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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1005)

[*English*]

BILL C-352—CANADA SHIPPING ACT, 2001

VOTE ON THE DESIGNATION OF AN ITEM

The Speaker: The Chair wishes to make a brief statement on the manner in which the secret ballot vote will be conducted on the designation of Bill C-352, an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and to provide for the development of a national strategy (abandonment of vessels). In so doing, I also wish to address the point of order raised yesterday by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*Translation*]

With regard to the voting process, members may obtain their ballot from the table officer seated on their side of the chamber. They will then be able to mark their ballots in secret at one of the two voting stations situated in the corridor behind the Speaker's chair. Completed ballots are to be deposited in the ballot box which will be placed at the foot of the table.

[*English*]

During statements by members and oral questions, ballots will be distributed from the corridor behind the Speaker's chair and the ballot box will also be placed there so as to not disrupt the proceedings.

With regard to the manner in which the results will be revealed, I am afraid that I cannot accept the argument made by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby that this process should be treated differently from the only other analogous practice that exists in our Standing Orders, that for the election of the Speaker.

[*Translation*]

In that case, Standing Order 4(12) provides that all ballots and records of the number of preferences marked for any candidate are to be destroyed by the Clerk of the House. It also instructs the Clerk to in no way reveal the number of preferences marked for any candidate.

[*English*]

Standing Order 92 does not provide any direction to the Chair which would cause it to depart from that now established practice. Accordingly, when the two days of voting have been completed, the table officers will count the ballots and provide me with the final result, not the number of members voting for or against the motion.

[*Translation*]

I will then provide that result to the House at the opening of the sitting on Thursday, November 30.

[*English*]

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs may wish to consider this matter and if it deems necessary, provide further direction to the Chair with regard to the manner in which the result of the secret ballot is revealed.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 92(4), I now direct that the vote on the designation of Bill C-352 commence.

[*English*]

I thank hon. members for their attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICALLY UNJUST CONVICTIONS ACT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-66, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other Acts.

Government Orders

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

* * *

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, these being the days of activism against gender-based violence, I would like to take this opportunity to present another series of petitions signed by many people living in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and the Montérégie region. They are calling on the government to take swift, concrete measures to put an end to domestic violence.

[*English*]

EATING DISORDERS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise again to table a petition regarding eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Children as young as seven are being diagnosed and hospitalized with eating disorders. The petitioners indicate that more than one million Canadians and their families suffer. They also indicate that sufferers of eating disorders have a long wait list if they want help, and that there is limited access to mental health services and lack of trained professionals in hospital and residential care. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support Motion No. 117 and initiate discussions with the provinces, territories, and stakeholders and those affected, to look for a pan-Canadian strategy for eating disorders.

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition about climate change.

[*English*]

The petitioners in this particular batch of petitions are all from Salt Spring Island, and I want to note that within my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands, Salt Spring Island has several active groups on the climate issue. They call on this House to recognize that the current carbon price put in place by the federal government, which they welcome, is far too small to have the effect of helping us reach the target for 2030. The petitioners call on the House to take meaningful steps to reduce greenhouse gases and to have the carbon price increase incrementally to at least \$150 by 2030.

OMAR KHADR

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been asked to present two petitions to the House of Commons this morning.

The first petition is from a number of people who are concerned with the payment to Omar Khadr and the apology that was issued to him. The petitioners have asked the Government of Canada to revoke its apology issued to Mr. Khadr on July 7, and to seek to redirect any settlement payments attached to that apology to

Sergeant Speer's widow and Mr. Morris for their pain and suffering caused at the hands of Mr. Khadr.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from another group of people who are concerned with the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code that would eliminate the protection for faith leaders and malicious interference with funerals, rituals, and other assemblies of any faith. The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to abandon any attempt to repeal section 176 of the Criminal Code, and to stand up for the rights of all Canadians to practise their religion without any fear of recrimination, violence, or disturbance.

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I bring voices from Nanaimo, Ladysmith, and Victoria into the House. Because coastal communities have called on the government to act on the long-standing pollution risk of abandoned vessels, I have introduced Bill C-352. Liberals have blocked debate on Bill C-352. The petitioners urge members of Parliament to allow the bill to be debated and voted on in the House to bring all the resolutions of vessel turn-in, recycling, safe disposal, and fixing vessel registration.

The Speaker: I want to remind members that the practice in the House is that we do not walk between the Speaker and a person who is speaking at the time. Many members do not seem to realize this.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

* * *

• (1015)

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 2

BILL C-63—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.) moved:

Government Orders

That, in relation to Bill C-63, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

[*Translation*]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is now proposing to rush through a bill, moved by the Minister of Finance, without adequate debate among Canadians, not only about the substance of the bill but the conduct of the minister in crafting it and other similar legislation.

The very first financial legislation introduced in this House by the finance minister was a notice of ways and means on December 7, 2015, that would raise the effective capital gains tax on January 1, 2016, only about three weeks after the introduction of that said motion. Financial advisers told investors that they should quickly sell their shares in order to realize gains before that tax increase would take effect only days later. The result was that the stock market fell by 5% from the day before the introduction of that notice of ways and means until seven days after.

Morneau Shepell shares also fell by 5%, but not before somebody was able to sell their shares in Morneau Shepell and avoid those losses. Someone sold 680,000 shares, worth \$10.2 million, one week before the finance minister introduced his motion on the floor of the House of Commons. That person was very wise and had great foreknowledge and ability to project what was to come.

I am asking if the Minister of Finance can tell us who it was who made that sale of 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I would say to the opposition member is that if he wants to make an allegation of wrongdoing, he should do it outside this House.

I am focused on doing the work that Canadians asked us to do. What we are talking about today is moving forward on a bill that is going to continue our plan to make an enormous difference for Canadians. We have seen, over the last couple of years, that the work that we are doing is making an enormous difference. There have been 500,000 new jobs over the last couple of years and the lowest unemployment rate over the course of a decade.

What we are talking about now is continuing that work with measures that are going to ensure tax fairness and that we can continue on our plan, in its entirety, to make a continuing difference for Canadians. That is what we are doing today and that is what we would like to talk about.

● (1020)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): As you know, Madam Speaker, we now have a record debt load for average Canadian families, the worst in the industrialized world. If that is something the finance minister is proud of, then I think his priorities are all wrong.

The government has brought in closure now, on average, 25% more times than the Conservative Harper government did. We can remember how Canadians reacted to the closures and omnibus legislation of the Harper government. Now the Liberals are 25% worse in terms of closure. It is appalling.

The real reason the government seems to be ramming through this legislation is because it is taking absolutely no action against all of these overseas tax havens that so many Canadians are concerned about. I cannot talk about ethical lapses, but we have the ethical void of the finance minister, who has been unable to answer any of the questions asked by opposition members in the House. Is that not the real reason that the government is ramming through this legislation, invoking closure yet again, because of the ethical void of the finance minister and the government?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to talk about what we are trying to do for Canadians through this bill and the high ethical standards our government will continue with, and what we are actually doing for Canadians on a day-to-day basis.

In this bill, we will make an enormous difference for Canadians. We will continue with the plans we have put forward and will talk about them this morning. I hope we will talk about the measures actually in the bill. We will talk about tax fairness. We will talk about how we have improved flexible work arrangements for Canadians. We will talk about our continuing goal of being part of the international community through our investment in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

We would like to talk about the changes we have made for nurse practitioners, allowing them to have a broader scope of responsibility, not only making it easier for people to get access to medical care but also making our health care system more efficient.

We will want to continue to talk about the measures in this bill, which we would like to move forward now.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague, the member for Carleton posed a question to the minister, and I actually thought that after having a chance to sleep on this, the minister would gather his thoughts and information and answer the question.

One of three answers is possible. There is, “I don’t know who sold the shares”, or “I did not sell the shares” or—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, and with all due respect to the members opposite and the line the questioning they might want to ask, I think it is important as we go through this process to note that our Standing Orders clearly indicate that the members opposite need to be relevant to the subject at hand.

What I would suggest—

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As the parliamentary secretary knows, there is a bit of leeway. I think we need to allow the member to finish her question. I am sure the relevancy will be there.

The hon. official opposition House leader.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, let me quickly mention how it is relevant.

We have a Minister of Finance who has shown a number of ethical lapses, in fact one that he was found guilty of and fined for because he did not disclose all of the information he should have to the Ethics Commissioner. He has introduced legislation that—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, in no way is character assassination relevant to the legislation before us or the procedure we are entered into.

We are talking about the budget implementation bill and time allocation. The members opposite adjourned debate on this very piece of legislation. If they want to keep relevant, those are the two items they should be talking about. Maybe they could justify why they moved adjournment yesterday. Maybe they could ask questions related specifically to the budget implementation bill. That is what we are debating today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the members that their comments must be relevant to the issue before the House. I would just remind the official opposition to maybe get to the question very quickly, because we are running out of time. Time does not stop when the points of order are being made.

The hon. official opposition House leader.

•(1025)

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, the government agreed with us yesterday that we should adjourn debate on the budget implementation bill. We did so because we do not have confidence in this Minister of Finance who introduced this bill, as he will not answer very simple questions.

He had a chance to look over his records and now to answer either that he knows who sold the shares, that he does not know who sold the shares, or that he sold the shares. It is a very simple question. It needs a very simple answer.

I would ask the Minister of Finance the same question. Does he know who sold the 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares prior to the tabling of the bill regarding the budget and the tax changes? It is a very simple question.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, if the member opposite would like to make an allegation of wrongdoing outside this House, I would be happy to answer in full force.

What I can say is that today we are talking about the second budget implementation bill to move forward with the work we are doing for Canadians. Canadians know that we should be focusing on work that would benefit them, and not on spurious correlations that have absolutely nothing to do with the work in this House.

I will continue to talk about that and why we are moving forward on things that actually matter to Canadians. That is what we are

talking about this morning. We are going to talk about how we are continuing to make a difference for Canadian families, a difference that has been enormous over the last couple of years and we will continue to work on on their behalf.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have not heard the finance minister address the issue raised by our House leader that when the Liberals were in opposition, they joined us in condemning the practices of the then Harper government for shutting down debate in Parliament time and time again. We actually thought things could not get worse. It was hard to imagine how they would get worse. Somehow, the Liberals have found a way to make things worse for Parliament.

If the finance minister would not mind listening, I have a specific question for him. Like the Prime Minister, he has often talked about respect for Parliament and the process. How does he demonstrate that respect? He contributes to the idea that we should shut down debate more often than Stephen Harper did. That is the fact of the matter today.

If he wants to talk about facts, I think he should. He should address the fact that rather than moving through a normal process and talking about something significant, like the implementation of the budget in a proper way, as I am sure he talked about as a candidate, he has instead reverted to this other type of politics, where they say they will use their power to force upon Parliament vote after vote before debate can be concluded. I will remind him that is how mistakes get made. I remind him that when he disclosed his assets to the *National Post*, through John Ivison, in trying to clear up one ethical mess, he made another ethical mess. Maybe he was rushing forward on that too quickly and creating the cloud himself by not placing things in a blind trust. That was no one else's decision, but his.

The decision today is about his government's intention to ram through another bill, doing so 25% more often than Stephen Harper did. I would like him to address that one simple fact, if he could somehow find a way to do it.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member that Bill C-63 has been debated extensively in the House and at the finance committee. We have seen four days of second reading debate, during which more than 70 members have spoken. That includes 23 members from the Conservative Party and 10 members from the New Democratic Party. The bill has also been studied at the finance committee for six hours. We have seen eight members speaking at report stage.

We want to move forward. This bill is clearly the next step in our continuing goal of making a difference for Canadians. I suspect that the member opposite should be pleased that his constituents are feeling much better because there is more employment across this country. We are seeing 500,000 new jobs. I hope the member opposite is pleased with the fact that nine out of 10 families are seeing more money because of the Canada child benefit. Because of the positive economic results we have seen, we are able to make sure that benefit will keep up with the costs of inflation.

Government Orders

That is the kind of work we are doing on behalf of Canadians. It is the kind of work we are committed to continue doing. This debate has been extensively elaborated upon, and now we would like to move forward to do the good work that Canadians asked us to do.

• (1030)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the finance minister cannot seem to understand why we still have so many questions, so let us come at it another way. Fool Canadians once, shame on the finance minister. Fool Canadians twice, shame on us.

The finance minister has admitted guilt by paying a fine levied by the Ethics Commissioner, as well as by surrendering millions of dollars of ill-gotten gains to charity. That is why Canadians' confidence has been shaken in the capacity of this minister. He now refuses to answer questions about major stock trades made before a ministerial announcement. He refuses to disclose information within—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): A point of order by the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, again I rise on the issue of relevancy. There is an obligation on the part of the official opposition to be relevant to the debate. Today's debate is about a time allocation motion and Bill C-63. Issues related to something the opposition wants to create at this point in time are just not relevant to the debate we are supposed to be having.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I remind the member that the parliamentary secretary is correct on that fact, but the parliamentary secretary also knows that some latitude is provided. I ask the members to get to their questions and comments fairly quickly, within one minute, because a lot of people want to speak on this, so we can allow questions, answers, and comments to continue.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

Hon. Peter Kent: Madam Speaker, I will come directly to my question, which relates to the relevance of this minister presenting legislation in the House and his past behaviour in doing so. Why will he not answer these simple questions? Why is the Prime Minister allowing him to stonewall?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that we have a process in this House of working with the commissioner of ethics. That is a process I have followed to the letter by disclosing all of my assets. Making up fabrications in order to move the dial from what we are actually doing for Canadians is what we are clearly seeing repeated over and over again. The actions of this government and mine as finance minister have led to a situation where the only thing the opposition members want to talk about is me, because the only thing they do not want to talk about is what is going on for Canadians. When growth has increased in this country significantly above the anemic growth rate under the previous government, they obviously do not want to talk about that. When we create 500,000 new jobs and reach the lowest unemployment rate in a decade, they obviously do not want to talk about that. When families are doing better because they have more money in their pockets, they obviously do not want to talk about that. Those are the things we want to continue to do on behalf of Canadians.

Mr. Peter Julian: And record family debt.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for New Westminster—Burnaby that when a minister or anyone else in the House has the floor, they deserve respect, and I would ask him not to heckle.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Hochelaga.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Finance if he knows whether his government plans to use time allocation every time the Minister of Finance introduces a bill.

Perhaps the Liberals do not want us to discuss them for too long, in case we find additional conflicts of interest involving the finance minister.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I will continue to remind the House that we have had plenty of time to debate this measure. We have had four days to examine these measures in the House. We have heard from 23 members from the Conservative Party and 10 NDP members.

We think it is important to examine what we want to do for Canadians, which is to continue with our policy to improve Canada's economic conditions. Our economy is currently in good shape, but we know that there is always more that can be done. We want to continue improving the lives of the middle class and Canadian families.

• (1035)

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise because I am disappointed that we are once again seeing time allocation. This is a very large bill and much here that I would like to study more. As the Minister of Finance will know, I voted for the bill going to committee. I think there is much in here that is really quite encouraging and positive. However, in the debates at committee, it was drawn to my attention by the member for Carleton that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank could indeed fund potential infrastructure investments that go against our Paris accord commitments.

Could the Minister of Finance assure this House, as the bill is rushed through, that Canada will apply a climate lens to the funds we provide to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank?

Government Orders

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I first want to acknowledge the member opposite, who did not vote to shut down debate yesterday like the Conservative and New Democrat members did. What I would say to her is that we are of course very pleased to be making investments in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. What we do by making investments there is get a seat at the table. As she knows, we have a significant goal of trying to make sure that our efforts to improve the changing climate around the world are considered in everything we do. With that seat at the table, we will certainly be talking about our government's initiatives to improve our environmental practices, and be a voice for encouraging that activity in other parts of the world as well.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, what we are witnessing today is an absolutely pathetic display of contempt for this Parliament. This is a government that ran on the fact that the voices of its members would be heard, yet here they are again shutting down debate. However, we are seeing bully politics going on here as well.

I had a conversation with some of my colleagues this morning, and we talked about how this day would go. I said to them that as soon as the sun comes up, the finance minister's answer to any questions similar to yesterday's would be, "Let's take it outside." Well, it was taken outside.

More importantly, the finance minister is responsible for answering to Canadians. He was asked a simple question about when he sold his shares or who sold those shares, and he refused to answer.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. John Brassard: Here comes the bully politics again.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Even the member across the way acknowledged that he was starting to get off topic. I just want to remind my colleague that we are debating the budget implementation bill, along with the issue of time allocation. The member was starting to deviate, and I want to bring him back to those topics.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Once again, I am asking that members stick to the time allocation motion as it relates to the budget and get to their points and their relevance as quickly as possible, because all these points of order and interruptions end up costing time when others want to ask questions.

Mr. John Brassard: The disruptions, Madam Speaker, are designed to thwart the voices of members in the House.

The relevance to Bill C-63 is this. The minister has shown a propensity to not be honest with Canadians and to not be honest with the House by not answering questions that are specific to him. How can we trust the minister with respect to the budget implementation bill, Bill C-63, if he will not answer those simple questions? How can we trust him when he suggests that he is not benefiting from this if he is not answering those questions? That is the relevance.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I will continue to be absolutely transparent with the Ethics Commissioner. That is the way we work in the House.

No matter how many times members opposite talk about their superimposed approach on the approach that has been used in the House for decades, for ministers today and for ministers of yesterday, we will not accede to their fabrication of a process that actually does not exist.

The member for Barrie—Innisfil yesterday moved a motion to shut down this debate. What we are talking about today is moving forward on Bill C-63. We are moving forward, because we have had debate on this over the course of four days. More than 70 members have spoken. We are moving forward with a plan that will continue to improve the lives of Canadians. We know how important it is to keep on this track, because we are seeing real impacts now after two years of hard work.

● (1040)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

As you know, my riding is located in the suburbs north of Montreal, where the REM, or electric rail network, is being built. I wonder if we could have an update on the infrastructure bank and how it might support the REM project in Montreal.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member that she is to address the Chair and not the minister.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, it is very important to understand how our plan is working for Canadians. Our current economic situation is an important example and that is thanks to our policies. One very important policy is the Canada infrastructure bank. This bank gives us the opportunity to find global investors for our infrastructure fund and Canada's pension funds. That is exactly what we will have the opportunity to do in Montreal and the surrounding areas, in order to improve public transit. It is an investment in infrastructure that will make a big difference for people living in Montreal or near Montreal. It is very important. Once the bank is up and running I hope that we will have the opportunity to invest with institutional investors to improve conditions for people living near Montreal.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must say that I am confused. We are currently debating a time allocation motion on the budget, and yet I am hearing my Liberal colleagues and the Minister of Finance discussing the budget even though they must not want to talk about it, given that they moved a time allocation motion.

Does the Minister of Finance want to talk about the budget or not?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, we have had plenty of time to talk about our budget. Now I believe it is time we thought about how we might speed up the process to finally implement it. We want to continue with our plan to improve Canada's economy. Things are already going very well, but there is still work to be done. This bill is an important part of our plan to improve our economy. That is why we are here today.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would first like to address my comments to my colleague and friend, the parliamentary secretary to the government house leader, who has made continuous interruptions and interventions during this debate, citing relevancy.

I point out to my friend, and to all members in this place, that we are talking about the budget implementation bill, and as the finance minister, he is the architect of that bill. Any budget-related matters are relevant to this discussion and debate.

The credibility of not only the government but this minister is at stake here. His failure to answer a basic and very simple question about the timing of the sale of 10 million Morneau Shepell shares affects not only his credibility but that of his government as well.

For the life of me, I cannot understand why the Minister of Finance, arguably the second-most important member of this government, refuses to answer a legitimate and very simple question. This question is about the timing of a sale of shares that could have potentially benefited the Minister of Finance directly. He refuses to answer even the most basic question about that potential conflict of interest. We are simply asking why he does not answer the question.

Did he have any knowledge about the sale of Morneau Shepell shares one week prior to the introduction of the bill that he himself introduced on this floor?

•(1045)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, as I have said in this House, it is important that we work together with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that we do things exactly as prescribed, which is exactly what I have done.

The fabrication of processes that do not exist is completely unnecessary. What we are talking about today is how we can move forward on Bill C-63, making a real difference for Canadians. I fully understand why the member opposite does not want to talk about that. I fully understand that he is not interested in talking about how constituents of his and people across this country are doing better because of our policies. We understand that.

We are going to continue to move forward to make a real difference for Canadians, and we are not going to be taken off our game by fabrications.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find it appalling that a time allocation is being imposed on us for the 26th time, especially since this is a mammoth 329-page bill that amends about 20 acts.

In his own budget bill, the Minister of Finance proposes no measures whatsoever against tax avoidance. I can understand why, given that he himself is involved in a tax avoidance mess.

Why does he want to hasten the process when this is such a major bill? With the holidays around the corner, it is time we gave Canadians the gift of bringing back home all the tax that has been dodged and using it to provide public services.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, we want to continue to move forward with our plan for the country. That is the explanation for today's situation. Moving forward with our plan is very important.

It is clear that our plan is working, because our economy is doing very well. Many more people now have jobs, which is important. Thanks to our policies, we have a very high rate of economic growth. We are going to continue implementing our plan. That is an important part of our plan.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

•(1125)

[English]

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

(Division No. 407)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking

Government Orders

Eyolfson	Fergus	Deltell	Diotte
Fillmore	Finnigan	Dreeshen	Dubé
Fisher	Fonseca	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Duvall	Eglinski
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)	Falk	Fast
Freeland	Fry	Fortin	Gallant
Fuhr	Gameau	Garrison	Généreux
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones	Gill	Gladu
Goodale	Gould	Godin	Gourde
Graham	Grewal	Harcastle	Hoback
Hajdu	Hardie	Hughes	Jeneroux
Harvey	Hébert	Johns	Julian
Hehr	Holland	Kelly	Kent
Housefather	Hussen	Kitchen	Kmiec
Hutchings	Iacono	Kusie	Kwan
Joly	Jones	Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Jordan	Jowhari	Laverdière	Liepert
Khalid	Khera	Lloyd	Lobb
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Lukiwski	MacGregor
Lamoureux	Lapointe	MacKenzie	Maguire
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc	Malcolmson	Marcil
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Leslie	Lightbound	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Lockhart	Long	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Longfield	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Nantel	Nicholson
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Obhrai	Paul-Hus
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	McGuinty	Pauzé	Plamondon
May (Cambridge)	McKenna	Poillievre	Quach
McDonald	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Rankin	Rayes
McKay	Mendicino	Rempel	Richards
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	Saganash	Sansoucy
Mendès	Morneau	Scheer	Schmale
Mihychuk	Murray	Shields	Shipley
Soeurs)	Ng	Sopuck	Sorenson
Monsef	Oliphant	Stanton	Stetski
Morrissey	O'Regan	Stewart	Strahl
Nassif	Paradis	Stubbs	Sweet
O'Connell	Peterson	Tilson	Trudel
Oliver	Philpott	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Ouellette	Poissant	Vecchio	Vierzen
Peschisolido	Ratansi	Wagantall	Warawa
Petitpas Taylor	Romanado	Warkentin	Waugh
Picard	Ruimy	Webber	Weir
Qualtrough	Sahota	Wong	Yurdiga
Rioux	Samson	Zimmer — 123	
Rudd	Scarpaleggia		
Rusnak	Schulte		
Sajjan	Shanahan		
Sangha	Sikand		
Schiefke	Sohi		
Sgro	Spengemann		
Sheehan	Tan		
Simms	Tootoo		
Sorbara	Vandal		
Tabbara	Vaughan		
Tassi	Whalen		
Trudeau	Wilson-Raybould		
Vandenbeld	Young		
Virani			
Wilkinson			
Wrzesnewskyj			
Zahid — 163			

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.*[Translation]*

I wish to inform the House that, because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

*[English]***REPORT STAGE**

The House resumed from November 27 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, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: Once again, I want to remind members who are engaged in voting to try to avoid passing between the Speaker and the member who is speaking.

There are five minutes remaining in the speech from the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Government Orders

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will remind the House that I moved a motion to adjourn debate yesterday when we were talking about Bill C-63. The reason I moved that motion was the fact that the finance minister refused to answer the question from the member for Carleton and others, including the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent. In the context of that bill, I moved that motion because of a lack of confidence in the finance minister's ability to talk about it. Again, unless and until the finance minister answers these tough questions, we will be at a stalemate.

When time allocation was moved this morning, during tough questions from the member for Carleton, very simple questions, too, the finance minister suggested the member take it outside. That has been a pattern of the government in the past. If the Liberals do not want to answer the questions in the House, the inference is that we should take it outside, a bully politic tactic. If the finance minister wants to threaten high-priced Bay Street lawyers by threatening us to take it outside, we will not stand for that. In this democracy and this Parliament, every one of us is sent here to represent the voices of our constituents and every one of us has an obligation to ask the tough questions, the simple questions, the yes or no questions.

The debate was adjourned yesterday because we lacked the confidence in the minister's ability to deal with Bill C-63. We did not know his agenda, and we still do not know what his agenda is with respect to Bill C-63. The funny thing was that every member of the Liberal Party voted to adjourn yesterday, including the finance minister. Therefore, the Liberal members clearly do not have confidence in the finance minister's ability to deal with this issue as well.

We read in *The Hill Times* yesterday that the Liberals' major concern was not transparency, not accountability, not openness, not the impact Bill C-63 would have, not the fact that the finance minister would not answer any questions, and continues to hide in the dark. Their concern is the next election, the fact that potentially in 2019, after four years, they may lose their pensions. This was said in *The Hill Times*. That causes me to greatly question the motivations of Liberal backbenchers. It is all about their pensions. How sad is that?

I hear them chirping on the other side, and to that I say "bring it on". Until the finance minister answers the simple questions being asked by Her Majesty's loyal opposition, we will continue to ask the tough questions, the very simple questions, on behalf of all Canadians who sent us here, including my riding of Barrie—Innisfil.

• (1130)

There are no high-priced lawyers in Barrie—Innisfil. It is a working-class community. The finance minister thinks he can come in here, bully the opposition by threatening lawsuits, libel, or slander suits, telling us to take this outside and not ask the tough questions in the House. None of us will be intimidated by the bully tactics of the finance minister, and we ask him to answer the questions.

Returning to Bill C-63, the Liberals have talked about tax fairness and the fact that the middle class and those working hard to join it are somehow better as a result of what they have done. This is about the middle class and those working hard to stay in it. They talked about a revenue-neutral tax decrease, that they would tax the top wealthiest 1% and lower taxes on middle-class Canadians. It was not

revenue-neutral. It was going to cost the treasury \$8.9 billion over six years, further adding to the debt and deficit of the government, deficits as far as the eye can see, debt that is projected to be \$1.5 trillion by the 2050s.

For those of us who live in Ontario, talk about compounding the problem. The Ontario government is mired in endless debt and deficits. Now the federal government is moving in that direction. Quite frankly, I am worried, not just for my four children but every young person in the country who will have to pay for the Liberals' spending.

• (1135)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for standing up for democracy and for the hard-earned dollars that young families are contributing through their taxes. The government continues to squander that.

When we look at the deficit alone, between now and 2021, the interest costs alone on the deficit will be \$33 billion per year. Just think for a moment what we could be doing with the \$33 billion that would actually make a positive difference in our country. However, the government continues to spend money it does not have on projects we do not need. I wonder if my colleague would comment a bit about the long-term effects of this growing deficit that adds to our national debt, which my children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren will need to be paying back.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, that is a very good and relevant question. If they say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga does not have to look too far to understand the impact that high debt has. In Ontario, we are the largest sub-sovereign nation debtor in the world. In fact, payments on the debt alone are one-third, next to health care and education. If paying for the debt was a department in Ontario, it would be the third biggest funded department in the Province of Ontario at \$1 billion a month, just in debt payments. When we start compounding that, think of the impact that is going to have on our kids. Two things happen: taxes go up and services go down. We have seen that in Ontario, and it is predictable federally as well.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the things I have noticed in Durham Region—and my riding of Whitby is a part of Durham Region—is that, right now, we have the lowest unemployment we have had in 15 years. It is at 5.3%.

Government Orders

I wonder what my hon. colleague would say to his constituents who have benefited from the work our government has put in place. We have the largest growth in the G7, a strong economy, 500,000 new jobs created, and low unemployment. What does he say to his constituents who have benefited from such a great economy currently in Canada?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, there have been reports recently about Canadians being the most indebted nation in the OECD. We have seen the government show no limit to the amount of debt and deficit spending it is willing to do.

Employment based on debt that is funded is not sustainable in the long term. We have seen that in Ontario. Ontario has become a have-not province. Again, if we want to predict the future, we need only look at what has happened in Ontario. Every person in Ontario, under a Liberal government, is suffering as a result of the debt and indebtedness. It is not sustainable in the long term. If the hon. member ran her house in the same manner they are running the government, she would not be able to afford it, because it is not sustainable.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a strange moment where Liberals voted, essentially a non-confidence vote against their own finance minister, in a way. That happened yesterday afternoon. One might understand some of their concerns and reservations with the conduct of the finance minister because of the recent number—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: You adjourned debate.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Confidence? It was to adjourn the debate.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Madam Speaker, the vote happened, I will remind my friend from Winnipeg. However, here is the concern. Right now, Canadians are experiencing the highest personal debt rate of anywhere in the developed world. I wonder if the bill we are debating today is going to help out any Canadian who is experiencing these record high personal debt rates, or is it just more noise coming from the government?

• (1140)

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, it is more noise, simply put.

When we look at the investment of \$500 million in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, we have to ask questions. Why are we not investing that money back into seniors in this country? Why are we not investing that money back into veterans this country? Why are we sending that money overseas? How about prioritizing Canada? How about prioritizing the people who have contributed most to this country?

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

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

Niwakoma cuntik Tansai Nemeaytane Awapantitok.

[English]

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be speaking today on Bill C-63 and truly speaking on the issues related to the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 2. This is an interesting piece of legislation.

Budgets are important because they impact people on the ground, average Canadians, average people. It is my belief that a budget is a real reflection of the will of a people.

I think of the people in my riding who came to me and talked to me about, for instance, subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. They came to me in May 2016. They spoke to me with great passion. They talked to me about their beliefs, and how they wanted to make the world a better place. They said they wanted to make sure we could make room in this world for other human beings and we could look after each and every one of us. They believe in ideals like *simplicité volontaire* or voluntary simplicity.

There are people in the areas of my riding, like Wolsley, and when these young people ask what we are going to do about the environment and if we are going to fulfill our promises made during the election, I say, “Of course, I am going to fight for you every day to fulfill those promises.”

As an indigenous person, I have heard from my elders. “Treaty” is a buzzword today that we often use. It was a buzzword a thousand years ago as well. Wahka say jach was the very first man. When the creator, the Great Spirit, created all beings, when he created the two-legged ones, the four-legged ones, those who could fly, when he created the rivers and streams and mountains and sky, he created man last of all, and that was Wahka say jach.

He gathered all the animals together and asked them, “Who will protect this man, because it is cold today and he is cold?” The buffalo said, “I will give him my fur so he can stay warm.” The birds said, “We will give him food and sustenance. We will provide him with something to feed himself and his families.” They had a treaty. They had a relationship with each other. It was not something to be taken lightly.

I said:

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

Niwakoma cuntik Tansai Nemeaytane Awapantitok.

[English]

That says I honour all my relations.

We have to honour all of our relations because we have treaty with everything that exists in this world. If we use something, we must honour it afterwards. If we use an animal or a being, we must honour it in a good way, to make sure we do not waste, we do not destroy, and we continue to cherish, love, care, and protect.

Those things, today, are sometimes very hard, but that is what I saw in the people who came to speak to me on May 27, 2016, in my riding.

The world's largest economies in 2009 agreed to phase out subsidies for oil and other carbon dioxide fossil fuels in the medium term as part of efforts to combat global warming. Some \$300 billion a year is spent worldwide to subsidize fuel prices, boosting demand in many nations by keeping prices artificially low, and that is leading to more emissions.

Government Orders

This agreement in 2009 was backed by all G20 countries, including Russia, India, and China. It was a victory for the United States president, Barack Obama. He said this reform would increase our energy security and it would help us combat the threat posed by climate change. He also said, “All nations have a responsibility to meet this challenge, and together we have taken a substantial step forward in meeting that responsibility”.

It is my belief that eliminating such subsidies by 2020 will reduce greenhouse gas emissions blamed for global warming by 10% by 2050, and this was also highlighted by the International Energy Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In a statement from the G20, comprising the major rich and emerging economies, energy and finance ministers said they would develop timeframes and strategies for implementing the phase-out of the subsidies and report back at the next G20 summit.

• (1145)

It was our prime minister back then, the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, who was the one to act on behalf of Canada at this G20 summit. In 2015, he agreed to a final communiqué for the G7 which said, “we emphasize that deep cuts in global greenhouse-gas emissions are required with a decarbonisation of the global economy over the course of this century”.

Our Parliament also voted last June to accept that the Paris accord is a necessary step to fight climate change. These are all truths.

However, another truth is that the Liberal Party promised in our 2015 platform:

We will fulfill Canada's G-20 commitment to phase out subsidies for the fossil fuel industry. The next step will be to allow for the use of the Canadian Exploration Expenses tax deduction only in cases of unsuccessful exploration. The savings will be redirected to investments in new and clean technologies.

That is our engagement on behalf of Canadians that we decided to fulfill in the budget implementation act no. 2.

I will now quote what we are actually going to be doing in the budget implementation act in relation to the fossil fuel subsidies:

The success rates for exploratory drilling have increased substantially since the 1990s and, in a majority of cases, discovery wells now lead to production, which makes the well an asset of enduring value.

This measure would modify the tax treatment of successful oil and gas exploratory drilling. Consistent with the usual treatment of enduring assets, expenses associated with oil and gas discovery wells will be treated as Canadian development expenses, unless and until they are deemed unsuccessful.

This measure supports Canada's international commitments to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

I have had the opportunity of sitting on the finance committee for the past two years, almost. I remember asking the Canadian Taxpayers Federation representatives about fossil fuel subsidies, and I asked what they thought about them. They said they were against corporate welfare in any form. However, we on the finance committee also recognize that we need to take a balanced approach and that, yes, there were and there still are continuing issues in Alberta related to employment. However, I believe it is a balanced approach that we have tried to take, not simply coming in and applying what we believe right away but taking the time to listen and to consult. We have waited for Alberta to lift itself to ensure that we have other programs that can take the place to ensure that we have good economic development in Alberta.

In my belief, we are fulfilling a promise of treaty to all our relations. We are fulfilling a promise of the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, one that we are willing to keep because it is important. We are willing to fight for the environment, fight for the beliefs of Canadians, and fulfill our promises that were contained in our 2015 platform. I am proud that even a bit of work, asking some of those questions on the finance committee, allowed us to ensure that today we are fulfilling that 2015 promise, fulfilling what should have been done in 2009 to 2011.

Thank you very much. *Tapwe akwa khitwam.*

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Winnipeg Centre, for his speech. His introduction was very interesting because he explained the relationship that indigenous peoples have with animals and the planet Earth, the history of humanity, namely that there is a sacred relationship between man and animals, a reciprocal relationship based on the ethics of living together.

In the 2015-16 budget and in this one, and following the COP21 negotiations in Paris, the Liberal government decided to send billions of dollars to poor countries in the developing world to help them with climate change. It is not a sure thing that they will use the money for that purpose.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. I know that he will understand because he is an anthropologist. From the perspective of intergenerational ethics, can we really ask a generation, or the generation of living Canadians, to pay for the mistakes of their ancestors who have supposedly polluted the planet? Is this legitimate in terms of intergenerational ethics? In terms of the ethics of international relations, is it okay to send billions of dollars overseas to compensate for the mistakes of our ancestors? Do we have to pay for these mistakes?

• (1150)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beauport—Limoilou. That is a very interesting question. As an anthropologist, I know that cultures change and evolve. They are dynamic and constantly changing. That is part of the indigenous philosophy.

However, we still have a responsibility, even if our ancestors are the ones who made the mistakes. My own parents made plenty of mistakes in their lives, which are evident in the way they raised me. I have to try to correct that for my own children.

We cannot abdicate our responsibilities. We need to try to strike a balance in our society between the environment and the economy. I think it is possible, even if we have to help subsidize the economies of third-world countries or poorer economies. It is important to try to help everyone in this world move forward. We are not an island unto ourselves, even if North America's original name is Turtle Island.

Government Orders

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about environmental protection. The question I would like to ask him is related to the environment, but it is about housing, which is my portfolio since I am the housing critic.

I would like to know why there is nothing in the budget about renovation and energy-efficient construction. The government recently released a strategy that talks about housing construction. If the government were to include the principles of energy-efficient renovation and construction in its strategy, that would help protect the environment and lower building maintenance costs for social housing, for example. I think it would be very beneficial to consider such options.

Given his way of thinking, which comes from his indigenous culture, is he not disappointed that his government does not share his environmental perspective when it comes to housing?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Last Friday in Winnipeg, I had the opportunity to make an announcement about the national housing strategy. Speaking at the Siloam Mission, we explained how this policy will be implemented for the benefit of all Canadians. I did indeed mention that the environment is important to me. We have to protect the environment and we have to build housing that is as carbon neutral as possible.

As I said during my speech, this will be an important change. However, we cannot forget to listen to local communities. Yesterday, I had the chance to speak with people who were trying to lay secure foundations for northern homes so that they do not shift quite so much and are more stable, preventing cracks from developing. Sometimes, the lifespan of a house depends on its design and how it is built. We have to convince local communities that it is important to build these types of homes.

However, this is not something we can impose because many indigenous communities are used to seeing people show up there to experiment with new building techniques. It gets to the point where they are fed up. Why do they not go somewhere else?

That is why it is important to really communicate with people and try to convince them to do this on their own initiative.

•(1155)

The Deputy Speaker: The time for questions and comments is over. Here is a little reminder for all hon. members. Members who want to be recognized by the Chair must be in their usual seats.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual, I would like to acknowledge the people of Beauport—Limoilou who are listening to us today. I am sure they have some serious questions with respect to all of the question period speeches they have been watching on television or reading about in the papers.

Canadians are all wondering the same thing: can we trust the Minister of Finance? As we debate the 2017 budget and the proposed spending to achieve the government's objectives, all Canadians are watching the Minister of Finance closely and wondering if they can trust him.

Indeed, over the past three months, the finance minister has done some things and shown some lapses in judgment that have been revealed by journalists, the official opposition, the NDP, and Canadians. Paradoxically, ironically, and sadly, members of the Liberal Party are still smiling and laughing about it today, and not taking it seriously. As my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil was finishing his speech this morning on yesterday's motion, which calls on the government to end the debate on the 2017 budget implementation bill, we saw several members of the Liberal Party laughing and dismissing it all as nonsense. Basically, they are saying the opposition is lampooning them and engaging in gutter politics, but that is not at all the case.

Since July, the Minister of Finance has been saying that he wants to stand up for taxpayers by going after people who cheat when filing their income tax returns to pay less in taxes. To that end, he implemented certain tax reforms, or rather tax hikes for small and medium-sized businesses, which create jobs for the so-called middle class that the government is always talking about. I have a problem with all of that. We should be talking about Canadians, not about classes. Meanwhile, the minister hid from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner that he had a company in France, which owns his villa there. He paid a \$200 fine for that just under a month ago.

While he was trying to go after small and medium-sized businesses, farmers, mechanics, and hairdressers, among others, he made millions of dollars on his shares in Morneau Shepell, which he held until recently and were worth roughly \$20 million. Instead of putting those assets in a blind trust, he hid them in a numbered company in Alberta. While he was going after small businesses that create jobs in Canada, he failed to disclose to the Ethics Commissioner the fact that he had assets in France and Alberta. What is more, he devised and introduced a bill that seeks to make changes to Canada's pension plans and will benefit three companies that specialize in pensions, including Morneau Shepell.

The Minister of Finance keeps spouting nonsense every time we ask him if we can trust him in light of the revelations from journalists and the official opposition. Yesterday, our venerable official opposition finance critic, the hon. member for Carleton, and several other opposition members, asked a very specific question. It takes a lot for me to feel discouraged, but I am starting to have serious doubts about the integrity of this Minister of Finance.

•(1200)

The hon. member for Carleton reminded him that he introduced a bill in 2015, after the Liberal government was elected, making changes that, according to the Liberals, would increase taxes on the wealthiest. That is not what happened. Several academic papers show that it is not the case. Ultimately, the wealthy are paying less taxes.

Government Orders

In short, two weeks before the announcement of the bill's implications for the stock market, the Minister of Finance—or someone else, but we do not know who—sold millions of Morneau Shepell shares in order to save about half a million dollars. If it was not the minister, can he tell us who it was? Yesterday, during question period, he did not answer.

The situation has only gotten worse over the past three months. After the villa in France, the \$20 million in Morneau Shepell shares hidden in Alberta, and the bill that benefited Morneau Shepell, today we learned that someone sold shares to avoid the consequences of the proposed tax increase.

The Minister of Finance must stop playing ridiculous, partisan politics, which are no longer acceptable. It is high time he gave serious answers to the questions asked by the official opposition of Canada. We represent the Canadian people and we hold the government to account to ensure ministerial responsibility. The members of the Liberal Party of Canada must stop making light of the situation. Their Minister of Finance has committed serious violations. He must answer the questions and stop telling us nonsense day after day in the House.

I would still like to say a few words about the 2017 federal budget. Once again, it is a completely ridiculous budget and the Liberals are calling it a feminist budget. The budget should be for all Canadians, not just a special interest group. Of course, we know that the Liberals are centralists and that they work on behalf of special interest groups, including post-materialist groups.

What is more, this budget is in the red and speaks to the many promises the government has broken. Unfortunately, what has defined the Liberals over the past two years is a series of broken promises, including their promise on electoral reform. We are lucky that they broke that promise, because it would be a very bad idea to change the way we vote in Canada. We must retain our Westminster system of voting. The Liberals also broke another promise they made to their environmentalist base by keeping the same greenhouse gas emissions targets as our Conservative government.

Most importantly, the Liberals said that they would run a modest deficit of \$10 billion per year in their first two years in office, when in reality they ran a deficit of \$30 billion in the first year and \$19 billion in the second year, 2017-18. What is even more worrisome is that they broke their promise to balance the budget by 2019-20, even though we are not in an economic crisis or at war. They themselves are saying that the economy is doing great. When we, the Conservatives, ran a deficit in 2008-09, it was because Canada was weathering the worst economic crisis since 1929 and 1930. Today, there is no economic crisis and no war, so there is no reason for the government to be running a deficit.

A recent article in the *Financial Post* indicated that, according to the OECD, household debt, particularly mortgage debt, is the highest it has ever been. For the past few years, the household debt ratio in Canada, including debt for houses, cars, and all the rest, has been the highest of all the OECD countries. This could have a serious impact on Canada's economic growth.

●(1205)

The Liberals say the economy is doing great. They keep sending Canadians an endless stream of Canada child benefit cheques. Despite adding up to thousands of dollars a year, they do not seem to be working, because Canadian households are more in debt than ever. This debt could be extremely dangerous for the country.

How can we expect Canadians to behave any differently, when the example they are given is a Minister of Finance who cannot be trusted and a government that urges them to spend as recklessly as it does? It is time for the Liberals to get a grip on themselves.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention today. I know that he spent the majority of his time trying to personally attack the Minister of Finance. However, what we are actually debating here today is the budget implementation act. He did spend a little time on that and referred to the budget as completely ridiculous.

This is a budget that invests in people, skills training, and making sure that we continue to empower people to help build our economy and to build the middle class so that the economy can continue to flourish. We are seeing that.

My colleague continually said we are just stating that the economy is doing great. Well, in fact, the growth of our economy is the best of the G7 countries. What the government is doing is making investments into the economy that are actually making a difference, which unfortunately is not what we had seen with the previous government.

I ask the member to further explain how he can call this budget ridiculous when it attempts, and has been shown, to have such a huge impact in the lives of so many Canadians.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the impact is quite clear. In 20 years our kids will pay for all the demands that they have brought forward.

I remind the hon. member across the aisle that I did not say that the content of the budget was ridiculous. I was speaking of the way it was presented and titled as a “feminist budget”. Is it possible in this country or in any parliamentary democracy for a budget to refer to a particular group or gender? This is unbelievable and unacceptable. The budget should be for all Canadians, not only in its content but in the way it is presented.

Financial Post journalist, Mr. Watson said, “Turns out the Harper government was actually terrific for wage growth.” In the last two years of the government under Mr. Harper, we saw wage growth as we have never seen in Canada. We created 1.2 million jobs in the last decade.

All of the fruits that the Liberal government is harvesting in the last two years are because of the work of the Conservative government from 2006 to 2015 and its \$3-billion surplus.

That is the reality. Stop playing politics and work for all Canadians.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his passion. In the Liberals' bill, I see no investments at all for indigenous children. There has been a lot of talk about Jordan's principle and about the welfare of indigenous children and the need to keep them out of court.

In this 330-page bill, about which we have just been muzzled, because the Liberals are yet again trying to speed up the process and pass a bill that we do not even get time to debate, there are no measures to make sure indigenous children receive more, higher-quality services, that they have the means to access these services, or that we have the means to offer them.

How can a government that says nation-to-nation relationships are the most important and claims to want to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission introduce a budget, in 2017, that contains no mention of any investments for indigenous children?

• (1210)

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. I am pleased to elaborate on that. When I hear the government say that the most important relationship is that with the indigenous peoples, I wonder what the problem is. The important relationship is the one with all Canadians. Indigenous peoples are Canadians. I am a Canadian. Everyone here is Canadian. I find that truly absurd.

I would also say that the issue of indigenous peoples and reserves is very complex. It is truly unfortunate to see everything that is going on. To think that there are still reserves that do not have running water is beyond me. I agree with you.

That being said, what bothers me the most is that one of the first pieces of legislation from this government withdrew provisions on transparency on the reserves. That policy was very important because one of the fundamental problems on the reserves is that the native elite are the ones who pocket the money, who benefit the most from it without taking good care of their people. That is a serious problem on the reserves. We legislated on transparency in a very important piece of legislation that indigenous peoples appreciated. Without the transparency provisions indigenous peoples are now unable to hold their chiefs accountable. Once again, this government is working for interest groups and not for Canadians, and especially not for indigenous peoples, other than to issue an apology of course.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-63, a budget implementation bill, and all the great investments that budget 2017 will make for people, communities, and industries from coast to coast to coast.

Bill C-63 is just another step forward in meeting the commitments we made to Canadians back in 2015: strengthening and protecting our middle class, growing our economy, and helping those Canadians who need it most. Since the campaign, we have held strong to those values, and we saw in the fall economic update that it is working.

Since 2015, we have created over 500,000 jobs in Canada, most of which are full-time. Unemployment in Canada is down to 6.3%,

which is the lowest this country has seen in many years. Canada is now the fastest growing economy in the G7, and it is because our government is investing in the Canadian people and our communities. It is because of this positive approach that we as a government are able to continue investing in middle-class families, in hard-working Canadians, and in small businesses.

The finance minister announced in October that, because of this growth, our government is going to reinvest in our Canada child benefit two years ahead of schedule by making annual cost-of-living increases to the CCB starting in July next year. For all the families in my riding of Avalon, the Canada child benefit gives them the extra money they need to ensure that raising their children is a little easier. For these families, knowing that they will receive an increase in their monthly benefit will mean that they will have the comfort they need to grow and thrive.

As of July 2017, the Canada child benefit monthly payments in my riding have totalled over \$3.8 million, helping over 13,000 kids and their families. This is the type of investment that truly matters to Canadians, especially to the constituents in my riding of Avalon.

Along with strengthening the CCB, we are also enhancing the working income tax benefit by investing an additional \$500 million per year, starting in 2019, and cutting the small business tax down to 9%. We know that, by helping our small businesses and hard-working Canadians, our communities and their associated industries will continue to thrive and push our economy in the right direction. The actions that our government has taken this year to support regions like mine and the people within them have been well received by my constituents.

In budget 2017, our government committed to strengthening the employment insurance program by extending the program to caregivers, which would now give them up to 15 weeks of benefits when they need to take time off to care for loved ones. We have invested \$92 million to meet the increased demands in claim processing and given more flexibility for parents who use the program for maternity leave. We have also reduced waiting periods of EI benefits from two weeks to one week.

In my region, seasonal workers, fishermen, processors, and many more depend on this program when work is not available. I am pleased that our government has continued to recognize the important role that this program plays in keeping our small communities alive and giving workers the security they need when times are tough.

Our most recent budget is proof that our government knows what matters to Canadians, and not just in my region but across the entire country. Back home in my province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I see people every day who benefit from these strategic and important investments in local infrastructure, in social programs, and in growth.

Government Orders

Thanks to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, all levels of government in Newfoundland and Labrador have been able to come together to support communities so that they can grow well into the future. ACOA has been a huge driver in my riding, which is a rural riding with small, vibrant towns that benefit greatly from the funding that ACOA allows to flow into their municipalities. It is companies like Harbour Grace Ocean Enterprises whose pride in its community and confidence in its people make it a local economic driver. With funding from ACOA, this company can employ local people and keep jobs in Harbour Grace, all while stimulating the local rural economy.

Our government knows that regional-specific programs and investments work. It is why programs like ACOA address the regional challenges that we have and work with proponents to use them to our advantage.

• (1215)

This leads me to the incredible investments that our government, specifically our Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, has made into the Atlantic fisheries fund and the oceans protection plan. In my region, investing in our oceans, in our fisheries, and in our coastal communities is crucial. They are the backbone of our towns and an integral part of our history.

I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the importance of preserving our resources and our coastlines while investing in smart, clean, and sustainable technology and practices, so that our people can continue to do what they love while preserving our resources and coastlines for future generations to come.

It is no surprise that in a province like mine, fisheries still hold strong as economic drivers in many coastal communities. Since being elected I, and I am sure many of my Newfoundland and Labrador colleagues, have seen how important small craft harbours are in communities across our province.

That is why an investment of \$5 million in small craft harbours in budget 2017 combined with the \$149-million investment in budget 2016 has helped ensure that our facilities in Avalon are safe and accessible. This is just another way our government is recognizing our regional needs and supporting the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are now two years into our mandate, and the change I have seen in my riding is astounding, with a record number of investments, including infrastructure funding, funding for social programs and for tourism, and investing in growing businesses, just to name a few.

We are spending strategically and smartly. We are listening to Canadians when they tell us what they need and what would make their lives better, and Canadians are recognizing that as well.

Our government, since 2015, committed to taking a new approach. We committed to doing what was best for everyday, middle-class Canadians. We also made a commitment to better relationships with our provincial and territorial governments to really do what was best for all of our people. We committed to growing the economy while supporting the middle class. It is because of these investments that today we see incredible economic and social

prosperity in this country. It is because of these commitments that we can continue to invest in all of the great programs and services that I have outlined today.

It was my pleasure to stand and support Bill C-63. I, along with my colleagues on this side of the House, look forward to continuing to invest and do what is best for our people and our communities well into the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. The only things missing were the unicorns and rainbows. Really, everything is just wonderful.

I was especially touched by the part of his speech about employment insurance. Obviously, we will not oppose reducing the waiting period by a week. Nor will we oppose the fact that family caregivers may have access to the system. However, right now, nothing has changed with respect to eligibility to EI. There are still fewer than four out of 10 workers who contributed to the plan who manage to get benefits when they need them. If someone does not have access to the plan, the fact that there is one week less to wait does not change much, since he or she will have to get through 52 weeks without income.

Why is the Liberal government not getting to the root of the problem with the employment insurance reform by ensuring that more people are eligible?

• (1220)

[*English*]

Mr. Ken McDonald: Mr. Speaker, if the member is waiting to hear about unicorns, he will have to go to sleep and start dreaming.

When it comes to the employment insurance changes that we made, we have done great things. As my colleague mentioned, we lowered the waiting period to one week. People are not qualifying for the minimum number of required hours but that minimum number changes from economic region to region and it also changes the number of qualifying weeks.

I do not see a lot of problems with the EI system. Would I like to see it enhanced even further? Yes, I would.

I will work with this government to make sure that people are looked after when it comes to employment insurance.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to some of the discussion in the House earlier today when the official opposition and the NDP were raising questions about the finance minister's unwillingness to answer questions arising from his being found in violation of the Conflict of Interest Act, his willingness to accept guilt by paying a fine the Ethics Commissioner levied, and in returning to charity some of the ill-gotten gains he received from trades made during the past two years.

I would like to ask him this. Do his constituents have confidence in his ethical behaviour, performance, and ability as minister to continue with the presentation of bills, such as Bill C-63, which involve so critically the finances of the country and the hard-earned tax dollars returned to the government every year by hard-working Canadians?

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Mr. Ken McDonald: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the finance minister and the fine that was levied, I think the record will show that the fine was levied because of an administrative error. I know that the opposition members keep trying to personally attack the finance minister by asking who owns what shares in what numbered company, what money he made in Morneau Shepell, and why the shares were not in a blind trust. If those shares had been in a blind trust, the profits would still have been made. The minister has stated that he will dispose of his shares. It is his decision to donate any gains he has made since becoming Minister of Finance to charity, which I think would amount to much help for a lot of charities across this country.

He operated under the same system that everyone in this House operates under. He met with the Ethics Commissioner and divulged all of his assets, what he owned and what he did not own, and the Ethics Commissioner agreed with this so-called screen that was put in place. When the members opposite were in government, they used the same system. I have every confidence in the finance minister, and I believe the constituents of the riding of Avalon have the same confidence.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to again engage in debate on the budget implementation act. As we know, the budget implementation act comes out of the budget process. Every year, the government tables a budget, and that budget tells Canadians where the government wants to go, where it wants to land; the taxpayers' money it is going to spend; where it will be spent; and how it will be spent. The budget implementation act, of course, is effectively the master plan going forward. It is the government's plan to implement the budget.

I would like to focus my remarks on one of the most important drivers of economic prosperity in the country, which is trade. Members will have noticed that in the budget implementation act, the government proposes to spend \$10.1 billion in trade and transportation projects. The Liberal government believes there is \$10 billion worth of taxpayers' money that should be spent on promoting Canada's trade and transportation interests at home and around the world.

I believe Canadians have the right to ask whether the Liberal government can be trusted to actually negotiate trade agreements in Canada's best interests, and whether the government has the competence to get these agreements right. I am going to digress and talk about three different trade negotiations that are presently ongoing that should give Canadians great concern in terms of the ability of the Prime Minister to negotiate agreements that serve Canada's interests.

First is the softwood lumber agreement. As we know, back in 2006 the softwood lumber dispute had escalated to a point where there was tremendous fear within our softwood lumber industry that we were going to lose companies, opportunities to drive economic growth, and hundreds and hundreds of jobs across Canada because the government of the day, the Chrétien government, just could not resolve that dispute with the United States.

It was at that time that our Conservative government, under Stephen Harper, appointed David Emerson to be the trade minister. His number one responsibility was to negotiate an end to the

softwood lumber dispute. Guess what? Mr. Emerson got the job done. He negotiated an agreement that served Canadian interests well, and returned to Canada billions and billions of dollars that the Americans had levied against our softwood lumber exports.

The agreement that we entered into with the United States, under the leadership of David Emerson and Stephen Harper, was a seven-year agreement. Seven years of peace in our woods. Again, it served Canadians well. When that seven-year period expired, there was a provision in the agreement for another two-year renewal. That required the consent of both the United States and Canada, and guess what, we had a great relationship with the American government and were able to persuade it that a two-year extension was in its interest and our interest, and so the agreement was renewed. Now we had a total of nine years of peace in the woods.

It just so happens that on the approximate date the new Liberal government was elected back in 2015, the standstill agreement, the softwood lumber agreement, expired. Canadian forestry companies were left faced impending duties, which have indeed now been imposed by the Americans.

• (1225)

We have had a new trade minister and new foreign affairs minister as of 2015, and they set to work to get this agreement resolved and put to bed. In fact, there was a meeting in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, D.C., where our Prime Minister and President Obama got together and said they had established a framework for resolving the softwood lumber dispute and that within 90 days they wanted get the framework in place and resolve it. Here we are two years later and there is no resolution to the softwood lumber dispute in sight. Whether it is incompetence or a failure to understand the softwood lumber agreement, we know that the Liberal government has failed on that front.

The second is the North American Free Trade Agreement. I know the media has been paying a lot of attention to the renegotiation of that agreement. That agreement is now subject to renegotiation because our Prime Minister, when asked by the Americans to renegotiate it, simply said he would gladly renegotiate it, and yet the issues that Donald Trump, the president of the United States, had were with Mexico, not Canada. The Prime Minister has made the fateful decision of aligning Canada's interests with Mexico's, when in fact those interests are not aligned at all.

Members may recall that the first comprehensive trade agreement in the world was actually between Canada and the United States, and Mexico was added in years later. Today, the United States and Canada have a perfectly balanced trade relationship. Canada exports as much to the United States as they do to Canada. Therefore, the president of the United States, if truth be known, does not have a big beef with Canada on trade. He certainly does with Mexico. To entwine our interests with those of Mexico, I believe, is a strategic mistake.

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NAFTA negotiations are going nowhere. In fact, most pundits are looking at what has happened in the last few rounds, where the Americans have put demands on the table that are completely unacceptable to us as Canadians, somehow expecting us to surrender or cave in on these negotiations and give the United States everything it wants. Why do they get away with that? It is because we have a government in place that does not have the spine to say absolutely not. We have a government that embarks upon trade negotiations in a manner that does not serve Canada's interests.

The last trade negotiation I want to deal with is the trans-Pacific partnership. That negotiation commenced under the Conservative government. It was completed in Atlanta in November of 2015. Then the United States left the TPP, and now the remaining 11 partners are trying to negotiate a deal among themselves. One of those partners happens to be Japan, one of the largest economies in the world, which we would have a trade agreement with if the TPP actually comes into force.

What happened in Vietnam when the Prime Minister was at the APEC summit? All of the 11 parties to the TPP agreed that the basic essentials of that agreement were now in place and had gathered in a room, where they were going to make the announcement. Where was Canada? It was missing in action. The Prime Minister was nowhere to be seen, a national embarrassment on the international stage. This is what we get from the Liberal government. There is no understanding of what it means to build trusted relationships with some of our most trusted trade allies, like Australia, New Zealand, or Japan. Not to show up at a meeting when it was agreed ahead of time that there was a consensus on the basic elements of a trade agreement is unconscionable. That is not good trade negotiation.

Canadians have a right to ask whether the Liberal government can be trusted to negotiate trade agreements in Canada's best interests as an economic driver for prosperity in Canada? The resounding answer has to be no.

There are many Canadians across Canada who have heard that the Prime Minister now wants to run pell-mell to China to negotiate a trade agreement with that country. They are thinking that he is not getting any of the other deals done. He is juggling them and he cannot put them to bed. How will he ever negotiate an agreement with what he called the "basic dictatorship" that is China?

• (1230)

In summary, when it comes to promoting our economic prosperity, economic growth in Canada through trade, the government so far has been an absolute disaster.

• (1235)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I have a great relationship. We sit on the environment committee and I have a great amount of respect for him. However, I am troubled about the last 10 minutes and his discussion regarding the trade relationships and the agreements we are building. Being someone who was in that portfolio not that long ago, I know he is aware of how complex those trade agreements can be and how we really cannot negotiate them in public.

However, we have seen this government successfully complete the CETA. In fact, if I remember correctly, after we ratified that, the

member for Abbotsford crossed the aisle and embraced the then minister of trade as a sign of congratulations and good work that was done between both parties, because it did start with the Conservative Party.

Does the member not at least accept that as a sign that the minister responsible at the time and the government knew a little about trade, that they knew what they were doing, and that they had been successful and can continue to be successful into the future?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, CETA is the free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union. It was an agreement that was negotiated under our former Conservative government. When the Liberals got their hands on that agreement, they made a big error in judgment. They agreed with the EU to reopen the agreement. Once they did that, there was a big problem when some of the European states wanted to renegotiate the agreement the previous Conservative government had negotiated.

Again, getting back to the spine, the backbone, when we are negotiating trade agreements, we have to be tough. The Liberal government is not tough. In fact, the member is wrong. When CETA was signed, it was the foreign affairs/trade minister who walked across the floor and embraced me for the work our Conservative government had done. That is a correction on the record. I think he would agree that this is actually what happened.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will have to check the tape on that one, who initiated the embrace, was the embrace reciprocal, was it a caring embrace. More important, while trade relations certainly affect the economy, what also affects the economy and how Canadians feel about it is the confidence they do or do not have in their government. It is the trust they do or do not have in the finance minister, who plays an incredibly powerful role. I would argue that outside of the Prime Minister, it is the most powerful role in the country's finances. He not only has decisions over a massive federal budget, but also decisions about the rules that govern the economy, not interest rates, but just about everything else outside of that policy.

We saw an interaction with the finance minister earlier today about the government moving to close down debate on certain issues. We tried to express, as opposition, that there had been concerns raised about how much trust we could have in the finance minister, not only in previously stating that his affairs had been put into a blind trust, which would have avoided the current controversy ironically enough, but about his current decisions being affected by the fact that he still had four or five numbered companies about which the contents of them we knew nothing. We do not know if he is in a conflict of interest. We do not know what decisions he is making and how his personal affairs are affecting those decisions rather than serving the public.

Could my friend, having served in cabinet, reflect upon the need for trust and confidence in someone who holds such a vital role and the impact that can have on the lives of Canadians?

Government Orders

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, although the member and I occasionally will disagree on trade policy, one thing we do agree on is that Canadians have lost trust and confidence in the Liberal government. More particular, they have lost trust in the finance minister, who has the most senior role in the Liberal government, a finance minister who just will not come clean on whether he put his assets into a blind trust the way he said he would do. It turns out he did not. The finance minister was fined \$200 by the Ethics Commissioner for not disclosing a company that owned a villa in France.

Canadians are watching this. They are saying that he is a senior minister in the government and they cannot trust what he says. Now there is some speculation about stock trades that took place. We do not know yet if they were made by him. He will not tell us. He was asked 21 times yesterday in question period if he was the person who undertook the trade on the Toronto Stock Exchange, and 21 times he would not say yes or no. That should be embarrassing. This is why the Liberal government has struck fear in the hearts of Canadians. They do not trust the government anymore, and certainly not on trade policy.

● (1240)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, those who watch French-language television have probably seen the commercial for the 6/49 lottery where unusual things happen to people, who then feel the need to go out and buy a lottery ticket, thinking that this is their lucky day. That is exactly how I feel today, since I have the opportunity to express my thoughts about Bill C-63. I am one of those rare fortunate ones in the House who will not be cut off by a Liberal time allocation motion.

That we are once again being subjected to a time allocation motion is ridiculous in a House where 338 members have been elected to share the comments, opinions, and visions of the people they represent.

I would have thought it impossible, but it appears that we are going to set an absolutely extraordinary record. After two years in power, the Liberals have managed to put forward 25% more time allocation motions than the Conservatives did over the same time. I find it unbelievable, but it is true.

I will stop here, because I only have 10 minutes, and there are probably only nine left. There are so many subjects I would like to address, that I tried to find a quote to open with that would summarize everything I would like to say, since I will not have the time to say it all. David Macdonald, from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, said, and I quote, “Economic growth is meaningless if it’s enjoyed only by a lucky few. The measures in today’s budget will do little to address the big issues facing Canadians [and Quebecers]”. I admit that I added “and Quebecers” to be sure to remain faithful to Mr. Macdonald’s intent.

I will throw out a few numbers to show that this economic growth, this wealth we are creating, appears to be benefiting the wealthiest Canadians, not the middle class that we have been hearing so much about in the past two years. I should mention that the notion was never defined, other than indirectly, by the tax breaks they were given, among other things. To be eligible for these tax breaks, you

need to earn at least \$45,000 a year, while the median salary in a riding like mine is around \$31,000. It is obvious that the Liberals’ notion of the middle class is not rooted in reality. Either that, or this is just more window dressing from an image-obsessed government.

Over the past 30 years, workers have helped grow our economy by more than 50%, and yet, their wages have stagnated, and raises are so negligible as to barely cover the increase in the cost of living. At the same time, these workers’ pension plans are becoming less and less secure. Consider the most recent case of Sears, where, once again, the preferred creditors are certainly not the workers, many of whom devoted several years or even decades of their lives to the company. As they retire or look for other employment, these workers will not be collecting the benefits they were hoping for.

Not to mention the Liberals’ plan to modify defined benefit pension plans, where workers know exactly what they will be getting when they retire so that they can make the best choices. Workers can plan, choose their fields and decide when they want to retire. No, these defined benefit pension plans are quietly being replaced by target benefit pension plans, where corporations on Bay Street say they will try to secure a certain return for your retirement. Imagine the insecurity experienced by people who are preparing for their retirement or, worse yet, who are on the verge of retiring.

Here is another interesting statistic. The gap between the wealthiest and the majority is growing wider and faster in Canada than in other developed countries. As an example, the total income of the wealthiest 100 Canadians is equivalent to the total income of the 10 million most disadvantaged Canadians.

● (1245)

With such a clear picture, there is something wrong if people cannot fully comprehend the growing gap between the rich and the poor, or the fact that the key measures put forward by the Liberal government do nothing to help close that gap.

I mentioned EI benefits earlier in my questions and I have a bit more I want to say on that. Despite nine years under the Conservatives and two years under the Liberals, still today, fewer than four out of 10 workers who pay premiums end up being eligible when misfortune strikes and they lose their jobs. This is a disaster. I would remind the House that only employers and employees contribute to the plan, since the government pulled out several years ago, except to reap the benefits.

The Liberal government did propose a few measures that we cannot argue with. No one is going to oppose the measure to reduce the wait time by one week. No one is going to oppose the measure to expand EI benefits to caregivers. Accessibility to EI continues to be the main problem. How is it that the government still has not introduced a measure to make this plan more accessible to the workers and employers who pay into it themselves?

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The government is telling workers it will deduct money from their paycheques to fund an insurance program for them. However, that insurance money goes back into the consolidated revenue fund instead of going to workers when they need it. We must fight this travesty with all our might.

With statistics like these, how can we stay positive when addressing Bill C-63? How can we keep things in perspective and square them with the Liberals' promise to cap wealthy CEOs' stock options, among other things? The Liberals said they would close this loophole that helped the richest get even richer, widening the gap. At the same time, absolutely nothing is being done for people at the other end of the spectrum, if only to ensure that minimum-wage workers get a decent wage that goes up to \$15 an hour, either immediately or over the coming years. Once again, we see that many of the measures put forward by the Liberals are not intended to help the middle class, but rather to help the well-off and the extremely well-off.

What about our motion on tax havens? The Liberals voted in favour of it. It is false to say that tax havens are such a massive and complicated problem that Canada cannot do anything about them unless it is part of a vast international community of like-minded countries. There are simple measures that we can start taking now. It is true that being part of an international coalition would help us go much further, but why wait until a coalition is formed? Why not take the lead?

This motion, which the Liberals voted for but did nothing about, included strong measures to tackle tax havens, such as tightening tax rules for shell companies. Instead, the Liberals attacked SMEs. There was also the proposed renegotiation of tax agreements that allowed corporations to repatriate profits from tax havens to Canada without paying tax. Instead, new tax havens were created under the Liberals. There was a proposal to put an end to penalty-free amnesty deals for individuals suspected of tax evasion. Those are simple measures that can be implemented here that produce results, perhaps not the next day, but in the short term. These measures would put money into the government's coffers that it could use to support the middle class that they always talk about, but have not defined.

What can we say about all this window dressing? Amending the Labour Code to provide a certain number of days of leave in cases of domestic violence, among others, makes the Liberals look good. This is unpaid leave, however. How can a victim of domestic violence take three days off if she cannot afford to do so? How can she take time off without raising suspicions and when she is already in a very delicate situation? This move looks good, but it will never solve the problem.

● (1250)

The same could be said of changes with respect to the environment. We welcome the geothermal credit, but an average family with a single-family home does not really have the means to invest in geothermal. That family might, however, appreciate incentives to help change their windows or upgrade their home's insulation. There are no accessible programs for middle-class people in this budget. The government has thrown some ideas at the wall, but none of them really stick.

[English]

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

Mr. Speaker, the member across the way made reference to tax evasion. Something about the New Democrats is that they have a tough time recognizing when the government has done good things. It has done so many good things. I do not have time to go through the list. I want to focus on the issue of tax evasion. In its first and second budgets, the Government of Canada has allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to deal with that issue. It is close to a billion dollars in total to hire the accountants to do all the work.

We are seeing results. We are working toward billions of dollars coming back in revenue. What would the NDP have done differently?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I was kind of picturing a stopwatch to see how many seconds it would take him to mention the \$1 billion we have been hearing about for months. What the NDP would have done, what the NDP will do, is set out in the motion the Liberals themselves supported.

One simple thing Quebeckers and Canadians want the government to do is crack down on KPMG-type schemes that enable people to walk off scot-free without having to pay any penalty whatsoever.

How come big firms that cheat the system can get off scot-free, but the CRA wastes no time making ordinary citizens who unintentionally make mistakes on their tax returns pay what they owe, naturally, plus interest?

Why the double standard? Why is there one set of tax rules for ordinary people and another for big businesses?

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. I also want to congratulate him on his comparison between Bill C-63 and Lotto 6/49.

[English]

I am sure my colleague hears just as clearly as the official opposition the Liberal claims of all the wonderful things they are doing for the Canadian economy and for the middle class. However, at the same time, they are taking money away from diabetics. They are taking money away from people with autism. Taxes have actually gone up on 81% of the Canadian middle class. At the same time, the current Liberal government is exporting half a billion dollars to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to build infrastructure in Asia, while postdating the cheques for Canadian infrastructure and having to re-profile fully \$2 billion in infrastructure commitments, because it cannot get the money out the door.

I wonder if my colleague could speak to the confused, dysfunctional priorities of the current Liberal government in spending Canadians' hard-earned tax dollars.

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•(1255)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I commend him on the quality of his French, and I encourage him to speak French more often in the House.

That being said, of all the things he mentioned, I would like to focus on the investments in an Asian bank. Last week, the government announced with great fanfare the national housing strategy, which provides for an investment of \$40 billion that we do not have, \$20 billion of which will likely come from the federal government. However, nothing will be done until 2019, because right now we have nothing but deficits and no real money. The federal government is hoping that the provinces, the private sector, and who knows who else will also put some money in the pot.

The Liberal government is all about image. On financing the Asian infrastructure bank, the government reached new heights of absurdity and duplicity when it said that the money that it will invest in that bank will also be counted as foreign aid. I almost lost it when I heard that. I cannot imagine which objective of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development the government could possibly meet by investing in an Asian infrastructure bank.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to speak to this bill relating to Canada's vibrant agriculture and agrifood industry.

This highly diversified sector is a major economic driver in Canada. It generates more than \$100 billion, or more than 6% of Canada's GDP, and employs one in eight Canadians.

Agriculture has shaped our nation and contributes to the health of Canadians and of the Canadian economy. We are talking about a powerful driver of job creation, growth and trade in Canada. The sector has evolved to become highly specialized, efficient and able to make remarkable progress in terms of crop yields and diversification.

We know that farmers play a key role in our economy, and that is why we want to be certain to take the appropriate actions, particularly regarding the new generation of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. That is also why this bill will ensure that the government does not change the tax measures aimed at helping family businesses grow, create jobs and innovate.

The Government of Canada is committed to supporting Canadian farmers by investing in the growth of the agrifood sector and in agricultural innovation.

On November 6, 2017, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, announced tax relief to assist farmers. Those measures included tax relief for farmers who received compensation under the Health of Animals Act for the mandatory destruction of their livestock following the outbreak of bovine tuberculosis in Alberta and Saskatchewan in 2016 and 2017. There was also the designation, for tax deferral purposes, of regions affected by flooding or drought in 2017, a measure that will help farmers renew their herds by allowing them to defer to 2018 part of the proceeds of their sales of breeding livestock in 2017.

The government also announced the continuation of the tax treatment that currently applies to cash tickets for deliveries of listed grains.

We want to see farm families succeed. That is why we are working so that all family business owners retain the ability to pass on the fruits of their hard work to the next generation.

As stated in the bill, the government plans to cut the tax rate for small businesses, from 10.5% to 9%, by January 1, 2019.

During the consultations, farmers told us about unexpected consequences. The government will not implement the measures related to conversion of income into capital gains.

Farm owners will continue to benefit from the lifetime capital gains exemption on farm property, up to \$1 million.

Over the coming year, the government will continue its awareness activities regarding proposals that facilitate the intergenerational transfer of businesses, while maintaining the fairness of the tax system.

Based on comments received during the consultations, the government plans to simplify the proposals related to income distribution. We were told that the proposed measures regarding the lifetime capital gains exemption could have unexpected consequences, particularly by preventing business owners from transferring their business to their children. As a result, the revised measures regarding income distribution, which will be released later this fall, will not contain any measures to limit access to the lifetime capital gains exemption.

Moreover, the government will follow up on the proposals related to passive investments, but will also ensure that farm owners have greater flexibility to allow them to save money for professional and personal reasons, including retirement.

•(1300)

We know that one of the best ways of optimizing return on investment is to help the next generation pursue a career in farming. As it expands, the sector needs more and more talented, dynamic and educated young people.

The government is resolved to help this new generation acquire the skills and support they need to obtain good, well-paid jobs, including in the Canadian agriculture sector.

The future is bright for this dynamic sector, thanks to global growth in the middle class, who want the products our world-class farmers and processors can offer. However, to continue to prosper, the sector must continue to attract young farmers, but many young people have financial barriers to overcome before they can take over the family farm or start their own farm business.

Government Orders

That is why the government, through Farm Credit Canada, has increased its support for young farmers through the loans available to young farmers, by doubling the amount of credit offered, from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Farm Credit Canada has also reduced the minimum down payment to 20% of the value of the loan, thus encouraging the purchase and improvement of farm lands and buildings. These are key resources that will help new farmers deal with the considerable expenses required to get into agriculture.

As part of the 2016 youth employment strategy, the Government of Canada created the agricultural youth green jobs initiative, a \$5.2-million investment that will help create 145 green jobs for young people in the agricultural industry.

Young farmers also play an important role in the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial agreement to invest \$3 billion in the advancement of this great industry over the next five years.

The partnership will focus on priorities critical to optimizing the sector's growth potential, including research, innovation, internal competitiveness and trade. The partnership is a solid foundation for the future of our great agricultural sector. It will build on our sound agricultural program, which includes the investments in science and innovation, trade, the environment, transportation and value-added industries announced in the 2017 budget. To stimulate the growth of agrifood trade, the budget set a target of \$75 billion in agrifood exports by 2025.

As the House can see, the government fully understands that it is in Canada's interest to encourage young people to opt for a career in agriculture.

The tax changes we are proposing will not increase tax rates for agricultural businesses. They will have no impact on farmers' ability to incorporate, invest or pay family members who work on the farm.

Lastly, the government's goal is to make sure that the next generation of farmers have the tools, resources and support they need to succeed.

The government knows that farmers play a key role in our economy, and we want them to prosper. We are committed to ensuring the vitality of Canada's agriculture and agrifood sector.

• (1305)

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I would also like to remind him that the government proposed its tax reform in July. In fact, the Liberals launched the consultation in July, when farmers were not at home, but in the fields working. Fortunately, the opposition managed to get the government to back down. If the tax reform had been implemented as proposed, no young person would ever have been able to take over the family farm, because it would have been more advantageous to sell the farm to a stranger than to one's own children.

Fortunately, I see that the government has reversed its position, thanks to the opposition, which did a tremendous job collaborating

with Canada's business community to ensure that 80% of the measures in the ridiculous tax reform were withdrawn.

I would like assurances from my colleague. The Liberals created a \$250-million fund to help producers. I hope they remember that the Conservative government set almost \$4 billion aside for compensation. We are talking about compensation under treaties with Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

Do the Liberals intend to increase the \$250 million earmarked for farmers?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We began consultations during the summer and we were also able to hear what producer organizations had to say. The goal of the exercise was to listen to producers and determine how we could help them. We are still currently holding consultations with owners who want to transfer their farms.

With regard to the \$250 million, I would like to remind my colleague that the Conservatives' \$4 billion or more was split between two agreements, namely the agreement with Europe and the trans-Pacific partnership, the TPP. The TPP involved access to not only the dairy sector, but also everything involving the poultry and feather industries. For the moment, the TPP has not been implemented. Our \$250 million still makes sense.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture talk about how the federal government is encouraging young people to get involved in agriculture, while the Liberals themselves voted against the bill introduced by our current House leader. Bill C-274 would have made it possible to transfer family businesses, especially in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. It would have made it more advantageous for farmers to transfer their land to their children than to strangers. They voted against it. They also said that they would compensate dairy farmers and cheese producers for the free trade agreements with the European Union. It took a single week for the entire \$250 million to be allocated. It was done during the summer on a first-come, first-serve basis.

We can easily imagine the number of farmers who converged on the Hill to meet with us and tell us how unfair and poorly thought out it was and that not all dairy farmers had been compensated.

How can the member opposite believe that opposing Bill C-274 and allocating such a small amount for compensation on a first-come, first-serve basis could encourage young people to get involved in agriculture?

• (1310)

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her two questions.

With respect to Bill C-274, we knew that we were going to consult people on the ground before passing anything about the transfer of farms. We are currently consulting to determine what will help them the most.

Government Orders

As for the \$250 million, we started with a first phase in which producers could apply for compensation. We received approximately 3,000 applications, but there will also be a second phase, since the \$250 million has not yet been allocated in its entirety.

There is therefore more to come concerning the remainder of the \$250 million.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in this place to speak today to Bill C-63, the Liberal government's budget implementation act.

The genesis of the today's debate is the move by the opposition yesterday to close down debate on the bill because the finance minister refused to answer questions during question period. Twenty-one questions were asked about his stocks to make certain that he was above reproach. He smugly refused to answer the questions, which is regrettable.

There are a number of times when Canadians, as well as members in this place, understand the direction a government takes. We understand that when the government gives us its throne speech, it is laying out what it wants to accomplish over its tenure. We know it is the same when it comes to a fiscal update or a budget.

Regrettably, Bill C-63 continues to attack our future prospects and amass more debt for future taxpayers to pay off. After the bill passes, and it will pass because the government is pushing it through, Canadians will see what the Liberals have actually done.

In the past election campaign, the Liberals told Canadians one thing and did something completely different when it came to their throne speech and their first budget. The Liberals promised there would be a small deficit of up to \$10 billion a year, and we now know that was simply not true. I very much question whether they had any intention of ever living up to that promise. Not only that, but the 2017 budget, which we are debating, also has no answer to the question of when Canadians can expect the government to balance its budget. The Liberals continue to refuse to tell Canadians when their big spending will stop and when debt reduction will begin.

In the last election, Canadians did vote for the Liberal Party and for small deficits. They believed that some investment by government to that degree was all right. However, Canadians in my constituency and across this country are concerned when they see a spend, spend, spend government that gives absolutely no indication as to when it will stop. The debt is continuing to grow.

Families, small businesses, the middle class and those struggling to join it cannot perpetually operate their households in the red. They cannot perpetually, year after year, continue to spend more than they have.

Millionaires and billionaires spend. They have no problem sometimes accumulating debt if they see that it will pay off in the end. They typically borrow money and know they will have to pay off that debt. We have a millionaire Prime Minister and finance minister who are having more fun now because they are borrowing money that the future generation will have to pay off.

Families cannot operate this way. When annual economic growth is moderate or high, families know they have to save for a rainy day,

but not the Liberals. The Liberals borrow money during prosperous times, and why not? It is not their money. They are borrowing money that other people will have to pay back, including my grandchildren.

Families scrimp and save because they know that things can happen that cost money. If the furnace breaks down, given the climate in this country, a new one must be purchased. That is when a family tries to find savings to pay off that furnace. Families do not borrow money to buy a new furnace with no intention of ever paying that money back, and yet the Liberal government has no plan to pay back the debt, no plan to get out of debt, no plan to stop overspending, no plan to balance the books, no plan to start paying down the accumulated national debt. The Liberal government continues to pay interest on the massive amount of money it has borrowed.

● (1315)

I was speaking to a Liberal member the other day who asked, why worry about the debt when interest rates are low? Interest rates are low. However, fiscal responsibility is what we expect from a government. If our mindset is "interest rates are low then why worry about it", what happens when the rates start to turn around? Is there a panic all of a sudden? The government does not panic because it will not have to pay for it.

The Liberals came up with the so-called "new tax bracket" to tax the top 1% of income earners. We know now that it did not work. In fact, less money came in than the revenues flowing before.

After the Liberals hiked the taxes on the rich, we found out that the rich or the top 1% of the income earners, many of whom are also job creators, are actually paying a billion dollars less in taxes per year than they had been. The middle class did not receive any of the revenues from the top 1% of income earners, because there were not enough revenues raised by hiking those taxes to pay for the programs and the services that the Prime Minister said that he was going to implement.

Since 2015, the Liberals have cancelled tax credits, raised CPP, and raised EI premiums. At the same time, the price of everything else for the average Canadian continues to rise, such as transportation, fuel, groceries, and rent. Very soon, all Canadians will be suffering under a new carbon tax. We have seen that in the throne speech. We have seen that in budgets. That carbon tax will not be used to reduce carbon emissions. Rather, it will be spent by the Liberals in Ottawa on their friends and pet projects.

What about jobs? The former government understood that we needed trade agreements and lower taxes. When we lower taxes, jobs are created.

Government Orders

The Liberals talk about their job creation achievements. To look at their record, 11 out of 12 jobs that are created are not in the private sector. They are in the public sector. More people work for both the federal and provincial government. It is unsustainable.

In Alberta, a lot of the new jobs came up in the public sector. Revenues from the private sector pay for jobs in the public sector. Revenues from public sector jobs do not create more jobs.

Still the Liberals say that there has been a two-third reduction this year in unemployment numbers. It is shameful. They do not talk about the fact that fewer people out there are looking for work. Statistics show that two-thirds of the unemployed in Canada have given up looking for a new job.

The Liberals are putting Canada second in the long-term goals of what our country should look at and investing in the wrong places. A good example of this is the decision by the Liberal government to invest in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. This system makes sure that taxpayers and their money take all of the risk when it comes to building infrastructure in Canada. The millionaire owner of a construction firm building an infrastructure will escape losing money if a bridge fails to generate revenues, because it is the taxpayer who will be on that hook.

What is worse is that the Liberal plan includes creating well-paying, middle-class jobs in foreign countries. That is the shameful part. It is not money invested here in Canada for jobs, but money invested in China and Pakistan and other nations in this infrastructure bank. That is where the jobs will be found and that is where the benefits will be created. The goal of this bank is not to create jobs here in Canada for middle-class Canadians.

It is easy to sign a cheque. The prime minister loves the signing. The government members may believe in an "A" for announcement, but if job creation is one of their goals, they get a "D" for delivery. Although they make the announcement, jobs are not happening in the country. This is where it will come back to bite us.

● (1320)

In Alberta, the Liberals have managed to complete 20-some out of 174 announced infrastructure projects. This is from a government that campaigned on infrastructure. That is shameful.

I see that I am out of time. I would have encouraged the government to say that we need more trade, we need lower taxes, we need to create jobs, we need to make certain that we live within our means, and that has not happened with the Liberal government.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to note that the parliamentary budget office released a report in October, the fiscal sustainability report, and noted that federal finances are actually sustainable in the long term, contrary to what the member has indicated.

The member mentioned the carbon tax coming into force. It is revenue neutral at the federal level, and the provinces will do what they will with the funds. B.C. will do something different from what Manitoba will do, which will do something different from what Nova Scotia do, perhaps.

Does the member not believe in market mechanisms, such as a carbon tax? Does he not believe in climate change? If he does believe in climate change, what does he propose as an alternative?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe in carbon tax. I do not believe that by taxing the average Canadian we are going to see much less emissions.

As far as climate change, I know that man-made climate change here in our country accounts for about 1.6% of emissions. The question is not whether we believe in climate change. The question should really be around how much money we are going to throw at 1.6% man-created emissions in our country.

I agree that we need to do what we can to make certain we have a clean environment, to lower emissions. However, it is not a carbon tax. I have seniors on fixed incomes walking into my office and asking which bills not to pay. We have seen the carbon tax and how it has affected our gas prices in Alberta. We live in a large, vast country where we must move goods and services across our country.

Fuel and heating oil is an absolute in this country. The government is attacking the very people who need it the most and who do not have it. Those are the ones who will feel a disproportionate hurt on their lifestyle because of what the government has done with its big tax plan.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, ultimately budgets are about choices. In his speech, the member alluded to the decision to send nearly half a billion dollars to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, but there is more.

We have a decision right outside these Parliament buildings to spend more than \$5 million on a temporary ice rink. There was a decision made to cover the Canada Post headquarters in a \$500,000 building wrap. It was also judged necessary to spend over \$200,000 on the budget cover.

I look at the situation that exists in my home province of British Columbia, where one in five children are growing up in households mired in poverty. I think about the missed opportunities when the government is prepared to spend that kind of money on some of these frivolous projects.

Could the member elaborate on what that says about the Liberal government's true intentions, and about the missed opportunities to really help Canadians who desperately need it?

● (1325)

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about a couple of areas that he believed were massive wastes of money. Certainly I would agree.

I have individuals in my constituency coming up to me and saying, "Kevin, tell me it isn't so, \$5.9 million on a hockey rink on the front lawn of our Parliament building. Tell me it isn't so. How long is the rink going to be up?" It is going to be up three or four weeks. They ask, "How long did it take to build?" It was months. They want to know, "How many people are going to skate on this rink?"

Government Orders

My constituency is predominantly a rural riding, and \$1 million is a lot of money to help some smaller community with a rink that is going to be there for decades and decades. Again, we have a government that loves the photo op, that loves the idea of something new and innovative, a rink on Parliament Hill.

We had \$200,000 budget covers, smiley, glossy budget covers. It does not dress it up. Something this ugly cannot be dressed up. The budget was so bad. It could be asked if that \$200,000 did its job; the answer is no.

The OECD came out in the past few weeks, warning the developed world of high household debt. I think this goes back to expectations of our government. Canada is at the top of the list, above the United States, China, Korea, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, France, Germany, the whole list.

The household debt of Canadians is scary. There is nothing that addresses this issue in our budget. This has always been a fear in Canada. It is time the government awoke to the true threats in our economy. It is time it wakes up, but it just keeps hitting the snooze button.

The Deputy Speaker: I can see abundant interest in participating in questions and comments. I will do my best to fit everybody in, but, of course, it depends on how long members take for their interventions, which I would ask them to keep to a minimum.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to follow a seasoned parliamentarian, who was actually the second-in-command to the minister of finance in the Conservative government, which, through the worst recession, paid down \$40 billion and then came out of it faster than any other nation, not by coincidence but by management, and actually gave the government across the road a surplus. That is quite amazing.

However, we cannot forget the election. The group across the way campaigned by saying they were going to have a little \$10-billion deficit, which is how they described it, and Canadians bought into it. That is democracy, folks. That \$10-billion deficit is now over \$20 billion. I mentioned that to folks in my rural riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, which does not often deal with billions of dollars.

Let me provide an example of the Liberal government being irresponsible, disrespectful, and incompetent. Let us say I am a small business guy who has a project, I want to increase my business, and I go to the bank with my business plan, saying I need \$1 million. After I make my plea, my lender tells me I have the money for my project. Eight weeks later I go back to the bank, saying I am going to start the project, everything is in order, but I now need \$2 million. The bank wants to talk about the changes and I say there actually are no changes, it is just that I did not know what I was talking about in the first place and I now want to increase what I previously asked for by 100%. In the real world, that does not happen. When I walk out through the door of the bank, it would hit me in back.

What happens when the Liberal government has a budget that is incompetent in terms of its projections and irresponsible in terms of what it has done to taxpayers? The banker is now every taxpayer in

Canada. That is only the tip of the iceberg. We now have a Minister of Finance and a Prime Minister who are in an elite group. I actually get a kick out of it. Do members remember when they said they were going to take that little deficit from the top wealthiest 1% and spread it among the working class? I think they call it the middle class. We, in our places, actually work. They said it would save taxpayers \$2 billion. That worked out well. They took that off the top, did not get the revenues they wanted, and shafted taxpayers for about \$3 billion. That is the irresponsibility and incompetence of the Liberal government, which says one thing and does not actually know what it is going to do.

Earlier, my colleague mentioned another great investment, the Asian infrastructure bank, in which we are going to spend \$480 million, though we are not sure. We are going to send it to Asia. Liberals have this love affair with China, so I am assuming it is going to possibly go to Beijing, where it can build its infrastructure with Canadian tax dollars.

● (1330)

I know that the folks across the aisle met last week, as I did, with members of the municipal governments in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities who come from rural areas. Rural infrastructure is important, with our vast amount of roads, bridges, and rail that need to be looked after. I do not know what the number is, but what is amazing is not the amount of money that has gone out but the amount of money that has not gone out. We have talked a lot about infrastructure. The new infrastructure plan is a bit like the new housing strategy. When is it going to take effect?

We hear that housing is really important. We hear that we have desperation in public housing, and we need to deal with it quickly. That is what the municipalities talk about. The years 2020 to 2021 meet the urgency panic button. This is 2017. That is four years down the road, by the way. I suspect it will make a good election platform in the next election in the fall of 2019.

Similarly, with respect to infrastructure, most of that has been moved past 2019 into 2020. That happens to be after the election, so it will make another good election platform, I guess. What is happening in our rural municipalities across this country and in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex is a lack of actual dollars to partner with our municipalities that need a partner. In Ontario, our third partner has sort of disappeared in the red tape of Ontario, much like where the Liberal government has taken Canada.

We are now worrying about where we will get the money for the infrastructure, because it is not flowing. They talk about it, but when we talk about something, and I go back to my earlier discussion about businesses going to the bank, we actually have to manage it. We need to have a business plan on how to put it out.

Government Orders

In my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, agriculture is the main industry. It is the driver of the economy in Ontario, and I might say the driver of the economy, quite honestly, in this great country of Canada. The Liberals came out with what they called the new growing forward 2 agriculture program, and they added a couple of things to it, such as a public trust and money to actually help processors, because we need to vertically integrate this great industry of agriculture from top to bottom, and in this case, from the bottom up. I agree with those.

As a country based in agriculture, we need to make sure that we grow the safest and best products. Just ask anyone in international trade about our agricultural products. We always provide quality. We need to make sure that we have public trust on our side so that people understand what great products we produce in Canada. Because we are great producers, we export a lot. We also process much of the product we have. Where is the money to help do this? The Liberals added two or three components to the Canada agriculture program, but where is the money for it. The Liberals said they would have to shift some around, which means everyone is going to get less, or it will be just like infrastructure, with spending in the earlier part, and maybe even housing. They are just going to talk about it, but they are not going to put any money into it. They might talk about the money going into it in five years. By then, Canadians will be hopeful that they are no longer in government and that the Conservatives will be able to do it.

My time is running out. All I can say to the folks in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and across this great country, is that Bill C-63 is a disaster, and I will simply not be supporting it.

• (1335)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by correcting the record on a few fronts. Although I enjoyed the hon. member opposite's opinions, they were not necessarily based on fact. I note that as part of the national housing strategy, there is money actually being spent today that was allocated in budget 2016. It is going to things like the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society in my riding. With respect to infrastructure, projects are being built today in my community, putting people to work. The accounting issue he mentioned, the gap of \$2 billion, is merely how funds are allocated, because they are paid out when funds come in.

He also indicated that during the last government, they managed their way out of a recession. He said that they were the best in the G7. Going into the last election, in 2015, we were the only G7 country that was facing a recession again. Was it the \$55-billion deficit they ran in 2008-09? Was it the \$150 billion over 10 years?

If he is going to use those facts, will he at least acknowledge that the deficits being run under our government are leading to unprecedented growth and to job creation that we have not seen in a decade?

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, 94% of announced infrastructure projects have failed to start. That is really moving forward.

Let us talk about jobs. We actually talked about jobs in committee this morning. We talked about a number of things. One of them was Phoenix. The shipbuilding procurement program was another.

In my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, what is the driving indicator? It is small and medium-sized businesses. Is that not interesting? It is one job in 11. Eleven jobs out of 12 are not private. They are in the government. Who drives the industry?

Across the aisle, they always talk about how important small businesses are for job creation. They give one of 11 the credit for saving the jobs of the other 11.

• (1340)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would comment on what the budget does in terms of helping those trying to join the middle class and those in the middle class, who the government is always talking about, when the income tax provisions proposed in the budget do not give any breaks at all to the people who are really in the middle class, those making \$45,000 a year or less. It does nothing to go after the really big fish, the people who are putting their money offshore in the tax havens in Barbados and the Cook Islands we heard about in the paradise papers. I wonder if he could comment on that complete lack of priorities on the part of the government.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, members might remember the tax reform that came out in the middle of the summer and ended just before we came back in the fall. That was small business tax reform. It should have been called “shaft the small business people”, because that is what it was all about. The Liberals made some retractions after they were caught. Do members remember capital gains?

However, they did great things for themselves, especially the leaders, such as the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister. They wanted to make sure that those at the very top were sheltered. In fact, what we have heard is that those in the very elite top are now paying \$1 billion less in tax a year. However, the middle class they talk about, which I call “working individuals”, are now paying \$840 more than they were before the Liberal government came to power.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, coming back to the matter of trust and confidence that every Canadian taxpayer must have in the finance minister of the day, as Canadians had in the legendary Jim Flaherty, confidence that has been shaken by this finance minister, with his conviction for non-disclosure, his crash divestment of shares, and his contribution to charity after he was caught, I would like to ask my colleague to explain again to the Liberals why our continuing questions are so important, particularly under the legislative guillotine of time allocation we are seeing with this important bill brought forward by the minister, Bill C-63.

Government Orders

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, it is irresponsible. It is disrespectful, quite honestly. We have the second-most powerful individual in the country under investigation. In fact, he was charged and had to pay a fine, because he would not disclose the things that all of us had to. He had an administrative oversight and forgot to mention his villa in France. We do ourselves a disservice by not being honest and upfront. We wonder why people call politicians crooked. It is because we sometimes are not forthright about what we do and what we say. Jim Flaherty was declared the best finance minister in the world. We need that back again.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder where I should begin my speech about Bill C-63. I do not necessarily want to repeat what I already said at second reading. Today, we are at the report stage. I was lucky enough, if you really want to call it lucky, to be the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Finance. I had the honour of being a very involved, even proactive, participant in the study of the bill in committee.

This huge bill required all of our attention during its final weeks in committee and I wanted to report on how things progressed. I also wanted to report on how the Liberals behave in committee.

It seems that they just plug their ears. When we hear witnesses about a bill, and the witnesses are in general agreement on an issue, it seems that by the end of the process the Liberals have not heard anything. They are practically deaf.

They look at their notes and stick to the guidelines they were given on how to vote on amendments. Even if they can hear as well as I do—I do want to give them the benefit of the doubt, as they are obviously not deaf—when it comes time to vote on the NDP or Conservative amendments, they seem to have completely forgotten what they heard from the witnesses.

I will give a few examples. In the bill, significant amendments were made to the Canada Labour Code to add leave for various reasons. The first types of leave added are for indigenous cultural practices. I moved a very simple amendment, which would ensure that indigenous peoples are consulted about their practices. I must say that in addition to the list of indigenous cultural practices already included in the legislation, which are accepted and which employers will also have to accept, the Governor in Council may make regulations to add other practices. We said that indigenous peoples needed to be consulted first and that this obligation had to be put into the bill. This was rejected. However, it was very clear that this was needed. The Liberals rejected this amendment.

We welcome the initiative of leave for family violence in the Canada Labour Code, but it is for 10 unpaid days. Several witnesses who came before the Committee found that this did not make any sense. How can a victim of family violence be told that she can simply get out of her family violence situation, take unpaid leave and everything will be quickly worked out. Come on.

It defies logic that someone could take unpaid leave to get out of critical and vulnerable situations like those. We tried to amend the labour code to turn it into paid leave, but the Liberals refused to listen to the witnesses and experts who said that it would take at least paid leave.

The same thing is true for family-related leave. Family responsibilities are very important today. Often, both parents work. Family responsibilities can vary widely. The government was proposing three types of leave, again unpaid. Experts agree that it made sense to give paid leave. That is what we proposed. We even proposed five days of paid leave and the Liberals refused that proposal as well, for reasons that they cannot even explain themselves. They simply voted against the proposal without giving any explanations. It is from the opposition, so it surely is not good.

We tried to amend the bill so the leave could be taken in blocks of less than a day. It is very clear, in the bill, that employers can require that employees take a full day of leave or more. Leave related to family responsibilities or family violence may only be for two hours. Nevertheless, for the Liberals, that is out of the question. The leave must be one day or more. They again refused our proposed amendment.

We put forward other amendments on other topics in Bill C-63 that have been extensively discussed. There was the one regarding the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

● (1345)

In addition to the Conservatives' amendment aimed at reducing the allocation to the government's poorly designed and misguided bank to zero, we attempted, even though we knew that the government would reject our amendments, to make the process more transparent. Given that most experts were opposed to the bank since, in their opinion, there would be no real return on the investment for Canadians, we asked the Liberals to have the finance minister report to the House on the money invested in the Asian infrastructure bank for each project, so that Canadians would know exactly where their money had gone and which infrastructure project in Asia they had financed.

In my opinion, the Minister of Finance has a strong obligation to be transparent. We are being asked to spend up to \$480 million Canadian dollars on this infrastructure bank. Canadians are being asked to invest all this money in a bank, and they are not even being given information about what their money is being used for.

In Asia, there are many diverging interests, and officials who are at the very least questionable will probably benefit from that bank. That is why we asked questions about the transparency of the bank's accountability mechanisms. Unfortunately, once again, the Liberals closed their eyes and plugged their ears, and refused another amendment, one that made sense. It was not to prevent the bank from existing; it would simply have made it possible to obtain transparency for Canadians, which is a bare minimum.

Statements by Members

Bill C-63 also covers another topic, the sharing of cannabis revenues. This topic is in the news and the sharing of revenues is highly contested by the provinces, as we know. The Minister of Finance began to hold preliminary consultations at one point and the provinces were adamant: equal sharing is not acceptable. Most of the responsibilities related to the legalization of cannabis fall to the provinces. It was therefore sensible, in our opinion, to include an obligation in the law setting forth transfers and taxation mechanisms.

The minister should have been required to consult all his counterparts to come to an agreement before being able to set up this type of cost sharing. Once again, the Liberals rejected this sensible amendment that would have prevented the minister from pursuing an approach that imposes the Liberals' way of seeing things onto the provinces.

After the preliminary discussions, the minister made a more definitive proposal on splitting the proceeds from cannabis legalization equally. The cities and provinces are categorically against the idea. They know full well that they will have to bear the full burden, that they will have to change their own regulations in their own laws and in their own jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the federal government is being stubborn and simply does not respect the provinces.

That being said, the Minister of Finance's fingerprints are all over the more than 300 pages of Bill C-63. Today we know how he divested himself of his shares in his company, of which he was still a shareholder when he introduced this new legislation on taxing individuals and corporations. Once again, in this bill, we get the impression that the Liberals want to protect their own interests.

The Minister of Finance left his mark throughout this bill. We might wonder whether he is working for himself or for Canadians, but this bill makes it clear that he is working for himself and that is why I am voting against it.

I hope that all my colleagues will join me in voting down Bill C-63 at report stage.

● (1350)

[English]

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I are thinking along the same lines as far as this budget is concerned. I certainly do not want to call it a fiscal plan, because it is far from that. Obviously, we disagree

I could ask all kinds of questions on this. The previous speaker from Crowfoot in Alberta talked about the budget document, and I think he called it a piece of crap. I would never do that. They talk about the \$200,000 cover with which they tried to cover up this document.

The way they would say it back in my riding is that people spread manure all the time, so they fill up the spreader with horse manure, and they can cover it with a tarp, but the bottom line is that the spreader is still full of horse manure. Could the member comment on that?

● (1355)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I really like the image my colleague used to describe the government's bill.

As we have seen, a number of governments have tried hiding various things in bills. That is what is happening here. The government is trying to hide things in Bill C-63 that it does not want Canadians to know too much about. It does not want to give Canadians a lot of details. A good example of something the Liberal government is trying to hide is the \$480-million investment in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

If Canadians had \$480 million to spend on growing the economy, and if we were to ask them whether they would rather spend that money in Asia or in Canada, I am sure that the vast majority of Canadians, if not all of them, would say that the money should be spent in our economy here at home.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sherbrooke for his speech. I have just one question.

My colleague touched on a number of subjects, but he did not say a word about all of the good things in the budget. That really worries me when I think of the people in his riding and other ridings represented by opposition members.

In my riding, Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, 15,700 children receive the Canada child benefit every month. That is phenomenal. It adds up to \$5.2 million per month.

I wonder if my colleagues can tell us how many children in their own families receive the Canada child benefit.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure which part of the bill my colleague was referring to when he mentioned the Canada child benefit.

I am not sure whether my colleague read Bill C-63. What I do know is that nowhere in the bill is there any mention of the Canada child benefit. I do not know why the member is asking me a question about that today. If my colleague is wondering why I did not talk about it in my speech, he should read the bill we are debating here today. Then he will know why I did not mention the Canada child benefit.

I nevertheless thank my colleague for his question.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

CIVIL LAW

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec culture, its institutions, values, and traditions are all too often ignored by Ottawa. Federal official bilingualism means English first and French if possible. The French language is far too often given second-class status. The same goes for civil law. Canada has two legal systems: common law, in the British tradition, and the Civil Code, in the French tradition.

Statements by Members

Between now and Christmas, the Prime Minister is going to appoint a new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. For the past 18 years, the chief justice has been trained in the common law tradition. It is time to put the Civil Code, with its traditions and perspectives, back in its rightful place at the top of the highest court in Canada.

There are two legal systems, just as there are two official languages. It is time for change. It is only natural, as it will bring a critical balance. That is why we insist that the Prime Minister appoint a francophone judge from Quebec who is also trained in civil law.

* * *

• (1400)

[English]

MACDONALD, DETTWILER AND ASSOCIATES

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a great Canadian success story.

MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates is a multinational communications and information company in Richmond, B.C. with a long-standing partnership with the Government of Canada. For over 30 years, MDA developed technologies that allowed Canada to be a world leader in space.

Do people know that B.C. engineers mapped the globe before NASA did in the 1960s? Do people know that the Canadarm was developed at MDA? Do people know that MDA provided the initial platform for Google Maps through RADARSAT-1 and RADARSAT-2, and is the world's leading supplier of radar earth imagery?

Today, thanks to the CASIA project, MDA offers world-class data dissemination and collection.

Recently, MDA acquired the U.S. company DigitalGlobe, a leading optical satellite imagery provider. With an impressive track record in the delivery of space technology, this would secure MDA's and Canada's dominance globally in radar remote sensing, surveillance satellite communications—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

* * *

BRITISH COLUMBIA WILDFIRES

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my community experienced one of the worst wildfires in British Columbia's history this past summer. Although our community came together like never before, we are now facing many challenges with cleanup and recovery.

My constituents are counting on the government to help us with quick responses for those who have had their lives destroyed by fire. However, I have had a number of individuals who are facing capital gains taxes, because they were forced to log and salvage the lumber on their property, which was destroyed by the wildfire. They are looking for an interpretation from the Canada Revenue Agency, because they have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to repair the grounds and their fences.

In spite of the request that went to the Canada Revenue Agency many weeks ago, we are still lacking a response. They are waiting for answers. They need to know the policy. They need to know if consideration will be given.

I would ask the government, respectfully, to recognize the suffering of the fire victims and respond immediately to this query.

* * *

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Ontario government recognized each November as Hindu heritage month. All month, Hindu Canadians have been celebrating their heritage all across the province of Ontario.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the contributions the Hindu community has made in Canada. We should be proud of its contribution in building a stronger, more diverse nation, in fields ranging from science, education, law, politics, and sports.

It is worth mentioning that in my riding of Brampton East, we have five Sikh gurdwaras, four Hindu temples, three mosques, and two churches. This is a clear example of how diversity is our strength and how we are achieving the Canadian dream in Brampton East.

I want to acknowledge the Hindu community's rich heritage. I hope members can join me in celebrating the multicultural fabric that makes our country the greatest country in the world.

Happy Hindu heritage month.

* * *

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today and tomorrow, Parliament votes in a historic secret ballot vote to unblock my abandoned vessel legislation.

A yes vote would mean yes to over 50 coastal communities from Tofino to Fogo Island that endorsed my Bill C-352; yes to the 23,000 letters my supporters sent Liberal MPs this week; yes to standing with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, Ladysmith, Victoria, Oak Bay, Stz'uminus First Nation, and many more local governments that built this legislation with their solutions; yes to filling all the gaps in the transport minister's new bill, like dealing with the backlog of abandoned vessels; yes to co-operation across party lines to solving long-standing oil spill problems, which is something all Canadians want to see; and yes to restoring the one chance I get as a member of Parliament to bring legislation to the House.

Statements by Members

I ask members to please answer this united call for action. Vote yes and allow coastal community voices to be heard.

* * *

DICK'S JAMBOREE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about a decade ago, Mr. Dick Bristol, a small businessman in Amherst, Nova Scotia, launched Dick's Jamboree.

The jamboree has been a weekly event in Amherst, featuring artists from all over the area. It has been more than entertainment; it has been truly a social event, where people meet and enjoy each other and local talent.

Dick and Carol have arranged special jamborees for people with disabilities and brought out some incredible talent that nobody knew was there. Dick's Jamboree never charged admission, but it did accept donations. Every single cent was donated to good causes.

For many artists, it was their first chance, and maybe only chance, to perform in front of a live audience. Every year the jamboree had a Christmas party and ensured that everyone who attended had a meal, a gift, and a great memory.

Dick has now retired the jamboree, but to Dick, his wife Carol, and his sister Betty, on behalf of Rosie and I, and all of Cumberland County area, our sincere thanks for the years of incredible generosity and very hard work. We thank Dick and Carol.

* * *

● (1405)

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the contribution of Calgarians in my riding who are bringing the community together during this festive season. We will have floats, parade bands, and Santa Claus to delight the crowds, as well as hot chocolate and coffee to warm frosty hands. During the outdoor fun and the indoor Christmas markets, there is something for everyone.

Among many others are the Millican-Ogden Christmas Craft Fair; the McKenzie Lake Community Association - Children's Christmas Carnival; the Auburn Bay Parade of Lights; the Auburn Bay Christmas Party; the Cranston Residents Association—North Pole Express & Food Drive; the Cranston Christmas Festival of Lights; the McKenzie Towne Council—Kids' Christmas Party; the New Brighton “Brighton” up your home contest; the New Brighton Christmas at the Clubhouse; and the Copperfield & Mahogany Community Association—Outdoor Winter Festival with Santa.

Christmas is a time to give. We stand shoulder to shoulder in times of hardship, but also in times of celebration. I extend my thanks to all the volunteers and organizers. It is not quite a Macy's Parade in New York City but we are getting real close.

In gratitude, I wish all my constituents a merry Christmas and a darn good show.

MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, truly humbled and grateful. Two years have passed since the people of Mississauga—Erin Mills placed their trust in me to represent them in this place.

In these two years, under the leadership of our Prime Minister and our Liberal government, my team and I have served over 1,800 constituents with their issues; knocked on over 5,000 doors to hear directly from Canadians; created 800 new jobs; brought in over \$5.8 million in new federal investments; met with hundreds of constituents and stakeholders; and stayed connected with residents through thousands of emails, and attending over 500 community events.

I have spent the past two years doing what I am so passionate about, but as our Prime Minister says, “Better is always possible.” In the next two years, I vow to do better and be better for my constituents and for this beautiful democracy that is our Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

OUTAOUAIS DAIRY CO-OPERATIVE

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have more good news. Gatineau produces the best milk in the country. Laiterie de l'Outaouais is a dairy co-op in Gatineau, a co-operative of workers and consumers that has made a name for itself in the Outaouais region and elsewhere thanks to its exceptional products. This delicious milk is available at 300 retail outlets, for those who want to try it.

This morning, I had the pleasure of announcing \$382,000 in financial assistance from the Government of Canada so that the dairy can purchase new equipment and develop new products that will be promoted under the new “Notre lait — Our Milk” brand. We support the dairy industry, Outaouais region farmers, employees, and our communities.

* * *

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Christmas is a holy day where families come together to share love, happiness, and stories. In Beauport—Limoilou, thousands of families will get together to celebrate Christmas. This Christmas season, I look forward to welcoming hundreds of people from Beauport—Limoilou to my office in Quebec City to celebrate the arrival of Christmas and the new year. My Christmas party will take place on Wednesday, December 20 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and I invite everyone from Beauport—Limoilou to come out and meet me and my family, share their concerns, talk about politics, or just have a good time. Santa Claus himself is even expected to make an appearance for the little ones.

I would like to wish everyone in Beauport—Limoilou and all Canadians a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. Thank you and merry Christmas to everyone.

*Statements by Members**[English]***AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA**

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Agricultural Institute of Canada is meeting with members of Parliament from all over Canada. The AIC is Canada's voice for agricultural research and innovation and a world leader in conservation of Canada's land through science.

For 97 years, first as a Canadian Society of Technical Agriculturists, later named the Agricultural Institute of Canada, this great Canadian institution has served farmers by providing credible information for the Canadian agriculture and agrifood sector.

● (1410)

[Translation]

The AIC works hard to help farmers, academics, and industry stakeholders by advocating for and disseminating agricultural research. The AIC offers a variety of programs relating to agricultural accreditation, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and professionalism and ethics.

[English]

I encourage all members to attend the AIC reception later today in Room 238-S, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., either before or after they attend the reception at square drill hall.

* * *

HATS ON FOR AWARENESS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 28 years ago, Giovanni Tiberi lost his battle with depression and, after his death, his daughter Enza pledged to learn more about mental health, hoping to prevent such heartbreak for other families.

Enza and Benny Caringi co-founded Hats On For Awareness.

[Translation]

This organization fights against the stigma of mental illness by raising public awareness and helping people who are dealing with mental illness or addiction.

[English]

To this date, this exemplary organization in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge has raised more than \$625,000 through its annual Hatsquerade Gala.

[Translation]

This year marked its 9th anniversary.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in congratulating the team and dedicated volunteers at Hats On For Awareness.

[English]

Let us put a hat on to raise awareness about how we can better address the mental health issues that affect us all, our loved ones, our workplaces, and our communities.

LONDON ABUSED WOMEN'S CENTRE

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Saturday, November 25, kicked off the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. That is why today, I would like to stand and pay tribute to the London Abused Women's Centre for all of the work it does in the community of London and surrounding area.

The London Abused Women's Centre provides assistance for women and children over the age of 12 who have been exploited through prostitution and sex trafficking, abused by their partners and/or exposed to sexual harassment.

It is not just about the centre, but truly the people who work there. Led by my incredible friend, Megan Walker, the team offers informed counselling, advocacy, and support in safe, non-crisis, nonresidential settings.

Throughout the month of November, its campaign, "Shine The Light", is in full gear to raise awareness of violence against women by turning cities, regions, and counties purple for the month of November. Purple is a symbol of courage, survival and honour, and symbolizes the fight to end women abuse.

We stand in solidarity with these young women and girls and with the London Abused Women's Centre to end gender violence.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the unemployment rate for recent immigrants was 11%, while Canadian-born people had an unemployment rate of just 5%. That is a significant discrepancy.

If we truly want Canadians to build successful lives in Canada and join the ranks of the middle class, we must make it easier for immigrants to get their education and credentials recognized. This is why I was pleased to announce in my riding on Friday that our government is providing \$573,000 to the College of Dental Technologists. This project will help internationally-trained dental technologists find jobs by shrinking the licensing process by three months. That is a significant amount of time for a newcomer eager to join the workforce in Canada.

We know that Canada is at its best and most prosperous when all Canadians have a real and fair chance at success. I am proud that our government is supporting newcomers by ensuring—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

* * *

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, education is the leading determinant of health and wellness and is also the key to breaking the cycle of poverty. Child poverty is something that affects every riding in the country, and in my riding we have levels that double the national average.

The Canada learning bond program helps to lift children out of poverty and gives them a chance at a better life. We are inspired by the leadership of Vancouver Island University president Dr. Ralph Nilson and his team for their work in registering children of low-income families in this important program, but we still have more work to do.

I call on community groups and volunteers to follow the lead of the VIU, as only a fraction of eligible children have been registered for this incredible program. I urge the government to increase its funding for these local initiatives and make it easier to register children into this program so we can create a path to health and prosperity for low-income families. One child living in poverty is one child too many.

* * *

• (1415)

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year the conviction of Travis Vader on two counts of second degree murder was vacated after the trial judge applied a section of the Criminal Code that had been found to be unconstitutional all the way back in 1990, and yet there it was still in the Criminal Code 26 years later. After waiting six years for justice, the McCann family was obviously devastated by the vacated convictions.

In March, the Minister of Justice introduced Bill C-39 to see the removal of constitutionally inoperative sections from the Criminal Code. Yet eight months later, the minister has done absolutely nothing to move Bill C-39 forward and absolutely nothing to see that what happened to the McCann family never happens again. It is time for the minister to stop the delay and pass Bill C-39.

* * *

[Translation]

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, I was in Louiseville—and here I want to acknowledge the member for Berthier—Maskinongé—to participate in our government's announcement about expanding high-speed Internet access to our rural regions, in collaboration with the Quebec government.

Our governments announced \$290 million to connect our communities, and more than 100,000 families will benefit. This is great news for all rural regions of Quebec.

Within a few weeks, I will be able to give details about what this means for Brome—Missisquoi. I want to thank Robert Desmarais, director general, Arthur Fauteux, retired reeve, and all the mayors of Brome—Missisquoi for their tireless work on this file.

Special thanks are due to Réal Pelletier, the former mayor of Saint-Armand. I am grateful for Réal's commitment and passion. I also want to thank the member for Tobique—Mactaquac, who is the chair of our rural caucus, and my friends, the members for Hastings—Lennox and Addington and Laurentides—Labelle, as well as our colleagues in all parties for their indefatigable work on the issue of high-speed Internet access.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CSIS warned the Liberal government all the way back in 2015 that returning ISIS fighters were a continuing and real threat to Canada. It warned that Canadian citizens were recruited by ISIS “[not] because they needed more foot soldiers...but because they want to teach the Westerners to take the struggle into every neighbourhood and subway back home.” ISIS specifically trained Canadian fighters to come back here and terrorize our community, and the Liberals have known about it for over two years.

Why is the Prime Minister so focused on reintegration services and not putting these people in jail?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government, like all governments, takes extremely seriously the safety of Canadians, and that is why everything we do is focused on keeping Canadians safe. We know that a society that is safe is one in which we are using a broad range of tools to keep Canadians safe. Yes, we have enforcement, surveillance, and national security tools that we use to a significant degree, but we also have methods of de-emphasizing or deprogramming people who want to harm our society, and those are some of the things we have to move forward on.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister who is de-emphasizing Canadian security, and Canadians are tired of it. It was Conservatives who amended the Criminal Code to make it an offence to leave Canada to fight for ISIS. It was Conservatives who were focused on giving our law enforcement new tools to prosecute ISIS fighters. The Prime Minister is using a broad spectrum that includes poetry and podcasts, and all kinds of counselling and group hug sessions.

When will the Prime Minister take the security of Canadians seriously and look for ways to put these ISIS fighters in jail?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party learned nothing from the last election and the lessons Canadians taught them. They ran an election on snitch lines against Muslims, they ran an election on Islamophobia and division, and still they play the same games, trying to scare Canadians. The fact is we always focus on the security of Canadians, and we always will. They play the politics of fear, and Canadians reject that.

Oral Questions

●(1420)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody voted in the last election to elect a government that would be so focused on the rights of ISIS terrorists, people who watch soldiers burned alive in cages, people who sell women and girls into slavery. When people like that come home, they do not need to spend time writing haikus; they need to spend time in jail.

When will the Prime Minister take this seriously?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton and others on his side will come to order.

An hon. member: What about that side?

The Speaker: Order. When it comes to the same level, or anywhere near it, I will say so.

The hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we can see that Stephen Harper's Conservative Party is alive and well. They are doubling down on the same approaches they had in the last election, the same approaches that Canadians rejected. I wish them luck.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given the cloud of ethical scandals that seem to grow worse every day, I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Does he still have confidence in his finance minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them on the wealthiest 1%. He delivered on a Canada child benefit that is helping nine out of 10 Canadian families and reducing child poverty by 40%. He strengthened the CPP for a generation with a historic agreement with the provinces. He has lowered small business taxes to 9%. He continues to focus on the things that matter to Canadians and he has our full confidence.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he was fined by the Ethics Commissioner for hiding offshore corporations, he is under investigation by the Ethics Commissioner for introducing pension legislation that benefited himself and his family, and he has been misleading Canadians as to whether he actually divested himself of the shares he owns, and now questions are being raised about the sale of \$10-million worth of Morneau Shepell shares just days before he introduced tax measures that would drastically affect the market.

I have one quick question for the Prime Minister. Can we expect his finance minister to deliver the next budget?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people who are watching question period, perhaps for the first time, across the country. The fact is that it is an opportunity to talk about substantive issues of the time that affect Canadians in terms of policy. The members opposite choose to go with personal attacks.

A handy way of evaluating if those personal attacks are baseless or groundless is whether the members opposite are willing to repeat them outside this House where there is no parliamentary privilege. What we see here is Stephen Harper's party, through and through.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has asked the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to launch another investigation into the Minister of Finance and the suspicious sale of Morneau Shepell shares in November 2015. If the commissioner decides to open an investigation, it will be the fourth investigation of members of this government, including two involving the Minister of Finance and one involving the Prime Minister.

In his mandate letter to the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister stated, "...the arrangement of your private affairs should bear the closest public scrutiny."

When will the Prime Minister follow the rules that he himself established?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I feel rather bad for the opposition members because we are managing a growing economy for the middle class, providing families with benefits that make a huge difference, and launching a national housing strategy that is being praised across the country.

We are not giving opposition members many reasons to criticize our actions. They feel they need to make personal attacks, and that is truly unfortunate for our democracy, our government, and our country.

●(1425)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it strange that the Prime Minister is telling me that quoting from his own mandate letter to the Minister of Finance constitutes a personal attack.

I think that what the Prime Minister should do is what he himself said when he was in opposition. In 2013 he said:

Canadians deserve leaders who tell the truth.

Leaders take responsibility when things go well but also when things go wrong.

Why is the Prime Minister of 2017 not listening to the member for Papineau of 2013, not assuming his responsibilities, and not coming clean with Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has demonstrated a level of transparency, openness, and accountability that was completely unheard of during the days of the former government.

We will continue to work with the Ethics Commissioner. We will continue to answer all the questions. We will continue to show that we are working hard every day to remain worthy of the trust that Canadians have put in us.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is said by a man who is under investigation by the Ethics Commissioner.

The definition of insider trading is “the use of undisclosed material information for profit”. Here are the facts. The finance minister told the *National Post* he sold \$10 million in Morneau Shepell shares in December 2015. Six days later he introduced a tax change that would have lost someone selling \$10 million in shares half a million dollars. Just minutes ago, the finance minister refused to tell reporters if it was he who in fact had sold those shares.

Given all of this, how can the Prime Minister still have confidence in his finance minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not exactly blame the NDP for not remembering the 2015 election. It was a pretty bad one for them. However, we were very clear throughout the entire campaign that we were going to lower taxes for the middle class and raise taxes on the wealthiest 1%. That is exactly what we did.

The NDP have some theory about non-disclosure. It simply does not apply. We have anchored ourselves in telling people what we are going to do, and are doing it. It is working. We have the strongest growth in the G7 because of our finance minister and because of the plan.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, telling people what they will do and actually doing it is ironic, because if the finance minister had actually done what he told people he was going to do and had put his things in a blind trust, none of this would be an issue. The Prime Minister's instructions to the finance minister was that he “must avoid conflict of interest, the appearance of conflict of interest and situations that have the potential to involve conflicts of interest.”

The finance minister has failed to live up to that standard, and because the Prime Minister has failed to enforce the standard, we had to once again write the Ethics Commissioner. If all of this is not a conflict of interest to the Prime Minister, what exactly is?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this minister, like all members of this House, worked with the Ethics Commissioner exactly to avoid any conflicts like this. The Ethics Commissioner exists above the back-and-forth of Parliament to ensure that people are following the rules and that mistakes are not made. That is exactly the job that she has been fulfilling, and that is exactly where Canadians can be reassured that, despite the personal attacks of the members opposite, the Ethics Commissioner is being followed.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: in December 2015, the Minister of Finance still owned thousands of shares in Morneau Shepell. On November 30, 2015, someone just happened to sell 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares worth \$10 million. On December 7, one week later, the minister introduced tax measures that resulted in a 5% drop in the stock market, allowing this individual to make half a million dollars.

Given that the Minister of Finance owned Morneau Shepell at that time, can he tell us who sold these shares?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times in the House for the member's benefit, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner and has always followed her recommendations. If he wants other facts, I can give him some. For example, real GDP growth was 1.6% during the 10 years they were in power. That is the worst performance since Mackenzie King. Average annual employment growth was 1%, the worst since the Second World War. He wants other facts, so here they are: growth was 3.7% last year, the best growth in the G7 for Canada. In addition, 500,000 jobs were created in the last two years, and there was a 40% drop in child poverty. That is the work our government has done.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians want is simple answers to simple questions. If the minister has nothing to hide, all he has to do is answer this question. A week before he introduced tax measures affecting his own company, someone sold a block of 680,000 shares worth \$10 million, neatly sidestepping a \$500,000 loss when the stock market dropped.

Here is the simple question. He owned the company. Can he tell us who sold that block of 680,000 shares?

● (1430)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps my colleague would benefit from being reminded that the tax measure he referred to is a tax increase for the wealthiest 1% and a tax cut for nine million Canadians. Our plan to do that was the worst-kept secret in town, because it was one of our campaign promises, and we keep our promises. Our promises have enabled Canada to achieve the highest growth in the G7 and have given some breathing room to families that need it, and I am very proud of that.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member says that the tax change was promised. So was electoral reform; so was the \$10-billion deficit that suddenly became \$20 billion; and so was the tax on stock options that never happened. Promises mean nothing. Motions in the House of Commons move markets, and only the minister knew when he would introduce that motion and was able to predict what impact it would have on stock markets.

Someone sold 680,000 shares prior to the introduction of that motion, saving a half-million dollars. Who was it?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner, who is responsible for preserving the integrity of Parliament. That duty does not fall to the opposition, which seems to consider itself judge and jury. It is up to the Ethics Commissioner, who acts impartially and with integrity. We have confidence in the Ethics Commissioner.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday John Ivison indicated that he received some documents showing that the sale of the 680,000 shares by the minister would have happened on December 3. December 3 would be the settlement date for a sale that would have happened on November 30. We know that such a sale occurred by somebody, and that somebody avoided a five per cent drop in Morneau Shepell shares, which happened after he introduced his motion.

Can the minister confirm that he was the one who sold that block of stock?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ever since he took office here in Ottawa, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner. He made sure he acted on her recommendations, including her advice to set up a conflict of interest screen. He announced that he had sold all of his shares in Morneau Shepell and that he was putting all of his assets in a blind trust in order to continue the important work he does for Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now we are back to “everything was done with the Ethics Commissioner”. I wonder if the minister told the Ethics Commissioner that he was going to sell \$10 million of shares in stocks that would drop only a week later when he introduced a bill affecting the entire stock market.

I will ask that question directly. Did the minister discuss the date of the sale of the shares along with the date of his motion on taxes?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night I had the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion with this particular opposition member, and I noticed that he was very careful not to repeat any of the allegations he is making here outside this chamber. If they are as justified as he claims, I invite him to repeat them outside this chamber.

What I can say is that the tax measures he is referring to raised taxes for the wealthiest 1% and cut them for nine million Canadians. This was a promise we made during the election campaign, and I am very proud of it.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right: we did do a panel yesterday, at which point, outside of the walls of this House, I asked when the Minister

of Finance sold his 680,000 shares in Morneau Shepell. I also enumerated all the facts leading up to that sale, and I am absolutely confident that everything I have said out there and in here is true. Would he commit that, if I go out and repeat my question in the lobby at this moment, the finance minister will meet me there and answer the question?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I ask members not to bang on their tables. Applause is permitted, but not banging on their desks. Members should know that, on all sides.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the member misunderstood my response. I asked if he was prepared to repeat the allegations, not the questions. He knows exactly what allegations he made yesterday in the House.

I can assure everyone that the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner.

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[English]

MEDIA INDUSTRY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that more than 30 local and community newspapers across the country will be shut down. The heritage minister has been talking the talk about the news industry crisis. She had options, yet she did nothing to prevent this disaster. Now she is saying she will study the issue, but with no action, frankly, there will not be much left to study.

How can she sit back and do nothing as nearly 300 people lose their jobs? What will the minister say to her colleague the member for Orléans and his constituents when *Orleans News* shuts down?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I am disappointed to see that Postmedia and Torstar decided to close these local media a month before Christmas. My thoughts are with the workers and their families.

These are cynical business decisions that were taken by Postmedia and Torstar, and it is up to these companies to explain them. As for local newspapers, Canadians value them, and of course, as government, we will continue to provide our support to the local media.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): If I were the hon. member for Orléans, I would not feel very reassured.

Mr. Speaker, if we needed another alarm to alert us to the crisis in the news industry, we heard it yesterday with the announcement that some 30 local newspapers will be shut down, resulting in the loss of almost 300 jobs. This should come as no surprise, since we have been talking about this issue for years, and there have been several reports on it.

Oral Questions

Everyone warned the minister about the coming crisis, and she was offered turnkey, tangible solutions. The ship is sinking, yet the Liberal band continues to play as though nothing were wrong. I think I have seen that movie, and it did not end well.

Is the minister ever going to take measures to help this industry, or is she going to wait until there are no newspapers left before she wakes up?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I am disappointed that Postmedia and Torstar made this decision a month before Christmas. Of course my thoughts are with the workers and their families.

These are cynical business decisions that were taken by Postmedia and Torstar, and it is up to these companies to explain them. The government will continue to support local media. We are investing \$75 million a year and will continue to do so.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert not to speak when he does not have the floor.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the Prime Minister said that his government is transparent, accountable, and trustworthy. Those are his words. This is a good opportunity to prove it.

On December 7, the Minister of Finance introduced a tax policy that had a direct impact on the stock market and resulted in a 5% drop in the share price of his own company, Morneau Shepell. However, 680,000 shares had been sold a few days earlier on November 30, saving someone half a million dollars.

To prove that he is transparent, accountable, and trustworthy, could the Prime Minister tell us if the person who sold those shares was the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always been transparent with the Ethics Commissioner, who is responsible for safeguarding the integrity of Parliament. He followed her recommendations, and he will continue to do so and to work with the Ethics Commissioner.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know that the minister sometimes forgets things. For two years, he forgot that he owned a villa in Provence. Now, he seems to have forgotten who sold 680,000 shares in his company, worth \$10 million.

Just now, referring to the Minister of Finance, the parliamentary secretary said, and I quote: “he sold all his shares”.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell us when the Minister of Finance sold all his shares?

• (1440)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times in the

House, all members and all ministers are expected to work with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that the rules governing us are followed.

That is exactly what the Minister of Finance did as soon as he arrived in Ottawa. He announced that he was putting all his assets in a blind trust and that he was divesting himself of his remaining shares in Morneau Shepell. He also announced that he was donating to charity any difference in the value of those shares since the election.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the finance minister has been pretty busy lately sorting out his ethical lapses, and raising taxes on Canadians while sheltering his own from taxes. His mind has been pretty preoccupied. Maybe that is why yesterday he could not quite remember what he did in November 2015. However, 24 hours have passed and I am hoping the Prime Minister may have spoken with his finance minister.

Can the Prime Minister tell us if the finance minister sold 680,000 shares in Morneau Shepell in November 2015, yes or no?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, as I have already said, has been working with the Ethics Commissioner from the very beginning of his term. She is the one responsible, far from the partisanship that sometimes drives us in the House, to ensure that the rules and the highest standards of integrity are followed. The Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner and will continue to do so.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in November 2015, someone sold a whole lot of Morneau Shepell shares and in the process saved a whole lot of money. Either the finance minister does not know who sold them, knows who sold them and it was not him, or knows who sold them and it was him. It is one of three answers. It is very simple. There should be no more threats from the Liberals. I do not think they are in any position to threaten us. They should just answer the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member already knows, the person responsible for enforcing the highest standards of integrity in the House is the Ethics Commissioner. It is with the Ethics Commissioner that the Minister of Finance has always been fully transparent by giving her his full co-operation to ensure that the rules are followed. That is what is expected of all members and all ministers, and that is what the Minister of Finance has always done.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the past few months, there have been more than 60 cases of opioid overdoses in Montreal. The crisis has even reached Laval, where at least 10 more overdoses have occurred. The crisis is only getting worse across Canada.

Oral Questions

For a year now, the NDP has been calling on the Liberal government to treat the opioid crisis as a national emergency, so that communities in need can access more resources.

With seven people dying every day, what is this government waiting for to declare that the opioid crisis has become a national emergency?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is deeply concerned about the opioid crisis in Canada. We have taken several emergency measures on this issue, including significant federal investments, a new law, and expedited regulatory action.

Going forward, we will be working with the provinces and territories to expand access to treatment, support innovative approaches, and respond to this crisis. We will fight against the stigma of opioid use.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, devastating news out of Alberta reveals a 40% increase in opioid deaths this year and Canada will lose 3,000 lives in 2017.

Families affected by this crisis are growing dismayed by the Prime Minister's glacial response. In fact, Moms Stop the Harm has started the "Do Something Prime Minister Photo Campaign" by sending photos of lost loved ones to the PMO.

The Prime Minister has ignored our call to declare the opioid crisis a national public health emergency. How many more Canadians need to die before he finally listens?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the tragic impact of the opioid crisis that has faced our country. We remain committed to taking action through this compassionate, collaborative, and evidence-based approach. I also had the opportunity to meet that group when I was in Edmonton last week.

Formal declarations of an emergency will not provide us with any additional tools or extra measures to provide to the opioid crisis. Our government will continue to work with all partners to address this crisis and the underlying cause of problematic substance use.

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POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have tried to score political points with their so-called support for free speech at post-secondary institutions, yet there has not been a word from the Leader of the Opposition after a group was prevented last week from showing a pro-choice documentary on a university campus. It seems like he is only in favour of free speech when it is an opinion he agrees with.

Could the Minister of Science please tell the House what our government's position is on this important issue?

•(1445)

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker our government is committed to creating open spaces for Canadians to debate and express their views. We also firmly support a woman's right to choose. In a free society, we may disagree with a person's

views but we must defend the right to hold them unless those views promote hate.

The opposition leader's silence suggests he will only stand up for free speech if it is politically convenient. We cannot cherry-pick on free speech.

The Speaker: All members could show a little respect for free speech by not interrupting when someone else has the floor.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Morneau's office confirmed to the *National Post* that someone sold more than 680 shares—

The Speaker: Order. I would remind the member that he must not refer to other members by name. I would ask him to continue without doing this.

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Mr. Speaker, the minister's office told the *National Post* that someone sold 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares in November 2015 at \$15 a share, which allowed that person to save half a million dollars.

My question is simple. Was that person the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner. He has always said that he was completely transparent with her in disclosing his assets, following her recommendations, and upholding the highest standards of integrity. He will always work with the Ethics Commissioner.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that the minister works with the Ethics Commissioner. If that is true, did he ask the Ethics Commissioner for permission before selling 680,000 shares in his family company, which allowed him to make a \$500,000 profit, since the value of those shares dropped by 75¢ seven days later?

Did the Minister of Finance inform the Ethics Commissioner of his intention to sell his company shares in November 2015, yes or no?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always been transparent in his dealings with the Ethics Commissioner by following her recommendations, including setting up a conflict of interest screen, which she thought was the best possible measure of compliance.

As the member for Beauce knows, the minister announced that he would go the extra mile by divesting himself of the rest of his shares in Morneau Shepell and placing all his assets in a blind trust.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I tried asking the minister inside the House of Commons if he sold 680,000 shares on November 30 and now I invited him to come and answer that question outside the House of Commons. The House will be disappointed to learn that he did not show up to answer the question, so will the Prime Minister answer it on his behalf?

Who was it who sold 680,000 Morneau Shepell shares one week before tax measures were introduced on the floor of the House?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the Minister of Finance always worked with the Ethics Commissioner. He will continue to do so, but I do appreciate the opportunity to talk about the tax measures that were announced in December 2015, which fulfilled a commitment that we made during the election campaign, namely to raise taxes for the wealthiest 1%.

I know that it is a fairly strange idea for the opposition party, which focused on giving tax breaks to the wealthy during the 10 years they were in power. We cut taxes for 9 million Canadians, and we introduced the Canada child benefit to reduce inequality in this country. This is a record that I am proud of.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, somebody avoided paying the higher taxes that the finance minister imposed by selling those 680,000 shares before those measures took place. Someone sold those shares before the new tax measures were tabled in this House of Commons. It was either the minister, and he does not think there was anything wrong with that, or it was not the minister, and he could just say that.

We have repeated everything that was said in the House outside the House. The Liberals have refused to answer questions in the House or outside. Will the Prime Minister answer the question, who sold those shares in December?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1450)

The Speaker: Order, order. I am sure we will hear about some things later on.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased with the question from the opposition member, who has given me the opportunity to talk about this tax measure that he is referring to. What is this tax measure? It is to raise taxes for the wealthiest 1% and to cut them for 9 million Canadians, and it is the Canada child benefit that we have made more progressive than ever. Under the Conservatives, not only was it taxable, but it was also sent to all families, regardless of income. We have introduced more fairness into our tax system to give more to those families who need it the most, and I am proud of that.

*[English]***PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the phoenix shows no signs of rising from the ashes. The problems continue.

Now we learn there is no way to assess whether programs to prioritize the hiring of Canada's veterans are working. The government knew about this. It made promises, but still cannot claim an increased number of veterans in the public service because it has no way of knowing if, or how many, veterans have been hired.

When will the government show veterans and public servants the respect they have earned, and fix the Phoenix problems?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there are many who have suffered under Phoenix system, and veterans are certainly some of those.

We are doing our level best to identify those who have been affected, and we are asking some of them to come forward. It does make it difficult, because we do need a head count on these individuals. However, I can say that these officials are working diligently on the matter. We ask those veterans who have not come forward and who have been affected by Phoenix to please do so, and we will do our level best to help.

[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning in committee, the deputy minister responsible for fixing the Phoenix fiasco said that IBM did not make any mistakes in creating and implementing the pay system. On the contrary, the company merely did what it was asked to do. In other words, all the blame lies with whoever is managing the project, namely this government.

If the government did not know what it was doing when it implemented Phoenix, how can we expect it to fix this disaster? It is time to work with the real experts: our public servants and unions.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure everyone that resolving this situation is my top priority.

People deserve to be paid properly and on time. When the previous government irresponsibly treated this project as a cost-cutting measure instead of the complex, enterprise-wide business transformation that it was, it set the project up to fail and exposed it to enormous risk. We are currently taking steps that the previous government did not take.

Oral Questions

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government promised a client-focused CRA, and all we have so far are tax increases on type 1 diabetics, half-baked plans for taxes on retail employees, misinformation, and busy signals.

Now there are reports that the CRA is auditing single moms and telling them to get expensive separation agreements, and then telling that it is not good enough, and withholding their child benefits.

When will the minister stop attacking ordinary, honest Canadians who are just trying to comply, and receive the credits and benefits to which they are entitled?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am dedicated to ensuring that Canadians, especially the most vulnerable, get the benefits they are entitled to. That is a key part of my mandate. The CRA has never set out to make life more difficult for anyone. We realize that some people cannot provide all of the information needed for the agency to review their files. People grappling with situations like that should contact the CRA for help.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am assisting a single mom with three kids who has provided independent third-party letters and even a restraining order to prove to the Canada Revenue Agency that her ex-spouse no longer lives with her. Worse yet, CRA has said that until her ex-cooperates with her, she will have her Canada child benefit withheld.

The government is being heartless, and I am hearing increasing numbers of cases of similar stories. When will the minister instruct her officials to quit making life more difficult for Canadian single moms?

• (1455)

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am dedicated to ensuring that Canadians, especially the most vulnerable, get the benefits they are entitled to. That is an absolutely key part of my mandate. I can assure my colleague that the CRA does not withhold the Canada child benefit for want of a spouse's signature. I want to emphasize that the CRA would not require potential beneficiaries to communicate with an abusive spouse.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Speaker: I urge the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola to remember that the time for debate is when one has the floor, and there are a lot of opportunities in this House for debate.

The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the report of the Liberal dominated Standing Committee on National Defence is clear: the Royal Canadian Navy is vulnerable and does not have a resupply capability on the high seas. Costs are skyrocketing and delivery times are getting longer. Not one vessel has been delivered. The Liberal government is incapable of providing a delivery date.

What are the Liberals waiting for to immediately award the contract for the *Obélix* to the Lévis shipyard, as we did with the *Astérix*? This is about national security.

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the navy is in the midst of the most comprehensive fleet modernization since peacetime in history. As part of the national shipbuilding strategy and under 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 vessels that will provide core replenishment, sealift capabilities, and support to our operations offshore.

This government is committed to building new ships for the navy and to maintain Canada's naval capabilities over the long term.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that Canadians have the skill and experience needed to work in today's economy. There are many well educated students graduating, but the common concern I hear from those in London North Centre is that they are unable to get their feet into the workforce without any work experience. This is a large gap that we must act to fill so as to ensure graduating students are successful.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development please explain what he is doing to ensure that our graduates are ready for the workforce?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his support for education and students.

As the member well knows, our government supports lifelong learning. We support work-integrated learning, which is why we invested \$221 million to create more workplace opportunities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and in business programs.

This investment will create 10,000 paid internships for Canadian students from coast to coast to coast. This is about creating good-quality jobs for students for today and tomorrow.

*Oral Questions***CANADIAN HERITAGE**

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the front lawn of this building is a \$5.6 million example of the Liberals' outlandish abuse of taxpayers' dollars.

The Prime Minister commissioned this arena, and it will be open for a very short period of time. The public is only going to have access for 45 minutes, which, quite frankly, is going to be a bit of a relief, because according to the rules, all one is allowed to do is go around, around, and around.

How can the Prime Minister justify this expense that will be on the backs of our grandchildren and children?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to announce last week that the Canada 150 rink will be open through the 40th anniversary of Winterlude and until the end of February. This will be a great legacy project, a first in front of Parliament Hill. Afterward, the rink will be given to a community in need. There will be hockey, ringette, sledge hockey for children and adult men and women, and many other activities. Thousands of Canadians will enjoy the delights of this great rink.

I invite my colleague to put on her skates. It will be a pleasure for me to go and skate with her.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would remind colleagues we are not on a rink here.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite the Liberals' promises, several hundred pyrrhotite victims have not been compensated. Furthermore, several hundred more do not even have a hope of obtaining compensation. They are caught in a grey area as they do not qualify for assistance because the federal standards for aggregates used in concrete are vague.

Since the entire Mauricie community has been asking for this standard to be reviewed for years, how can the government revise the building code and refuse to review the standard for pyrrhotite content in concrete?

• (1500)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He will remember that in the Trudeau government's first budget we included \$30 million for the victims, \$10 million a year—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The member may be referring to the Government of Canada, but I do not believe that he is referring to another era, and we must not use the name of other members in this place.

The hon. Minister of International Trade has the floor.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to remind members that it was the current Minister of Finance who put \$30 million in the first federal budget for compensation for pyrrhotite victims in Mauricie. When we speak with the victims, it is obvious that they are aware that the government is acting in their best interests.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Surrey—Newton has many small and medium-sized businesses that trade with India every day.

BI Pure Water, a Surrey-based business that focuses on clean tech, was part of the trade mission led by the Minister of International Trade to India earlier this month. Businesses like this benefit greatly from trade missions where they meet with companies to build stronger relationships.

I ask the minister to update the House on his—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Surrey—Newton for the great work he is doing in his riding. We had 175 participants, 85 small and medium-sized businesses, and 300 meetings over five days in five cities. I was honoured to lead this historic mission, the biggest Canadian trade mission to India.

During our mission, Canadian companies got to showcase their talents and expertise in various sectors like innovation and clean tech, while making numerous new connections. We will continue to have an ambitious trade agenda and make trade work for people.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with \$5.6 million how many outdoor skating rinks could we renew across Canada to get young children and their families to skate for the next 25 years?

Instead of fuelling this Prime Minister's boundless egocentrism, why did this Prime Minister and the Minister of Canadian Heritage not consider investing all that money into several skating rinks. Instead of skating on just one temporary outdoor rink to the tune of \$5.6 million for the sake of a photo op on New Year's Eve—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I announced that the Canada 150 skating rink will remain open until the end of February for the 40th anniversary of Winterlude. This great legacy project, a skating rink in front of Parliament, is a first and the skating rink will be donated to a community in need, as my colleague said.

Routine Proceedings

There will be hockey games, ringuette, and sledge hockey for young and old, men and women alike. Thousands of people are expected in front of Parliament. I hope that my colleague will join me for the Canada 150 celebrations.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government supported our motion that deplores the loss of 800 jobs at the Davie shipyard, but it is not doing anything more. Quebec's labour minister has said that someone needs to wake up and make sure that the shipyard gets what it is entitled to. Forty Quebec Liberals are asleep at the switch on the other side of the House. It is all well and good to deplore the loss of 800 jobs, but it seems all the government is doing is shedding crocodile tears. This week, another 350 jobs will be lost.

Does the government care? Is it going to do something?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the excellent work of Davie employees. Over the past few weeks, our government has been in contact with Davie shipyard executives and the unions. The company has presented a bid, and we are in discussions.

Since 2011, the government has invested over \$7 billion in the Canadian shipbuilding industry, including \$717 million in Quebec, as part of the national shipbuilding strategy.

• (1505)

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while other shipyards in Canada are unable to turn out a ship, Davie delivers the goods. Yesterday, the Minister of National Defence said he had already ordered two more supply ships to meet the navy's needs. The problem is that Seaspan cannot start building them until 2023 and cannot deliver them until 2027. It will take 10 years to get the ships that Davie could build and deliver by 2019.

Why is the government refusing to award contracts to Davie when this is the only sensible solution?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, the navy is currently in the midst of the most comprehensive fleet modernization in its peacetime history. Work is under way on the two joint supply ships that Seaspan is building. Because of some of the delays, the interim ship was required, and we thank Davie for its tremendous work in filling this interim capability gap.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Al Hawkins, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; and the Honourable Randy Delorey, Minister of Health and Wellness and Minister of Gaelic Affairs from the Province of Nova Scotia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I also draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the south gallery of the recipients of the 2017 Governor General's Literary Awards: Oana Avasilichioaei, Serge Bouchard, Cherie Dimaline, Véronique Drouin, Louise Dupré, Julie Flett, Jacques Goldstyn, Christian Guay-Poliquin, Richard Harrison, Hiro Kanagawa, David Alexander Robertson, Joel Thomas Hynes, and Graeme Wood.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Pursuant to the order made on Monday, November 20, 2017, I invite the representatives of each party in the House to make a statement.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

LGBTQ2 CANADIANS

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest choices a person can make in their life is the choice to serve their fellow citizens. Maybe it is in government, in the military, or in a police force. In whatever capacity one serves, dedicating your life to making Canada, and indeed the world, a better place is a calling of the highest order. Imagine, if you will, being told that the very country you had willingly laid down your life to defend does not want you, does not accept you, sees you as defective, sees you as a threat to our national security, not because you cannot do the job or because you lack patriotism or courage, but because of who you are as a person, and because of who your sexual partners are. Imagine being subjected to laws, policies, and hiring practices that label you as “different”, as “less than”. Imagine having to fight over and over again for the basic rights that your peers enjoy. Imagine being criminalized for who you are.

This is the truth for many of the Canadians present in the gallery today, and many more listening across the country. This is the devastating story of people who were branded as criminals by the government, people who lost their livelihoods, and in some cases their lives. These are not the distant practices of governments long forgotten. This happened systematically in Canada, with a timeline more recent than any of us would like to admit.

Today we acknowledge an often overlooked part of Canada's history. Today we finally talk about Canada's role in the systemic oppression, criminalization, and violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit communities. It is my hope that in talking about these injustices, vowing to never repeat them and acting to right these wrongs, we can begin to heal.

Routine Proceedings

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Today, we acknowledge an often overlooked part of Canada's history. Today, we finally talk about Canada's role in the systemic oppression, criminalization, and violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit communities. It is my hope that in talking about these injustices, vowing to never repeat them, and acting to right these wrongs, we can begin to heal.

Since arriving on these shores, settlers to this land brought with them foreign standards of right and wrong, of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and of suitable and unsuitable partnerships. They brought rigid gender norms, norms that manifested in homophobia and transphobia, norms that saw the near-destruction of indigenous LGBTQ and two-spirit identities. People who were once revered for their identities found themselves shamed for who they were. They were rejected and left vulnerable to violence.

[*English*]

Discrimination against LGBTQ2 communities was quickly codified in criminal offences like buggery, gross indecency, and bawdy house provisions. Bath houses were raided. People were entrapped by police. Our laws bolstered and emboldened those who wanted to attack non-conforming sexual desire. Our laws made private and consensual sex between same-sex partners a criminal offence, leading to the unjust arrest, conviction, and imprisonment of Canadians.

This criminalization would have lasting impacts for things like employment, volunteering, and travel. Those arrested and charged were purposefully and vindictively shamed. Their names appeared in newspapers in order to humiliate them and their families. Lives were destroyed, and tragically, lives were lost.

[*Translation*]

This did not end in 1969 with the partial decriminalization of homosexual sex. Up until 1988, a twenty-year-old gay man who had sex with another man could still be convicted of a crime.

The imprisonment and criminalization of LGBTQ2 individuals was not the end of it. Other methods of oppression have been rampant throughout our society for generations. Homophobia during the time of the AIDS crisis generated hysteria and propagated fear of gay men.

Books and magazines were stopped at the border under the guise of obscenity offences and customs regulations, the content, words, and images deemed unacceptable. LGBTQ2 families have had to fight their own government for the right to benefits and the freedom to marry, often at great personal cost.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Over our history, laws and policies enacted by the government led to the legitimization of much more than inequality. They legitimized hatred and violence and brought shame to those targeted.

While we may view modern Canada as a forward-thinking, progressive nation, we cannot forget our past. The state orchestrated

a culture of stigma and fear around LGBTQ2 communities and in doing so destroyed people's lives.

A purge that lasted decades will forever remain a tragic act of discrimination, suffered by Canadian citizens at the hands of their own government. From the 1950s to the early 1990s, the Government of Canada exercised its authority in a cruel and unjust manner, undertaking a campaign of oppression against members and suspected members of the LGBTQ2 community. The goal was to identify these workers throughout the public service, including the foreign service, the military, and the RCMP, and persecute them. The thinking of the day was that all non-heterosexual Canadians would automatically be at increased risk of blackmail by our adversaries due to what was called "character weakness". This thinking was prejudiced and flawed.

Sadly, what resulted was nothing short of a witch hunt. The public service, the military, and the RCMP spied on their own people inside and outside of workplaces. During this time, the federal government even dedicated funding to an absurd device known as the "fruit machine", a failed technology that was supposed to measure homosexual attraction. Canadians were monitored for anything that could be construed as homosexual behaviour, with community groups, bars, parks, and even people's homes under constant watch.

When the government felt that enough evidence had accumulated, some suspects were taken to secret locations in the dark of night to be interrogated. They were asked invasive questions about their relationships and sexual preferences. Hooked up to polygraph machines, these law-abiding public servants had the most intimate details of their lives cut open.

Women and men were abused by their superiors and asked demeaning, probing questions about their sex lives. Some were sexually assaulted.

Those who admitted they were gay were fired, discharged, or intimidated into resignation. They lost their dignity and their careers, and had their dreams and indeed their lives shattered.

[*Translation*]

Many were blackmailed to report their peers, forced to turn against their friends and colleagues. Some swore they would end their relationships if they could keep their jobs. Pushed deeper into the closet, they lost partners, friends, and dignity. Those who did not lose their jobs were demoted, had security clearances revoked, and were passed over for promotions.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Under the harsh glare of the spotlight, people were forced to make an impossible choice: their career or their identity. The very thing that Canadian officials feared, blackmail of LGBTQ2 employees, was happening. However, it was not at the hands of our adversaries. It was at the hands of our own government. The number one job of any government is to keep its citizens safe, and on this we have failed LGBTQ2 communities and individuals time and time again.

It is with shame, sorrow, and deep regret for the things we have done that I stand here today and say we were wrong. We apologize. I am sorry. We are sorry.

For state-sponsored systemic oppression and rejection, we are sorry. For suppressing two-spirit indigenous values and beliefs, we are sorry. For abusing the power of the law and making criminals of citizens, we are sorry.

● (1520)

[Translation]

For government censorship and constant attempts to undermine your community-building, for denying you equality and forcing you to constantly fight for this equality, often at great cost, for forcing you to live closeted lives, for rendering you invisible, and for making you feel ashamed, we are deeply sorry. We were so very wrong.

[English]

To all the LGBTQ2 people across the country, whom we have harmed in countless ways, we are sorry.

To those who were left broken by a prejudiced system, and to those who took their own lives, we have failed you.

For stripping you of your dignity, for robbing you of your potential, for treating you as though you were dangerous, indecent, and flawed, we are sorry.

To the victims of the purge who were surveilled, interrogated, and abused, who were forced to turn on their friends and colleagues, who lost wages, lost health, and lost loved ones, we betrayed you. We are so sorry.

To those who were fired, to those who resigned, to those who stayed at a great personal and professional cost, to those who wanted to serve but never got the chance because of who you are, you should have been permitted to serve your country, but you were stripped of that option. We are sorry; we were wrong.

Indeed, all Canadians missed out on important contributions you could have and would have made to our society. You were not bad soldiers, sailors, or airmen and airwomen. You were not predators. You were not criminals. You served your country with integrity and courage. You are professionals. You are patriots. Above all, you are innocent. For all your suffering, you deserve justice and you deserve peace.

It is our collective shame that you were so mistreated. It is our collective shame that this apology took so long. Many who suffered are no longer alive to hear these words, and for that, we are truly sorry.

To the partners, families, and friends of the people we harmed, for upending your lives and for causing you such irreparable pain and grief, we are sorry.

● (1525)

[Translation]

As we apologize for our painful mistakes, we must also say thank you to those who spoke up.

To those who pushed back when it was unpopular and even dangerous to do so, to people from across the country, from all walks of life, and of all political stripes, we stand here today in awe of your courage, and we thank you.

[English]

We also thank members of the We Demand an Apology Network, our LGBTQ2 apology advisory council, and the Just Society Committee of Egale, as well as the individuals who have long advocated for this overdue apology.

[Translation]

Through them, we have understood that we cannot simply paint over this part of our history. To erase this dark chapter would be a disservice to the community and to all Canadians.

We will work with the academic community and stakeholders to ensure that this history is known and publicly accessible.

[English]

We must remember, and we will remember. We will honour and memorialize the legacy of those who fought before us in the face of unbearable hatred and danger.

It is my hope that we will look back on today as a turning point, but there is still much more work to do ahead of us. Discrimination against LGBTQ2 communities is not a moment in time, but an ongoing centuries-old campaign. We want to be a partner and ally to LGBTQ2 Canadians in the years going forward. There are still real struggles facing these communities, including for those who are intersex, queer people of colour, and others who suffer from intersectional discrimination.

Transgender Canadians are subjected to discrimination, violence, and aggression at alarming rates. In fact, trans people did not even have explicit protection under federal human rights legislation until this year.

[Translation]

Mental health issues and suicides are higher among LGBTQ2 youth as a result of discrimination and harassment, and the homelessness rates among these young people is staggering.

There is still work to do on blood and organ donation, and the over-criminalization of HIV non-disclosure. The government needs to continue working with our partners to improve policies and programs.

That said, there are important and significant changes coming. The repeal of section 159 of the Criminal Code is working its way through the House of Commons.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

I am proud to say that earlier today in the House we tabled the expungement of historically unjust convictions act. This will mean that Canadians previously convicted of consensual sexual activity with same sex partners will have their criminal records permanently destroyed.

Further, I am pleased to announce that over the course of the weekend we reached an agreement in principle with those involved in the class action lawsuit for actions related to the purge.

Never again will Canada's government be the source of so much pain for members of the LGBTQ2 communities. We promise to consult and work with individuals and communities to right these wrongs and begin to rebuild trust. We will ensure there are systems in place so these kinds of hateful practices are a thing of the past. Discrimination and oppression of LGBTQ2 Canadians will not be tolerated anymore.

● (1530)

[Translation]

With dialogue and with understanding, we will move forward together, but we cannot do it alone. The changing of hearts and minds is a collective effort. We need to work together, across jurisdictions, with indigenous peoples and LGBTQ2 communities, to make the crucial progress that LGBTQ2 Canadians deserve.

[English]

Canada's history is far from perfect, but we believe in acknowledging and righting past wrongs so we can learn from them. For all our differences, for all our diversity, we can find love and support in our common humanity.

We are Canadians and we want the very best for each other, regardless of our sexual orientation or our gender identity or expression. We will support one another in our fight for equality, and Canada will stand tall on the international stage as we proudly advocate for equal rights for LGBTQ2 communities around the world.

To the kids who are listening at home and who fear rejection because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, and to those who are nervous and scared but also excited about what their future might hold, we are all worthy of love and deserving of respect.

Whether you discover your truth at six, 16, or at 60, who you are is valid.

To members of the LGBTQ2 communities, young and old, here in Canada and around the world, you are loved and we support you.

[Translation]

Canada gets a little bit stronger every day that we choose to embrace, and to celebrate, who we are in all our uniqueness.

We are a diverse nation. We are enriched by the lives, experiences, and contributions of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit.

● (1535)

[English]

To the trailblazers who have lived and struggled and to those who have fought so hard to get us to this place, thank you for your courage and thank you for lending your voices. I hope and I know that you look back on all you have done with pride. It is because of your courage that we are here today together reminding ourselves and each other that we can and must do better.

For the oppression of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit communities, we apologize. On behalf of the government, Parliament, and the people of Canada, we were wrong. We are sorry. We will never let this happen again.

[Translation]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in the House to reflect on a terrible moment of injustice in the history of the Canadian federal government.

It is our responsibility, as parliamentarians, to defend the fundamental freedoms and rights of all Canadians.

[English]

Among those rights is that of equal treatment before and under the law without unjust discrimination, and to be free of any cruel or unusual treatment or punishment.

We are here today because many years ago and for too long the government of Canada failed in its duty to protect the basic rights of hundreds of the very Canadians who had dedicated their lives to public service.

[Translation]

These men and women, these citizens, lost their jobs because they were suspected of being gay.

[English]

At a basic level, Canadians can perhaps picture what losing your livelihood can do to your self-esteem, to your family, to your own quality of life.

[Translation]

However, it is nothing when compared to the fear and intimidation that many women and men experienced in dealing with their own government and the institutions that they selflessly served.

[English]

For a dark chapter in its history, the Government of Canada perpetuated this injustice. It took upon itself the mantle of judge, jury, and set the private lives of its citizens in its sights. Too often and in too many cases around the world we have seen the terrible consequences of overreaching governments.

[Translation]

We need to have an honest discussion with the people who were targeted by the terrible campaign that sought to expose and humiliate LGBTQ2 individuals in the public service.

Routine Proceedings

In this country, we deplore and condemn injustice towards the innocent, the oppressed, and the persecuted.

[English]

Interrogation and harassment based on fear is its own injustice. We must not fail to mention the toll this campaign of intimidation took on the brave women and men in uniform who found themselves the target of their superiors.

[Translation]

For those who serve our country, the government's accusations regarding their personal lives were made even more offensive by the insinuation that they were acting against the interests of the country they were devoted to. This type of insult is difficult to imagine and impossible to measure.

The women and men who dedicate their lives to defending Canadians at home and abroad were subjected to a secret and unfair trial: they were arrested and chastised and they were humiliated in front of their families, friends and colleagues; many livelihoods were destroyed and many lives were cut short. I firmly believe that we have to acknowledge that this country is only getting better.

• (1540)

[English]

Hard work has been done over generations to ensure Canada remains a champion of justice, human rights, and liberty. All of us here continually strive to be better, as elected officials, as a people, and as a country.

[Translation]

The Conservatives deeply believe in these principles. All human beings have the same value and the same dignity and deserve respect, and women and men who have differing views respect each other as human beings.

[English]

The government cannot, the government must not deny the dignity or freedom of those citizens who seek to make Canada a better place. How you treat your fellow Canadians, how you work every day to make the country stronger, how you give of yourself to your families, to your communities, and to your loved ones, those are the true measures of one's love for Canada.

[Translation]

Today's apology must be an opportunity for all of us to recommit to defending human rights, not only here, in Canada, but around the world. Too many countries around the globe, today, have despicable policies that officialize the harassment of gays and lesbians. Too often, the consequences are not only job loss and public shame, but torture and death.

[English]

Canada is better than that. We must do more to stand up for the LGBTQ2 community in places like Iran, Russia, and other countries where it is the target of brutal violence. I am personally proud of the work done by the previous government to prioritize these and other refugee groups who are particularly vulnerable.

[Translation]

We all have a duty, here, today, to ensure that Canada is the best for everyone, no matter who they are. For those who were forced to abandon a career they spent years building and for those who were rejected without recourse, we hope that today's apology offers some justice.

[English]

It cannot undo the wrongdoing and pain they have endured, but it is another important step toward leaving the next generation a Parliament that more fully embraces its duty to protect the rights and freedoms of every person it was built to serve.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats welcome and support today's apology. We join the government in acknowledging the harm that was done to the entire LGBTQ community, but especially the severe impacts that prejudice, discrimination, and persecution have had on individuals. We also want to honour today those many activists who resisted these campaigns and fought back against social prejudice. Today is the vindication of your struggles.

[Translation]

It is high time that we recognized that the careers and lives of thousands of Canadians were ruined, not only through the endemic discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia of the past, but also by government policies and campaigns to single out members of the LGBTQ community for persecution.

It could take several forms. There were countless criminal prosecutions for consensual same-sex activity. Special units were created in the Canadian Forces to ferret out gay and lesbian members and to drive them out of the Forces, either by forcing them to resign, by offering an honourable discharge for their co-operation, or by imposing various forms of less-than-honourable mentions on those who were hounded out.

There was even a secret committee of senior public servants and RCMP officers in Ottawa who sometimes met weekly to conduct a campaign of dismissals from the public service and the RCMP.

• (1545)

[English]

Despite the fact that consensual same-sex activity had been legalized in 1969, with the support of both the Liberals and the NDP, these government activities targeting the LGBTQ community continued well into the nineties. Anyone who doubts the relentlessness of these campaigns has only to read Gary Kinsman's book, *The Canadian War on Queers*, for the proof that these campaigns had devastating consequences: careers cut short, and family and social lives ruined because of the impact of being outed as a result of a firing or an arrest.

Routine Proceedings

As time went on, members of the LGBTQ community began to resist. Long-serving New Democratic member of Parliament Svend Robinson worked tirelessly for change as the first, and for many years only, openly gay member of Parliament in the House of Commons. Among all the issues he tackled, perhaps most significant was his success in having sexual orientation added to the hate crimes section of the Criminal Code with a private member's bill that became law in 2004.

Let us also remember that James Egan and John Nesbit fought in the courts for recognition of equal spousal pension rights, and won, when sexual orientation was added to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a prohibited ground for discrimination by the Supreme Court in 1995.

Some 25 years ago this October, a very brave member of the Canadian Forces, Michelle Douglas, challenged her dismissal from the forces in court and won a judgment outlawing dismissal from the Canadian Forces on the basis of sexual orientation.

This apology, nearly 25 years after the end of the discharges from the military and the firings from the public service, and 50 years after the legalization of same-sex activity, comes none too soon for those who were its victims.

Simply the idea of an apology has been on the agenda for a very long time. Long-time NDP member Libby Davies, the first openly lesbian woman in this House, tabled a motion over three years ago calling for a meaningful apology for those fired from the public service.

Today we should also acknowledge the work of those who helped make this apology possible, especially the advisory council that worked with the government to get this apology before us today and the activists from We Demand an Apology Network and Egale's Just Society Committee, which not only made the case for justice but kept up the pressure on the government to act.

Most of all we should thank those survivors of the anti-LGBTQ campaigns who have come forward to tell their heart-wrenching stories yet one more time.

[*Translation*]

Apologies are in themselves a form of justice. The New Democrats are pleased that the apology was delivered today by the Prime Minister and inserted into the House of Commons record. The New Democrats were afraid that today there would be only an apology, without any mention of restitution. We were pleased to see movement on the part of the government in recent days to include measures that begin to deal with the substance of the harms for which the apology was given.

The New Democrats are committing today to work with the government to ensure that this legislation is passed quickly by the House and that it is exhaustive. We are also committing to continue working with the LGBTQ community to ensure that the legislative changes will become a daily reality, since there is still too much work to be done in terms of justice for the LGBTQ community.

We hope that today will mark a true change of gears for the government on LGBTQ issues, and that it will bring about a renewed climate of co-operation on these issues in Parliament.

●(1550)

[*English*]

New Democrats are also pleased to hear that the government has reached an agreement in principle with the plaintiffs in the class action lawsuit against the government. The lawsuit sought restitution for specific harms to individuals resulting from the government's campaign of firings from the public service, the RCMP, and the Canadian Forces. While the damage suffered was never limited to just financial losses, just compensation is an important part of any effort toward restorative justice.

We acknowledge the openness the Minister of Justice showed in working with the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke on passing his former private member's bill as a government bill.

There is still much to do to change government policies and practices so they honour the new legislated right to be free from discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression. Let us get to work, starting today, with transgender and gender variant Canadians on implementing Bill C-16.

[*Translation*]

When it comes to ending the legal discrimination against the LGBTQ community, there is no question as to what needs to be done.

We are pleased today to see the introduction of a bill to expunge the criminal records of gay men who engaged in consensual sexual activity with same sex partners. However, it is not as though we do not know what such a bill might look like.

Philip Toone, an NDP MP from Quebec during the last Parliament, introduced such measures in 2014 under private member's business. Similar measures were introduced that same day by way of apology by the Australian government in Queensland, by New Zealand, and by Scotland.

Measures to counter this injustice should have been in place decades ago. We must not forget that this bill is not only symbolic. Every day, gay men with unjust criminal records are prevented from travelling or volunteering, and face discrimination when it comes to employment.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

We hope to see authorization to proceed in addressing the cases of those kicked out of the Canadian Forces with something less than fully honourable discharges. After all, more than a year ago, the national defence committee unanimously approved a motion from the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke calling on the Minister of Defence to authorize the military ombudsman to begin revising the service records of those who were driven out of the Canadian Forces based on who they loved. We understand that aspects of dismissals from the forces will be covered in the settlement of the class action law suit, but the revision of service records still needs to happen.

[Translation]

The NDP welcomes the government's promise to move forward with removing section 159 from the Criminal Code, a section under which the age of consent for anal intercourse is different than it is for heterosexual relations.

Although the government introduced a bill to that effect, it has been held up at first reading stage for several months. A similar bill was already introduced in the House in the last Parliament, in 2014, by former NDP MP Craig Scott.

[English]

There is, of course, one sense in which this apology risks ringing hollow. That will be if this Parliament fails to act expeditiously to end discriminatory laws and policies that continue to penalize and stigmatize the LGBTQ community. As some have said, this would be a good time to stop doing things the government might have to apologize for in the future.

The discriminatory gay blood ban remains in place, despite the fact that almost every health professional agrees that there is no science behind the ban. This is a policy that not only stigmatizes gay men but continues to restrict the supply of blood and organs at a time when the need is so great.

● (1555)

[Translation]

Members of the LGBTQ community have waited decades for our government to acknowledge the systemic nature of the injustices perpetrated against their community.

Therefore, today is an important day marked by an apology presented on behalf of all Canadians and the government's commitment to make amends.

What we have acknowledged today is that the injustices perpetrated against, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Canadians by the government were both egregious and systemic.

[English]

New Democrats hope that today will mark more than simply turning the page on this regrettable part of our history. Instead, this apology should be the springboard for action both here in Parliament and in Canadian society. We must begin by removing the last vestiges of institutional discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, and transgender Canadians. We must also eradicate the

prejudice that lives in our communities and affects our siblings, children, parents, friends, and neighbours.

From Svend Robinson to Libby Davies to the members for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke and Saskatoon West, and so many more, the NDP consistently stood with the LGBTQ community and followed its lead on these vital civil rights issues. It is our hope that all Canadians take today as an opportunity to move forward and continue to build the inclusive, accepting country that we all know we can be.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are revisiting a dark chapter in the history of Canada. It is an opportunity to remind ourselves how far we have to go in the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. We still have a very long way to go.

Up until 1992, not only was there discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirited government employees, but it was tolerated. It was an official policy. Until 1992, discrimination based on sexual orientation was a reason of state.

Canada violated human rights under the pretext of its best interests and security. It was not enough to violate the rights of LGBTQ2 people. It was not enough to insult them, to treat them like second class citizens, and to treat them like a threat to their country. The federal government placed investigative units at the service of discrimination. It even created a device, which I will not name because it is insulting, to help determine people's sexual orientation.

Canada hunted down these people in order to fire and disgrace them, as though they were criminals. They continue to suffer today. It was systemic discrimination of LGBTQ2 people and the majority used every political and institutional means to impose its values on others. This did not happen in the middle ages, it happened up until 1992.

The Bloc Québécois fully supports the essential apology the government made today. We expect that apology to be accompanied by fair and equitable compensation for the victims of this systemic discrimination. It is absolutely essential that the Canadian government and Parliament send a strong message.

We want to tell members of the LGBTQ2 community that we are proud to have them with us, as our family members, friends, colleagues, entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, successors, retirees, and, yes, soldiers and public servants. In short, we are proud to have them in our society.

It is essential to send a strong message because, although there has been some progress in the fight against discrimination since 1992, that progress is built on a shaky foundation. The fight for equality will never be entirely won. Women know something about that. We must never lose sight of the fact that we are not immune to setbacks. Women know something about that too.

Routine Proceedings

It is essential to send a strong message as parliamentarians because a wave of intolerance has been spreading across the world and we need to fight it together. We must present a united front in the fight for equality for all when faced with an extreme right that is increasingly vocal, powerful, and closer to home. When faced with the growing influence of religious and doctrinal currents in state affairs, we must present a united front in the fight for equality for all.

We must always remain steadfast in the fight for equality and not make any compromises. If there is one principle that we are prepared to defend, it is our freedom to be who we are, and live and love as we see fit, no matter who we are.

This apology should be a time for reflection and should send a strong and determined message that the time for discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirited individuals is over, period.

● (1600)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, what wonderful speeches from my friend from Repentigny and from all the other leaders and party representatives in the House.

I am honoured to speak today. I would like to thank our Prime Minister for the official apology he made today. He is a great man, and the day of heartfelt official apologies has finally come.

[*English*]

This is an important day, and I thank the Prime Minister, the Government of Canada, the member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre, the member of Parliament for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, and all those who have gone before, like Libby Davies and Svend Robinson, all of those in this place who recognized there has been a historic injustice, one that touched all aspects of the lives of our friends, brothers, sisters, parents, and cousins.

Throughout this society, people have suffered: the trailblazers, and we know them, those who first achieved equal marriage, the first same-sex couple to marry in British Columbia, my friends Tom Graff and Antony Porcino, and my friends and constituents, Robin Roberts and Diana Denny, whose fight was so deeply personal, so difficult, after being told they could not marry and raise their children together. However, today's apology focuses on something in some ways that was even more brutal, no less personal, the drumming of people out of the jobs they earned because of their partners, the people they love.

I want to specifically say that I am very honoured that two of my constituents are here for this apology, Emma Smith and Mary Lou Williams, who were fine soldiers until the military discovered they loved each other. They ended up in military prison. People know how hard it is to go through the decision to tell their parents. The last thing they imagine is that the military police will tell them for them. They are brave and, like many in this room, we acknowledge and thank the We Demand an Apology Network, without which I think many of these people would have gone through years of feeling shame, feeling isolated, thinking it was only they.

Anyone who served with Emma would say she was the best soldier in that platoon. Canada not only punished, shamed, ostracized, and violated the civil and human rights of Canadians, we also deprived ourselves of excellent soldiers, terrific members of

the RCMP, and people who would have been wonderful diplomats in our foreign service. Our stupidity, blindness, and ignorance punished our society while bringing grievous injustice and long-lasting pain to people who had done nothing wrong but want to serve their country, and this apology matters.

I think there are cynics among us who would say at one point that surely Canada's government has apologized enough. We apologized for residential schools, we apologized for the *Komagata Maru*, and we will probably apologize for turning the *St. Louis* around in Halifax harbour, and we now apologize to the LGBTQ community, and somehow someone might wonder if apologies matter. I want to say clearly that I know they matter. They matter to the people who have suffered injustice, they matter to the families of those who have died and never got to hear this apology, they matter to all Canadians who know that we recognize that we have wronged our fellow citizens and that we will never do it again.

We have been here a while and this is an emotional thing, but it needs to be said that this is a wonderful moment for all those who are oppressed, wherever they are and for whatever reason. I think transgender people really need our support now. I lost a friend just in October. Dr. Susan Roddy took her own life. She was a wonderful mathematics professor at Brandon University in Manitoba. She was still suffering discrimination and injustice as a trans woman.

● (1605)

We are not there yet. We have not righted all of the wrongs, we have not eliminated all of the discrimination, but we stand here today and the quote that comes to mind is from a speech by Martin Luther King: “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

The Speaker: As Speaker, as a member of Parliament, and as a Canadian citizen, I am honoured to have been in this chamber to hear the powerful words spoken over the past hour by my hon. colleagues.

Those whom we have wronged, those to whom we have caused great suffering, whether by commission or omission, do not owe us their forgiveness. Acknowledging our nation's past injustices does not wipe the slate clean.

[*Translation*]

I can only hope that our statements today in the House will convey to the LGBTQ2 community our sincere regret for the great wrongs perpetrated against it. Together, we will move forward to build an ever more just society.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

●(1610)

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

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, November 20, 2017, I wish to inform the House that, because of the statements, government orders will be extended by 61 minutes.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this chamber and engage in debate on substantial issues.

Before I begin my speech today on Bill C-63, I would like to briefly share a comment with all members. Some time ago, a now-retired provincial cabinet minister shared a comment with me. After a 16-year career in a provincial legislature, his advice was simple. He said that, whenever a government attempts to resolve a problem through legislation, it must be careful to avoid inadvertently creating a series of new problems in the process. That sounds so very simple, and I believe all governments, including the current one, are certainly well intended. People put their names forward to serve and to try to help build a better, stronger, and more prosperous society. However, as my former and now-retired provincial cabinet minister friend pointed out, it is not always that easy. I suspect that, over the past few months, few members on the government's bench would disagree with this sentiment.

I share the advice of my friend because within one of these sections contained within the bill is precisely such a measure that is likely well intended but would certainly cause harm. The specific measure I am talking about is a new provision proposed to eliminate the use of billed-basis accounting by designated professionals. I will credit the Liberal government for resisting the temptation to call this one "billing fairness for lawyers and accountants" because, much like the attack on small business, this particular measure would create some serious problems.

Allow me to explain. At the moment, we know that in professions such as accounting and in law firms, until they actually get paid for their billable hours they do not have any income. This concept does not take much for anyone in this chamber to understand. However, if this measure were to go through, for example, it would mean that once a lawyer has billed his or her billable hours, those hours are considered income for tax purposes. To be clear, this even means that, although the said lawyers have yet to be paid for those hours, they would be taxed on them.

On the surface, it may not seem like a big deal. At the finance committee, we heard from officials. They said that, after this measure is implemented fully, it is about \$500,000 to the treasury, which is not a big sum for this place. However, like most things, we need to look away from the Bay Street law firms. I mean no offence to them in saying that, but in rural parts of the country, in fact in many small to mid-size communities, law firms are not so large. I

suspect many in this place know full well that the reality is that not many even middle-class Canadians can afford a lawyer anymore, let alone those who are most vulnerable, without legal assistance. On the same note, I suspect members would not meet a provincial bar representative anywhere who would not share with them what a crisis legal-aid funding is going through throughout this great country. We all know that the vast majority of our provincial treasuries are running deficits and few, if any, are putting more money into things like legal aid. As I mentioned, even for the upper middle class income earners, still the cost of legal representation is exorbitant.

It is easy to blame lawyers for this, but as some in this place will know full well, running a law firm carries a huge amount of overhead: bills, expenses, staff, making draws. These things need to happen weekly. In some cases, it can take years before they see a resolution. I mention these things of course because the proposed measure in this bill would ultimately increase the costs that lawyers would have to carry. In other words, it would increase the overhead. In the big firms, this may or may not be a big deal. However, in smaller firms and in particular in those rural areas, these added costs could well be crippling, and they would make the availability of legal representation that much more difficult for middle-class Canadians let alone those scraping by.

●(1615)

These are the very same middle-class Canadians that have become a favourite talking point of the Prime Minister and his finance minister, but what is more frustrating about this is that there is really no public benefit here. Ultimately once a lawyer bills those hours and finally gets paid, the tax revenue is coming to Ottawa anyway, unless of course, someone is one of those wealthy friends of the Prime Minister who banks in the Bahamas.

For the most rank and file Canadians and their attorneys, this tax money would make its way here to Ottawa, but that is not good enough for the government. The Liberals do not want to wait for that money. They want the cash upfront, now. I do not know about everyone else, but I think an estimated half a million dollars inevitably pushes smaller firms to take less marginal cases; for example, a grandmother who has been hit, not offered proper compensation from my own province, ICBC, which is a provincially regulated monopoly, will not be able to find that same representation in the rural areas because people will say they are sorry, they would like to take her case, but the rules are here and they cannot subsidize her case on the backs of the other ones. Unless she pays a full retainer upfront, they will not be able to take her case let alone help her.

Government Orders

Again, I am hoping that government members hear this and start to ask a few more questions. The government members will say they have consulted with the provincial bar associations and they are fine with this. They said they would it put in place over five years, so every year it would go up 20%, but that does not negate the harm this would be doing to those seeking representation in those marginal rural areas. Sometimes a consultation is asking to hear what people say and then making a response. In this case, the government said it did a consultation but it is going to go ahead regardless of what people say. What kind of a consultation is that?

Is it really so unreasonable that the government should wait for people's income until they have actually been paid for a service that has been performed? I would suspect many people in this chamber would say that expectation is not unreasonable, and I am hoping that members across the way agree.

I'll now turn to taxing employee benefits, denying disability status for type 1 diabetes, and something I raised in this place earlier: the case of a mother whose Canada child benefit has been withheld simply because she has an unco-operative spouse. These are people who need those supports, and the government, whether through laws like this or whether through finding them ineligible by technical grounds on the administrative side, is harming the material life of these vulnerable people.

In my view, this agency is overreaching at the behest of the government, and there will be consequences for that. I do not simply mean political consequences. I mean that, for those who need legal advice, it might become that much harder to reach. Also, here in Ottawa we could have that money a little sooner.

Meanwhile, if people can afford lawyers, they might be paying them to sit in court only to find out that there is no judge because the government is well behind in judicial appointments. I raised that directly with the Minister of Justice, that we saw for the first time in 35 years a section of the family chambers court in Vancouver closed because there were no judges. That is a shame, and frankly, for a party that has always been so revered by so many in the legal profession, I am surprised that it is only the opposition members who are standing up for the profession in this case.

Before I close, I will say that at times the government has surprised me by changing directions. That would be only a very small change in direction, but if the Liberals were to make this change and remove this section, it could hugely help out those facing legal challenges and help the legal profession in general throughout rural Canada. For that matter, I am hopeful that the members opposite will give my comments some consideration and look to see this provision removed.

On that same note, I would like to thank the members in this place, particularly the government, for listening. I appreciate everyone's time today.

• (1620)

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member said something that I want to clarify and get his thoughts on. He said that any work-in-progress account is going to be subject to income tax. The members opposite know that is not true. In fact, bill-based accounting rules are the lesser value of fair market value and/or cost. Perhaps the member could explain to

the Canadian public why his previous statement was incorrect and the importance of that distinction.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's sincerity here. I asked this over and over of the lawyers who were at committee. I asked the officials about this concern. The way the government is proceeding to do bill-based accounting, with 20% every year, is going to cause that harm. I had lawyers from the provincial bar association in British Columbia come and talk to me about this case. This is not something made up by one member of Parliament; this is something that is out there and being heard. I just hope that the people on the other side really ask those questions, because the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance actually said in this place that he believed it was a challenge and that more could be done to make this better. I sincerely hope the member goes and talks to the parliamentary secretary and asks his advice.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Does he not see a strange parallel between our constant feeling that the government is not going after tax havens and the sad spectacle we have been witnessing for weeks now involving the Minister of Finance? Is there not a curious discrepancy between what is being said and what is unfortunately not being done?

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, this is a tale as old as time. What often happens is that those who are well connected are able to take advantage and, whether it be through social connections, work relationships, or formal political lobbying, are able to get their message heard. I am fearful that we are starting to see a two-tier approach to taxation in this country, where those who have very little power, influence, or political ability to get in front of the government are being disregarded and are being nickelled and dimed.

This is the opposite of what the government says it wants to do. It says it wants to have an inclusive economy. Part of an inclusive economy means including people and thinking of them, not thinking for them. In this case, I have to say the government is putting the onus on these small marginal cases, these grandmothers and family members of ours who are hurt, who need help, who need representation, and who are told no because of economic decision-making that is forced upon them by the government.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to see my colleague drill down on a particular shortcoming in a piece of Liberal legislation.

It is true that the receivables are considered by accountants as assets. However, taxation before payment is yet another example of the theoretical application of the grasping that we have seen from the government. I think my colleague was quite correct in mentioning the abortive consideration of taxing benefits of retail employees.

Government Orders

This brings us back to the question that has been asked a number of times in the House. Given the government's focus on those who struggle most to perform a job, to raise families, and to pay their taxes, is this a case of a finance minister and a Prime Minister who have lived such rarified lives that they simply do not consider the impact they are having on those who have not?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, we heard from officials who said they likened the billable hours to inventory, and that the fair market value, as the previous Liberal member raised, would be representative of that, and Canadians would be paying taxes on that per share. The problem with that is, if grocers had inventory that went bad, as in the case that one did not win, they would be able to write that inventory off against their income and not be taxed on that. That is not the case here. I think it is because officials are basically giving examples that make sense at the surface. However, when we start asking if it would apply to other forms of business or if other forms of business could write off inventory that spoils on the shelf, it is obvious that no one on that side is going deeper into the issue. That is what I am asking these members to do, go deeper.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to give my thoughts on Bill C-63 on behalf of the hard working and amazing constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I have to once again note, on their behalf, how unfortunate it is that we have to debate this bill under the yoke of time allocation. This bill, like so many others, is being railroaded through the House. It seems like it is the only way the government can get its legislation through, rather than having meaningful dialogue with the opposition parties.

I want to start off by underlining some key facts and figures, and they are not pretty.

Over the last 30 years, workers have helped grow our economy by over 50%. In spite of this, their salaries are stagnating and their retirements are becoming less secure. The inequality gap in Canada between the richest and the majority of Canadians is growing faster and wider than in other developed countries. The 100 richest Canadians now have the same wealth as the combined wealth of the 10 million less fortunate.

Employment insurance is becoming harder to access. Statistics show that less than four in 10 unemployed persons qualify for insurance when they need it. That statistic has not changed. In fact, none of these statistics have changed for quite some time now.

Closer to home, in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and in my beautiful province of British Columbia, since the House of Commons passed a resolution in 1989 to eliminate child poverty in Canada, the child poverty rate has increased from 15.5% to 18.3% today. The richest 10% of B.C. families with children receive 24% of the total income, while the poorest half of families share 27%.

My own home town of Duncan has extremely alarming child poverty rates. It is especially severe in the city where almost three in 10 children live in poverty. As I said, these are not new statistics. Continuous Liberal and Conservative governments have been aware of these. We are now two years into the government's mandate and we still have some of the most disadvantaged families in the country, waiting for meaningful action to tackle many of these dreadful statistics.

A lot has been made of the Minister of Finance of late. It is worthwhile to talk about him because he is the sponsor of this bill. The opposition represents most of Canadians, given that about 60% of them voted for the parties on this side of the House, and most of them do not have any confidence in the minister.

Yesterday, and continuing through today, he has been unable to provide yes or no answers to simple questions from the member for Carleton. He will not reveal his assets in other numbered corporations so the House may have confidence in his abilities as the finance minister.

The real sticking point for our members in the NDP is that he sponsored Bill C-27, an act that would allow federally regulated sectors to change their pensions to targeted benefit programs, while he had shares in Morneau Shepell, a company that stands to benefit in extreme ways from the passage of that legislation. I would like to see Liberal members of Parliament have the courage to bring that bill forward for second reading debate and hear the arguments they put forward on how it would affect the retirement security of the middle class they claim to stand for each and every day in the House of Commons. I am so looking forward to that day.

Budgets are about choices. I want to go through some of the choices that exist in the bill and that the government has made.

One of its provisions will allow the Minister of Finance to transfer some \$480 million to the Asian infrastructure bank, which was mentioned in the 2017 budget. Many members of the opposition have expressed concern about why Canadian money is flowing to that bank and about the good it could have done here in Canada. For those of us who represent rural communities, \$480 million is untold riches of what it could do and build in our local communities.

• (1630)

This fits with the pattern of the government's spending choices. Right outside these doors, we have a hockey rink which cost \$5.6 million. I know the government likes to talk about it as a legacy project, but it will be dismantled after February and it is only a block away from the largest skating rink in the world. Therefore, \$5.6 million is a princely sum of money to be spending on something that will make the front lawn of Parliament look better for three months.

Also half a million, \$555,000, was spent on a building wrap, while Canada Post headquarters gets renovated. The government spent over \$200,000 developing the illustration on the cover of budget 2017.

When we start to see spending patterns and choices like this, it raises legitimate questions about the government's priorities.

Government Orders

This leads me to the second part. When we talk about those choices, what invariably comes up are the missed opportunities. The budget implementation bill, because it would implement certain measures of the budget announced earlier this year, gives members of Parliament a large amount of latitude to talk about some of the choices that were not made.

For example, we asked the Minister of Finance if he could include provisions to cap CEO stock options, CEOs who make use of this loophole to shelter some of their income. We asked him to actively fight tax havens. We asked him to establish an all-important \$15 minimum wage for federal workers to show that kind of leadership to our provincial counterparts and to show that we actually cared about the workers of our country. We could have made huge investments in energy efficiency home renovations. We could have addressed accessibility problems linked to housing, drinking water, mental health services, and education in first nation communities. More important, we could have established a universal pharmacare program, a program that the parliamentary budget officer conservatively estimated would save Canadians over \$4 billion. Unfortunately none of these provisions were implemented.

In March 2017, the government supported our party's motion to tackle tax havens and place a cap on those same tax loopholes for CEOs, as I just mentioned. However, while the government supported it, we are still waiting for that concrete action to address the problems caused by tax measures benefiting those at the top.

The previous Conservative speaker talked about a tax system that increasingly treated some at the top differently from those at the bottom. He used the term “nickel and diming”, and I could not agree more. Vulnerable sectors of our Canadian society, such as those suffering from diabetes, are unable to access the disability tax credit. I have seen the cost to these families to treat their diabetes. Meanwhile, high-flying millionaires, Liberals friends at the top, can use tax havens and measures about which none of us at the bottom could even dream.

This goes to a sense of fairness. We need to institute that fairness in our tax system. We need to see that the government is supremely confident and serious about tackling this widespread problem. The paradise papers have only released the tip of the iceberg of how deep this problem goes, how deep the rot goes, and it really needs to be addressed.

The government likes to talk about the child benefit. Of course, families receiving money is a good thing, but it still does nothing to address the chronic shortage of available child care spaces. I have families talk to me about this all the time. The fact is that they cannot afford to get a second job because the cost of child care is so high and the spaces are simply unavailable.

At least one party in the House consistently and constantly talks about these issues, whether standing up for minimum wage, adequate retirement security for our workers, or ensuring families get real breaks, and that is the NDP. It is why I joined this party. I will continue to stand with it to raise these issues on behalf of my wonderful constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford to ensure we get the true progressive policies our country deserves.

● (1635)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member concluded his thoughts on standing up for Canadians. The member is correct in one sense. He did stand up and say no to the Canada child tax benefit. He did stand up and say no to the middle-class tax cut. He did stand up and say no to the tax that was being applied to Canada's 1%. When it comes to the whole issue of tax evasion, I have news for the member. Chances are there are fairly wealthy New Democrats also out there, as there are wealthy Conservatives.

There is a need for us to look at the way individuals avoid paying taxes. That is why the government has put in close to \$1 billion to look at that and prosecute, where we can, tax evaders.

Would my colleague support that initiative brought forward by the government? We have allocated close to \$1 billion to go after rich tax evaders, whether they are New Democratic wealthy, Conservative wealthy, or Liberal wealthy? Does the member support that initiative?

● (1640)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I have to address the misleading information that the parliamentary secretary just uttered right now.

When he talks about New Democrats voting against the tax measures, I want it to be known that every Liberal member of Parliament gave themselves the maximum tax bracket raise in that budget. The median income in Canada is around \$41,000 a year; those people got zero. He can argue with me all he wants but that is a fact. That is why we voted against the measure, and he knows that to be true.

When we give tools to the CRA to ensure it cracks down on tax avoidance, we want to ensure it goes after the people who deserve it, not nickel-and-diming the people at the bottom. We are very concerned that the CRA's level of service and the way it goes after Canadians is completely misguided. The Minister of National Revenue needs to stand in the House and be accountable for her agency's actions.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the budget implementation bill is important because it puts forward the measures the government will enact through its budget.

One of the key issues Canadians are deeply concerned about is universal pharmacare. Theoretically, we have universal health care, but the government, with the Conservatives, voted against an NDP motion to bring forward universal pharmacare.

Could the member explain to me if there is anything in the budget implementation act that speaks to universal pharmacare for Canadians?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, when it comes to universal pharmacare, health care has been consistently listed by Canadians as the number one priority.

Government Orders

The supposedly progressive Liberal government likes to talk the good talk, but when it comes to real action, when we gave it the opportunity to implement a national pharmacare plan to really save money for Canadians on their prescriptions, the Liberals were nowhere to be seen.

I want it to be known that there is one party that will keep fighting the good fight. It is right here, the NDP. My constituents in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford can count on me to continue raising this issue on their behalf and ensuring the most disadvantaged members of our Canadian society get the help they deserve.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member knows full well just how hard families work in his riding, in my riding, and in ridings right across the country. For our part, we have to ensure we support those families and those children. That is why the first budget brought forward the Canada child benefit. Now, with our economy doing so well, it is providing those investments back into our communities so our communities can continue to grow.

Does the member not believe that his community, and all communities, deserve this funding, this plan that is working, that is driving our economy, creating jobs, and taking 300,000 kids out of poverty?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, speaking of investments, I would like to refer the hon. member to the national housing strategy. Most of that money will not come into effect until after 2019. The last time I checked, some communities are in crisis right now. We have known about the housing crisis for decades, and still Canadians have to wait until they elect another Liberal government in 2019. The NDP will ensure the job gets done immediately.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. 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 Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Taxation; the hon. member for Drummond, Official Languages.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, just listening to the previous speaker reminds me of the degree to which the NDP love to put a spin on things. Let me just comment on a couple of the things the member across the way makes reference to.

He talked about the importance of a national pharmacare program. I believe there are many members of this chamber who are striving to achieve that. I know my colleagues, at least on the government benches, are very much committed to strive toward that. We have a Standing Committee on Health that is working on that and inviting stakeholders to its meetings. It was in the midst of a report when the NDP had a flash of an idea and took the idea from the standing committee and presented it inside the chamber, not allowing the standing committee to do its fine work. True to form, the NDP likes to think that if it is a good idea it has to be an NDP idea.

The member just made reference to the housing strategy, that it might be a big plan but that we are not spending money on it today. I inform the member across the way that we are spending money

today. Every year, the national government spends hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidizing national housing. However, this is historic because this is the first time we are getting the type of money we are seeing invested not only for today but into the future for a national housing strategy. Instead of at times trying to recognize the fine work the government is doing, the NDP tends to navel gaze and wants to look at where it can criticize and how it can say it is better than the government.

The member talked about tax fairness. One of my favourite lines is that the NDP likes to come across as if it thinks the rich and corporations should be taxed and the money given to the poor. That is the standard line that it likes to say. When I was in the provincial Manitoba legislature, where the NDP was in government for far too many years, it actually reduced corporate taxes from 16.5% to 12%. That was the NDP in government in the province of Manitoba—

• (1645)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: We are in Ottawa.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is right, we are in Ottawa. That is very observant of the member opposite.

What did the members in Ottawa have to say? When it came to putting a tax on Canada's wealthiest, what did they do? They voted against it. What did they do when it came time to support Canada's middle class? The member opposite says that it was brought in because of the salaries of MPs. No, that is not true.

The difference between us and the New Democrats is that the Government of Canada supports its middle class and those striving to be a part of it to the degree that it brought in a middle-class tax cut that put hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of its middle class. I am talking about teachers, health care workers, and factory floor workers. Millions of Canadians had their disposable income increase, had that tax break, and what did the NDP do? It voted against that too.

Then we take a look at New Democrats wanting tax fairness. Once again, we have a government that wants to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Speaker, I will not lie: it is good to switch off this member's loudspeaker. The truth is that that this man's speech has nothing to do with the business that is before us today. He spends his life blaming us for our positions. He should talk about the topic at hand, Bill C-63.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows that there is some latitude when members are speaking. However, I also know that the parliamentary secretary raised several points of order today regarding the relevance of speeches. I would ask him to make sure that his own speech be relevant to the bill that is before the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will do just that. I may actually do a bit more than that. However, before I do that, I can appreciate the sensitivity because when New Democrats hear the truth it makes them feel a bit uncomfortable in their seats.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: It has filled my veins.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The truth hurts at times but the truth needs to be said.

Madam Speaker, I have done quite well in terms of not standing up, because I hear many members of the opposition stand in their place and talk about the exact same things that I am talking about, but maybe not being as harsh on my friends in the NDP. I will try to stay away from being so harsh and look at ways in which we are supposed to be adding further thoughts on today. That is the issue of the infrastructure investment and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. That is what the NDP moved an amendment on to the budget. I realize very few members have actually talked about that, but I want to at the very least make reference to it because what we hear from across the way is again a false impression.

The members tried to give the impression that Canada is actually spending money on infrastructure in China in a very significant way. I thought it was interesting that one of the most significant investments that it made was actually in the Philippines. In the Philippines, where there were issues related to flooding, there was a commitment of just under half a billion dollars providing flood protection. Flood protection is important, I know. Manitoba is a province that has often had floods, and we have invested in flood protection and it works. It has saved the City of Winnipeg billions of dollars over the years.

We have the Asian infrastructure bank, which does some fine work that might not have taken place. Not that long ago, some serious floods took place in the Philippines and at the time members on all sides of this House stood up and called on the Canadian government to do something. We had individuals in every region in our country; it went far beyond the Filipino heritage community, which continues to grow and be prosperous and add to our very rich heritage. People responded to the flooding in the Philippines, not only by providing comments but by providing hundreds of thousands of dollars and the Canadian government responded to that.

This is some of the work that is being done with the Asian infrastructure bank. However, if people listen to the opposition that is not the impression they would receive. One of the things we do exceptionally well in Canada is the high level of expertise of individuals who have infrastructure experience. Investing in the Asian infrastructure bank allows Canada to better compete, with the expertise that we have to offer the world. If people listen to the opposition, they would think that we are throwing the money away. That is not the case because that money ultimately will come back and there is a very good chance there will be a healthy dividend on it. Therefore, we are contributing to the development in many areas of the world, particularly in that Asian area, in a very humanitarian way as in the example I just cited, and allowing Canadian expertise and possibly even Canadian companies to participate in the process.

It is a bit ironic. We hear Conservatives talk about how bad this thing is because of infrastructure dollars going out of Canada, and yet here we have a Minister of Finance who has invested more in infrastructure with historic record highs, hundreds of millions going toward billions of dollars invested into our infrastructure.

• (1650)

The government has excelled at investing in Canada's infrastructure. By building infrastructure, we support the middle class, and the healthier the middle class, the healthier our infrastructure, the better we all will be.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I always appreciate my colleague's enthusiasm, but I will pick up from the end of his remarks when he talked about the government's promises for infrastructure spending, many billions of dollars worth of those promises postdated until after the next election. How does he excuse the \$2 billion committed already, which has had to be reprofiled because the government could not get those \$2 billion out the door?

• (1655)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am sure my friend across the way recognizes that as much as the government would like every dollar of that spent in a fiscal year, there is an obligation to work with provinces and other stakeholders. In many situations, they could not get the shovels in the ground fast enough. More and more projects are being approved and there are more and more shovels in the ground, but let there be no doubt that this government is truly committed to Canada's infrastructure and the dollars tied to it, because we want the Canadian economy to continue to develop and grow.

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his speech and for emphasizing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

After the Second World War, Canada learned its lesson well regarding the importance of being part of multilateral organizations to ensure development.

As we all know, when everyone works to create prosperity and wealth by investing in basic infrastructure, everyone benefits, as it ensures progress and development in Asian countries.

Canada is not the only investor in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Indeed, it is not 10 or 20 countries that expressed interest, but 80 countries.

According to my colleague, is it a good idea for Canada to do its part to invest in development in developing countries?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. Canada plays a very strong leadership role on many fronts. If we look at the Asian infrastructure bank, Canada is not alone. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, and many other countries are engaged with that infrastructure bank, and no doubt it is for different reasons. Canadians can feel very comfortable with our investment, which will range anywhere from \$250 million to \$500 million, depending on whether it is U.S. or Canadian dollars, that it is a good, solid investment, for which we will get a return, likely with significant dividends. Whether it does or does not, we should recognize the potential good we are doing around the world.

I used the example of the Philippines, because it is a country I care very much about. My constituents and Canadians as a whole understand and appreciate the horrific natural disasters that took place there and because of the infrastructure bank, the country will be more flood-proof. I see that as a positive thing. It is not just about the dollars. It is about ways we can contribute to the betterment of countries beyond our borders, while still getting a return. Canada is not alone. The Conservative Party might want to be excluded from that, but I suggest there is an obligation to other countries I have already referenced, such as the U.K., Australia, and many others.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to review Bill C-63 at report stage. I lament that we have time allocation in place, but I am grateful that I was able to grab the slot that occurs every 34 slots for someone in a position like mine: being in a party with fewer than 12 MPs. Time allocation tends to be a real detriment to the principle that all MPs in this place are equal. That is the principle of Westminster parliamentary democracy. Of course, the increased power of party whips and the increased partisanship within the House means that all MPs are equal in the way that George Orwell described all animals as being equal in *Animal Farm*. Some are more equal than others.

Regarding the rules on recognized parties, I only recently discovered that Canada is the only Westminster parliamentary democracy that has the notion that a party needs a certain number of MPs before they get the same rights as their colleagues. It is unique to Canada. It is replicated in our provinces and is something I would like to see removed someday.

In the meantime, the bill has already made history. It is the first time the new rules for parliamentary procedure on omnibus bills have been applied. I appreciate that the Speaker accepted to look at this and separate out the sections that did not appear to be within the same theme of action.

Omnibus budget bills became, I have to say, horrific in the Harper era. We had two omnibus budget bills in 2012, Bill C-38 and Bill C-45, that had nothing to do with budgets and were omnibus bills of the most egregious kind. The term “omnibus budget bill” became, in the public mind, something to be absolutely rejected and condemned. However, there is such a thing as a legitimate omnibus bill; there is such a thing as a legitimate omnibus budget bill. This one came close, but there were sections I appreciated the Speaker separating out.

For the most part, the debate in this place has been misplaced in tending to be, from the opposition benches, primarily about the

Minister of Finance's personal finances. We need answers to those questions, but not in the context of a debate on Bill C-63. Bill C-63 has much in it that I would urge colleagues to read closely, because I have read the bill closely, and there is much in the bill I like.

Although it did not go far enough, I certainly want to support the steps toward something the government promised. The Stephen Harper government promised to remove fossil fuel subsidies at the 2009 G20 summit. The promise has been on the books for some time that Canada would eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. It is, in that sense, a government promise that is not strictly a Liberal promise, but it is also a Liberal promise, and it was made in the platform and in the Speech from the Throne. We have seen very little done at the federal level to eliminate subsidies to fossil fuels. The accelerated capital cost allowance for oil sands investments was tapering off under the previous Conservative government. It remains in place for existing projects that are grandfathered under this very advantageous tax regime. It continues to amount to about \$1 billion a year for oil sands companies, but it was once closer to \$3 billion a year. People debate what is a subsidy and what is not, but a capital cost allowance is seen as pretty advantageous tax treatment that amounts to a subsidy.

The other one that has not been touched at all by the Liberals was one Stephen Harper brought in after he pledged to get rid of fossil fuel subsidies. That is the subsidy for the production of natural gas, particularly to assist liquified natural gas companies. It is hard to beat the one the former premier of B.C., Christy Clark, left in place for the Woodfibre LNG plant, which will amount to about \$4,000 in public subsidies for every job created. Therefore, we are still subsidizing fossil fuels provincially and federally.

However, I was pleased to see what the bill would do on oil and gas drilling, in part one, although it would not go far enough. If a company had an unsuccessful oil and gas drilling experience, it used to get a 100% writeoff. Under Bill C-63, that would now be reduced to a 30% writeoff. That tax treatment would be better. It is a step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough.

• (1700)

The other piece in that same section that certainly is encouraging is better tax treatment for a real winner in renewable energy, and that is geothermal energy. We have known for a long time that we can do a lot with geothermal. We have seen countries around the world benefit from geothermal. The bill includes very good new tax treatment to encourage geothermal electricity.

Government Orders

There are also improvements in the bill on the donation of ecologically sensitive land. I was part of the national round table on the environment and the economy back in the day when the member for Ottawa South was the CEO. We took a real fight on to try to convince then minister of finance Paul Martin not to treat the donation of ecologically sensitive land as something that penalized the donor. People used to get dinged with a deemed capital gain, when they did not actually get anything; they were making a donation.

Over time, our tax code has moved consistently in the direction of better treatment. Bill C-63 would expand the kinds of land that could be donated and would improve the tax treatment. The ecologically sensitive land donations are quite welcome.

I also want to support the improvements in the tax treatment of nurse practitioners so that they would have some of the same tax treatment as other health professionals, which would improve their day-to-day lives.

Similarly, in division 10 of part 5, there are improvements to how the Energy Efficiency Act would operate. We definitely want to see more energy efficiency programming. It has been a big disappointment to me, and the Minister of Finance knows this, as I mentioned it to him recently, that we are not using the tools in the federal tool kit to approach climate change as if we take it seriously.

If we could go back and look at the current Minister of Public Safety's budget when he was minister of finance, in 2005, and pull all those measures out and decide that they were a top priority for the government to put in the 2018 budget, I would be one happy camper. That would include ecoenergy retrofits, which we do not have. It would include support for electric and hybrid vehicles and improvement of the east-west electricity grid.

Those are the things we do not have in the budget, but at least in Bill C-63 we have amendments to facilitate a lot of energy products to include harmonization of regulations to enhance energy efficiency. Those are very welcome.

What I tried to change the most in committee, through amendments, was something that is generally positive or a step in the right direction, which is to give people the right to time off work if they or members of their family are victims of violence. It is obvious to anyone who thinks about it or has gone through it. If a person has been a victim of a violent assault, or if someone in the family, particularly a child, has been the victim of a violent assault, it takes time. That child will have to be taken to therapy appointments. People will have to go to therapy appointments.

If people are going to recover from the trauma, they need time off work. This legislation is very welcome. It would give employees, by right, time off work. However, the bill operates in such a way that employers would have the option to say that someone could not take less than a full day. Employees could not say that they just wanted a couple of hours off, because that was all they needed. Employees would have to take a full day, and this would be time off work without pay. I am very disappointed that my amendments did not get through, because in committee, we said that this should be time off with pay.

The evidence we heard in committee was overwhelming, certainly from Hassan Yussuff, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, who pointed out that 90% of domestic violence survivors experience financial control issues.

If a spouse has been violently assaulted by a spouse, and in most cases it is the male partner who violently assaults his wife, and the wife is, generally speaking, in a reduced financial situation of independence compared to her husband, how does she manage, if taking time off work means she might lose her right to raise her own children because of the financial duress? These are the parts of the bill I would have liked to see fixed.

• (1705)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the leader of the Green Party for her speech, and there are many parts I agree with, and also for her work at finance committee, of which I am a member.

My question is in regard to some of the tax treatment changes in Bill C-63. One of the elements the member mentioned was changes regarding geothermal energy and its tax treatment. I am wondering if I could give the hon. member the opportunity to talk more about the measures, some of the changes she wanted to bring, and how in future budgets she would look for changes in that regard.

• (1710)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for those points and for his kind words about my work at the finance committee.

The geothermal regulations are found in a couple of places, primarily at subclause 104(1), on allowing the recovery equipment to be used in the process of both energy efficiency, meaning conserving energy, and producing energy. Geothermal has tremendous potential. A lot of reports the British Columbia Utilities Commission has issued, for instance, to B.C. Hydro have said to look at that potential. The potential is enormous.

People tend to think that it is kind of icy and geographically specific, such as in Reykjavik in Iceland, where there are geysers and it is clear that they get their energy from geothermal. However, geothermal is adaptable to almost every region of Canada. One could tap geothermal energy to warm a house in every part of Canada, certainly below the treeline. There is huge potential for the large-scale production of geothermal energy.

In the suite of renewable energy options, including solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, and tidal, Canada is abundant. When Stephen Harper used to talk about Canada as an energy superpower, that is where our superpowers lie: installing that equipment so that we never have to buy fuel again. Once we have solar capacity, once we have wind capacity, once we have geothermal, once we have tidal, we are not buying fuel to run energy-producing equipment. It is there for free. We just have to invest in it.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from the Green Party for her speech. We do not hear often enough about alternative methods for finding heating, for example, below ground where the temperature is higher in the winter, regardless of where we are in Canada.

Another topic that we do not talk about enough is the Labour Code. I was listening to my colleague speak about the different types of leave and I wondered if she did not find it deplorable how little the government has done. We are finally talking about it and we could have respected the Arthurs report that proposed 10 days of family-related leave, but we stopped at three.

Does my colleague think that that is something that we could have improved?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree with my colleague, the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

In times like those, families must have access to financial support for days not worked. Without that support, it is truly hard to obtain leave.

[English]

It is pretty clear that when we are in these situations, if it is an opportunity we cannot use, it is not really an opportunity.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak again to the economic update, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures.

This will be an opportunity for me to address, in particular, the issue of accountability in government decisions. Governing is not just about pleasing people. It is also about making well-thought-out and sometimes difficult decisions by going beyond the objectives of the mandate itself. Our political actions have repercussion on many future generations, and that is even clearer for budget issues.

The Liberals had promised us balanced budgets by 2019. They also promised us a deficit of less than \$10 billion only for the first two years. That is what they promised Canadians, and Canadians elected this government because they believed those commitments. The Liberals are therefore accountable to all Canadians who expect those promises to be kept, and also to all those who elected opposition members and who are concerned about the growing government spending.

The Liberal deficit is now twice as large as what was promised and, unfortunately, the government does not foresee a return to a balanced budget. The Liberal government is thus increasing the debt twice as fast as promised and expects that debt to increase every year from now on.

I will read a quote: “We were the only ones in the last election to not focus on a balanced budget at any price, regardless of the repercussions”. Who said that? It was our esteemed Prime Minister himself, no later than this summer, on June 27, during a press conference in Ottawa. That statement by our own Prime Minister is a bit over the top.

Meanwhile, interest on the debt is growing, totalling more than \$15 billion in 2017. I take this opportunity to clear up the confusion that exists sometimes between deficit and debt. A budget deficit, or a negative balance on the government budget, is when budget revenues, what the government receives from taxpayers and businesses, are lower than that government's expenditures. It is therefore a negative balance. To fund its overspending, or its deficit, the government must borrow money, and all government loans, every year, when added together, constitute the government's debt. Accordingly, the more deficits the government accumulates, year after year, as the Liberal government is doing, the more the government's debt grows.

The two figures are different, but they are closely related. Budget deficits contribute to the debt, which, in turn, has an impact on the level of the deficit due to the increase in interest being paid. While the deficit corresponds to the money that is not available today, the interest on the deficit is simply lost money. Let me explain.

The government will tell us that it created a deficit to invest in infrastructure, and we can understand that reasoning. However, the interest that is paid on the debt is money that is completely lost. It is \$15 billion. The infamous interest that we pay, \$15 billion just in 2017, is an expenditure. It is therefore money spent just to finance the debt, not programs, structuring projects, or aid that could be provided to Canadians, such as tax cuts.

Here are some comparisons to illustrate the magnitude of the money lost by paying interest on the debt just this year. With \$25 billion, we could have funded a half million child care spaces. We could have built three Champlain bridges. We could have built four dams like La Romaine or 11,500 affordable housing units.

• (1715)

Unfortunately, a series of deficits, year after year, fosters the creation of new deficits. If we continually increase the debt, the interest that it produces leads to an increase in the deficit. In other words, the country is driven further and further into debt. There is therefore collectively more interest to pay, year after year. That is what is called a snowball effect.

That is why I wanted to talk about government accountability. The Liberal government is currently operating on a line of credit and therefore on the backs of our children and grandchildren. This government constantly tells us that the economy is going well and that all indicators confirm that we are in a good economic cycle. However, if we rack up the debts now, when the economy is doing well, what will happen when the economy is not doing well? What will happen when we have no choice but to borrow to be able to deliver our programs and our services and our line of credit is in the red? What will happen when we need to borrow to stimulate the economy by investing in infrastructure while already being in the red?

What are we leaving for future generations? If the tendency that the Liberal government has begun continues, my daughter, who recently turned 16, will be 45 when the budget is balanced. What are we leaving to our children?

Government Orders

I will give an example: according to data from Statistics Canada, if we divide this year's \$20 billion deficit by the number of children in Canada, that represents exactly \$2,005.75 for each child just this year. That is in addition to last year's deficit and future deficits.

Does this government think beyond its four-year mandate or does it think more about its re-election in 2019?

I would also note that if the previous Conservative government had not been such a good steward of the economy for the past 10 years, and if that government had not been able to balance the budget after a terrible global economic crisis, the Liberal government would never have been able to act so irresponsibly.

If we oppose this budget update today, it is because the government is asking for a blank cheque, with no guarantee regarding a return to a balanced budget. However, Canadians have a right to know when the country's finances will improve and when we will see an end to this endless cycle of deficits that fuel an ever-growing debt, like the snowball effect I explained earlier.

In the meantime, someone will have to pay the bill. Today, despite the deficits, 80% of middle-class Canadians are paying more taxes than under the previous Conservative government.

Make no mistake: the money we are spending today will have to be paid back one of these days, whether by us, by our children, or by our grandchildren. The more recklessly we spend, the bigger our debt will be and the more it will cost us to repay that debt.

The bigger the deficit grows year after year, with no plan to balance the budget, the more we will be saddling our children and grandchildren with that debt. That, to me, is completely and utterly irresponsible.

• (1720)

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his speech.

I have to say that our government is very responsible. Why? Because our government decided to invest in creating jobs for Canadians and supporting middle-class families.

Does my colleague have anything to say about a government that created over half a million jobs all across the country from coast to coast?

We need to invest in driving economic growth. We need to invest in creating jobs for Canadians. We need to invest in supporting middle-class Canadian families, and we need to invest in paying the debt the previous government left us.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I like his smile.

No one believes that the economy is doing well because of this government's decisions, since the funding it allocated to programs are just starting to be used. More than half the infrastructure projects did not even get off the ground after they were announced. Several projects are in a holding pattern in the municipalities.

The economy is doing so well because of past decisions. Let us come back to that in two or three years to talk about the repercussions of the current decisions. One thing is certain, someone

will have to pay for the deficits created by this government. My three children, and the children and grandchildren of every hon. member here and all Canadians will one day have to pay for the budgetary irresponsibility that this Minister of Finance and this Liberal government have shown for the past two years.

• (1725)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention.

I always have a hard time understanding where the Conservatives truly stand on the question of deficits and balanced budgets. My colleague talked about everything we could do with billions of dollars. As a matter of fact, the previous Conservative government left a \$150-billion debt, not including interest, which was added to the government's cumulative debt, which is currently almost \$700 billion.

Can my colleague tell us how much interest we are paying every year on the \$150 billion that the Conservatives added to the public debt? What could we have done with that \$150 billion?

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I thought I was pretty clear in my explanation of the difference between a deficit and a debt.

The Conservative government was in power during the worst economic crisis in the world, and yet Canada was the first major democratic country to balance its budget. We proved that we can invest in our economy and still achieve a balanced budget.

I would also like to remind all members of the House that it was the previous Conservative government that lowered taxes for Canadians, cut the GST from 7% to 5%, and took less money away from taxpayers, all while balancing the budget, making investments, and creating the largest infrastructure program in Canadian history to that point.

I am not sure how I could be any clearer. Indeed, the economic situation did create a deficit. We balanced the budget gradually and over time, while still putting money back in taxpayers' pockets. Unfortunately, we are back in the deficit spiral, which means that today, we are paying \$15 billion in interest, on top of the \$20-billion deficit this year and the \$25-billion or \$26-billion deficit from last year. For the people from Quebec who are listening today, that is equal to 53 Videotron Centres a year, and it will probably be the same next year. At this rate, every city and town in Quebec could have its own Videotron Centre.

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on the Liberal government's second budget implementation act of 2017.

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As with all legislation, members of Parliament must weigh the consequences not only of what is found in a budget implementation act, but also what is not included. It should come as no surprise to anyone that the government is not moving forward to lower the small business tax. That was promised in the 2015 election, but as I have pointed out, they broke their promise. Then after the great tax revolt of the summer of 2017, they had a revelation that breaking their promise to thousands of small business owners and then calling them all tax cheats was not a recipe to get re-elected.

While scouring the many parts of this proposed legislation, I thought that there might have been a line about how they would retract their ill-thought-out tax increases on local businesses, farmers, and entrepreneurs. Lo and behold, the government did not take this opportunity to provide clarification on the details of its tax increases and how it would be plucking more feathers out of the goose. The government's intention to raise taxes is causing great consternation among job creators throughout Canada.

The government likes to proclaim that it and it alone is responsible for any job creation, and in many respect it has been, as thousands of new individuals joined the ranks of the public service from across the country. For example, it has been estimated that the public service has grown by almost 10% in the national capital region since the Liberals formed government. While any government can go out and borrow money it does not have to create new full-time equivalents, we must always remember that such growth in these jobs is not sustainable.

There is an argument to be made that a government should stimulate the economy while in recession. However, it must also include a road map back to balanced budgets, as Prime Minister Harper predicted, and attained one year faster than his original plan. This brings me to the point that there are no measures included in the Liberals' proposed budget implementation act to get back to balance. It reminds me of the broken promise that the Liberals ran on in the 2015 election.

Some would say that the Liberals' election platform was one of the greatest works of fiction in recent memory. While it was not written nearly as eloquently as one would like, it was the platform, however, in which they made promises to Canadians.

During budget 2017, the Liberals projected a \$28.5-billion deficit for this fiscal year. This was almost triple their campaign promise of running a small \$10-billion deficit and that the budget would be back to balance in 2019. Finance Canada now says that if spending continues at the same pace, there will be no budget balance until 2051, which is almost 35 years.

Now the Liberals think they deserve kudos because their fall economic statement revealed that the deficit is only about \$20 billion to date. While not as bad as originally projected for this fiscal year, it is still a broken promise as per their election platform. As they would like to call it, balancing the budget in 2019 is under way, but with challenges.

The Liberals have tabled a budget implementation bill and are asking us to get behind their finance minister's financial plan. Normally this would be par for the course in a parliamentary democracy, but it was only earlier today that the Prime Minister gave

no clear answer to a point blank question on whether he would stand squarely behind the finance minister. What was most shocking was that it was a chance for the Prime Minister to publicly state he had full confidence in his finance minister, but he avoided giving a straight answer. This begs the question: If the Prime Minister will not defend his finance minister, why do members of the opposition trust anything the finance minister says?

There are many reasons for Canadians to be concerned about what is found in this omnibus bill. If the proposed legislation passes, it would allow Canada to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. This would mean the Government of Canada would be giving \$256 million over five years to that bank, even though Finance officials have stated that Canadians should not expect to see any financial dividends or return on this investment.

• (1730)

If the intent of the Liberal government is to send a quarter billion dollars to an Asian bank that will not see any financial gain, it can only lead those people who are questioning this deal to think there are ulterior motives behind this agreement. The government's priority to reach a free trade deal with the People's Republic of China should not be achieved using Canadian taxpayers' money, particularly when the money is being given to a bank located halfway around the world. At the end of the day, the government should not give loans to other countries when Canadians will be taking all the risks and seeing no rewards.

In this legislation, the Liberals are once again going after energy companies by repealing one of the tax credits for energy exploration. The government is phasing out the first one million dollars, and no longer will Canadian development expenses be allowed to be reclassified into Canadian exploration expenses. This change will have an impact on smaller and more up and coming drilling companies, exactly the ones that most rely on this tax credit. Ironically, this change was actually in the 2015 election platform. Raising taxes seems to be a promise the government is willing to keep. The government is more than willing to once again go after the energy sector, which employs hundreds of thousands of individuals either directly or indirectly, but it has no problem adding billions to our debt load while playing class warfare. This is all in the name of politics.

Government Orders

I cannot tip my hat to the government for another aspect of this legislation, it is trying to move the yardstick forward by eliminating many of the non-tariff barriers between provinces. Quite frankly, it is absurd that in many cases it is easier to ship and sell your products in a foreign country than to your provincial counterparts next door. While there has at least been some progress made to reduce interprovincial trade barriers, it should be noted that the list of exclusions to this agreement is almost as long as the agreement itself. I would prefer the Government of Canada to spend its time and energy on eliminating all interprovincial trade barriers than on attempting to woo the People's Republic of China.

It would be irresponsible of any member of this House to vote in favour of this bill. No member should endorse the government's budgetary plan. The government has completely eliminated any hope of ever balancing the budget. It has eliminated even the mere thought of having a plan to return to balanced budgets, and it is causing serious and unnecessary pain to Canadian businesses and our overall economy.

A government that spends more money than it brings in while the economy is growing is foolhardy. I have seen that personally when I spent my 14 years in the Manitoba legislature watching the NDP. The Liberal government is trying to outspend Manitoba's former NDP government. It is adding billions of dollars of new debt with not a lot to show for it. It should come as no surprise that the government is willing to waste taxpayers' money, such as spending over \$200,000 to design the cover of their budget document or half a million dollars to make the Canada Post building look like a present.

Let me say this. Canadians are mightily upset about the millions of dollars being spent to build a hockey rink where no one will get to play hockey. They have a finance minister that nobody trusts. They have budgetary numbers that no one believes and they have no plan to create real private sector economic growth, other than spending billions of dollars of taxpayers' money on pet projects.

I cannot, and will not, support this legislation as, in many respects, the government has failed Canadians. It has lost its way and, unfortunately, Canadians are left picking up the tab.

In the weeks ahead we will see if the finance minister will keep his job. It is my sincere hope that, in the best interests of all Canadians, they will stop piling on debt and attacking local businesses.

• (1735)

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite suggested there is not a lot to show for some of the federal spending. However, the Governor of the Bank of Canada disagrees and has called the Canada child benefit “highly stimulative”.

The member also talked about hopeless budgeting that no one believes, so I just want to read the following quote:

Taken from the perspective of the government sector as a whole (that is, federal and subnational governments and public pension plans combined), current fiscal policy in Canada is sustainable over the long term. Relative to the size of the economy, total government net debt is projected to remain below its current level over the long term....

However, this perspective masks unsustainable fiscal policy at the subnational level. While federal net debt is projected to be eliminated entirely in just over 40 years, we project that subnational government net debt will rise....

Current fiscal policy at the federal level is sustainable over the long term.

Of course, that was the parliamentary budget office in October of 2017. I wonder what the member has to say about that.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague across the way in the Liberal Party that the finance department of the Government of Canada has indicated that it would not even get rid of the deficit in 35 years, never mind getting rid of the debt in 40 years. I do not know whether the member has the ear of the finance minister or not, because his own department is telling Canadians that it will not even reduce the deficit for 35 years, as I said earlier.

I also believe, as I said, that if the governing party of Canada today continues the way it is going, it will outstrip the debt of Manitoba per capita, the province with probably the highest net debt per capita next to Ontario.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing in my riding that people have a lot of questions and concerns about is that the infrastructure money the government committed has not gotten out the door. They also hear that we are going to be investing half a billion dollars in an Asian infrastructure bank that will be used to develop or underwrite things like pipelines in Asia that will be run out of China.

Is the member hearing the same concerns from citizens in his riding and what might they be telling him about this particular aspect of the budget?

• (1740)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly hearing that from people in Brandon—Souris, my constituency, and throughout the Prairies, as I had an opportunity to be in a few provinces over the last few days. It is a sad irony that we would allow Canadian money to go into an Asian bank to build pipelines in a foreign country that has a ghastly environmental record, when we will not allow money to be used for pipelines in our own country. Very few pipelines will ever be built under the current government. The government is already halfway through its mandate. It has an infrastructure program that it talks a lot about, but three-quarters of the money promised in the election, including now for the infrastructure bank, has not even been used in Canada. If three-quarters of that promised money has not been used in Canada, why are we sending an equivalent amount to an Asian infrastructure bank? People are quite critical of this.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government talks a lot about the Canada child benefit. As one who understands finance and the economy, it is a pity that people believe that the Canada child benefit will lift the Canadian economy to the level that Liberals are talking about. Some reports suggest that 81% of the people the government is trying to help it is actually hurting.

I would ask my hon. colleague to comment on this point.

Government Orders

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

I had an opportunity to be with my grandchildren on the weekend in Calgary, and one of the young ladies who was there with her own children, a friend of my daughter, asked if I was Mr. Maguire. I said yes and she said she wanted to tell me to keep up the good work, because we have to get rid of that guy. I asked her to elaborate and she said we have to find a mechanism to get rid of the Liberal government. This lady is about 35 years old with a family. She is married, lives in Calgary, and has three small kids. She was bemoaning the fact that the government has taken away income splitting and the child tax credits.

If members want to find out what is actually happening on the ground, they should go to playgrounds. The people with kids will tell them.

The Deputy Speaker: I noticed a couple of looks when the hon. member for Brandon—Souris referred to his own name. The Standing Orders do not permit members to refer to other members in the House by anything other than their riding names or titles. The Standing Orders are silent, though, on whether members can refer to their own names, so we have tended to permit it. If members wish to invoke their own name in the course of their own remarks, that is perfectly acceptable.

[*Translation*]

I will now recognize the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as someone who is called Joël, I am pleased to rise today. I hope I will not be a lawless rogue.

I rise today to talk about a cartoon I saw yesterday evening that depicted Justin Trudeau receiving his report card from the Auditor General.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the hon. member that he cannot mention members of the House by name.

Mr. Joël Godin: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, that was my mistake.

The Prime Minister of Canada was being given his report card by the Auditor General of Canada, Michael Ferguson. The context is as follows. The Auditor General shows him a note with the following written on it: incompetence, lies, and unaccountable spending. That is written in the cartoon. Our famous rock star, and I am referring to the Prime Minister of Canada, is standing beside his wax sculpture at the Musée Grévin. He looks at himself in the mirror and says, well, that wax figure is not that bad.

That says a lot about the attitude of the Prime Minister and the government. That is our Prime Minister's priority, and what he thinks of the impartial officers of our Parliament.

Total disregard. He could not care less about the Auditor General of Canada, who evaluates how well Government of Canada departments and programs are doing.

Incidentally, in his latest round of reports, the Auditor General looked at the Phoenix pay system. There is no comprehensive governance structure to develop a sustainable solution to pay problems. The Auditor General himself mentioned that in his report.

The Liberals' only defence is to say that we, the previous government, are responsible, but it has been 16—no, 18—months since they gave it the green light, and they have still not found solutions to make sure our hard-working Canadian public servants get paid.

This is unacceptable. They are floundering. I do not know whether yesterday's vote on marijuana got them thinking, but they have not implemented anything and they still have no date. Public servants do not know it. Public servants have gifts to buy and mortgages to pay, but all they get from the government is radio silence. The Liberals have no solution.

That is serious. Their sole defence is to blame the former government for this fiasco. We were not the ones who gave it the green light. They were. They need to find solutions. Their job is to govern, although for the sake of all Canadians, I hope it is only for four years.

During yesterday's question period, and again today, the parliamentary secretary to finance answered opposition questions directed at the Minister of Finance. We are unable to get any answers to highly relevant questions about ethics and the appearance of conflicts of interest. We are asking questions and doing our job properly.

We are doing it so well that the commissioner recently fined the Minister of Finance \$200 for certain violations. The Liberals cannot say that they are following the rules and are guided by the commissioner. The 335 or so other members, and I hope there are no others on that side of the House, because we on this side are all in compliance, followed the rules and respected the commissioner's ethics.

It is ironic that the Minister of Finance has a bill here today that we are debating. I do not trust this minister. He is not capable of giving an answer. We would gladly move on to something else. We would love to get the economy moving forward. We would love to see programs and departments get the resources they need. Why does the minister refuse to answer yes or no? Once he does, we can move on to something else. They are the ones who refuse to answer.

The government introduced a bill several months ago. Yesterday, at third reading, we voted on the legalization of marijuana. The Liberals are unable to manage the public service pay system, and now they would have us believe that they are legalizing marijuana to protect our children and eliminate organized crime. I do not buy it. They have not proved that they are competent.

● (1745)

The real reason the government is in such a hurry to legalize marijuana by July 1, 2018, is the economic impact this will have. The government is in a tight spot and has backed itself into a corner with the budget. It has been spending money hand over fist but not seeing any results.

In 2019, the government will have a record to defend. Legalizing marijuana will do two things. First, it will allow the Liberals to recover a little more money to pay down their infamous deficit, since they promised to balance the budget by 2019. However, they are now realizing that the way they have been managing the public purse will not allow them to do that.

Government Orders

I have given four speeches in the House on marijuana. I said that the physical development of young people aged 18, 20, 21, or 22 is not yet complete, and that statement is based on studies conducted by psychologists, psychiatrists, and scientists. I am not a doctor, but all of the studies show that brain development is not complete until age 25. Why play Russian roulette with marijuana? I find that unacceptable.

Do my colleagues know why the government has set the legal age for marijuana use at 18? It is because they hope that in 2019, the young people who will have had the privilege of using marijuana legally will vote for them. The government has a hidden agenda. The Liberals are in financial trouble, and they want more votes. It is always smoke and mirrors.

Today, we are debating a second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures.

My introduction has been long, but I must say that the government is patting itself on the back. It is telling us that the Canadian economy is going well and that the Liberals are the champions of the economy. The way they see it, the Canadian economy has never been stronger. They need to come down to reality. It is true that the economy is doing well or at least it is not in such a bad shape. Luckily we are not in an economic crisis. What would we do if we were? It would be tragic.

We Conservatives have weathered an economic crisis. Under the leadership of Stephen Harper, Canada was the first country to emerge from the economic crisis and get back on its feet. Among the G20 countries, Canada was the first country to do so.

We need to be aware that we are now spending hand over fist. Occasionally we invest in an economy, which is perfectly fine in a fragile or precarious situation or an economic crisis. However, since we are not currently in a crisis, it is irresponsible for the government to be spending so recklessly.

The government is congratulating itself by saying that it is investing in the economy through its infrastructure programs. I have the privilege of being the deputy critic for infrastructure. Quebec municipalities do not know what to do with the program. The Liberals said that they would pay up to March 31, 2018, but they also said that there could be an extension until March 31, 2019, but only 40%. What we do not know is whether the 40% pertains to project completion or submission. Can we help out our regions by giving them some breathing room?

Since everyone is in a hurry, costs are increasing. There is no vision, because we want to have the money available right now. It is irresponsible. Who is going to pay yet again? It is Canadian taxpayers, that is who. Being responsible means thinking about the taxpayers and not raising their taxes. That is what we did for 10 years on this side of the House. As for the members on the other side of the House, they are raising taxes. At some point, our taxpayers will not be able to function anymore.

I would have liked to talk about several other aspects, but time is running out. I will take the time when I answer questions.

In closing, I would like to say that I do not feel that I can trust this Minister of Finance. He does not have the decency to answer the questions that opposition MPs and Canadians have for him. From now on, any bills he introduces will fuel my skepticism about him. He reacts only when his back is against the wall. Personally, I do not want to give this Minister of Finance a blank cheque. I do not trust him.

• (1750)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

My colleague had some very interesting things to say. He said that the government introduced proposals in this bill on marijuana in order to win the vote of 18-year-olds who smoke cannabis. That is totally ridiculous.

I am not a doctor or a philosopher, but I remember my philosophy classes. There is a concept called Occam's razor. According to that philosophy, there is no need to seek a complicated explanation that relies on principles outside of experience when a simple explanation based on existing knowledge adequately accounts for the phenomenon that we are experiencing.

Does my hon. colleague know that the current consumption rate in Canada, with the prohibition of cannabis, is the highest in the industrialized world? If we want to regulate access to this substance and eliminate or greatly reduce the profits of organized crime, the best way to do that is to legalize cannabis.

• (1755)

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, it has been quite a while since I studied philosophy, but my colleague from Hull—Aylmer was probably quite involved in that field.

I am not naive when it comes to marijuana. I am not saying that there is not a problem. I wish to remind my colleague from Hull—Aylmer that he could read over my speeches. In them I said that while we have a special situation and we need to find solutions, legalizing marijuana is a cowardly approach.

Let us simply put two very simple things in place: a more rigorous and better-equipped force to eliminate or reduce organized crime and, to protect our young people, awareness programs to encourage them to get involved in sports and the arts. As well, as I said in one of my speeches, we should encourage them to volunteer for the many organizations that they will run into during the holidays. They need young people and new blood. As a society, we need to be proud and encourage these people so that we can be even more enlightened in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have some interesting observations.

First, the member spoke on infrastructure, knowing that \$2 billion has not been rolled out in 2017. The government tried to announce a new housing strategy just last week, but the new housing strategy would really start after the next election, in 2020. It puts a tremendous onus on every province and territory in this country. They have not even been consulted; they were just told to divvy up.

Government Orders

The telltale sign of the government was today in question period when the Prime Minister would not even confirm that the current finance minister would deliver the next budget. That, to me, shows a lack of confidence, even on their own benches, that the finance minister is doing the job.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Indeed, that is strange, and I am not sure the government backbenchers are aware of what is going on in the front benches on the government side. It is important to understand that, yes, there is the national housing strategy, but with the tax reform, the Liberals are postponing everything and have said that they would cut corporate taxes to 9%, but not until 2019.

I invite my backbench Liberal colleagues to look closely at what is going on. The Liberals are managing their election, when really, they should be managing this country, Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about my journey this summer through my riding. It is very relevant to the budget implementation act tabled today and to what is not in the budget.

This summer I travelled my riding. It is 8,500 square kilometres. I did it by bicycle and by boat. People in my riding travelled with me, seniors, young people, leaders, chiefs, mayors, councillors. They rode with me from community to community. They came out to share what was important to them.

The reason I also did it by bicycle was because I tabled Bill C-312, an act to establish a national cycling strategy, on October 4, 2016. Members are probably wondering what the benefits are of a national cycling strategy and what that would do for Canadians.

The national cycling strategy would commit the federal government to set clear targets for the expansion of cycling-friendly infrastructure; encourage more Canadians to choose cycling as their mode of transportation; improve national safety standard measures such as side guard rails for trucks, support cycle tourism in Canada, which is one of the fastest-growing areas of tourism in the world; and increase education for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

Why is a national cycling strategy important? We need to take small steps and a multi-faceted approach to tackle the great challenges we face with soaring health care and infrastructure costs, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic congestion. Cycling is a sustainable transportation solution that is low cost, environmentally friendly, and encourages healthy living.

Therefore, Bill C-312 is a multi-faceted proposal to develop cycling options across our country. It addresses the social, economic, and environmental issues facing Canada today. It provides a plan for cycling infrastructure and education. It makes dollars and cents. With the rising costs of housing, gas and groceries, just to name a few, life is becoming increasingly unaffordable for many Canadians. Cycling is a sustainable solution offering to transportation, and we can make that happen. Therefore, we need to do more to make Canada a cycling nation.

I want to talk about a study that was recently done in Denmark. It shows that for every kilometre cycled, society enjoys a net profit of 23¢, whereas for every kilometre driven by car, it suffers a net loss of 16¢.

When I learned more about cycling in our country, what alarmed me was that in the Netherlands 50% of children would ride their bike to school. In Denmark, it is 40%. In Germany, it is 15%. In Sweden, it is 20%. In Canada, it is 2%. That is not because we live in this big, vast country, which one would think is the reason why. It is because 82% of Canadians live in an urban environment. In fact, 35% of Canadians live in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal alone. It is not because of our climate, because there is only a 1° difference between Stockholm and Toronto. It is because we have not made it a priority, set clear targets or made a commitment.

Let us look at the costs associated with health. I will give an example.

Heart disease in Canada costs us \$12 billion a year. A recent study done in Denmark shows that the people who ride their bikes to work reduce their risk of heart disease by 40%. Imagine finding a pill that could reduce costs from \$12 billion to \$8 billion just by simply taking it. That is cycling. We need to set clear targets. We need to create a marketing and education approach to get more people on bikes and bring all users of the road together.

As a former municipal councillor, I know this. If the federal government puts a dollar on the table designated specifically for active transportation, for cycling, we know the province will not leave a dollar on the table. We know a municipal government will not leave \$2 on the table. We know a local community group will not leave \$3 on the table.

This is supported by many groups. The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment has endorsed the need for a national cycling strategy as has Canada Bikes. The City of Toronto recently wrote a letter of support for Bill C-312 and the need for a national cycling strategy. In my riding, Port Alberni and Cumberland have also committed to that.

There was nothing in this bill that was specifically designated in the last budget, and the budget before, for cycling in Canada. Therefore, we need to do more.

● (1800)

I started my journey on August 22 in Hesquiaht, which is about two and a half hours north by boat from Tofino. I was the first MP in the history of our country to show up in Hesquiaht. I was received very well. I went with Chief Lucas. The people talked about the importance of conservation on their herring, the reality of low-income assistance rates, the high cost of transportation, and the complicated failure of our government to respect their rights by the Supreme Court to catch and sell fish.

Government Orders

We went to Hot Springs Cove after that, and we heard the same thing. Then we went to Ahousaht. We met with Chief Louie and his council. We heard from them about—

• (1805)

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate my hon. colleague's comments, but I believe we are supposed to be debating the amendment on the Asian infrastructure bank. I would like relevance on the issue.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margaret's for her intervention. I know the hon. member introduced the notion of relevance at the opening of his remarks. It did seem for a moment or two that he was well into describing the upcoming measures for, potentially, a private member's question that will be before the House at some point in the future. However, it does fall to the hon. member to incorporate how that set of ideas fits. I think he was just getting around to that when the point of order was raised. We will let him carry on. Of course, I ask him to keep those arguments relevant to the question before the House.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, the intervention could not have been more perfect, because we are talking about where the government is not spending its money. It is in my communities. It is spending \$500 million on the Asian infrastructure bank instead of infrastructure in Ahousat, in Hesquiatic, and in Hot Springs Cove, and I am not done yet.

As I travelled through my riding, all I heard about was neglect from the government and bad decisions. I went to Tofino. People there told me about the lack of investment for marine debris and the lack of investment now, today, for affordable housing. I went to Ty-Histanis and Esowista. In the Tla-o-qui-aht nation, people talked about the lack of commitment from the government to honour its promise to ensure indigenous people would be its most important relationship and would be treated like that.

We talked about social issues, including elder care, which was not in the budget. The money is going to Asia instead. We talked about addressing the lack of monitoring and science-based indigenous decision making not being supported.

I went from there to Macoah in the Toquaht nation. People there had not received the support for a community centre. In fact, we had our gathering under a 10x10 tent. I was received beautifully, despite our neglect as a nation for this community, with a feather, asking us to work with them. In fact, they were looking for transportation support so they could grow their economy and build a nation, and be part of this great story.

I went to the Ucluelet nation. The people there welcomed me warmly as well, calling for language revitalization and support for a higher learning economy. These are all good ideas in which we can invest in Canada. They talked about Parks Canada houses sitting empty in Ucluelet, which could be used for housing people when they had a housing shortage. Those houses are actually rotting and moulding instead.

The government's neglect is costing us not just money, but infrastructure, which is available right now.

I went from there to the Huu-ay-aht First Nations. I met with Chief Dennis. He talked about the amount of children living in care, and the lack of investment from the government.

It is humiliating and embarrassing to hear that the government is concerned about what I am talking about today and is calling me out for that when it is investing in Asia instead.

I went from there to Bamfield. People there talked about the lack of investments and support for their institution and how they needed more.

I travelled to the Alberni Valley and met with Chief Tatoosh and the Hupacasath. We talked about the need for salmon restoration and EI eligibility for fishers. They received nothing from the government's coastal restoration fund and nothing from its oceans protection plan.

I travelled throughout the riding. I went and saw the STseshah. I went to Hilliers and Nanoose Bay, to Coombs, to Parksville, to Qualicum, to Bowser, to Denman Island, Hornby Island, to Royston, Union Bay, Cumberland, and Courtenay. When I went to the Qualicum nation, and all those communities, they all said the same thing. They felt they had been ignored. They felt the government's priorities were completely out of order.

That intervention just said it all. The government wants us to talk about an infrastructure bank in Asia, instead of here in Canada, while people are suffering, living a meagre existence, and being totally forgotten. Seniors are being neglected. The lack of commitment from the government in my riding is clearly evident, where we have one of the highest poverty rates in the country, the highest in British Columbia, and in the Alberni Valley where one third of the children are living in care.

• (1810)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a little perplexed about the reference to money going into Asia. In the last federal election, in a pamphlet called "Building the country of our dreams", my friend's party outlined investments of up to \$600 million in foreign aid. I am quite perplexed that those members are coming back today, saying that it is outrageous that money is going into Asia.

He needs to look a bit deeper into what these funds are going for and really reflect on where his party has been on bringing Canada back into the world. The commitments of the New Democrats in the last election clearly alluded to the fact that they too were willing to spend that kind of money. Today they are basically demonizing foreign aid. That is quite offensive.

My friend really needs to reflect on what he says because as a party, the New Democrats have been quite clear that foreign aid and our place in the world is quite important.

Government Orders

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, it would be great if this money were going to foreign aid, but it is not. It is going to an infrastructure bank, money that could be invested in our communities. Alberni valley needs urgent investments for our port, which would create hundreds of jobs. That would be great for the Canadian economy. We could honour our commitment to Canada's indigenous peoples and ensure they would have investments so they could be part of this great story. Instead Canadians are living in poverty, and that costs a lot of money.

If it were about aid, the Liberals would be following up on their commitment to grow the GDP and our commitment internationally. Our party has been calling for that. The Liberals are dropping their commitment to aid. They are failing the United Nations and they are failing people who really need a lift up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech. It is obvious how much he cares about his riding, his constituents, and the issues that matter to them. I sincerely congratulate him on the figures he presented, including his cycling statistics. I was recently in Copenhagen, and I saw how incredibly popular cycling is there. He is quite right; we should be trying to bring forward these kinds of measures, rather than spreading ourselves too thin with all kinds of pipe dreams.

He mentioned the child poverty rate in his riding. As the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, I know that 37% of our kids, so over one-third, live in families that are living under the poverty line in Longueuil. The government seems to be turning a blind eye to the problem. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

When we see the government investing \$5 million in a skating rink on the front lawn of Parliament Hill, we know where its priorities lie. Does my colleague agree?

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, we are hearing about a temporary skating rink being built right here on the lawn of Parliament. It is going to cost over \$215,000 a day, while in my riding, a third of the children are living in poverty.

Today I rose on a statement to call on the government to change the requirements for the Canada learning bond so every child could be registered. We know education is the most important indicator to help lift people out of poverty. However, instead of the government trying to get more children registered, is making it difficult.

We need to find ways to lift children out of poverty and make it a priority. It is a multifaceted approach. Health is one, education is the other, and housing is critical as we know. I call on the government to listen to what we are saying today, to make children a priority. Lifting every child out of poverty should be our utmost priority.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the member talks about poverty, why then did he vote against the Canada child benefit, which literally lifted tens of thousands of children out of poverty? Why did the member vote against the guaranteed income supplement, which lifted tens of thousands of seniors out of poverty? Many of those thousands of

Canadians are his own constituents. Did he tell his constituents that he voted against measures to address poverty head-on?

• (1815)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, first, I voted against a middle-class tax break that did not include 17.9 million Canadians. Anyone who earns \$45,000 a year or less get nothing. I will not support a tax cut where people who earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year get a \$700 tax break and most of the people living in my riding get nothing.

Second, when it comes to child care, there was nothing in that budget to build a national child care plan, which is good for the economy, good for families, and good for the health of our country.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour to be able to speak in the House on this important issue, and Canadians are engaged on this issue. Canadians are realizing the serious problem that Canada has with a government that has a serious spending problem. The spending problem is actually getting worse. I am not going to spend time going over the growing list, but I did see Santa Claus over the weekend and it is confirmed that the Prime Minister is on the naughty list. What he is doing is not good for Canada, it is actually bad for Canada.

The Fraser Institute recently reported that 81% of middle-class families are paying more under the Ottawa Liberal government. That is an average of \$840 more every year under the current government. It is not good news. First, the Liberals eliminated the child fitness tax credit, unbelievable. Then the children's art tax credit, the tax credit for post-secondary education and textbooks, and income splitting for families. Now it is found that they are going after children with autism and diabetes, and they are going after seniors. It is endless, and is all happening because of this horrendous spending problem and a growing debt.

I listened to a youth advisory board of our bright young leaders, and they are also not happy with the direction the government is going. They recognize the government is focusing on where it can get votes and not necessarily doing the right thing. It spends a lot of money and makes announcements. In fact, it was the commissioner of the environment who made a comment that the government makes bold announcements but before the confetti hits the ground it forgets those promises. The government has a hard time getting to the finish line. That was something that was said in 2005 by the commissioner of the environment, then a Liberal government.

The government has said it is back. Absolutely it is back. It is back in entitlement, corruption, and wasting Canadian taxpayers' hard-earned money. However, it is back to a new level, where it is actually calling hard-working Canadians "tax cheats". It has introduced a budget to fund this out-of-control foolish spending. Canadians are saying that this is wrong, and they do not want us, as members of Parliament, to support this out-of-control spending.

Government Orders

I have just come from an important meeting at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. It is important we give our youth a future of prosperity, a future where there are jobs. The government is all excited about making announcements, but again is not getting things done. The government wants to travel, and was quite upset that the Conservatives said no. We heard that in the last Parliament there was travel on accessibility, but it wants to travel again.

The Liberals like to travel, report, and make announcements. It is time to get things done and create jobs for our youth. Our youth are quite upset about this growing debt, mega billions of dollars of debt that will have to be paid by them. They are also upset with tax increases on small business, which is an attack on the very economic engine that creates jobs for our youth. Our youth is not happy with the Liberal government's budget implementation plan.

There are also seniors, and we have heard from the parliamentary secretary about how good they have done. Again, we have these bold announcements. However, when we dig down, we find that the Liberal plan for seniors is actually going to save the government approximately \$4 billion a year because of the way they have structured this and the clawing back of benefits to seniors.

• (1825)

For families, the middle class, and hard-working Canadians who are trying to join the middle class, the Liberals keep moving the goalposts further and further away, all the while making these bold announcements with spaghetti. Even the announcement that was made last week about the housing plan, the greatest plan in Canadian history, is if the provinces provide a majority of the funding. This is if the Liberals get re-elected, and Canadians want corruption and entitlement to continue. Therefore, the plan goes nowhere, because it is not worth the paper it is written on. It is not a real plan.

In addition to all of this, the big promise that the government wants to create is to have marijuana legalized and have impaired drivers put on our roads. However, that is not what the Liberals say. They say that marijuana legalization is to take drugs out of children's hands and take it out of the hands of organized crime. How is the government going to take marijuana out of the hands of our children to make it safer for our children? They would allow 12-year-old children to walk around with 15 joints. Right now, it would be confiscated, but the government's plan is that it would not be confiscated anymore and that they will be able to carry it around. There is this detachment from logic where the Liberals are saying that they would take it out of the hands of children, but the legislation would permit them to walk around with 15 joints.

Once a person turns 18, they would be able to walk around with 90 joints. Therefore, if we take a 19-year-old with buddies and let us say that they roll their joints pretty big, then instead of 90 joints they will have 75 joints. These are premium joints. If there were four people in the car, at 75 joints each, that is 300 joints. Now with three people driving around in a car, the government would be creating a distribution network with marijuana, and I am not making this up. It is bizarre. This is the new Canadian economy. This is why police forces are really expressing concern.

Is this new, open, and transparent government listening? No. We have an ice rink out front of the Prime Minister's office, and that is for right now, but for Canada Day, we are going to have marijuana legalized. These are the wonderful announcements that the government is making, and it does not make sense. It is not good for Canada. It is not good for the Canadian economy. Obviously, the government, to get drugs out of the hands of our children, would allow them to carry around vast amounts of marijuana, which is illogical.

What are the Liberals going to do to make sure our streets are safer? We should be learning from Colorado. When we have people out on the road with legalized marijuana, it cannot be confiscated, it will be legal in their possession. What happened to the roads in Colorado? What will happen to the roads in Canada? Well, it is going to get worse. There will be increased deaths, and it will be chaos. We heard the Liberals say that it will be chaos, yet they are moving forward, and this chaos cannot happen soon enough. Surely the health officials, police forces, and chiefs of departments would be listened to. No. The government set this July 1 date.

We have an economy where the Liberals adopted a surplus budget of \$2 billion, but now they have a growing deficit of mega billions, and this is all going to be passed on to the next generation. The Prime Minister is going to be going around and skating on his private ice rink, and he will be able to go to Paradise Island. The finance minister is in good shape. However, the Canadian taxpayers are being called tax cheats and told they need to pay more. It is a mess. This is what the Liberal government, the Ottawa Liberals, want us to vote for.

The number of phone calls and emails that I get continues to grow month after month, and they are asking what is happening here, and what is happening to their money. We are not supporting our veterans. We are not even supporting our seniors. It is a mess, and the obvious, logical solution is to vote against that bad bill.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Langley—Aldergrove started off his speech by talking about travel and how committees wanted to travel and that the Conservatives were so good at putting their foot down.

At the beginning of this fall session, I had the opportunity to travel with that member to eastern Europe and Ukraine. We learned on that trip about the amazing work that our men and women in uniform are doing throughout the world. That member took great satisfaction out of that trip and learned from the experiences that we experienced as a committee together.

My question is: Is travel only beneficial when it is somewhere that he wants to go, or does he think that it is specific to a particular committee that he happens to be on?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the travel to Brussels, Latvia, and Ukraine in nine days was a wonderful, edifying, educating experience. It was a brutal trip where there was no stopping. It was go, go, go, and many of us came back sick. Was it ever educational. It was an amazing trip that came on the recommendation of the shadow minister for defence. He serves on national defence committee that is somewhat non-partisan—

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: A Conservative wanted the trip.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Liberal member to listen for a moment. He asked his question.

I appreciated that trip, but that travel does not happen every year. In the last Parliament we had a trip on accessibility and the Liberals wanted to travel some more. They did it last year and they said they wanted to do it again. Canadians are saying no, that if we already have the information, we do not need to travel anymore. We need to get to work and solve the problems.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from British Columbia for bringing up “skategate”. Almost nobody from British Columbia ridings is going to use the temporary skating rink that will cost Canadians \$5.6 million, or \$215,000 a day, and located a block away from the world’s longest skating rink, the Rideau Canal.

Groups that are looking for funding for salmon, an important resource for British Columbians, for our economy, for our food security, for our well-being are getting denied. I just received an email from the Clayoquot Salmon Roundtable. They received nothing from the coastal restoration fund and the oceans protection plan. West Coast Aquatic, a great group of stakeholders representing all sectors of the fishing industry, received nothing as well.

Maybe the member could speak to how important it is that we get funding for our fish if they are going to get a temporary skating rink here in Ottawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, that is a big question and the big answer is the Liberals are not spending wisely the dollars that are sent here in trust by hard-working Canadian taxpayers.

Canadians want Parliament to do a better job. They want this Parliament to vote against the way the Liberals are spending their money. It is not the Liberals’ money. It is not the Prime Minister’s money. It is not the finance minister’s money. It is hard-working Canadians’ money, and they are overtaxed and under-represented.

I challenge Liberal members to start representing their communities. When their constituents say they want them to vote a certain way, then that is what they should do. They should not discipline members who do not vote the way the Prime Minister tells them to vote.

• (1830)

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I consider myself very honoured to represent the people of Tobique—Mactaquac. I can honestly say that the people of Tobique—Mactaquac are very well represented. The people of Atlantic Canada spoke very clearly during the last election and they would also agree that Atlantic Canadians as a whole are well represented in the House.

We talk about what Canadians want. I had the opportunity to listen to my hon. colleague pontificate at length in the committee meeting just a little while ago. Does he think that the manner in which he represented himself and his constituents in that meeting represents the best interests of Canadians? Does he think that is what his constituents would want him to be doing here on their behalf in Ottawa?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I believe all of us have a responsibility to be available to our constituents, to listen to our

constituents, and to represent our constituents. I introduced a motion that a meeting be dedicated to study job opportunities for youth and taking care of our aging population.

It was turned down by the committee, a partisan committee, directed right from the Prime Minister’s Office, and Canadians do not like that. The member knows that the Prime Minister promised that this was not going to happen, that committees were not going to be run by the Prime Minister’s Office. However, that is exactly what is happening now. The Prime Minister is directing the desired outcome, and the members of the committees are making sure that what the Prime Minister wants is what the Prime Minister gets.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that I have been in this Parliament for 20 years. During that period of time, members of Parliament were elected on this side of the House, on that side of the House, on every side of the House, and it keeps changing. I can assure the member that everybody represents their constituency very well, including that member. That is why he was elected. This is not about of the issue of representation. We are all representing our ridings, and we are all doing a great job for our constituents.

As my colleague said quite clearly, I have been in the government. I do know from experience, having been in the government, that policies and issues are made by the government, by the PMO, by those things, and they direct that.

During the summer, the Liberal government came out and tried to raise taxes on all these things, and it was spending money. There was a big push-back from Canadians. We could see them changing. There was a push-back because Canadians are worried. They are worried about their jobs, number one. They are worried about where the government is going with its economic agenda and with the TPP.

The government did not attend a meeting with our allies, and what a shame when the government is saying we are back on the world stage. Talking about NAFTA and where it is going, talking about pipelines not being built, not pushing to have pipelines built, this creates uncertainty across the country. Even the NDP leader in Alberta is talking about jobs and jobs.

The question that arises out of this is where the Liberals are taking us. We are concerned. Everybody out there is talking about the wasteful spending on the ice rink, the \$5 million. Things like that really bother Canadians all across this country, and they are asking if the government is really in charge.

Canadians saw the Panama papers come out, and the Liberals’ rich friends put money away so they do not have to pay taxes, while the government wants ordinary Canadians to pay taxes, while taking away the disability credit for diabetics and others. There is a big concern out there.

Today, while I am talking on that subject, Canadians want the government to address the issues in Canada. That is what they want. There are a lot of jobs being lost. The economy is not doing well—actually, it is doing well, but the Liberals are spending all the money.

Government Orders

The question that arises for Canadians is what is there for the future. In this bill—which really concerns us, aside from the fact of all the other money that the Liberal government is spending—is the \$500 million going to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In 1966, we joined the Asian Development Bank. The Asian Development Bank is another bank that is supposed to do infrastructure spending. Canada has contributed \$7.5 billion during that period of time, up until today, not to say that in return Canadian companies have been awarded close to \$715 million. However, there is a bank there that we have been associated with for such a long time, which has been doing the development assistance program in Asia.

Here come the Chinese—and I say to the Chinese, they are absolutely right, they are welcome to set up their infrastructure bank, but they should do it with their own money. They should not ask Canadians to pay for their foreign policy issues.

This infrastructure bank is designed to promote the foreign policy issues of China. Look at where the infrastructure bank has given its money. It has given its money to Bangladesh, it has given its money to Indonesia, it has given its money to Tajikistan, and it has given its money to Uzbekistan, countries surrounding China. That is because this fits into China's foreign policy.

I am not putting down what the Chinese want to do; they can go ahead and do it, but do it with their own money. Why would we, here, have our money go to promote the foreign policy of another country, when we could use that money here in this country to address the issues that Canadians want addressed? This is the big question that is being raised out there.

Let me say this again. There is a concern here. This policy of giving money to the infrastructure bank in China is something that is not well thought out, because we have a problem here with the Liberals, who are being over-friendly with China.

● (1835)

There is the concern about the free trade agreement with China. The previous government talked about a free trade agreement with India for years, a country that has similar values and is a democracy like Canada, but now the Liberals are going to sign a free trade agreement with China that is causing concern, because there is no level playing field between the Chinese and Canadians. The Chinese can invest here and we can go there, but there is no level playing field. Ask any Canadian business in China or Chinese businesses here. It is a common question.

The Prime Minister is going to China. The one big concern I have is that the Chinese government is saying that the Liberal government is biased toward China as opposed to other countries. When Conservatives were in government, we had a strategic dialogue with India, which has a democracy similar to Canada, to find common ground. The Liberal government has not done anything about it. It has had a strategic dialogue with China. A second dialogue was held with China. Our system of democracy is different. The Chinese have their own system, which is for the Chinese people to decide, and we have our own system. There is no compatibility. What is the point of having a strategic dialogue with a country that is pursuing its own foreign policy? Are we just riding its coattails? Do we not have our

own policy? Can we not stand on our own feet and make our own decisions in this country? Why do we have to follow, just because the Prime Minister's father was a very big fan of China? That does not allow us to just close our books and look other ways.

There are big issues being raised in this country on the direction the Liberal government is going. The Prime Minister said we are on the world stage. For example, this afternoon, the Minister of International Trade talked about a historic visit to India. Imagine that, a historic visit to India. Before the Liberals came to this House, the prime minister of Canada visited India twice, the governor general visited India, and there were countless visits by other foreign ministers, yet for the Liberals, it is a historic visit. Come on, we need to get some sense of where the government is going and pay attention to what has been done, because thousands of bureaucrats and public servants have worked very hard over the years to ensure that we have very good standing around the world.

Of course, the biggest blowback was from the Prime Minister not showing up at the TPP negotiations. Imagine that. Other heads of government were there. Who are we? Think about that. Who are we to brush them aside? Let me get straight what the Prime Minister said. He said we are not ready. There is a department sitting there. The government has had negotiations on the TPP, so how can the Prime Minister suddenly say that we are not prepared? Liberals are not prepared, because they are looking for a free trade agreement with China. Is that why they are doing this? It is about time someone pointed out to the Liberal government that whatever direction it is heading, it is not the direction Canadians want it to go.

● (1840)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it may have escaped the hon. member, but the relationship with our current largest trade partner is a little rocky, and the response we have had from the other side so far has been complete capitulation, that we should lie down, let them roll over us, and see if we can save something in it, as opposed to looking at a very large, very rich, growing market on the other side of the Pacific that has already demonstrated that it likes the products and services that come from Canada.

Compared with his strategy, does he not think developing new markets, especially in a country that wants to do business with us, as opposed to one that does not seem to, make sense?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, talking about NAFTA and the policy of capitulation is the Liberals' talking point. The fact of the matter is that we were negotiating the TPP, which is larger than anything else, and they walked away from it. When they want to look for new markets, they will take the opportunity to look for new markets, yet we are turning a blind eye to the fact that the Chinese have different rules. Their labour rules are different, their environmental rules are different, and the way they operate is different. They are not compatible with a free market. Why does the government want to open up Canada's markets to a country whose environmental and labour regulations do not match ours, giving it the advantage and us the disadvantage. That is not the right policy for trade.

Government Orders

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to a great speech by my colleague from Alberta, one of the only guys in the Alberta caucus who has been here longer than I have. I certainly appreciate his wisdom. He has been here a long time.

He has been here so long, could he remind all of our colleagues in the House of the fiscal position the Liberal government inherited from the previous Conservative government? Based on the tax position at the time, we were going to be debt free as a nation by the year 2055 versus having about \$1.3 trillion in debt based on the current government's strategy. Could he remind Canadians of the importance of that?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for bringing up our record. The Liberals always take credit for everything we did. We laid the foundation for a good economic base in this country, as my colleague said, and the Liberals want to say they did everything. They have only been in power for two years. All they have done is create uncertainty in the minds of Canadians.

We were going to balance the budget. Jim Flaherty was one of the best finance ministers Canada ever had, bringing us into account. I want to tell the other side clearly and simply that it was because of the base built by the Conservatives that we are enjoying economic growth today, yet the Liberals are putting us in jeopardy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, somebody has to get up and say something. It is true that the member there at that time. I was in the previous Parliament too, and I can say that we often found the Conservative government's policies to be very tiresome and miserly with respect to many issues, especially social issues.

However, does the member not agree with me that the famous sunny ways of the government's election campaign have turned into a form of arrogance, or entitlement? The government has decided to set up a large skating rink in front of Parliament. It believes that China is really important. It is spending money hand over fist. It is accumulating a monstrous deficit. There is also the behaviour of the Minister of Finance, which has left everyone scratching their heads. How can they be so arrogant and believe that the rules do not apply to them? I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

• (1845)

[*English*]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, of course, we are Conservative and they are NDP. We definitely have differences on the economy. There is no question about that. However, let me say that I agree with him one-hundred per cent that it is an arrogant government, a government that feels it is entitled to all these things. We see time after time the Liberals not listening to anyone. I one-hundred per cent agree with my colleague that in 2019, Canadians will speak.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear that the Conservatives have the nerve to bring up their economic record, every year of which they were in deficit except

one, with the lowest growth since the Great Depression, and huge unemployment.

I was more shocked to see the NDP suggest cutting funds for the largest housing project in Canadian history, money for low-income seniors, money for low-income students, the national child credit that has brought 300,000 children out of poverty, and the working income tax credit. These are all investments that have created the highest employment record in a decade, with the highest economic growth.

Could the member talk about something that is not his talking points?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong. I do not know what he is talking about. He is talking from his talking points without telling us all he is reading.

Let me say very clearly that the member's government is putting a huge burden on Canadians with this deficit. The Liberals said during the election campaign there would only be a \$10 billion deficit. At this time, we have no idea where the deficit is going.

The legacy of the former government is not as the member is saying, but the legacy that Canadians will carry for years and years is the high debt load that the Liberals are putting on young Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:46 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. Call in the members.

• (1920)

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 5.

• (1925)

(The House divided on Motion No. 5, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 408)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauult	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lauson (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Marcil
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nantel	Nicholson
Obhrai	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Rankin	Rayes

Reid
Richards
Sansoucy
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Stetski
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Sweet
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Stanton
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Viersen
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Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Chen
Cornier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhalival
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	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Holland	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauson (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)	
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Érables)
Soeurs	
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard

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Poissant
Ratansi
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Sajjan
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Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Qualtrough
Rioux
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Shanahan
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Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

Pauzé
Poilievre
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Sansoucy
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 5 defeated.

[*English*]

The Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 6.

• (1935)

(The House divided on Motion No. 6, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 409*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif
Albrecht
Anderson
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Benzen
Bernier
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Cannings
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Doherty
Dubé
Dusseau
Eglinski
Fast
Gallant
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hoback
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Laverdière
Lloyd
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson

Albas
Allison
Angus
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Bergen
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boulterice
Brassard
Calkins
Caron
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Davies
Diotte
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Fortin
Garrison
Gill
Godin
Hardcastle
Hughes
Johns
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Marcil
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nantel
Obhrai

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Cornier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hébert
Holland
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lockhart
Longfield
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bains
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Brisson
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Hehr
Hussen
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Long
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Murray
Ng
Oliphant

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Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Cormier
Dabrusin
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Dhillon
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El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
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Gould
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Hardie
Hébert
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Hutchings
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Jordan
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
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Lockhart
Longfield
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May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
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Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
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Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Paradis
Peterson
Picard
Qualtrough
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O'Regan
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Petitpas Taylor
Poissant
Ratansi
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Sajjan
Sangha
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 6 defeated.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (on behalf of the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-63, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, be concurred in at report stage.

The Speaker: 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 ye.

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:

• (1940)

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

(*Division No. 410*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bains
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Brisson
Carr

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Anderson
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Benzen

NAYS

Members

Albas
Allison
Angus
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Bergen

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Bernier	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauil	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Marcil
Mathysen	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nantel
Nicholson	Obhrai
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Plamondon	Poilievre
Quach	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Tilson
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the delay, there will be no private members' business hour today. Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting, and I apologize for breaking the hearts of so many members.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

● (1950)

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to finally have the opportunity to address an issue that I raised in the House regarding the government's attack on farmers through its proposed changes to tax planning measures that it introduced this past summer.

While the government has finally come to its senses and made some necessary changes, I still have some very serious concerns. When the government held consultations on and announced these measures—during the busiest time of the year for farmers, I might add—farmers across Canada were scrambling to understand what the changes could mean for their family farms. During a round table in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, it was suggested that the changes being proposed would have a considerable impact on AgriInvest, a program used by a number of farmers to set money aside for a rainy day.

On three different occasions in the House, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food about how the proposed changes would effect the passive income that farmers across Canada have saved in their AgriInvest accounts. Not once did the parliamentary secretary even mention the term “AgriInvest” in any of his answers. He simply dismissed the very serious and real concerns of farmers. I suspect he does not know a thing about AgriInvest.

I can say that farmers did not and do not appreciate being treated like tax cheats or having to fight tooth and nail to have the government finally listen to them. To have a representative of the government not even address a very real and serious concern about a specific federal program, in my mind and the minds of many, is shameful.

Furthermore, the parliamentary secretary went so far, in one of his answers, as to address the new Canadian Agricultural Partnership, which actually cuts the AgriInvest program. Under the new agreement, beginning in 2018, the maximum limit for farmers to contribute will be reduced by \$500,000. In addition, the new agreement will see a \$5,000 decrease for matching contributions from the government for AgriInvest accounts. Therefore, not only is the government limiting what farmers may contribute to their accounts, but it is also decreasing the amount of support farmers may receive from the government.

It is very disappointing to see the government make cuts to a tried-and-true program like AgriInvest. This is an important program that allows farmers to create a safety net for themselves with their own money, to save for a rainy day, or to invest in new equipment. In response to these changes, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Mr. Keith Currie, said, “We need those safety net programs..to be as good as they can be to help support us.” Furthermore, when asked about the changes to AgriInvest, Mark Brock, chairperson of Grain Farmers of Ontario, said, “With the exception of Crop Insurance, AgriInvest is the only program, within the suite of risk management programs, that works well for our farmer-members...”

Adjournment Proceedings

Given all of this, I would like to ask the government whether it actually understands how AgriInvest works and why it would make AgriInvest a target of taxation and then a target for cuts.

I want to make one point on this before I sit down. The Government of Canada, through the agriculture minister and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, actually encouraged farmers to do this and then pulled the rug out from underneath them. Is that really fair? I do not think so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I am pleased to address this issue because it gives me the opportunity to highlight the high priority that our government places on Canada's dynamic agriculture and food industry.

I want to begin by reassuring the House that hard-working small business owners, including family farmers, are not the focus of the government's proposed tax changes involving private corporations. I particularly want to reassure them that the proposed changes will not apply to AgriInvest income. AgriInvest is a savings account in which producers receive matching contributions from federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Producers can use their AgriInvest accounts as they see fit. Government contributions are taxed only when producers withdraw funds from their savings account.

Under the existing tax system, investment income placed in an AgriInvest account is treated as active business income. The government intends to continue with that approach. In other words, the tax treatment of AgriInvest will remain unchanged.

Our priority is to ensure tax fairness while avoiding unforeseen consequences for hard-working farmers. During the consultations, we heard that the proposed measures regarding the lifetime capital gains exemption and the conversion of income into capital gains could be bad for farming families, particularly as they might prevent farm owners from passing on their business to their children.

We want family farms to stay in family hands. That is why the government will not be moving forward with the proposed measures to limit individual access to the lifetime capital gains exemption or regarding the conversion of income into capital gains. In the meantime, farm owners will continue to be eligible for a lifetime capital gains exemption of up to \$1 million for farm property.

We want farming families to succeed. That is why the government will continue to support programs like AgriInvest. We will continue to make sure all family farm owners can pass on the fruits of their labour to the next generation.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague across the way trying to respond to this. However, I can say that the farmers in my riding are very unhappy with the cuts to AgriInvest, and they do not at all feel like they have been consulted. Farmers across Canada do not understand where these cuts are coming from.

Earlier I quoted the Ontario Federation of Agriculture president Keith Currie. When he was asked about consultation on changes to AgriInvest, he had this to say: "There really wasn't any consultation

on it. There wasn't any discussion amongst the provincial agriculture ministers." Furthermore, Mark Brock, chairperson for the Grain Farmers of Ontario, said, "It seems to fly in the face of co-operation when...they start monkeying with the programs before we even get to the review process."

It has been a common theme for the government to keep farmers in the dark. I am asking the Minister of Agriculture to come clean as to why these cuts to AgriInvest were made and if he would commit today to reversing them when the government launches its full review of risk management programs.

● (1955)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to reassure the House that hardworking small business owners, including owners of family farms, will not be affected by the government's proposed corporate tax changes. Our priority is to ensure tax fairness while avoiding unforeseen consequences for hard-working farming families. The government will not be changing tax measures aimed at helping family businesses grow, create jobs, and innovate.

Last week, the government announced its intention to help small businesses even more by committing to lowering the small business tax rate from 10.5% to 9% by January 1, 2019. Farmers and small business owners, who are the backbone of our economy and our main job creators, will be able to reinvest the additional federal tax savings in growing their business.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege for me to rise in the House of Commons to talk about the importance of official languages and the role of the official languages commissioner, Canada's bilingualism watchdog and protector of official language communities across the country.

On June 21, everyone was talking about the botched appointment of Madeleine Meilleur, which was a disaster for official languages and official language communities all over Canada. At that time, I asked the Prime Minister a question about this extremely important position and the Madeleine Meilleur appointment fiasco because it did not take us long to realize how partisan the appointment was. We asked the Prime Minister and the heritage minister why she continued to outdo herself.

Adjournment Proceedings

As I said yesterday evening, we were without an official languages commissioner for four days. Finally, the heritage minister woke up and extended Ghislaine Saikaley's term as acting commissioner for another six months. That time is almost up. If I am not mistaken, her term expires on December 15, which is in three weeks, and we still do not have an official languages commissioner.

This is what former commissioner Graham Fraser, whose own term was extended and who held the position for some 10 years, had to say about it:

I think that this is an example of a bungled appointment process. I can only think that it reflects a lack of attention, lack of concern for the issue...for the question of official languages.

Graham Fraser dispensed with neutrality and used harsh words. "Lack of attention" and "lack of concern" are very serious words, but they are fitting because he had sent a letter to the Prime Minister a full year before his term expired advising him of his departure and recommending that he take the appointment process very seriously and not wait until the last minute.

Unfortunately, almost one year after his departure, we still do not have a Commissioner of Official Languages. There are barely three weeks left to fill this position, to properly consult the opposition leaders, to appear before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, and finally, for the House to be able to vote in favour of the next Commissioner of Official Languages.

My question is quite simple. Why is the government dragging its heels? Why did it take the government a year to do things properly? What is going on? Why is it so difficult to follow this process properly?

• (2000)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for the question.

As my colleague knows, on July 28, the government relaunched the process for appointing the Commissioner of Official Languages. We sent a document to the leader of his party.

My colleague complains about a lack of consultation with his party and his leader, but we sent him a document that I have here with me entitled, "Commissioner of Official Languages — Selection Process to Appointment — Key Stages".

As the NDP critic for official languages, my colleague from Drummond received a copy of that document. It is not some big secret.

The document indicates:

Selection Process—Launch

A selection committee is established to manage the process with the support of a search firm

The selection committee members, a majority of whom are public servants, is composed of one representative (senior official) from each of the following:

the Privy Council Office

the Treasury Board

Justice Canada

Department of Canadian Heritage

the Prime Minister's Office

the Office of the Minister of Canadian Heritage

...Leaders of the parties in both Houses of Parliament are invited to promote the opportunity to potential candidates, provide their input on stakeholder engagement and highlight qualities the selection committee should consider. This input will be shared with the selection committee.

That is a quotation from the document that he and his leader both received. The document indicates that we invited his leader to provide input at the beginning of the process. It is very clear in the document.

[*English*]

Once the process has been launched it then goes forward to an assessment, where the search firm screens the applicants against the criteria in the notice of appointment opportunity. There is a recommendation from among the qualified candidates upon review of the documentation provided by the selection committee. The Minister of Canadian Heritage submits the recommended candidate to the Minister of Justice, who then recommends the candidate to the Prime Minister.

There is then a parliamentary process. Consultations take place with the leaders and with the official languages critics, including my friend from Drummond, to inform them about the proposed candidate for nomination and to seek their input. Then there is the nomination and then the appointment.

All of this is clearly set out in a two-page document that was provided to my friend and to his leader back in July. There can be no lack of clarity around the process. It is there in black and white.

It is in process and we will, through this process, find the person who is best qualified to be the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Official languages are at the core of our identity as a country and are a priority of this government.

• (2005)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, in reply to my adorable colleague, who gave a good explanation of what he did, I then sent a letter signed by my leader. I never received a response to my suggestions and to my main recommendation concerning compliance with the Official Languages Act.

My colleague said that we were informed. It is not about informing us, but about consulting the opposition leaders. That is in the law and it was not done.

At #ONfr, journalist Benjamin Vachet said the following, found in the section "The Process Called into Question":

Despite this future appointment, in the hallways, many are questioning the appointment process that was relaunched in July. Candidates who applied in this second round have said that they were not contacted and are wondering if new applications were considered, or if it was simply a public relations exercise.

There are barely three weeks left in the appointment process for the Official Languages Commissioner.

Does my hon. colleague believe that, in three weeks, we can do what section 49(1) of the Official Languages Act asks us to do, that is, consult the leaders of the opposition and not inform them? That violates the Official Languages Act. The leaders of the opposition must be consulted.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have already indicated that the leaders of the parties in both Houses of Parliament were invited to promote the opportunity to potential candidates, provide their input on stakeholder engagement, and highlight qualities the selection committee should consider. That is what we did in the beginning.

Following the appointment, parties will be consulted again, as per the requirements of the law and the process. We have already informed my colleague and his party about that. Yes, we have

enough time to complete the process, and that is what we are going to do.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:07 p.m.)

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