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Monday, November 27, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 27, 2017

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP) moved that Bill C-354, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to begin debate on my private member's bill, Bill C-354, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act, with regard to the use of wood in government infrastructure.

I introduced this bill at a critical time for our forest industry and for our fight against climate change. This bill could play an important role in both of those issues. There is a revolution happening around the world in how we construct buildings, the revolution of mass timber construction of engineered wood. The revolution began in Europe and has spread to North America where Canada is the leader in that technology. However, we have to work hard to keep on top here, and this bill is about that revolution and about that work. It is a bill designed to support our forest industry, and the forest industry needs support.

For the last 30 years, we have suffered through the onslaught of several softwood lumber disputes with the United States. We need to develop other markets for our wood and there are several obvious ways to do this. We could use more wood at home. We could export more wood to Asia. We could export engineered wood to the United States since it is not covered under the unfair softwood lumber tariff. All of these strategies can be tackled through mass timber construction through engineered wood.

I would like to go back to the bill itself, what it says and what it aims to do. On the surface, it is a simple bill designed to support our forest industry but there is much more to it. First, it is a recycled bill like many private members' bills and motions in this place. Similar bills have been tabled in past parliaments by members of different parties. Like those bills, it asks the federal government to give preference to the use of wood when constructing buildings, with two important caveats. Those caveats form a dual lens to help the government decide what structural material or materials to use in a building. The first issue is the overall lifetime cost of those materials; second, the government should consider the impact that those materials would have on the greenhouse gas footprint of that building. Therefore, the bill seeks to balance those costs, the dollars and cents cost and the environmental cost. It is very similar to the Wood First Act enacted in British Columbia and to government procurement policies in Quebec that promote the use of wood.

I want to say here that there is nothing to stop the government from choosing to use a number of materials in the primary structure of a building. Right now, large buildings across Canada and around the world are largely built of concrete and steel. It is the way the industry has worked for decades. However, what this bill seeks to do is to get the government to consider wood by applying that dual test. Many buildings now use a combination of wood, concrete, and steel and that would continue. One of those hybrid buildings partly made with engineered wood is the Ottawa airport, a building that I imagine a number of the members here are very familiar with.

My bill differs very little from the previous bills. What has changed is our ability to use wood as the primary structural material in large buildings, and that is why this bill is so timely and so necessary to the well-being of our forest industry and indeed the construction industry across Canada. To take advantage of these new wood technologies, we will have to steer the mindset of designers, architects, and builders, and the government procurement agents who hire them, to consider the use of wood in large buildings.

Private Members' Business

I would like to move on here to talk in a bit more detail about engineered wood, how it is made, why it makes good sense to build with it, why it is safe, why it is economical, and how it plays into Canada's climate action goals. There are two main types of engineered wood used in large buildings. First, there are the glulam beams made from dimensional lumber glued together to form large, sometimes a metre by a metre in thickness, beautiful support beams that support the floors, ceilings, and roof in the building. These beams can be used instead of the large steel beams we now use. Second are the cross-laminated timber, CLT, panels that are made in a similar manner to glulam but are formed as panels about eight or nine inches thick. These can replace some of the concrete used in walls and floors. The beams and panels are made with extreme precision, much more precisely than concrete or steel. These products are made off-site in a manufacturing plant and then moved to the building site just as they are needed, where they are joined together to construct a building, floor by floor. It is an extremely efficient way of building.

● (1105)

In traditional construction, the site is prepared over a number of weeks or months, the time depending on the complexity of the site and often the weather. Delays can be caused by wet weather or cold weather, both of them very common here in Canada. Then the building goes up with a concrete foundation, steel girders, building concrete frames, pouring concrete, letting the concrete cure, and then moving on to the next floor. More delays can ensue because of weather. In tall wood buildings, the concrete foundation is prepared much as in other projects, but because the beams and panels are made off-site, they can be constructed as the site is prepared. They are light enough to transport long distances to the site.

This fall, the University of British Columbia opened Brock Commons, an 18-storey student residence on campus. Brock Commons is the tallest wood building in the world. Only its foundation and the elevator shafts use concrete or steel for support. Brock Commons was built with engineered wood made at the Structurlam plants in Penticton and Okanagan Falls, 400 kilometres away. It was built in nine weeks, two floors per week, about twice as fast as a typical high-rise. The cost savings in that speed are significant.

Tall wood buildings are not only efficient to build, but can play a significant role in reaching our climate action targets. We are at a moment in history where we must take bold steps in tackling the global issue of climate change. We must reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and increase our sequestration of carbon. The Green Building Council of Canada has calculated that buildings account for about 30% of our energy use in greenhouse gas emissions, significantly more than any other sector, and the UN Environment Programme identifies buildings as offering the greatest potential for achieving significant energy and GHG emission reductions at the least cost. How we construct the buildings and what they are made of can be a huge part of those reductions.

As architect Michael Green states in *The Case for Tall Wood Buildings*, "Wood is the most significant building material we use today that is grown by the sun. When harvested responsibly, wood is arguably one of the best tools architects and engineers have for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and storing carbon in our buildings." FPInnovations has calculated that each cubic metre of wood in a building acts to sequester one tonne of carbon. A 20-storey wood building takes the equivalent of 900 cars off the roads in carbon dioxide savings every year.

We can do all this and help our forest sector at the same time. As I said earlier, that sector has had tough times over the past 30 years because of the unfair tariffs on softwood. Mills have closed across the country, tens of thousands of workers have lost their jobs, and many rural communities have been very hard hit.

We can help our forest sector in two ways: develop new markets and create value-added opportunities within Canada. Engineered wood does both of these at the same time. If we build more infrastructure using wood, that would automatically boost our domestic market, and engineered wood can be exported to the United States without softwood lumber tariffs, which would expand our U.S. market. China is actively exploring the concept of building with engineered wood. Just a tiny part of that market could be a significant win for Canada.

We are in the middle of a study in the natural resources committee on the value-added sector in Canadian forestry. Engineered wood and tall wood buildings have come up time after time as the biggest opportunity for us to make gains on that front. Bill Downing, the president of Structurlam in Penticton, mentioned that his company has just received a contract to rebuild the Microsoft campus in Silicon Valley with engineered wood. From that one contract, he put in a purchase order to local Canfor mills for \$4 million of dimensional lumber. The amount of \$4 million is a big payday for any Canadian company, even a big one like Canfor, and that money is going to rural communities in the B.C. Interior.

Private Members' Business

Any new technology, any change, comes with concerns about the unknown. One of the questions I get most often is about the fire safety of tall wood buildings. I talked to one fire chief who said he breaks out in a sweat whenever he hears the word “wood”. The fact is that mass wood buildings are as fire-safe as those built with steel and concrete. First, the heavy beams and panels that are used are completely different from the old stick-frame construction we are used to. Fire acts completely differently when it encounters a beam that is a metre thick than when it encounters a two-by-four. It is like holding a match to a large log. Tests have shown that the material typically chars on the outside and then the fire goes out. Even a building with exposed beams and panels offers more than the standard two-hour exit time in a fire.

● (1110)

The U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory published findings this year from the burning of a two-storey test building, concluding that the exposed cross-laminated timber essentially self-extinguished after fire consumed the building's furnishings.

The Brock Commons student residence included design features meant to provide added assurance for safety. The panels and beams were clad in layers of fire-resistant gypsumboard, for instance. The architects pointed out that this was unnecessary, but it may well be necessary to include these features until this technology becomes more common and Canadians feel more comfortable about tall wood buildings.

Others have asked me if we have enough wood in Canada to provide the material for this new sector. The forests of North America can grow the wood used in Brock Commons, a very large building, every six minutes.

I have also been asked about the reaction from other industry sectors. Interestingly, the Cement Association of Canada was on Parliament Hill a few weeks ago lobbying for their industry, and their big ask of the federal government was to consider a dual lens when choosing material for infrastructure: the lifetime cost of the materials and the greenhouse gas emissions. That is exactly what I am proposing in this bill.

The fact is that steel and concrete have enjoyed a century of a duopoly in large-building construction. This shift to tall wood construction would not suddenly result in a significant loss in market share for either industry. We would still be constructing many buildings with steel and concrete, but any small increase in market share could be significant for the forest industry. This bill simply asks the federal government to consider wood and to remember that there is a new way of building. The wood industry just needs that foot in the door.

I have been encouraged by government action on this front. Natural Resources Canada will be providing almost \$40 million in funding over the next four years to support projects and activities that increase the use of wood as a greener substitute material in infrastructure projects. This money will be used in research and testing that is essential to growing that needed confidence in a new product and in incentivizing new construction to serve as examples of just what we can do with wood.

There are many examples out there already. Chantiers Chibougamau has built numerous bridges for the mining industry in northern Quebec using glulam beams. Their engineered wood was used to build the Buffalo Sabres' training facility. The architect first proposed steel for that project, but a second look showed that wood would be more economical. The Art Gallery of Ontario was transformed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry using Douglas fir glulam arches made in Penticton, British Columbia, by Structurlam. The 284,000 square foot Rocky Ridge Recreational Facility in Calgary boasts the largest wood-constructed roof in North America, again built by Structurlam. These are iconic buildings. What I hope to promote in this bill is the construction of much more conventional buildings, such as office buildings and warehouses, from engineered wood.

Government procurement could play a huge role in expanding the engineered wood industry in Canada. Bill Downing, at Structurlam, would tell us that their company would not have gotten off the ground without the wood-first policy in British Columbia, and now it is one of the leading manufacturers of engineered wood in North America, along with Chantiers Chibougamau.

Forest companies across Canada are looking to this new sector to help them survive or even flourish. All these companies would benefit from government procurement to make that leap into a new technology. J.D. Irving has gone to Europe to look at the burgeoning mass timber construction sector there. France intends to build 30% of its new residential buildings with wood over the next 30 years.

Wood buildings are safe, cost-competitive, and beautiful, and they fight climate change. I ask all members to consider wood, support Bill C-354, foster the engineered wood sector in Canada, and keep our forest industry strong.

● (1115)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any time we can take a science-based approach to improving the environment, building with better materials, and growing our economy, it is something we should certainly look into.

I have been made aware that a lot of the timber being used in CLT in British Columbia actually comes from dead wood from infestations. Can the member speak a little about how that can play a role in allowing us to make sure that these trees simply do not rot in the forest and release CO₂ into the environment but are actually used so that the carbon remains stored and allows the forest to regenerate and store new carbon in a new forest?

Private Members' Business

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, that is correct. If we look at the CLT panels being constructed in the Structurlam plant in Penticton, for instance, we will see a lot of blue-stained lodgepole pine being used, because it is perfectly sound in terms of the engineering, especially when put into these large, thick panels and cross-laminated. It is a great way of using that timber. Some people do not like using blue-stained timber for regular work. Some people think it looks cool. It has a different look. However, this provides a huge way of using large amounts of that dead wood, which would otherwise be hard to sell in many markets, in cross-laminated timbers and in big buildings.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, for an extremely thorough speech on this topic. I am appreciative of the fact that not only did he mention that this may be advantageous in tackling climate change but also where else the federal government has jurisdiction, including through the national building code and certainly in procurement.

The government would be well advised to look at the report we did at the government operations committee a few years ago. It talks about actions that could be taken by the federal government in its buildings to reduce greenhouse gases.

Could my colleague elaborate more on safety? He raised the fact that there is not yet public confidence. I have had a number of discussions in my nine years here with both police chiefs and firefighters themselves. I wonder if he could elaborate on some of the measures being taken to address the potential concerns about the safety of fire officers and whether they should also be included when we are designing the use of wood for building.

• (1120)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I have talked to both representatives of firefighters and fire chiefs. As I mentioned, those concerns are out there. This is a new technology. One of their main asks is that they be at the table when we develop a new national building code. They want to be there to make sure that firefighters are safe. When they go into a building, they want to know that the structure will be safe to enter and that they will have exit time. That is one of their main asks.

Certainly, when the Brock Commons building was built, it was built outside the code. All of these buildings are built with special sign-offs from engineers and fire chiefs to make sure that they are safe. One thing about these large wood buildings is that they are built floor by floor. As they build each floor, they install the firefighting equipment needed, such as the hydrants and sprinklers, floor by floor as they go up so that these buildings are safe. Firefighters will tell us that the most dangerous time for a wood building with respect to fire is when it is being constructed, because there are a lot of torches around and things like that. That is where the danger is. These wood buildings, because of their design, can be finished off floor by floor as they go up, which is very different from a concrete and steel structure. The fire chiefs in Vancouver have told us that the Brock Commons building is a very fire-safe building, and they were very happy to sign off on that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-354,

which was introduced by my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay. This bill amends the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act with respect to the use of wood.

We recognize that the purpose of this bill is to give preference to projects that promote the use of wood in awarding federal construction, maintenance, and repair contracts, taking into account the associated costs and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. However, I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to initiatives our government has already introduced to support the Canadian forestry sector.

[*English*]

First is the assistance package for the forest industry. In June 2017, the government announced its continued support for the softwood lumber industry in the form of an \$867-million assistance package for the forest industry, workers, and communities impacted by recent tariffs imposed by the United States.

Second is the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. This framework, adopted in 2016, is a comprehensive plan to reduce emissions across all sectors of the economy, accelerate clean economic growth, and build resilience to the impact of climate change. The framework's actions, supported by announcements in budget 2017, will enable Canada to meet or even exceed its target to reduce emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. Under the framework, our government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from federal government buildings and fleets by 40% below 2005 levels by 2030.

[*Translation*]

I should point out that these measures include federal-provincial-territorial collaboration to promote the use of wood in construction. One way to do that is by introducing new building codes. In the 2017 budget, Natural Resources Canada received \$39.8 million over four years to support projects and activities that increase the use of wood in construction and create new markets for sustainable Canadian products.

Lastly, to assess the environmental impact of construction projects, Public Services and Procurement Canada is committed to using industry-recognized assessment tools to ensure the best possible environmental performance. These tools help the department make informed decisions when estimating the environmental impact of construction materials and their use in construction projects.

Private Members' Business

Any changes made to the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act must be in compliance with Canada's free trade agreements and must uphold the government's contracting principles, namely equality, openness, transparency, competition, and integrity. Our government strongly supports the Canadian forestry sector, which represents hundreds of thousands of good jobs for the middle class all across the country. This high-tech sector has serious value-added potential and is key to some of the biggest issues of our time: combatting climate change, fostering innovation, and creating economic opportunities for rural and indigenous communities. This is why we are allocating more than \$150 million over four years to support clean technology in the natural-resources sector, including the forestry sector.

• (1125)

[*English*]

Through our softwood lumber action plan, we are investing \$867 million to support workers and communities to diversify our markets, which I think my colleague mentioned when he referred to the Chinese market, a very large and interesting opportunity for Canadian lumber, and to facilitate access to a range of financial services for our producers on commercial terms.

[*Translation*]

Through programs such as the expanding market opportunities program, we are looking to increase exports to other foreign markets in order to increase competition in the long term and to make the forestry sector more sustainable. We strongly support Canada's forestry sector, as well as the long-term health and transformation of this sector.

[*English*]

To conclude, I believe that the aspirational objective of Bill C-354 could be a complement to the actions our government has already taken to support the long-term sustainability of Canada's softwood lumber industry. In my opinion, it merits an in-depth study by committee to evaluate all the potential ramifications and to avoid unforeseen consequences.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to continue the debate on this private member's bill.

I first want to thank the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay for introducing this bill. In my view, discussions of private members' bills, which advance the ideas and individual interests of MPs and the concerns of their constituents, constitute the most important hours of debate in the House. I do not always agree with all the bills introduced in the House; sometimes I must oppose them, and other times I support them. However, it is always good to see what MPs are interested in when they introduce bills, and also the discussions and ideas that they bring to the House to be debated.

I would like to mention that I worked for a sustainable development department. I was in financial administration, and a special division of this department was responsible for Alberta's forests. I worked very closely with this special division.

After that I was a political advisor to the sustainable development minister, who was responsible for forestry. One of our key roles was to oversee the renegotiation of forestry management agreements with individual companies, something I am very interested in. I also worked with forestry companies in Alberta during those renegotiations.

This is not the first time Canada's Parliament debates a bill like Bill C-354, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood). One hon. member told me that this might be the fourth time; this has been discussed in previous Parliaments. Bills C-429 and C-574 also addressed the topic.

The bill states:

(1.1) In awarding contracts for the construction, maintenance or repair of public works, federal real property or federal immovables, the Minister shall give preference to projects that promote the use of wood, taking into account the associated costs and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Again, I appreciate the intent of this bill, which seeks to strengthen Canada's forestry sector. We can all agree that any effort to strengthen any economic sector in Canada is commendable.

I will be sharing my thoughts on the member's bill. His intention is understandable. However, we must think of the repercussions this bill will have not only on the forestry industry, including sawmills, for example, but also on other industries, like cement manufacturing, public and private construction, and construction in general.

In February 2014, the former member for Jonquière—Alma introduced Bill C-574, which was also supported by some members of his party. The Conservative Party opposed the bill at the time.

As we know, the amendment being made to the act will result in changes to the way the government approaches procurement and how it renovates its buildings. This could be interesting. However, this bill, which will affect the maintenance and repair of federal real property, will cause problems in the public procurement process that will be difficult to solve. I read the debates that have occurred in other Parliaments many times, because I wanted to inject some new ideas. I did not want to merely repeat the same thing other members have already said, because I hope to contribute a more philosophical perspective to this debate. I did not want to just repeat the opportunities this will open for the forestry industry and the repercussions it will have on workers in that sector.

I know that a life-cycle cost analysis produced by the United States Department of Defense some years ago demonstrated that wooden structures cost 40% less per square foot than steel or masonry structures. The cost of construction was 37% less for wood than for other materials.

Operating costs are also less for wood. I always say that a free-trade-based market should be able to benefit from these sorts of efficiencies and the lower operating costs. Architects and others who decide what type of building will be built and with what materials look at those costs and that type of report.

Private Members' Business

●(1130)

It is the marketplace that will decide. I think that implementing this sort of legislative measure would require a major regulatory review and update and would put financial pressure on entrepreneurs and some provinces to conduct policy reviews and make changes. What is more, any potential legal challenges from construction sectors other than the wood sector could prove to be long and costly for the government. I believe that the best people to make these types of decisions regarding buildings are construction professionals, architects. They are in the best position to make this sort of decision. We should not rely on a law that would favour one material over another. That would take away the architects' and construction companies' power to choose. They can choose to go with wood if they want to and if they can do so in a way that will cost the government less, or they can do renovations that will reduce the government's operating costs in the future.

I believe that the code of practice and professional standards for architects and builders would be the best place to promote the benefits of wood construction. This building is a very good example. It is built of stone but much of the interior is made of wood. This building has stood for a very long time. We know that building with wood has advantages, and it is also beautiful, as we can see around us. The House was a success for those who built it.

This legislation would also have a major impact on the regulatory regime, as I mentioned. It would probably result in unexpected changes to the regulations of other departments and would establish a precedent that could lead to challenges in other sectors. As I mentioned, the steel and concrete sectors are two examples that come to mind. The National Building Code, which is the basis for provincial building codes, would definitely be affected by this legislation.

When I read the bill, I asked myself what the member's objective was and what effect he hoped it would have on those who bid on projects for the construction of government buildings. If we give preference to wood for the construction and renovation of federal buildings, the bill will indirectly promote one sector over another. All these sectors are vital to Canada's economy. We do not take away from one sector or another. Every sector is vital to Canada's economy to ensure growth and good jobs.

This would favour the economies of certain regions over others, in direct contravention of the mission of Public Works and Government Services Canada, which is to apply an open, fair, and transparent procurement process in order to obtain the best possible value for the government. This for me is the problem with the bill. It could result in job losses in the concrete and steel industries, which would be an economic substitution. There may not necessarily be new growth, but other sectors could lose contracts and be unable to continue working in the construction sector, as concrete, stone, or steel is discarded in favour of wood. I think this is a problem. It does not necessarily lead to new economic growth or to new jobs, but simply replaces one sector's jobs with another's.

In closing, I would like to talk about Frédéric Bastiat, a 19th-century French economist, member of the French National Assembly, and well-known Liberal polemicist who wrote a book called *Economic Sophisms*. Chapter 7 of his book is known as the

Candle Makers' Petition. He wrote this fictitious petition as a way to prove an economic point. The premise is that candle makers are petitioning the government to force everyone to board up all windows and live in the dark so that they will have to buy candles. By depriving people of sunlight, they hope to create economic growth. The petition says that it is not fair for people to have access to sunlight for free and that they should be forced to buy the candle makers' products. This is a bit of an extreme example of sophism.

●(1135)

In simpler terms, this is about the economic substitution effect and consumer choice. In short, new jobs and potential economic growth are not necessarily a source of economic activity. At the end of the day, who will make the decisions? Will it be the architects, the builders, or the MPs in this House? We should allow the architects and the builders to make the best choices they can rather than legislating to impose one choice or another.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay, who introduced this important bill. If it is adopted, it will help the forestry industry and will have a positive impact on the environment.

This bill will encourage sustainable development by promoting the use of wood in public infrastructure projects. Not only is it a commitment to the forestry sector and all its workers, but also a concrete step to protecting the environment. The bill calls on the government to give preference to construction with wood when building infrastructure, balancing those decisions on the relative costs of various building materials and the savings in greenhouse gas emissions that those materials might produce.

Designers of modern buildings too often do not think of wood when creating new infrastructure, and there are many reasons to consider wood. First of all, it would provide a boost to the Canadian forest industry that is looking to increase domestic markets for their products. It would also lower the carbon footprint of large buildings. Buildings made of mass wood products can be built more quickly than conventional buildings, and they are just as safe. Canada is a world leader in the design and construction of wood buildings. I hope that the bill will promote the construction of many beautiful, clean, and safe buildings made from Canadian wood.

Private Members' Business

The forestry industry is an economic driver in my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, because this sector represents more than 11,000 jobs. The use of wood in federal buildings would help our businesses develop new secondary- and tertiary-processing products and find new markets for local products. The forestry industry in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean has developed so much and so well, that it has formed an industrial cluster and works together with tree farmers, sawmills, pulp and paper plants, as well as secondary- and tertiary-processing companies.

I want to talk about a plant that I visited last summer, Resolute-LP in Larouche, in my riding of Jonquière. During the high season, this plant employs more than 107 workers specialized in tertiary processing who build joists. This plant focuses on home building, but if the government passes my colleague's bill, it could help develop new markets and new plants in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. The forest resource is nearby, and we already have sawmills. This bill would help create jobs and keep families in the region.

The exodus of young people and families is a problem we deal with every day in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. Developing secondary and tertiary products could not only help create and maintain jobs, but also help keep our families in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

I would like to point out three other important things about my region. Saguenay produces 20% of Quebec's lumber. It consists of 81% softwood and 19% hardwood. Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean is the largest timber reserve in Quebec. The forestry industry is composed of 500 active companies, including nine major primary-processing companies. We know that constructing buildings out of wood has several advantages. Using dry materials helps reduce the amount of waste produced in manufacturing and in getting projects built. With careful coordination of various trades, building sites are more accessible and cleaner than masonry construction sites.

● (1140)

Water is not used on that kind of construction site. There is nothing to dilute, nothing to clean up. It is a win for the environment in so many ways. Wood is an excellent insulator. It insulates six times better than brick, 12 times better than concrete, and 350 times better than steel.

In addition to the material's intrinsic qualities, wooden building systems insulate especially well. Solid wood panels in particular work well for exterior insulation. Wood houses with the same R-value as other types of construction are more energy efficient and take longer to cool down and heat up, which keeps the occupants comfortable in summer and winter alike. Even once harvested, wood continues to store that atmospheric menace, carbon dioxide. Building with wood is one way to actively fight global warming. It is a renewable material. Producing and using wood uses less energy than other materials. When it comes to production, structural wood consumes six to nine times less energy than bricks and 20 times less than concrete. Wood construction site waste is recyclable. It can be converted to serve other purposes or used as biomass to produce energy.

Wood construction is synonymous with comfort and well-being, because wood is an excellent thermal insulator, which makes for walls that are warm in winter and cool in summer and that can

breathe and regulate ambient humidity. Because of its low thermal inertia, houses made of wood warm up quickly, even after standing empty for long periods of time. Wood is such a good insulator that a building made of wood costs about 30% less to heat than an equivalent structure made from concrete, which is 15 times less insulating. Wood is ideal for architectural experimentation. It is easier to customize a habitat with wood than with other materials, by creating volumes and spaces that match each client's vision.

Wood has long had an unfair reputation as a highly combustible material. However, it is now recognized that wood is in fact stable under fire conditions. It is not deformed by heat, so it retains its mechanical characteristics. It does not burn, but chars slowly, giving firefighters more time to respond than any other type of building. It also releases little toxic gas when burning. Fire risks typically involve electrical wiring, heating equipment, kitchens, and curtains and furniture. Wood construction is fully consistent with current fire codes.

In closing, a forest is like a big garden, and we have everything to gain from bills that will help us cultivate our forests and develop new architectures, which is what the bill introduced by my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay does by promoting the use of wood in the construction of government infrastructure. I would also like to give a shout-out to the Association forestière Saguenay—Lac-St-Jean, which has done so much to make people aware of forestry and works to find innovative ways to use wood and build with wood. This association is also educating people about how our forests help our environment and how everyone benefits when wood is used in construction.

The government has been emphasizing the importance of supporting the forestry industry. I therefore urge it to put words into action by passing the bill introduced by my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

● (1145)

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and commend her for her excellent speech. I am pleased to rise this morning to speak to Bill C-354, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood).

As my NDP colleague, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, said in the House of Commons, this bill asks the government to assess the material options for large buildings, balancing the overall dollar cost of the project and the impact of its greenhouse gas footprint.

During the October 19 debate, he stated:

This bill is not meant to exclude non-wood materials but simply to ask the government to look at these new wood technologies that can be used to create beautiful, safe, and environmentally sound buildings.

The forestry sector plays a key role in the economy of my riding of Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia and the Canadian economy in general. I know that I speak on behalf of the government when I say that we strongly support the Canadian forestry industry.

Private Members' Business

According to the most recent data from Statistics Canada, the forestry industry provides over 230,000 quality jobs for middle-class Canadians across the country. Last year, it contributed over \$23 billion to Canada's nominal GDP.

The forestry industry is a high-value, high-tech industry that plays a key role in addressing some of the biggest challenges of our time, such as combatting climate change, driving innovation, and creating economic opportunities for indigenous and rural communities.

Those are not just empty words. We have taken practical measures to support the forestry industry. I would like to take a few moments to remind the House of those measures.

Our government allocated over \$150 million over four years to support clean technologies in our natural resource sectors, including the forestry industry.

As part of our softwood lumber action plan, we are investing \$867 million to help workers and communities diversify their markets to make it easier for them to access a range of financial services on commercial terms.

This is what we are talking about: loan guarantees through the Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada; access to the work-sharing program to help employers and employees supplement their incomes; funding to the provinces to provide financial support to workers who are looking for work during the transition; new funding for the indigenous forestry initiative to support indigenous participation in economic development activities; extending the investments in forestry industry transformation program and the forest innovation program.

Thanks to initiatives such as the program for export market development, we are actively seeking other foreign markets to export to, in order to strengthen the forestry industry's competitiveness and sustainability.

One of our government's top priorities is the fight against climate change, and the forestry sector will have an important role to play in that regard.

The pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, adopted in 2016, is a comprehensive plan to reduce emissions, promote clean economic growth, and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The framework's actions, supported by announcements in budget 2017, will help Canada to meet or even exceed its target to reduce emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.

The federal, provincial, and territorial governments will work together to promote greater use of wood in construction, for example, by updating building codes.

Budget 2017 also proposes to provide Natural Resources Canada with \$39.8 million over four years to support projects and activities that promote greater use of wood as a greener alternative for infrastructure projects, as well as opening up new markets for more sustainable Canadian products.

●(1150)

In the framework, our government committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and its vehicle fleet to 40% below 2005 levels by 2030. As the government's common service provider, Public Services and Procurement Canada plays a leading role in achieving those objectives.

To further support those objectives, our government uses the latest tools to assess environmental impact. Public Services and Procurement Canada is committed to using industry-recognized assessment tools for high environmental performance to measure the impact of construction projects. These tools help the department make informed decisions when evaluating the use of various materials in any given construction project and their environmental impacts. These measures show that we are steadfast in our support of the Canadian forestry industry and its long-term health and transformation.

I feel that the bill we are debating today deserves to be studied in committee. All potential measures our government could take to support the forestry industry deserve a closer look. I encourage the committee to ensure that this bill complies with the free trade agreements we have signed and with the government's procurement principles.

As everyone knows, Canada is signatory to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Government Procurement. Each one of these agreements imposes certain obligations on Canada with regard to public procurement. It is therefore important to examine the repercussions this bill could have for these agreements.

Furthermore, the government must adhere to the principles of fairness, openness, transparency, competition, and integrity in procurement. These principles are intended to ensure Canadians' confidence in their procurement system and in the way we do business on their behalf.

That being said, these issues are not insurmountable. Some creativity may be required, but it is absolutely worth the effort. We parliamentarians have a duty to ensure this bill receives proper consideration. I hope my colleagues from all parties will come together to continue seeking ways for our government to support the forestry sector.

●(1155)

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that I have been able to speak to this legislation. As a former parliamentary secretary for natural resources for six years, I saw a couple of different versions of it. It came out in 2010 as Bill C-429, which was written a bit differently, and then in the last Parliament, in 2014, as Bill C-574. The bills might have had some different text, but the approach was the same as the Bill C-354 that is before us today.

Private Members' Business

The bill calls on the government to amend section 7 of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act by highlighting the use of wood. It talks about the following:

In awarding contracts for the construction, maintenance or repair of public works, federal real property or federal immovables, the Minister shall give preference to projects that promote the use of wood, taking into account the associated costs and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

I am not sure that the wood industry needs this type of protection and government involvement. As a parliamentary secretary in the past, I saw the strength of the wood industry across Canada. I had an opportunity to go to forest products innovations, FPInnovations, in Vancouver. It has three centres across the country that work on promoting wood. It is a multi-partnership project. The government and private industry worked together to set up a non-profit company so it could study wood and wood manufacturing, new technologies, and the creation of new products. It has certainly been a successful non-partisan project, with both working together.

It is interesting to note the size of the wood industry. I read that the U.S. non-residential market was worth \$289 billion in 2010. That is a phenomenal number. In Canada, the industry has been valued at \$29 billion. Those are big amounts of money being spent on wood construction in North America, and that is non-residential.

I should touch on the fact that early in our government, we were able to make a softwood lumber agreement that was acceptable across this country. That agreement was extended in 2015 and went to the end of 2015. It brought peace to that industry for a number of years. Canadian companies had the opportunity to go not only around the world with their products, but particularly into the United States. Canada has had access to the U.S. market for so long that it is unfortunate the Liberal government has failed to be able to bring a softwood lumber agreement forward. That has had an impact on the Canadian marketplace, and that will continue.

The Liberal government is talking about sending this legislation to committee, but we are certainly not dealing with some of the bigger issues, the bigger failures, that the government has faced in dealing with this subject.

A number of flaws are created by supporting this legislation. As soon as government picks one industry or one person or one entity over others, there are imbalances and challenges right away, in a number of places in the system.

I would like to point out that picking one product in order to highlight it for construction across Canada certainly, in our opinion, contravenes Canada's legal obligations under a number of provisions in international and domestic trade agreements. Those agreements typically prohibit any kind of discriminatory, unnecessary barriers to trade, and any legislation that then begins to highlight and amend that process will be challenged basically immediately.

With respect to contract tendering requirements, we built provisions into the tendering process so that one type of product could not be highlighted or favoured over others. It is obvious that if that were to happen, other industries, such as steel and concrete, are going to question what is going on when their products are set aside while the government tends to favour a competitive product.

● (1200)

It also would contravene domestic agreements, for example, the agreement on internal trade, if we start talking about government tendering being affected by the use of particular products. That agreement actually prohibits the introduction of any kind of a bias in the form of technological specifications in favour of particular goods or services, unless there is some need in terms of safety or those kinds of things, for that to be there.

We do not believe that Bill C-354 is going to be a good bill for the government to pass. I know it is a private member's bill, but it seems like the message we are getting from the other side, which is a very strange and different one for the government to be giving, is that the government is going to be sending this to committee to be studied. Typically, if that is the case, we see these bills going forward from there.

I do not have very much time to speak to this issue today, but one of the other things we are concerned about is that this could be begin to affect things like NAFTA. The government has failed on NAFTA negotiations as well. It is apparent that things are not going very well there, at all.

The Liberals have never had a commitment to trade. They have never been able to see a way through to getting these free trade agreements done. Certainly we do not want to see something else that is going to start impacting NAFTA, or whatever follows from that. We do not want to see things impacting our WTO agreements. We certainly do not need our free trade agreements to be violated.

The market is a powerful thing. It chooses, based on the quality of the products that are available there. We all believe that wood is very competitive. It is able to compete with concrete and steel. There are other places where the other products are critical. I have watched four high-rise apartments go up in the area where we live here in Ottawa in the last 10 years, and if they did not have concrete and steel in them, they certainly would not have been built to the height that they are.

It is good to see that the new lumber building codes are changing as well, so they can do the four-storey buildings now. They are also looking at six stories, and perhaps up to 10. Those are the kinds of innovations that we need to see, new products and new technology. We do not need the government to be interfering with the marketplace, especially on things as important as construction across this country.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands will have three minutes remaining for his remarks when the House next resumes business on the motion.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017**

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to resuming debate and the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, I will let him know that there are only five minutes remaining in the time provided for debate on the motion.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that I have only five minutes left to contribute, because the government essentially brought in closure. Instead of submitting a problematic bill to the House of Commons for debate and improvement, the government decided to resort to a form of closure that would prevent us from exploring every aspect of this bill.

The NDP is against referring Bill C-59 to committee in part because it does not achieve what the Liberals promised to Canadians. During the last campaign, the Liberals said that they were wrong to vote in favour of the former Harper government's Bill C-51, which encroached on Canadians' civil rights, including the right to privacy. The Liberals said they would right that wrong when they were in power.

What they did was introduce Bill C-59, which also raises some serious concerns around privacy protection and does nothing to fix the Bill C-51's mistakes. The Liberals introduced a bill that does not fix any of the Harper government's flaws or mistakes on this issue. They are continuing along the same path, and as such, Bill C-59 will not address the gaps in Bill C-51. That is why we, the NDP, oppose this bill.

● (1205)

[English]

However, what the Liberals have done is put in place a procedural trick, and it is a procedural trick that is a type of closure. What this does is twofold.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, when we look at rules for the House of Commons around omnibus legislation, Standing Order 69.1 would give you the power to divide this legislation, because it is omnibus legislation with negative impacts on Canadians. However, because of this procedural trick from the Liberal government, you, Mr. Speaker, are not permitted, under the very strict framework of Standing Order 69.1, to divide this legislation. Therefore, we are forced to vote on a motion of the government that does not allow each and every one of us as parliamentarians to actually vote on the rare but still occurring positive aspects of the bill, and vote against the negative aspects of the bill. It is the heart and soul of parliamentary democracy to know why we are voting and to vote in the interests of our constituents, to stand up in this House and vote. The Standing Order 69.1 provisions were put into place so that we do not have this bulldozing of parliamentary democracy by the

government, because the Speaker has the power to divide the bill. That is, except in the case of this particular procedural motion that the government has put into place, which stops your ability, Mr. Speaker, to divide this, so that, as parliamentarians, we can vote in the interests of our citizens, the constituents.

The current government has done even worse than the former Harper government. When we look at the number of times proportional to the number of non-appropriation bills passed, the new Liberal government is 25% worse than the old Harper government in its invoking of closure. I am not even including this procedural trick. What we have is a Liberal government that made many promises back in 2015, and one of the Liberals' promises was to respect parliamentary democracy. What the government is doing today is symbolic of what it has done over the last two years. It is 25% worse than the Harper government on closure, and now it is putting this procedural trick into place so that Canadians cannot have members of Parliament voting on each aspect of this omnibus legislation. It is for that reason that we say no to the motion and no to the bill.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 12:08 p.m., pursuant to the order made on Thursday, November 23, 2017, the question on the motion is deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until to the expiry of Government Orders later this day.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 2

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-63, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are six motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-63. Motions Nos. 1 to 6 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

● (1355)

[Translation]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 6 to the House.

The hon. member for Ottawa West—Nepean is not present to move her motion at report stage. Accordingly, Motion No. 1 will not be put to the House.

The hon. member for Montcalm is not present to move his motion at report stage, nor is the member who gave notice of the same motion. Accordingly, Motions Nos. 2, 3, and 4 will not be put to the House.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP) moved:

That Bill C-63 be amended by deleting Clause 176.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC) moved:

That Bill C-63 be amended by deleting the Schedule.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, I am pleased to rise to speak to our amendment, but also to the entirety of Bill C-63, the Liberal government's budget implementation bill.

We proposed one amendment, but we could have proposed dozens given the great many things that are omitted, incomplete, or wrong-headed in Bill C-63.

The oddest thing about this bill is that it authorizes the Minister of Finance to inject \$480 million in the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

The budget announced \$256 million, and Bill C-63 increases that amount to \$480 million. During committee hearings of the Standing Committee on Finance, we asked departmental representatives questions about the goals of this Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

During the last election campaign, the Liberals said that we had an infrastructure deficit and that we had to invest in water and wastewater systems, bridges, and roads. People voted for infrastructure investment here, in Quebec, Ontario, or British Columbia. We never really discussed building infrastructure in Asia. I agree that Asian countries need infrastructure; that is quite all right.

However, when we asked whether these investments would be used to privatize infrastructure, we were told that we would be investing in public-private partnerships, or PPPs. At least now we have a general idea.

Will this investment yield a return or dividends fairly quickly? No, it is a long-term investment. The goal is to create a market that is receptive to Canadian private investment in Asia. That is why we are going to invest there. It will pave the way for our companies to invest in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China.

Did the Liberal Party tell voters about this in the 2015 election? No.

We do not believe this to be the most judicious use of \$480 million, especially given that this was never mentioned before and that the goal is not even to get a return on the invested public funds.

We will be minor participants in a major Asian infrastructure bank. Our money will be sent over there and we have no idea when we will get it back. That investment will be made over there without any return on investment. We will get our investment back if we ever decide to sell our shares, and assuming that other countries want to purchase them. That is a strange investment. We do not quite understand what the objective is here.

Worst of all is the fact that the \$480 million of Canadian and Quebec taxpayers' money that will be put into an infrastructure bank, one that will be controlled by China, I might add, will be reported as foreign aid. It will count as foreign aid so that we can raise our level

of international aid, which is currently an abysmal 0.27%, closer to the objective of 0.7% set by the United Nations. It is appalling.

The government plans to engage in some sort of dubious investment scheme that will not yield any returns and count it as international aid in the budget.

It is misleading. The government thinks that Canadians do not see what it is really up to. That is why we tabled this amendment. We want to take away the finance minister's ability to write a cheque for \$480 million on which we will not see any return on investment and which will be used to privatize infrastructure. The government would have Canadians believe that the money is going to foreign aid, but that is not what I would call foreign aid.

The government is helping foreign companies and countries do some of their work, without generating any returns for Canada. The government is doing this to look good abroad in the hopes that Canadians companies will be afforded business opportunities down the road. That is the shell game the Liberals are playing with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

We do not think that this is a good investment. Canada also has an infrastructure bank that the NDP calls the infrastructure privatization bank, which was planned, designed, and practically led by Black-Rock, one of the largest investment companies in the world. That company held countless meetings with the Minister of Finance to concoct this infrastructure privatization bank.

It is funny because, during the election campaign, the Liberals told us that it would run a small deficit and build a lot of infrastructure. After two years under the Liberals, we now have a large deficit and no infrastructure. The Liberals keep saying that it is coming, but we have not seen anything yet. The board of directors of the infrastructure privatization bank will be set up this year, and its members will be appointed. The board will then ask for money from private corporations and investment funds to build infrastructure in our communities.

During the campaign, they said that interest rates were low and that it was a good time to borrow money to invest in our communities, in creating wealth, and in infrastructure. That logic is sound, but what they never told us was that three-quarters of the investment would come from the private sector, and that that money would be used to pay for projects. What kind of return did the government promise the private companies involved in the infrastructure investment bank? Was it 7%, 8%, or 9%?

The state is supposed to invest in our communities to make sure we have infrastructure that meets people's needs. Private investors invest to make a profit. Sometimes those two objectives are aligned, but not always. Because of the new infrastructure privatization bank, Canadians and Quebecers, the people who use the highways and bridges, who go to the skating rinks and swimming pools, are the ones who will have to pay for all that. That is the only way it will be worthwhile for private investors. The infrastructure has to make money. Will infrastructure projects be selected based on what people need or on how potentially profitable they are?

Government Orders

This is where our vision is diametrically opposed to that of the Liberals. On this file, they are really adopting a neo-liberal approach, meaning that the government is there to help private companies make a profit, not to work for the common good or the public interest. If the Liberals really wanted to be consistent and logical, they would have borrowed money in the international markets in order to raise the funds to invest in our infrastructure, their famous social infrastructure. However, that is not what they are doing. They are going to create a kind of super PPP, or public-private partnership, whose primary purpose will be to guarantee a return on private investment. We think that this is a shame and that people will be appalled.

The Liberals are always saying they are working for the middle class and those working hard to join it, but these are the very people who will be paying for the new infrastructure to be created by the Liberal government. On top of taking money out of Canadians' pockets, Bill C-63 contains no measures to fight tax evasion, aggressive tax avoidance, or tax havens. According to Statistics Canada, tax havens cost us at least \$8 billion a year. We are losing \$8 billion a year in uncollected taxes because of our agreements with the Cayman Islands, Barbados, and the Cook Islands, like the one the Liberals signed last year. The amount we lose every year is enough to pay for two Champlain Bridges or to build 21 Videotron Centres in Quebec City. I should note that there is another problem in Quebec City, namely the fact that we have a \$400-million arena but no hockey team to play in it.

Bill C-63 does not meet the needs of Quebeckers and Canadians. There is the Asian infrastructure bank that the government is putting money into that is obscure and misleading. There is the infrastructure privatization bank here, which is going to force Canadians to pay more for public services and access to certain services, whether at the provincial or municipal level. There is a lack of real action and political will to recover the money that is owed to us.

Tax evasion is theft, and the Liberals are letting it happen. It is shameful.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. I serve on the finance committee with him, and we have debated this matter in committee. I proposed two amendments to the bill to try to remove the Asian infrastructure bank, which the Liberals seem to be very interested in.

I wonder if the member would agree that this bank could be described as crony capitalism. That kind of capitalism means that certain people have access to the government and they tell it which projects they would like it to fund in Asia. That is what cronyism means, when Liberal friends get first choice.

I would like to hear what other members think of that.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is always a pleasure to work with him in committee.

A disproportionately high number of former Liberal Party ministers, organizers, and fundraisers were awarded contracts for cannabis permits. I understand the hon. member's concern.

Is cronyism between Asian governments, certain companies there and certain companies here in Canada, what is behind the use of

taxpayers' money and public money to pave the way for future political patronage to benefit government friends?

That is an excellent question. Judging by what has been going on these past few months, that is highly likely unfortunately.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concerns. Any time investments are made, there are concerns about the rate of return. The infrastructure bank investment into Asia talks about a return to Canadian taxpayers. However, the real opportunity, as it has been understood by folks on this side of the House, is that a lot of Canadian companies have expertise in the delivery of large infrastructure programs, especially in the construction management field, as well as with architects and engineering firms.

One of the things that is presented as an opportunity already within the riding I represent is that people with foreign credentials, people who were perhaps born overseas, or have studied overseas, have come back to Canada, and whose credentials are not recognized, can find employment with engineering, construction, and architectural firms. As these firms gear up for the infrastructure investments on the table in that part of world, people with foreign credentials are now seen as an advantage to have inside their firms because of the work they can do overseas.

If local Canadians, who have been hard to employ in their professions, would get work out of this, would the NDP have an eye to support it? There is an extraordinary opportunity now present to immigrants and refugees who arrive here with credentials that quite often are not recognized. They would now have an opportunity to participate in a very high level way and do so in a way that actually would return an investment to Canadian taxpayers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct my colleague. In committee, we were told in no uncertain terms that there is no hope for a return on investment in the short term. It is not a question of making money with the public investments that would be made in this bank.

I agree with the hon. member. I also want architects, engineers, and our Canadian experts to be able to make investments and work on projects in India, China, or Bangladesh. Obviously that is what we want. Why do we need to put in half a billion dollars to make that happen? Why is that necessary? It is extremely expensive and yet, our expertise and our companies are already available to take part in the projects.

Do we have to put a token on the table? Is there an entry fee for taking part in the project?

Government Orders

I would have liked that half billion dollars to be invested in creating infrastructure here at home. Our architects, our engineers, and our workers would benefit from building the infrastructure that we need here and now.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it troubles me when the Liberals run for office, go to the communities, and promise one thing and then we get the budget bill, with \$180 million going to Asia, not that Asia does not need better infrastructure. I have worked in Indonesia and Bangladesh and know the need. The infrastructure needs in our rural, isolated aboriginal communities troubles me. Not one cent in this budget, or last budget, goes toward helping those communities to get off diesel or switch over to what they would prefer—access to clean energy.

Does the member think that perhaps the government has its priorities in the wrong direction?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. She is quite right.

We obviously want people in Asia to have access to more services and infrastructure. This is an appealing investment opportunity for our companies. At this time, we do not see the need to invest public money in this type of bank.

My colleague is quite right when she says that there are urgent needs in many of our communities. We need infrastructure and water systems, for example. Some communities have difficulty accessing drinking water. In some communities, there is no electricity and people rely on generators, which use fuel. There are urgent needs in our own country, but we are not addressing them.

On the weekend, we learned that 25 of the wealthiest Canadians own more assets than 40% of the poorest Canadians. Unfortunately, the Liberals are doing nothing to address this inequality.

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to debate these report stage amendments. I get to move amendments very rarely, and so I am pleased that we are going to be debating at least one of them. I tried to move them at committee, but I was not successful there.

I am going to focus most of my comments, if not all of them, on the portions in division 2 that deal specifically with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

I will start with a Yiddish proverb. I always have these. “Everyone knows where his shoe pinches”. My pain point is with this infrastructure structure bank. I have a serious problem with throwing away a half billion dollars of Canadian taxpayer money for a project that at best is a “nice to have” at this point.

I do not know if the Liberals have noticed, but they are broke. They are \$20 billion in the hole just this year. They are racking up debt in large amounts. This is not the time to be throwing away a half billion dollars of taxpayer money on such a project.

At committee, we heard from expert witnesses from the government. They were officials who came in and said that this is

an opportunity for Canada. Just like we are members of the Asian Development Bank, it is an opportunity to invest Canada's money. Well, it is taxpayer money, and they should honour and steward it. They should not just throw it away like this.

There is no gain for Canada in this. We would be buying less than a 1% share in this AIIB, which would give us the same voting rights as Poland or Israel. The way decisions are made by the bank is by a majority decision of the board. The bank is led by the Chinese government. It has a Chinese national president. It is based in Beijing. It is not like the Asian Development Bank, which is an easy comparison that the government makes. The Asian Development Bank is based in Manila. It has a Japanese president. I do not know if the government has noticed, but Japan is our ally. China is not. Japan has an exemplary human rights record in the past 30 years. China does not.

This is not about China bashing. This is about the proper use of taxpayer dollars and where the Liberals are putting them at a time when they are running a \$20-billion deficit. In comparison, we heard from the New Democrat member who said that infrastructure dollars should be spent here and not in Asia, and that this is the wrong way to go.

Using Alberta as an example, the Liberals have only completed 27 out of 174 projects. Two years into their mandate, and now they are sending a half billion dollars over to Asia to build infrastructure there and to finance loans overseas for these 21 projects that have already been approved by the AIIB. In comparison, when the previous Conservative government was in power, between 2006 and 2008, it completed 100 projects in Alberta. The comparison here is 27 to 100. Where are the priorities? It is an easy question to ask the Government of Canada today.

This is an interesting part, where the budget and foreign affairs and foreign relations of Canada kind of intersect, but putting \$480 million of taxpayer money into this bank does not advance our international interests. It does not advance our national interests. It advances China's foreign interests through the belt and road initiative.

It is not just me saying this. Members just have to read the speeches of Xi Jinping, the president of China, in 2015 at different summits where he makes a distinct connection between the belt and road, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. They are connected together. The journals of *Contemporary Politics*, different Chinese journals, academics, professors, and foreign service officials from their governments make this point as well. The intent of the AIIB is to turn infrastructure toward China and the entire Asian continent. This is its intention. It is a tool of China's foreign policy, and it does not hide it but is very open about it. Anybody who takes the time to read any of these documents, which are publicly available, will find that China does not hide this fact. It is not as if this is some grand conspiracy. All of this documentation is very much public.

Government Orders

The Prime Minister is going to China to perhaps kick off these so-called free trade negotiations. Was the AIIB investment, the first \$480 million, a down payment in order to get in through the door, in order to get an opportunity just to meet with China? Is that how these negotiations are going to go? To get to the next step, we have to pay the Chinese government a certain slice, and more taxpayer dollars have to be sent to it.

The thing that is most degrading for myself as an Albertan is that the AIIB is financing, loaning money, to two projects that are pipeline projects: the TANAP line in Azerbaijan, and the Bangladeshi line. Both of these are natural gas pipelines.

We have such difficulty building pipelines in Canada, yet we are so ready to hand over Canadian taxpayer dollars to support the loans that will end up building pipelines overseas. Some have said, and it has been said at committee too, that part of the reason we are investing is so Canadian companies can have an opportunity to bid. That is absolutely not true. They could have bid for the project before. Officials have confirmed this. It is publicly available on its website as well that Canadian companies could have bid for the contracts before.

The interesting part is that when we review all the projects, how the RFP was done, and which companies received the projects, they were either state-owned enterprises, SOEs, or Chinese sub-contractors, the majority. That is interesting. This so-called bank that is supposedly not dominated by China, and not directed by the Chinese government in fact, furthers the ends of the Chinese government, and ensures that many of the contracts were handed to Chinese-based companies, whether state or privately owned, if we can even call them that, or that they supposedly exist in China. That is the galling part.

There were two pipeline projects that were approved last year. Actually, one of them was approved in and around the time the current government tabled its budget, so it would have known this. When I asked the question whether human rights and environmental reviews had been done for every single project before agreeing to join, the Liberals said that they had indeed been done. I am still waiting for that information to be given to the committee. I am still waiting for that information to be passed on.

We are investing \$480 million for a 1% share. We are not on the board of governors. We are not on the board of directors. We likely will never be able to get to that point. We are just giving the money away when we are running a \$20-billion deficit in this country. Therefore, instead of good-paying, middle-class construction jobs being created here in Canada through public procurement for infrastructure, we are doing it for the benefit of the middle class in Asia, in whatever countries and whatever assortment there is.

One thing we will hear is that some will say that there are other multinational institutions that are financing some of these projects, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. In fact, only 10 of the 21 current projects this AIIB is financing actually have multiple partners doing that. The other 11 are purely funded by this Chinese-led bank. Among the future projects, only three of nine have other international partners funding them. Again, the majority of them are funded by the Chinese government.

Some of the witnesses from the government side came and talked about de-risking, that government money, government largesse, middle-class taxpayers giving large sums of money to this bank, will de-risk a high-risk project. That does not exist. That does not happen. By government putting money into a project, it does not suddenly reduce the risk magically, all it does is offset the risk. That way the company will still get paid. We do not de-risk a project that way. The risk is still there. Government participation cannot reduce the risks of cost overruns, natural disasters, supplies not getting there on time, or a worker strike. Government participation does not eliminate those risks for a construction project. What it can do is ensure that the rich, wealthy, and well-monied international elites get their share of the pie. They get their share of Canadian middle-class taxpayer dollars. That is why we have to remove it from the budget. This is the wrong time to be putting half a billion dollars of taxpayer cash into a bank that will never build an infrastructure project in Canada. That should be where we first look at infrastructure projects.

I understand why the government is doing this. If we look at its record in Alberta, it is terrible. There are 27 out of 174 projects completed. That is on its infrastructure website. Therefore, it admits willingly that it is failing in this regard.

I talked about the RFP process before. A lot of the regimes that the money is going to are not known as liberal democracies, they are more illiberal democracies at best and pseudo-democracies at worst. I do not blame countries like Azerbaijan for trying to better themselves. Of course they should be doing that, building projects, finding the financing wherever they can, both in the private and public sectors. That is up to them and their governments. However, I do not see why the Canadian government should be using taxpayer dollars to this end. We are running a \$20-billion deficit. We should be financing and helping sustain good-paying, middle-class energy jobs here. The fact that this bank is going to be loaning money to sustain the TANAP line in Azerbaijan and Bangladesh is absolutely ridiculous.

Therefore, I look forward to a continuing debate on this. Hopefully, the government will listen and will remove it from the budget.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a world leader in infrastructure projects. Canada is an active and constructive participant in emerging markets, in growth markets. We take Canadian expertise to the world. Our world-leading companies are recognized and welcomed the world over. This includes institutions like Brookfield, but also the CPPIB, and others. In short, Canada has made a name for itself in infrastructure development the world over.

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The member would have us pull back, hunch over, and retreat within our borders, as opposed to spreading our economic wings, improving Canada's influence around the world, and helping to achieve economic growth at home and abroad. Would the member not concede that this is a feather in the cap of Canada?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, that is an expensive feather: \$480 million of taxpayer funds for a feather. That is interesting procurement on that side.

No one is talking about removing ourselves from the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, because those are led by our allies, countries we have deep trust with. This is a bank led by the Chinese government. Do the Liberals trust them to do everything in the best interests of Canada? I just explained the entire process of how it finances the projects. The majority of sub-contracting jobs go to Chinese companies. Many of the companies involved are stated-owned companies.

The best part is, whether we participate in the bank or not—and I think we should not—Canadian companies could still build on it. Our world-class construction leaders could bid on these projects, because the bidding process is entirely available online. We were not missing out before, and we would not miss out in the future by not participating in this.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the concerns of my colleague from Calgary Shepard around Liberal spending. Perhaps he could comment on this. Recently, we learned there is a skating rink being built in front of Parliament that will cost Canadian taxpayers \$5.6 million. This is a block away from the world's largest and longest skating rink at the Rideau Canal, and four blocks away from the rink of dreams the City of Ottawa has as well.

I am concerned. Not one person from Courtney—Alberni is going to use that rink. In fact, we need a rink. The five nations in the central region of Vancouver Island, Tofino, and Ucluelet are looking to build a hockey rink, and they need around that amount for the federal government's share to build a rink in our region.

We know the government is confused in terms of its decision-making, and governing is about decision-making. It is going to cost over \$215,000 a day for a temporary hockey rink. Perhaps the member could share his comments and thoughts on how that is impacting people in his community, and across Canada, and how they feel about it.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, that is the member's pinch point, how the government is spending. The Liberals are bad stewards of the resources Canadian taxpayers are forced to give them through taxation. This \$5.6-million project is a good example.

I will give him an example from my riding. Right behind my constituency office, there is a space allocated for a fully enclosed lacrosse facility that has been waiting for funds from a new recreational program of the federal government. We have the matching funds, \$1.5 million, ready to go. This would be a year-round facility for lacrosse players—about 6,000 of them all across Calgary—to go and play. It would revitalize the area we are in.

My constituency office is inside the city, but I still find deer at my back door, among people who have nowhere else to go who

sometimes sleep there, unfortunately. It would revitalize the area. It would fundamentally change Ogden, and the commercial area it is in, for \$1.5 million of matching funds.

This gives us an example. This would be a year-round fully built facility run by volunteers, and \$1.5 million is all they are looking for, but in return \$5.6 million was spent on this hockey rink just outside Parliament Hill.

I heard a member ask why I do not like hockey. I love hockey, but no one can play hockey on it. It is a hockey rink with no hockey allowed.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate, I would remind hon. members that while the bill before the House is in the nature of a budget implementation bill, which normally welcomes debate across the spectrum of finances, we are also under the rubric of report stage motions and the debate would normally be focused around the motions before the House on Bill C-63.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure of being here today. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-63, which implements the budget and, in particular, measures to protect Canadians who are interns, especially young Canadians.

We know that knowledge and expertise are essential to the success of our community, our society, and our economy. They are the drivers of innovation and keep Canada ahead of the curve when it comes to change.

[*English*]

They are also key to a strong and thriving middle-class and imperative for those seeking to join the middle class. That is why Bill C-63 is so important. It includes changes to ensure that interns are treated fairly when they are in workplaces in the federally regulated private sector to develop the skills they need and successfully transition into the workforce.

In budget 2017, we made a commitment to eliminate unpaid internships in the federal private sector where internships are not part of a formal education program. We recognize that internships can give Canadians the hands-on workplace-based learning experience they need to make a successful transition into the workforce. However, let me be clear: some internships, particularly those that are unpaid, can be unfair and exploitative. Young people and others who are desperate to find a way into the labour market can find themselves in situations that cause them undue hardship. We have all heard the stories of a supposed intern being used as free labour, and that is just not right.

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We want to make sure that interns are treated fairly. To that end, Bill C-63 proposes changes that would amend the Canada Labour Code to prohibit unpaid internships, unless they are undertaken to fulfill requirements of a program offered by a secondary or post-secondary educational institution or vocational school or an equivalent institution outside of Canada. For those internships that are legitimately part of an educational program and are unpaid, the intern would be covered by a modified set of labour standard protections, such as maximum hours of work, weekly days of rest, and general holidays.

[*Translation*]

The proposed amendments are consistent with our government's fundamental position that interns should be paid for their work. The only justifiable exception is if an intern receives credit as part of an academic program. In this case, it is appropriate for the intern not to be paid. The majority of stakeholders, experts, and other administrations in Canada agree with us on this key principle.

[*English*]

The amendments are also consistent with our government's overarching goal of providing young Canadians with fair and meaningful opportunities through programs designed to help them gain the skills and experience they need to find good jobs. That is not all we are doing. We all know that the workforce today is dramatically different from what it was a decade ago. A changing economy means new challenges, concerns, and opportunities for employers, students, and post-secondary institutions. Students are telling us that it is hard to find jobs: with no experience, they get no job; but with no job, they get no experience. Post-secondary institutions are telling us that students need real work experience in their fields before they graduate and that employers need to be more connected with education.

We also recognize the need to better align what is taught in post-secondary institutions with the needs of employers, and we are committed to creating high-quality paid-work placements to give students the on-the-job experience they will need to succeed when they graduate. That is why we introduced the Government of Canada's student work placements. Over the next five years, almost 60,000 Canadian students will have paid-work placement opportunities, like co-ops, internships, and apprenticeships.

We will make it happen in two ways. First, we are investing \$73 million over four years in student work placements. This funding will help to create close to 10,000 work placements for students in STEM and business over the next four years, with extra supports for under-represented students to make sure they are also offered placements. Our student work placements, in addition to our partnership with Mitacs, will ensure that 60,000 paid-work-placement opportunities are available for Canadian students over the next five years. These work placements will ensure that students develop the skills that employers are seeking, and that they become job-ready. It is part of our plan for creating the kind of economic growth that does not leave anybody behind and ensures that all Canadians have a shot of success.

Another key component of our plan is to give young Canadians the best start in their careers. Each year, our government invests more than \$330 million through its youth employment strategy. We

expanded this strategy and provided significant investments through budget 2017. We are investing more than \$395 million over three years for the youth employment strategy, starting in 2017-18.

Combined with similar measures in budget 2016, these investments will help more than 33,000 vulnerable youth, including indigenous youth develop the skills they need to find work or go back to school; create 15,000 new green jobs for young Canadians in sectors like agriculture and renewable energy; and provide over 1,600 new job opportunities for young people in organizations that celebrate our Canadian heritage.

The youth employment strategy has three complementary streams: skills link, which helps young people who face more barriers to employment than others to develop the skills they need to get a job or to go back to school; career focus, which helps post-secondary graduates find jobs through paid internships; and Canada's summer jobs, which provides wage subsidies to employers to create summer employment for secondary and post-secondary students.

Young Canadians are the future of our economy and have the talent and determination to succeed in today's labour market. Since we formed the government, we have made it a priority to help them get the education and training they need to find good jobs and build good lives for themselves and their families. Our plan is working. Youth unemployment is now the lowest on record.

To conclude, the amendments we are proposing in Bill C-63 will help to ensure that interns in the federally regulated private sector are treated fairly while they gain the hands-on, practical experience they need to transition to the workforce.

More generally, I urge my fellow members to support Bill C-63 so that we can continue to make smart investments that will help students and anyone trying to secure a better future succeed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which I think gave a pretty clear picture of what happens when the time comes to vote.

The member spent most of his time talking about what qualifies as an unpaid internship, according to the conditions he mentioned. I agree on this measure. However, although he focused on this aspect, he ignored all of the other amendments to the Canada Labour Code, in particular those related to leave for family responsibility, domestic violence, or traditional aboriginal practices. Not only do they fall short of what we were expecting, but the leave is unpaid.

Does my hon. colleague honestly believe that they could offer victims of domestic violence unpaid leave without setting off alarm bells?

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Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Ten minutes of speaking time is not enough to talk about every issue that a bill like the budget implementation bill addresses. However, I would like to thank him for agreeing with us about unpaid internships.

We think that we are doing the right thing for the most vulnerable Canadians, including students who are trying to get the work experience they need to find a job and build a successful career.

Obviously, we think that there must be guidelines or some sort of framework so that students and interns are not left to their own devices and are protected under the Canada Labour Code.

With regard to the issues the member raised, I think that the government has taken a step in the right direction by introducing new leave for various circumstances, including traditional aboriginal practices or domestic violence. I believe that this is a step in the right direction. These measures are being introduced in response to what we learned through extensive consultations.

[*English*]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's focus on youth and the initiatives that we have taken to ensure that our young people have opportunities to succeed now and well into the future. In my riding of Whitby, part of Durham region, we have seen a lot of the impact of the last two budgets, particularly the last. The unemployment rate in the Durham region right now is 5.3%. We have not seen such a low rate in about 15 years.

Could my colleague expand a bit more on some of the strategies put forward in this budget that will help see that unemployment rate stay low, or go even lower, now and in the long term?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question.

Two weeks ago, I got a chance to visit her wonderful riding and see how very dynamic Whitby's private sector and non-profit entrepreneurs are. However, I did notice a problem in Whitby. I do not want to make comparisons, but I am a bit biased. In my region, the Quebec City area, unemployment is at 4.4%, which virtually means full employment. This also poses all kinds of challenges for employers seeking to recruit and retain labour in the region.

We held a round table with the non-profit sector, and one of the points that was raised was the importance of the Canada summer jobs program. Members may recall that we have doubled funding to this program since coming to office.

The Canada summer jobs program is a way to lend a hand to organizations that often accomplish a lot with very little, as well as to give young Canadians a chance to gain work experience in a field that interests them. We saw the impact this program has had in Whitby, and I also see it in my riding when I visit organizations. This is just one of the many aspects of our youth strategy.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, heavy rainfall has led to a state of emergency for the Tseshaht First Nation and flood warnings across the Alberni Valley region. This is the fourth year in a row we have had what was deemed to be a 100-year flood.

Climate change has moved from being a future threat to a present danger. Extreme weather events such as floods are increasing in frequency and severity. The Insurance Bureau of Canada recently mapped the flood risk for people across the country and found that 19% of Canadian households are at some level of risk. Canada is the only Group of Seven country with no national flood program, and we need one.

Last year the parliamentary budget officer estimated that the financial cost of natural disasters over the next five years, driven in part by climate change, would be far greater than previously estimated, and would be \$900 million in fact. That is far in excess of what the government has set aside for such events.

Maybe the member could speak about what the government is going to do to make sure that we mitigate the impacts of climate change on our infrastructure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I do not think anyone on this side of the House questions the consequences of climate change. That is why the Minister of the Environment announced our plan to price carbon pollution. That is why we announced a \$180-billion investment in infrastructure, including in public transit, to reduce our contribution to climate change.

I take my colleague's comment about flooding very seriously, and I thank him.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to address Bill C-63, the budget implementation act. Today I will speak to the concerns I share with many Canadians.

In my riding this past summer, I heard from countless constituents at round tables with small and medium-sized businesses. Even though I heard from hundreds of different people, each of their situations was unique. One thing was common, Canadians are overwhelmingly concerned about how their businesses and their families will make ends meet.

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My constituents of Markham—Unionville are concerned about the Liberal government's economic update. The cycle of debt and deficit is not the key to success. Sensible budgeting and limited government are what will allow our economy to flourish. The same free market principles that allow small businesses to be successful can be applied to our economy. The free market allows for optimal allocation of resources, incentives to work hard, and more freedom.

This is why I stand here today to speak against the government's out-of-control spending and huge deficits that will leave our children to pick up the bill. I stand today as the voice of taxpayers, the average Canadian, and fight every day to leave money in the hands of the people who earned it, not to be foolishly spent by the Liberal government. Businesses have to find ways to stretch a dollar but the government throws it away. We saw this foolish pattern in the previous budget, the fall economic statement, and now in the budget implementation bill. This just confirms to Canadians that the government cannot be trusted with our nation's finances.

Let me highlight what the record shows.

First, budget 2017 projected a \$28.5-billion deficit for the 2017-18 fiscal year. This is almost triple the Liberal promise of a small \$10-billion deficit.

Second, the 2017 fall economic update confirmed the government was still spending double its promised small \$10-billion deficit.

Third, the Liberals have broken their promise to balance the budget in 2019 and have no plan to return to balanced budgets. This is simply irresponsible.

Finally, under the Liberal government, more than 80% of middle-class Canadians are paying more taxes today than they were paying in 2015 under the former Conservative government.

It is clear that the Liberal government does not have the best interests of Canadians in mind. Bill C-63 shows us that the finance minister is good at spending other people's money. It is a shame that the government continually attacks those who create wealth, are entrepreneurial, and want to work hard to succeed. We saw this just a few months ago when the finance minister introduced tax planning using private corporations.

Canadians are scared to do business at home. There is no incentive and they are taxed out of the market. Almost every day I hear another example of an entrepreneur, a doctor, a small corporation leaving our country to do business south the border.

This trend cannot continue. We need to allow a healthy environment for businesses to flourish for our economy and in turn our country to be successful. On top of businesses leaving, the debt and deficit continue to rise. It is like the finance minister cannot help himself. The previous Conservative government did right by Canadians.

According to Finance Canada, there was a surplus of \$3.2 billion at the end of 2015. The Liberals cannot accept the fact that we balanced the budget in 2014-15, and we did so ahead of our original schedule.

The last economic outlook given by the Minister of Finance showed that revenues were holding up better than expected. GDP growth in the last quarter of 2015 was also higher than expected.

The previous Conservative government created jobs during the worst economic downturn since the great recession. Canada had the best job creation and economic growth record among G7 countries.

The previous Conservative government balanced the budget. After running a targeted simultaneous program that created and maintained approximately 200,000 jobs, it kept its promise to balance the budget, and it left the Liberals with a \$3.2 billion surplus at the end of 2015.

The previous Conservative government lowered taxes. We reduced taxes to their lowest point in 50 years, with a typical family of four saving almost \$7,000 per year.

The previous Conservative government created approximately 1.3 million net new jobs, the most per capita in the G7. These were high-quality jobs, with 80% of them full-time and another 80% of them in the private sector.

The Prime Minister and the finance minister were lucky enough to inherit good fortune in the form of a balanced budget and a recovering economy thanks to the Conservatives. However, their carelessness and mismanagement spent this good fortune very quickly.

Here we are now halfway through the Liberal government's mandate and all we can see is that the Prime Minister is giving with one hand while taking with the other. This is not sustainable, this is not responsible, and Canadians are concerned.

In order to feed their greedy spending, the Liberals have raised taxes on hydro, gasoline, home heating, health and dental benefits, employee discounts, personal savings, life-saving therapies, and of course local businesses.

The government is hurting the very people it claims to want to help. Job creating businesses will not invest in the Canadian economy if they do not know the cost of doing business. Saddling businesses with higher taxes, changing the rules of the game when they are not looking, and handing borrowed money from one politician to another is not going to create jobs. Mom and pop shops will face higher taxes, which will put many out of business.

It is high tax hypocrisy for the Prime Minister and finance minister to force middle-class Canadians to pay for the government's out-of-control spending while their family fortunes remain untouched. Too many Canadian families are already struggling to make ends meet. They cannot afford to be taxed further.

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I am in favour of free market, where people are able to get ahead by working hard. It contributes to economic freedom, prosperity, and creates a competitive market. This creates more choice for both the firm and the consumer. Free market principles and hard work are what allowed me to become a successful businessman. These principles are what inspire the Canadian dream and are the way we build a prosperous country.

Every economist knows that the only reason our economy has slowed is because companies have stopped investing. The government is stifling opportunities. This is not right. I cannot understand the current Liberal approach that more government spending, higher taxes, and regulatory uncertainty will solve this problem. I obviously cannot support the legislation. Taxpayers do not deserve this. Businesses and entrepreneurs do not deserve this. Canadians do not deserve this.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has cited a study that the Conservatives have often cited in the House, which would be probably inaccurate or incomplete at best but more likely to mislead, in the view the study takes of the measures this government has put in place that actually reduce taxes and lead to economic growth for Canadians. These measures include a program that has seen nine million Canadians see their taxes reduced, as well as millions of Canadians receive more in a simpler, more generous, and tax-free Canada child benefit that helps families with the monthly cost of child care and has lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

Add that to the historic investments in infrastructure that are putting people to work and building communities for the long term. That is why we see this unprecedented economic growth, the best in 17 years, with 500,000 jobs right across the country and consumer confidence once again as Canadians feel confident in their government, which is leading them toward economic growth.

Did my colleague opposite have all those facts when he entered the chamber today?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, he can bet I did. I do not only have the Canadian facts, I also have the international facts.

Let me remind my hon. friend that when Margaret Thatcher became the prime minister of the United Kingdom in the 1980s, the country was almost bankrupt by the Liberal government and the Democrats, the same sort of thing. They said, "go to work, bring me the cheque, I know how to spend it better." This is going on today. People go to work, bring the money here and the Liberals know how to better spend it.

The money the Liberals are borrowing on a daily basis is \$50 billion so far in two years. In the last campaign in 2015, we remember the commercials on the TV of a small \$10-billion deficit a year for four years. Now the Liberals have over-spent \$50 billion for which our kids and unborn Canadians will pay. It will not be the Liberals who pay for it; future generations will pay for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if it were not so sad, it would probably be pretty funny to see the Conservatives and Liberals pointing fingers at each other, when

we know that they ultimately share more similarities than differences.

Could the hon. member who just spoke tell me more about the Liberal government's deficits? This government promised us small deficits so that we could invest heavily in infrastructure. However, what we have gotten are big deficits and tiny investments in infrastructure. If we were to talk about green infrastructure, there would virtually be nothing to say, especially since the infrastructure funding seems to be constantly delayed because the government wants to go through the infrastructure bank it is trying to set up.

Does my colleague agree that infrastructure should be public and should be funded at the government's prime rate, not based on the rate of return that private businesses expect?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, on the infrastructure bank and the infrastructure money, the only thing I understand is that it is one of the minister's goals, and the Liberals make an announcement. I see no sign of something improving or creating jobs.

Back in 2013, 2014, and 2015 fiscal years when in the United States the unemployment rate was 8%, we were below 8%. Now the American unemployment is 4%. Using the same ratio, when we should be at 2%, we are 7.8%. The Liberals are claiming that they are creating jobs but I do not see where they are. They are giving with one hand and taking with the other hand. If they still have the money, they should spend it to put shovels in the ground. I do not see it and this one of the problems. The Liberals keep spending the future of our country.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-63, as a budget implementation bill, reflects the general fiscal policy and spending announcements in last spring's budget, so it will come as no surprise to any members here in the House, or to those listening at home, that I am opposed to this bill, just as my colleagues were opposed to the budget itself.

This bill and the budget that proceeded it contain a litany of misplaced priorities, broken promises, and hypocrisy and a preponderance of the type of style without substance that has characterized the Liberal government from the start.

Having dispensed with the question of where I stand on the bill, I want to point out that this bill is actually more than just a budget implementation bill. It is an omnibus bill that contains a significant new spending commitment that was not included in the budget: a new commitment to fund the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, surely a misplaced priority. This budget implementation bill would enact the Liberals' decision to jump at the opportunity, as they call it, to invest half a billion dollars in an Asian infrastructure bank.

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Let us be clear about what this so-called investment would really mean. An actual investment in shares of an enterprise consists of a decision to place money at risk in the hope of receiving either profits paid to the shareholder in the form of dividends, or an eventual gain from the profitable sale of the shares. This bank's shares cannot be resold for gain, and it pays no dividends.

The so-called investment would be a spending commitment, not included in the budget, that would go to capitalizing a Chinese government-controlled bank, a bank that experts at the finance committee said does not meet international standards for governance and transparency. It makes loans that are below investment grade and that have been given no grade from international rating agencies. Canada will have no representation on its board and will not have any control over its operations.

This is not an investment. It is a decision to export taxes paid by Canadians to Asia for the benefit of foreign corporations and lenders and bankers, who will get the profits of contractors, and of foreign citizens, who will get to use the infrastructure.

This is especially problematic given that our tax dollars are going to an Asian infrastructure bank that will fund pipelines, not pipelines here in Canada, where we could take Alberta's oil and gas to Kitimat or Saint John, but pipelines that are going to take energy products from Kazakhstan to China.

That brings us to the point about hypocrisy. This infrastructure bank had no business being in the budget. It ought to have been debated separately, from the start, as a new, unbudgeted policy proposed by the government. For a government that complained about omnibus legislation in opposition during the campaign, and indeed during its first year in office, it seems to have no problem now tabling omnibus bills. This bill is, by definition, a broken promise.

Having stated my opposition to the bank and the public policy decision to fund it, I still have plenty of objections to this bill. The bill contains a measure that would further cause harm to the broader Canadian economy, but particular harm to Alberta, especially the city of Calgary and my constituents. This bill aims to curb the use of flow-through shares for exploration expenses for oil and gas projects. The changes proposed in this budget would reduce competition in the industry, diminish the incentive to drill new wells, slow development of Alberta's natural resources, favour large producers over smaller ones, and accelerate capital flight as companies left the province for more business-friendly jurisdictions.

Calgary is now three years into a downturn, triggered at first by the collapse in commodity prices but severely aggravated by the actions of both the Liberal government and its allies in the provincial NDP in Alberta. Changes to exploration expense credits through flow-through shares would be another attack on the energy sector by a government wilfully blind to practical reality.

The people of my riding cannot understand why the government hates the energy business so much. They know that for years, energy exports have generated prosperity for Canadians in all provinces. The taxes from the industry have funded public services through the income tax it pays to the crown and the spread of wealth throughout Canada through equalization payments.

My constituents cannot understand why the Liberal government just cannot thank the industry for its many contributions and get out of the way. They cannot understand why the Liberals will seek any opportunity to create another tax or another regulation to kill off a few more jobs in the energy sector. They want to know why the government just cannot stop making things worse.

Raising taxes on energy investors is not the way to foster growth and innovation. It is not the way to help create well-paying, middle-class jobs. Indeed, it will help drive more jobs overseas and contribute to the brain drain that is well under way in Calgary. However, it does fit with the government's unrealistic and idealistic approach to energy and with its conceit that it always knows better.

This brings me to how the government always allows style to trump substance. For example, the Liberals spent over \$200,000 on the cover art for budget 2017. I have to admit, I have been waiting weeks to weigh in on this subject, but it has been tough because of all the unbelievable things the government has said, done, or been caught doing since this past summer. The opposition topics have been overwhelming, but today let us talk about it.

The finance minister's disclosure problem, even while he wags his finger at every other private corporation owner, and the revenue minister desperately trying to raise revenue on the backs of everyone from type 1 diabetics to minimum-wage-earning restaurant workers, has made it tough to weigh in on the budget cover, but I will do so.

It caught my attention when it was first printed, and I commented on it in my speech in the spring. At that time, I thought that maybe it was a bit Freudian how the Liberals had these illusionary doodles on the cover that were imaginary, things like infrastructure actually being built, or solar-powered fishing boats, which we now know were actually supposed to be icebreakers in the Arctic, but I digress. The cover art was absurd and worthy of ridicule, even before Canadians found out that the Liberals paid an advertising agency over \$200,000 to produce it and then wasted a bunch of finance department staff time putting focus groups together and dithering over photos of models who were being paid public money to try to look like ordinary Canadians. I could not make this stuff up. It would be funny if it were not so ominous.

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We know of the shameful history of the Liberal Party and advertising agencies. When we talk about Liberals paying advertising agencies, those who remember the last Liberal government know how it ends. People have still been going to jail in the current Parliament for the last time we talked about Liberals paying big money to advertising agencies.

I want to remind Canadians how this budget and the last were chock full of broken promises and draw attention to how the bill, the fall economic update, and the recent PBO report all confirm that the government has betrayed the Canadians who voted for it on the promises it made in the 2015 election. Indeed, analysts have confirmed that the current Liberal government has run the largest per capita expansion of the federal government outside wartime or a recession.

Middle-class Canadians are now paying more income tax than they did under the previous government. The Liberals promised a maximum deficit of \$10 billion, which would be used to fund infrastructure, and to then return to balance. However, the bill and the budget it would implement perpetuate deficits as far as the eye can see. According to the PBO's economic fiscal outlook "it is unlikely that the budget will be balanced, or in a surplus position, over the medium term."

The minister was asked seven times at the finance committee when the budget would be balanced, and each time he was asked, he blathered aimlessly about how proud he was of his approach, which would suggest that he is perhaps proud of the fact that he has broken, and continues to break, his party's promises, all while he remains under the cloud of a conflict of interest investigation.

In his fall economic update, the finance minister boasted about a smaller than anticipated deficit. The PBO report revealed the reason for this: the Liberals have actually failed to deliver on the infrastructure spending promise. The one thing that convinced voters to tolerate a return to deficit, the one thing Liberals promised that would actually improve the economy and the day-to-day lives of Canadians, is the one thing this tax-and-spend government cannot effectively spend.

Given that this BIA is riddled with broken promises and hypocrisy and directly threatens jobs in my riding, I will not be supporting it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is exaggerating about where investments are taking place. I will use a specific example. This may help members across the way get a better appreciation of the value of this particular investment.

When Stephen Harper was prime minister, a lot of flooding took place in the Philippines, and Canadians responded overwhelmingly by contributing millions of dollars, which the government matched. We sent the DART unit there, recognizing that there was serious flooding. One of the biggest projects of this organization we are investing money in, money we are guaranteed to get back in terms of a return, is for flooding in the Philippines. That is an actual capital infrastructure program where this bank is investing some half a billion dollars. Canada is putting in about \$250 million in shares, shares we are guaranteed to get back. Therefore, it is helping in a tangible way in the Philippines.

Why would the Conservatives and NDP say that it is a bad investment? They want to focus on one issue, a politically spun issue, but in reality, there are many projects that are very helpful in that area. I cite the Philippines as one example. Does he not support the Asian bank investing that sort of capital?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing to the House's attention the record of the previous government on foreign assistance and being there when countries that lacked resources desperately needed help from countries like Canada, with our ability to deploy DART to a place like the Philippines when the need arises. There is no need for Canada to participate in this bank to facilitate other projects, which, I remind everyone again, include things like building pipeline infrastructure so that other countries can compete directly with Canada, with Canadian taxpayer money. Conservatives have no interest in supporting the Asian infrastructure bank.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

I must admit that I agree with him on a number of things, especially what he said about how the Liberal government is more about style and less about substance. I think that is an understatement. This was clear last week when the government announced the national housing strategy.

If the Liberal government is all about style, which I completely believe, can my colleague explain how the government went from investing \$256 million to \$480 million in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is a bad idea? Even if this was only to make itself look good, I think that \$256 million would have already been too much.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, those are thoughtful comments and a fantastic question. What a moving target this number is. We talked about it at the finance committee. It seems that nobody knows what the real number is going to be. Numbers get used interchangeably, whether they are Canadian or U.S. dollars. It appears that we are at a half-billion dollar commitment. Liberals have offered competing answers in different forums as to what the number really will be. It is a fantastic question, and I wish I had a better answer. I do not think there is an answer.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the targets are moving because they are growing and because our impact is getting stronger. As the economy grows, we can invest more.

Government Orders

I will ask a question related to the comment the NDP made. New Democrats seem to suggest that a \$40-billion investment was not as significant as the \$2 billion they promised. From this perspective, when we measure the emphasis we put on Canadian infrastructure, it is \$180 billion, as opposed to the paltry sums offered by the Tories and the meek approach to housing. As I said on Friday, the meek did not inherit the world in this case; they got third-party status as a booby prize.

The issue is this. The Asian infrastructure bank does not just build pipelines that take oil from Asia to other markets; it also takes Canadian oil to Asian markets. Pipelines flow in two different directions.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, where does one even go in response to that? I invite the member to consult a globe to see if a pipeline from one part of Asia to another could move Canadian oil, or crude from anywhere in Canada, to areas outside of Canada. His comments seem to be more directed to the NDP bench than my speech.

The NDP member wanted to know the real dollar amount that we are voting on for this Asian infrastructure bank. That still remains an unclear, and is a poorly answered question by the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to follow my colleague from Calgary.

Today, I am wearing black for a very sad reason. We will be voting in the House of Commons on the bad legislative measures for marijuana legalization for what is likely the last time.

Speaking of colour, let us talk about the colour red. Let us talk about deficits, a Liberal government hallmark when it comes to finances and managing public money. That is what we are talking about today, as we debate the Liberal government's latest budget implementation bill.

This government has an impressive track record of promising one thing and doing the opposite. It promised to run small deficits, but it is running big ones. It promised to put more money in the pockets of middle-class Canadians, but they have less. It promised to make the rich pay more taxes, but thanks to its legislative measures, the rich are paying less. I can prove it.

During the election campaign two years ago, Canadians were asked to consider the various electoral platforms. What did the Liberal Party say in its platform, entitled "Real Change: A new plan for a strong middle class"? I would like to read something from page 76:

With the Liberal plan, the federal government will have a modest short-term deficit of less than \$10 billion in each of the next two fiscal years...our investment plan will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019-20.

The Liberals were elected on that promise. Now let us look at the reality at the halfway point of their term, two years after they were elected. First of all, it is no longer a question of a modest deficit of less than \$10 billion. It is double what was projected, that is, \$19.9 billion in the last fiscal year. That is classic Liberal government. The Liberals promise small deficits and then run up deficits twice as big.

Furthermore, their platform predicted a return to a balanced budget in 2019, but they have no idea when they will be able to balance the budget. This is completely unacceptable. Canada is experiencing strong economic growth, and we are not at war. This is the first time in the history of this country, not including periods of war or major international economic difficulties, that the government has no idea when it will be able to balance the budget.

We are stressing this so much not only because the Liberals betrayed Canadians' trust by saying one thing and doing another, but also because they are sending the bill to our children and grandchildren, and that is even worse. When a government runs a deficit, it is borrowing money from our children. Sooner or later, the money will have to be paid back. That is why we strongly condemn the Liberals' approach of allowing deficits that are two times higher than projected and having no plan to balance the budget. This is unacceptable.

The Prime Minister always talks about the famous 1% wealthiest Canadians, as though these people had a venereal disease. It is terrible that the Prime Minister has so much contempt for those who are fortunate. The government has a supposedly progressive policy that will make the wealthiest Canadians pay even more.

Let us look at what the Liberals have managed to do in two years. I have here a report from the Department of Finance entitled "Annual Financial Report of the Government of Canada Fiscal Year 2016-2017". The report states the following on page 16:

[*English*]

Personal income tax revenues decreased by \$1.2 billion...largely reflecting the impact of tax planning by high-income individuals....

[*Translation*]

In a report on the past fiscal year, the finance department found that the wealthiest Canadians paid \$1.2 billion less in taxes since this government took power. Why? Despite the so-called progressive measures that would have the rich pay more taxes, the richest Canadians found ways to sidestep these measures, with the result that the wealthiest Canadians pay less taxes today than they did under our government. If someone is paying less, someone else is paying more. The middle-class family is paying more taxes. According to a Fraser Institute study, 80% of Canadian families are paying, on average, \$840 more than they did under our government.

[*English*]

Let me read a statement by Mr. Charles Lammam, director of fiscal studies at the Fraser Institute, on measuring the impact of the federal personal income tax changes on middle-income Canadian families. He said:

The federal government has repeatedly claimed they've lowered income taxes for the middle class while in reality, taking their major income tax changes into account, they've actually raised taxes on the vast majority of middle-class families.

Government Orders

[Translation]

The Fraser Institute is speaking out against the Liberal government's flawed measures that are costing middle-class families more money, among others.

The Liberal government did away with the child fitness and arts tax credits. It did away with the textbook tax credit that helped our children when they went to school, and believe it or not, the Liberals did away with the public transit tax credit. I will never tire of saying that I never in my life would have believed that the Liberals would go after public transit.

When we were in office, some of the good things we did were to provide help for Canadian taxpayers, workers, students, and public transit users. We took proactive measures. We should thank and commend those who take the bus. The way we did that was to give them a tax credit that amounted to about the equivalent of two free months of public transit per year. That was a direct measure, a measure that made people happy, a measure that provided direct assistance to ordinary Canadians and helped them keep more money in their pockets. However, the Liberal government went after that measure and did away with it. That is sad.

The government is so righteous about its so-called environmental principles. It goes on and on about how we have to save the planet and about how we need public transit infrastructure so people pollute less. Then it axes a measure specifically designed to help people who help the planet by taking public transit. How very Liberal.

That is not even counting the revenue minister's sneaky measures that make life even harder for the poorest and weakest members of our society.

When we were in power, we had a tax credit that helped people suffering from illnesses such as type 1 diabetes, and 80% of the people who applied for that tax credit got it. Under the Liberals, 80% of the people who apply for it do not get it. Under our government, 80% of the applications were approved. Now that the Liberals are in office, 80% of them are rejected. Attacking the poorest and weakest members of our society is a despicable strategy.

Furthermore, this government launched a direct assault on small and medium-sized businesses, which the Conservative Party believes are the backbone of our economy. Small and medium-sized businesses are the true job creators and the true wealth creators. It is through personal initiative and support to our SMEs that we stimulate initiative, the desire to work, and the creation of wealth and jobs across Canada. On July 18, however, right in the middle of summer, this government decided that it would launch a direct attack on businesses when it introduced a package of thoroughly ill-advised measures.

Fortunately, we were on the alert. Thanks to the amazing quarterbacking of the member for Carleton, we mounted daily head-on attacks, under the guidance of our leader, on those who were going after our small businesses. Chambers of commerce across the country banded together, and fortunately, the government ended up scaling back its assault on small and medium-sized businesses.

I would also remind members that the government abolished several tax credits that were designed to stimulate growth and

investment in our businesses and that it did finally uphold its election promise to lower the small business tax rate, but far later than expected and far too late overall, not to mention the fact that it raised taxes on pension funds.

I could go on for hours, but for all these reasons, we believe that the budget implementation bill is a bad bill, which is why we are appealing to all members of the House to reject it and vote against it.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member referred to small business. The minister responsible for small business has done a fantastic job in recognizing its importance to Canada's middle class. She led the fight to get small business taxes reduced to 9%. In our first budget, we literally put hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of Canada's middle class through the tax cut. That enabled greater expenditure from the higher disposable incomes, which many if not all small businesses will acknowledge is the most important thing one can do to get consumers buying and purchasing their services and products. Through measures such as the Canada child benefit, we see money being put into the pockets of families so they can spend it on our small businesses.

Would the member agree that the proactive approach of this minister and government to ensuring there are tax benefits and more consumer consumption for small businesses is a positive thing?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, the least we can say is that the document tabled by the finance minister on July 18 was anything but a progressive and proactive way to help people and small business. It was anything but that. This is why, under the strong leadership of the Leader of the Opposition and with the fantastic job done by our quarterback, the member for Carleton, we have raised the issue here in the House of Commons. Hopefully, the government will recognize that it was wrong.

The member talked about how much money the Liberals have put into the pockets of people. May I remind him that this was done under a deficit budget. Therefore, the money he said the government has put into people's pockets will be owed by their children and the grandchildren who have not yet been born, but who will have to pay because the Liberal government cannot correctly adjust the finances of the Canadian people.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my community there is a gentleman who has an addiction to alcohol. Every day for many years he would drink, pass out on the street, and an ambulance, a police officer, and a fire truck would get called. They would take him to the local hospital, which would sometimes run x-rays on him and keep him in an acute care bed or send him to the cells, which literally costs thousands of dollars a day. We know this man is like many other men and women in every community and riding in our country. Our community found a low-barrier housing place for him, which costs \$475 a month. He has been there for five years, which is saving the taxpayers hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars.

Government Orders

The Liberal government announced its housing rollout plan, 90% of which is to come after the next election. It says that only 50% of homeless people will have a place to live as a result of the plan. Therefore, I ask the member this. Does he think it is good enough that only 50% of the people will be taken care of? We are talking about years down the road; it is not starting until 2021.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the NDP for raising this important issue, because we certainly all are concerned that people with difficulties do get help with housing from the government. However, for that we need a realistic plan, one that would take care of the needs of the people today. The member has expressed quite well the human aspect of it.

Let me also talk about the constitutional issue. We were very surprised to see that the Quebec government did not accept the deal or the promise made by the government. Why? It is because the federal government did not consult the provincial government, which is why it said no. We are talking about housing, and in Quebec housing is part of a responsibility issue. Therefore, we have to build on something with the support of the Quebec government. However, the current government has failed to recognize that, which is another mistake it has made.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we are in this House debating Bill C-63. This is the second bill to implement provisions of the budget. There are a few noteworthy elements in the bill that I will address today. Most importantly, my remarks will focus on what is not in the budget implementation act.

Financial issues have been the main focus in this House during this session. Many Canadians are concerned and have been watching with disappointment. The sponsor of Bill C-63, the Minister of Finance, is embroiled in so many scandals that I do not even know where to begin. Prior to many allegations coming to light, people from North Island—Powell River, my riding, came to my office, wrote me letters, and sent emails protesting and expressing deep concern around Bill C-27, a bill that would weaken pension obligations. When Canadians later learned that the sponsor of that bill, the Minister of Finance, still owns shares in Morneau Shepell, they were concerned. I was asked whether this means that the minister will make millions off the prospect of the bill. They were concerned that the minister would make even more if the bill were passed. This is one of the clearest cases of conflict of interest that we have seen in years. That is why we need a formal investigation into the minister's actions.

Imagine, as well, the sudden influx of calls, emails, and mail in constituency offices across Canada. When the finance minister started his so-called consultation on the small business tax. The minister failed to respect Canadian small business owners in this process. In my riding, I represent many small businesses. In our region, our economy has had many challenges. We have seen a significant change, from a very focused resource-based economy, broadening to include a strong and growing small business community. In the summer, many of the farmers and owners of tourism-based businesses contacted my offices. Many of them simply did not have time during the summer to participate in any consultation.

I also had the honour of meeting with some doctors in my region. What was most disheartening was hearing how hurt they were when the Prime Minister of Canada talked about the so-called rich doctors. In many rural and remote communities across Canada, finding health professionals is hard, and it is getting harder. The doctors who spoke with me were very concerned about the divisive nature of those comments and the impacts on their work in their communities.

Returning to the finance minister, the people from my riding are very concerned about the minister hiding his wealth from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. I do not know many Canadians who would have forgotten their house in the south of France. So much for a transparent government. The same minister still has a series of numbered accounts stashed away from public scrutiny. This raises more troubling questions. Let us not forget that the Ethics Commissioner came to exist as a part of the Federal Accountability Act in 2007, after another series of Liberal moral and ethical failings. Today the Liberals have found more ways than ever to protect their friends, the tax cheats, by not addressing the sophisticated systems that can only be used by the wealthiest and most connected.

Bills like the one we are debating here today would not change much for hard-working Canadians, and my riding is full of everyday hard-working Canadians. Bills like Bill C-63 would keep protecting cheaters from scrutiny and justice, and that is not right. As the paradise papers are still unravelling, I cannot say that I have much confidence in the current government, other than having a good sound bite for the media. One thing to keep in mind is that the paradise papers are a result of a leak from only one firm. There are many other firms out there carrying trusts and offshore companies linked to Canadians. It is a matter of finding them, and CRA is simply not doing enough.

The latest report from the Auditor General was not friendly to the Canada Revenue Agency. While tax cheats are not its main focus, the report highlights a total mismanagement of CRA call centres. The AG's report indicates that the CRA has been blocking over 50% of Canadians' calls for help. Even worse, CRA agents are providing misleading or inaccurate information almost 30% of the time. The Auditor General's report also focused on the failings of the Liberals' responsibility to implement the Phoenix program. In fact, the AG pointed out that the Liberals have no idea of the full extent and causes of the Phoenix problem. It is estimated that it will take years before solving pay problems, and will most likely cost Canadians around \$1 billion.

Government Orders

However, this is about so much more than just \$1 billion. It is about civil servants across Canada not receiving their pay. It is about Canadians losing their homes, having to go to food banks, having their credit destroyed, and family stress. It is very important that, in this House, we recognize that civil servants are still going to work every day even when they are not getting paid. These people are dedicated to their work and to Canadians. Many of my constituents have asked why the government does not have someone writing cheques until this is figured out, because they just need to be paid. I have taken the time to talk about this failing, because I know Canadians want this problem fixed. What better way to fix it than in a budget implementation bill?

Bill C-63 lays the foundation for Canada's membership in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which we believe will cause many problems. In fact, Bill C-63 allows the finance minister to transfer \$480 million Canadian to the bank. Since the bank was only recently launched, the government cannot fully evaluate the risks of privatizing infrastructure in countries where the bank will invest. Some experts have raised concerns about the lack of provisions regarding environmental impact assessments, labour rights, or anti-corruption reforms, as is generally the case with loans made by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It is difficult to say with any certainty, because the bank has only been in existence for one year, whether it will be respecting international standards. We need better assurances from the government about these concerns, and we need proof that the bank will not contribute to privatization of infrastructures, the degradation of the environment, and the violation of labour rights. The government cannot pay its own federal employees, but we can spend \$480 million on a foreign initiative that may privatize infrastructure. The government cannot catch tax cheats or fix our revenue agency, but it can spend \$480 million on a foreign initiative that degrades the environment. It cannot understand the realities of small businesses, but it can spend \$480 million on a foreign initiative that will potentially violate labour rights.

Let us recap what progress has been made on the first budget implementation bill, including the Canadian infrastructure bank. A few months in, and the federal government has moved in predictable Liberal fashion, with a board made up largely of Liberal donors and promoters of privatization. This list includes James Cherry, the former president and CEO of Aéroports de Montréal, who has previously advocated for airport privatization. How surprising. I cannot wait to read the AG report on this.

However, wait, there is more. The bank will be subject to audits at a lower standard and with less transparency than the Auditor General has over direct government departments, despite the \$35 billion in public funding to establish the bank. Again, so much for a transparent government.

Before the budget was tabled, our finance critic wrote the finance minister to ask him to include some provisions to create a fairer and greener society. For example, we asked him to cap CEO stock options for large companies; actively fight tax havens; establish a \$15-per hour minimum wage for workers; invest in energy-efficient home renovations; address accessibility problems linked to housing, drinking water, mental health services, and education in first nations

communities; and establish a universal pharmacare system. None of these provisions were implemented.

After two years of listening to the government talk about the middle class and those working to join it, this budget demonstrates, for a fact, that Liberals have no idea who those people are.

I cannot support this bill. It clearly has too many gaps that leave the most vulnerable with little, and does not address the important parts of moving towards a fair tax system.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about a lot of things that she disagreed with. She did not come up with any resolution to any of them.

The member did not mention the Canada child benefit that was changed under the government, and the increase in payments that went to families. I know in my riding of Avalon, 9,280 households received cheques, averaging \$5,180 per month, for a total from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 of \$47.9 million that went to families in my riding. These are families that needed that money. They did not tuck it away in a bank account and save it. They spent it. That shows the way that the economy is going now, and the unemployment rate, which is the lowest in a decade.

Could the member comment on how that is affecting families in her riding?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, what I heard from the people of my riding of North Island—Powell River has unfortunately not changed from what I heard when I was knocking on doors in 2014-15.

I definitely heard from too many women who told me they could not work. One woman in particular came to me recently and shared her reality. She was trying to work, but the costs of day care were so prohibitive that she had to quit her job. She told me that at the end of month she was clearing about \$20 a week, because everything she made was going toward paying for day care.

I encourage the government to listen to the people of Canada, to listen to the families, and to hear what they are saying about how expensive child care is. It has not created one child care space in this budget, nor in the last budget. This is really needed. This is about being a feminist country that supports women entering the workforce, and supports families. It is good that they get some money, but the reality is that the money does not come even close to covering the cost of day care.

It is the government's responsibility to work, on all fronts, to support families.

Government Orders

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are certainly a lot of holes in the budget that need to be addressed. We do not have time to address all of those today, but my colleague did mention some of the ill-thought-out tax proposals that the government presented in the summer of this year. I had a big response in my riding from small business owners, farmers, and from professional corporations. I also heard from doctors who are working in under-serviced areas and providing good medical care. That was a huge issue that my riding dealt with.

My question goes to a different level. People in my riding are very cynical about the current finance minister and some of his ethics breaches when it came to disclosing his assets. They are also concerned about his part in Bill C-27, which clearly favours the company that he incorporated.

I wonder if my colleague is hearing those kinds of concerns from her constituents as well.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I definitely have heard from the business community in my riding. I have heard repeatedly that these businesses are supportive of tax fairness, but they are not being consulted in a meaningful way. They feel that this could profoundly undermine their businesses. They are concerned about the unintended consequences, especially in rural and remote communities. They want to make sure that their voices are heard.

I have worked hard and continue to work hard with those communities, so I can make sure their voices are heard in the House. That is my job. It is my sacred obligation, and I take it very seriously.

There is another reality. As politicians, we have a responsibility to be ethical and honest. Our constituents are relying on us to do the right thing, to always care about their concerns, and to always be willing to listen, even when we do not agree.

I agree with the member. I have definitely heard from my constituents a raised sense of cynicism and concern that the Liberal government simply does not know or understand the reality of people who are living every day in Canada.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand that my time is short right now in advance of question period, but it is with profound sadness today that I found out about the closure of the *Barrie Examiner* and the *Innisfil Examiner* as a result of cuts to the newspaper industry. The *Barrie Examiner* has been a stalwart within our community since 1864. I know in talking to you, Mr. Speaker, that you are sad as well about the *Orillia Packet and Times*.

May I remind the House that newspaper closures do not just affect the newspaper, they affect those who work with those newspapers. I can think of people like Bob Bruton, Ian McInroy, and award-winning photojournalist Mark Wanzel, who today have lost their jobs. As well, at the *Innisfil Examiner*, Miriam King, who I just happened to be with yesterday at the Innisfil Santa Claus Parade. There is profound sadness within our community, not just for the focus on community news and events, but for the people impacted by this. These are people who are directly involved in our community every day not just reporting the news, but supporting the many organizations within Barrie—Innisfil.

I want to send them my best wishes in advance of my speaking about the budget implementation bill.

In the last election, as I campaigned throughout the riding of Barrie—Innisfil, I talked about it being a “chicken in every pot” election. What the Liberals were promising, as the third party with roughly 35 seats, was basically a chicken in every pot in the last election. It is easy when one is sitting there as the third party to make all kinds of promises, but as we have seen after two years, living up to those promises has been extremely difficult.

It is no surprise that Canadians voted for change. Unfortunately, that happens in politics. However, I think many Canadians right now are living with voter's remorse, in the sense that a lot of the things they thought were going to happen with the Liberal government are not happening, or happening in a much worse case scenario that we deal with in this budget implementation act.

This is an omnibus bill. In spite of the fact that the Prime Minister campaigned on no omnibus bills, he actually has introduced several omnibus pieces of legislation. Many Canadians voted for change, which is their prerogative to do, but I do not think they voted for this. Also, I do not think they voted for deficit spending. In the last election, the Liberals spoke about \$10 billion in deficit spending, and now we learn from Finance Canada that even the Prime Minister and the finance minister will not admit when we are going to see the end of deficits. There are deficits as far as the eye can see. The profound effect of deficits in this country is on young people, people like my children and many other millions of Canadian children across this country who are going to have to pay for this deficit spending for generations to come.

I heard somebody muse recently that it is Liberals who make a mess and that eventually it is Conservatives who have to clean that mess up. We are hopefully going to be in that position again within two years. Hopefully they do not make too much of a mess and that we are not overburdened to clean it up.

As an Ontario MP, why in Ontario are we concerned about this? Because we are compounding the problem. We have a provincial government \$330 billion in debt, the largest sub-sovereign debtor nation in the world, and now we are compounding it with this. Think of what that is going to mean to our children.

I am going to pick up those thoughts after we are done.

● (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil will have five and a half minutes remaining in his time for his remarks on the question before the House.

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

[English]

[English]

MEDAL OF BRAVERY

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an act of true heroism that occurred in my riding on July 9 last year. This hero has never sought any publicity, and instead acted to protect a child from mortal danger with an instinct to which we should all aspire.

That hero is Calvin Stein from Madoc, who saved a three-year-old girl from being trampled by a team of charging horses that had broken away from their handlers at a fair in Tweed. Calvin sprinted for the child who was directly in their path and tossed her out of harm's way, seconds before the horses ran into him. He sustained severe injuries as the horses dragged him before finally coming to a stop.

I would invite my hon. colleagues to join me in thanking him for his heroism and congratulating him for the decoration for bravery that the Governor General presented him last week.

* * *

WESTERN MUSTANGS

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Western Mustangs, after a 23-year drought, were victorious at the Vanier Cup. Saturday's game saw the Mustangs capping off their undefeated record by beating the reigning champions from Laval university with a final score of 39-17. Despite facing down the top-ranked defensive team in the country, Western's relentless offence carried them to a hard-earned victory and a perfect season record in an exciting rematch with the team that stopped them the last time they played for the cup.

To head coach Greg Marshall, quarterback Chris Merchant, defensive player of the game Fraser Sopik, and the entire team, I offer a hearty congratulations. As a former student, I know what it is to be "purple and proud".

To my colleagues, including the member from Louis-Saint-Laurent, maybe next year, nudge nudge.

Way to go, Mustangs.

* * *

COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF ENDANGERED WILDLIFE IN CANADA

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. First established in 1977, COSEWIC is the independent body of experts responsible for identifying and assessing the status of wildlife species that may be at risk of extinction or disappearance in Canada.

[Translation]

The committee plays a critical role in ensuring biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, and it assess species using the best available scientific, indigenous, and community knowledge.

I want to applaud the committee for its important contribution to conservation over the past 40 years. I very much look forward to its future work to protect and promote biodiversity in Canada.

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SASKATCHEWAN ROUGHRIDERS

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was great seeing so many people in our nation's capital this past weekend wearing green and white, despite our Roughriders previously falling victim to a last-minute Toronto comeback. As someone who was elected by 132 votes, I appreciate late-breaking victories and hope that the Argonauts will not face a judicial recount.

My grandfather, Ken Weir, played for the Roughriders from 1949 to 1951. He did not win the Grey Cup, but legend has it that he and some neighbours once managed to set up an outdoor hockey rink for well below \$5 million.

To mention a third sport, we are tremendously proud to have former MMA fighter Matt Fedler as our NDP candidate in the Battlefords—Lloydminster by-election. Matt works for the Canadian Mental Health Association in his hometown of North Battleford. All of us should support his goal of mental health coverage.

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BRAMPTON NORTH

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year we celebrated the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. Since 1867, our great country has established itself as a beacon of hope around the world. From our Charter of Rights and Freedoms to our multiculturalism, Canada is regarded as one of the best countries to call home. For that reason, many in the riding of Brampton North have put their Canadian pride on full display.

Baljinder Sekha turned his love for Canada into a song. He had Canadians singing and dancing to "Go Canada", a Bhangra song that praises the beauty of this land and accomplishments of its people.

At the same time, Vahid Saadati was so inspired by how welcoming Canada is that he created a hand-stitched needlepoint tapestry with the word "welcome" woven into it in over 100 times in 100 languages. It now holds the Guinness world record for the world's largest needlepoint.

If there is one thing that I am sure of, it is that Brampton North residents are proud to be Canadian.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 16, I had the honour to attend a citizenship ceremony for 33 new Canadians from 11 different countries organized by the Orangeville District Secondary School and the Orangeville Legion Colonel Fitzgerald Branch 233.

My compliments to principal Pat Hamilton, Department head Paul Nelson, Janine Grin, and Kathy Trimble for bringing together the student body resulting in such an impressive ceremony.

I thank the Orangeville Legion President Chris Skalozub and the Legion's colour party for the tremendous effort they all undertook in making this ceremony memorable.

In addition, I would like to thank the senior band, Honour Stahl for her poetry reading, the ODSS choir, the yearbook class, Pommeliens Thijs' beautiful rendition of *O Canada*, and the students who formed the flag-waving human tunnel that celebrated each new citizen. It was a tremendous experience.

Finally, I would like to thank former principals Bill Lenny and the late Darryl Kirkland, under whose leadership this initiative began.

Well done, ODSS.

* * *

ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, strengthening cultural diversity by helping others in need is one of Canada's greatest strengths. On Sunday, November 26, the Armenian community named the late Sara Corning as an Outstanding Canadian. This nurse helped save 5,000 Armenian orphans in 1922.

At this same event, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced Canada's support for the Armenian community's inter-action project, empowering cultural diversity in the classroom.

Today, the Armenian Community Centre in my riding is keeping Ms. Corning's spirit alive by helping hundreds of newcomers from Syria.

As members can see, when we welcome and help newcomers, we strengthen our society in long-standing and significant ways.

* * *

CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian football was its best this weekend in two cities: Hamilton with the Vanier Cup, and Ottawa for the 105th Grey Cup.

I have watched football for over 60 years and broadcast 500 games on radio over 20 seasons for the Cats or the Argonauts, so I believe I am qualified to pronounce this as one of the most exciting games our league has ever seen.

The Argonaut victory will go down in football history in part because of the quality of its opponent, the Calgary Stampeders. It speaks to the amazing quality of Canadian football and its ability to bring our country together for a party and sports spectacle second to

none. It also reflects the message of diversity, created in broadcast by Commissioner Randy Ambrosie.

We are a league as diverse as the country, where what makes each of us different makes us all stronger. It is a reminder of how great things can be if, as the Argo motto says, we all pull together.

* * *

ROYAL ENGAGEMENT

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales is delighted to announce the engagement of Prince Harry to Ms. Meghan Markle. The couple became engaged earlier this month.

With the blessing of their families, the couple is planning to wed next spring. Following the nuptials, the couple will reside at Nottingham Cottage at Kensington Palace.

The couple share a common passion for humanitarian work. Their union forges an inspirational powerhouse with promise of meaningful contributions to those in need.

The couple kindled their relationship here in Canada, and Canadians wish the greatest happiness to Prince Harry and Ms. Markle as they begin their journey together in life.

* * *

CANADA 150 CITIZENSHIP AWARD CEREMONY

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 13, I had the honour of recognizing exceptional people from my riding for the Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill Canada 150 citizenship award ceremony. The award recipients all represent Canada's commitment to innovation and diversity, thought leadership, and the important Canadian values of diversity, inclusion, and compassion.

From high school students who developed software to help the visually impaired learn to read Braille, to a man who developed technology for pharmaceutical molecular structures, to a world-renowned film director, to the first Canadian circumnavigation by helicopter, these individuals truly reflect the best Canada has to offer, and I am proud to represent them in Ottawa.

For Canada 150, we unite as Canadians to imagine a vision, a big, bold vision, of what our country can become. These award winners have committed themselves to this vision by dreaming boldly through projects that will position our nation for continued success—

Statements by Members

●(1410)

SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the opening day of Canada's most lucrative fishery. I wish the thousands of hard-working lobster fishers, who will be heading off the shores of southwestern Nova Scotia, a safe and prosperous season.

[*Translation*]

As the owner of 37 small craft harbours in West Nova, the federal government is responsible for ensuring that those harbours are safe and accessible for our fishing fleet.

[*English*]

However, due to years of neglect, many of these small craft harbours are in disrepair or do not have enough berthage to accommodate the increasing size of vessels that are a result of a successful fishery.

Our government has invested in the harbours in West Nova, but much more good work needs to be done to ensure our fishers have safe and accessible infrastructure.

By continuing to invest in our harbours, the federal government will help the fishing industry get its world-class seafood off their boats and to global markets, and help local communities, like those in southwestern Nova Scotia, thrive.

* * *

105TH GREY CUP

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's 105th Grey Cup was another thriller for the ages. It began in true Canadian fashion with the wet snow falling. Shania Twain arrived for the half-time performance on a dogsled. The Toronto Argonauts played the role of underdog, trailing most of the game, but this is the CFL.

With just minutes to go, the Calgary Stampeders were set to put the game out of reach, when Argo's Cassius Vaughn recovered a Calgary fumble, running it back 109 yards for a touchdown. The game was tied. Then a last-minute field goal put the Argos up by three. However, the Stamps marched right back down the field, set to score, but Matt Black's end zone interception secured the upset Argo victory in another classic Grey Cup finish.

I congratulate Argo's coach Marc Trestman, president, Michael Copeland, owner Larry Tanenbaum, QB Ricky Ray, and the entire team on a great win. We honour Jerome Messom, the outstanding Canadian, and DeVier Posey, the Grey Cup MVP.

I thank Commissioner Randy Ambrosie and the entire CFL operation for an outstanding season. The Canadian game is part of our identity, and they gave us a Grey Cup game to remember.

We will see them next year in Edmonton.

* * *

WESTERN MUSTANGS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour, as a proud Western University alumni and

former faculty member, to stand and congratulate the Western Mustangs football team on winning the 53rd Vanier Cup.

Western handily defeated Laval Rouge et Or, the number one team in Canada coming into the national championship, but not the number one team anymore. That is because the potent Mustang's offence was too much for any team to handle.

During their incredible undefeated 2017 campaign, the "Stangs" outscored opponents 386 to 105 in the regular season and 261 to 64 in the playoffs. This is arguably the best team ever assembled in the history of university sport when it comes to football.

I would also like to sincerely congratulate Greg Marshall. Simply put, Greg is one of the greatest football coaches our country has ever produced. This weekend he was able to check the final box off and become a Vanier champion. He has coached 18 university football seasons, winning nine Yates Cups. He is a marvel for London.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, or UNDRIP, is a fundamental declaration that underlines the rights of the first peoples across the world.

Recently, the Comox Valley Amnesty International group held an event in the K'ómoks First Nation hall to have a discussion on Bill C-262, a bill brought forward by the member for Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou on UNDRIP. What I have heard, clearly, from many indigenous and non-indigenous people in my riding is that a nation-to-nation relationship should mean respecting the first people of our country. That means supporting Bill C-262.

I am pleased to hear the government plans to support the bill, but actions matter more than words. In the context of supporting the bill, I encourage the Minister of Fisheries to take time to talk to the many indigenous people occupying fish farms in my riding. They have been waiting too long for the discussion on rights and title. In the spirit of UNDRIP, I hope action will be taken soon.

* * *

●(1415)

ATTACK IN EGYPT

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and faith communities around the world are still reeling from Friday's mosque attack in Bir al-Abed. At least 305 people are dead and hundreds more are injured after the deadliest attack in Egypt's modern history.

Oral Questions

We express our sincere condolences to all those affected. Events like this impact every one of us. Every person should be free to believe as they choose and express that belief without fear of recrimination or violence. This is a fundamental human right and central to peace and democracy.

Events like this remind us that Canada is not immune to religious hatred and violence in all its ugly forms. This past January, we were horrified to learn of the cold-blooded murder of worshippers as they were praying at a Quebec City mosque. Cowardly acts such as these are the antithesis of our free society and denigrate what it means to be Canadian.

Today we mourn for the worshippers and their families. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the people of Egypt, and we unequivocally condemn this horrible massacre.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the good work of my colleagues, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Trade. As an individual from a Canada-U.S. border community, there is a great deal of interest in ensuring negotiations continue for the best free trade agreement through NAFTA.

The importance of everything from manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture to transportation and cross-border power restoration provides assistance to our neighbours in times of need. Co-operation on many fronts, such as ease of the flow of goods, services, and people across borders, allow trade to expand.

Canada and the U.S. are the world's largest trading partners. The two nations have the world's longest-shared border, with a relationship that is vital to continuous economic growth, given that 90% of our Canadian population lives within 160 kilometres of the Canada-U.S. border. A shared border in my riding of Tobique—Mactaquac also means ever-increasing close cultural and economic ties.

Just as we work across the aisle with one another in the House, it is necessary to ensure we can do the same with our cross-border communities and create an approach that is non-partisan, signifying a unified front.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been speaking out about the Minister of Finance's conflicts of interest for three months now. Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned and now we learn that a number of Liberal members are embarrassed by his complete lack of ethics. On the condition of anonymity, many went so far as to say that the minister should be assigned to another position. It is madness. Now Liberal Party members are disavowing the Minister of Finance.

Does the Minister of Finance realize that Canadians have completely lost confidence in him?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I worked with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that I was not in a conflict of interest. In addition, I decided that there should be no perception of a potential conflict of interest, so I decided to sell all of my shares in my former company. I will continue to work with the Ethics Commissioner to work for Canadians across the country.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is trying to sweep this whole thing under the rug by repeating that everything is fine now, as though he can snap his fingers and magically become a person of real integrity and transparency after being in a conflict of interest for two years.

Since the Minister of Finance did not place his shares in a blind trust, does that not mean that he was in fact in a direct conflict of interest for the past two years?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand why opposition members want to talk about me. It is because they do not want to talk about Canadians.

We know that a healthy economy is very important to Canadians. Our economy is currently experiencing a high rate of growth. It grew at a rate of 3.7% over the past year. What is more, the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in a decade. Things are going very well for Canadians.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if this minister insists that he has nothing to hide, let him prove it. Last Thursday, we moved a motion calling on him to reveal all assets he has bought or sold within all his private holdings since he became finance minister. That is the only way to know whether the minister's personal interests conflict with his public duties as finance minister.

The question is simple: will the Liberal members across the aisle show transparency and integrity by voting in favour of our motion this evening?

● (1420)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to make sure I was not in any conflict of interest.

The important thing is for me to continue to work for Canadians. I am continuing to improve our economy. I am continuing to make it clear how very important it is that we have more jobs in our country. That is now the case. We have added 500,000 more jobs in the past two years, and unemployment is at its lowest in a decade. Canada's economy is in great shape at the moment.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister refuses to answer questions about what assets he has owned over the last two years. He says that he does not need to answer, because currently he has told the Ethics Commissioner everything and it is all good.

Oral Questions

However, the fact that he is refusing to answer this question directly and that the Liberals refuse to support our motion, demonstrates his unwillingness to be transparent with Canadians.

Why will the finance minister not simply answer the question and reveal to Canadians what assets he has owned over the last two years?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from day one, I have disclosed 100% of my assets to the Ethics Commissioner. That is the way it works in the House.

I will continue to work with her to ensure that I am free from conflicts of interest. That is what we do in order to allow us to get on with the important work that Canadians expect us to do.

The good news is that work is making a big difference for Canadians, with a higher level of economic growth and more jobs than they have seen in over a decade. It is truly a good situation for our country right now, from an economic perspective.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): No, Mr. Speaker, this is the problem. The finance minister did not disclose everything to the Ethics Commissioner. He forgot that his Morneau Shepell shares were not in a blind trust and he forgot he had a villa in France. This is why his credibility is on very shaky ground, and he is doing nothing to get himself out of that situation.

He answers to the Canadian people. He seems to have forgotten that. Will the finance minister simply come clean and publicly disclose what assets he has owned over the last two years?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the member opposite is 100% wrong. I disclosed 100% of my assets to the Ethics Commissioner and will continue to work with her in that regard. That is allowing us to get on with the work that we want to do for Canadians.

Our demonstration of that last week was particularly important, when we demonstrated how we could help Canadians with housing. We outlined our national housing strategy, which is going to make sure that we have 50% less homelessness over the next decade and that 500,000 more Canadians will have a key to their own home with a portable benefit that will help them. We are doing the hard work on behalf of Canadians and we are proud of that.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance's hands were clean, he would not have paid a fine for failing to declare all of his assets.

The Minister of Finance actually has a big problem, because every time he tells us that everything has been straightened out, someone digs a little deeper and finds out that there is more to the story. Now we know that his former company, Morneau Shepell, regularly signs multi-million-dollar contracts with the government.

Knowing this, can the minister explain why, shortly after the election, the president and CEO of Morneau Shepell told his shareholders, and I quote, Government and other public sector organizations represent a significant growth opportunity?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to open, fair, and transparent procurement processes. Through proactive disclosure of contracts, our government operates according to the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability. The contracts issued are compliant with government policies and legislation, just as they were many times under the former Conservative government.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I can see why the finance minister is actually so nervous. With all of the ethical scandals surrounding him, Liberal MPs are also becoming nervous. They are scared that the minister's mistakes will hurt them, and they get it. The whole story just seems to be getting worse and worse. They talk with their constituents the way we do, and they know that Canadians are fed up with Liberals working for themselves and for their friends. How does the finance minister hope to regain the trust of Canadians when even his own colleagues are starting to lose faith in him?

• (1425)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the way we will work for Canadians is the way that we have worked for the last two years. We will think every day about how we can improve our economy and we will think every day about how we can ensure that middle-class Canadians see success as a result of that work. The good news is that over the last two years, we have done exactly that. Our economy is doing well, better than it has done in a decade. Middle-class Canadians are feeling better, with the Canada child benefit putting an average of \$2,300 more after-tax income into nine out of 10 families' pockets. What we are seeing is an improved economy, helping middle-class Canadians. That is the work we are going to continue to do to ensure that they remain confident.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning a brief was submitted to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court asking her to include Canadian officials in her investigation into potential war crimes committed in Afghanistan. It has been over 10 years and this dark chapter in our history has yet to close. Will the Liberal government finally call for a public inquiry and accept that justice is something they should call for not only when they are in the opposition.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and its work to ensure accountability for war crimes. Torture is abhorrent and illegal. Torture is contrary to Canadian and international law and is against Canadian values. Our military personnel deployed on operations respect the Canadian Armed Forces' code of conduct and all applicable Canadian domestic and international laws.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada transferred hundreds of Afghan detainees even though it was clear there was a significant risk of torture. For years, we have been asking the government to launch a truly public, open, and transparent inquiry to get to the truth of the matter.

Now that a legal expert has asked the International Criminal Court to include Canada in its investigation into possible war crimes in Afghanistan, will the government promise to collaborate?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is proud to support the International Criminal Court. Torture is abhorrent and illegal. Torture is contrary to Canadian and international law and goes against our values. Our deployed military personnel respect the Canadian Armed Forces code of conduct and all applicable Canadian domestic and international laws.

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[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on December 7, 2015, the Minister of Finance introduced a motion in the House of Commons to raise taxes effective January 1 of the forthcoming year. The stock market dropped, and so did Morneau Shepell, by five percentage points, but not before someone could sell \$10 million in Morneau Shepell shares one week before that drop, and one week before that bill was introduced. Can the minister tell us who sold those shares?

The Speaker: I am not sure how a question about who sold shares in a company is the responsibility of the government. However, I see that the Minister of Finance is rising.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually see it as an opportunity to talk about why we did in fact raise taxes. What we did was that we said to Canadians that we thought the appropriate thing to do was to raise taxes on the top 1%. We said that would enable us to lower taxes on middle-class Canadians. Therefore, we lowered taxes on Canadians in the \$45,000 to \$90,000 tax bracket by 7%. The tax rate went down from 22% to 20.5%. Thus, we lowered middle-class taxes on nine million Canadians. We think this is a really important initiative to ensure tax fairness in our country, and we will stay on top of that.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's office told John Ivison that he sold 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares. At 10:25 on November 30, 2015, someone sold 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares. That someone saved a half a million dollars by avoiding the drop in the stock market that followed the minister's introduction of tax measures in this House of Commons. Was it just a coincidence that those two transactions lined up so carefully, or did in fact the minister jump the gun and sell his shares before he introduced his tax measures?

• (1430)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think I have a good idea of why members on the opposite side are trying to create conspiracy theories out of thin air. I think their objective is to deflect Canadians from understanding what they do not want them to understand, that the policies we have put in place

are making an enormous positive difference for Canadian families. By introducing the Canada child benefit, we are helping nine out of 10 families do much better. By indexing that benefit, we will see it keep up with inflation. We are also moving forward with the working income tax benefit to help working Canadians get into the middle class. We will continue with these efforts—

Mr. John Barlow: When the Speaker tries to bail you out, take it.

The Speaker: Order, please. I would urge the hon. member for Foothills, as we would all love to hear from him when he has the floor, to reserve his comments for when he has the floor.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, reading the Liberal platform, one would have expected that tax increase to take effect at the beginning of the fiscal year. That is when the revenues were projected from. Instead, the minister confirmed in the House of Commons that it would take effect at the beginning of the calendar year. Investors quickly sold their shares in the 2015 year so they could realize their gains in a lower-taxed year. The markets dropped. Morneau Shepell dropped by 5%, but not before someone who knew what was going on was able to sell his shares and save a half a million. Who was that somebody?

The Speaker: Once again, it is not clear that this is within the responsibility of the government. As I see no one rising to answer, the hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is actually the responsibility of government to ensure that no minister ever uses inside knowledge to benefit from transactions in the stock market. We know that when this member locked in stone the changes to the tax system that would raise capital gains taxation, investors quickly sold so they could make their gains before those changes took effect. The stock market dropped as a result. Morneau Shepell went down 5%. However, somebody sold \$10 million in shares before that could happen. Somebody sold those shares before the minister introduced his measures on the floor of the House of Commons. Was that this minister?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer to the fact that as Minister of Finance, I am looking to make sure that our economy does well. Of course, one of the ramifications of that is positive—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I need to hear the answer, members need to hear the answer, and we need to know whether someone says something that is out of order. Or, would members prefer that we go on to something else? Order.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, one of the things the finance minister does is to work to make sure the economy is doing well. What has happened over the last couple of years is that the economy has done well. Of course, one of the positive upsides of that is that sometimes the stock market does well also. Of course, the stock market is significantly up from when we came into office.

Oral Questions

We are working on behalf of middle-class Canadians and trying to help Canadians to get into the middle class. The good news is that those efforts are working. Canadians are seeing the benefit and, at the same time, we are seeing advantages across the economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious and very important question.

On December 7, 2015, the Minister of Finance proposed tax measures that would have a direct impact on the stock exchange. Morneau Shepell, for example, lost 5%. One week earlier, on November 30, someone sold over 670,000 shares, so that transaction saved that individual half a million dollars.

Can the Minister of Finance confirm whether he was or was not the person who made that transaction?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will keep working for Canadians across the country. The good news is that our economy is doing well. Thanks to our policies, we are enjoying the highest level of economic growth we have had in a decade, and the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in a decade.

The truth is, this is a good situation for Canadians across the country.

• (1435)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, the question is very serious. For months we have been saying that the Minister of Finance is in conflict of interest. The conflict of interest is glaringly obvious.

Can the minister tell us who sold shares in Morneau Shepell just days before the Minister of Finance brought in a tax policy that caused a 5% drop in the company's value? Can the minister seriously set the record straight for Canadians? Is he the one who sold those shares or not?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is what I can say to Canadians. The opposition wants to talk about me because they do not want to talk about Canadians. We want to talk about our economy, which is performing really well. There is very good growth for Canadian families, and the situation for the middle class is much better. We will pursue our policy to improve our economic situation.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General had some harsh words for the Canada Revenue Agency last week. He accused the agency of a cover-up and misrepresentation.

However, the Liberals refused to delve into this issue at the Standing Committee on Finance. That is right, in addition to hiding the data and the real statistics of the call centre, the Liberals are avoiding being accountable in the House. That is deplorable and insulting for Canadians, as they expect the Liberals to take these matters seriously and get to the bottom of things.

Why is the minister refusing to accept responsibility for this abysmal failure? What else is she hiding? Her incompetence?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I read the Auditor General's report and I agree with all his recommendations. In our first budget, we invested \$50 million to help our call centres provide better service to Canadians.

We have already started hiring more agents to respond to more Canadians, and we have an action plan that focuses on modernizing our telephone platform, improving training, and updating our service standards.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of targeting five wealthy neighbourhoods, the Liberals can act right now on tax avoidance by closing tax loopholes. In fact, the Liberals voted in favour of an NDP motion that would do just that, but, of course, they failed to act. My private member's bill aims to shut down tax loopholes very similar to the ones that were used in the paradise papers.

I have a simple question. Will the Liberals prove to Canadians they are working for the middle class by closing tax loopholes to make sure their wealthy friends stop abusive tax avoidance, yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are fully committed to fighting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. The NDP is talking about the importance of fighting tax evasion and is criticizing what we are doing about it. We are getting results and we have a plan. Last year, 335 cases were sent to criminal investigations and 123 search warrants were executed. We continue to work on ensuring that our tax system is fair for all Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Gordon Pape, the famous financial expert, wrote in the *Globe and Mail* after the minister's tax increase was introduced on the floor of the House of Commons, "If you've been considering taking profits on some of your stocks, do it now. You'll save the equivalent of 2 per cent federal tax plus the provincial share." As a result, many sold their shares and the stock market dropped. Morneau Shepell dropped 5%.

A week before the minister introduced his measures on the floor of the House of Commons, someone sold \$10 million of Morneau Shepell shares. Was it him?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to advocate on behalf of a tax system that is broken. What we did was something that we believe was absolutely the right thing to do. We did raise taxes on the top 1%, including families like mine—

Mr. David Anderson: Just clear it up.

Hon. Ed Fast: Yes or no?

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order. I really would encourage members not to interrupt when they do not have the floor. They know that Standing Order 18 prohibits it, so I would ask my hon. friend from Cypress Hills—Grasslands and others not to interrupt when it is not their turn, to wait for their turn. It is not that much to ask. Members can manage it.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: As I said, Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased to move forward on a package of tax changes that made an enormous difference on nine million Canadians. Lowering taxes on middle-class Canadians was financed by raising taxes on the top 1%. We saw that as way to make sure that our tax system was more fair.

We have continued down that path by looking at additional tax changes this past summer, lowering small business tax rates, finding some advantages for the wealthy.

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, the minister says he raised taxes on the wealthy. He is pretty wealthy.

If anybody sold their shares before the end of 2015, he or she would have not paid a penny more because of these tax increases. Far more important than that, if he or she was able to sell before these measures were crystalized in a motion before the House of Commons, that individual would have avoided the resulting drop in the stock market, in particular the 5% drop in Morneau Shepell shares. That person saved a cool half million dollars. Was the minister that person?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members across the way will continue to focus on me because they do not want to talk about what is actually going on.

What is actually going on is that the policies we put in place are making a better situation for our economy and a better situation for Canadian families. Middle-class Canadians are feeling much more secure two years into this government than they were in the previous decade. That is because they have the Canada child benefit. That is because their tax has been lowered. That is because the future looks more bright with higher economic growth.

We will keep on our plan.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a former corporate executive, the hon. member would know that selling shares on advanced information is a very serious problem. He would also know that most corporate executives freely disclose widely to the public when they buy and sell shares, so that they can be scrutinized and that they have no advantage in the stock market.

Why does that hon. member, if he made no mistake or he broke no rules in the timing of the sale of shares, not stand now and tell us when he sold his 680,000 shares in Morneau Shepell?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the fact that the opposition will continue to focus on me so they do not focus on what is actually going on here.

We will continue to talk about what we are doing for Canadians in every dimension, in our housing policy, in helping with child benefits, and making sure that we get fair trade agreements.

We will work on behalf of Canadians to make sure that our economy stays strong and their families stay strong, for today and for tomorrow.

* * *

[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, in response to our questions, the Prime Minister's special LGBTQ adviser said that the apology to the community would keep remedies separate from regret.

However, since last Thursday, the government has been saying that it might introduce a bill to expunge the criminal records of Canadians previously convicted of consensual sexual activity with same-sex partners.

Can the government confirm that the apology that will be given to the LGBTQ community tomorrow will include the necessary remedies?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians should feel safe to be themselves, free from discrimination. We have already made significant progress on these issues with Bill C-16 and Bill C-39.

Our special adviser on LGBTQ2 issues, the member for Edmonton Centre, has been consulting extensively with the community to ensure that we give a full and meaningful apology.

We are committed to making this formal apology tomorrow, November 28. Our government is working with the national advisory committee representing the community to make sure that this is a full apology.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it would be ironic if the government makes a just apology to the LGBTQ community tomorrow, and then fails to act to address ongoing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Failing to act will mean that the government will leave itself open to having to make future apologies.

Will the government commit today to working with us and the LGBTQ community to remove ongoing discrimination from federal law and policy, starting with the unscientific blood ban?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said already in French, all Canadians should be safe to be themselves, free from discrimination of any kind.

We have already made significant progress in this House on these issues with Bill C-16 and Bill C-39. Our special adviser on LGBTQ2 issues, the MP for Edmonton Centre, has been working with the community concerning the different issues that affect them in their everyday lives.

Oral Questions

We have committed to apologize in an inclusive and meaningful manner tomorrow. Our government is working with a national advisory committee representing the community, to make sure that these excuses are—

• (1445)

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

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that residential schools were designed to strip away the identity, culture, language, pride, and spirit of indigenous children, and many who attended them suffered neglect, abuse, mistreatment, and discrimination.

Addressing and making amends to the survivors of this dark chapter, a part of our history, is a vital part of our country's commitment to meaningful reconciliation.

Can the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations update the House on Canada's efforts to support the survivors' journey of healing with the former students of residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the abuse suffered by indigenous children at Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools was a horrific part of our history. Their exclusion from the 2008 residential schools apology was simply wrong.

I was humbled and honoured to join the Prime Minister last Friday when he righted that wrong and offered the historic and long-overdue apology to the former students on behalf of the Government of Canada. We know that this is only a first step in their healing journey, but, as the Prime Minister said, they no longer bear that burden alone.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fiscal policy changes are only ever certain when they are introduced in the House of Commons. Before that, they are just political promises.

The Liberals promised only a \$10-billion deficit. That is gone. They promised that they would lower taxes, and that promise has been broken. They promised once that they would get rid of the GST, and that promise is gone.

That is why fiscal policy measures are only certain when tabled in the House of Commons. The markets learned on December 7 the coming into force date of tax increases that moved markets, but not before someone was able to get out and avoid the losses.

Was the Minister of Finance that person?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very nice opportunity for us to talk about promises that were kept.

Promises that were kept include reducing taxes on middle-class Canadians and, for nine million Canadians, seeing a 7% reduction in the tax bracket from \$45,000 to \$90,000. Promises kept: we said that

we would raise taxes on the top 1%. Promises kept: we said that we would take a look at the Canada child benefit and increase it significantly while helping those families who needed it most.

These promises were kept to make sure that our economy would grow and that middle-class Canadians would see the benefits. We are going to keep on with those promises.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reason there is so much confusion about the detail of fiscal proposals before they are introduced in the House of Commons is because often platforms say confusing things. The Liberal platform would have us believe that revenue from this tax change would only start to be realized at the beginning of the fiscal year. However, when the minister came to this House to introduce his December 7 tax motion, he indicated it would take effect at the beginning of the calendar year. That news moved markets, but not before someone was able to sell their shares and save half a million dollars.

Was that person the Minister of Finance?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how we can be more clear. We promised Canadians that we would lower middle-class taxes. We promised Canadians that we would raise taxes on the top 1%. We followed through on both those promises, because we knew they would ensure that we had a fairer tax system. We also said we would make sure that middle-class Canadians see benefits from the changes in child benefits. These things ushered in a spark plug for a growing economy, which is exactly what we have seen over the course of the last couple of years: helping middle-class Canadians, strong growth rate, more jobs across our country. We will stay on with our approaches.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member says that he is not sure how he could be more clear. Let me just give him a suggestion. He could say "yes", or he could say "no".

I will ask again. Trading records show that somebody sold over 10-million dollars' worth of Morneau Shepell shares one week before the minister introduced tax measures that caused Morneau Shepell to drop by 5%. Was that seller the Minister of Finance, yes or no?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in focusing on me, what the opposition does not want to focus on is what we are actually doing for Canadians. There are 36 million Canadians, nine million of them were advantaged with our middle-class tax cut. What we are going to continue to do is work on behalf of Canadians and focus on the things they want us to do, which is growing the economy, making sure we have jobs that are helping Canadians, and making sure that families are doing better. That is what we will continue to focus on.

Oral Questions

●(1450)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the minister seems to have to hide. When he was a corporate executive, insider trading reports would have required the public reporting of his purchase and sale of company shares. He should be used to telling people when he buys and sells. If he has nothing to hide, he would just continue that practice now.

Did the minister sell his shares in Morneau Shepell in the amount of \$10 million exactly one week before he tabled in the House of Commons market-moving tax changes?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, we all work together with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all of our financial affairs are fully disclosed. That is what I have done from day one. That is what has allowed me to do the work we are doing on behalf of Canadians. The good news is that work is showing big advantages for Canadians across our country, such as 500,000 new jobs over the course of two years, and a lower rate of unemployment than there was during the entire time of the previous government. We are seeing a positive benefit for Canadians, and we are feeling positive about the opportunities for the next generation of Canadians as well.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's own department provided a report earlier this year showing that wealthy Canadians moved income into the 2015 tax year in order to avoid paying this new higher rate. One of the ways we know they did it was by selling their shares after the finance minister tabled his tax measures on the floor of this House of Commons. It caused the markets to drop. The data is right there. However, somebody knew enough to sell \$10 million of Morneau Shepell shares before that drop could occur, saving him half a million dollars.

Once again, was that the minister?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite might take a look at the stock market and see that it has gone up over the last couple of years. It may be unknown to him, but that is a result of some things that have gone on in the global economy, something that has gone on, as well, within the Canadian economy, and that is that our economy is doing well. Businesses are feeling optimistic. The reason they are feeling optimistic is that the investments we have made in middle-class Canadians have shown to be doing a good job to help those people put more money into the economy. That has led us to a higher rate of growth, more jobs, and a more optimistic outlook for the future. We hope that will continue to be the case.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in December 2016, the Prime Minister personally promised to take action to extend employment insurance sickness benefits. One year later, nothing has been done, clearly.

Fifteen weeks of benefits is not enough, especially for someone struggling with serious health problems. Once those 15 weeks are

up, the sick person is left without any income to live on. How is a seriously ill person supposed to pay the bills? It is impossible.

When will the Prime Minister finally keep his promise, stop doing consultations, and overhaul EI sickness benefits?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be part of a government that believes the employment insurance system has a role to play in providing an income to families going through hard times and to communities that are suffering.

Since 2016, we have implemented solid measures to make the EI system more flexible and more generous. We are going to continue this work, because we strongly believe that we are just getting started.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Christmas is coming, and for many Quebeckers, that means the return of *Ciné-cadeau*. We are all very excited to see Asterix and Obelix again.

However, for the families of Davie shipyard workers, the holidays are unlikely to be happy. Those workers delivered *Asterix* and were waiting for the green light to start building a second ship, the *Obelix*. According to the union, 113 people have already lost their jobs, and another 800 could be on the chopping block. Only a twisted bureaucracy would deny that this shipyard is entitled to its fair share.

Are the Liberals ignoring Quebec on purpose, or can they simply not help themselves?

●(1455)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is always concerned about the impact of job losses on workers and their families. We know that the people at Davie do excellent work.

Our government has been in touch with Davie shipyard executives and the unions in recent weeks. The national shipbuilding strategy will certainly create opportunities for Davie.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, Canadians want the Minister of Finance to set the record straight, and he has a golden opportunity to do just that.

On December 7, 2015, he introduced a tax measure that had a direct impact on Morneau Shepell, whose share price went down 5%. One week earlier, someone had sold \$10 million in shares. That person saved half a million dollars the day after the tax measure was introduced.

Can the minister tell Canadians the truth? Did he or did he not sell those Morneau Shepell shares on November 30, 2015?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like all members of the House, I worked with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that I am free from conflicts of interest. I will continue to work for Canadians to improve our economic situation and to make things better for the middle class and for families across Canada.

Fortunately, our policies are working. We have the highest rate of economic growth and the lowest rate of unemployment in a decade. That is good news for Canadians.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking. Sooner or later, the Minister of Finance will have to admit whether he did or did not sell his shares in Morneau Shepell one week before introducing tax measures that led to a 5% drop in Morneau Shepell's share price.

I am reaching out to the Minister of Finance. Will he finally tell Canadians the truth?

Did he or someone else sell shares on November 30, just before he introduced a tax provision that led to a 5% drop and a \$500,000 profit for the person who sold these shares?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that opposition members want to focus on me because they do not want to focus on Canadians.

We are far better off than we were before. We have the highest rate of economic growth and the lowest rate of unemployment in a decade. This is a very good news for Canadian families. We will continue to work for them in order to improve our situation in the future.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, prominent financial advisers told investors, in publications across the country, to sell their shares and realize their gains before the end of the calendar year of 2015, after the minister introduced his tax measures on the floor of the House of Commons, but a week before he did that, somebody sold \$10 million of shares in Morneau Shepell, saving half a million dollars by avoiding the consequent drop in the stock market. If the minister has nothing to hide, could he confirm if that person was him?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely nothing to hide, and that is why I disclosed all of my assets to the Ethics Commissioner. I will continue to work with her the way all members in this House are expected to work with her. That is important. That allows us to get on with the work we are doing on behalf of Canadians, the kind of work that led us to make investments in housing that are going to make an enormous difference over the next decade. That is the kind of work that we know will make a difference. Continuing this work will make a huge difference for the future of our country, for the future of Canadians.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indigenous peoples are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian workforce. In my riding of Sault Ste. Marie and across the country, our economic growth depends on their success. The Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour recently went on

a tour of northern Ontario. She stopped in places such Sault Ste. Marie and other ridings.

Could the minister update this House on the work our government is doing to support indigenous peoples in northern Ontario and across this great country?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Sault Ste. Marie for his question. I was pleased to visit his community recently, along with Sudbury, Mishkeegogamang, Nibinamik, and Whitefish Lake First Nation. We know that to grow the middle class, indigenous people must have equal opportunities for skill development and good-quality jobs. That is why after our government took office, we increased funding for indigenous job skills training for the first time in 20 years. We will continue to work in partnership with indigenous communities and people across the country to ensure that they have the skills and opportunities they need.

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● (1500)

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, financial advisers told investors to sell their shares after the minister introduced his tax increase on the floor of the House of Commons. His department has now confirmed that this is exactly what happened. That is why revenues in the subsequent year from the wealthiest Canadians actually went down, and the stock market data itself demonstrates a drop after he introduced his measures. Morneau Shepell was down 5%, but once again, someone was able to sell their shares a week before that. Was the minister that somebody?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I will continue to work with the Ethics Commissioner, because that is the appropriate way members in this House disclose all of their assets, as I did, to make sure that we can do the work that is appropriate. We will continue with the policies the opposition does not like, the policies that are helping the middle class, the policies that they are not voting against, like the increase in taxes on the 1%.

We are going to continue to do that, because we know that not only are they helping middle-class families, they are actually helping our economy to grow. That is why we are so proud of what has been done over the last couple of years.

*Oral Questions***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Sunday afternoon, a barge carrying three and a half million litres of diesel and a half-million litres of gasoline lost power on B. C.'s central coast. A little over a year ago, the Heiltsuk people faced almost the exact same threat, and the federal government promised to make things better. The transport minister met with Chief Councillor Marilyn Slett today. She personally gave him a copy of the Heiltsuk's indigenous marine response centre proposal. A true nation-to-nation relationship means backing up one's words with real actions.

Will the Liberals support the first ever indigenous-led coastal protection strategy?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are determined to improve marine safety. That is why we have put in place the oceans protection plan. I want to say that it includes strong involvement from our coastal first nations. We need them to help us to monitor and respond to marine incidents.

I want to thank the Heiltsuk Tribal Council for its report, which it sent me about 10 days ago, which is a proposal on how to help. We will look at that very carefully. As my colleague said, I met with Chief Councillor Marilyn Slett about an hour ago, and she brought me up to date on her concerns with respect to the current incident with the *Jake Shearer* barge.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, growing our markets in Asia is key for many Canadian businesses. These markets provide a significant opportunity for growth, and we know that consumer demand for Canada's world-class agricultural products continues to grow. Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of joining our Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. This was just before his mission to China.

Now that he is back, can the minister update us on our government's plan to create opportunities for Canadian farmers, growers, and producers?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for Scarborough North for his question and hard work.

This month I led a very successful trade mission, which is a vital market for Canadian farmers. During the mission, our agricultural industry signed deals for new business, worth nearly \$300 million, for blueberries, barley, swine genetics, and ice wine.

I was proud to help put more Canadian products on Chinese store shelves and e-commerce platforms, which will help create good, well-paying jobs in Canada and help put more money in the pockets of Canadian farmers.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not clear that the minister understands the seriousness of the situation.

Somebody unloaded \$10 million of Morneau Shepell shares one week before the minister introduced measures that would cause the share value to go down by 5%, a significant drop. That individual was able to save \$500,000.

Now, I am going to give the minister one last chance. Will he answer the question? Was he the one who sold those shares at that time?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that the member opposite might not understand how it works in this House. The way it works is that we work with the Ethics Commissioner to disclose all of our assets, which is exactly what I have done in order to make sure that I can get on with the work that is going to make a difference for Canadians.

Back in 2015, what that work entailed was thinking about how we could lower taxes on middle-class Canadians and raise them on the top 1%. What it entailed was thinking about how we could means test the Canada child benefit, providing much more for middle-class families. Those policies ushered in a rate of growth that the previous government could only have hoped for in its wildest dreams. We have seen a positive situation for families across our country.

* * *

● (1505)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 800 people are about to lose their jobs at the Davie shipyard. Out of \$100 million in contracts, 80% is going to Halifax, 17% is going to Vancouver, and less than 1% is going to Quebec. However, the people in Lévis are ready. All they want is to work, but no, Ottawa prefers to enrich the Irvings. Will the Prime Minister go and see the 800 workers and tell them why he decided to send their jobs to Halifax?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is always concerned about the impact of job losses on workers and their families. We recognize the excellent work of Davie employees. Over the past few weeks, our government has been working with Davie shipyard management and the unions. We will continue those discussions and come up with a solution.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is just the same old empty rhetoric. The opposition asks questions but always gets the same talking points in response. I want to come at this from a different angle. My question is for the defence minister. How does he expect to be able to defend three oceans with only a single supply ship for two fleets, and why is he jeopardizing 800 jobs in Quebec when Quebec produced the jewel of the Canadian fleet at low prices and on time? I would like him to explain that to me.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the navy is in the midst of one of the most comprehensive fleet modernizations in its peacetime history. As part of the national capabilities strategy under our new defence policy, our government is acquiring fleet support ships to permanently replace the Protecteur class auxiliary oiler replenishment vessels. The project will deliver two ships that will provide core replenishment, sealift capabilities, and support to our operations.

We are committed to building new ships for the navy and to maintaining Canada's naval capabilities for the long term.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

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

The current funding formula for Nunavut falls short, making it difficult for the territorial government to adequately provide basic services. I have raised this concern on numerous occasions, and for good reason. Just look at the stats: only 35% of students graduate high school, the suicide rate is ten times the national average, and the core housing need is three times the national rate, and there are many more.

Will the minister commit to working with the territorial government to adjust the formula to more of a needs-based approach?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Nunavut for his question and for the important work he is doing for his communities.

We are always engaging with provinces and territories to better understand their challenges and needs and are committed to important issues, like the ones the member just listed.

We know that higher costs associated with housing in the north leave many families with core housing needs. This is why last week, building on funding committed in budget 2017 for housing, we announced \$300 million over 10 years to meet the specific needs for housing in the north. Of the \$300 million we just committed for more stable housing funding in the territories, \$240 million will be allocated—

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Terrebonne on a point of order.

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DAVIE SHIPYARD

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I seek the consent of the House to move the following very modest motion. I move:

That the House deplore the loss of 800 jobs at Davie shipyards in Lévis by the end of the year.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the 12+ Group Steering Committee held in Porto, Portugal, on September 10 to 11.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 47th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 47th report later this day.

[English]

FINANCE

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to the supplementary estimates (B), 2017-18.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 47th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House today, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

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● (1515)
[English]

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by residents of my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The petitioners call on the government to cancel its tax grab against doctors, farmers, and small business owners, which directly affects their employment, access to timely medical care, and affordability of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

[Translation]

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak for the vast majority of the people in my riding in presenting a petition signed by over 9,000 members of the Cercles de fermières du Québec from across the province. These people are against the legalization of marijuana, and especially against Bills C-45 and C-46, which are rushed and sloppily drafted.

Given that political, police, and legal authorities say they are not ready to handle this situation, they are calling on the government to impose a moratorium on marijuana legalization until the provincial and territorial governments are properly equipped to oversee the legal sale of marijuana. A survey showed that more than 82% of my constituents are against legalization. Maybe the 40 Liberals across the aisle are not taking the time to—

The Speaker: I would remind the member that he is not to engage in debate when presenting a petition. This is not the time to debate but to present petitions.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

[English]

EXTRACTIVE SECTOR

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to table a petition on behalf of Amnesty International Comox Valley Action Circle.

The petitioners urge the Government of Canada to take action to create an extractive sector ombudsman with the power to independently investigate complaints and to make recommendations to corporations and the Government of Canada, and to create legislated access to Canadian courts for people who have been seriously harmed by the international operations of Canadian companies.

PENSIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of thousands of

Canadians who are concerned with the current bankruptcy act of the federal government.

In particular, the petitioners reference the differences between the provincial and federal legislation and have great concern that provincial legislation ensures pension plan deficiencies be the first super priority creditor, and they ask for that, while the federal does not. They point out that between the federal and provincial legislation, the provincial legislation is much more generous to employees.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on the subject of carbon taxes as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Although some might think the petition is now out of date, since we have not seen any legislation yet before the House, the petitioners request that the carbon price be organized under the principle of carbon fee and dividend, in which carbon fees are collected at source and the amounts are returned to each of the taxpayers through whatever jurisdiction applies the tax.

The petitioners ask the House of Commons to examine fee and dividend as a preferred method.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise in the House and present a petition on behalf of the residents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, who recognize that the federal Minister of Environment and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans have a renewed mandate to increase the protection of Canada's marine and coastal areas. They also recognize that the establishment of a national marine conservation area in the Strait of Georgia was needed to protect that marine environment.

The petitioners therefore call upon the Government of Canada to establish a national marine conservation area in the Salish Sea, and to consult and work with first nations to ensure we leave this legacy for our children.

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I again bring voices of coastal communities into the House to urge the government to adopt my legislation, Bill C-352, to solve the long-standing problem of abandoned vessels.

The petitioners from Nanaimo and Ladysmith urge this Parliament in particular to vote in favour of unblocking debate on the legislation. They want to see their solutions, which they have been advocating for decades, come to the House for full debate. They urge parliamentarians, in the vote tomorrow or the next day, to accede to the hope that their voices will be heard.

The Speaker: I remind members not to engage in debate during presentation of petitions.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

•(1520)

DRINKING WATER

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of my constituents concerning safe water for first nation communities.

Along with Human Rights Watch, the petitioners demand, in a very lengthy preamble, that we ensure all first nation communities have access to clean water; that there are waste water treatment plants on first nations; that there are sufficient regulations and funds in capital, operation, and maintenance costs for the community and household systems; and that there are mechanisms to track progress to ensure that no first nation child, or any first nation person, in our country does not have clean, adequate, and good drinking water.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I ask leave that, when the House adjourns, we can debate an important matter requiring urgent consideration. As we all know, Islamic terrorists returning to Canada after fighting our own Canadian soldiers and our allies is a matter of national security. Canadians expect to be kept informed about this threat, and the government must show that it has a solid plan to keep them safe, which should be any government's priority. Since the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness is unable to provide specific, up-to-date figures about the number of terrorists who have come back, who they are, where they live, and whether they are being properly monitored, I am requesting an emergency debate on this subject so Canadians can get accurate, up-to-date information about these traitors plus assurances that the government is doing everything in its power to keep Canadians as safe as possible.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for raising the subject, but I do not believe that it meets the requirements of the Standing Orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-63, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on

Government Orders

March 22, 2017 and other measures, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil has five and a half minutes remaining in his comments.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I resume my comments, I want to go back to question period and what I thought, quite frankly, was an egregious display of contempt for our parliamentary democracy.

The minister was asked multiple times to answer whether he sold his shares in Morneau Shepell in advance of his tax reform announcement, and he failed to answer the question on multiple occasions.

It begs the question, in the absence of the minister's answering those questions on a bill that, quite frankly, he has influence over, I would call into question the ability of Canadians to have confidence in conducting further business on this bill.

Therefore, as a result, I move:

That the debate do now adjourn.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

•(1600)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 401)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Aubin
Ayoub	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)

Government Orders

Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boissonnault	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Bossio	Boucher	Peschisolido	Peterson
Boudrias	Boulerice	Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard	Picard	Plamondon
Bratina	Breton	Pollievre	Poissant
Brison	Brosseau	Quach	Qualtrough
Brown	Caesar-Chavannes	Rankin	Ratansi
Cannings	Caron	Rayes	Reid
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Rempel	Richards
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger	Rioux	Robillard
Champagne	Chen	Romanado	Rudd
Chong	Choquette	Ruimy	Rusnak
Christopherson	Clarke	Saganash	Sahota
Clement	Cooper	Sajjan	Samson
Cormier	Cullen	Sangha	Saroya
Cuzner	Dabrusin	Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Damoff	DeCoursey	Schmale	Schulte
Deltell	Dhaliwal	Sgro	Shanahan
Dhillon	Di Iorio	Sheehan	Shields
Diotte	Dreeshen	Shipley	Sikand
Drouin	Dubé	Simms	Sohi
Dubourg	Duclos	Sopuck	Sorbara
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Sorenson	Spengemann
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault	Stanton	Stetski
Duvall	Dzerowicz	Strahl	Stubbs
Eglinski	Ellis	Sweet	Tabbara
Erskine-Smith	Eyking	Tan	Tassi
Eyolfson	Falk	Thériault	Tilson
Fast	Fergus	Tootoo	Trudel
Fillmore	Finnigan	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Fisher	Fonseca	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Fortier	Fortin	Vaughan	Vecchio
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)	Viersen	Virani
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland	Wagantall	Warkentin
Fry	Fuhr	Waugh	Webber
Gallant	Garneau	Weir	Whalen
Garrison	Généreux	Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Gerretsen	Gill	Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Gladu	Godin	Yurdiga	Zahid
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale	Zimmer — 273	
Gould	Gourde		
Graham	Grewal		
Hajdu	Hardcastle		NAYS
Harder	Hardie		Members
Harvey	Hébert		
Hehr	Hoback		
Holland	Housefather		
Hughes	Hussen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)— 1	
Hutchings	Iacono		PAIRED
Jeneroux	Johns	Nil	
Jolibois	Joly		
Jordan	Jowhari		The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
Julian	Kelly		
Khalid	Khera		
Kitchen	Kmiec		
Kusie	Kwan		
Lambropoulos	Lametti		* * *
Lamoureux	Lapointe		ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière		
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier		
Leslie	Liepert		
Lighthound	Lloyd		
Lockhart	Long		
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacGregor	MacKenzie		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malcolmson		
Maloney	Marcil		
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)			
Mathysen	McCauley (Edmonton West)		
May (Cambridge)	McGuinty		
McDonald	McKenna		
McKay	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Mendès		
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mihychuk		
Mendicino	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)		
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)			
Monsef	Morneau		
Morrissey	Motz		
Murray	Nantel		
Nassif	Ng		
O'Connell	Oliphant		
Oliver	O'Regan		
Ouellette	Paradis		

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1640)

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

(Division No. 402)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alhabra
Alleslev	Amos
Arseneault	Ayoub
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhalival	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Leslie
Lighbound	Lockhart
Long	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)

Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Romanado
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Shanahan
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 157

Government Orders

Morreau
Murray
Ng
Olipphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Rudd
Rusnak
Sajjan
Sangha
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

NAYS

Members

Albrecht
Anderson
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bergen
Berthold
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Cannings
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Dreschen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Fortin
Garrison
Gill
Godin
Hardcastle
Hoback
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kelly
Kmicc
Kwan
Lauson (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lloyd
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nantel
Pauzé
Poilievre
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl

Points of Order

Stubbs
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

Sweet
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Weir
Zimmer — 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—SECRET BALLOT VOTES

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today concerning the practice that you will follow in the upcoming votes to determine the votability of Bill C-352, the important bill from the very dedicated and hard-working member of Parliament from Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

This is a very important and historic point in time. We have never used Standing Order 92(4)(a) and (b) before, and therefore the process that you use, Mr. Speaker, will determine the precedence for this in the future and for future parliaments. You may be tempted to follow the practice following upon the election of the Speaker, the only other time under our rules when we have this secret ballot vote. This practice has the clerk with the assistance of table officers conduct the count and, in the morning after the vote has been held, announce the decision of the vote with no reference to the number of ballots cast for each side of the question.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking for you to consider releasing the numeric results of the ballot and the names of the members of Parliament who have voted.

I understand the rationale for you, Mr. Speaker, not to release either result. This place runs on precedent and previous practice and the only other use of a secret ballot vote in the House is for the election of the Speaker. That procedure is prescribed by Standing Orders 2 through 7 and they are designed to show the importance of the following of these rules. They clearly say that for electing the Speaker, the only folks who shall handle the count will be those from the table. Our rules are also clear that there will be no release of the numeric ballot results, only the names of the candidates still on the ballot and the naming of the winner. Mr. Speaker, you know this very well as you went through the process.

I submit to you today, Mr. Speaker, that the procedure for the conduct of the secret ballot vote to determine if Bill C-352 will be allowed a vote is not analogous to the process of electing a Speaker. I submit to you that it is not appropriate to apply a procedure for the election of a Speaker to a question being put before the House as a normal part of the legislative process.

First, these two secret ballot votes are doing very different things. Electing a Speaker is a constitutional obligation of the House of

Commons. Sections 44 through 49 of the Constitution Act, 1867, the core part of our Constitution, strictly deal with the election of the Speaker and the powers vested to the Speaker therein. The election process was designed back in the 1980s for the Speaker's election. Parliamentarians at that time had an objective of allowing the free and fair election of the Speaker and the rules were designed to make sure that the newly elected Speaker had the legitimacy and freedom to perform her or his important constitutional role in the strongest way possible. Parliamentarians made sure that our most trusted officials would be those conducting the election to make it above reproach. To make sure that the Speaker has the maximum confidence of the chamber that elects her or him, the number of the ballots would not be released so the Speaker's mandate would never be questioned.

I believe that the subject of Bill C-352 is of critical importance, especially to the coastal communities it would so strongly impact, but I have no illusion that if the bill is votable is on the same procedural or constitutional level as the election of a Speaker. When the rules for votability of private members' bills were being developed, which took place 15 to 20 years after the election of our first Speaker by secret ballot, it was not envisioned that the importance of that decision was on the same level as choosing the chief presiding officer over the elected assembly of our country. The decision before members of this Parliament in the next few days will be about a specific initiative of a private member being able to have a vote in the House. It is not a constitutional question, but rather part of the legislative process for private members' business.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have lots of PMB votes in this House. We know the questions and we get to know the results when the vote takes place and so do Canadians. We get to know how many members voted on each side of the question and we generally value the numeric value of the vote as a transparent way where Canadians can see their democracy at work, and that helps instill confidence in our system of government. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is antithetical for this place not to know what the numbers were on any side of any question, which is part of the legislative process. Our democracy is not simply about having representatives make decisions; it is about making decisions in a way that builds confidence in the people who sent us here to make decisions on their behalf, and we do that by being open and transparent.

● (1645)

[*Translation*]

At each stage of a bill, we vote openly and publicly so that our constituents know how their representative voted. That is also why the final result of the vote is communicated immediately, as the Speaker just did, so that everyone can see how much support there is for a given issue.

The purpose of the secret ballot under Standing Order 92(4)(b) is to allow members to vote freely without their party whip knowing how they voted. This different way of voting stemmed from a desire to give members greater freedom to express themselves on private members' business and was part of a push for a clearer distinction between government business and private members' business during the reforms of 2002 and 2003. Those changes were designed to achieve a clear distinction in terms of both procedure and content.

Government Orders

Other aspects of this reform included the creation of the private members' draw, the exclusion of ministers and parliamentary secretaries from the process, the different voting method for members of the House, and the establishment of a separate order of precedence from government business. It was in that spirit that Standing Order 92(4)(b) was created.

• (1650)

[English]

Page 32 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, states that “Responsible government has long been considered an essential element of government based on the Westminster model.” It goes on to say that “responsible government means that a government must be responsive to its citizens, that it must operate responsibly (that is, be well organized in developing and implementing policy) and that its Ministers must be accountable or responsible to Parliament.” For there to be confidence in responsible government, I submit that being open and transparent is essential.

Because the appeal process that we are undertaking this week by secret ballot, starting tomorrow, has never happened in this place before, it is totally appropriate for you to decide how the result of this vote should be released, not based on the practice used for the election of the speaker, for the reasons I have just set out, but based as much as practical on the rules we use in the legislative process, those of clarity and transparency. It is up to you, Mr. Speaker, that the spirit of the drafters of this Standing Order be heard. I therefore ask that, like all other parts of the legislative process, the numerical results of the decision on the votability of Bill C-352 be made public.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for raising his point of order. I will have more to say on the subject tomorrow morning. However, at first blush, if I understood him correctly, I think that the member is asking me not to follow precedent in relation to the closest thing we have had to this kind of a vote previously. It also seems to me that he is asking me to do something that the Standing Order does not, and that the House has not authorized the Speaker to do. Also, it strikes me that this might be a topic that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs might wish to look at. Nonetheless, I will be coming back tomorrow morning with more to say on this subject.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Drummond, Government Appointments; the hon. member Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Status of Women; the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable, Rail Transportation.

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved that Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity to speak on Bill C-58, which would amend Canada's Access to Information Act.

As we developed these reforms, we were guided by the principle that government information belongs to the people it serves.

[Translation]

We remain committed to that principle, which was introduced for the first time in the Access to Information Act in 1983.

[English]

Now 34 years later, our proposed reforms would advance the original intent of the act in a way that reflects Canada's technologies, policies, and legislation. This is not a one-off exercise. Rather, we have kicked off a progressive ongoing renewal of the ATI system, one that will protect Canadians' rights of access to government information well into the future. Our efforts began over a year ago.

[Translation]

In May 2016, I issued a directive suggesting openness by default in government.

[English]

Open by default means having a culture across government in which data and information are increasingly released as a matter of course, unless there are specific reasons not to do so. Now, with the amendments proposed in Bill C-58, we are taking the next step. These amendments would create a new part of the act relating to proactive disclosure, one that effectively puts into practice the idea of open by default. Proactive disclosure would apply to more than 240 departments, agencies, and crown corporations, including the Prime Minister's Office, ministers' offices, senators and members of Parliament, institutions that support Parliament, administrative institutions that support the courts, and over 1,100 judges of the superior courts.

• (1655)

[Translation]

We also added to the legislation the proactive publication of information that we know is of interest to Canadians and that provides greater transparency and accountability with respect to the use of public money.

[English]

This will include travel and hospitality expenses for ministers and their staffs and senior officials across government, contracts over \$10,000, and all contracts for MPs and senators, grants and contributions over \$25,000, mandate letters and revised mandate letters of ministers, briefing packages for new ministers and deputy ministers, lists of briefing notes for the minister and deputy minister, and briefing binders prepared for question period and parliamentary committee appearances.

Government Orders

Of course, this does not absolve us of our responsibility to strengthen the request-based system. We know that the access to information system has been the subject widespread and warranted criticism. In fact, demands on the system have grown massively in recent years. That is why we are developing a guide to provide requesters with clear explanations of exemptions and exclusions, investing in tools to make processing information requests more efficient, allowing federal institutions with the same minister to share request processing services for greater efficiency, and increasing government training to get common and consistent interpretation of the application of ATI rules.

In addition, the proposed bill gives the Information Commissioner new powers, including the power to order the release of government records. This is an important advancement that was first recommended by a parliamentary committee studying the Access to Information Act back in 1987. Our government is acting on it and Bill C-58 would change the commissioner's role from an ombudsperson to an authority with the power to order the release of government records.

[*Translation*]

We are taking steps to help government institutions eliminate requests made in bad faith, which are detrimental to the system.

[*English*]

By tying up government resources, such vexatious, bad faith requests can interfere with an institution's ability to do its work and respond to other requests. Let me be clear. We have heard the concerns expressed about how we must safeguard against the abuse of this proposed measure. A large or broad request, or one that causes government discomfort, does not, of itself, represent bad faith on the part of the requester.

I would like to address the amendments made at committee. Our government believes in working with parliamentarians through the committee system for the good of all Canadians. I was happy to see that the committee passed over a dozen amendments, which serve to further strengthen and clarify our government's intent to strengthen and reform our access to information regime.

For example, one amendment removes the ability of departments to decline to act on a request simply because the request does not specify the subject matter, type of record, or time period. It gives the Office of the Information Commissioner the power to approve or reject upfront a department's request to decline to act on a request. It clarifies that a department can only decline to act based on the record already being available if it is the identical record.

These amendments address concerns raised by both the Information Commissioner and other stakeholders, including representatives of indigenous claims organizations. The amendments further underline the fact that we want to ensure that the system cannot be abused and cannot be used to decline to act on legitimate requests.

The committee also passed an amendment giving the Information Commissioner the power to publish the results of her investigations and to publish their orders. This is an important strengthening of the commissioner's powers.

The committee passed an amendment that imposes a 30-day deadline for the proactive disclosure of mandate letters.

This is just the first phase of our access to information modernization. In fact, Bill C-58 includes a mandatory review of the act every five years. The first review will begin no later than one year after this bill receives royal assent. What is more, it will require that departments regularly review the information being requested under the act. This will help us understand and increase information that could be proactively disclosed.

After 34 years, Canada's Access to Information Act needs updating. This is going to be an ongoing work in progress as we have an evergreening, modernization and strengthening of the Access to Information Act. We look forward to continuing our work to help make government more open, transparent, and accountable.

● (1700)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the minister would like to start with openness, accountability, and transparency, maybe he should start with the minister who sits beside him, the finance minister. We saw a display today in the House of Commons where no questions were answered by that minister. How does that give Canadians any confidence in this minister's ability to push through legislation that speaks about openness, accountability, and transparency?

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, first, the Conservative government we replaced was the first government in the history of the British Commonwealth to be found in contempt of Parliament for not providing information to Parliament on the costs of its legislation. In fact, in 2006, the Conservatives' platform stated they were going to modernize the Access to Information Act, and 10 years later they had not even touched it. We are actually getting the job done. We are doing it, and we would welcome the member's support.

With respect to our finance minister, the absurd smears by opposition members today implying that our finance minister somehow entered politics to make money are totally asinine. Our finance minister entered politics to make a difference. He is making a difference, because two years in he cut the taxes of the middle class and brought in a Canada child benefit that has helped lift over 300,000 Canadian kids out of poverty. We have—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I find it appalling that the minister is completely avoiding the issue. We have a bill and he is throwing out all manner of political stuff and attacking the Conservatives. He should stick to and explain his own attack on the access to information system. I would like the Speaker to make sure that the minister is held accountable to at least explain why he is attacking the access to information system.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. President of the Treasury Board rising. I thank the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay for his intervention. I think we are into a dispute about the facts in this case. I recognize that we have just begun the debate on this question and there will be more opportunities for questions and comments.

Does the hon. President of the Treasury Board wish to address the point of order?

Hon. Scott Brison: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, because as is often the case, the member misses the point, and he missed the question. The question was about the finance minister. I was speaking to that question—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We are going to go back to the President of the Treasury Board to let him finish his response to the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil, and then we will carry on with questions and comments.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, again, I was answering the question posed by my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil, which referred to the finance minister. I was speaking of the finance minister, who entered politics to make a difference. He is indeed making a difference, with the best economic growth we have had in over a decade, at 3.7%, something that the previous government did not accomplish. I am proud of the role that the finance minister is playing in terms of the kinds of policy that creates good middle-class growth for all Canadians.

• (1705)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the President of the Treasury Board, but I cannot, because I do not know what bill he is talking about. Bill C-58 would do the opposite of what he just said it would do.

Here is what the Liberals promised would be in this legislation. They promised that access to information would apply to his office and to the Prime Minister's Office. It does not. They promised that the bill would apply appropriately to administrative institutions that support Parliament and the courts. It does not. The government promised that the bill would empower the Information Commissioner to order the release of government information. It does not.

That is not just my opinion, it is the opinion of the Information Commissioner who appeared before us at committee and moved recommendations to fix Bill C-58. It is somewhat offensive to hear the Treasury Board President talking about respecting the work of committee, because the Liberals struck down amendment after amendment. These were amendments that were based on the testimony we heard at committee, from not only the Information Commissioner, but representatives from first nations communities and the media.

The Liberals promised a number of things, one of which was to rely on evidence. On all of these measures that I just outlined, Bill C-58 is “regressive”, and that is also according to the Information Commissioner.

Who does the member expect us to trust, a government that will not answer simple and direct questions day after day, or the Information Commissioner who is the watchdog and works on behalf of Parliament and all Canadians to make sure we get the information we need to hold government to account?

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are the first government in 34 years to act to modernize the Access to Information Act. In fact, we have given the Information Commissioner, for the first time ever, real order-making power. She can tell a department or agency to respond to a requester, and the department or agency, after that order is issued, has to respond within 30 days. Failure to do so will be in violation of the law. The department or agency can challenge her, but that would be in a court of law, and that will be decided by a judge. That is real order-making power, and that is progress.

In terms of the application to ministers' offices and the PMO, we are doing that through proactive disclosure. I know why the NDP do not like proactive disclosure. Those members did not like it in 2013, when our Prime Minister, in opposition as leader of the Liberal Party, led the way to proactively disclosing expenses of MPs. We were the first to do that. The Conservatives were quite supportive of that. The NDP did not support proactive disclosure of those expenses, and that party put up all kinds of reasons as to why that should not be done.

We are glad that we led in opposition on proactive disclosure. We are glad that, in government, we are leading in terms of proactive disclosure as an essential part of modernizing Canada's Access to Information Act.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work that the minister has been doing with respect to modernizing the access to information regime for the first time in many years, and for his promise to continue doing that work.

I would like to touch on the note that the minister made that there were over a dozen amendments made to this legislation. He mentioned that those amendments reflect the things the Information Commissioner was asking for, some of which were our intent in the first place, but were not perfectly expressed in the original bill. Other amendments were to move further based on the commissioner's request.

Could the minister tell us how this compares with the previous Conservative government with respect to listening to and consulting with people, and then being willing to have amendments made by committee?

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Vancouver Quadra, who has been doing a great job as parliamentary secretary on this and other files.

These amendments address concerns raised by the Information Commissioner and other stakeholders, including representatives of indigenous claims organizations. We have taken these concerns seriously and are open to moving forward with them. We want to make sure that the system cannot be abused and that a request cannot be declined when it is a legitimate request.

Government Orders

The call for a vexatious clause in this has come from the ethics committee in the past. In fact, the Information Commissioner has called for it in the past. It is important that it be properly and narrowly defined. There are eight provinces and the three territories that have a similar clause.

I also agree with the amendment that would provide the power of the Information Commissioner, up front in the process, to either agree with or reject the use of a vexatious clause in the denial of a request. I support that, and I believe it should be up front. That is why the parliamentary process informs and strengthens legislation. It is why I demonstrated very early that I was open to amendments that would help to strengthen the legislation.

Beyond that, within a year of the passage of Bill C-58, we would have a mandatory full review to assess these changes and inform future changes. This is a work in progress—

• (1710)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister speak, and as I sit in the House on a daily basis, as we all do, is it any wonder that we find it hard to believe that anything the government says it is going to do will actually come to fruition? We have seen broken promise after broken promise. If members do not believe me, just look at what some of those who are looking closely at Bill C-58 are saying. By ruling out the possibility to obtain information from ministers' offices and the Prime Minister's Office, the government is breaking its campaign promise to establish a government open by default. Moreover, the possibility to refuse certain access to information requests on an undefined basis jeopardizes the transparency and the openness of this government. That was from Katie Gibbs, the executive director of Evidence for Democracy group. However, there are more, and I will refer to more as I get through my speech today on Bill C-58.

I would be remiss if I did not go back a couple of hours, back to the future, and the egregious display of contempt for parliamentary democracy. It has been a practice in this place for many years that when opposition members ask questions directly and pointedly to the finance minister, as we did today, or to other ministers of the crown, that those answers are expected. They are expected on behalf of all Canadians. This is why we are elected to come to this place; it is to ask the type of hard questions that were asked today.

In the preamble to the movement of a motion to adjourn debate on Bill C-63, I will remind the House that we are talking about openness and transparency, which is something the government runs around saying. The Prime Minister stands up in front of microphones, posts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat that the government is more open and transparent than any other government in the history of Canada. I would suggest that nothing could be further from the truth.

I would again remind the House of what I said before I moved the motion to adjourn debate. I said to the Speaker that before I resumed my comments, I wanted to go back to question period and what I thought, quite frankly, was an egregious display of contempt for our parliamentary democracy. This minister was asked multiple times whether he had sold his shares in Morneau Shepell in advance of his

tax reform announcement, and he failed to answer the question on multiple occasions.

Therefore, in the absence of the minister answering those questions on a bill that, quite frankly, he has influence over, I would call into question the ability of Canadians to have confidence in him conducting further business on the bill. It is confidence, and not just on this bill, but any bill. The Minister of Finance was asked a minimum of 14 times today in question period whether in fact he had sold his shares in Morneau Shepell in advance of his tax reform policies being announced, and each time he skirted the question. He would not answer. He went on about the middle class and those working hard to join it. Well, right now, it is a matter of the middle class and those working hard to stay in it because of the policies of the finance minister.

We are expected to sit in the House and accept not just what the President of Treasury Board talks about in terms of openness and accountability, but there are multiple people, stakeholders, who have a vested interest in what the President of Treasury Board is promoting and proposing in terms of this access to information legislation, and they are being critical of it. They are being as critical as we are being on the finance minister, because he needs to answer the questions.

The government needs to force the finance minister to answer the questions as to whether in fact he had any vested interest or knowledge of the sale of those shares. It speaks to credibility, to transparency, to accountability, which the government is good at talking about, but when it comes to implementing or living by that, it does not.

• (1715)

What was funny about Bill C-63 and the motion we put forward was that every single person, save one, I believe the member from the Green Party, voted in support of adjourning the debate on that bill. They did that because they do not want to talk about it.

All we are asking is that the minister answer the questions that have been asked of him by those who represent Canadians in this House, every single one of us who are not members of the Liberal Party.

We are actually hearing about Liberal members who are questioning their confidence in the ability of the finance minister to conduct the business of the country. Why? It is because he has failed to answer the questions. He has answered, but in generalities. He goes back to the fetal position of saying that they are working hard for the middle class and those working hard to join it. However, he refuses to answer the questions.

Government Orders

If we are talking about openness and transparency, and this government is proposing Bill C-58, why is the finance minister not being open and transparent with Canadians? We can speculate that perhaps he knows that Canadians will not be happy with the answers. They will not be happy with the villa in France and why he hid that from the Ethics Commissioner, that he had complete control over Morneau Shepell shares and shares in various corporations, or that perhaps he was the one who sold that \$10 million worth of shares just ahead of making that announcement. Openness and transparency: what an absolute joke.

I also want to talk about some other individuals who have concerns about what the government is proposing in Bill C-58. The bill proposes a good amendment, and I will give some credit here, by requiring more proactive publication of some information by giving the Information Commissioner the power to order the publication of some information, but it does nothing to fill the huge gaps in the act, as was promised by the Liberals.

We need more changes to have a government that is transparent and open by default. Again, the Liberals talk about openness and transparency, but they do not act in that way.

"The bill is a step backwards in allowing government officials to deny requests for information if they think the request is frivolous or made in bad faith. Public officials should not be given this power, as they will likely use it as a new loophole to deny the public information it has a right know." Dale Conacher, the co-founder of Democracy Watch, said that.

Stephane Giroux, the president of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec said, "The most interesting fact for us was to have access to documents from ministers' offices. False alarm. It was too good to be true."

In spite of the fact that the President of the Treasury Board is standing up and saying that all these changes have occurred within Bill C-58, the reality is that there are still significant concerns. I think there is concern among Canadians. This past weekend, I had lots of events in my riding, and one of the things I kept hearing about is confidence in the finance minister to continue to do his job, given the circumstances and the besieged state he has been in over the last while. The fact that every single member of the Liberal caucus voted to adjourn debate on this issue calls into question not just Canadians' confidence in the finance minister but the Liberal backbenches' confidence in the finance minister.

The *Hill Times* today reported that there are concerns among Liberal backbenchers that this is going to affect them in 2019. Do members know the reason they gave for that concern? Many of them will have been here for one term of four years. They are concerned about their pensions. That is what it said in the paper.

How about being concerned about the process of democracy in this country and making sure that no one benefits from having holdings, in the case of the finance minister, that they have not brought forward and been transparent about?

• (1720)

Never mind pensions, we should be focused on what the finance minister is doing by not being transparent and accountable to

Canadians and question whether some of the legislation he is putting forward, such as Bill C-27, actually benefits him.

I would remind the House as well that it is not just a matter of benefiting him. What about the benefit to his family? What about his wife? What about his kids? What about his father? How many Morneau Shepell shareholders, or anyone directly or indirectly associated with that family, are benefiting as a result of the policies the finance minister is putting forward? We talk about being open and transparent, but the finance minister has been anything but, and we certainly saw that egregious display today in the House.

As parents, we teach our kids about the difference between right and wrong. We tell our kids what they cannot do and explain it to them. We tell them what they can do and explain the reasons why. We talk often to our kids about character. School systems, through the policies of education, speak about character. They speak about honesty and integrity, yet the finance minister is showing none of those character traits to Canadians with his actions.

We are dealing with a piece of legislation, Bill C-58, that, quite frankly, is difficult to support for many reasons, the least of which is the government not showing any strong movement toward openness and transparency. It is a very top-down approach by the government.

The former information commissioner, from 2007 to 2008, said, "there's no one [in government departments] to review what they choose not to disclose, and I think that goes against the principle of the statute. They've taken the commissioner out of the loop. If you ask for these briefing notes...[and parts of them had been blacked out], you had someone to appeal to."

This is no longer the case with Bill C-58.

He went on, "We can't even go to a court. It's one step forward, two steps back."

We have seen a lot of one step forward and two steps back with the government. My fear is that the openness and transparency the Liberals ran on are not there anymore. We have seen that the finance minister cannot even answer a simple question. He will not even answer a simple question. Quite frankly, after seeing this display we have been seeing over the course of the last several months to questions being asked, how can we have any faith? If the finance minister will not even answer a simple question, how can we expect the whole of government to be open, honest, and transparent?

I am saddened by what I see, quite frankly, as a new parliamentarian. I know the other side is going to say that there were circumstances in the past when similar issues happened. We are not talking about circumstances in the past. The Liberals were the same opposition that stood and talked about the egregiousness of the actions of previous governments. They ran to be different. They said that they were going to impose real change. We have seen nothing to suggest anything different. We are seeing a government that is more inward. We are seeing a government that is controlled from the top down. We are seeing a government where the Prime Minister's Office runs everything. Not just on this issue but on multiple issues, anything but what they said has come true.

Government Orders

Conservatives are not going to support Bill C-58. I certainly call into question the finance minister. I call into question his ability to manage the financial affairs of the country, given the circumstances we have seen over the course of the last several months.

• (1725)

Despite their campaign promises, the Liberals have failed to increase government openness and transparency with this bill. As I have said, it is no surprise. This is effectively a government that chooses to publish when it is accountable to Canadians. It is not being accountable all the time. It is going to pick and choose when it wants to be accountable to Canadians. In practice, what the Liberals have effectively done is give themselves the power to refuse to respond to access to information requests they find embarrassing. Under the principle of openness and transparency, should not everything be responded to?

I understand that there might be matters of national security that are not in the public interest, but this is something different from what they ran on, as far as openness and transparency goes. With the changes proposed by the Liberals, less information would be available to Canadians. Moreover, the Liberals would do nothing to address unacceptable delays, so we would continue to see that information punted down the field and would have unacceptable delays in when that information would be put forward to Canadians.

I spent some time talking about Bill C-58, but in the context of openness and transparency, I cannot emphasize enough the egregious nature of the issue we have been dealing for the last couple of months with the finance minister. Again today there was zero accountability, zero transparency, and zero openness. It is a pattern that has evolved with the Liberal government over the course of the last two years. It should concern all of us. It certainly concerns stakeholders who have an interest in this. However, it is not just a concern to all of us who are here to represent Canadians. It is a concern to all Canadians, because it is the small stuff that leads to the big stuff. If we cannot get simple answers to simple questions in this place of openness and transparency, how can we expect to get that information from a government that proves, day after day, that it is not interested in openness? It is not interested in transparency and accountability, in spite of the fact that it ran on that very thing.

They said they were going to be different. The reality is, and we have seen it over the course of the last two years, that nothing could be further from the truth. With the display of the finance minister over the course of the last couple of months, and certainly today, there is not much faith in the ability of the government to be open, transparent, and accountable. That is why Bill C-58 is flawed. We continue to be concerned about the actions of the finance minister and how the Liberal government and these Liberal backbenchers can continue to endorse the display we are seeing here on a daily basis.

• (1730)

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must say I am disappointed. The member clearly does not have the intention of raising the quality of debate in the House. First, he barely spoke about Bill C-58. I am proud that we are the first government in 34 years to make major reforms to the Access to Information Act. Second, he was wrong in the few comments he made about the bill. He said it would deny access to information requests that are

frivolous or made in bad faith. In fact, the amendments would give the commissioner up-front approval power over any department's request to decline to act on a request because the department believed it was vexatious or in bad faith. The member clearly did not even read the committee's changes and is not up to date on the bill. That is disappointing. It is not a priority for him, clearly.

I also want to note that in its 2006 platform, the Conservative Party made a clear commitment to update the access to information law, and the Conservatives did absolutely nothing in 10 years. Did they never intend to actually deliver on that promise, or did they just not care enough to do a thing about it in 10 years?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, if the member wants to go down the rabbit hole of not intending to keep promises, I would need a little more than 10 minutes to respond.

What is more important in the context of my speech is the faith of Canadians and how little faith they have in the ability of the government to implement any of its agenda. Over the course of the last two years, we have seen backtracking on electoral reform, and the list of promises the Liberals made is long, which they are not keeping.

I read some of the comments from those stakeholders who have a say in this legislation. Is the hon. member saying they are wrong? These are their concerns.

In the context of openness and transparency, I spoke a lot about what we saw today in question period. The finance minister is not being open and transparent, so how can we have any faith in the Liberal government to be open and transparent? It is as simple as that.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, what is really disturbing about what the government is doing is the level of cynicism by which it has approached this.

The Prime Minister ran on an issue of trust of Canadians. He told them he would create an open and transparent government. Access to information was actually his very first electoral promise. When we look at what the Liberals have done, they have given the tools to the bureaucracy to limit, obstruct, and shut down access to information requests that they do not like.

The President of the Treasury Board stood in the House and told Canadians not to worry because the government would now publish the mandate letters of the ministers. Those are public anyway. Do the Liberals think Canadians are stupid?

When the President of the Treasury Board says not to worry, that the government will bring forward changes to now have the expenses for ministerial travel made public, which they are already posted, do Liberals think Canadians are stupid? This is a fundamental question about trust. Access to information is about holding government to account when government does not want to be held accountable.

Government Orders

Why does my hon. colleague think the government ignored every single recommendation from the Information Commissioner who wanted to work with Parliament to improve this act?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, why did the government ignore every request of the Information Commissioner? It is a government that ignores a lot of information from a lot of people. An ideology exists within the government. It is a top-down ideology. It does not care what other people say. It does not care what the experts say. I think the government is intent on ramming through whatever it thinks will work for it, politically.

The hon. member brings up an interesting point about the bureaucracy. We have seen many circumstances around here where Liberals hide behind the bureaucracy. They are like petulant little children. They do not accept responsibility for anything, and they blame everybody. We have seen that with the Ethics Commissioner. If something goes wrong here, or if there is information that the Liberals do not want out, or that gets out, the first thing the Liberals will do is blame the bureaucracy, blame the bureaucrats.

We have seen a habit of not accepting any responsibility on the part of ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and even Liberal backbenchers. It is no surprise to me that the Liberals are going to put up a shield between them and the bureaucracy, and then blame it if something goes wrong.

• (1735)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague across talked about the concerns on the quality of debate. I was very intrigued and interested in my colleague's speech today. We have talked about major reforms that the Liberals promised, and my colleague said he did not have time to go into them. We can look at things that have failed, such as electoral reforms, Standing Order reforms, tax reforms, reforms in the military, and now accountability. I think Canadians probably expect the same kinds of results we have seen in so many of these other areas.

One of the reasons we will see that is because of what we saw today in question period. We had a minister who was questioned a dozen times on one question, and all he had to do was say "No". He did not have to say yes or no, just "No".

Could my colleague address that issue of just how systemic this kind of refusal to be accountable to the Canadian people is in the government? Is that the reason why so many of these promised reforms have never turned out?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I have sat here the last two years and I have seen the systemic misinformation. I have seen the lack of accountability, responsibility, and transparency.

I brought it back to one thing, and I have talked to my constituents about this. They hold total contempt for this place, and we saw that with the actions of the finance minister today. It is complete contempt. To the Liberals and the Prime Minister, this place does not matter. What matters most is Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. If the Liberals can do selfies, put it out there, and tell people how great everything is, then somehow that is the way the Liberals think they should govern.

However, members of Parliament are sent to this place to represent their constituents. They are not sent to this place to sit 20 feet away from a government that has contempt for this place and would rather govern on social media than be in this place and be accountable to Canadians. That is the problem right now.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is difficult to listen to the hon. member. It is as if the previous government did not even exist. I am looking at a headline from 2014, published by *Global News*, entitled "Harper government gets failing grade in freedom-of-information audit". When the member makes these criticisms, I wonder if he keeps in mind that the previous government, the Harper government, failed categorically in every regard when it came these matters.

Also, since the member went a bit off topic, why did the universal child care benefit of the previous government have a tax applied to it? Our CCB has no tax applied to it and 90% of Canadian families are doing better as a result.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, there the Liberals go again, not accepting any responsibility but putting blame on anybody else. I will remind the House and the member that this was your promise to be open and transparent. It was not the promise of Stephen Harper. You made that promise.

• (1740)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. I want to remind the member that he is to address his answers to the Chair, and he has 18 seconds to wrap it up.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, it was the Liberals' promise. Why are they not accountable to this? There is as much criticism about Bill C-58 on their part than there was on the previous government. Do people know what the 2017 and 2018 headline will read? "Liberal government fails to be open and transparent."

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, as always, I am deeply honoured to rise in the House and speak for the people of Timmins—James Bay. I will be speaking tonight to Bill C-58 and to express my deep concern about the government's attack on the access to information system.

The folks back home may not pay a lot of attention to access to information because it is the stuff of journalists, researchers and opposition politics. However, access to information is one of the fundamental principles of an accountable democracy. In order to hold government to account, we need to know who is involved when the decisions in the backroom are made. We need to have some manner of light shone into the dark rooms where the power brokers are to ensure a level of accountability. That is the role of the Access to Information Act.

At one point, Canada was well-respected for the Access to Information Act brought in a number of decades ago. However, year by year Canada has slipped in its level of credibility. We are going to be talking about some specific examples of how that plays out tonight.

Government Orders

We are in a situation now where we have a Prime Minister who won so much support across the country because the very first step he took in offering his vision as a new leader was on access to information and open government. His vision for Parliament would be the opposite of the Stephen Harper government, which was considered so controlling and secretive. People put their trust in the Prime Minister. I remember thinking this was really bold, a leader who was willing to make the changes necessary for access to information.

I have grown increasingly concerned that more and more our Parliament has become a sideshow. It has become a Potemkin democracy, where MPs get to play out in the House, but the real decisions are made to benefit those who are not accountable. When the Prime Minister makes a promise on access to information and then undermines it in such a cynical manner, Canadians have a right to know how this happens and how it affects them.

With respect to Bill C-58, which is supposed to change the access to information laws in the country, the President of the Treasury Board says that we should not worry because Canadians will now have access to the mandate letters for the ministers. Is that not already public? He also said that we should not worry because Canadians would now get to know the travel budgets of various ministers. That is already public.

However, what we do not have is the ability in this case for the Access to Information Commissioner to ensure that all documents are posted. One thing we have found with government is that certain documents are not all that helpful to it. Remember when the Minister of Indigenous Services racked up all those thousands of dollars riding around Markham in a limousine? That was embarrassing to government and it did not want that information released. Therefore, if we allow government to release what it wants, it will not release what is embarrassing. However, we need accountability.

Therefore, I will talk about Bill C-58 in the context of a couple of specific cases so people will understand exactly what we are talking about. I am going to talk about the issue of St. Anne's residential school.

As the government is leading its attack to limit the ability of people to access information, I am dealing with the Access to Information Commissioner on the three-and-a-half-year obstruction by federal officials in the justice department to suppress and blackout who made key decisions regarding the justice department's response to the survivors of St. Anne's residential school. In telling the story, we begin to understand why it is so important to have an accountable system for access to information.

St. Anne's residential school was in the region I represent, the community of Fort Albany. If we look at the horrific history of the residential schools, the story of what was done to the children at St. Anne's year in and year out, generation upon generation, it stands among the most horrifying of stories in the country's history. It was a veritable concentration camp of torture and sexual abuse of children.

In 1992, the survivors of St. Anne's came together in Fort Albany to talk about their experience. For the first time, many of them began to talk about the levels of sexual abuse, rape, and forced abortions to which children were subjected.

● (1745)

Edmund Metatawabin, who is chief, brought this to the Ontario Provincial Police and demanded a major police investigation. To its credit, the Ontario Provincial Police, with Sergeant Delguidice in the Cochrane division, undertook a massive investigation of the crimes committed against those children. They identified over 180 perpetrators of rape, torture, and abuse of children. They gathered 1,000 witness statements of that abuse from the survivors and students who were there. They gathered 12,000 pages of police testimony and documentation, including subpoenaed records from the Catholic church in the diocese of Moosonee, to build a picture of what went on in that institution year in and year out.

In 2003, there was an effort with the survivors and the then federal government of Paul Martin, I believe, to try to find a solution. The survivors were shocked at the aggressiveness of the federal government to fight and deny every single case, no matter the evidence. At that time, all of the evidence the police had gathered in Ontario had led to a number of convictions in an Ontario court against the perpetrators of the abuse at St. Anne's, but let us face it: the big ones got away. The priests and bishops who were involved got away. Some of them were dead, some of the perpetrators could not be found, but a number of people were convicted in an Ontario court.

However, in 2004, the justice department wanted access to that trove of evidence to prepare the defence of the number one defendant, which was Canada. When it applied for access to the police documentation, it told the Ontario Superior Court of Justice that it would be unfair to Canada, which was in charge of this institution, in preparing its defence if it did not have all of the evidence. The key officials in the justice department were involved in the application to obtain those records, and they got the records, some 12,000 pages. They got the names of the perpetrators. They were preparing for the major civil litigation trials against Canada.

In 2007-08, the process for the Indian residential schools settlement agreement was set up as an alternative so that the federal government could escape these cases. The federal government agreed at that time to set up the independent assessment process, the IAP. The IAP was to be a non-confrontational process in which the survivors could tell their stories. That is how they told the survivors it would play out, but of course it did not play out like that at all for the survivors of St. Anne's. Therefore, the justice department wore two hats. The first hat was to obtain all of the evidence, prepared in so-called narratives, so that the adjudicators and claimant lawyers could use it to make it easier for the claimants. The justice department acted as the gatherer of evidence. The justice department's other hat was as lawyer for the defendant, Canada, and its number one goal was limiting the payouts.

In the case of St. Anne's residential school, the justice department had an obligation to prepare a list of all documentation, listing all the known crimes and sexual abuse that occurred in that institution, and it presented a document at the hearing stating that there was no known history of sexual abuse at the Fort Albany Indian residential school, St. Anne's. It said there was absolutely no documentation to show any student-on-student abuse at the Fort Albany institution of St. Anne's.

Government Orders

People told their stories, and their cases were thrown out because the justice department did not go there with a non-confrontational attitude. It went in loaded for bear and accused the survivors, who were victims of child rape, of not being able to prove their stories because they could not remember the day the priest raped them, that they could not remember little details. Yet the justice department already knew they were telling the truth because it had all of the evidence.

● (1750)

We had claimants, like claimant H-15019, whose case was thrown out, because the justice department argued there was no proof that a predatory pedophile priest was in St. Anne's Residential School when that child was in that building. That child, who grew into a man who asked for justice from the Government of Canada did not know that the justice department had a long list involving that pedophile priest. The department knew he had been in that building since 1938. From 1938 to 1974 he had free access to rape children, and the Justice Department of Canada lied about it in hearings, suppressed that evidence, and had that case thrown out. How could this have happened in 2015, 2016, and 2017 in Canada?

The greatest moment that I have seen since I have been here and the greatest moment in the history of this Parliament was when Prime Minister Harper stood up in the House and apologized. People in my region wept for days when they heard that apology. They never thought that justice would happen and after hearing the apology they thought it was possible.

People wept when the present Prime Minister gave a powerful speech at the closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I was listening to him. He said that Canada would make this right, that the obligation of the survivors to prove what they went through was over, that Canada would be there for them. That has not been the case with the survivors of St. Anne's Residential School. The justice department continues to take the brass knuckles approach to deny them basic levels of justice.

In 2013 I wrote to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the justice minister at the time and I asked them who had made the decision to suppress the police evidence in testimony that had these cases thrown out. I asked them both what they were going to do to rectify this clear breach of legal duty. Those ministers said they knew about the evidence but that they were not accountable for presenting it, which was false.

In January 2014, the Ontario Superior Court ordered the previous government and the justice minister to turn over those documents to the independent assessment process to have those cases fairly adjudicated. The government refused. It continued to deny.

The survivors of St. Anne's Residential School had to go back to court in 2015, and this time the government was forced to turn over the documents. However, it had blacked out the names of the perpetrators and the witnesses to make the evidence functionally useless.

For what purpose in a nation like ours would the Government of Canada opt to protect pedophiles, rapists, and sadists by hiding their names? For what possible reason would justice department lawyers, the people who are charged with presenting the law for the people of

Canada, go into hearings and challenge survivors who suffered horrific levels of abuse? For what possible reason would the Government of Canada decide to suppress this police evidence? I still have not figured out an answer to that, but it dogs me. I stay up at night trying to figure out what kind of person hired to represent Canada would do this.

In 2013, I applied a simple tool, a tool of all parliamentarians and of all Canadians, by making an access to information request regarding the political decisions that went into suppressing the police testimony and evidence that denied justice to the survivors of St. Anne's Residential School.

For the information of folks back home, when a government does not want to answer a question, it delays. We had a 300-day delay. We knew this was just an attempt by the department not to have to answer the question. The cases were closing down and the ability of survivors who had their cases thrown out to re-appeal the verdicts was coming to an end. It seemed obvious that the justice department would drag this out over three years, because it thought that the cases would be closed and all would be said and done. We waited 300 days, 600 days, then 900 days.

The new government came in and I thought it would change things. It had no reason to oppose survivors of St. Anne's. The new government took the position that it would not turn over any of the political documentation regarding the decision to suppress the police evidence. That was done by the new justice minister and the new Prime Minister.

● (1755)

Therefore, we approached the access to information commissioner, the tool that we use, to ask how is it possible that after three years of delay, they could deny and say they were not obligated to turn over this evidence. This documentation concerns who knew what in the minister's office. This is a question on a political issue that Canadians need answered.

The Information Commissioner and her office are one of the great institutions of our country. She understood the seriousness of this. It was not a vexatious request; it was about justice. She challenged the justice department. We were on the verge of being in court with the justice department to find out what was being said in those offices when they suppressed that police evidence. The justice department agreed to turn over four batches of information over a period of a year. The first batch of information was about 90% blacked out. The second batch of 3,000 pages we just received was entirely blacked out.

When the government says it wants the right to refuse vexatious requests, what it means by vexatious are the requests that would give it political grief. It wants to be able to turn those down.

Government Orders

The folks who survived St. Anne's Residential School, who were taken from their families, who had their identities stripped from them, who had their rights taken away from them, who were left in the hands of abusers and torturers, have a right to ask why Parliament failed them. They have a right to ask why the justice department of our country continues to deny and challenge them and obstruct their basic rights for redress. Part of those answers may lie in the courts, but part of those answers lie in the access to information request. We have a right to know who advised the politicians to do this.

I would like to say that the abuse of the children at St. Anne's has come to an end because of these beautiful apologies, but it has not. We now have, in the case of claimant H-15019 and claimant C14114, a case that was thrown out because she did not have any documentation. She was unable to prove that when she was assaulted in St. Anne's Residential School it was known by administration. Then, after her case was thrown out, she learned there were all these documents. She attempted to have her case reopened. The Government of Canada said she could not reopen her case because her case was adjudicated. We are talking about a child victim of rape. What possible reason would the Government of Canada have to suppress police testimony about child rape? What possible reason could it have to defy the Ontario Superior Court and black out the names of the perpetrators? For what possible reason would it black out all of the political documentation on what was said in the minister's office regarding this decision?

For what possible reason, right now, at this time, would they be in the hearing saying "Okay, we've been finally forced to hand over the police testimony, but it is inadmissible". Why is it inadmissible? It is inadmissible because it has not been tested. What they are saying to the survivors is that it does not matter that we are having to present 12,000 pages of police documentation of the perpetrators, because the survivors have to find a witness to come in and be tested.

The trauma to the communities I represent is a direct highway from St. Anne's Residential School to the suicide crisis of our young people today. Talk to anyone in the community and they will say that trauma continues to kill children, and yet we have justice department lawyers saying that evidence cannot be used unless they bring forward a survivor to be re-challenged by the justice department.

I will close on this. We do have a survivor who is willing to come forward and verify the testimony. The justice department said she cannot be allowed to speak because she has already spoken. Can someone explain that to me? That is why we need access to information. It is to understand the perfidious nature of what is—

• (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say my colleague highlighted the problems, in his view, of creating a requirement or an ability to decline requests that are vexatious and frivolous. That was a recommendation from the Information Commissioner. When we undertook at our committee a study of the Access to Information Act, that was one of our recommendations based on the evidence.

We did hear concerns and testimony about the culture of delay and we heard concerns about governments having this ability not just to refuse for vexatious and frivolous reasons but for other reasons as well, and so we made an amendment. The member previous said we did not listen to any of the recommendations from the Information Commissioner, but in fact we did. A specific amendment that we made was to ensure that, where the government is refusing access on any of these new grounds, the Information Commissioner must first sign off. I wonder what the member thinks about that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, what I think of that is not a lot.

I do not know if the hon. member read the Information Commissioner's report of the government's recommendations and its plan. The Information Commissioner said this is a complete failure of every single major promise the Prime Minister made on issues of access to information, and I am absolutely appalled to see the current government members standing up there and saying they are going to give the minister a few little efforts here while they are leaving it in the hands of the bureaucracy to decide what is vexatious, that they are leaving it in the hands of the bureaucracy to decide whether they now have to have the specific issue, specific subject matter, the specific type of request, and the specific period. That might seem really great for government to be able to limit because it can throw those cases out.

I would refer him to Mr. Peter Di Gangi's work with the Algonquin Nation Secretariat. If the member listened to any of the indigenous voices who came forward, they spoke on how this would be used by the crown because it is the crown that is always a defendant with first nations and it would be used by the crown to be able to throw out indigenous claims. It would be able to limit indigenous justice. The Information Commissioner has spoken on this. Therefore, the Prime Minister said that it is nation to nation, but no, it is still the bureaucracy deciding what information indigenous communities can and cannot have.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Beaches—East York was aiming to point out that the member made some inaccurate comments, and he just reinforced the mistakes of his speech. I am concerned that he may have prepared and presented his comments without taking a look at what the committee did to address the commissioner's report. Yes, the commissioner had criticism. The commissioner has one perspective on this, the access perspective. The committee also heard from the Privacy Commissioner and others who represented other interests.

That being said, the committee put over 12 amendments forward, most of which were to actually address the very concerns the member has been raising. I think we are all touched by the challenges of the St. Anne's residential school. We all want what is best for first nations' healing and reconciliation. Therefore, there were specific provisions in the committee's amendments to ensure that it was very clear that a "large or broad request, or one that causes the government discomfort, does not of itself represent bad faith on the part of the requester" and that the ministries have a duty to consult to make sure that in their duty to assist they are assisting requesters like the very requesters whom the member was talking—

Government Orders

•(1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We want to allow other questions. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, the current government is obviously not all that touched by the children of St. Anne's when it is continuing to fight them in court. Therefore, all the talk that I hear from the Liberals about this new relationship, yes it is nice, let us all cry on each other's shoulders, means nothing unless the government is going to put this in action.

The member said that the Information Commissioner's is just one point of view. She is the defender of the Access to Information Act. When the member talks about the committee, we are talking about a Liberal majority committee that ignored working with the other members of that committee and that ignored all the key recommendations of the Access to Information Commissioner. When I hear that it is just one point of view, yes it is just not the point of view of government. The role of the access to information system is to hold government to account. Canada was once one of the world leaders in access to information. We are 46th, 47th, or are we down to 50th now? We are below narco drug states. We are below Mexico, below Serbia, and below Sri Lanka in terms of access to information. We have an Access to Information Commissioner who is raising the alarm bells that this would even further impede our broken access to information system. I am just frankly appalled at the cynicism of the current government.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, the story that my colleague for Timmins—James Bay has told is a terrible story. It illustrates exactly why, to get to the bottom of some of the most terrible crimes, whether they are human, ethical, or environmental, we need to know what is happening at the place of decision-makers and not leave this in the hands of the bureaucrats.

Given the Prime Minister's very solemn promise that the Access to Information Act would be extended to cover the offices of the Prime Minister and ministers so that we can see as Canadians and as members of Parliament how decisions were made, what is the impact for people such as those the member represents, the indigenous people, who are fighting the legacy of residential schools and St. Anne's repeated court cases? When we see this promise so completely broken, what does that do to their faith in government?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, there are many tools a government has to limit access to information. There are cabinet confidences and a whole series of tools that the government already has. However, the question my hon. colleague has raised about the promise that was made by the Prime Minister to open up the key ministerial offices to access to information is really fundamental, because Canada has been called a black hole of accountability when it comes to the fact that any minister can put something under the ministerial office and lo and behold, it cannot be accessed. This is where the decisions are made.

The Prime Minister made a specific promise about opening that up, and yet he did not follow through, and these are key issues, particularly with the issue of St. Anne's Residential School. What we need to know as politicians and the public are the decisions that went into the political decisions, not into the legal issues, and not into the individual cases. Those are already covered and protected under the

Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. They are protected by privacy. We do not need to know the individual names of those who suffered. What we need to know is, for example, who was the assistant deputy minister. What was the role of the assistant deputy minister in gathering evidence? What was the role of the advisers to the minister in making a decision that had a profound impact and that has denied justice?

We have to ask ourselves, are there two levels of justice in this country, with the lesser one for indigenous people? I would like to think there are not.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is worth remembering that the Information Commissioner in an unprecedented response gave a full condemnation, top to bottom, of the bill. She basically said that Bill C-58 as it stood, notwithstanding the couple of tweaks and little turns that have been made, is a regressive piece of proposed legislation.

I would ask my colleague what he thought, and whether he agrees with me that the arrogance of the Liberal government is best reflected by the fact that some government departments are already using provisions of Bill C-58 to deny information properly requested which would have been provided under the existing status quo.

•(1810)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, the fact is, our Information Commissioner is studious about being non-partisan, and so when we see the Information Commissioner totally condemn a government bill, I do believe that is unprecedented for the kind of work the commissioner does. To see that we have various departments already throwing requests out is a very disturbing undermining of the fundamental principle. As I said, Canada is about 50th in the world in terms of credibility of access to information. When Mexico, Serbia, and Colombia are further ahead of us in accountability to citizens, we have a problem.

I would have thought the Prime Minister would have lived up to that promise. It is the cynicism of the Liberals' action and presentation here that really disturb me.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House, particularly at supper time.

I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-58. It is quite a coincidence that we are talking about consistency, transparency, and access to information—in short, giving clear answers to clear questions—when we saw exactly the opposite of that today in question period. I will come back to that a bit later.

Government Orders

This bill objectively seeks to make government more transparent and to give Canadians better access to government information. That is the objective, but it is still far from reality. I would not say that I am in a conflict of interest because that is a sensitive topic these days. However, as a former journalist and a current MP, I find myself walking a very fine line between the legitimate access to information requests that Canadians should be able to make to the federal government and the executive's ability to govern in order to carry out the usual business of a government, a country, while maintaining some level of confidentiality when it comes to debates and relevant information.

Let us be clear about one thing: if everything is made public and if there is access to everything that is said, and if everyone's views are known, at some point there will no longer be any real internal debate by cabinet, which is necessary to govern a solid state like Canada. Therefore, there is a very fine line that needs to be drawn and this government clearly did that when it was in opposition. When the Liberals made an election promise, they drew that line; today, the line is there, whereas before it was here. This is a regressive bill.

I listened closely to the President of the Treasury Board, who sponsored this bill. I hold the member in high regard and have great respect for him. He has been here for almost 21 years and, at another time, early on in his political career, he sat on the right side, with the Conservatives. He has the right to change his mind, as some have, but I just wanted to point that out, tongue in cheek. I will be a good sport. He made an objective statement that I will not challenge: this is the first time in 34 years that a government is overhauling access to information. Only that much is true. The overhaul is not going to provide more access to information. On the contrary, it will give more power to the executive, the ministers, the Prime Minister and his cabinet to restrict Canadians' access to information.

I will provide some examples. First, the Information Commissioner was rather scathing in her assessment of the first draft of this regressive bill and worse yet, she said that in her view, the sponsorship scandal, the legacy of the Chrétien and Martin governments—of which the current President of the Treasury Board was a member—would not have been uncovered without the excellent journalistic work of the Daniel Leblancs of this world. It is quite a positive development for transparency, right? It is truly a step forward for openness. It is truly a fundamental element of freedom of the press. No, it is not.

We recognize that a dozen or so amendments were adopted, but we think that those amendments do not go far enough when it comes to the Liberal ambition and even less so when it comes to the practice of journalism. I acknowledge that what I am about to say may be subjective, but part of our work as MPs is to be subjective. It may be subjective, but I have 20 years' experience as a journalist under my belt. We believe that the proposed amendments do not go far enough. As a result of these amendments, in a case like the sponsorship scandal of the Chrétien and Martin Liberal governments, of which the current President of the Treasury Board was a member, it would still be difficult to get access to that information. It would not be impossible, but journalists' work would become even more difficult, and that is why we think this is a regressive bill.

●(1815)

In addition, it will be the government that chooses what can and cannot be disclosed from now on. It will be judge and jury. Of course it is in the government's interest to withhold certain information; that is only natural. I am not saying that is what it should do, but it could be a natural reaction for some government members. That is what I would call a step backwards.

The same is true when it comes to the proactive disclosure of certain documents. With this supposedly proactive approach, there is a risk that bureaucrats, policy advisers, and ministers will know which documents are going to be made public in a month or in six months. We can therefore expect a version A, which will be made public, and a version B that has the real information, which can be found in emails, for example, and might be a little more politically sensitive. The government might be a little less inclined to make that information public.

Of course, nothing is perfect in life, but we believe that the proactive disclosure of certain information falls short of what was said or aspired to in the Liberal Party's electoral platform, which is what people voted on two years ago.

Earlier, my NDP colleague mentioned certain amendments that the government flatly refused to consider. The amendments were substantive and in keeping with Liberal promises, but unfortunately, they were rejected. The same amendments had been suggested by the Information Commissioner, journalists, members of the media, and first nations.

The government says it cares so much about first nations and keeps talking about how they are its priority. However, as we have shown during a number of debates, including the one on the Prime Minister's unfortunate statement about religious belief, the government talks about first nations only when doing so suits its purposes. The same goes for this bill.

Even though the government made a dozen or so amendments, we feel that this bill does not go far enough in terms of ensuring the clarity, openness, and transparency everyone expects of the government. It is also a watered-down version of the Liberal promise. In short, this is yet another in what is becoming a very long line of broken Liberal promises.

This government got itself elected on a promise of a small \$10-billion deficit for three years and a subsequent return to a balanced budget. Now we are talking \$20-billion deficits, and nobody has any idea when the budget will be balanced. The government said it would aggressively raise taxes on seniors. As a result—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the member, but the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is rising on a point of order.

Government Orders

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 2

BILL C-63—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to advise that agreements could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-63, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures.

[Translation]

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings of the said stages.

* * *

● (1820)

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome that happening for the first time while I was speaking. I was a little afraid, to say the least, but I am getting used to the rules of the House of Commons.

[Translation]

Earlier, I was speaking about this government's long line of broken promises, which keeps growing. I was going over the commitments it made and then ignored, especially the ones concerning deficits and the money it was supposed to give to the middle class. The Fraser Institute has reported that 80% of Canadian families are paying \$840 more, mainly because certain tax credits our government introduced, such as the green tax credit for people who take public transit, like the bus, were eliminated. This represented two months of free public transit. The Liberal government, which claims to be a green government that is in touch with people, did the exact opposite by eliminating this tax credit.

It is the same thing when the government says that the wealthiest 1% of Canadians will pay more taxes under the Liberal government. This Robin Hood policy is completely false. It is not us Conservatives who are saying so, nor the Montreal Economic Institute or any other right-wing think tank. It is the Department of Finance itself that determined in a report issued just two months ago that the wealthiest Canadians are paying \$1.2 billion less in taxes because of this government's tax policies. The government is saying one thing and doing another.

Fortunately, that information is public. It is found in a document that the government made public. We did not have to go through the

Access to Information Act, which as we know will be weakened by the updated version of Bill C-58.

It is a rather big coincidence, to say the least, that we are debating access to information, openness, and transparency since, today, as we tried to get answers to our questions in the House of Commons, we saw an extremely ugly demonstration of what a government should not do in question period.

[English]

Let me be clear. We understand that in question period, we are talking about a question, period. It is to provide information. When I sat on the National Assembly, it was officially called a question and answer period. However, here, unfortunately we are just talking about a question period, we are not talking about answering a question. That would be very useful, because, today, not three or four times, but on 21 occasions in a row, we asked a clear and simple question of the Minister of Finance, and every time, on 21 occasions in a row, he dodged the issue. He refused to answer a clear question with a clear answer. That is sad. Therefore, it will be very interesting to see our colleagues on the other side say why it is important to have openness and transparency, and to give good information to the people of Canada.

In a government, the minister of finance is number two, not the last minister. In some cases, we could even say the minister of finance is number one; however, that is another debate. I do not want to put aside any other ministers, such as the global affairs minister, the transport minister, the Treasury Board President, and all of those important portfolios such as the defence minister and the first nations minister. All of them are very important. However, in life, there are those who are at the top, and then there are other people. When we talk about cabinet ministers, for sure the finance minister is at the top. I am quite sure that no one who is sitting here—and I see some hon. members from coast to coast who have had strong responsibilities in former governments—will be offended when I say that for sure Jim Flaherty was the number one cabinet minister under the Stephen Harper government. The same thing also goes for Joe Oliver. Everybody will recognize that, because the finance minister is the one who designs the financial and fiscal policies that apply to the financial and fiscal reality of Canada. Therefore, when we have what we could say is a conflict of interest, it is our responsibility to ask questions of the Minister of Finance. That is what we did today. We asked a simple question 21 times in a row, but, unfortunately, 21 times in a row, the Minister of Finance refused to give a clear answer.

● (1825)

[Translation]

That is why I think it is pretty ironic that we are debating Bill C-58, the goal of which is to increase government transparency and openness around information gathering. However, in our view, the bill is regressive and will make investigative reporting even harder. It also places the government in a conflict of interest by making it both the judge and the judged when journalists and citizens raise questions.

Business of Supply

We think this bill is regressive. It is also ironic that we should be debating it on the very day that the Minister of Finance, the number one minister, refused to give a clear answer to a perfectly simple question not once, not twice, not three times, but 21 times in a row. He never gave a clear answer to the question in either English or French.

In conclusion, we are going to vote against this bill. We recommend that the Liberal members also vote against this bill, because it is never too late to do right. It would be a good thing if the Liberals voted against it. We could review the bill, which we believe to be a step backwards, not forwards, for press freedom and especially for access to information.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Information Commissioner and the former Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics recommended that, subject to oversight by the commissioner, an enhanced act should give government institutions the authority to refuse to process frivolous or vexatious requests, which clog up the system.

The committee made amendments to give the commissioner the power to make the final decision about whether a request could be refused by a department.

Does the member opposite believe this was a step in the right direction for our access to information system?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Quadra for her very relevant question, but above all, for the quality of her French. I very much appreciate it.

Anyone who speaks in the official language that is not his or her mother tongue deserves our respect and our encouragement, especially the Minister of Finance. I have said this many times. Once again, it would be nice if he gave us some answers, but that is another story.

The member for Vancouver Quadra has a good point. I would like to remind her, however, of something I said earlier in my speech. We believe this does not go far enough.

We see this as regressive, and I am not trying to lecture anyone here. I was a journalist for 20 years, and I did my job to the best of my ability. I was not the best or the worst. I was pretty good, but I cannot say I was the Daniel Leblanc of my field. As everyone knows, he was the one who uncovered the Liberal sponsorship scandal.

Based on that information, we believe that this bill does not go far enough, and although we recognize that an important amendment has been made to the original bill, we still believe that the amendment does not go far enough.

● (1830)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member, but I do not speak French.

[*English*]

First of all, I am delighted that the member brought up transit, because I would love to see the comparison of the billions upon billions we are putting into transit with this party, and I will maybe ask the environment minister to do that.

The member said we should go a bit further in some clauses. Could he name one clause and explain the wording he would like us to go farther on, especially with his experience as a journalist?

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent has the floor, but I will ask him to be brief.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I would like to say that I appreciate the fact that he said a few words in French.

With regard to public transit, I think that the government needs to do more to help those who use this mode of transportation. That does not preclude other investments in transport, but all of this must be done with an eye to balancing the budget.

To the member's other relevant question, as a former journalist I would say that these new measures that have been introduced would ultimately allow the government to accept or reject access to information requests regarding its own departments; it is like asking a judge to preside over their own case.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member. He will have approximately six minutes for questions and comments the next time this bill is before the House.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FINANCE MINISTER'S ASSETS

The House resumed from November 23 consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Carleton relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1855)

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

(*Division No. 403*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Albrecht
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Bergen
Bemier	Berthold
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Brown
Cannings	Caron
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault

Business of Supply

Duvall
Falk
Fortin
Garrison
Gill
Godin
Harder
Hughes
Johns
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Leitch
Lloyd
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nantel
Pauzé
Poilievre
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Stewart
Stubbs
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

Eglinski
Fast
Gallant
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hoback
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Marcil
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Rayes
Rempel
Saganash
Scheer
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Strahl
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Waugh
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Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lockhart
Longfield
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Romanado
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Scarpaleggia
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Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Long
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney

McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morneau
Murray
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Rudd
Rusnak
Sajjan
Sangha
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Ayoub
Bains
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Gameau
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hébert
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jordan
Khalid

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Brisson
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Hehr
Housefather
Hutchings
Joly
Jowhari
Khera

Nil

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

CANNABIS ACT

The House resumed from November 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment.

● (1900)

[English]

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

(Division No. 404)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Allison
Arnold
Barsalou-Duval
Bergen
Berthold
Boucher

Albrecht
Anderson
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bernier
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias

Business of Supply

Brassard
Chong
Clement
Deltell
Dreeshen
Falk
Fortin
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hoback
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
Lukiwski
Maril
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Pauzé
Pollivie
Reid
Richards
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Zimmer— 83

Brown
Clarke
Cooper
Diotte
Eglinski
Fast
Gallant
Gill
Godin
Harder
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Leitch
Lloyd
MacKenzie
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Rayes
Rempel
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Stubbs
Thériault
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bains
Beech
Benson
Bittle
Blair
Boissonnault
Boulerice
Bratina
Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes
Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Christopherson
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Hardie

Alghabra
Amos
Angus
Aubin
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Bossio
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Brosseau
Cannings
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Choquette
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Garrison
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardcastle
Harvey

Hébert
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Joly
Jowhari
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lockhart
Longfield
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Mathysen
May (Cambridge)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs
Monsef
Morrissey
Nantel
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Qualtrough
Ratansi
Robillard
Rudd
Rusnak
Sahota
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Shanahan
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Stewart
Tan
Trudeau
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 199

Hehr
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jolibois
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Long
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morneau
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Quach
Rankin
Rioux
Romanado
Ruimy
Saganash
Sajjan
Sangha
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Simms
Sorbara
Stetski
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[Translation]

The next question is on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

● (1910)

[English]

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

(Division No. 405)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Aubin
Ayoub	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Benson	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Christopherson	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauil	Duvall
Dzerowicz	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardcastle
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Johns	Jolibois
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leslie	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Business of Supply

McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Mormeau
Morrissey	Murray
Nantel	Nassif
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Quach
Qualtrough	Rankin
Ratansi	Reid
Rioux	Robillard
Romanado	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Saganash	Sahota
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Stetski	Stewart
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Trudeau
Trudel	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Weir
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesniewskij
Young	Zahid — 200

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Allison	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bouchier	Boudrias
Brassard	Brown
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Deltell	Diotte
Dreeshen	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Généreux	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Harder
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Leitch
Liepert	Lloyd
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Marcil	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Rayes
Rempel	Richards
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Tilson
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 82

Business of Supply

PAIRED

Nil

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

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, November 23 the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion.

• (1915)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 406)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alhabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Ayoub	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leslie	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald
McGuinity	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)

McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Romanado
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Trudeau
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Young	Zahid — 164

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulérice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Brown
Cannings	Caron
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Leitch
Liepert	Lloyd
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Marcil	Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nantel	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Saganash
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields

Shiplay
Sorenson
Stewart
Stubbs
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

Sopuck
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Weir
Zimmer— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is adopted. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

(Motion agreed to and bill referred to a committee)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

● (1920)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise again in the House to speak about the position of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which is very important for Canadians across Canada and for official language minority communities.

On June 19, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage a question about this. I challenged the Liberal approach to this file, which unfortunately is a real travesty. It was no laughing matter to hear about the appointment of Madeleine Meilleur. I have nothing against her, but this process has been a real farce, and we were not pleased at all. Things were bleak for official language communities. This is what I said on June 19:

...the Liberals' approach to official languages is a joke. The Minister of Canadian Heritage forgot to extend the interim commissioner's mandate. As of Saturday [it had been four days at that point], we no longer have an official languages watchdog. Before that, the Liberals announced the partisan appointment of Madeleine Meilleur with absolutely no regard for the law or Parliament. This is all the doing of a minister who tells us every day that official languages are a priority for the government.

I concluded by asking the following question:

When will the government get serious and respect the Official Languages Act?

Then I had to rise in the House of Commons on a question of privilege because the Minister of Canadian Heritage knew who was going to be the Commissioner of Official Languages, while members of the House and Canadians were kept in the dark as to the identity of the country's official languages watchdog.

Here is why I raised a question of privilege:

...I wish to point out that my parliamentary privileges, and those of the other members of the House, have been violated. The Commissioner of Official Languages reports not only to the government, but also to Parliament. As a result, Parliament must know who the Commissioner of Official Languages is so it can address this individual, ask questions, and receive information. Today, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage who the current Commissioner of Official

Adjournment Proceedings

Languages is and at what time we will know when a new Commissioner of Official Languages is appointed. We currently do not know who the official languages commissioner is. Perhaps the government knows, but if we parliamentarians do not know...

Does the government think it is acceptable that Parliament and Canadians were kept in the dark for four days regarding who would be our official languages watchdog?

● (1925)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on February 25, 2016, the Prime Minister announced the introduction of a new approach to Governor in Council appointments. The new approach is more open and transparent, representative of Canadian diversity, and merit-based.

The Government of Canada considers the function of the Commissioner of Official Languages to be very important since the incumbent is responsible for enforcing the Official Languages Act across Canada.

[English]

Ghislaine Saikaley was appointed acting commissioner on December 19, 2016, to ensure the normal and continued operations of the office of the commissioner until a new commissioner is appointed. Her interim appointment was renewed on June 22, 2017.

On July 28, 2017, the Government of Canada relaunched the recruitment process for the next Commissioner of Official Languages.

[Translation]

We will ensure that we identify the best candidate for this position.

This government sees promoting our official languages from coast to coast as a priority that defines our country and its great diversity.

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, the Liberals say this is an open and transparent process. However, we were kept in the dark for four days about the identity of the future official languages commissioner.

We demand to know who paid the Boyden recruitment agency to find the new commissioner. Was it the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages that paid, rather than the government? We also demand to know who is on the final committee. Who are these people? Do they have any ties to particular candidates? We do not have their names.

Finally, if this is an open and transparent process, why were the opposition leaders not given the short list of the final candidates? I am not asking for it to be released to the Canadian public at large. The Liberals must answer these questions in order to be open and transparent.

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada sees the function of the Commissioner of Official Languages as very important, since it ensures the enforcement of the Official Languages Act in Canada.

We will ensure that we identify the best candidate for this position.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

A new commissioner must be appointed before Ms. Saikaley's term as acting commissioner ends, later in December.

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are now at the beginning of the 16 days of activism to end violence against women.

New Democrats urge the Liberal government to lead a national coordination of policies to end campus sexual assault. More than eight months have passed since the status of women committee unanimously recommended federal action and leadership to end sexual violence on campus.

However, after two years, the government's feminist rhetoric has not translated into action to prevent campus sexual assault, and most recommendations have not been implemented. The government's responses were mostly that these are matters of provincial and territorial responsibility, and maybe they will talk to each other. That is not the kind of action we have seen in other countries and that a truly feminist government would take.

Why is national leadership important? Women and girls continue to face very high levels of violence across the country and, at the same time, front-line organizations have had budget cuts. They do not have reliable operating funding, something we continue to advocate for so they can do their work.

At Nanaimo's Haven Society, since 2014, crisis calls have increased by 53%. As we remove the stigma around women reporting sexual assault, we need to have the concomitant supports for them so they feel supported in coming forward.

At the status of women committee, an overwhelming number of witnesses said there is a particular need for uniformity of policies, justice, and access to service for victims of sexual assault on campus. Students are especially likely to move from province to province at a young age, and especially across the country, and should have an expectation of equal safety. One in five women will experience sexual violence while studying at a post-secondary institution. That is one in five. Young women in Canada continue to face an out-of-touch legal system, fragmented, and often with inaccessible services, as well as inconsistent or non-existent policies in their schools and workplaces.

As the #Me Too campaign continues to show the magnitude of sexual assault in our country, there is Our Turn, which is a fantastic national student-led association advocating for an action plan to end campus sexual violence. This group, Our Turn, graded Canadian universities as a C- for their campus rape policies. We met with them last month, and were very impressed with their work.

The lack of federal leadership to address the inadequacy of sexual assault university policies continues to have devastating impacts for young women on campuses across the country. Our Turn's report highlighted the wide spectrum of trauma experienced by survivors of sexual assault. These are mental health impacts, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts; physical injury; sexually

transmitted infections; flashbacks and triggers; changes in how they view trust, and a sense of vulnerability.

We need to re-emphasize the federal government's responsibility here. It would be a national shame for the government to break its promise to make Canada safer for women and girls.

Again I ask, when will this self-proclaimed feminist Prime Minister truly stand up for women and lead this campaign?

• (1930)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this adjournment debate during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

This past weekend, our government teamed up with the Canadian Football League to engage Canadians and highlight the pledge to end gender-based violence. This pledge provides an opportunity for Canadians to amplify their voice on social media and raise awareness for the need to end all forms of gender-based violence, our government's commitment to ensure that all women and girls can live free of violence, which is why we have put in place a multi-faceted approach to deal with this critical issue.

For example, with the implementation of budget 2016 now under way, \$89.9 million is being invested over two years to enhance Canada's network of shelters and transition houses through the construction or renovation of over 3,000 shelter spaces off-reserve, with an additional \$10.4 million over three years allocated to support the renovation and construction of new shelters for victims of family violence in first nations communities. A further \$33.6 million over five years will support shelter operations on-reserve.

These funds were supplemented in budget 2017 by investments in a new national housing fund, with \$300 million invested over the next 11 years for northern housing and \$225 million invested over the next 11 years for off-reserve indigenous housing, as well as expanding the homelessness partnering strategy, both of which prioritize vulnerable populations, including survivors fleeing family violence.

Adjournment Proceedings

In June, our Minister of Status of Women announced a plan entitled, “It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence”. This strategy is based on three pillars that will improve Canada’s overall response to violence: prevention, support for survivors and their families, and promotion of responsive legal and justice systems. The minister’s announcement included important investments as part of a government-wide approach. This includes \$100.9 million over five years and \$20.7 million per year thereafter to support implementation.

Of this funding, money will go directly to programs that front-line service organizations provide. There will be \$77.5 million over five years to Status of Women Canada to include the creation of the gender-based violence knowledge centre, which will collect new data and serve as a hub for sharing information. Additionally, this funding will enhance the ability of service providers to support diverse groups of survivors through funded projects and launch a national dialogue, which engages Canadians in changing the social culture that allows gender-based violence to exist.

Our government has also introduced important steps to address harassment in federal workplaces through proposed amendments to the Canada Labour Code. Each of these actions will help women and girls and, in fact, all of society from coast to coast to coast live violence-free lives.

• (1935)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, I would be interested in hearing the member’s numbers on how much of sexual violence shelter renovation money has actually flowed. We have not seen evidence of it yet and I would like to know what has been spent and where.

Organizations in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are doing very powerful work during the 16 days of activism to end violence against women and girls. There is a shoebox program which I know is played out across the whole country. The Nanaimo Women’s Resource Centre, Haven Society, and Samaritan House are all beneficiaries when people donate toiletries and other basic supports in a shoebox.

At Vancouver Island University, there is a vigil on December 6 to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. I applaud those groups and urge the government to work with them and support them in every way it can.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, again, this government is working in many ways to prevent and address gender inequality and tackle issues like gender-based violence. This includes the women’s program at Status of Women Canada by engaging stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels as they carry out projects that directly impact the lives of women and girls. Many of them are front-line service providers. In fact, 50 projects with \$18 million in funding support were recently approved as part of a call for proposals entitled, “funding to advance gender equality”. New funding, under “It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence”, will also go toward grants and contributions to enhance the ability of service providers to support diverse groups of survivors through funded projects.

Many of us on this side of the House will be participating in the shoebox program.

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my turn to rise to come back to a rather important subject for the people of my riding of Mégantic—L’Érable, particularly those who live in Lac-Mégantic. As everyone in the House knows, in 2013, they suffered a very serious tragedy, the worst rail disaster in Canadian history.

I am rising to ask the government what it plans to do next, what concrete action it intends to take, to support the people of Lac-Mégantic.

The Eastern Townships public health department has done a lot of research centred on the people of Lac-Mégantic, which has shown they are having a hard time recovering from the tragedy. This is particularly true for young people, who were the focus of the most recent study. We have learned that, unfortunately, more and more young people in Lac-Mégantic are talking about suicide. That was very unexpected, since four years have now passed since the rail disaster, and yet that is what is happening.

The Minister of Transport repeatedly reiterated his support for the people of Lac-Mégantic. We know that every member of the House wants to support the people of Lac-Mégantic.

Members of all parties have asked questions. I collaborated with members of the government on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities on coming up with solutions. However, what the people of Lac-Mégantic expect today is concrete action.

Adjournment Proceedings

We have to translate words into a meaningful commitment to build a rail bypass in Lac-Mégantic, and soon. It is time we stopped saying that it is a priority and that we want to find a solution.

Why is this commitment so important? The people need this in order to truly start the healing process. That is where we are right now. As long as we keep saying that we have a priority or that we are waiting for the results of studies, those people will not be able to fully recover from the situation.

If the Liberal government could promise that there actually will be a bypass, no matter how and when it will be built and who will pay for it, that would be a good thing. We are hoping for a commitment that will allow the people of Lac-Mégantic to move forward, work on rebuilding this line, and move the train out of the downtown core.

This would ensure that the people of Lac-Mégantic would no longer hear the train whistle reminding them of this awful tragedy three, four, five, even eight times a day. We want to be able to say that there is finally light at the end of the tunnel because a bypass will be built.

I will repeat my question for the government member and I do so on behalf of other MPs as well. I have been trying to work on this file in a non-partisan manner with government members. However, time is of the essence. The time for civility and co-operation has almost run out. Someone has to make a move, someone has to make a commitment, and the government must stop playing ping-pong with the Government of Quebec and decide who is going to pay and how much.

It is time for someone to make a commitment. I believe the federal government should make a clear announcement as soon as possible that there will be a rail bypass in Lac-Mégantic. This is not for the sake of MPs or politicians, but for the sake of those who survived this disaster, the worst rail disaster in Canada.

● (1940)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable for his question.

As the Prime Minister said, our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims and all those whose lives were changed because of this tragedy. Four years later, this very tight-knit community continues to show remarkable resilience in the wake of the scars left by these awful events and their traumatic consequences. We are not wavering from our commitment to improve the rail system and to make it safer for similar communities across Canada. This is the top priority of the Minister of Transport.

We are aware of the recent study that was conducted and that shows the long-term impact of the tragedy on the adolescent population. I want to say that our hearts go out to these young people and the entire community. The resilience and strength of this community is remarkable and Lac-Mégantic continues to rebuild itself as a vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Transport launched a statutory review of Canada's Railway Safety Act a year ahead of schedule. The review will focus primarily on the effectiveness of the federal legislative and regulatory framework around rail safety. On

October 26, we closed another chapter of this tragedy following Irving Oil's guilty plea. As part of the court settlement, sanctions will be imposed on Irving, including a \$3.6-million investment in safety improvements to ensure that this kind of tragedy never happens again. We are still in the midst of active discussions with the Government of Quebec and the City of Lac-Mégantic regarding plans for a rail bypass. That is why the minister met with the Quebec premier to discuss the rail bypass and the next steps on that file as an equal partner, we hope.

In closing, I want to reiterate that our government is committed to supporting the people of Lac-Mégantic to ensure their well-being and help revitalize their community.

● (1945)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I implore the parliamentary secretary to speak on behalf of the people of Lac-Mégantic and give his government the message that, yes, this is a number one priority, and that, yes, the government may be investing in rail safety across Canada, but Lac-Mégantic's situation is unique. What happened in Lac-Mégantic deserves more than a one-line answer saying that rail safety must be improved all across Canada. The situation in Lac-Mégantic needs to be addressed. That is what we want, and that is the kind of commitment that we want from the government. We do not want to know who is going to pay for what, and we do not want the federal and provincial governments arguing over this at the expense of the people of Lac-Mégantic.

I know that everyone supports the people of Lac-Mégantic, but now it is time for the government to put words into action and commit so that the people of Lac-Mégantic can finally heal.

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Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, the people of Lac-Mégantic are always in our thoughts and prayers. Improving rail safety is the Minister of Transport's top priority. That is why we have allocated \$143 million to rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods. That is why we accelerated the removal of the least crash-resistant tank cars. That is why we launched the Railway Safety Act review a year ahead of schedule. We have taken concrete measures that show how seriously we take rail safety and due diligence in the transportation of dangerous goods through Lac-Mégantic and across Canada. We will be doing more stil.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:48 p.m.)

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