and awareness to inform Canadians, particularly young people, of the risks of cannabis use, as well as surveillance activities. The government will monitor patterns of and perceptions around cannabis use amongst Canadians, especially youth, on an annual basis through the Canadian Cannabis Survey to inform and refine public education and awareness activities and to mitigate the risks and harms of use. This public education and awareness campaign will be a continuing priority for the government.

Question No. 1126—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to lifetime non-disclosure orders for employees of the Privy Council Office, since January 1, 2016: (a) how many employees were subject to lifetime non-disclosure orders; (b) what are the titles of each employee subject to such an order; and (c) what is the maximum penalty for breaking the lifetime non-disclosure order?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2016, 79 employees of the Privy Council Office have been permanently bound to secrecy under the Security of Information Act. The maximum penalty for contravention of the act is no more than 14 years in prison. With regard to the titles of each employee subject to such an order, this information cannot be provided. In processing

parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles of the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and this information has been withheld on these grounds for security reasons.

Question No. 1127—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to government expenditures and payments for out of court legal settlements: (a) what is the total amount paid out between June 15, 2017, and July 15, 2017; (b) how many payments were made during the time period referred to in (a); and (c) what is the largest single payment made during the time period referred to in (a)?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this information is protected by settlement privilege.

Question No. 1128—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to the new citizenship guide from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada titled "Discover Canada": (a) why were the warnings against female genital mutilation removed; (b) why were the warnings against honour killings removed; (c) what specific actions is the government taking to ensure that new Canadians are made aware that female genital mutilation and honour killings have no place in Canadian society; and (d) what is the title of the individual who made the decision to remove the warnings in (a) and (b) from the citizenship guide?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b), there is no new citizenship study guide, therefore no content has been added or removed.

The citizenship study guide is being revised to produce a product that is balanced, accessible to all readers, and reflects Canada's diversity. It will cover subject matter that would be included in the citizenship test that applicants take when they apply for citizenship, as outlined in the citizenship regulations.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is consulting a wide range of stakeholders over the next several months to ensure the revised content of the guide represents all Canadians, including women, indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2 individuals, minority populations, francophones, and Canadians with disabilities.

As consultations progress, the content of the guide continues to evolve to incorporate ongoing feedback. As such, given the new guide is still under development, the content to date should not be considered final or complete.

With regard to part (c), the revised citizenship study guide will highlight the importance of Canada's democratic institutions and principles. It will emphasize the importance of obeying the law as a responsibility of citizenship and that gender-based violence is illegal. It will be representative of all Canadians and their rights, including women, minority populations, francophones, Canadians with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

With regard to part (d), no such decisions have been made.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1133—Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to the proposed tax increases for small businesses announced by the Minister of Finance on July 18, 2017: (a) prior to the announcement, what consultations, if any, were done with the Canadian Medical Association regarding the proposed tax increases; (b) what studies has the government conducted on the impact of the tax increases on doctors, particularly in rural areas; (c) broken down by province, what is current estimated number of doctors per capita; and (d) broken down by province, what does the government anticipate will be the projected number of doctors per capita in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020, (iv) 2021, if the tax increases are implemented?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when analyzing the tax system, the department relies on a range of approaches and information sources to develop an in-depth understanding of potential issues, including the statistical analysis of tax return data, the monitoring of the tax literature, and consultations with the Canada Revenue Agency, academics, tax professionals, and other stakeholders.

When the analysis identifies a need for action, the department develops options and assesses these options against a range of criteria, such as their impact on the fairness of the tax system, on economic efficiency, and on the ease of administration of the tax system.

This process was followed in the development of the three proposals that were unveiled on July 18, 2017. Draft legislation was also released for two of the proposals and stakeholders were invited to comment on the proposals and the draft legislation. Feedback was received from many Canadians, including small business owners, doctors, professionals, and farmers and fishers. The department consulted with the Canadian Medical Association prior to July 18 on tax planning strategies involving the multiplication of the small business deduction, which have interactions with the strategies addressed in the July 18 consultation paper.

On October 16, 2017, the Government announced that the small business tax rate would be reduced to 10% as of January 1, 2018, and then to 9% as of January 1, 2019. To support this tax reduction, the Government also announced that it would be moving forward with its plan to ensure that private corporations are not used to obtain unintended tax benefits.

The department does not prepare estimates of the number of physicians in Canada. Such information can be obtained from the Canadian Institute for Health Information and the Canadian Medical Association.

Question No. 1134—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to the attendance by officials from the Department of Finance to the Liberal caucus retreat in Kelowna, British Columbia in September, 2017: (a) what information was presented to the Liberal caucus; (b) how many officials attended the retreat and what are their titles; and (c) what are all travel costs related to the retreat incurred by the Department of Finance, including (i) total cost, (ii) accommodation, (iii) meals and per diems, (iv) airfare, (v) other expenses?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no officials from the Department of Finance attended the Liberal caucus retreat in Kelowna, British Columbia in September, 2017.

Question No. 1144—Mr. Alexander Nuttall:

With regard to meetings and correspondence between the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, or his office and Dream Unlimited Corporation,

formerly known as Dundee Developments, since November 5, 2015: (a) what are the details of all meetings including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) participants, (iv) topics or agenda items, (v) file number of any related briefing material and; and (b) what are the details of all correspondence including (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) file number, (v) title, (vi) topic?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to meetings and correspondence between the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, or his office, and Dream Unlimited Corporation, formerly known as Dundee Developments, since November 5, 2015, Infrastructure Canada has nothing to report.

Question No. 1148—Mr. Robert Aubin:

With regard to the consultations led by the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie on renewing Canada's international assistance: (a) what is the total of expenses incurred for the consultations, including the breakdown by (i) cost of airfare, (ii) cost of food and beverages, (iii) cost of accommodations, (iv) cost of travel expenses, (v) cost of photos, (vi) details of each contract or expenditure, (vii) supplier, (viii) amount, (ix) contract details and length, (x) date, (xi) number of photos or images purchased, (xii) where the photos or images were used (internet, bulletin boards, etc.), (xiii) advertising campaign description, (xiv) contract file number; (b) what is the total of exempt political staff expenditures, broken down by (i) cost of airfare, (ii) cost of food and beverages, (iii) cost of accommodations; (c) what is the total number of consultations, broken down by (i) number of individuals, (ii) number of organizations, (iii) number of countries; (d) who was on the delegation, other than reporters and security personnel; (e) what was the title of each member of the delegation; (f) what were the contents of the Minister's itinerary; (g) what are the details of each meeting attended by the Minister during this trip, including (i) date, (ii) summary or description, (iii) attendees, including the organizations and the list of their representatives, (iv) topics discussed, (v) location; and (h) what are the details of all agreements signed during this trip?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a), (b), (d), (e), (f), and (g), no international assistance review, IAR, allocation was created by the department. Teams at headquarters and at missions abroad absorbed the consultation costs within their respective budgets.

GAC undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. GAC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

With regard to part (c), for details regarding the total number of completed consultations, please refer to the following link:

http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/what_we_heard-que_nous_entendu.aspx?lang=eng.

Following the 2016 international assistance review consultation process, the department published the "What we heard" report. This report can be found at the following link:

http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/what_we_heard-que_nous_entendu.aspx?lang=eng.

Routine Proceedings

[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 a revised response to Question No. 1045, originally tabled on June 25, 2017, and the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1122 to 1124, 1129 to 1132, 1135 to 1137, 1139 to 1143, and 1145 to 1147 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1045— **Mr. Blake Richards:**

With regard to sponsored social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) by the government, including those put out by agencies, Crown Corporations, and other government entities, since November 4, 2015: (a) what amount has been spent on sponsored posts; (b) what is the description and purpose of each sponsored post; and (c) for each sponsored post, what are the details, including (i) date, (ii) analytic data, views and reach, (iii) details of demographics targeted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1122— **Ms. Christine Moore:**

With regard to the Skills Link program and the calls for proposals during the summer of 2016: (a) what is the total number of projects in the two streams (the regular stream and the innovation stream) submitted as part of the call for proposals for the 2016 Skills Link program; (b) what is the total number of projects in the two streams submitted as part of the 2016 Skills Link program in Quebec; (c) what is the total number of projects in the two streams submitted as part of the 2016 Skills Link program in the constituency of Abitibi—Témiscamingue; (d) what was the total amount budgeted for the entire Skills Link program associated with the 2016 call for proposals; (e) what was the total budget amount granted to the 2016 call for proposals for Quebec; (f) what was the total budget amount granted to the 2016 call for proposals for Abitibi—Témiscamingue; (g) what is the residual budget amount (the funds that have still not been allocated) for the Skills Link program; (h) what is the nature (source, deadlines) of the budget envelope for the Skills Link program; (i) how many employees are assigned to analyze the innovation stream of the Skills Link program; (j) how many projects from the two streams associated with the 2016 call for proposals were approved in Canada, and what were the amounts granted to these projects; (k) how many projects from the two streams were rejected; (l) how many projects from the innovation stream are still waiting for approval; (m) how many projects from the two streams for the 2016 call for proposals were approved in Quebec, and what were the amounts granted to these projects; (n) how many projects from the two streams for the 2016 call for proposals were approved in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, and what were the amounts granted to these projects; (o) how many projects under the Skills Link program (by program stream) have been granted in the constituency of Abitibi—Témiscamingue since 2007; and (p) what were the amounts granted in the Abitibi—Témiscamingue riding as part of the Skills Link program (by year and program stream) since 2007?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1123— **Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to directives provided to Canada Border Services Agency front line employees at land crossings, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all directives provided to front line employees, including for each the (i) date, (ii) direction given to employees, (iii) title of the individual who issued the directive, (iv) file number, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1124— **Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to the selling of arms by Canadian based companies to Azerbaijan: (a) what are the details of all sales which the government has permitted since

December 1, 2015, including for each the (i) date, (ii) types of weapons or equipment involved, (iii) value of sale, (iv) details of relevant briefing notes, including file numbers; (b) what is the government's response to the concerns raised by the Armenian community, including the Canadian-Armenian Political Affairs Committee and the Armenian National Committee of Canada to the sales; and (c) does the government have any guarantee that Canadian arms sold to Azerbaijan won't be used against Armenians and, if so, what are the specifics of any such guarantees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1129— **Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to the deletion of social media posts on government websites, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) how many posts were deleted; and (b) what was the reason for each deletion in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1130— **Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:**

With regard to documents concerning third party activities during elections, including documents concerning the influence of foreign organizations or other entities on third parties or their activities, held by either the Privy Council Office or Elections Canada since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all memorandums on the subject, including for each (i) sender, (ii) recipient, (iii) date, (iv) title, (v) subject matter and summary, (vi) file number; and (b) what are the details of all studies received, reviewed, analyzed, or otherwise consulted regarding the subject, including for each the (i) date, (ii) author, (iii) title, (iv) findings, (v) file number, (vi) website location where findings are available online, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1131— **Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:**

With regard to individuals seeking asylum after crossing the border illegally or irregularly: how many such individuals have sought asylum since October 1, 2016, broken down by month and by province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1132— **Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to official government roundtables held since October 1, 2016: what are the details, including for each the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) number of attendees, (iv) list of government staff in attendance, including Ministers and their staff, (v) topic or purpose of roundtable, (vi) file numbers of relevant briefing materials, (vii) costs related to each roundtable, including an itemized breakdown of costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1135— **Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to expenditures on accommodation expenses incurred by the Prime Minister's Protective Detail section of the RCMP outside of Canada during December 2016 and January 2017: what are the details of all such expenditures, including (i) name of hotel, resort, or other accommodation, (ii) vendor, if different from (i), (iii) dates of accommodation, (iv) amount, (v) daily room rate, (vi) contract file number, (vii) location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1136— **Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:**

With regard to the advertising or decorating on federal vehicles including customized paint jobs, decals, or wrapping, since January 1, 2016, what are the details of each such expenditure, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity, including for each the (i) total amount spent, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount of contract, (iv) date, (v) number of vehicles, (vi) description of work completed, (vii) description of campaign associated with expenditure, (viii) file number of contract?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1137—Mr. Luc Berthold:**

With regard to the camp for asylum seekers or “irregular” border crossers set up by the government near Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle: (a) what is the occupancy of the camp, as of September 18, 2017; (b) what is the occupancy capacity of the camp; (c) what are the total costs associated with the setup of the camp; (d) what is the itemized breakdown of the costs referred to in (c); (e) what is the monthly operating cost for the camp; (f) what is the itemized breakdown of the monthly operating costs; (g) how many government employees work at the camp, broken down by department; (h) how long does the government plan on keeping the camp open; and (i) when is the anticipated closing date of the camp?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1139— Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to exposures or potential exposures to fentanyl by Correctional Service Canada guards, since December 1, 2015: (a) how many exposures have occurred; (b) what is the breakdown of reported exposures, broken down by (i) month, (ii) location or institution; and (c) how many of the exposures required medical treatment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1140—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to the storage of classified or protected documents since September 19, 2016, and broken down by department or agency: (a) how many instances have occurred where it was discovered that classified or protected documents were left out or stored in a manner which did not meet the requirements of the security level of the documents; (b) how many of these instances occurred in the offices of ministerial exempt staff, including staff of the Prime Minister, broken down by ministerial office; and (c) how many employees have lost their security clearance as a result of such infractions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1141— Mr. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, and others, operated by departments, agencies, crown corporations, other government entities, including Ministerial accounts, since November 4, 2015, and broken down by account and by incident: (a) how many individuals were blocked; (b) what was the reason for each account being blocked; (c) what was the handle or name of each account which was blocked; and (d) what is the policy as it relates to blocking accounts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1142—Mr. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to sanctions against Venezuela and President Nicolas Maduro, since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the complete list of current sanctions which Canada has in place against Venezuela; (b) when did each sanction referred to in (a) come in to effect; (c) what specific action has the government taken to ensure that fair elections are held in Venezuela; (d) what specific action has the government taken to ensure or encourage the safety and free movement of opposition leaders in Venezuela; and (e) what are the details of any gifts given by the Canadian government or anyone representing the Canadian government to the Venezuelan government or its diplomats, including for each the (i) date, (ii) description, (iii) recipient, (iv) value?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1143—Mr. Alexander Nuttall:

With regard to car and driver services provided to employees of departments, agencies, or crown corporations, as of September 18, 2017, and excluding Ministers and other elected officials: (a) how many employees are entitled to a car and driver; and (b) what are the titles of all employees who are entitled to a car and driver?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1145— Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to the decision of Health Canada to issue a new decision on March 26, 2016, which imposed no terms and conditions on Apotex's Establishment

Licenses for products fabricated at Apotex Pharmachem India Private Limited and Apotex Research Private Limited: (a) what new information did Health Canada receive that led to the new decision; (b) what is the title of the individual who made the new decision; (c) what are the details of any briefing documents or dockets prepared in relation to Apotex Inc. since November 4, 2015, including for each the (i) date, (ii) title or subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number; (d) was the Minister or any member of her exempt staff lobbied by Apotex and, if so, was this issue discussed; and (e) what are the details of any meetings Health Canada had with Apotex Inc. since November 4, 2015, including for each the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) topics discussed, (iv) list of attendees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1146—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard social media expenditures since January 1, 2016, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of all expenditures for social media promotion, including the amount spent on likes and promoted tweets, promoted Facebook posts, or other promoted social media postings, including (i) amount, (ii) date of expenditure, (iii) topic of promoted material, (iv) names of social media platforms included, (v) file number of contract, (vi) vendor, (vii) advertising agency (or other type of agency) used, if different from vendor, (viii) start date of contract, (ix) end date of contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1147— Mr. Robert Aubin:

With regard to the replacement of VIA Rail's aging fleet: (a) how many engines and cars will be retired in (i) 2017, (ii) 2018, (iii) 2019, (iv) 2020, (v) 2021, (vi) 2022, (vii) 2023, (viii) 2024; (b) which rail lines will be cut; (c) has the impact on service levels been evaluated; (d) what impact will these retirements have on VIA Rail's service levels; (e) what plans have been put in place for replacing engines and cars; (f) have directives concerning fleet renewal been taken and, if so, what are they and what is the timeline; (g) is there any report about train incidents and stoppages due to age and, if so, when did VIA Rail finalize this report; (h) will the report in (g) be made public; (i) when will the report in (g) be made public; (j) is there an investment plan for the purchase of new cars and engines to replace aging equipment and, if so, what is the timeline; and (k) will the detailed plan be made public?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1230)

[Translation]

TOBACCO ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has no complaints about Bill S-5 and supports it at second reading. The purpose of the bill is to create a new legislative framework for regulating vaping products and implement plain and standardized packaging.

Government Orders

We have long called for effective, concrete anti-tobacco measures to discourage young people from starting to smoke. The NDP is clearly a leader on this front. We have long called for plain packaging and a regulatory framework for vaping products.

In 2009, the former health critic, the member for Winnipeg North, introduced a bill to close loopholes in the Tobacco Act by tightening requirements for the labelling, packaging, and sale of flavoured tobacco products. In the last election campaign, we promised to introduce anti-smoking measures, increase funding for anti-smoking strategies, implement plain packaging, and ban all flavoured tobaccos.

We also talked about the need to initiate a federal review to strengthen Canada's tobacco control legislation and strategy, which expires in 2018. It is clear that our demands were heard because it is now illegal to use flavourings and additives in tobacco products, even though the Conservatives did not weigh in on the tobacco issue during the 2015 election campaign. We also hope that the government will support this bill, and that we will be able to work together to implement it and improve the health of Canadians.

According to the Canadian Community Health Survey published in March 2017, over 5 million Canadians aged 12 and older smoke either daily or occasionally. Over 18% of Quebec residents smoke, exceeding the national average. In response to the 2015 report of the Standing Committee on Health, this bill would effectively combat smoking and vaping, particularly among youth. This would have a positive impact on Canadians' health, especially lung health.

Smoking is the leading cause of disease and premature death in Canada. The annual health care cost per smoker in Canada is over \$3,000, which adds up to \$17 billion a year. If passed, this bill could save money by reducing smoking rates in Canada. Studies show that people with a psychiatric disorder are two to four times more likely to smoke than the general population. More than 80% of those with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder are smokers.

There is no doubt that tobacco causes serious illnesses and a number of problems that can lead to death. One Canadian dies from tobacco-related illness every 14 minutes. That is unacceptable. This is why we are supporting this bill and why we are urging the other parties to do the same. Anti-smoking groups rightly point out that the longer we wait to pass a bill like this one, the more people will start to smoke and the more people will die from the consequences of tobacco use.

This bill would rename the Tobacco Act as the "tobacco and vaping products act". Vaping is a more recent problem, and we must regulate the use of these products. Vaping products are indeed less harmful than cigarettes. According to a study by Public Health England, e-cigarettes are estimated to be 95% less harmful than tobacco and could help smokers stop smoking. E-cigarettes are the most well-known and most popular vaping product. They first appeared in Canada in 2007.

Although there are regulations in place, it is difficult to restrict access to e-cigarettes. There is no evidence as of yet indicating that e-cigarettes encourage young people and non-smokers to start consuming nicotine. However, we still lack information on these and other vaping products, since they are new to the market. These

products and their different flavours may seem enticing, especially to young people.

● (1235)

The 2015 Canadian tobacco, alcohol and drugs survey found that nearly 15% of Canadians aged 15 and older have already tried e-cigarettes, an increase over the percentage reported in 2013.

If this bill is passed, the ban on tobacco sales to persons under the age of 18 will also be extended to vaping products, and it will also be illegal to promote vaping products by referencing specific flavour descriptions or ingredients that suggest health benefits, because this would be considered false advertising.

It will also be illegal to promote vaping products to young people using tobacco brands or information-based advertising. Labels on these products must carry warnings regarding their nicotine content and the health problems they can cause.

These measures are less restrictive than those applied to tobacco, since these products are considered less harmful for now. However, the United States Food and Drug Administration has grouped vaping products and tobacco products together under one regulation. It is vital that vaping products do not become a new source of nicotine addiction, that they are used only to reduce the harmful effects of smoking, and that young people's access to them is restricted. That is why this bill creates a regulatory framework for these products.

Linda Bauld, a British cancer prevention research expert, said that free stop smoking services are the most effective way to quit, but she recognized that e-cigarettes may help many people stop smoking.

The only downside to this bill is the fact that vaping product manufacturers will be able to promote their products everywhere, which is bound to attract young teens. Some provinces and territories, including Quebec, have different, stricter rules about this. In Quebec, vaping products can be advertised only in newspapers and magazines aimed at adults, not children. Bill S-5 will have to harmonize with provincial laws on that score.

Vaping products may help reduce tobacco consumption, but it is important to remember that using them does not break the smoking habit. Maison Alcôve, a well-known addiction treatment centre in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, made it clear that the only way a smoker will stop smoking is by breaking those habits, those daily rituals. Smoking an e-cigarette is still smoking. Using vaping products to reduce tobacco consumption has limitations we need to consider.

Government Orders

If this bill passes, manufacturers would be required to submit to the Minister of Health information on sales and the ingredients in the vaping products, to ensure follow-up. The 2015 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health regarding vaping contained 14 recommendations, including one to create a legislative framework for vaping products. This bill follows on those recommendations.

Bill S-5 would also require plain packaging for tobacco products, a requirement Australia enacted in 2012, followed by France and the U.K. in 2016. The NDP wants us to adopt the strictest packaging system in the world in order to combat the effects of tobacco on the health of Canadians. This measure is also being considered by many countries such as South Africa, Sweden, and Singapore. It is one of the measures we promised to implement during the 2015 election campaign.

Plain packaging is an effective way to reduce tobacco use, dissuade young people from smoking in the first place, and limit exposure to second-hand smoke, which can have an adverse effect on non-smokers. Plain packaging would also help standardize the appearance and format of all tobacco products and get rid of logos and trademarks. The colours on the packaging would be neutral and health warnings would always be included. Plain packaging has been proven to make health warnings more effective.

● (1240)

Canadians will therefore be better informed of the health risks of tobacco and will be more aware that it is a dangerous product.

Just look at the impact that plain packaging had in Australia and you can see that this measure is essential to reducing tobacco use. Australia experienced the largest-ever decline after plain packaging was introduced. According to David Hammond, from the University of Waterloo, plain packaging resulted in more than 100,000 fewer Australian smokers. If plain packaging were to have the same impact in Canada, that would translate to 190,000 fewer smokers. These figures were taken from 100 different scientific studies. Scientific evidence shows that plain packaging would help significantly lower the number of smokers.

Fourteen studies on the impact of plain packaging in Australia were published in a *British Medical Journal* supplement. All of these studies found that plain packaging makes cigarettes less attractive to young people, and it did not lead to increased use of tobacco or contraband tobacco. Instead, the initiative pushed smokers to try to stop. Plain packaging makes tobacco less appealing.

According to research carried out in the Australian state of Victoria, smokers perceive plain-packaged cigarettes to be lower in quality and therefore less satisfying. As a result, they are more likely to consider quitting. Tobacco packages are currently designed to be appealing and eye-catching to make consumers forget that tobacco is a deadly and addictive product. I agree with Rob Cunningham, a senior policy analyst for the Canadian Cancer Society, who said that it is wrong for an addictive, deadly product like tobacco to be marketed in packages that are designed to be attractive. This is clearly not normal.

This bill would put an end to this practice by introducing plain packaging requirements. This measure has received the support of

many organizations and associations, such as the Canadian Coalition for Action on Tobacco, a group with many members who specialize in the issue of tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. The coalition's representatives provided a committee with a document demonstrating that plain packaging has the support of more than 340 organizations across the country. A coalition of over 200 Quebec organizations, including the City of Montreal and the Quebec division of the Canadian Cancer Society, has also expressed support for plain and standardized packaging. This shows that this measure is universally supported.

Some people might be concerned about the problem of counterfeiting plain packaging. We can look to Australia for an example, where neither the Australian border services agency nor the tobacco industry identified any counterfeiting problems since plain packaging was introduced. Investigations even found the opposite, that is, fewer instances of counterfeit packaging of foreign brands. As for the concerns of convenience store owners, once again using Australia as an example, studies found that Australian retailers quickly adapted to the new measures regarding plain packaging and that cigarette pack retrieval times did not really increase at all.

The bill also contains other provisions. Indeed, the Non-smokers' Health Act, which seeks to protect those in federally-regulated workplaces, will be amended to ensure that vaping products are subject to the same prohibitions as tobacco products.

Bill S-5 also harmonizes compliance and enforcement authorities with those found in other modern statutes, including the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act. These authorities would apply to both vaping and tobacco products. This would allow inspectors to use telewarrants and enter private property in carrying out an inspection, while accompanied by any person qualified to conduct the inspection. They could also require manufacturers to keep records, and stop or move any means of transportation for the purpose of inspection.

The Senate adopted 10 amendments to Bill S-5. Eight of them are largely technical. One amendment requires the Minister of Health to undertake a review of the operations of the act and to table a report in both houses of Parliament.

● (1245)

The final amendment would make menthol and cloves prohibited additives in all tobacco products.

Government Orders

I want to emphasize the fact that disadvantaged and marginalized populations are the easiest targets and, unfortunately, they tend to consume more tobacco than the general population. They are also more likely to suffer from tobacco-related diseases. For example, 40% of first nations people smoke, and 37% of people who are divorced or separated smoke. We can no longer allow these groups to be targeted. That is why we have to focus our anti-smoking programs and services on them. We have to implement strategic measures to improve social conditions and reduce the social and environmental factors that promote tobacco use. The end goal is to reduce the gap in health status between general and disadvantaged populations caused by serious tobacco-related diseases.

Canada needs to get with the times and look to laws passed in Australia, France, England, and other countries that have implemented plain packaging, prohibited the use of terms with positive connotations that encourage people to use tobacco, and regulated the use of e-cigarettes and vaping products.

Youth are also affected by this. Young people usually start smoking during adolescence. They are an easy target because they are easily influenced and find the packaging appealing.

This bill will make it possible to minimize tobacco use and nicotine addictions among young people. As a result, it will also reduce the percentage of smokers.

In 2014, at the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention, the World Health Organization urged its member countries to pay particular attention to young people and vulnerable groups when it comes to tobacco.

The main goal of this bill is to protect young people by discouraging them from smoking and by giving adults access to tobacco substitutes, such as vaping products. Passing this bill would be a major step forward in reducing tobacco use and would improve the health of Canadians.

It would be very unfortunate if this bill were not passed because we really need regulations and measures like the ones set out in Bill S-5 to successfully reduce tobacco use. However, we also need to make young people aware that they can choose not to use tobacco. We need to get them to think about what they are taking into their bodies and make sure that they know how to say no.

Parents also need to be educated about this, so that they stop trivializing smoking and realize that, yes, smoking is dangerous.

An organization in my riding called Satellite and one in Acton Vale called Horizon soleil are trying to educate younger kids about these issues beginning in elementary school. Education will have a stronger impact and must go hand in hand with passing Bill S-5 in order to effectively reduce the number of smokers in Canada.

I have discussed this bill with some of the stakeholder organizations in my riding, including the ones I just mentioned, Satellite and Horizon soleil, which start educating children in elementary school, as well as their teachers and parents, regarding the harmful effects of using tobacco and the importance of not using it as teenagers, and especially not in elementary school. We really need to have a strict law, because young people are drawn to these products, with their colourful packages and different flavours. We

need to make sure they do not ever start smoking. We all know people in our lives who want to stop using tobacco. We know how hard it is. We need to focus on prevention so that they do not start using tobacco.

As I was saying in my speech, I have spoken with stakeholders and the director of Maison l'alcôve, a very reputable addiction prevention centre in my riding. They were saying how hard it is to address this problem because it is a matter of breaking daily habits.

My NDP colleagues and I would like this bill to be passed.

● (1250)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. Eight provinces have passed legislation on vaping products.

I have a question for my colleague. Could she elaborate on the importance of federal leadership on vaping products and the importance of this bill for providing uniform protection to Canadians?

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, again, as in many cases, the provinces provided the impetus by passing legislation well before the federal government did anything.

The federal government can absolutely play a leadership role by working with the provinces because it is important to ensure that the information gets out there. Provincial legislation can easily be adapted and passed by other provinces. The federal government can play a leadership role to ensure good communication.

However, we must ensure that our federal legislation harmonizes with provincial legislation and that it respects provincial jurisdictions. The provinces that have already legislated on the matter were the precursors. The federal government has to make its own contribution by showing leadership and ensuring good communication.

At some point, we have all spoken with organizations that are having a hard time, that do not have the resources to ensure that information flows freely across Canada and that smoking cessation groups are mobilized. It is up to the federal government to show leadership in that area.

As I said in my speech, the fact that people in our society still smoke costs us millions of dollars each year. We know how much addiction treatment centres need support. Organizations that work to spread awareness in order to prevent addiction, like Satellite and Horizon Soleil in my riding, need our support. We must continue to act on this issue.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her speech.

On the one hand, the federal government is putting forward a bill to legalize marijuana consumption. On the other, it wants everyone to stop smoking. It wants to institute plain packaging for tobacco, but not for marijuana.

Government Orders

Does my colleague find this behaviour somewhat hypocritical?

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

Before I became an MP, I spent 10 years as the executive director of a community organization that provides housing for troubled youth. We helped youth ranging in age from 12 to 23. Living shoulder to shoulder with these youth, I saw and spoke with them every day. I came to realize that addictions, whether to cigarettes, alcohol or drugs, should not be taken lightly. I certainly think we need to make sure the marijuana legalization bill the Liberals want to pass does not normalize marijuana consumption.

Today's debate on this bill clearly shows that the use of such substances has harmful effects and leads to serious problems, even death. We need to send a consistent message with all of our measures. As MPs, our goal should be to improve the health and quality of life of our fellow Canadians. With every decision we make and every law we pass, we should be doing everything we can to achieve that goal.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with youth. I have had the privilege and honour of working with youth for 20 years, and one of the areas that has been a concern for me is nicotine addiction. The member mentioned that a number of times in her speech. I think the awareness-raising that has taken place in her riding is fantastic.

I wonder if she could elaborate on how she thinks this legislation would help protect youth from nicotine addiction.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, this bill sends a clear message to young people that e-cigarettes and other vaping products are not a better way to consume nicotine. They are tools to stop smoking. This needs to be clear to young people. They must not think that smoking an e-cigarette or a vaping product is better than smoking a cigarette. Our message must be clear: smoking an e-cigarette must be considered just as harmful as smoking a cigarette.

The other aspect is plain packaging. Studies have shown that attractive packaging is more enticing to young people. They are attracted to the products because the packaging is pretty or it highlights the different flavours.

There are a number of elements of this bill that will directly lower use among young people, or at least we hope so. Young people start to use these products when they are young, during adolescence, and that is when we need to act.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is actually Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. St-Hubert is the BBQ chicken place. I am just kidding around.

I would like to thank my colleague for her speech about something that is part of everyday life for so many people. Like many others, I too smoked for a long time. Fortunately, I never tried vaping, because personally, I think it can have the same hold on people as cigarettes.

As my colleague explained, a lot of people get excited about vaping and use their e-cigarettes as much as they would otherwise smoke cigarettes. I have seen plenty of excellent smoking cessation ads that depict people outside in -20 degree Celsius weather smoking a cigarette in the snow and cold. People still do that with e-cigarettes.

My colleague mentioned that she is in regular contact with two addiction prevention centres in her riding, so I can see that she knows whereof she speaks.

I would like her to comment on what we can do to prevent young people from thinking it is cool to vape. E-cigarettes come in a wide variety of styles, and it always surprises me that they are sold in certain types of places, often located near other businesses that I would not necessarily want my children patronizing. I think this issue is very important, and I hope I am not pushing my luck by talking about this.

I think this is a very relevant issue nowadays, and I would like my colleague to comment on it, given that she seems to know much more about it than I do.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I believe that this bill is a first step. There are still many questions that we do not have answers to. A lot more independent research must be done because we still do not know much about the health effects of e-cigarettes and related devices. The impact that the introduction of these nicotine products is having on young people and the efforts being made by prevention organizations are not yet sufficiently well documented.

Are their efforts making a difference? Are they taking the right approach? Are there better ways of doing things?

I asked the parliamentary secretary earlier if the government plans to provide more funding for independent research projects that will help us answer these questions and do more in the way of prevention.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I will be sharing my time with the member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

I am addressing Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. The possible implications of this bill are not conclusive but should be investigated by the Standing Committee on Health.

Our party strongly supports reducing smoking among all Canadians, especially our youth. This has been reflected in the numerous policies we put forward while in government.

Government Orders

Vaping, which is often considered a healthier alternative to smoking, is addressed in this bill. Although it may be healthier, nicotine is still an addictive substance, which requires public education on the associated risks and numerous regulations on access. Establishing plain packaging policies for tobacco products is one of the other primary components of this bill.

There is currently conflicting research on the market impacts of this bill, and therefore there should be thorough studies obtained. We need to ensure that this bill will in fact do what it is intended to do: lower smoking rates. We must also consider alternative tobacco products. Although some may be substantially healthier than smoking, the industry has been unable to demonstrate that or market these products to consumers, because they are considered tobacco products. This dilemma should be explored.

Smoking is harmful, and we are proud to support policies that reduce the rate of smoking in Canada. The previous Conservative government introduced numerous measures to curb smoking rates. These included larger, updated warning labels; the banning of flavours attractive to children; the removal of loopholes exploited by large tobacco companies; and heightened regulations on advertising. As a result of these policies, we were able to get Canada to an all-time low smoking rate, I am proud to say. Smoking rates for adolescent males dropped by almost 40%, and by 44% for adolescent females. We believe that these fortunate declines in smoking rates among adolescents were a direct result of these policies.

We strongly believe in the health and safety of all Canadians and further minimizing smoking, and vaping may be an opportunity to do so.

The safety of vaping has had minimal research. However, it is certainly a large improvement over conventional cigarettes. The smoke of conventional cigarettes contains significantly more dangerous substances, many of which are carcinogenic, including tar, benzene, cadmium, and arsenic. Although e-cigarettes have been found to contain levels of cancer-causing compounds, such as nitrosamines and formaldehyde, the level at which these chemicals are found are about a thousand times lower than they are in conventional cigarettes. Some studies have even proven that vaping has the ability to assist individuals in quitting smoking. Because some e-cigarettes come with assorted amounts of nicotine, individuals are able to gradually step down their intake and eventually quit completely.

With the legalization of nicotine in vaping products such as e-cigarettes, education and research are imperative. Nicotine is still a harmful substance, even if it is not smoked. According to Health Canada, nicotine increases heart rate and blood pressure, constricts blood vessels, lowers the body temperature of the extremities, alters brain waves, and relaxes muscles, not to mention that it is a highly addictive substance. With addictive substances, individuals are prone to withdrawal symptoms up to a month following quitting. These symptoms include dizziness and shakiness, headaches, anxiety and irritability, nervousness and restlessness, difficulty concentrating and sleeping, increased appetite, slight depression or feeling down, and increased cravings.

We need to ensure that sufficient education is done on the risks associated with nicotine. Most individuals know that smoking is hazardous and causes cancer, but the public must also understand the risks associated with other nicotine technologies.

● (1305)

The bill also intends to implement plain packaging for the tobacco industry, similar to what was employed by Australia. However, Australia had inconsistent results following their implementation in 2012. Essentially, it removed trademarks, logos, non-prescribed colours and graphics, allowing only the use of a brand name and a prescribed size and font. When Australia reviewed the policy in 2016 to determine if smoking rates had declined, some experts observed that there was nothing statistically significant to suggest that smoking rates had lowered as a result of applying plain packaging to tobacco products.

[*Translation*]

Although plain packaging has had a negligible impact on smoking rates, it has had a major impact on market dynamics. Since it is now more difficult to tell the difference between tobacco brands, the price of cigarettes has become more of a determining factor. There has been a marked drop in the sale of premium brands and a marked increase in the sale of lesser known brands. Many premium brands have been taken off the market and become obsolete.

According to some reports, contraband tobacco has also become more popular since plain packaging policies have come into effect. However, professionals in the field actively dispute this supposed rise in popularity because the reports in question were commissioned by tobacco companies and are most likely biased.

The Canadian Cancer Society does not believe that plain packaging has led to an increased use of contraband tobacco and it maintains that Canada's advanced tax stamp system prevents counterfeiting.

Technological advancements also make us reflect on what is included in the definition of tobacco products and vaping products. The bill seeks to recognize that vaping products are a healthier alternative to tobacco products. It also recognizes that there are some so-called tobacco products, at least technically, that the scientific community regards as healthier alternatives.

The Standing Committee on Health needs to examine the possibility of allowing businesses to promote those products to consumers, or at least to people who have no intention of quitting smoking.

Government Orders

The United Kingdom and New Zealand expanded the scope of their definition regarding healthier alternatives that could replace nicotine and tobacco use. A wide range of replacement products can be found all around the world, including heat-not-burn cigarettes, moist smokeless tobacco, and nicotine soluble and inhalable products.

We must look at the potential impact of the sale and promotion of these products to target groups. We must make sure that Canadians are familiar with alternatives to using tobacco, particularly people who have no desire to quit smoking. If they manage to adopt a healthier habit, this will likely help bring down health care costs in Canada, which could also increase efficiency.

[English]

There is a lot to consider with the bill and it is imperative that answers are provided to the unknowns I have just mentioned. Consequently, I suggest the bill to go to committee to receive a compressive examination. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to do our best at improving the health of Canadians. I believe the bill, with proper oversight, has the potential to do so.

• (1310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go to questions and comments, I want to remind the hon. members that when we refer to someone else in the House, we refer to them by their riding or title, not by their name.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the legislation before us today because the government is very genuine in its concern about the health of young people. I suspect all members of the chamber are concerned about the health and well-being of our young people. At times, we need to make changes to do what we can to prevent things such as the possibility of increased smoking. As a whole, our young people have done a fantastic job, even among themselves, in seeing the number of people smoking consistently going down over the years.

My question for the member is very similar to a question I asked one of her colleagues. One of the best ways to get fewer people smoking is to allow young people to educate themselves and, in particular, to educate their peers. I am interested in her thoughts on that.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, education is absolutely a very important part of any consideration we make in the House. I am asking for more consideration and more facts. We want to make decisions with the best possible information.

It is almost always impossible to have perfect information, but we would not buy a car without checking other types of vehicles, or look at the potential gas mileage of a vehicle, or know its safety record, or perhaps check the blue book value. We would not purchase homes without considering if they were in good neighbourhoods in which to raise our children. We would not choose spouses without knowing their values and whether we and our families could get along. We always need the best information possible when make these types of decisions.

I am asking exactly for that. We need more information about results. It is always excellent to do benchmarking, whether within our own nation or comparative with other nations. It is absolutely fantastic to do that. However, in regard to education, influencing our young people, and making decisions, we always want the best information and as much information as possible.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and especially for her efforts to speak French.

Earlier, I was thinking about e-cigarettes and wondering whether the members across the way feel the same way I do, that we must ensure that e-cigarette advertising does not lead anyone to believe that it might be a good idea to smoke e-cigarettes, and that they are a safe alternative to tobacco.

Would you agree to regulations prohibiting the use of a prestigious, internationally known tobacco trademark on such devices? Do you think it is imperative to regulate this alternative product, these e-cigarettes?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Again, I would remind the hon. member to address the chair and not other members directly.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I think that it is important for us to explore all our options and all the information on the existing products, the ones we are researching. As I said, it is always better to have more information than not, and I think that includes the various products and ways in which they would be marketed. I think it is good to do that kind of research.

As I said, it is always better to have more information than not in order to make the best decisions.

• (1315)

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add my thoughts to this important discussion on Bill S-5, an act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

One of the most important roles of any government is to protect the health and the safety of its citizens. As Conservatives, we have always taken this very seriously.

Government Orders

The previous Conservative government took a number of steps to improve the health of Canadians by funding and implementing various programs to reduce the smoking rate in Canada. Some of these initiatives included tightening advertising restrictions, banning flavoured cigarettes, which were seen as attractive to children, and introducing regulations for larger and updated warning labels. In fact, under the previous Conservative government, smoking rates among youth aged 15 to 19 decreased to 11%, representing the lowest rate recorded for this age group since Health Canada first reported smoking prevalence.

We invested over \$650 million to reduce the smoking rate across all ages and partnered with the Canadian Cancer Society, providing it \$5 million in partnership to launch the “Break it Off” tobacco cessation campaign to encourage young adults to quit smoking. These were positive concrete steps that were taken to help Canadians lead healthier lives, but Bill S-5 goes in a totally different direction.

As it is currently written, Bill S-5 plans to make two key changes to the Tobacco Act. The first change is to introduce a framework into the Tobacco Act that would regulate vaping products. The second key change is to implement plain packaging requirements for tobacco products.

I understand the stated goal behind Bill S-5 is to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to reduce youth smoking. However, as I read it, the bill quite frankly could do much more harm than good.

As I mentioned, Bill S-5 plans to implement plain packaging regulations that will see the outside packaging for cigarettes standardized as well as the cigarette stick itself. That means there will be no branding whatsoever. As a result, people who choose to smoke will not be able to tell one brand from another, either from the package or from the cigarette. Nor, indeed, will they be able to tell whether they have bought a legal product. In fact, law enforcement agencies will not be able to tell the difference either.

The government claims that this is designed to make the cigarettes less attractive to young people. That will in turn lower the youth smoking rate. I am concerned, on a number of fronts, that this portion of the legislation in particular will have just the opposite result.

My first concern is the impact that the plain packaging regulations could have on the contraband tobacco market in Canada. The reason why this market is a concern is that it is unregulated, unlicensed, and untaxed. Not only does the government lose an estimated \$2 billion a year in taxes from the sale of illegal cigarettes, but the money that is made off them is used to fund very highly organized crime in Canada and abroad.

There are parts of our great country where contraband tobacco is big business. In some areas, it is reliably estimated that as much as 80% of cigarettes smoked are contraband. I am not exaggerating in the least when I say that there are also areas where the illegal cross-border trade of cigarettes between Canada and the U.S. is a serious and sometimes even a deadly business. That is how big the stakes are.

What does plain packaging have to do with contraband tobacco? By having a generic package for all cigarettes, it will make it much

easier for contraband producers both to counterfeit and also to sell their own product, with little chance of getting caught.

This leads me to a second issue surrounding the safety of Canadians and their right to know what they are ingesting.

As the contraband tobacco market is unregulated, there is no way to determine, much less control, the chemical make-up of its cigarettes. Because the packaging and the cigarette stick will be indistinguishable from one brand to the next, Canadians who choose to smoke will not only be unable to tell whether they are receiving their brand, but they will also be unable to determine whether they are receiving legal, counterfeit, or a contraband product. Since there is no way to control what chemicals are actually in these cigarettes, this could result in negative health impacts for Canadians and cause even more harm instead of reducing it. Believe me, some contraband cigarettes have been known to have some rather nasty stuff in them.

• (1320)

To get back to the government's stated goal of harm reduction, I also have a serious concern regarding the wording within the legislation that bans companies from saying that one product is less harmful than another. For example, the harmful chemicals that enter a person's body when smoking do so mostly once the cigarette is ignited. There are currently products available that simply heat the tobacco instead of igniting it, which significantly reduces exposure to much of the harmful chemicals. These products have been proven to be significant aids to quitting smoking. However, if this legislation passes, Canadians will not even get to know about these products.

The second half of this legislation deals with vaping products, which have also been deemed to be a less harmful alternative to smoking. However, as consumers, Canadians would be unable to know that these products are less harmful for them because of the advertising ban that would ensue if this legislation is passed.

For a bill that is focused on harm reduction, it seems illogical that companies or even Health Canada would not be allowed to educate Canadians if there are less harmful alternatives out there.

In addition, the government claims that switching to plain packaging will decrease the smoking rate. My concern here is twofold. Throughout my research, and through consultation with a number of stakeholders, I have been unable to find reliable statistics that prove that implementing plain packaging reduces the urge for youth to start smoking. In my experience, they do not try smoking because they see a package and think it looks cool. In many parts of Canada, they cannot see the package anyway because by law it is hidden from view in stores. Rather, they try it because their friends are doing it, or because it is easy to access.

We all want to go home for the weekend, so I will spare everyone from going into the litany of problems in this bill, and how it contrasts with what the Liberals are putting forward in their marijuana legislation.

Government Orders

Back to my second concern, which is if we implement plain packaging and end up fuelling the contraband market we could actually see an increase in the rate of youth smoking as a result of accessibility. One of the reasons why contraband tobacco continues to be popular is because of its low cost. In fact, in many areas where contraband tobacco is sold, a person can buy a Baggie of 200 cigarettes for about \$10 compared to buying the legal product for well over \$100 for the same quantity. People buy the cheaper product to save money.

A lot of young people do not have the means to purchase \$100 worth of cigarettes, but they may have the means to purchase cigarettes at \$10. Therefore, if the contraband market is allowed to flourish, youth could quite conceivably have even more access to cigarettes as a result of their low cost.

As I said earlier, I understand and I even support the stated goal, but I have very serious issues with the path that the Liberals are taking to get there.

In closing, I ask that the members of this House consider the very real and serious concerns that I have outlined today and take them into consideration when developing their own thoughts about the bill, and that they think of my speech when Bill S-5 is discussed at committee.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the hon. member's speech. I noticed that e-cigarettes put doses of nicotine into the system through the use of an aerosol. With respect to aerosols, if we buy a can of spray paint, the label tells us not to inhale the stuff directly, and we know that it can cause long-term health effects. I wonder if the member would like to comment on that, because we are going to have young kids using an aerosol to directly inhale vapour into their mouths when the medical evidence out there tells us that it is dangerous to one's health.

• (1325)

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of products out there, and there is a lot of confusion with respect to many of them. E-cigarettes have been on the market for the last five or so years. There are some that contain nicotine, but many do not. They are being used. Those without nicotine are not regulated at all and those containing nicotine are much harder to find and come in a variety of forms. I think we always want to make sure that our young people are protected from any consumer product. They need and deserve to know what is in them and what the risks are. That is one of the problems with this bill, even with respect to regular cigarettes. Once the companies go to plain packaging and plain sticks, and with the other plans that have been discussed by the Liberal government, people will not know what they are getting in the product. We need to have consumer protection at all levels on all products.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the parliamentary secretary introduced the legislation, the member across the way stood up and expressed serious concerns with regard to the labelling and people not necessarily knowing what it is. The question was addressed by the parliamentary secretary, I thought, to great satisfaction.

Does the member feel that, as a whole, the government is going in the wrong direction on the issue of labelling? What is it that she would like to see?

Provincial jurisdictions are looking at vapours. In order to ensure that there is some sense of a national standard, if it is at all possible, the federal government should play some leadership role. Would the member not agree that this is a step forward in dealing with that?

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I seem to be waffling about my position on this.

During my speech, I thought I had made it pretty clear that going to plain packaging, going to plain tubes with no branding whatsoever puts the customer, and indeed the retailer, in a very vulnerable position. They have no way to determine that what they are buying or, in the case of the retailer, selling, is the product that they think they are getting. There will be no way for law enforcement to determine whether these are legal products or not without extensive analysis, and even then it would be limited.

There would be no branding, so the government would be stripping away the intellectual property rights of companies. More importantly, it would be stripping away the rights of consumers to know that what they are buying is what they think they are buying and what they are paying for.

Generic packaging would lead to a dramatic surge in the contraband business. That is not in anyone's interest whatsoever, anyone who wants to be a law-abiding citizen or indeed a law-abiding government. There are a whole lot of reasons why contraband tobacco is a very dangerous thing, not just to the consumers but to the communities in which they operate.

Therefore, I have some terrible concerns about what the government is doing. If it really wants to give a gift to the contraband tobacco industry, this bill is the best thing it could ever hope to present.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listen very closely when the member for Haldimand—Norfolk speaks, because this member has a lot of experience implementing legislation. She knows very well how something that is well-intentioned, if not properly implemented, can go in the wrong direction.

I am a little concerned about the vaping side. The government seems to be doing the same thing as on other legislation, where it does not really specify a lot of details and wants to leave them to a later regulation. We know that with vaping products, there have been some concerns about ones that have exploded, and various things like that.

Could the member comment on the level of detail in this bill?

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has spent a lot of time on this issue. One of the things that she has learned is that there are a lot of different products out there.

Vaping products are not regulated at the federal level. Again, Canadians need and deserve to know what products they are consuming. They need to be educated about this, as has been described.

Private Members' Business

Other products exist on the market that are not addressed in this legislation, except that they are lumped in, in places they should not be. The government states that it wants to help people reduce harm from tobacco and nicotine products, and yet it will not allow any advertising of products that are good at harm reduction, that do help people quit smoking. Those companies will not be able to advertise those products to let Canadians know the benefits of them. That seems to be totally contradictory to what it says it wants to achieve.

It is really important that the government revisit this, and think about the implementation. It cannot just say, "Here is part of the rules." That does not work. In thinking this through, the government has to recognize that the whole thing has to be there and that there are products on the market that are not covered. The legislation does not achieve what it sets out to do, according to the advertising section.

• (1330)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS

The House resumed from September 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-325, An Act to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights (right to housing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-325, an act to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights (right to housing). It gives me a great opportunity to highlight some of the great initiatives and partnerships between different levels of government, private enterprise, non-profit organizations, and others that have been completed in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga.

First, a little overview of the bill.

This legislation would change the Canadian Bill of Rights by adding a right of an individual to obtain "proper housing at a reasonable cost and free of all unreasonable barriers." It argues that access to housing, free of financial and other barriers, is necessary to adequately recognize the "dignity and worth of all individuals" and to provide them with security and other benefits that housing gives. The bill would give the government one year from the day royal assent is given to make this change.

The Conservative Party believes that all Canadians should have a reasonable opportunity to own their home or to have access to safe and affordable housing. That is why we support broad-based tax relief, income support programs, and tax incentives to make home ownership and rental accommodation more attainable and accessible.

Rather than support these broad-based, grassroots initiatives, the current Liberal government seems intent not only on ignoring these willing small business partners, but also on placing additional roadblocks in their way or even destroying their businesses

altogether. The current war on small and medium-sized businesses will have a huge detrimental effect on the construction industry and this will automatically negatively impact housing starts.

Small construction companies, whether pouring concrete foundations, framing, scaffolding, installing heat and ventilation, and plumbers, electricians, and roofing contractors, many of whom are self-employed and at the same time employing five or six workers, will be forced to lay off workers and scale back their operations, or worse yet, to wind down their businesses altogether. This will result in fewer contractors being available to build and therefore will drive up the cost of housing even higher. So much for making housing available at a reasonable cost and free of barriers.

While I can agree wholeheartedly with the overall premise of Bill C-325 to do all that we can to ensure proper housing free of unreasonable barriers and at a reasonable cost, there are far too many questions left unanswered for me to support the bill in its current form.

The use of the terms "reasonable cost" and "unreasonable barriers" in the preamble is vague. There is no indication of what might be an unreasonable barrier or what price range is a reasonable cost. The bill does not account for price differences in housing markets across the country and assumes that the creation of a "right" will fix the issue. It is not that simple.

Also there are very real financial ramifications to the implementation of the bill. Where is the costing analysis? Will the Canada social transfer be largely inflated due to this action? What about cost-sharing with provinces and municipalities?

It is our belief that the government should get out of the way of private enterprise and instead partner with the respective jurisdictions of provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, and private business initiatives, and work with social agencies and non-profit organizations in dealing with housing needs.

The bill makes no mention of empowering local stakeholders or marketplace workers who could potentially increase housing stock available and therefore make housing less costly.

Yes, every Canadian should have the opportunity to own a home or have access to affordable rental accommodation. We agree with helping Canadians who need it the most, however, the government can help through partnering with all levels of government and the private sector to ensure the creation of sustainable, responsible, and fair solutions.

Let me share with the House just one of the many organizations that are working to make housing more affordable in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga. I have been proud to work with this organization over the past 16 years, long before I was elected as member of Parliament for Kitchener—Conestoga.

I will be quoting directly from the 10-year anniversary booklet of MennoHomes:

• (1335)

During the 1990s, poverty in Ontario became a growing concern. Social programs faced severe cutbacks, including in the funding downloaded from the provincial government for social housing.

...

Private Members' Business

The extremely low vacancy rate meant landlords were able to ask for premium rental prices. For lower-income families and individuals, this often made housing utterly unaffordable. Housing also became a dangerous proposition: desperate to find a roof over their heads, people took chances on unsafe, substandard housing and were unwilling to report poor conditions, for fear of losing what they had.

...

In late 2000... [the Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario] (MCCO) Program Director, invited several people with social programming experience to be part of a small working group that would explore how to respond to this need for affordable housing.

...

By May 2001, the working group invited 40 people including Mennonite and Brethren in Christ pastors, together with members of their churches who were community leaders in health and social services, into the discernment process to determine the will to respond collectively to this need and to determine what form the response would take.

A number of meetings later, and after securing commitment from churches and individuals, the incorporation of MennoHomes was complete.

While individuals in other churches and denominations as well as community members at large have been strongly supportive of MennoHomes, it has primarily been a Mennonite initiative and the Mennonite community in the Kitchener-Waterloo area has responded strongly to every capital fundraising drive and has a strong sense of this being "our" project.

...

Soon after the incorporation process was completed, the Region of Waterloo put out a call to groups interested in affordable housing saying they had funding available for family housing. MennoHomes made an "Expression of Interest" and was approved. The search for property on which to build began.

At this time, Faith Lutheran Church on Village Road in the Forrest Hill area of Kitchener was planning a change to their building to improve accessibility, and decided instead to build a new sanctuary. The project would be funded by the sale of a large piece of land at the back of their property.

...

However, as Pastor Hamp said, "We ran into a bit of a struggle with our neighbours. We had a lot of phone calls from neighbours worrying and complaining about what it would do to the neighbourhood, to house values." A series of meetings with community members followed, with angry words and even threats, but the situation remained deadlocked and intense until finally one neighbourhood resident Wendy Shaw became a bridge between the two sides. She met with each of her 66 neighbours who had opposed the project and who planned to take their grievances to the Ontario Municipal Board. Wendy brought the concerns of the neighbours to MennoHomes. This resulted in MennoHomes changing the design and reducing the number of units, as well as guaranteeing long term, active involvement with the project to ensure that it would be well-integrated into the neighbourhood.

...

Tenants moved into the eight duplexes on Village Road in July and August, 2004. They were met by Dorene and were each given a hand-made quilt. One resident said of the quilts she was given, "I appreciate every hour, every stitch and every thought that was put into those blankets. I will cherish them for the rest of my life."

Dorene met with the residents on a regular basis. "There were a number of new Canadian families and we wanted to make sure they were aware of various agencies in the community. As a board, we wanted to develop a sense of community among the families. We held a barbecue in the summer and a Christmas dinner (where we recognized Ramadan and other holidays)." A tenant said of the Community Worker role, "No matter what the need, whether it be a ride, food, clothing, community information, or simply a shoulder to cry on, she was there. Because many of us have been isolated from our families and hometowns, every bit of inclusion and support is meaningful."

Therefore, we can see that by working with federal, provincial, municipal levels of government, private enterprise and local benevolent groups can make a big difference. Not only is housing provided at an affordable price, but personal care and coaching are provided too.

The story continues. Currently, MennoHomes owns and operates 105 units, and recently partnered with another company to create an additional 25 units in Waterloo.

As I said, I cannot support the bill. I believe that the issue of affordable housing is best solved through private enterprise and incentives from government. I am grateful that MennoHomes is so successful in Kitchener. What we need to do is to find ways to replicate the work that MennoHomes is doing across Canada.

The real barriers to home ownership and affordable rental units are unnecessary government red tape, high taxes, and lack of incentives for the private sector to produce good quality and smaller housing units.

The implications of the bill would not necessarily resolve the fundamental issue of the housing crisis, which is fuelled by restrictive supply and government regulations. There needs to be assurance that people are able to move out of subsidized housing or subsidized rental units into market rate housing, and that they have the appropriate incentive to do so. Job creation needs to be at the forefront of any endeavour, so people have the means and the incentive to improve their social standing, including access to good quality housing.

● (1340)

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my remarks today will be a bit of an homage to one of my favourite comedians and talk show hosts, David Letterman. I want to be clear that there is nothing funny about homelessness. However, there are so many reasons Canada must enshrine in law the right to housing, and, I only have a certain amount of time to speak today, so the format worked for me, sort of.

What I would like to share with everyone today is my top 11 reasons why Canada must enshrine the right to housing into Canadian law. Unlike David Letterman's top 10 list, my top 11 list is in no particular order. They are all equally important.

The number one reason housing should be a right in Canada is because housing first works. The idea of housing first as a therapeutic intervention into people's lives was the result of the work by a Canadian clinical psychologist from Montreal, Dr. Sam Tsemberis.

Dr. Tsemberis noticed, while practising in New York City, that the same people who were homeless were coming back over and over again to hospital for mental health services. Therefore, he did a radical thing. He reached out to those who, more often than not, were not consulted on homeless policies, people who were homeless, the individuals he was trying to help. Dr. Tsemberis then worked with other mental health professionals on a radical idea of helping people get off the street permanently by providing a place to live. The idea was simple. Once people had a permanent home, they could focus on their mental health, addictions, and physical health.

Private Members' Business

The model has been implemented all over the world, including in Canada, to great success, from the state of Utah, which saw a reduction in homelessness by 92%, to Medicine Hat, Alberta, the first city in Canada to end homelessness.

Housing first is more of a model than a program per se. In Canada, the Mental Health Commission of Canada's groundbreaking program At Home/Chez Soi project was built on the housing first philosophy and the success of the work of Dr. Tsemberis.

As the name suggests, I believe housing first uses a human rights lens to help people get and maintain a safe and affordable place to call home. This fundamental shift in thinking about how we intervene and help people is a proven, effective social policy. If improving and saving lives were not enough, housing first saves money, too.

In my community of Saskatoon, housing first, implemented by the United Way of Saskatoon and Area, in partnership with the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service, is saving lives and demonstrating cost savings by dramatically reducing the costs of emergency services.

Journey home is based on the housing first philosophy. As the name suggests, the program helps people who have been chronically homeless to find and secure a home. The stability and safety of a home then allows people to focus on their healing journey. The results have been amazing. In the first year alone, people helped by journey home saw an 82% drop in the use of high-cost emergency services like police, ambulance services, and emergency room visits. The social return on investment was calculated to be \$2.23 saved for every \$1 invested in the program. One participant said of her involvement with journey home, "Housing First saved my life".

Reason number one is also reason number two, which is the rising cost of health care. What we see in the absence of affordable, safe, and supportive housing is emergency rooms and hospital beds being the de facto front line service provider. We cannot afford this and it does not work.

Reason number three is because Diefenbaker would approve. In Prime Minister Diefenbaker's own words:

However, the Bill of Rights has been drafted by men and will be applied and interpreted by men who, notwithstanding their high offices in the executive and judicial branches of government, are human beings and therefore subject to error when judged by fundamental standards. In particular

- a. The Bill may, in the light of subsequent world developments, appear to have overlooked fundamental considerations;
- b. The Bill, as ultimately interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada, may appear, in one or more respects, not to have been so worded as to achieve the desired results.

I will add the word "women" to that quote.

Diefenbaker understood that the Canadian Bill of Rights as originally drafted may have missed something and would evolve over time. I often wonder if Diefenbaker would have imagined that during an economic boom in Saskatchewan, someone working full time in Saskatoon had to live at the Salvation Army men's shelter because he could not afford cost of market rent.

●(1345)

Reason number four is that communities need the consistency of long-term government policy. Enshrining the right to housing in law would allow communities the assurance of a consistent government policy framework in their efforts to end and prevent homelessness.

All across Canada, community leaders, front-line service providers, and municipal governments have stepped up to address homelessness with resounding success. However, they cannot do it on their own. They need long-term commitments from government to continue their great work. Many a great community effort that improves the quality of life ends up wasted because a government changes and all that great work is no longer a priority for the new government, resources are wasted, lives are disrupted, and communities find often themselves going back to square one.

Reason number five is because sometimes government policy, or the lack thereof, actually creates homelessness. Good government policy in ending homelessness and preventing it needs to be incorporated across government departments. Otherwise, great policy develops in isolation and can have unintended consequences.

I will share one personal example. When I was involved in the Saskatoon Point-in-Time Count in Saskatoon, I received a call from a social worker at a local hospital. She wanted me to know that if we included the elderly people who were currently in the hospital as homeless, our numbers of homeless people would have been much higher. She went on to explain that a high number of beds in the hospital were currently being occupied by elderly patients who, if they had a suitable home to go to, would not be in the hospital. Those patients and people did not want to be in the hospital. A hospital bed is not a home. Government policies and government systems need to work together better.

Number six of my top 11 reasons for making housing a right in Canada is because we owe it to the next generation. There are more children in foster care in Canada now than there were children in the Indian residential school system. A colleague of mine called the foster care system the super highway to homelessness for youth. Young people are homeless for very different reasons than adults. More often than not, young people are living on the street because of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at home. We can all agree that every young person in Canada deserves a safe, supportive home.

Reason number seven is that we are in a housing crisis and we need to do things differently. The rise in the cost of housing is outpacing the rise in incomes in Canada. We often hear that Canadians are holding more personal debt than ever and that many Canadians are one paycheque away from not being able to meet their monthly expenses. We must address this issue. We must do something radically different. The solutions of the past are not going to work in this new reality.

In an article in *The Hill Times*, on September 18, Tim Richter, the CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, and Jacline Nyman, CEO of the United Way Centraide Canada, put it this way, "changing times require policy innovation that moves beyond replicating past initiatives." Enshrining the right to housing in law could be the innovation that is needed in these changing times.

Private Members' Business

Reason number eight is that I believe Canada's signature on a piece of paper is worth something. In 1976, Canada signed on to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. So many legal experts would say that we have committed to enshrining in domestic law the right to housing. We have seen Canada's international rights regularly referred to in decisions made by our domestic courts.

Let me close with my last three reasons that housing has a right to be enshrined in law. Those last three reasons are Hashle Belanger, David Fineday, and Alvin Cote. Hashle, David, and Alvin all experienced homelessness in my city of Saskatoon. Hashle and David shared their expertise and their lived experience with me and others when I was the CEO of the United Way. Their generosity and intelligence and their willingness to share what they knew were the reasons why Saskatoon began to work as a community on homelessness, invest in housing first and saving lives.

● (1350)

The Saskatoon Plan to End Homelessness, designed to provide safe homes and a new future for Saskatoon's most vulnerable residents, is dedicated to the memory of Alvin Cote. A proud member of the Cote First Nation, Alvin Cote spent his life on the streets of Saskatoon. After facing unimaginable hardships as a child, a conventional life was too much to manage and he lost himself in alcohol. This placed him outside of the reach of most supports. The Plan to End Homelessness aims to provide options for others like him, so everyone can make the journey home.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must say that my Conservative colleague, the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, and my NDP colleague both gave excellent speeches. I was quite impressed by her reference to Mr. Diefenbaker, a great Canadian who hailed from her province. I myself was planning to bring him up today. I will still do so with pleasure, although my take will be slightly different.

The Conservative Party opposes Bill C-325, the act to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights to include the right to housing, which was introduced by the member for North Island—Powell River. I could say it is because the phrase “at a reasonable cost and free of unreasonable barriers” in the preamble is vague. I could say that the bill fails to consider price differences in housing markets. I could also say that section 92 of the Constitution considers housing to be a provincial matter, whereas the Canadian Bill of Rights, which was set in motion by Mr. Diefenbaker, applies only to matters of federal jurisdiction.

However, I am not going to use this perspective in my speech today in opposition to this bill. Instead, I would like to talk about the philosophical ideas underlying the bill introduced by the member for North Island—Powell River. I will use these underlying ideas to build my argument against this bill.

I would like to start by saying that, in my humble opinion, both Canada's intellectual left, which includes Marxist theorists at the Osgoode Hall Law School or at the University of British Columbia, and the intellectual right, meaning the Calgary School, would disagree with introducing this right into the Canadian Bill of Rights.

That said, hats off to the member for North Island—Powell River for proposing an amendment to the Canadian Bill of Rights instead of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This makes me very proud, since it means that the member subscribes to the British

tradition of liberal constitutionalism, in other words, the Westminster tradition of liberal constitutionalism, instead of subscribing to the American tradition of liberal constitutionalism. It is a small distinction, but that small distinction makes a big difference over many centuries. I will explain why.

Under the Westminster-type British model of liberal constitutionalism, the legislative branch is the ultimate authority and has the last word on constitutional matters. That is why Mr. Diefenbaker, a great Canadian if ever there was one, would never, not in a million years, have enshrined the Canadian Bill of Rights in the Constitution. Doing so would make the judiciary, or the judicial branch, the ultimate authority.

The member for North Island—Powell River has a great deal of respect for our Canadian political culture based on the Westminster tradition of liberal constitutionalism, a culture that, sadly, was stifled, if not snuffed out, by a cultural revolution led by that party over there and Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1982. They brought us closer to an American-style liberal constitutionalism, under which the judiciary gets the final word. We have the notwithstanding clause, sure, but regrettably, no prime minister has dared to invoke it.

Today's debate is historic. I believe this issue goes well beyond that of housing. The debate over how to strike a balance between individual and collective rights started in the age of enlightenment. Even in Canada, this debate has been going on since 1867. Since 1982, or for the last 35 years, Canadian intellectuals have engaged in a mighty fine debate.

John Locke, father of modern liberalism and individualism, believed that individual liberty predated the notion of statehood, and thus the establishment of any constitution or system of positive law. He therefore believed in natural law, and so, to his mind, all political systems based on this idea would place the individual at the heart of the constitutional state.

This is all fundamental to the debate we are having here today on housing, because John Locke would have said that the right to housing does not constitute an individual right, which forms the basis of natural law and therefore supercedes positive law.

● (1355)

A similar debate, although somewhat wider in scope, has been going on in Canada since the Charter was enshrined in 1982 in the midst of what I would characterize as a disgraceful cultural revolution. Progressive authors such as Mandel, Petter, Hutchinson, McWhinney, Hirschl, Mackay, and Lebel-Grenier are the standard-bearers of left-leaning, Marxist intellectual thought in academic circles. Then, there are the so-called conservative thinkers, the fathers of Canadian Toryism: Banfield, Morton, Patenaude, Knopff and Martin.

Although they belong to radically different schools of thought, all of these thinkers would agree that enshrining rights or bringing in new rights is no way to address the housing situation in Canada.

Private Members' Business

My reasoning may seem circuitous but I am nearing my point. These people would have said that access to housing, food, and education is to be secured through political struggle. They would have said, for instance, that homosexuals acquired their rights through political struggle, and not by way of the Supreme Court of Canada or enshrined rights. They would have said that it is in the political arena that women fought to acquire their rights. In this case, the fight was waged by the suffragettes in the early 20th century, not by the Supreme Court of Canada. That is what they would have said.

Everything rests in that interplay between negative and positive rights. That is where we can distinguish between these two schools of thought, between Marxist and conservative thinkers.

I am circling back to what the member said. In the NDP, the hope is that we will be able to incorporate some positive rights into Canadian law. In other words, we would be looking to make concessions, a truly rare occurrence under the Canadian Constitution. That is what happened in the case of language rights granted to French-speaking Canada. That might be the only case of a positive right under our Constitution.

Conservative thought typically associated with classical liberalism would lean toward the idea that we have negative rights, or in other words, that our freedom stops where that of others begins. Canadian law is a pyramid that rests wholly upon the fundamental goal of ensuring that other people's rights are not infringed upon. There is no such thing as a positive right. This is a healthy debate.

My colleague stated that she believed to be waging a political fight. Perhaps she ought to fight to control prices or the housing market. Perhaps the fight ought to be taken to the provinces over their traditional areas of jurisdiction. Being here in the federal Parliament, seeking to incorporate new rights that will amount to nothing more than a bunch of letters on a piece of paper, does not constitute a political fight.

There were some important and well thought out observations around Diefenbaker, but my reading of the man is that he would not have gone so far as to incorporate this right into the Canadian Bill of Rights.

I disagree with both extremes, which are the Marxist thinkers of Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto on one end of the spectrum, and on the other, those of the Calgary School, who believe in property rights above all else, where others believe in the right to housing. Both of these extremes are dead wrong, because in both cases, the result would be to paralyze the state. The power of the state is essential in Canada if we are to enforce our sovereignty first and foremost, namely in the military, economic and political spheres.

Enshrining property rights in the Constitution would prevent the government from running power transmission lines, for instance, or from carrying out large scale projects. Enshrining the right to housing in the Constitution would likewise paralyze the state, as it would have to supply housing to every Canadian, which is totally unrealistic, economically speaking.

Let us remain on the right track, the one we were on prior to 1982, and let us stick to the Westminster model.

● (1400)

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tonight in metro Vancouver, 3,605 people will spend the night homeless. A substantial number of these individuals reside in my riding of Vancouver East, some 3,605 people, according to the 2017 homelessness count. Since 2017, the number of homeless people in metro Vancouver has increased by 30%, and that number is constantly growing. To break that number down a little, half of them have been homeless for over a year; 16% are young people under the age of 25; 21% are seniors; and, yes, 21% either have a part-time or full-time job.

In my riding, where the rental vacancy rate has been sitting at below 1% for years, even those who currently have housing live in constant fear that they may be the next victim of the rental and demo evictions that have been dominating our local news cycles. Many are paying more than 30% of their total income on rent.

If this picture seems wrong to members, it is because the situation in my riding, and indeed throughout the country, is a human rights violation. Housing is declared to be a basic right by the United Nations, and Canada has signed and ratified a number of international human rights treaties that identify the right to adequate housing as a fundamental basic human right.

The persistence of homelessness and unaffordable housing in Canada stands in glaring contradiction to our acknowledgement and recognition of adequate housing as a basic fundamental human right. It is especially unacceptable when Canada is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Of course, this housing crisis did not occur overnight. In fact, I would argue that our housing crisis began in 1993 when the Liberal government cancelled Canada's national affordable housing program. Had the program not been cancelled, today we would have half a million more units of affordable housing across Canada than we currently do. In B.C., we would have an additional 100,000 units. With 100,000 units of affordable housing, we would be able to house every single homeless person in metro Vancouver 27 times over. Just imagine what that would look like for our communities.

Constituents and organizations in my riding have many creative visions to bring about more affordable housing in ways that would not only house our community's most vulnerable, but also add culture, heritage, and beauty to our community.

In Vancouver Chinatown, for example, community organizations, as well as Chinese Canadian youth and seniors living in Chinatown, have requested that all levels of government work together to either do a land swap or purchase the property at 105 Keefer Street from a private developer and build it for the community, with special emphasis on low-income seniors' housing.

Private Members' Business

In other parts of Chinatown, work has been under way to preserve and renovate the Chinese Society and clan association buildings to better serve the social and housing needs of community members. The city has committed to renew eight major clan association buildings, but there are many more that would benefit from federal funding so we could better serve the needs of the community by creating usable community cultural spaces, space for food programs, and affordable housing.

In the heart of my riding, the Urban Native Youth Association has been working with the City of Vancouver, the province, and the private sector to realize their vision of building a native youth centre. This centre will be a hub for the urban indigenous community, with multi-purpose programming spaces providing for culturally responsive services. Above the centre will be 180 units of affordable rental housing for indigenous youth and families. With over a decade of hard work and many partnerships, 50,000 square feet of land has been secured for the project, and fundraising efforts to fund the construction are under way. The organization has already raised \$2.6 million to date for this project and is requesting \$10 million from the federal government so they can complete it.

I hope that the federal government will join and be a partner of this initiative, especially when we consider the fact that in Vancouver, 34% of our homeless population is indigenous when it only comprises 2% of the general population. In fact, what we need is a national indigenous housing strategy.

• (1405)

I have mentioned that the rental vacancy rate in metro Vancouver has been sitting at below 1% for a very long time and that this situation leaves renters vulnerable. It has been estimated that in B.C., there are 117,000 rental households that cannot afford their homes. There is a backlog of over 80,000 rental units required to meet current needs. To meet future demands, 7,000 new units will need to be constructed annually.

In B.C., many non-profit housing societies, businesses, partners, and stakeholders have come together and are ready to work to solve our housing crisis. The B.C. Rental Housing Coalition has developed a comprehensive 10-year plan to address the province's housing needs. The plan includes the construction of new housing, funds to protect and maintain current housing stock, and income and other supports for individuals and families that need it. It has put its assets, equity, and expertise on the table and is inviting the provincial government and the federal government to come to the table as equal partners.

The coalition estimates that to meet B.C.'s current housing needs, annual investments of \$1.84 billion are needed. The community housing sector is ready to chip in \$41 million annually and requests \$691.2 million in annual investments from the federal government. While this may seem like a big price tag, the cost of doing nothing is a lot more.

Homelessness in and of itself costs Canada \$7 billion annually, \$1 billion in B.C. alone. It is common knowledge that every dollar we invest in providing homes for those who find themselves homeless yields over \$2 of savings in areas like health care, the justice system, and other social supports. It has also been found that every dollar invested by the government in housing construction also results in

\$1.52 of GDP growth. In addition, making housing more affordable would increase disposable income for the average household and generate more economic activity.

From the proposals, we can also see that housing will add value to our communities beyond the provision of homes. Investing in housing also protects our culture, history, and heritage. Investing in housing is caring for our elders and youth. Investing in housing is taking steps toward reconciliation and honouring our nation-to-nation commitments to indigenous peoples. Investing in housing is nurturing families and building communities.

Innovative ideas, experienced organizations, workable plans, and secured sites are ready and in place, and we are ready to get this going. The community is coming to us with assets and work plans. In some cases, the municipal and provincial governments are ready and have been doing their part. It is time the federal government stepped up and became a partner in all these important projects.

Instead, I am disappointed to see that the money has not flowed on the ground to build real units and house real people. The Liberal government says it has a housing plan, but 90% of that promised funding will not actually be spent until after the next election. This is not acceptable when people and families are desperate now. The government needs to invest now. Not only have we not started building, but existing affordable housing stock is being threatened by government inaction.

There are 34 housing co-ops in Vancouver East, with a total of 1,669 units. If the government does not renew operating agreements and ensure that support is in place for rent subsidies for low-income families, those families and individuals, I fear, will join the ranks of Vancouver's homeless population. This must not be allowed to happen.

Not to be forgotten are the needs of the many individuals in Vancouver who are dreaming of owning their homes and raising their families but are finding this dream further and further out of reach. Many of these people who cannot afford to own homes in my riding have been living in the community for generations. I urge the government to develop a comprehensive measure to address the housing affordability crisis.

Investing in housing is an investment. If we shut down tax havens and close the CEO stock option loophole, that will allow for the money required to build housing for all Canadians.

It is said that a nation is measured by how well we treat our most vulnerable. Let us start with the very basics. I ask all members to support this bill with a clear declaration that housing is a fundamental, basic right.

• (1410)

Private Members' Business

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I fundamentally believe in the right to housing. When over 235,000 people are without homes in Canada, we know that housing must be a human right. It is a true pleasure to speak on the right to housing. I wish we could do it more often. As the housing crisis continues, Canadians are increasingly looking to us to deliver solutions. My bill would do this. It would amend the Canadian Bill of Rights to introduce housing as a human right.

In 1976, Canada enshrined the fundamental right to housing when the government of the day ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, this right has never been formally incorporated into Canadian law. This bill would make it happen.

During the first hour of debate, we heard a few troubling statements from the government side regarding the right to housing. Surprisingly, in this second hour of debate, we heard absolutely nothing from a single member of the government, which I find interesting. In the first hour, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of families said, "If we read the UN report on housing, it is not simply about embracing a set of rights, it is about creating those policies..".

Of course, we need policies, but what he does not understand is that governments come and go, policies come and go, funding comes and go, yet the need for housing is constantly there. What Canada needs is a legislative framework. My bill would ensure a level of structure that would empower people.

The parliamentary secretary also kept repeating that the right to housing was simply a slogan. I find this to be extremely troubling for a government that claims to be implementing the right to housing "through a wide range of federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal laws, policies, programs, and administrative measures." Is the government saying that the right to housing is not a human right? It is not clear to me. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of families kept repeating, as late as yesterday at committee, that human rights are crucial in housing.

Bill C-325 is about dignity. Human rights are that, moral principles. When our fellow citizens do not have a place to sleep or to go to the bathroom, these are incredibly dehumanizing experiences. A home is more than physical space. Housing is intrinsic to the sense of security for families and the stability needed to prevent marginalization. All of us look at a home as an anchor to our community life, a retreat and a refuge. What happens to people when they do not have that is debilitating. The ramifications have been studied repeatedly, and the stress on our communities and society can attest to this.

In fact, in government consultations, the right to housing was a recurrent theme in many comments shared by experts at the round table. Stakeholders clearly spelled out the need for the legally recognized right to housing. They insisted that a national housing strategy should examine whether our laws, policies, and practices are sufficient to prevent homelessness, forced evictions, and discrimination in accessing adequate housing. They agreed on a rights-based approach to housing, and how the right to housing must be recognized and realized through laws and policies.

We have seen the Liberal government be covetous of other people's good ideas, like the bill on abandoned vessels we saw tabled recently, after the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith's bill was not allowed to proceed. The national housing strategy is soon to be unveiled, but let us be clear: a strategy is not legislation.

Although part of me hopes that the right to housing will be featured front and centre in this strategy, the reality is that it will not be the change that makes housing a human right in Canada. A decade from now, we will still be talking about the gaps in our housing sector if we do not take a different approach. I hope the Liberal government will be brave enough to support Bill C-325.

For the government to establish a successful long-term national housing strategy, it must be done within the lens of a right to housing. This allows a more cohesive outlook beyond the physical structure, by addressing the systemic causes of housing insecurity. There are too many people living in tents or couch surfing, people with mental health issues not having a home to provide them stability, working people who cannot find a home, people living in unsafe conditions, and seniors making decisions between food, medication, and housing.

The housing crisis in Canada requires leadership now. The lack of adequate and affordable housing is troubling, and Canadians deserve much better.

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

Private Members' Business

(The House adjourned at 2:18 p.m.)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 2:18 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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