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Monday, April 23, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 23, 2018

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

•(1105)

[*English*]

ENDANGERED WHALES

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.) moved:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be instructed to undertake a study on the situation of endangered whales and be mandated to (i) identify steps that could be taken to better protect and help the recovery of right, beluga, and killer whales, (ii) identify immediate and longer term improvements limiting the impact of human activities on each of these species and, by so doing, add to recovery efforts and to recommendations for new or enhanced actions, (iii) call expert witnesses on each of the species, hearing from those who might be impacted by any possible actions, and working to find a balance among various competing claims; and that the Committee present its final report to the House within four months of the adoption of this motion.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to present Motion No. 154, my motion to enhance the protection and recovery of Canada's endangered whale species.

New Brunswick Southwest, the riding I am honoured to represent, is situated along the beautiful Bay of Fundy. My interest in the protection and recovery of whales was initially based on my experience locally, and what they mean to us from an ecological, cultural, and economic standpoint.

Whales are the largest and the most intelligent mammals in our oceans. The endangerment of whales is an indication of the state and health of our oceans. The dramatic loss of 17 North Atlantic right whales in 2017 heightened my interest to advocate for their protection and population recovery. With two other whale species at risk, the southern resident killer whale and the St. Lawrence estuary beluga, it became clear that my private member's motion should encompass all of Canada's endangered whale species.

From my riding, in 2017, we tragically lost Joseph Howlett while he was disentangling a North Atlantic right whale. Joe participated in nearly 30 whale rescues over the past 15 years.

As parliamentarians, we also have the unique opportunity to advocate on issues that matter to Canadians and, in this case, to the researchers, whale rescuers, and others who work so tirelessly for the

protection and recovery of whales. We know that Canadians from coast to coast to coast are deeply concerned about the long-term protection and recovery of these magnificent mammals.

Currently in Canada, we have a global population of 450 North Atlantic right whales, 900 St. Lawrence estuary belugas, and a southern resident killer whale population of just 76.

Our approach to finding solutions must continue to be driven by research, in collaboration with fishing and marine transportation industries, indigenous communities, the tourism industry, and international stakeholders. The world's leading scientists and others have long worked with marine industries to find a balance that provides maximum protection to whales and minimal disruption to industry.

Over the past six months, I have consulted with over 50 experts and stakeholders across our great country and the United States. Their collective voice is clear. We need to do what Canadians and the global community expect us to do on this issue. Time is of the essence, and we do have the means to meet this challenge.

In New Brunswick Southwest, our marine ecosystem is one of the most vital parts of our economy. When it comes to the environment and the ocean's ecosystem, whales help regulate the flow of food by helping to maintain a stable food chain and ensuring that certain animal species do not overpopulate the ocean. Whales are a sentinel for the health of our ecosystem, and they are sending us a message. Their situation speaks volumes to the long-term sustainability of our ocean industries.

I want to thank the Minister of Fisheries for his immediate and effective leadership last summer on the situation of the right whale. The department acted quickly to implement measures in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to protect these magnificent mammals.

Since that time, the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Transport have introduced even more robust measures to protect the North Atlantic right whale, including an earlier start and end to the snow crab fishing season in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence; fixed and temporary closures where whales are spotted; an earlier speed restriction for ships in the western gulf; and dramatic increase in aerial and at-sea surveillance to detect the whales.

Their efforts and new measures, combined with ongoing scientific research and recent investments in marine protection in budget 2018, give us every indication that our government is on the right track.

Private Members' Business

I want to recognize the work of Dr. Moira Brown and her team at the Canadian Whale Institute. Dr. Brown has been a tireless advocate for the protection of the right whale for over 30 years. Most recently, Dr. Brown has said:

The population decline since 2011 demonstrates that right whales do not have the capacity to sustain low birth rates and high death rates for very long. If mortality rates remain the same as between 2011 and 2015, with so few breeding females alive, the species could become functionally extinct in less than 25 years.

Although there were no new calves born this year, we must remain optimistic that there will be positive outcomes because of the new measures our government has put in place. We have the means to meet this challenge.

• (1110)

Let me give an example. As early as 2007, a study conducted between the Grand Manan Basin and the Roseway Basin determined that reducing vessel speed from 12 knots to 10 knots reduces the risk of a ship strike by 30%, and that in beautiful Bay of Fundy, shifting the shipping lane by four nautical miles to the east reduces the risk of a vessel collision by 90%.

I am convinced that, as we have done with the North Atlantic right whale, similar actions can be taken for the recovery of the beluga and killer whales. In all instances, we need to identify longer-term improvements to limit the impact of human activities on these species.

The situation of the beluga and killer whales is different from that of the North Atlantic right whale. These species tend to be threatened primarily by pollution, noise from shipping, and access to prey. The current population of the St. Lawrence estuary beluga is a mere 900.

Robert Michaud, the president and scientific director of the Group for Research and Education on Marine Mammals, highlighted this important fact. He said:

The history of other species of cetaceans has taught us that populations can decline from 5,000 individuals to extinction in less than twenty years. With a population of 900, the St. Lawrence belugas urgently need effective measures of protection.

Even more daunting, the current estimated population of the southern resident killer whale is, alarmingly, 76. The range of the southern resident population includes water adjacent to Vancouver, where there is high shipping traffic and other human impacts.

Once again, I would like to recognize the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard for demonstrating our government's commitment to the protection of the southern resident killer whale with the announced \$9.1 million in new science funding.

In addition to this, budget 2018 includes \$167.4 million over five years to help protect and recover endangered whale species in Canada, notably the southern resident killer whale, the North Atlantic right whale, and the St. Lawrence Estuary beluga. This includes funding for science activities to help better understand factors affecting the health of whale populations, as well as actions to help address the threats arising from human activities.

In a letter of support for this motion, Rick Bates, CEO and executive vice-president of the Canadian Wildlife Federation, said:

A study undertaken by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans will benefit all efforts to conserve our endangered whales by producing an all-party examination of the situation and how it can be improved.

Both immediate and long-term action is required to protect these iconic species. There is no single solution to this problem.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans would play an important role in studying the effectiveness of protection and recovery measures to date, hearing from expert witnesses, hearing from those who might be impacted by any possible actions, and working to find a balance among the various stakeholders.

In closing, on a personal note, I would like to dedicate this motion to Joseph Howlett. The dedication of the volunteers and staff who participate in whale disentanglement rescues is inspirational to us all. That is why I am urging members to join me and demonstrate support of Motion No. 154.

In my opinion, as parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to explore every avenue available to us to enhance the protection and recovery of Canada's endangered whale species. I look forward to taking my granddaughter out on a boat in the Bay of Fundy where she, too, will fall in love with the ocean, teaming with minkes, humpbacks, and right whales. Canadians and our future generations deserve nothing less.

• (1115)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the intention of the member's motion, will she not agree that the time for study is over? We need immediate action for the 76 southern resident killer whales that she identified in her speech. We need the government to issue an immediate emergency order under the Species at Risk Act. We do not need another study. Will the member agree that the time for action is now and that we do not need yet another study?

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, certainly just 76 southern resident killer whales is an alarming number, but finally we have a government stepping up to do the research and do its homework. I am very proud of our government and the initiatives that have been taken, the dedication to research. In addition to that, we also have the accountability and responsibility to look at how the measures currently in place can be monitored and reviewed and to take into consideration the Species at Risk Act.

In my opinion, when we look at any work being done, we have to look at the maximum protection of whales with a minimal disruption to industry. I believe our government is working hard to find a balance. A committee study will also be reviewing this situation, and we will have the opportunity to hear from the key stakeholders and others.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member would be to ask her if she would consider pressuring her Liberal colleagues to actually take action on some of the things that have been recommended. I sit on the fisheries committee, where we have done a number of studies and reports and provided recommendations to the government, but we have seen very little action.

I would like to know if she is willing to step up and pressure the government to take action on the studies that have already been completed by this committee before we continue another study.

Private Members' Business

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, as parliamentarians, we all have a responsibility to speak to our counterparts and advocate on the direction our government is going. I have worked very closely with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Transport on behalf of the endangered whales, whether it is having the round tables in Moncton or listening to the conversations that took place in Vancouver. I am very confident that we are going in the right direction and I will do everything I possibly can to ensure we are following through on that.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to build on an earlier question with regard to whether it is too late for action. Would the member not agree that it is never too late to study anything when it comes to the protection of our oceans and to make recommendations to the government, which do get followed?

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, when we are looking at significant issues like this in Parliament, certainly it is always an ongoing process. We also have to take into consideration measures that have been put in place and review those measures so we know we are going in the right direction.

One of the key statements I heard from stakeholders is that one size does not fit all. As we move forward, it is really important that there be continued dialogue, whether it is with indigenous communities, scientists, researchers, the fishing communities, the transportation communities, or the tourism sector, so that we get this right, and there are times when we do look at changes. The course we are moving forward with may require some adaptation. I think that is an important point. When the committee studies this issue, it is an opportunity to look at the possible avenues that should be receiving focus, possibly going in a different direction or reaffirming that they are going in the right direction, as well as looking at who else should be at the table and having a conversation.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be one of the seconders for this motion. The way I see it, we know action must be taken, and a study should not delay action. For instance, we know seismic testing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is disastrous for the right whale. While the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has taken some steps, we have not yet banned seismic testing. We know that southern resident killer whales are on the precipice. We need to rebuild their food supply. They need the chinook salmon and less threat of tanker traffic. We do not need to stall action while we study.

Does my hon. colleague agree that doing a study is not an excuse for failing to take emergency measures?

• (1120)

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for seconding my motion. Action is taking place, and action will occur as the study is going on. In fact, I would argue this is a complement to the work already being done.

With regard to the seismic testing, there are environmental controls that have been put into place. However, there is certainly an opportunity as well when it goes before the committee to bring in experts to testify regarding any impacts it may or may not have had in the Gulf of St. Lawrence or off the coast of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for New Brunswick Southwest for her

motion and her speech this morning. It is truly a noble cause to try to save the last of any species. As she said, her original thought was to do a study on the endangered right whales. However, she eventually allowed it to encompass beluga and killer whales.

The declining population of the whale species is something we should be concerned with, and I believe we all are. We have inventories of right whales predicted to become functionally extinct within a few decades unless action is taken. We saw 17 dead whales on the Atlantic coast in Canada and the U.S. last year, and so far this year there have been no new calves sighted in those populations.

However, I debate here that this is not time for another study. It is time for action.

Before I get into the reasons for saying that another study is not the answer, I first want to sincerely thank and recognize all of the work that the local groups have put into the conservation of whales and other species.

My path to this House was an unpaved path, working with conservation organizations, where I learned that it is the work on the ground that can accomplish goals beyond anyone's wildest hopes. I applaud the volunteers for all they do—people like Joseph Howlett, who lost his life while saving the life of an entangled whale, and all those who transpose their words into actions. While I also applaud the member for New Brunswick Southwest for the idea of having the standing committee study the issue with the mandate of identifying ways to protect and recover the species, I want to point out some alarming facts.

First, as a member of the current majority government, she has or should have access to the ministers responsible for taking action on protecting and recovering any species needing help. Why has she not been able to get the ear of her ministers? Why is she, as a member of the majority Liberal caucus, forced to ask the House of Commons to support her motion to do what her party's ministers should already be doing? I propose that it is because her Liberal ministers are not as committed to saving the environment as they purport to be. We see much talk from the Liberal government and very little action.

Second, I would like to point out that while she has presented this motion to have the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study and present a report, has she looked at her own government's record of acting on that or other committees' report recommendations?

Private Members' Business

I bring to the attention of the House the report from the committee entitled “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Northern Cod Fishery: Charting a New Sustainable Future”, which had 10 recommendations, with almost none acted upon. The report from the same committee entitled “Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada” had 17 recommendations, with very few acted upon. These recommendations directly dealt with predation, seal population overabundance, and exploding striped bass populations, which are all impacting the wild Atlantic salmon and the cod stocks in the Atlantic. The committee put a lot of hard work and time into those studies and coming up with those recommendations.

Although the member for New Brunswick Southwest may have good intentions, her efforts and our time in this chamber would be better spent if she were more successful in lobbying her own Liberal colleagues, especially her own Liberal cabinet ministers and the Atlantic Liberal fisheries committee members to have action taken instead of repeating talking points.

The member for New Brunswick Southwest has five Liberal colleagues from the Maritimes on that standing committee. I sit on that standing committee, where the members have invested themselves heavily in providing complete, impartial, detailed reports to this House, and I am frustrated at the inaction and incompetence of the government in responding to the committee’s recommendations.

• (1125)

The maritime Liberal members on that committee, five of them, must be either embarrassed or furious, but scared to speak out that their government has ignored the recommendations put forward by the committee. Why have they not spoken out? They are failing to stand up for their constituents. Recommendations that could help recover Canada’s northern cod stocks, recommendations that could help recover wild Atlantic salmon, recommendations that could provide economic benefits for Canada’s indigenous and non-indigenous peoples were all derived by our hard-working committee members and cast aside by a Liberal government that is becoming exposed as all talk and little action.

Speaking of the hard work on our committee, we are currently in the process of doing three different studies. One of them was approved over 16 months ago and its first meeting was held over one year ago. This motion’s deadline would further delay those studies. I hope that the studies we are completing now will come up with recommendations for the government through this House and that those recommendations will be followed. That is why I have caution about what we are doing here. I do not oppose doing a study, but I am opposed to doing a study, making recommendations, and having a government not follow through on those recommendations.

As I have said, we have recommendations in these reports that I want to quote from:

That Fisheries and Oceans Canada support a grey seal harvest program that emphasizes full utilization of the seal to provide economic opportunities with an aim to significantly reduce the seal populations and enhance the recovery of wild Atlantic salmon populations.

We still have yet to see any action on that.

From the report on northern cod, we had another recommendation that we:

Ensure careful management for prey availability, especially capelin, and factor in ecosystem considerations like habitat protection and climate change

and

That, Fisheries and Oceans Canada implement management practices to deliver the greatest value from the resource with the lowest impact on stocks.

These are the types of recommendations that the committee put a lot of hard work into, and I commend all the members on that committee. We truly worked together to come up with significant, respectful recommendations. As we move forward through the debate on this issue, I hope that the government is listening and that the importance of these recommendations and government action on those recommendations comes through, because it is disheartening as a member of Parliament and as a member of the committee to put that hard work in and not have it heeded.

As I said, we are currently working on a number of motions and studies on the fisheries committee. Those studies tend to get waylaid and set aside as other things pop up that seem to be more important or more urgent. I do not know if there is anything more important than protecting a species that is possibly at the brink of no return. Therefore, while I do not oppose this motion, I would like to move that the motion be amended by deleting the words “within four months of the adoption of this motion”. That is so that we can have time to complete these other studies and that we are not set at a deadline for a time to complete this study, because it may take more than four months. I would prefer that we not be limited by a set timeline, so that the committee can continue to do good work and provide good recommendations that will be heeded by the government.

As such, I move that the motion be amended by deleting the words “within four months of the adoption of this motion”.

• (1130)

The Deputy Speaker: In accordance with Standing Order 93(3), no amendment can be made to a private member’s motion or at the second reading stage of a private member’s bill, unless, of course, it has the consent of the sponsor.

I therefore ask the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest if she consents to this amendment.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, no, I do not.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak on Motion No. 154, which reads:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be instructed to undertake a study on the situation of endangered whales and be mandated to (i) identify steps that could be taken to better protect and help the recovery of right, beluga, and killer whales, (ii) identify immediate and longer term improvements limiting the impact of human activities on each of these species and, by so doing, add to recovery efforts and to recommendations for new or enhanced actions, (iii) call expert witnesses on each of the species, hearing from those who might be impacted by any possible actions, and working to find a balance among various competing claims; and that the Committee present its final report to the House within four months of the adoption of this motion.

Private Members' Business

While I support the intention of the motion, I believe it may be too little too late, and certainly for some whales. The government needs to take action on protecting the most vulnerable species immediately, not wait for the outcome of a committee study.

As everyone knows, I am from the west coast, and the situation facing our iconic southern resident killer whales is dire. In 1997, the Squamish Nation bestowed an amazing responsibility on me. They gave me the name Iyim Yewyews, which means “strong swimmer in the animal world” or “orca, blackfish”. I wear this name proudly and with a lot of responsibility. They gave me this name because of the work I do on salmon. They realized that if the salmon are plentiful, the orca, which feeds on the salmon, will also be plentiful. We know that is not the case.

Again, I take this very seriously. Southern resident killer whales were listed as endangered under the Species at Risk Act in 2003. By 2016, only 76 individual whales, 23 of them female, remained in this population. Recovery is still possible, if the government stops dragging its heels and takes immediate action.

On March 15, the minister announced funding for research, but that funding will not help them today. Environmental organizations have joined together to call on the government to issue an emergency order under the Species at Risk Act to provide emergency protection, but the government has failed to act. I joined that call by asking for an emergency order for these whales in the House on March 21, 2018.

The situation is critical. We do not have decades to fix the problem. We do not even have years to fix the problem. These whales do not need another study; they need swift and immediate action. A steady decline in chinook salmon, combined with disturbances from vessels, which interferes with the whales' ability to hunt and communicate, has put this iconic species at serious risk of malnutrition and starvation. The orcas cannot find food, let alone reproduce. There has not been a single southern resident orca calf reported to have been born since early 2016, until just last week. A single calf has been spotted—a glimmer of hope.

Shipping activity and oil and gas development cause noise that can disturb and even damage their hearing and communication. This disturbance prevents them from using critical feeding and breeding grounds, and it disrupts their migratory path. A recent study found that southern resident orcas lose up to 97% of their ability to communicate with each other because of noise pollution, making Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline and the associated oil tankers it will bring a direct threat to the killer whale population. The pipeline project will bring an increase in oil tanker traffic to the west coast, along with a corresponding increase in noise. Even if by some miracle the project goes completely according to plan and there are no oil spills or ship strikes, the increase in noise alone significantly puts this species at risk of extinction.

Southern resident killer whales use sounds in order to establish and maintain critical life functions. They use them to navigate, find and select mates, maintain their social network, and to locate and capture prey. The current level of ocean noise has already degraded critical habitat, and studies suggest that it has reduced their feeding efficiency. The 76 southern resident killer whales desperately need action by the government to reduce the immediate threats they are

facing today, including the impact that the pipeline project may have on their ability to recover.

● (1135)

In March of this year, Washington State issued an executive order with time-bound measures to benefit southern resident killer whales, including actions concerning fisheries, whale-watching vessels, and state ferries. The Species at Risk Act has a process for the federal government to enact a similar emergency order, and I encourage them to do so without delay.

Speaking to DeSmog Canada about the recent Liberal announcement of more research to help the southern resident killer whale, Paul Paquet, adjunct professor at the University of Victoria and senior scientist with Raincoast Conservation Foundation said, “We could study them literally to death at this point.”

Misty MacDuffee, a biologist with Raincoast said, “What we're really looking for from the federal government right now is threat reductions.” She went on to state, “We've been waiting and waiting for the government to take some sort of action that would at least contribute to the protection of killer whales, but none has been taken to date.” They need action now, rather than waiting for yet another study to be complete and say the same thing.

President and CEO of WWF-Canada, Megan Leslie, agrees. In an op-ed in the Hill Times on April 20, she said, “While funding for technology and research is important, a cash infusion alone won't feed the 76 orcas facing extinction today.” She described the situation as an “emergency of the tallest order” and recommended immediate action, including “protection of feeding areas from fishing and disturbance by recreational/whale watching vessels, speed reductions for commercial vessels to reduce noise pollution in and near feeding areas, and chinook salmon catch reductions for the health of both species.” She said, “All of these [measures] need to be in place by late spring [of this year] when the orcas return to feed.” The clock is ticking. The minister must take immediate action.

The situation is not much better on the Atlantic coast. On March 16 of this year, the CBC reported that there has not been a single North Atlantic right whale calf spotted this year. That is an unprecedented and alarming sign for this critically endangered species. Usually, mothers and calves making their way north toward Atlantic Canada are spotted by the end of February, but halfway through March, there had not been a single calf sighted, for the very first time. The North Atlantic right whale is highly endangered. There are only about 450 of them left, 100 of them females.

Between April and November of 2017, at least 16 North Atlantic right whales died, 12 of them in Canadian waters. At least three of those had been entangled in fishing gear, and four showed evidence of blunt force trauma, which was most likely from a ship strike.

Private Members' Business

The 16 deaths represent more than 3.5% of the population. To put that in perspective, that would be the equivalent of about 1.25 million Canadians suddenly dying over seven months.

On April 20, speaking to *The Washington Post* about North Atlantic right whales, marine biologist Charles Mayo said:

...climate change seems to be shifting the animals' food source. Their habitat has been polluted with sewage and made noisy by construction and seismic tests. Speeding ships and tangles of hard-to-break fishing rope pose deadly threats. New technology and tightened regulations could protect the whales from some of the big hazards.

...the whales are a metaphor for what we have done to the planet.

Painfully, I agree. This is shameful. The situation is critical. We do not need the fisheries and oceans committee to tell us that. Scientists have already proved that. We need immediate action. They want immediate action. Protecting them is in the national interest.

• (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to what I believe is a very important motion that my friend and colleague, the member for New Brunswick Southwest, has brought forward.

In fact, reflecting on one of the member's comments, I think it is important to recognize that this motion is not necessarily about today. There is a lot that we can do today when it comes to ensuring whales live into the future, but my colleague made reference to her granddaughter. She wants to ensure that the experiences we have today when it comes to whales will be there in the future for her granddaughter. When we look at the types of issues that the House of Commons, the Prime Minister, and government as a whole deal with day in and day out, it is about the future. It is ensuring that we are doing the things that are necessary to have a positive impact into the future.

However, my Conservative and New Democratic friends often disappoint me in regard to their general attitudes when a member takes a good, solid initiative. Once again, I have been disappointed. They have asked why we need another study and why do we not just do things. Well, especially coming from the Tories, that is a little much, I must say. This was even from my New Democratic friends, who do not believe in studies. The only study they believe in is something that would prevent oil and gas pipelines from ever being built. That is the only time they seem to support a study.

I would suggest that this government has taken a number of actions to date, which I would like to reference, and the motion that my colleague has brought is forward thinking. It is about the future. We are taking a look at an important mammal species, three in particular, and highlighting the issues that are not only important to the member and her riding, but I truly believe are important to all Canadians, even to the riding of Winnipeg North, which is in the centre of Canada. Further north, we get to Churchill, where we find the beluga whale, which is well recognized and is a beautiful mammal. The motion talks about three species: the beluga, with reference to the St. Lawrence; the north Atlantic right whale, a beautiful mammal, which has a population that is on the decrease and cannot ensure its longevity into the future; and, of course, there is the southern resident killer whale from B.C.

We are a government that has caucus representatives in all regions of the country. The 32 members of Parliament from Atlantic Canada continuously advocate for important issues in the region. We have heard about the right whale inside and outside of caucus. We understand and appreciate the concern, and share the concern. We want to see government take actions that will have a very real impact.

Therefore, when I hear opposition members from across the way asking why there is another study, I can assure them that not only is it good for us to look at ways in which we can make things better, but we are, as a government, taking tangible action today. We have the oceans protection plan with \$1.5 billion, which is the first ever. We have been in government for just over two years, and we are seeing this commitment of hundreds of millions of dollars to protect our oceans.

• (1145)

We did not need a motion from the New Democrats or the Conservatives on that issue. All we needed to do was to listen to Canadians. By listening to Canadians we recognized the importance of not only talking about it but also ensuring that the necessary finances and resources would be there to have a positive impact on our oceans. The sum of \$1.5 billion is an incredible amount of money. In budget 2018 alone, somewhere around \$180 million, or even more, over the next five years is being put in place to ensure that our whale species are taken care of and that actions are taken to ensure the longevity of those whale species. Knowing the Conservatives, they probably voted against it, but that is for another day.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was in Atlantic Canada a few months ago, and there was a round table on the right whale. There was a symposium in Vancouver dealing with the southern killer whale. Those are the types of things our government is actually doing.

The money that has been invested into our oceans and the department will lead to more scientific studies. Science is important. We have a sense why these issues are before us today. We understand and appreciate there are some things for which we need to get a better understanding. We heard some examples, such as issues to do with food and prey, as well as acoustics. What is taking place in our oceans today is quite different from what took place many years ago. It is truly amazing how much rubbish and fishing gear ends up in our oceans, along with other types of pollutants. There is a litany of things we need to look into and apply some science to in the hope that we can make a difference.

I applaud the member for New Brunswick Southwest for taking this initiative and moving this motion for us today. I am hopeful she would be sympathetic and accept an amendment that I would like to propose at this time. I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (a) replacing the words "to better protect and help the recovery of right, beluga, and killer whales" with the words "to continue the efforts to protect and help the recovery of NARW, beluga, and Southern Resident Killer Whales";
- (b) replacing the words "call expert witnesses on each of the species, hearing from those who might be impacted by any possible actions, and working" with the words "call on expert witnesses on each of the species, and those who might be impacted by any possible actions to work";

(c) replacing the words “within four months of the adoption of this motion” with the words “by the end of the 2018 calendar year”.

• (1150)

The Deputy Speaker: In accordance with Standing Order 93(3), no amendment can be made to a private member's motion or to the second reading stage of a private member's bill, unless it has the consent of the sponsor. I will therefore ask the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest if she consents to the amendment.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague made a very passionate speech about whales, and I am pleased to accept the amendment.

I also want to say that the situation with whales today in Canada did not turn—

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, we are not allowed to make additional commentary on this.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking on behalf of our critic for fisheries and oceans, the member for Cariboo—Prince George. I would like to extend my condolences and those of our caucus to him on the loss of his mother-in-law.

Motion No. 154 is sponsored by the Liberal member for New Brunswick Southwest. The endangered right whales have been dying in record numbers in the past year in Canada. In 2017, of a population of approximately 450 whales, at least 13 perished in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The Gulf of St. Lawrence is not a normal habitat for the right whales. Their arrival last summer took many by surprise. It resulted in Transport Canada imposing a 10-knot limit on vessels 20 metres or more in length. We need to look at ship movement in our oceans and waterways.

The cruise lines have co-operated with these new limits, basically to avoid killing whales and to protect this endangered species. In addition to the 10-knot limit, the cruise ship companies were required to count the number of right whales they saw each day. With the ships slowing down, their crews may be able to count the whales so we know how many are left and how many we are losing. The cruise ships have to report the location of the whales to the government on a regular basis.

It is clear that this is not enough. That is why Motion No. 154 calls for a study in order to find a solution to this situation. Action needs to be taken immediately. Not only should there be a study, but we need to take action. Hopefully the result of the committee report will give us that opportunity to do so.

Right whales have been dying in record numbers. In 2017 at least 13 were lost from a community of 450 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Almost all the North Atlantic whales in the western North Atlantic Ocean in summer and autumn feed in areas off the coast of Canada and the northeastern United States in an area stretching from New York to Newfoundland. It is quite a journey along the east coast for these whales.

In particular, the popular feeding areas are the Bay of Fundy and Cape Cod Bay. In winter they head south toward Georgia and

Private Members' Business

Florida to give birth. They go to warmer places during the winter to give birth to maintain the population.

The leading cause of death among the North Atlantic right whale, which migrates through some of the world's busiest shipping lanes while journeying off the east coast of the United States and Canada, is being struck by ships. Unfortunately, that is the main reason for the loss in population in the course of time.

At least 16 ship strike deaths were reported between 1970 and 1999, and probably more remain unreported. Records show 16 ship strike deaths in a period of 29 years. That activity should be looked at and monitored.

• (1155)

A second major cause of morbidity and mortality among the north Atlantic right whale is entanglement in plastic fishing gear. Right whales ingest plankton with wide open mouths, risking entanglement in any rope or net fixed in the water column. Rope wraps around their upper jaws, flippers, and tails. Some are able to escape, but others remain tangled. If they can get the proper help, they can be saved. Again, the possibilities for saving or monitoring that closely are not always there.

In July 1997, the U.S. introduced the Atlantic large whale take reduction plan, which seeks to minimize whale entanglement in fishing gear and to record large whale sightings in an attempt to estimate numbers and distribution. Action is being taken by the United States to study the problem and to look for solutions if possible.

Researchers are still working to pin down how the whales in Canada died. At least three appear to have been hit by ships, and one perished after becoming entangled in fishing gear.

In 2014, researchers monitoring belugas in the St. Lawrence warned of catastrophic disaster if something was not done to stop the population decline. Records show that we are losing these as well. The number of belugas has gone from 1,000 to 889. What we are looking at in Canada is going below the 500 mark. We are losing this population, and we must do something about it.

At this point, there is not enough evidence and information from researchers to show us the exact number and the exact data on what is happening. An exact count of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence estuary is not there. As I said, the population was estimated to be about 889 in 2012. That is according to a recent Fisheries and Oceans Canada report. When I say recent, I am not sure if it was in 2017-18 or before that.

Motion No. 154 calls on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to undertake a study of the situation of endangered whales and to report the study back to the House of Commons within four months. Hopefully, four months will be enough time for the committee to do a study and call witnesses, researchers, and scientists to find some solutions.

The motion calls on the committee to:

Points of Order

(i) identify steps that could be taken to better protect and help the recovery of right, beluga, and killer whales, (ii) identify immediate and longer term improvements limiting the impact of human activities on each of these species and, by so doing, add to recovery efforts and to recommendations for new or enhanced actions, (iii) call expert witnesses on each of the species, hearing from those who might be impacted by any possible actions, and working to find a balance among various competing claims; and that the Committee present its final report to the House within four months of the adoption of this motion.

I am pleased to say that we will support the motion, and we look forward to studying the issue at committee.

● (1200)

[*Translation*]

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

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby on a point of order.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-74—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would indeed like to raise a point of order.

● (1205)

[*English*]

I am rising today to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to apply Standing Order 69.1 to Bill C-74, the budget implementation act, 2018, no. 1.

In this corner of the House, we believe that this bill is an omnibus bill, as defined under Standing Order 69.1. As you know, Mr. Speaker, and have ruled in the past, Standing Order 69.1 was added to the Standing Orders last June and was supposed to be the government's answer to the abuse of omnibus legislation.

I will remind you, Mr. Speaker, though I know you are well versed in this, that Standing Order 69.1(1) says the following:

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

Since the adoption of the Standing Order, we have seen a number of new omnibus bills tabled by the government. Bill C-63, the previous budget implementation bill, was divided for votes at second and third reading, because it contained so many different provisions. Mr. Speaker, you ruled on that.

We also had a huge environmental bill, Bill C-69, that was split for the purposes of voting. Mr. Speaker, you will recall that you ruled that the section on the Navigable Waters Protection Act was distinct enough from the rest of that environment bill to split it.

We have serious concerns, and all parliamentarians should have serious concerns, about the use of omnibus bills in this place. It becomes increasingly difficult for members of Parliament to

represent their constituents when governments table these massive bills, in which so many different things are lumped together.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-74 poses a particularly problematic situation. This massive bill is over 555 pages long and affects over 40 different acts. It is clearly an omnibus bill because it deals with matters as diverse as veterans' compensation, changes to the Parliament Act with respect to maternity and parental arrangements, and the establishment of the office of the chief information officer of Canada. This is, in fact, the most massive budget bill ever.

What worries us most, however, is that this budget implementation bill enacts the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, you are aware, of course, that the second paragraph, Standing Order 69.1(2), stipulates:

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

We looked through the budget speech, the budget documentation, the tax tables, and everything else that was tabled with the budget in February. The only reference to carbon pricing in the budget documents is a few short paragraphs, including the following:

The Government recently released draft legislative proposals on the federal carbon pollution pricing system, as well as a regulatory framework outlining the approach to carbon pollution pricing for large industrial facilities, and intends to introduce legislation to establish that system.

In that short paragraph, there is an acknowledgement that the government actually was working on separate legislation that should properly be put to the House separately. Of course, in terms of the spirit of Standing Order 69.1, the fact that this draft legislation was developed separately, and that the government even seemed to indicate a propensity to introduce that legislation separately, should give cause for consideration in terms of Standing Order 69.1, because it has an impact on all of us as members of Parliament being able to adequately represent our constituents.

[*Translation*]

Because of those few paragraphs, the Liberals—the government—felt justified in including the brand-new greenhouse gas pollution pricing act, a bill that takes up 215 pages of the budget bill, 215 of 556 pages.

[*English*]

The issue is that the government intended to introduce legislation to establish this system. This indicates that the intention was to have separate legislation on the subject. A federal carbon pollution pricing system is a big step that deserves to be properly studied, looked at, and voted on by parliamentarians.

Government Orders

Mr. Speaker, I will remind you of your ruling of March 1, 2018, on Bill C-69, when you said the following:

the question the Chair must ask itself is whether the purpose of the standing order was to deal only with matters that were obviously unrelated or whether it was to provide members with the opportunity to pronounce themselves on specific initiatives when a bill contains a variety of different measures.

At that time, you answered very appropriately and courageously, establishing the precedent for separating that bill out so that members of Parliament could have the opportunity to adequately represent their constituents through that separate vote.

I also want to quote the Minister of Public Safety, who said the following with respect to the issue of omnibus legislation, and I could not agree with him more:

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

The Liberals did in fact condemn the Conservatives' repeated use of omnibus bills as undemocratic. Now that they are in power, they are using some of the very tactics they criticized. Here is what the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness said about the Conservatives' 2012 budget implementation bill when he was in the opposition:

[*English*]

He further stated:

On the procedural point, so-called omnibus bills obviously bundle several different measures together. Within reasonable limits, such legislation can be managed through Parliament if the bill is coherent, meaning that all the different topics are interrelated and interdependent and if the overall volume of the bill is not overwhelming. That was the case before the government came to power in 2006.

That was the Minister of Public Safety, speaking in 2012, commenting on the previous Conservative government. He went on:

When omnibus bills were previously used to implement key provisions of federal budgets, they averaged fewer than 75 pages in length and typically amended a handful of laws directly related to budgetary policy. In other words, they were coherent and not overwhelming.

However, under this regime the practice has changed. Omnibus bills since 2006 have averaged well over 300 pages, more than four times the previous norm. This latest one introduced last week had 556 sections, filled 443 pages and touched on 30 or more disconnected topics, everything from navigable waters to grain inspection, from disability plans to hazardous materials.

That was the previous record before the budget implementation act of a few weeks ago.

The Minister of Public Safety completed his comments by stating:

It is a complete dog's breakfast, and deliberately so. It is calculated to be so humongous and so convoluted, all in a single lump, that it cannot be intelligently examined and digested by a conscientious Parliament.

I could not agree more with the current Liberal Minister of Public Safety in condemning what the impact is on parliamentarians of having these dog's breakfast omnibus bills. As members know, the current budget implementation bill is the largest we have ever seen dumped on the floor of the House of Commons, and 215 pages are on carbon pricing. This clearly violates the spirit of Standing Order 69.1.

As the Speaker, it clearly gives you the opportunity, despite the loophole I am sure the government House leader or the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will try to use, to justify what is unjustifiable.

There is long precedence in this place that we try to make sure that our votes count and that legislation is distinct enough so that as members of Parliament, we have the ability to truly represent our constituents.

This dumping in of 215 pages around carbon pricing to make the most massive budget implementation act in Canadian history simply violates to every degree the spirit and the principles around Standing Order 69.1.

You have ruled in the past on these important measures, Mr. Speaker. You have taken the opportunity to judge whether parliamentarians, or parliament, or ultimately Canadians are well served by this dumping in of legislation. It started under the previous government. Standing Order 69.1 was designed to give you the tools to counter that abuse by governments of dumping in separate legislation. There is no doubt that the government is violating the spirit of Standing Order 69.1 by dumping in carbon pricing into this massive bill.

What I ask you to do today, Mr. Speaker, is to take the time to consider what I have said, and other members may choose to join in as well, and ultimately to rule to separate out carbon pricing so, as members of Parliament, we can truly represent our constituents.

• (1215)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for bringing this matter to the attention of the House and for the precision and clarity of his arguments. We will take this under advisement and get back to the House in due course, and fairly soon.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 1

BILL C-74—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

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

That, in relation to Bill C-74, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second 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 said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

I invite hon. members, in the usual way that we do, to indicate how many might wish to participate in the 30-minute question period, and I think we get a sense of that. We will confine the interventions to around one minute, both for the member posing a question and for the government response.

Government Orders

The hon. opposition House leader.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have the government shutting down debate on its budget implementation act, a budget that has not bothered to mention NAFTA, a budget that has no plan to pay down the massive deficit it will give to our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and a budget that will implement a carbon tax, which the government is covering up not only the cost of to Canadians but of the effect it will or will not have.

Today, the PBO told us that the carbon tax would have a cost to the GDP of \$10 billion by 2022. Will the Minister of Finance tell us today how much this carbon tax will cost everyday Canadians? Would he please be upfront, stop the cover-up, and tell us once and for all?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer questions on Bill C-74 today, and to address the fact that we are moving forward on a plan that will continue the very positive economic results we have seen over the last two and a half years. It is not by accident that Canada has now had the fastest growth among G7 countries over the last year and a half. It has truly been a remarkable turnaround from the 10 years before, when we saw ourselves in a very difficult growth situation, engineered by the previous government's lack of investing in Canadians.

We are now in a position of having among the lowest unemployment rates we have seen in 40 years. Our plan to continue our economic success put forward in Bill C-74 is an important one in order to continue the good results for Canadian families. As well, it will continue our mission and approach to ensuring we deal with climate change over the long run. It is a responsible approach that we know will be positive for Canadians today, tomorrow, and in the long run.

• (1220)

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express the profound disappointment I have, and I think a lot of the members on this side of the House have, with the government. It promised during the election that it would be different, that it would respect Parliament, and that it would ensure we all would have a voice and input. What it is doing today is muzzling our voice, not letting us represent our constituents, being that strong voice for our constituents in the House of Commons.

It is disappointing because this budget implementation act is 556 pages. It is huge, omnibus, obese legislation. It is really important we study it and have a healthy debate in the House of Commons.

If the government is so proud of the budget, why is it muzzling debate in the House of Commons?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the bill has been debated in the House for four days. Forty-five members of Parliament have spoken to the bill, which includes 13 members of the Conservative Party, six members of the New Democratic Party, and of course one member from the Green Party. It is important that we have had that sort of discussion. We know as well that we will be able to then move the bill from this format into committee, where we can continue to ensure we have discussion.

We believe this is an important way for us to move forward on the agenda that will help Canadians be successful in the future. Clearly,

what has happened in the last couple of years is that the kinds of measures we have put in place have been positive for our economy. Now we want to ensure that positive direction continues. This bill is the way to ensure that happens. The debate that has gone on has been important, and now we can move it to committee so we can continue that debate.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Parliamentary Budget Officer produced a report in which he calculated that the Liberal carbon tax would erase \$10 billion a year from our economy. The finance minister thus far has refused to reveal how much the average family will pay for his carbon tax. Two hundred pages of the bill before the House today deal with the implementation of that very tax.

If the minister is able to put 200 pages of complicated rules, regulations, and taxes into the bill, why can he not stand now and answer this simple question. How much will the Liberal carbon tax cost the average Canadian family? How much?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, we are happy to talk about why we think pricing carbon is the right way to go. The reality of our situation is that climate change has real costs. Climate change is expected to cost Canada's economy \$5 billion a year by 2020. We know that as much as \$43 billion a year will be expended by 2050. That is if we do not take action.

We know the appropriate way for us to deal with this is to price carbon. That is why we have come forward with an approach to do this. It has been proved in a province like British Columbia that it can be done in a way consistent with continuing to successfully grow the economy.

We know that to ensure we have a long-term situation where our economy remains healthy, we price the things we do not want, such as pollution, while we encourage the activities we want, such as investing in clean technology over the long run. These things will most certainly go forward with our approach. We know that will help us continue the very positive economic situation we have engineered over the last two and a half years.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how ironic. I stood just a few minutes ago and raised a point of order, which you will be considering, given the size and scope of the fattest, most obese omnibus legislation in Canadian history. Just a few minutes after that, the Liberals moved closure to shut down debate. It is absolutely absurd for Canadians who believed the Liberals when they made commitments to be different in Parliament. We are seeing the Liberals act like the Harper government on steroids. What is going on here is absolutely and profoundly disrespectful to Parliament. Closure is being invoked on the most massive budget implementation act in Canadian history.

We know why the Liberals are moving closure. It is because, as debate started, we found out that pharmacare was just a study, that they were not going to implement it, and pay equity was not mentioned anywhere in the budget implementation act. Is that not the real reason they are invoking closure because the Liberals do not want Canadians to know what is not in the budget implementation act?

Government Orders

•(1225)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to be clear with Canadians on what we are trying to achieve.

We are trying to achieve the continuation of the positive economic results we have seen over the last two and a half years. Two and a half years ago, we were facing stubborn unemployment. We had a situation where the growth rates we had seen over the decade before were the lowest since the depths of the great recession. We said we would move forward on investing in Canadians to ensure we had good, well-paying jobs for Canadians and families to be successful. That is exactly what has happened.

Through our investments over the last two and a half years, we have engendered a real change in our economic situation. This bill will continue that approach, and we have done that in a respectful way. We have had four days of debate on the bill. Forty-five members of the House have had the opportunity to debate the bill, including six members of the NDP. We now know that it is best for it go to committee so we can move forward with the agenda that is right for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one particularly good thing in this year's budget is the substantial increase to the Canada workers benefit. One of the biggest complaints I hear from business owners when I am walking around my riding has to do with finding skilled workers.

We must expand the labour market and make choosing to work more appealing. Social assistance makes this choice very difficult, but people rely on this assistance, and we obviously do not want to lose it.

I therefore thank my colleague, the Minister of Finance, for this significant increase.

Why does he think it is so important to enhance the Canada workers benefit?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, what a great question.

It is important for us and for our country. It is obviously important to encourage all Canadians to join the labour force. We know that people who are struggling often find it challenging to start working.

This is why the Canada workers benefit is so important. It will give people joining the labour force financial assistance until they are earning enough money to meet their families' needs. We enhanced this benefit so that it can continue to have a significant impact. Not only will this measure have a more significant impact on our economy, since there will be more workers, but it will also help families that are struggling.

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I had higher hopes coming into the House of Commons this morning. After the Liberal Party met with its delegates from across Canada this past week, I thought the Liberals would have at least listened to their delegates tell them not to treat Parliament with such great contempt. Even with the sunshine

outside, I would have hoped that some of that would have found its way in here. The sunny ways have disappeared.

My question for the finance minister and the leader of the House in Parliament is this. Why cut off debate on this important information? There are 540 pages that deal with the expenditures for the country. Is it (a) because they are embarrassed that over 90% of middle-class families, which the Liberals supposedly support, are actually paying higher taxes; or (b) because they are raising taxes on small businesses; or (c) because this morning the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that not only would the deficit be \$18 billion for this year, but it would be \$22 billion, \$4 billion higher than they estimated just in February? It is out of control.

Is it (a), (b), or (c), or are the Liberals embarrassed in all of the above?

•(1230)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important that we have the opportunity to talk about this in the House. That is why we have spent four days debating Bill C-74. We think as well it is important that we go to the committee so that we can do a deeper dive.

To the specific questions, I think it is important to recognize what has actually happened over the last two and a half years. We find ourselves in a situation where our economy is in very good shape because, in the first instance, nine out of 10 families with children have significantly more money to invest in their families. That provides a spark plug for our economy which helps us to be in a better situation. Facts matter, and the facts are that two and a half years later, we have significantly lower employment and significantly higher growth.

We will continue on that approach of making sure the taxes for middle-class Canadians are low. As well, with respect to the member's question (b), we will continue our support for small business. We have lowered small business taxes. As of January 1, 2018, those small business taxes went down, and they will go down again on January 1, 2019. We think it is important to ensure that our economy continues to be strong.

Finally, we want to assure Canadians that we will continue our fiscally responsible approach to reduce our net debt-to-GDP ratio over time. This puts us in a very positive situation right now and also makes us resilient to deal with any challenges in the future.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will tell the minister what the facts are. The fact is that we are a laughing stock internationally, because we cannot apply taxes to OTTs, and stuff like that. This is a joke.

These are the facts that you are presenting to me this morning, and you know very well that we are late on these taxes. He is looking at me like he does not understand.

[Translation]

The truth is that the minister—

The Deputy Speaker: Once again I would ask all hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair in all speeches made in the House. The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Government Orders

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You are quite right.

It is shameful that the European community's finance minister had to come to Canada to tell us that Canada's decision not to tax web giants is untenable.

If the minister would come to my community, Longueuil, he would see the situation facing community groups taking care of refugees crossing the border. Despite the minister's utter gall in saying the government is taking care of refugees, he would actually see how difficult things are for the community groups.

It is a travesty that this government is eliminating tax credits for public transit and committing atrocities like this one here today.

I therefore have to ask, why did the government decide to limit debate on this today? Is it because suddenly its spin doctors and media relations staff can no longer explain the government's bad decisions?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question. It is very important for us to work with our counterparts in other countries and discuss corporate and personal taxation in an international context. I was at the G20 and the G7 last week, and I can tell you that we are working together to figure out a tax system that works around the world. The OECD has produced an important report that helps countries consider how to tax companies in the digital sector. It is a crucial issue. The report offers an explanation of the current situation as well as a vision of what the international tax landscape might look like in the future. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, we are working together, because co-operation in international matters is the only way to go. We are clearly leading the way on the world stage, and we will continue working with other countries to find an appropriate solution.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised in the last election that this year's deficit would be \$6 billion. The finance minister said a few months ago that it would be \$18 billion. Today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that it is now \$22 billion. In other words, the deficit is going to be more than three times bigger than the Prime Minister promised and 20% bigger than the finance minister said only a few weeks ago.

My question is simple. How did the finance minister get it so wrong?

• (1235)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I appreciate the reports that come from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. It is an important function of Parliament that he comes out with reports.

I can also say that the numbers we put out in our budget remain exactly what we think our estimates will be. We have taken an approach over the last two and a half years to very clearly enunciate how we are going to make investments so that we can grow the economy, and how we are going to be able to do that in a fiscally responsible way.

Each year we have shown where those investments are going, and we have projected what might happen in terms of the growth that would come from those investments. In fact, the growth has been stronger than expected. Canadians have had a better situation in

terms of job creation. Hard-working Canadians are creating jobs at a record pace, and we are in the lowest rate of unemployment that we have seen in about 40 years. It is an extremely positive situation for Canadian families as they consider how to raise their children.

We are going to continue with those investments. We are going to do it in a responsible way, while reducing our debt-to-GDP ratio over time so that we can always be prepared for the future for Canadians.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is disheartening to see that every day there is another broken promise from this Liberal government.

The Liberals promised they would not do omnibus bills and here we have a 540-page document to look through. They promised they were not going to run more than \$6 billion of deficit this year, but we have just heard that it is likely to be \$22 billion, despite their predictions that it was only going to be \$18 billion. We see these kinds of broken promises going on, and we hear the finance minister say, "Yes, but we had four days of debate." If one divides \$22 billion by four, that is \$5.5 billion. Is it worth taking more than a day to discuss the spending of \$5.5 billion of taxpayer money?

Why does the finance minister have so much trouble keeping his promises and making his budget targets?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to consider the promises that we made and the promises that have been kept. We promised Canadians that we would lower middle-class taxes. The members opposite voted against lowering middle-class taxes, but we went ahead and kept that promise. We promised that we would ensure the Canada child benefit did not go to the wealthiest so that we could give more to families. Nine out of 10 families have significantly more, on average \$2,300 more, which is now indexed to inflation so that they can raise their families. These are promises kept.

What we put in this budget, of course, are some new promises. We said that the Canada child benefit will keep up with inflation. We said that the Canada workers benefit will help those in the most challenged situation to do better over time. We are keeping our promises to Canadians. What we are doing with Bill C-74 is making sure that we continue with these positive economic results. We have had four days of debate on this bill. We think it is appropriate for the bill to go to committee so that we can examine it in more detail. That is responsible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: The Minister of Finance takes us for fools, Mr. Speaker; how very sad. Liberal spin doctors have been working to throw us off the scent for a long time now. The minister knows perfectly well that it is unacceptable that the services in question are not subject to any transaction tax, which includes GST, QST, and the other provincial harmonized taxes.

Government Orders

Because of this, we are the laughingstock of the international community. We were led to believe that this issue would be discussed at the G7 summit in Charlevoix, and the Liberals are definitely going to be laughed at if they bring it up, because everybody in the entire world charges tax on services.

I wonder why the Minister of Finance is acting like nothing is wrong and evading the issue by saying it will be discussed. Give me a break. Last week, the European Union's finance minister said it was an untenable position. I would like to get an answer in that regard.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I urge the hon. member to familiarize himself with the OECD's reports. We are working with the other countries on possibly creating an international tax system that works. It is very important. We know that international companies have many options as to where they will invest their money. That is why we need to work together and that is what we are doing.

I was with G20 and G7 representatives last week and I can assure the House that we will continue to work together on finding a solution. These things take time, of course, because we have to do our due diligence to ensure that major investments continue to be made. In the meantime, we will continue to ensure that the system performs well in the future.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it disgraceful that the government is moving to end debate on the budget. If we keep in mind that for every day we have debated the budget it has cost Canadians about \$5.5 billion of debt, maybe cutting off a day will save Canadians money.

The PBO report said that international growth is going to be 4% this year and 4% next year. That comes from the OECD. For the U.S., it is going to be 2.8% and 2.4% real GDP growth. Canada lags behind at 1.9% and 1.9%.

Considering we are falling behind a booming economy around the world, and rather than just accepting falling further behind, I am curious as to why the government would choose to end debate instead of discussing ways to increase our economy.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I will continue to speak up for how great Canada is doing. We are in a fantastic situation internationally. The member opposite can talk about his hypothetical idea of where the future may or may not be going, but what we can do instead is rely on facts.

What are the facts? The facts are that since this government has had the opportunity to come into office, we have made investments. Since this government has come into office, the rate of growth in this country has increased significantly. We only need to look at the last year and a half to say that Canada has grown faster than any other G7 country. That is just a fact.

We only need to look at what has happened in unemployment over the last two and a half years to say that we are at the lowest unemployment rate we have seen in 40 years. That includes the entire period of time the previous government was in office.

As we consider facts, let us think about the real facts. These are the real facts that Canadians are experiencing today.

We are going to continue with positive economic results by putting forward Bill C-74.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the years I have witnessed budgetary measures that continue to support and enhance Canada's middle class and those who want to be part of it and the impact that has had in getting Canadians involved in the success stories that the Minister of Finance is talking about.

I am wondering if the Minister of Finance could provide some thoughts on how we as a government are able to work with Canadians to increase their disposable income and how that is fostering a healthier economy.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, when we get really positive results, we go back and see what actually happened to get ourselves those positive results, because clearly, we want to do more of that.

What has changed over the last two and a half years? Middle-class taxes have gone down. The Canada child benefit has gone up. Canadians have had the ability to invest more in their families, and as a result, our economy has done better. These are just the facts. The economy has done better. We have lower rates of unemployment. As we looked at that, we said to ourselves that we want to make sure we continue to advantage Canadian families.

That is why we indexed the Canada child benefit, so that benefit can keep up with the cost of inflation.

That is why we also introduced the Canada workers benefit. We took what was there before, the working income tax benefit, and improved it and added funds to it, so that there would be more of an incentive for people to get into the workforce. In addition, we made it automatic, so that people who were not getting it before would have a greater incentive to get into the workforce. What we are going to see from this is not only an increase in the size of the workforce but increased potential for our economic growth.

That is how we are going to continue with the very positive last two and a half years through the course of the next period that Bill C-74 represents.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the last two weeks, there have been debates about pipeline construction. I am wondering if the finance minister can tell us whether he supports Alberta's legislation to throttle pipelines within that province.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, we see the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline to be an important issue for Canadians, for Canadian jobs, and to grow our economy over the long term. It is something we are putting in place because we believe that to be the case. We approved it after a robust environmental review, after talking with indigenous Canadians, and after putting in place an oceans protection plan.

Government Orders

Our view is that the project needs to go forward. That is why we are moving forward with it. As we do that, we are not going to be throwing around threats to anybody across the country. We are going to try to find a productive way to get to the best solution that will allow us to assure that this important economic project goes forward.

● (1245)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister and wondered which Canada he was talking about. I am from Alberta. When I go to the GTA and talk with businesses, people are uncomfortable. Taxes are on the rise. He is talking about job creation, but he does not tell Canadians how he increased the size of government. He is buying jobs. He has borrowed \$80 billion in the last two and a half years, which means, doing the math, that he should be able to create close to one million jobs.

How can the minister claim that he is improving the economy while people in Alberta and other provinces are complaining and suffering?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, simply said, the member opposite has pretty well every number wrong. Over the last two and a half years, we have had a turnaround in growth in our country. We have seen an increase in the number of jobs, with over 600,000 new jobs. We have actually seen that the economy in Alberta is starting to produce more jobs. What we are seeing across the country is that there are places where we are doing very well, and there are places that are recovering. We are going to continue with our investments to make sure the entire country does well.

We will not in any way accept erroneous statistics. The fact is that middle-class taxes have gone down, small business taxes have gone down, our economy has grown, and more Canadians are working. This is all positive. We are going to continue on our track to make sure this is the case for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Mr. Speaker, I can see why the minister wants to end the debate. Every time I ask him a question about the fact that Internet services are not subject to sales tax and GST, he goes on about taxing those companies, which will obviously require a great deal of coordinated effort on the global stage. However, he knows full well that I am talking about the GST and provincial sales tax, but he keeps denying and deflecting. I can see why he does not want to debate the issue for too long. He is concerned that he will eventually have to stay on topic.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I will continue to be truthful. In Canada, the tax system is working. We will continue to do what we must in order to ensure that the system is working here, in Canada. However, at the same time, we must collaborate with our counterparts in other countries to consider how the international system will continue to operate. That is very important. We will continue with our approach because it is the only way to ensure that the system works in the future.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1325)

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

(*Division No. 650*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Amos |
| Anandasangaree | Arseneault |
| Arya | Badawey |
| Bagnell | Bains |
| Baylis | Beech |
| Bennett | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blair |
| Boissonnault | Bossio |
| Bratina | Breton |
| Brison | Caesar-Chavannes |
| Carr | Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) |
| Chagger | Champagne |
| Chen | Cormier |
| Cuzner | Dabrusin |
| Damoff | DeCoursey |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Dzerowicz | Ehsassi |
| El-Khoury | Erskine-Smith |
| Eyking | Eyolfson |
| Fergus | Fillmore |
| Finnigan | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fragiskatos | Fraser (West Nova) |
| Fraser (Central Nova) | Fuhr |
| Garneau | Gerretsen |
| Goldsmith-Jones | Graham |
| Grewal | Hajdu |
| Hardie | Harvey |
| Hébert | Hehr |
| Hogg | Holland |
| Housefather | Hussen |
| Hutchings | Joly |
| Jones | Jordan |
| Jowhari | Kang |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti |
| Lamoureux | Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) |
| LeBlanc | Lebouthillier |
| Lefebvre | Leslie |
| Levitt | Lightbound |
| Lockhart | Long |
| Longfield | Ludwig |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacKinnon (Gatineau) |
| Maloney | May (Cambridge) |
| McCrimmon | McDonald |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Mendès |

Mihychuk
Soeurs)
Monsef
Morrisey
Nassif
Ng
Oliver
Oueltette
Peschisolido
Philpott
Poissant
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Yip

Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morneau
Murray
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Picard
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Young — 164

Sopuck
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Stubbs
Thériault
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Weir

Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Webber
Yurdiga — 114

Government Orders

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

* * *

SECOND READING

The House resumed from April 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-74, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

● (1330)

[English]

BILL C-74—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order in reply to the point of order raised earlier today by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby with regard to Bill C-74. In his arguments, the hon. member correctly stated that Standing Order 69.1 permits the splitting of votes on bills considered as omnibus legislation. As my hon. colleague also indicated, Standing Order 69.1(2) states that:

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

As the hon. member stated, the carbon pricing initiative was mentioned in the budget tabled on February 27. If one looks at page 151, one will find a section called “Pricing Carbon Pollution and Supporting Clean Growth”, which as my hon. colleague indicated, specifies our government's intention to introduce carbon pricing legislation.

As such, I disagree with my hon. colleague that the current legislation goes against the spirit of Standing Order 69.1. Consequently, I respectfully submit that Bill C-74 should not be split into multiple votes.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary, in this case for his timely intervention on the matter. I will get back to the House in due course on the question that was raised by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Angus
Aubin
Benson
Bergen
Berthold
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Caron
Chong
Clarke
Deltell
Donnelly
Dusseault
Egliniski
Falk (Provencher)
Finley
Gallant
Genuis
Gladu
Hardcastle
Hoback
Jolibois
Kelly
Kmiec
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Nantel
Nicholson
O'Toole
Plamondon
Quach
Rayes
Rempel
Saganash
Saroya
Shields

Albas
Allison
Arnold
Beaulieu
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boulerice
Brassard
Cannings
Carrie
Choquette
Cooper
Diotte
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fortin
Généreux
Gill
Gourde
Harder
Hughes
Julian
Kent
Kwan
Leitch
Lukiwski
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nater
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Sansoucy
Schmale
Shipley

Government Orders

When the House last took up debate on the question before the House, the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton had five minutes remaining for questions and comments. Therefore, we will go to that now.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question I have for my colleague has to do with the record of the Liberal government chronically breaking its promises. The Liberals were elected on a promise to run a small \$10-billion deficit. They promised that this year's deficit would be only \$6 billion, and it is more than three times that. They promised no omnibus bills, yet we see that. Could the member comment on how he sees the current government's ability to keep its promises?

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budget implementation act is a product of the Prime Minister saying one thing during the election and then doing quite another. He said he would never, ever introduce an omnibus bill, and here we have a 500-plus page omnibus bill. It was the second omnibus bill introduced in a single week by the current government. So much for that promise.

As the member for Sarnia—Lambton rightfully pointed out, the Prime Minister said that he would run three years of so-called small deficits. In the first year, it was twice as much, and in the second year it was twice as much. This year, the deficit was three times larger than what he promised. With respect to the commitment to balance the budget in 2019, instead of a four-year plan, the Prime Minister has replaced it with a 30-year plan.

It seems that the only promise the Prime Minister has been able to keep is the legalization of marijuana.

• (1335)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I happened to be in the House when the member for St. Albert—Edmonton made his comments when we last spoke to this. If I remember correctly, I believe he started off by saying that the Liberal Party won the jackpot when we won the election because of this amazing fictitious surplus that the Conservatives had left behind. He went on to say that we currently have a fiscal train wreck. However, the reality of the situation is that Canada currently has the best growth in GDP among the G7 countries. The difference between what the current government has done and what the previous government did is that instead of investing in gazebos and helicopter trips to private cottages, we are investing in things that are changing lives. We are investing in people and the resources to improve their skills and give them what they need to truly succeed.

Therefore, I ask the member opposite, how could he possibly say we have a fiscal train wreck when we have the best growth among the G7 countries?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands had listened to my speech, he would know that I alluded to the fact that in the first two years under Prime Minister Harper, we paid down nearly \$40 billion in debt, which was the largest debt repayment in modern Canadian history by any government. We led Canada through the toughest economic times since the 1930s through to a balanced budget, which the current government inherited. By contrast, the current Liberal government has run massive deficits, a sea of red ink, \$500 million of additional debt over the next 20 years. When comparing the record of Stephen

Harper and the current government, I would take the record of Stephen Harper any day.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's words are always encouraging, and I find him very inspirational when he does a speech in the House. I would like him to comment on something that is of particular importance to me. I am the MP for Oshawa, which manufactures. We are stuck with what John Manley, who used to be the Liberal finance minister, said was a lack of things in this budget to address the competitiveness problem. In Oshawa, we are fighting against the highest electrical rates, this new carbon tax, all kinds of different taxes, while the American government is taking an aggressive route to increasing competitiveness.

Could he comment on the requirement to address the competitiveness issue and what it is going to do to Canada unless the government gets moving on it?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the member for Oshawa raises a very good point. What the Liberal government has failed to do is address and respond to the North American reality where our largest trading partner and competitor is cutting taxes and rolling back regulations. Instead, the government is increasing red tape and taxes, which is putting Canada in a competitive disadvantage. Nothing could be worse than the government's tax on everything. For example, there is massive carbon tax, which, by the way, is going to do absolutely nothing to reduce GHGs. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that at \$200 per tonne, carbon emissions would be reduced by just 1.5%. By contrast, under Stephen Harper, when we took a responsible sector-by-sector approach, we reduced GHGs by 3.1%.

[*Translation*]

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-74 and budget 2018 today. This plan will help increase growth in urban communities in Pontiac and our rural communities, and will make them more prosperous. I feel engaged and inspired by the potential to make our country more equal for Canadian men and women. I am very proud of our government and this bill. This plan is based on the principles of growth, reconciliation, advancement, and equality. I would like to talk about some of budget's many initiatives that are particularly important to Pontiac.

I want to start with the assistance that workers will receive through the Canada workers benefit. There are many low-income workers in the riding of Pontiac, especially in the rural areas, but also in our communities in Gatineau. For example, in 2014, the average salary in the RMC of Pontiac was \$32,556 per year. In the RMC of la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, the average yearly salary was \$28,603. Some people in our riding are really struggling. The Gatineau valley has the highest level of low-income families, at 14.4%.

Government Orders

I was so pleased when I saw that the government introduced in the budget the Canada workers benefit, which will take effect in 2019. Thanks to this benefit, low-income workers who earn \$15,000 a year will have nearly \$500 more in their pockets. That is important for the people in my riding of Pontiac. The Canada Revenue Agency will automatically establish eligibility, which will ensure that 300,000 additional low-income workers receive the Canada workers benefit.

Seasonal workers are another important issue. In Pontiac, many people work in the outfitting, forestry, and ecotourism sectors. Many municipal officials in the Pontiac area approached me about the shortcomings they have seen in the employment insurance system. I am thinking in particular of the mayor of Montcerf-Lytton, Alain Fortin, and the Gatineau Valley council of mayors. Our government listened to what they had to say, and it will invest \$230 million over two years to improve the situation of seasonal workers who depend on employment insurance in the off-season. The terms and conditions will be presented in the coming months following discussions with the provinces. Simply put, this measure responds directly to the needs and requests of people in the Pontiac region who work in the forestry, outfitting, and tourism sectors.

Another very important issue in my riding is Phoenix. I am personally very concerned about the Phoenix pay system and so are many people in my riding. It affects far too many residents of Pontiac. No one should have to worry about being paid incorrectly or not at all. As members know, our government inherited the Phoenix pay system, a project that was poorly managed from the outset, before we took office. The previous government demonstrated a lack of governance and oversight, failed to allocate adequate technical and human resources, and used a poor change management strategy, which led to problems with the launch of the Phoenix pay system.

Nevertheless, we understand the urgency and the magnitude of the problem, and we know that it is up to us to fix it. Our government is doing everything in its power to ensure that federal employees are always paid on time. We have already taken a number of measures, such as steadily increasing the number of employees who process pay transactions.

● (1340)

The federal government has hired approximately 561 employees in recent months to make the Phoenix pay system work better. In budget 2018, I was pleased to see that our government is continuing to allocate resources to resolve this problem. Budget 2018 proposes an investment of \$431 million to continue to address the problems with Phoenix, including the hiring of additional employees to support the system. The government is also proposing to invest \$16 million over two years to work on the next steps of implementing a new pay system with the help of experts, federal public sector unions, and technology providers.

I hope that our government will finally be able to resolve this problem. When I knock on my constituents' doors, they ask me to do something about this. I will be there for them, and I will continue to work to resolve the problems with the Phoenix pay system.

With respect to official languages, as I am sure everyone knows, Pontiac is a very bilingual region. Both the francophone and the anglophone communities have a lot of cultural activities going on. I was pleased to see that the 2018 budget includes \$400 million in new

funding over five years to support the 2018-23 action plan for official languages. That includes funding for English and French community newspapers and radio stations in minority communities. There will also be money to provide better access to official language services for anglophone communities in Quebec as well as funding for local cultural activities, which are very important in ridings like Pontiac.

● (1345)

[*English*]

On the issue of environment and conservation, earlier this year, as the media reported significantly, 116 of our parliamentary colleagues signed a letter that I had the privilege of drafting, sent it to the finance minister and to the Prime Minister, and urged them to deliver a budget that would allow us to achieve our commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to protect 17% of our terrestrial land mass and 10% of our ocean by 2020. I was so proud of members opposite, members from our party, and senators.

These are really important commitments. This is one of the issues that most motivated me to run for office. I was so proud of the finance minister, the Prime Minister, and our government for making the decision to invest a historic amount of \$1.3 billion over five years to conserve Canada's ecosystems, landscapes, and biodiversity. This budget, on this measure alone, is an incredible victory for all of Canada.

In addition to thanking the Prime Minister, I would like to thank a number of people in our community of Pontiac, in particular Alison Woodley and Éric Hébert-Daly from CPAWS, who worked so hard on this issue. This achievement is theirs as well.

I would also like to thank all the parks and wildlife officials working in the federal civil service, who, for so many years, desperately needed this kind of investment. It really is a big boost, and I would like to thank them for working so hard on this issue for so many years. We all know that conserving our environmental heritage is an issue that transcends partisan politics. Canadians believe in it, and we have stepped up to do it.

On infrastructure, I was so pleased when the federal government announced that it would increase its portion of financial support for rural infrastructure projects up to 60%. This would allow communities of fewer than 5,000 people to tap into an extra percentage of funding from the federal government so that we can move beyond the formula of one-third, one-third, one-third, where municipalities have to pay one third of the cost. For small municipalities in the Pontiac, that kind of contribution is crucially important.

I want to give credit where it is due, to our infrastructure minister, who made that decision and is now working with the provinces so that our small municipalities do not get left behind in terms of infrastructure investments.

Government Orders

Regarding the Internet, when I knock on doors in the Pontiac, this is the number one topic. This is what people want fixed. It is an infrastructure issue for sure, but it is also an issue of democracy and socio-economic development. I am absolutely convinced that we are going in the right direction.

I would like to highlight the fact that we have doubled down on our \$500 million over five years. The connect to innovate program has already delivered results in the Pontiac, but this budget brought forward something more: \$100 million over five years to update to the next generation of broadband Internet services in rural regions, using new satellite technologies. This is good news, and I am looking forward to making more announcements like the \$6.7 million that was just announced in the Gatineau valley. There is more good news to come about the Internet in Pontiac, and I look forward to working hard.

• (1350)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at different times throughout my colleague's speech, he mentioned that he was proud of, or pleased with, the budget. I would like to ask my colleague if he is proud of the fact that during the campaign the Liberals promised vociferously that they would never introduce omnibus legislation, use time allocation, or go beyond \$10 billion in deficit, and yet here we have an \$18-billion deficit in the budget. Worse than that, just today we found out from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that it is not \$18 billion; it is \$22 billion. Between February and today, we have increased our deficit by \$4 billion.

Let us think of the amount of money that is going out the window each year just to pay the interest. Currently, we spend \$26 billion a year on interest, and by 2021 that will be \$33 billion, with no plan to balance the budget. Is he proud of that?

Mr. William Amos: Mr. Speaker, I will answer in a very Pontiac manner. The riding of Pontiac, where the average median income in a number of major sections hovers around \$30,000 a year, desperately needs investment. Our government committed to investing, and that is one of the biggest reasons why this riding went Liberal in the last election. The simple fact of the matter is that for 10 years Pontiac was starved of federal investment. Voters in Pontiac know that the debt-to-GDP ratio is declining very rapidly. This is managed investment that is absolutely going to help pick up jobs and help support families. When the Canada child benefit comes every month to the many thousands of families that desperately need help, the single mothers and the single fathers, the families living on the edge in the Pontiac, boy, are they happy that we are making those investments.

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really want to commend my colleague from Pontiac. I had the privilege of chairing the national capital region caucus, which embraces his riding. It is a very beautiful place, but as he mentioned in his speech, there are a lot of needs, and there are a lot of folks who are on the edge, so to speak.

I want to ask him specifically about the Canada child benefit. Recently, I came across a constituent in tears in my riding, who said to me that without the Canada child benefit, she, a single mother of two, would not be receiving an additional \$9,000 a year of tax-free support. We are trying as best we can to help eliminate the scourge of

poverty. We are trying to reach up and meet the sustainable development goals, one of which is to leave no one behind. That is something very important. I believe that only a foolish society would let people slip further and further behind.

I want to ask my colleague how he feels about the Canada child benefit in the context of his beautiful riding of Pontiac and its needs.

Mr. William Amos: Mr. Speaker, my learned colleague has been a mentor to me over many years.

The simple fact is that Pontiac families desperately need the Canada child benefit. Specifically, 23,190 children are being supported, and there are 12,600-odd payments. The average payment is \$540, tax-free. At the end of the day, yes, this is about poverty alleviation, and we are doing a great job on that, but it is about more than just that, more than our families. This is about supporting small businesses across the Pontiac. What does a family in need do when they get those monthly payments? They go straight to the grocery store, the sports equipment store, or the bookstore, and they invest for their families. That is what makes our small-town economies roll.

At the end of the day, the Pontiac needs support. That is what they said time and time again, and they are not going to stop saying it, because we are a region with many rural communities in need. I am not going to stop defending them until the day of the next election, and hopefully thereafter, because this is just too great an opportunity to make a difference in families' lives.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate and go to the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, I will let her know that we have only about three or four minutes before we have to interrupt for the usual statements by members. She will have the remaining time when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess I should consider myself lucky to be speaking to the budget bill, Bill C-74. I say that because many of my colleagues will not have the opportunity to do that. The Liberal government has once again shut down debate, and this is an important bill.

It is bad enough that the government was planning to spend \$18 billion in deficit this year, but we have found out from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that now it is going to be \$22 billion. It seems to me that we should take more than one day for each \$5.5 billion of Canadian taxpayer money that is going to be spent by the government. I am very disheartened that the Liberal government would once again shut down debate.

In the small amount of time I have, I want to cover a few things: infrastructure, some issues with the border, health, seniors, and a number of my concerns about the tax changes that have been announced.

Statements by Members

With respect to infrastructure, the Liberal government was elected on a promise that it would run tiny deficits and put money into infrastructure in municipalities. Here we are, and it has not spent even 40% of the money that has been pledged. On top of that, the government took \$15 billion away from municipalities to put it into an infrastructure bank that is not going to build roads and bridges in communities like mine.

I had a project in my community that was going to create 3,000 well-paying jobs. It was called the oversized load corridor project. I discussed this project with the Minister of Infrastructure for nearly three years. He said the government was in support of the project. The province was in support. The municipality was in support. I needed \$6 million from the federal government in infrastructure money to create 3,000 well-paying jobs in Sarnia—Lambton. The government told me to wait for the trade corridor funding, which was coming. Then it put the Minister of Transport in charge of that fund, and I have just found out that he will not give \$6 million of infrastructure money to Sarnia—Lambton to create 3,000 Canadian jobs.

I am not sure what kind of priorities the government has when it cannot fund 3,000 jobs with just \$6 million. It spent \$10 million to put an ice rink on Parliament Hill, which created zero long-term Canadian jobs. When it comes to infrastructure spending, I certainly think there is a big problem.

The Sombra ferry in my riding is a border crossing. The other thing I would say with respect to infrastructure is that the government seems to be able to put hundreds of millions of dollars in the budget to support illegal immigrants, but it cannot put \$2 million in the budget to restore the border crossing at the Sombra ferry. Once again, I feel that the Liberal government's priorities are terrible.

In the words that have been said so often in this chamber, “never has a government spent so much to accomplish so little.”

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton will have seven minutes remaining in her remarks when the House next gets back to the question.

Now we will go to statements by members. The hon. member for Montcalm.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

BILL 99 ON QUEBEC SELF-DETERMINATION

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, the Groupe parlementaire québécois applauds the Superior Court's decision to recognize Quebec's Bill 99 and the Quebec nation's right to self-determination as legitimate.

In a democracy, a 50% plus 1 vote is what it takes to make a choice. That is the cornerstone of the democratic values that guide this House. Some members have a flexible notion of democracy. As a party to the legal challenge against Bill 99, the federal government, regardless of the party in power, proved that it does not mind taking

a heavy-handed approach if it feels that doing so is in its interest. Certain Quebec MPs from the two governing parties have shown that they are willing to betray their own people's rights if their leader tells them to.

That is why we, as democratic Quebeckers, must remain vigilant. We do not have the luxury of taking our rights for granted when the government challenges our freedom of choice in court.

* * *

2018 LIBERAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that you could not be with us in Nova Scotia for our convention. You would have seen the warm welcome we received as well as the new convention centre. You could have heard the mayor of Halifax talk about his city, heard the four premiers of the Atlantic provinces talk about their partnership, and seen all the networking that took place among Liberals.

[*English*]

It is very important. We had presenters and panels. We had Gerald Butts with David Axelrod, who spoke strategically. We had James Curleigh, who spoke about turning moments into momentum. We had Sophie Trudeau give a passionate speech. We had our Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, give a dynamic speech.

We talked about the middle class. We talked about the people trying to join the middle class. We talked about veterans. We talked about seniors. We talked about youth. It was an outstanding conference.

• (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member knows that he is not supposed to use the given names of other hon. members.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from tax reform and the rail crisis to the Canada food guide and labelling, from pulse crops and selling wheat to Italy to compensation for concessions on supply management, when it comes to agriculture, the Liberal government has failed on every count.

It is very clear to Canadians that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food holds absolutely no sway with his cabinet colleagues on issues that matter to farmers. People are beginning to speak up, and a movement is taking shape.

Agriculture is about more than just overalls and the smell of spring. Agriculture is the heart of Canada. It is our lifeblood. It is what nourishes us, whether we live in the Plateau in Montreal or in Thetford Mines, Quebec. Agriculture is about the families in our villages that support local hardware stores, car dealerships, and restaurants.

Statements by Members

I am pleased to be hosting the next generation of farmers in Ottawa today. These young folks are passionate about their calling and proud to help grow Canada's economy. To Sabrina, Dany, Anthony, Vincent and Mathieu, and the rest of the next generation of farmers, on behalf of my colleagues, I want to say thank you for believing in Canadian agriculture. They must not lose hope, for in the near future, a Conservative government will be there to ensure that agriculture returns to its rightful place.

* * *

[*English*]**KEITH ASHFIELD**

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a true gentleman and a humble, hard worker, the Hon. Keith Ashfield served the Fredericton region for 16 years at the provincial and federal levels. He was a champion for New Brunswick. Keith passed away Sunday morning.

Keith was elected to the New Brunswick legislature in 1999, where he served as deputy speaker and as minister of natural resources and energy. In 2008, Keith was elected as member of Parliament for Fredericton. During his seven years in Ottawa, he held several cabinet portfolios, including minister of fisheries and oceans, and minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. A dedicated and effective voice for our community, Keith recently launched his return to politics, securing the nomination for his party provincially for the upcoming election. Our region is fortunate to have been served by such a classy and gracious individual.

On behalf of our community, I share my deepest condolences with his wife Judy, children Seth and Tara, and his entire family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all at this time. We thank Keith for his dedication and service to our community, our province, and our country.

* * *

[*Translation*]**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SICKNESS BENEFITS**

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, illness affects us all, directly or indirectly. In our neighbourhood of Vieux-Longueuil, our neighbour Marianne Simard knocked on our door to tell us about her scant 15 weeks of EI sickness benefits.

Marianne's story is particularly striking because she is fighting cancer and trying to make life easier for all those who will one day be diagnosed with cancer. There are plenty of stories like Marianne's, including that of Marie-Hélène Dubé, the woman behind the "15 weeks to heal is not enough!" movement. She will continue to collect more stories and accounts because one in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer one day.

In 2016, the government promised to review the program. Two years later nothing has been done. How can we expect someone with cancer to heal in 15 weeks when the average treatment takes 52 weeks? I invite all those who want to help Marianne, Marie-Hélène, and my team to join us in forcing the government to keep its

promise. Together we can continue to put pressure on the government and right this wrong.

* * *

[*English*]**MISSING CANADIAN**

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Jesse Galganov, a wonderful young man from my riding who has been missing since last fall. Jesse was headed to medical school, but first chose to go on a trip to discover the world. He disappeared while hiking the Santa Cruz trail in Huarrez, Peru, and despite his parents Alisa and Todd's herculean efforts, he has yet to be found.

I call upon the Peruvian authorities to do everything they can to assist Jesse's parents. This includes directing the Peruvian police to fully co-operate with the private search and rescue experts they have hired, to work with the Canadian government in the investigation, and to provide skilled resources as necessary.

I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for meeting with Jesse's father in Peru just two weeks ago. The hearts and prayers of all Canadians are with Alisa and Todd and their family. If anyone has any information about Jesse, please email helpusfindjesse@gmail.com.

* * *

● (1405)

[*Translation*]**SAUVEUR CHAMPAGNE**

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today to an extraordinary man, Sauveur Champagne. Throughout his life he shaped his family, physical, and social environment.

From a young age, and together with his brothers and friends, he cleared and worked on the land, and built and repaired the buildings and tools he needed on his farm, thus carving out his part of the country. He was a loving husband, an understanding, devoted and attentive father and grandfather, who helped solve all of life's problems, large and small.

Mr. Champagne was involved in every municipal, regional, and provincial organization where he could make a difference. He founded social institutions that help people in our community live in dignity, such as the Lotbinière Caregivers' Association.

As a tribute to Sauveur Champagne for his incredible sense of community, his constant dedication to his family and friends, and all the help he gave to strangers who crossed his path without expecting anything in return, let us remember his motto, "Save someone and one day you, too, will be saved."

You will never be forgotten, Sauveur Champagne.

Statements by Members

[English]

COMMUNITY RUNS

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that you like to run, so I am asking you to reach out to the communities across our country to get out running this summer. We started the race season in April, on Easter, with the Beaches Easter Run with the member for Beaches—East York. It is a great way to get out and start the day.

I am looking forward to the race season in our community. We are going to have two races in Tommy Thompson Park with MEC. One is going to take place on June 24 and the other on September 9. I will be at both of them, and I am hoping to see the community out too.

I will be at the Pride and Remembrance Run on June 23. In Withrow Park, we are going to be having the Kids' Run for Nature, a family friendly run, on June 10. It was started by two elementary school kids from my area, Jasmine and Jett. It raises funds for the World Wildlife Fund. It is an amazing time out.

There is more. I am inviting the community to join me for weekly runs. People can find out all the details on my Facebook page and website.

* * *

SHAKESPEARE BY THE SEA

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.):

I stand before the House to call
On members, and good folk of our city,
To celebrate twenty-five years in all
Of Shakespeare by the Sea theatre company.
In a battery at Point Pleasant Park
On Canada Day, the curtain first rose,
A tradition began, and left its mark
And shapes a fame which annually grows.
Many plays, old and new, have given voice
To Halifax as a rich dramatic feast,
Presenting a varied cultural choice
The largest outdoor theatre in the east.
Performance of quality always will be
The legacy of Shakespeare by the Sea.

* * *

LETHBRIDGE HURRICANES

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the Lethbridge Hurricanes on winning a spot in the WHL playoffs. Lethbridge could not be more proud. Their hard work, team spirit, and many hours of practice and competition have brought them to this point.

They are two games into the battle against the Swift Current Broncos, and as they enter game three, we are looking forward to cheering them on from home. Together they will test the bounds of their grit, determination, and drive, and I am confident that they will come out on top.

I have a bit of love from their Lethbridge family to them:

“Go 'Canes!” “We love you guys!” “Beat them at home and take it to 'em late in the series!” “We believe in you.” “Good luck guys!” “Just win baby!” “You've got this boys!” “We're behind you.” “Play

your game and believe!” “Couldn't be more proud!” “Rock 'em like a hurricane!” “Go Canes Go!”

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA-FRANCE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as president of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association, it gives me great pleasure this week to welcome the French delegation of our association, chaired by MP Annie Chapelier, with the co-chairs of the friendship groups, Senator Claudine Lepage and MP Jean-Luc Lagleize.

As the two key players in the international Francophonie, Canada and France are inseparable friends. We share many values. We have many things in common, such as culture, civil law, ways of thinking and doing things, and especially language. As Yves Duteil said in his song *La langue de chez nous*:

It is a beautiful language with splendid words
Whose history can be traced in its variations
Where we feel the music and smell the herbs
Goat's cheese and wheat bread

...

It tells us that in that far-off country of snow
It faced the winds blowing from all directions
To impose its words even in the schools
And that our own language is still spoken there

...

And from Île d'Orléans to Contrescarpe
Listening to the people of this country sing
It sounds like the wind moving over a harp
And composing a whole symphony

...

A warm welcome to our colleagues from France.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following the devastating crash a little more than two weeks ago, we learned that the Humboldt Broncos Logan Boulet had signed his organ donor card. Since then, Canadians across the country have come together, and organ donation rates have increased dramatically. Canadians come together in times of tragedy to care for one another. Because of Logan's heroic decision to become an organ donor, he saved the lives of six people who desperately needed a transplant.

[Translation]

While 90% of Canadians say that organ donation is important, only 20% agree to become organ donors. Greater Sudbury and Sturgeon Falls, in Nickel Belt, rank third and sixteenth in terms of number of registered donors in Ontario. I urge all Canadians to go to their provincial tissue and organ donation website to register. By registering to become an organ donor, you may become a hero to someone in need.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Statements by Members

[English]

DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, early this morning, Canadians were delighted to learn of the birth of a third child to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Kensington Palace has announced that the royal baby, a boy, was born at 6:01 this morning, weighing a healthy eight pounds, 11 ounces. The little prince is now fifth in the line of succession to the Canadian throne, and is Her Majesty the Queen's sixth great-grandchild.

The Duke and Duchess and their children visited Canada most recently in the autumn of 2016, touring British Columbia and Yukon. We look forward to having them return to Canada with the newest member of their family soon.

On behalf of Canada's official opposition, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and wish their family great happiness in the future.

* * *

[Translation]

DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to warmly congratulate the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the birth of their third child.

[English]

A new baby is always a reason to feel joyful and hopeful. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in wishing the new Cambridge baby a life of purpose, compassion, and fulfillment.

To Her Majesty, the Queen of Canada, our warmest congratulations on the arrival of her sixth great-grandchild.

[Translation]

I am delighted to join the millions of people who are welcoming this news with the joy that every baby around the world could hope for when a new life begins.

[English]

With renewed best wishes to Their Royal Highnesses, Prince George and Princess Charlotte, on the birth of their new brother.

* * *

EVENTS IN WINDSOR—TECUMSEH

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was another inspiring weekend in Windsor—Tecumseh.

I salute Sho event studio, fostering local arts, Kim Kristy and Pat Jefflyn of Canadian Arts Productions in making a film about civil rights activists Viola Desmond and Harriet Tubman, based on the original stage work of Leslie McCurdy, daughter of the late MP, Howard McCurdy, a distinguished trailblazer to whom my colleague from Windsor West recently paid tribute.

The Essex Region Conservation Authority's Earth Day celebration reinforced the work it and its foundation do all year long. It is clear,

when speaking to people at varied events, that we know our natural environment—

The Speaker: I apologize, but I am afraid we are having another problem.

I will ask the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh to redo her statement if she does not mind.

● (1415)

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was another inspiring weekend in Windsor—Tecumseh. I salute Sho event studio, fostering local arts, Kim Kristy and Pat Jefflyn of Canadian Arts Productions in making a film about civil rights activists Viola Desmond and Harriet Tubman, based on the original stage work of Leslie McCurdy, daughter of the late MP, Howard McCurdy, a distinguished trailblazer to whom my colleague from Windsor West recently paid tribute.

The Essex Region Conservation Authority's Earth Day celebration reinforced the work it and its foundation do all year long. It is clear, when speaking to people at varied events, that we know our natural environment cannot survive without a regulatory environment.

I applaud my colleagues, the member for Courtenay—Alberni for his pmb on ocean plastics; the member for Essex for hers on safe water; and our NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh, who has been outspoken on eliminating single-use plastics. I also applaud the caring Canadians in my riding who want to hold bold action now to protect our future.

* * *

KEITH ASHFIELD

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Conservative caucus, to mark the passing of a good friend to all of us in the House, and to so many around the country, our former colleague, Keith Ashfield.

[Translation]

Keith was a fixture here in Ottawa, his home away from home when he could not return to his beloved New Brunswick.

Determined to serve the people of New Maryland, Fredericton, and beyond, Keith put his name on the ballot of the provincial legislature in 1991 and won a seat just a few years later.

[English]

A true blue Conservative, Keith would take the fight to Ottawa in 2008 as a member of the Conservative government, where he would serve as a cabinet minister and a staunch defender of Atlantic Canadian interests until 2015. Throughout his political career, Keith fought to champion and protect Canada's natural abundance, both as the provincial minister for natural resources and the federal minister for fisheries.

Rural families and workers, and those who rely on Canada's natural wealth to help feed their families, knew they had an advocate in Keith Ashfield. Even as he faced health challenges in recent years, he never stopped working for the New Brunswick communities he loved so much.

[Translation]

Keith even said just a few months ago that he would run at the provincial level again. There is no doubt that the people of New Brunswick are mourning this loss today knowing that Keith was fighting for them yet again.

[English]

On behalf of our entire caucus, my wife Jill and I send our sincere condolences to Keith's wife Judy and their loved ones. May his memory be a blessing for all of them.

* * *

[Translation]

EARTH DAY

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, April 22, we joined the international community in celebrating Earth Day and honouring our planet. In the Pontiac, from Gatineau to Wakefield, folks of all ages attended workshops, went hiking, took part in panel discussions, and even attended a choral performance.

Earth Day is an opportunity to appreciate the beauty and diversity of nature on our planet and to enjoy Canada's most magnificent landscapes. We are inspired, motivated, and uplifted by them, and they give us hope while reminding us of our shared responsibility to be good stewards of our planet.

[English]

All Canadians know we were not the first people to set foot on earth, and we will not be the last. It is our responsibility to ensure our children and our children's children have the opportunity to see, hear, and feel the presence of whales off the coast of Nova Scotia, herds of caribou in Yukon and elsewhere, grizzly bears in Alberta, and wolves in the riding of Pontiac. Together, and only together, can we protect our lands, waters, and wildlife for generations to come.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

INCIDENT IN TORONTO

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I trust I speak for all parliamentarians when I say that our thoughts and prayers are with those victims of the recent tragic situation unfolding in Toronto right now.

I wonder if the Prime Minister will join me in sending our best wishes to the community impacted and update the House as to any information he may be able to share as the situation unfolds.

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition his question and his concern. Our thoughts are with those affected by this incident. We

are still gathering information. As soon as we can, we will share more information with Canadians.

[Translation]

Our thoughts are with those affected by this incident. We are learning more about what happened and will keep Canadians informed of developments.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a crisis at its borders. Last year, the RCMP intercepted more than 20,000 people crossing illegally into Canada. While thousands of people follow the rules and wait in line, sometimes for many months, this government is letting thousands more bypass the process and jump the queue.

Why are families that follow the rules being pushed to the back of the line by those who want to break the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to ensure the integrity of our immigration system. People who arrive legally or illegally are subject to security checks and an established, rigorous process as part of our immigration system. Canadians can be assured that its rules will be applied throughout the process no matter how people enter the country.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, so far in 2018, 6,300 people have crossed illegally into Canada. That is a rate of more than 60 people per day, worse than in 2017. This is a crisis that takes resources away from those families that are trying to come to Canada the right way, and prioritizes queue jumpers.

Could the Prime Minister explain to those families that have been waiting patiently for months for their turn to become proud Canadians why he is prioritizing those who are jumping the line?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is signatory to international conventions, which means when people arrive in our country, we process them in a responsible, rigorous way. That is how Canadians expect us to do it. That is exactly what we are doing. Suggesting that we should instead be ignoring our international obligations and conventions is simply not what Canadians expect from any government.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his report last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed something that everyone except the Prime Minister already knows, namely that the Liberal carbon tax is going to destroy the Canadian economy.

The math is simple: as the Liberal carbon tax goes up, economic growth goes down.

Oral Questions

My question is also simple; how long has the Prime Minister known that the carbon tax is going to destroy Canada's economic growth?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, comments like that one prove that the Conservatives learned nothing from Canadians in the last election. The Conservatives continue to believe that there is a choice to be made between what is good for the environment and what is good for the economy. Meanwhile, after 10 years of inaction on the environment, they left Canada with very little economic growth.

As we promised Canadians, we are going to continue investing in both the economy and the environment. The Conservatives, of course, can continue advocating Stephen Harper's approach.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is Liberals who are confused on this matter. In fact, when we asked for proof that a carbon tax would have any concrete impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, both the environment minister and the Prime Minister could not come up with an answer.

However, there is evidence that a carbon tax will damage the Canadian economy. We asked for that through an access to information, but that was blacked out. The excuse for blacking it out was that just that information alone would damage the Canadian economy. If that information alone would damage the Canadian economy, how bad will the carbon tax be for the economy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing to see in 2018 the Conservatives still doubling down on Stephen Harper's failed approach, not understanding that putting a price on carbon pollution is the way to build a strong economy for the future.

Quite frankly, I find it a bit rich that the members opposite are complaining about secrets. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should stop censoring the member for Beauce.

* * *

•(1425)

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of this tragic incident, their families and, of course, the people of Toronto. We will be closely following any developments.

At least one in five Canadians must choose between purchasing prescription medication and stocking the fridge. This is why a universal pharmacare program makes sense.

Good ideas have nothing to do with politics. Our policies include a universal pharmacare program, and the members of the Liberal Party decided to vote in favour of it, as they also did in 2016.

Will the government take this opportunity to immediately create a universal pharmacare program?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of our universal health care system, which focuses on people's needs rather than their ability to pay.

However, I think we all agree that it could be improved. We have created an advisory council to examine, evaluate, and recommend options for a national pharmacare program. This builds on what we have already done, in terms of lowering the cost of medications and simplifying the regulatory process for drug approvals.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in their 1997 election platform, the Liberals were already talking about the urgent need for a universal pharmacare program. That was 21 years ago, and we are still waiting.

The purpose of an election is for parties to present their political agendas. Election promises should never be just words. Once the party takes power, it must be willing to keep those promises. Canadians want the government to work on implementing a universal pharmacare program now, and that is what they deserve. They do not want to have to wait until the next election campaign only to hear the same promise.

Do the Liberals plan to conduct another study to buy time and then make the same promise in 2019?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising to see the NDP trying to implement something without a clear plan. On this side of the House, we believe in making a plan first and then implementing it. That is why we created an advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare, with a mandate to study, evaluate, and recommend options for implementing a national pharmacare program. This builds on the work we started by lowering prescription drug prices and streamlining the regulatory process for drug approvals.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Seriously, Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve action. The Liberals promised to implement pharmacare 21 years ago. This past weekend their party members called on the government to act. We have the PBO saying that national pharmacare would save Canadians billions of dollars, and the health committee is calling for public prescription drug coverage for all Canadians. What was the government's response? It was to call for yet another study.

Whom do the Liberals not trust: the PBO, the health committee, or their own membership?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is another example of the NDP being filled with ideas but it has no idea how to actually implement those ideas.

Oral Questions

On this side of the aisle we believe in developing a plan before we implement something. That is why we have created an advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare. It has a mandate to study, evaluate, and recommend options on a path forward on pharmacare. This builds on concrete work we have already undertaken to improve access to necessary prescription medications, including steps to lower drug prices and streamline the regulatory process.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with exploding household debt and over half of Canadians on the brink of not being able to afford their bills, Canadians simply cannot afford to wait another 21 years. It is shameful that 34 years after medicare was introduced, our health care system still has this gaping hole in it. Unfilled prescriptions just mean higher hospital costs down the road.

This situation is unfair and unaffordable for Canadians. Today in this House, will the government commit to implementing pharmacare?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect things to be done right. That is exactly what we are doing. We are making sure, with a panel of experts, that we move forward in a responsible way.

We believe in actually putting forward solutions that will help Canadians, and not just grandstanding on labels and ideas. We will deliver, like we have delivered on the Canada child benefit, like we have delivered on lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%, two things which the NDP stood against in the last election.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation regarding the entry of illegal immigrants into Canada is nowhere near being resolved.

Every day, we are seeing a massive increase in the number of people entering Quebec illegally. We have had this problem for over a year now, and, as usual, the Liberal government issues formal statements but is incapable of coming up with any concrete solutions.

My question for the Prime Minister is simple: what concrete steps does he plan to take to stop this massive influx of illegal immigrants?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada remains open and welcoming to people who need protection. However, our government is determined to maintain orderly migration.

[English]

We have invested over \$173 million for faster processing of asylum claims and border security operations. We have worked with the Province of Quebec and have done a lot to deal with this issue through the Intergovernmental Task Force on Irregular Migration. We have responded to provincial issues. We will continue to work to make sure that this issue is addressed properly.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem of illegal immigration into Canada has been well known for over a year now and nothing has changed.

There were over 20,000 clandestine entries into Canada last year, and nearly 90% of those were in Quebec alone. The good weather has only just begun, and we have already had 6,373 border crossings, including 5,609 in Quebec alone. At this rate, that number will double by the end of the year.

What does the government plan to do to stop this illegal activity?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members of the party opposite would have us believe that they actually care about border security. That is the party that cut \$390 million from the Canada Border Services Agency, jeopardizing border security operations. That is the party that cut refugee health care for the most vulnerable people: pregnant women and victims of torture. That is the party that did that. As recently as March 22, when it came time to stand up for the Yazidi survivors of Daesh atrocities and vote for \$14 million budgeted toward those services, that party was missing in action and voted against it.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one is disputing that the Prime Minister has a really expensive plan to deal with this issue. In reality, though, it is not working. No matter how much he spends, more people are illegally crossing the border every day. The only criticism that he has of our former government which, by the way, did not have this #WelcomeToCanada problem in managing our borders, is that we were not expensive enough.

Why does the Prime Minister think it is fair to prioritize hundreds of millions of tax dollars we do not have on illegal border crossers instead of stopping the flow?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is on record as calling on our government to spend more money for faster processing of asylum claims and border security operations. Budget 2018 delivers exactly that. What is absolutely irresponsible is for that party to preach to us on border security when it cut almost \$400 million from the CBSA, jeopardizing the same border security that its members are complaining about now. We will put our record up against the Conservatives' record any day.

Oral Questions

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think our former government had 400 people illegally entering Quebec every day. Every time we point out that the Prime Minister is allowing the flow of illegal border crossers to dramatically increase, the Liberals talk about how much taxpayer dollars they are spending. It is kind of like having a hole in one's roof during a storm but the plan is to replace the hardwood every day.

Why is the Prime Minister prioritizing Canadian tax dollars on making it easier for people to illegally enter the country and stay here for years with social benefits instead of stopping the flow?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a responsible party does is it invests in border security. We have done that in budget 2018 with an investment of \$173 million in border security operations and faster processing of asylum claims. There is \$74 million for the Immigration and Refugee Board so that refugee claims can be heard faster.

The Conservatives do not have that record. Their record is they left us with a massive backlog in asylum claims at the IRB. Their record is they left us with fewer border security operations as a result of cutting almost \$400 million from CBSA. They have a shameful record on this issue.

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•(1435)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend we learned that ISIS fighters returned to Canada with chemical weapons knowledge. ISIS terrorists are known to use commercially available toxic chemicals in attacks on civilians. It is unacceptable that Canadians only learned of this through the access to information process.

I will ask again, are those violent traitors under surveillance, yes or no?

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously constantly monitoring the situation to ensure that any individual who poses a threat to the country is immediately apprehended and brought to justice. I would hold out that when the party opposite was dealing with people of interest and concern, the 60-some individuals who were of concern during its mandate, not one charge was laid. We currently have two. Where we have evidence, we pursue that.

I would state as a last comment that with respect to the incident he is talking about, the risk level was rated as extremely low.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is ridiculous that any bit of information Canadians are getting on this is through an access to information request. It is clear that the Prime Minister has no respect for Canadians when he keeps refusing to be transparent on this file. The Prime Minister is prepared to accept these traitors as “an extraordinarily powerful voice for preventing radicalization”, but he has not even heard their confessions.

Again, who are these terrorists and where do they live?

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is a problem, if there is any evidence of wrongdoing or ill intent against Canada, then our government and our officials will take immediate action without question. The evidence is irrefutable. During the Conservative governments' mandates, no one was charged.

[*English*]

Under our government, there are two. Where we have evidence, we act.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PENSIONS

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has so far failed to come up with any solutions to help workers and retirees who have been negatively affected by recent bankruptcy proceedings, such as the closure of Sears. At this weekend's Liberal convention, the party encouraged the government to finally do something. The NDP put forward a much more practical proposal in Bill C-384 that would put an end to pension theft once and for all.

Will the government support this bill?

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been very clear when it comes to strengthening pensions. That is why in the last budget, we put forward a plan to make sure there was a whole-of-government approach when it comes to strengthening pensions. This goes above and beyond the measures we have taken to support the CPP. We will continue to work with other departments and officials to make sure we come forward with a robust plan to help provide more pension security for Canadian workers.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have no plan in the budget. Workers and retirees expect their government to change Canada's bankruptcy and insolvency laws to protect their interests and to end the theft of their pensions. The government and the party's resolutions talk nothing more than consultations. Canadians do not need more consultations. They need action. The NDP has given the government the fix in Bill C-384.

When will the government get on with the job instead of fooling around with these meaningless “calls for inaction”?

Oral Questions

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is disappointing to hear from the member opposite is his lack of support for the budget measures we put forward to strengthen Canadian pensions. We have been very clear about income security, making sure that we provide the adequate resources for those individuals who retire to make sure they have the support they need to retire with dignity. The pension initiatives we have put forward in our budget reflect our government's commitment. We will continue to advance that in a meaningful way, and we hope the members opposite will support us.

* * *

● (1440)

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed that the carbon tax would erase \$10 billion from Canada's economy by the year 2022. I filed access to information requests asking how much this tax would cost the average Canadian family.

The finance minister has the numbers, but he has redacted them from documents released. Will he reveal today how much that tax will cost the average Canadian family? How much?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that climate change is real and they expect their government to take responsible and effective action while strengthening our economy and creating good middle-class jobs.

Let us be clear: Canada's GDP is measured in the trillions of dollars. We are talking about roughly the same rate of growth with or without carbon pricing, and that is just one side of the coin: the PBO did not model the economic opportunities that are driven through the innovation that the carbon pricing will provide. Putting a price on pollution will help in addressing a critical environmental issue while concurrently unlocking enormous economic opportunities going forward for this country—

The Speaker: Order. I am afraid I have to remind the hon. members for Abbotsford and Durham that we wait our turns to speak and do not interrupt when someone else is speaking. Of course, the Standing Orders provide for not interrupting them, so they will not want to do that in the future.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only is the government redacting the cost of the carbon tax, but it is also redacting the minister's ability to answer questions on the issue here in the House of Commons. Most of us do not blame it for doing that, having heard some of his answers in the past.

The member across the way says that the PBO failed to calculate the wonderful opportunities that the carbon tax will bring to the economy, but the only opportunity that the PBO found in his calculations is the loss of \$10 billion of annual economic activity.

How much will that tax cost the average Canadian family?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, the memo that the hon. member refers to was released months ago, was discussed previously in exchanges in the House, was actually prepared under the previous Conservative government, and clearly thus does not represent the approach to the pricing of carbon pollution that we have negotiated and developed with the provinces and territories.

Carbon pricing works. It creates a powerful but low-cost incentive to cut pollution, encouraging people and businesses to save money by reducing their energy use and investing in clean solutions that will help to create good middle-class jobs.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the government has nothing to hide, then it does not need to use all of that black ink to cover up the cost of the carbon tax to the average Canadian family.

Speaking of costs, we learned today that the government's already promise-breaking deficit will be even bigger than the finance minister admitted just a few months ago. He said it would be \$18 billion; now the PBO says it will be \$22 billion, almost a 20% increase in only a couple of weeks.

How did the finance minister get his numbers so wrong again?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news for Canadians is clear: there are more Canadians working and there has been better economic growth, and it has all been about the policies that we have put in place.

We put out our fiscal forecasts in our budget and we stand by those forecasts. It is important to listen to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, but in this case what we are saying is that we stand firmly behind the forecasts that we put out, the forecasts that show a declining level of debt to GDP over the five-year term, the forecasts that show that we are able to be fiscally responsible while investing in Canadians and helping Canadian families. We stand firmly behind those forecasts.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was not the only bad news for Canadian taxpayers, present and future: we also learned today that Canadians will spend vastly more on federal government debt interest. By 2022, the cost of servicing our national debt will rise by two-thirds, to almost \$40 billion. That is as much as we spend, as a government of Canada, on health care.

How is it in the interests of Canadian taxpayers to fork over more to wealthy bondholders instead of funding our treasured social programs?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us consider what is in Canadians' interests. What clearly is in Canadians' interests is to invest in Canadian families. What clearly is in Canadians' interests is to make sure that Canadians are working. Our country works when Canadians are working, and that is exactly what we are showing.

We are showing the highest rate of growth that we have seen in a long time, and that is because in 2015 Canadians made a decision to go against the failed policies of the previous government and to invest in Canadians' future. That is what we are doing.

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● (1445)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 26 minutes into his April 15 news conference, the Prime Minister guaranteed Canadians that construction will finally begin on the Kinder Morgan pipeline within weeks, but he needs to explain how this is possible. The company has met fewer than half of the 157 required National Energy Board conditions, one-third of the final route has not yet been approved, and now the company is begging for relief on many conditions and wants to delay detailed route hearings.

Is the Prime Minister now going to override the authority of the National Energy Board so he can force this pipeline through British Columbia?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pipeline was approved by the Government of Canada with 157 conditions because we believe that the pipeline will create good jobs for Canadians, will open up export markets so that we do not have to rely on only one single market, the United States, and at the same time will give us a better price for a our resources. It makes very good economic sense.

At the same time, there is the \$1.5 billion investment to create a world-class oceans protection plan and a co-developed monitoring scheme with indigenous peoples.

Growth, environmental stewardship, and partnership with indigenous peoples—that is the recipe for growth.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, coastal communities are alarmed about the marine impacts of Kinder Morgan's new pipeline: a sevenfold tanker traffic increase, a terrible oil spill response, bitumen spill risks, traffic harming orca whales, and disrespect for indigenous rights. Instead of protecting these vital public interests, the Prime Minister is more concerned with protecting the interests of a Texas-based oil company.

Why will the Liberals not stand up for B.C.'s coast and keep the promises they made to indigenous leadership?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said a sevenfold increase in tanker traffic. Actually, it is one more tanker a day—one—which will be surrounded by world-class spill response at a time when indigenous people, for the first time, have been involved from day one in becoming a part of the monitoring of the safety of the line, and we

believe that we are going to leave the backyard of indigenous people better than we had found it.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government came into office with a promise to make investments in our communities to make them stronger, more sustainable, and more inclusive. In Ontario and in my riding of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, communities have benefited by these early investments.

Provincial and municipal leaders have said that they require long-term and predictable funding so they can plan ahead. Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities update this House on investments the government is making in Ontario?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for her question and for her advocacy.

Our government will invest more than \$8 billion in federal funding to support public transportation in Ontario over the next decade, including \$200 million in Hamilton alone. These investments will reduce traffic gridlock, improve air quality, connect people to better jobs and services, and provide better and accessible transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, foreign investment in Canada fell by 42% and again by 27% last year. U.S. investment in Canada decreased by half, while Canadian investment in the U.S. is up two-thirds since the Liberals were elected. The stalled Trans Mountain expansion directly affects Canada's growth. Natural resource jobs are middle-class jobs for Canadians. The Liberals put all those jobs at risk by undermining Canadian energy.

When will the Prime Minister stop helping Donald Trump steal Canadian investment and Canadians' jobs?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, investment in Canada was up in 2017. I just had conversations with international investors this morning, who say that in international conferences the word on Canada is that it is a wonderful place to invest, because of the stability of our political system and because of the availability of a skilled and diverse labour market.

Again, we have members of the opposition from Alberta who can only talk doom and gloom about Alberta when Alberta is leading the Canadian economy. We are all proud of that on this side of the House.

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the Liberals killed northern gateway, energy east, and the Pacific northwest LNG project and now delaying the Trans Mountain expansion, the energy sector is in crisis. The Bank of Canada predicts Canadian energy investment will decline in 2018 and then drop to zero. The services association warns that “Investment dollars are fleeing Canada for regions of the world offering a more competitive environment...and where there is greater confidence in getting projects approved and completed.”

When will the Prime Minister stop attacking oil and gas and champion energy investment in Canada?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member, who is from Alberta, has so little confidence in the entrepreneurship of Albertans and the capacity of Albertans to innovate. It was their innovation that gave us the opportunity to develop this resource in the first place.

Does the member find that all this talk about doom and gloom gives inspiration to foreign investors to invest in Canada? Perhaps she is part of the problem.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's economic and energy policies are absolutely disastrous for the Canadian economy.

The Liberal carbon tax will cost the Canadian economy \$10 billion. The worst of it is that, since the Liberals have been in power, \$80 billion less has been invested in energy, 125,000 jobs have been lost, and two pipeline projects have been scuttled while another remains in limbo. That is the Liberal government's track record on the energy file.

When will someone in this government step up and do the right thing for the Canadian economy and Canadian energy?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we expanded export capacity for the Alberta Clipper project, the Nova Gas pipeline, the Line 3 replacement project, and the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline. We support the Keystone XL pipeline.

Their record in 10 years in office was not one kilometre of pipe built to expand our export markets, failed attempts to consult with indigenous people, and no attention paid to environmental stewardship. Why would we follow that failed record?

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's attempt to phase out the Canadian energy sector will have national consequences. A survey released today illustrates that Ontarians believe that Trans Mountain will positively affect their local economy, and 81% believe it will positively influence the economy of Canada.

Ontarians know that a strong Canadian energy sector means local jobs and investment in Ontario. When will the Prime Minister realize that his attack on the energy sector is hurting not only Alberta but all of Canada?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree with the hon. member. We think this kind of investment in Canada's energy sector is good not only for Alberta and British Columbia but for all of the country. When the Prime Minister and the Minister of Infrastructure and I were in Fort McMurray, we met with Canadians from every region of the country. We were reminded then, as we are reminded every day, that a strong energy sector for Canada is good for all Canadians from coast to coast.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the European counterpart to the Minister of Finance told *Le Journal de Montréal* that Canada's position on taxing web giants is no longer acceptable.

While the European Union and others are showing some backbone, the Government of Canada is dragging its feet and proposing consultations with countries that have already asked the web giants to pay their fair share of taxes. It is completely ridiculous.

What will it take for the government to finally decide to take action? We are at our wit's end.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said many times, the benefits of the digital world are not shared equally between the web giants and our artists and creators.

The web giants have a responsibility and must recognize it. As the Minister of Finance has said, the international community has agreed to examine the impact of digitization on key aspects of the existing tax system and try to come to a consensus.

That being said, Canada will continue to be involved in this multilateral work. The G20 countries believe that international co-operation is necessary to respond to the opportunities of the digital world and ensure that the benefits are shared by all.

* * *

● (1455)

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberals promised Canadians the creation of a national food policy, but it took them 18 months to set up a consultation process. Then they consulted farmers for three months over last summer, during the busiest time of the year. Now, six months later, we are still waiting for the food policy. However, based on the minister's response a few weeks ago, it does not look very promising.

The government is spending a lot of time talking to itself, but little to farmers and to Canadians. When are the Liberals going to deliver on a strategy for local, safe, and affordable food for Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we have consulted and we have over 40,000 replies. We consulted with people, the agricultural sector, and the food industry right across the country. Our government will put a food policy in place that will be a major asset to the food industry and Canada in general.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Nick Chan was charged with first degree murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and directing a criminal organization.

Today, he is a free man, after the charges were thrown out of court due to delay because of the justice minister's negligence. The minister has failed to fill nine out of 10 new judicial spots to deal with the backlog in Alberta's courts.

In light of that, what excuses will the minister give to this criminal's next victims?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that we continue to move forward with broad-based criminal justice reform to address delays that were identified by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I was grateful to introduce Bill C-75. I look forward to the member opposite supporting Bill C-75 as we move forward, because it will substantially address the delays in the criminal justice system. I am going to continue to appoint meritorious judges across the country, including in Alberta, of which I have appointed 27 thus far.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Ed Fast: You're not doing it, though.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Abbotsford seems not to have heard me earlier. I would ask him to keep those comments that I made earlier in mind.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of the charges against alleged notorious gang leader Nick Chan were stayed because of court delays. That means that we are now seeing more and more big criminals go free because the Minister of Justice has failed in her duty. It seems that she is doing a lot more to protect criminals than victims.

When will the minister take her responsibilities seriously and appoint judges so that justice can finally be done?

[*English*]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that we continue to move forward to transform the criminal justice system, with an eye to public safety, protecting victims, and holding offenders to account.

We are going to continue to move on this. This is why our government introduced Bill C-75, which I look forward to the members opposite supporting, given that they are concerned as well about delays in the criminal justice system.

I was also proud and continue to be proud of appointing meritorious judges across the country, 167 in fact, and last year, in 2017, 100 judges, the most of any justice minister in two decades.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my six years as minister of justice, there was never a shortage of qualified candidates for the Court of Queen's Bench in Alberta.

I am absolutely convinced that there is no shortage of qualified candidates in Alberta today. There is no excuse for a gang leader to have his murder charges stayed because the minister is not appointing the necessary number of judges in Alberta.

Why is it that the government is enabling gang leaders to walk the streets?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I am happy to stand up to speak about the appointments process that we have instituted. We will follow the appointments process for every appointment that I make.

I have made 167 appointments to the superior courts across this country, 27 in Alberta. I will add again, there were 100 appointments last year, a record of any minister of justice in over two decades.

I look forward to the member opposite also supporting Bill C-75, as we are committed to ensuring that we reduce the delays in the justice system.

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INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, colleges play an essential role in training Canadians with the skills they need to succeed in today's economy, and in helping local businesses innovate and create new jobs.

In the Niagara region, through the community and college innovation program, small businesses partner with Niagara College's technology access centre on innovative research to help them stay competitive and expand their businesses. They also provide young Canadians with opportunities to gain hands-on training and job experience.

Can the minister tell this House how our government is supporting innovative research at colleges across the country?

● (1500)

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science and Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that colleges are essential in driving innovation in Canada.

To increase support for collaborative research between business and colleges, budget 2018 invested \$140 million in the college and community innovation program.

When I visited the Niagara region with the member for St. Catharines, I heard directly from local businesses about how this investment will train students. It will also help businesses solve pressing challenges, allowing them stay competitive, grow their businesses, and create jobs.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister expropriated 25% of the Arctic surf clam quota, and then awarded it to Liberal insiders, insiders with no company, no indigenous partners, no boats and no plan, just Liberal connections.

Since their own MP is not standing up for them, the people of Grand Bank have launched a campaign to save their jobs, at grandbankplan.ca.

Will the government finally put the people of Grand Bank above Liberal insiders and support their plan to save their community?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government stands with the people of Grand Bank. On a number of occasions, I have had the chance to talk with my colleague who represents that community in the House of Commons. In fact, we have plans to work with the community of Grand Bank to ensure that the processing jobs are protected, and to ensure that our commitment to the people who work hard in those plants is respected.

What is surprising is that the hon. member uses a word like “expropriation”, which he knows has absolutely no application in this case. In fact, his previous government had a process to bring a new entrant into this fishery, and they were not worried about the people of Grand Bank then.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the firefighters who responded to the fire on the *Kathryn Spirit* did not even know if there were still hazardous materials on board. They had not even received the emergency plan. After seven years of mismanaging this file, the government is still taking a lax approach to safety. That is totally irresponsible. For goodness' sake, it took a fire for sprinklers to finally be installed on board. Everyone wants to see this ship gone, but not like this.

What does the government plan to do to ensure that safety and environmental rules are followed during the rest of the dismantling operations?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, naturally, our government shares our colleague's concern about the safety of the personnel working on the *Kathryn Spirit* and sympathizes with the communities that are worried and want to see the *Kathryn Spirit* gone. That is why we have invested massively to make that happen. A small fire occurred in the machine room of the *Kathryn Spirit*. The contractor has confirmed that plans of the work site and the

Oral Questions

emergency plan were personally given to Beauharnois' director of fire and public safety on December 14, 2017.

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HEALTH

Mr. Richard Hébert (Lac-Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic which, in Canada, took 50,000 lives. Unfortunately, there was no vaccine available at the time. As we are celebrating National Immunization Awareness Week, can the Minister of Health inform the House of our government's action on vaccinations?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean for his important question and excellent work on this matter.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, vaccination is the cornerstone of public health in Canada, as it is one of the most effective ways to battle, prevent, and in some cases eradicate infectious diseases. As my colleague has pointed out, history has shown us the profound impact that vaccination can have.

That is why our government is acting on a \$25-million, five-year commitment to improving immunization coverage rates in Canada. By working with our partners, our government is supporting a strong immunization system in Canada.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is happening to Canada under these Liberals? We have a national opioid crisis, yet over the weekend the justice minister said she was open to the idea of decriminalizing illicit drugs. By being open to this absurd idea, she sent a signal that Liberals want to legalize the use of cocaine, heroin, crack, and other illicit drugs. Canada is already in crisis with young people dying due to illicit drug use. Why would the justice minister and the Prime Minister want to make a very bad situation even worse?

Routine Proceedings

●(1505)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have acknowledged many times that we are in a national public health crisis due to opioid overdoses, and our government is treating this as a public health issue rather than as a criminal one. We understand that stigma and barriers to treatment need to be reduced, and that is why we have restored harm reduction as an important pillar in the national drug strategy. While we recognize that decriminalization will not ensure quality control for a dangerous drug, we have made it easier for health professionals to provide access to opioid substitution therapies. We have supported the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act and, through budget 2018, we have made investments of over \$231 million to continue to develop innovative approaches—

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

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government is providing funding to the Quebec bar association to strike down Quebec laws under section 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867. Canada does not care about French and has violated its Constitution for 35 years. The Constitution Act, 1867, is in English only. There is no official French version even though that is required by the Constitution Act, 1982.

Can the Minister of Justice admit that Canada is violating its own Constitution with impunity?

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to working collaboratively with what I believe the member opposite is talking about, with federally appointed judges as well as the province that bears responsibility for the administration of justice. This issue has been referred to the Quebec Court of Appeal by the Government of Quebec. We are intervening on this matter and will be putting our submissions in.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): I would like further clarification, Mr. Speaker.

In order to give the French version of the Constitution of 1867 the same legal weight as its English version, section 55 of the Constitution Act, 1982 provides that a French version of the Constitution of 1867 be passed as expeditiously as possible. Thirty-five years is not what anyone would call expeditious.

For the sake of consistency, since there is no official French version of the Constitution of 1867, will the Minister of Justice suspend enforcement of section 133 until an official French version is adopted?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my two colleagues spoke about the Barreau du Québec. There are proceedings under way. Some organizations have decided to initiate proceedings; that is their choice. As the matter is before the courts, we will not comment further.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated hearing the Prime Minister in the U.K. at the commonwealth summit giving a hint of what the leadership of Canada will look like in the G7 on climate, and also approaching the huge issue of ocean plastic pollution. There are eight million tonnes of plastics entering our oceans every single year. England, Scotland, and Taiwan have already taken action to ban single-service plastic items. Can Canada follow suit to show leadership before the G7?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, preventing plastics pollution is a pressing global issue that requires action at all levels of government, industry, and the public. We are pleased that we are taking it forward as one of our issues as leaders of the G7 this year.

We are already taking action on marine plastics. We have legislation and regulations in place to prevent pollution and protect habitat. Last year, we were among the first countries to phase out microbeads in toiletries. We invest in waste and wastewater infrastructure and research. We support national conservation initiatives like the great Canadian shoreline cleanup. We continue to work with provinces, territories, municipalities, industry, civil society, and consumers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “Economic and Fiscal Outlook—April 2018”.

●(1510)

[English]

Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, entitled “Costing Budget 2018 Measures”.

[Translation]

Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “The Borrowing Authority Act and Measures of Federal Debt”.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE STATUS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development, and the Status of People with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-65, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

TEXTILE LABELLING ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-400, An Act to amend the Textile Labelling Act (animal skin, hair and fur).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have the member for Victoria second this bill. It is Bill C-400, an act to amend the Textile Labelling Act (animal skin, hair and fur). The bill will require that a textile fibre that includes the manufacturing use of animal skin, fur, and hair be identified when imported into Canada. In particular, the labelling of cat and dog fur and hair is important, because it is a consumer choice, at the end of the day. People have a right to know what they are purchasing.

Every year approximately two million dogs and cats are killed for their fur, and their skins are used to make trim on coats, toys, hats, and figurines. These are products often originating in Asia and exported all over the earth. The U.S., the European Union, Great Britain, and Australia have similar legislation. Companies that manufacture and produce these items should be accountable so that consumers know what they are purchasing for themselves and their loved ones.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition regarding the Canada summer jobs program. It cites the fact that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives people freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom of belief as fundamental freedoms. It says that the Government of Canada has to defend the rights of all Canadians, regardless of whether they agree with the government of the day. They are calling on the Government of Canada to defend freedom of conscience, thought, and belief and to withdraw the attestation requirement for applicants to the Canada summer jobs program.

ETHICS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition signed by thousands of people electronically.

Whereas the Minister of Finance until recently owned millions of dollars worth of shares in Morneau Shepell, a firm he was an executive of until elected and a firm with which the federal government does millions of dollars worth of business; that the passage of government bills introduced by the minister, such as Bill C-27, which targets pensions and would make retirement savings less secure and enrich the shareholders of Morneau Shepell, including, until recently, the finance minister himself; that the changes to the tax code proposed by the finance minister will incentivize businesses to move away from pension plans and help shareholders and firms like Morneau Shepell; that Morneau Shepell is handling the close-out of the Sears pension fund, and after emergency debate in the House on the subject of the company's bankruptcy, the government refused to take action, which will benefit the shareholders in Morneau Shepell, and until recently, the Minister of Finance; and that the pattern of the Minister of Finance's non-disclosure and retention of assets could be seen reasonably to be a conflict of interest that has caused Canadians to lose confidence; the undersigned call upon the Government of Canada to immediately withdraw Bill C-27, to disqualify Morneau Shepell from any government contract work, and to remove the finance minister from his position as finance minister.

● (1515)

ISRAEL

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition calling upon the government to work with the United Nations to secure the release of the remains of two Israeli soldiers, Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, which the terrorist group Hamas has illegally held for over four years. As the petitioners have noted, Hamas has engaged in an ongoing campaign of incitement against Israel. Refusing to act in the best interests of Gazans and refusing to release the remains of these soldiers to their families is cruel and a breach of international humanitarian law.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by Canadians from across the country calling upon the Government of Canada to advocate for the return of the bodies of Israelis Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, who were taken after being ambushed by Hamas terrorists during a United Nations negotiated ceasefire in 2014. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to condemn Hamas for its violation of the UN humanitarian ceasefire of August 1, 2014, and to make representations to the United Nations Secretary-General to use his good office to secure the return of the remains of the bodies of Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul to Israel for burial, as mandated by the Geneva Convention and the fundamental precepts of human rights and human dignity.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of many Canadians asking that Hamas return the bodies of Lieutenant Hadar Goldin and Staff Sergeant Oron Shaul to their respective families. The practice of withholding bodies is banned by the fourth Geneva Convention. It clearly states that the remains, “shall be transferred as soon as possible to the next of kin on their request.” International humanitarian law requires that the convention be followed by all nations and states, regardless of political differences or persistent conflict.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the past, the Conservative government stripped environmental protection regulations covered in the Navigable Waters Protection Act. I have many petitioners who are very concerned about that. They encourage the Liberal government to keep its promise to reinstate those environmental protections. The North Thames, Middle Thames, and Thames River, in my riding of London—Fanshawe, is a jewel. It is an incredible and historic river. The petitioners ask Parliament to support my bill, Bill C-355, which commits the government to prioritizing the protection of the Thames River and all the bodies of water that should be protected by Parliament.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by my constituents that calls upon the Prime Minister to defend freedom of conscience, thought, and belief and to withdraw the discriminatory attestation requirement for applications for the Canada summer jobs program.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a similar petition that talks about section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It identifies, among other things, that freedom of conscience, thought, and belief is a fundamental freedom and says that the Government of Canada must defend the rights of Canadians, regardless of whether the current government agrees with the specific views held by individual Canadians. The petition asks the government to withdraw the attestation requirement for the Canada summer jobs program.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition, from Edmontonians, calling upon the government to remove the attestation, based on the views of various faith-based applicants.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by a number of my constituents. Considering that Canada Post is an essential public service, that service cuts are affecting seniors, people with reduced mobility, the self-employed, and small businesses the most, and that the Prime Minister promised during the last election campaign to restore door-to-door mail delivery, this petition calls on the government to reject Canada Post's service reduction plan and explore avenues for updating the crown corporation's business plan.

[*English*]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table today a petition signed by many residents of Winnipeg North that once again raises the issue of pharmacare. It is the desire of the petitioners, and many of my constituents, to see a national pharmacare system implemented across Canada that allows prescription drugs to be incorporated into the Canada Health Act.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition, signed by hundreds of members from my riding of North Okanagan—Shuswap, stating that the revised application process for the Canada summer jobs program denies citizens rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to remove the condition on employers to attest to reproductive rights and abortion within the 2018 Canada summer jobs program application.

VETERANS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition from residents throughout the riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands, from Victoria to Gabriola and Mayne Island to Salt Spring. It pertains to the issue of unfairness to veterans.

Through the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act, the government has obligated Canada to show “just and due appreciation to members and veterans for their service to Canada.” Petitioners draw particular attention to the problem of time lags in reviewing claims. Re-evaluating disability benefit claims can take a tremendously long time, but the department has put in place a five-year statutory limit on back pay eligibility. We are essentially unjustly treating veterans because of the delays of the bureaucracy. The petitioners ask that the limits on back pay eligibility be removed.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition relating to the banning of groups from accessing the Canada summer jobs program due to their private convictions. The petition is calling on the Canadian Parliament and the government to defend their freedoms by removing the attestation requirement from the Canada summer jobs application and to thereby restore the confidence of Canadians that all constitutional rights and freedoms are respected by the government.

*Speaker's Ruling***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Questions No. 1515 and 1535, originally tabled on April 16, 2018, could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1515— **Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to the purchase of “likes” on Facebook by government departments, agencies, Crown Corporations, or other government entities since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all such purchases, including (i) amount, (ii) date, (iii) number of “likes” purchased, (iv) title of page or post which received the likes; and (b) what is the total of all expenditures in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1535— **Mr. Mark Warawa:**

With regard to the February 2018 New Delhi reception invitation which was issued to Jaspal Atwal: (a) on what date did the Prime Minister's Office become aware of the invitation; and (b) what departments or agencies were aware that Mr. Atwal received an invitation and when did each department become aware of the invitation?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ACCESS TO CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on March 27, 2018, by the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove concerning the government's Canada summer jobs program.

I would like to thank the member for Langley—Aldergrove for having raised this matter, as well as the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for his comments.

When raising the issue, the member for Langley—Aldergrove explained that many people and organizations in his constituency are not on this year's list of recommended projects for the Canada summer jobs program due to their beliefs, faith, personal conscience, or opinion, which are guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This, he argued, impeded his ability to administer the program on behalf of his constituents and thus constituted a contempt of Parliament.

[Translation]

Members will remember that, immediately prior to the matter being raised, I reminded the House and, in particular, the member for Langley—Aldergrove, that a requisite condition for a prima facie

matter of privilege is that it is raised at the earliest opportunity. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, explains at page 145 what is expected of members in terms of the timeliness of raising a question of privilege:

The matter of privilege to be raised in the House must have recently occurred and must call for the immediate action of the House. Therefore, the Member must satisfy the Speaker that he or she is bringing the matter to the attention of the House as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the situation.

● (1525)

[English]

While the member stated that he “just received the list” as proof of the timeliness of the issue, he gave a very detailed account of his communications with Service Canada about the program, which would indicate that he had been aware of the issue for quite some time.

I also recall the member speaking to the issue in the House on several occasions before giving notice to the Chair of his intent to raise a question of privilege, including during statements by members, back on February 13; during the debate on his party's supply day motion of March 1; and during the budget debate on March 20. It is therefore very difficult for the Chair, then, to accept that this matter could not have been raised earlier. As Speaker, I am no more persuaded to do so by the argument of the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands that they did not want to waste my time.

[Translation]

To be clear, the condition of raising a question of privilege at the earliest opportunity is not an arbitrary one. In a ruling delivered on January 30, 2018, I addressed this at page 16516 of the *Debates*:

There is a tacit understanding that, if a matter goes to the heart of a Member's or the House's privileges and immunities, or that contempt is involved, it is of the highest importance and should be addressed urgently.

[English]

Speaker Sauvé also explained it well in a ruling on May 26, 1981, when she stated at page 9924 of the *Debates*:

There has to be a balance in relation to a question of privilege. If an hon. member has a question of privilege, then it has to be dealt with very rapidly. If we defer questions of privilege for several days and they are serious, then I wonder what the meaning...of a question of privilege is. If it is urgent, it is urgent and therefore has to be heard immediately.

On that basis alone, the Chair cannot find that this question of privilege constitutes a prima facie contempt of the House.

As for the substantive arguments brought forward, a close review reveals that the member for Langley—Aldergrove is effectively taking issue with the eligibility criteria of a government program.

[Translation]

What is being challenged is neither a rule nor a practice of the House and is thus an issue to which the authority of the Chair does not extend. On November 22, 2016, I stated at page 7084 of the *Debates*:

It is equally clear that when members request redress with respect to rules external to the House, as Speaker I can neither interpret nor enforce them. It has long been the case that the Speaker's role is limited to ensuring that the body of rules and practices that the House has adopted are respected and upheld.

Government Orders

[English]

My predecessor also made this point on May 12, 2014, at page 5220 of the *Debates*, when he stated:

It is equally clear that it is not within the Speaker's authority to adjudicate on government policies or processes....

[T]he distinction between governmental procedures and House procedures remains and must be acknowledged.

Additionally, for privilege to be involved, it must be demonstrated that members, or the House as a whole, were impeded in the performance of their parliamentary duties as they relate to a proceeding in Parliament. As Bosc and Gagnon state at page 119:

In instances where Members have claimed that they have been obstructed or harassed, not directly in their parliamentary roles, but while being involved in matters of a political or constituency-related nature, Speakers have consistently ruled that this does not constitute a *prima facie* case of privilege.

Accordingly, I cannot find this constitutes a *prima facie* contempt of this House.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1530)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-74, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has seven minutes remaining in her speech.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will recap briefly for those who missed the brilliance of my remarks earlier. I said I suppose I should consider myself lucky to be speaking to the budget bill. Many of my colleagues will not have that opportunity because the Liberal government once again has shut down debate on an omnibus bill. This one has more than 540 pages. Once again the Liberals are breaking another one of their election promises.

The first issue that I raised was with respect to infrastructure. The government promised to spend infrastructure money in municipalities. Currently, the Liberals have not even spent 40% of the money that was promised and they took \$15 billion away from municipalities to create the infrastructure bank.

I gave some specific examples from my riding. Members will recall that \$10 million was spent to build an ice rink here on Parliament Hill. To spend that same \$10 million in my riding, the government could have provided \$6 million for the oversize load corridor to create 3,000 well-paying jobs, \$2 million to restore a border crossing that would allow trade with the United States of America, and \$2 million for rural Internet to completely fill the gap that exists with high-speed Internet in my riding.

I find it hard to believe that the government is committed to spending infrastructure money when there are projects like the ones

in my riding that are so good and have such great outcomes that are not supported. I can only assume that partisan politics are at play here and not any kind of reason or logic.

I did not see anything in the budget for seniors. Fifty per cent of the people in my riding are over the age of 55. Many of them have difficulty affording to live. The government has come forward with a totally inadequate response to help seniors in my riding and the rest of the country.

As the shadow health minister, obviously I have some comments about the health content in the budget. I am really disturbed to see that the words “palliative care” were removed entirely from the budget.

My private member's bill on palliative care received unanimous support of the House. The government pledged \$6 billion over 10 years for home care and palliative care, and I think mental health was another \$5 billion. Now we find it is only home care and mental health that will receive any money. Where did the money for palliative care go, especially since my bill has been passed into law? By June 11, the government has to meet with the provinces to determine the services that will be provided, the levels of training for the different service providers, and come up with a consistent plan so all Canadians can get access to palliative care. I have heard no mention of that. There is no money at all for that in the budget. That is concerning to me.

There is a huge amount of money being spent to legalize marijuana. There is \$800 million in the budget to legalize marijuana. This may seem a bit hypocritical, because on the one hand in the budget there is \$80 million to get people to stop smoking tobacco, but on the other hand, there is \$800 million to get them to start smoking marijuana. Something is wrong with that.

The other thing that is really wrong is that only a fraction of the money the government is spending to legalize marijuana is being spent to address the opioid crisis in this country. Thousands of people are dying every year and the government's response has been totally inadequate in order to stem the flow of deaths from opioids. For the families who have lost somebody to this opioid crisis, it is insulting to see the government spending more money to legalize the smoking of marijuana than to address the deaths that are happening from the opioid crisis.

Mental health is a crisis in this country. The government has pledged \$4 million in the budget going forward every year for dementia. Four hundred thousand people in Canada suffer from dementia. This is a totally inadequate response to the huge problem that exists.

Government Orders

Our colleague from Prince George brought forward a private member's bill on PTSD and it was unanimously supported. However, when we look at the budget, we see a very small amount, \$10 million, for PTSD and only for public safety officers. What about first responders? What about all of the problems we are seeing among our veterans? This is an inadequate response to be sure.

When it comes to mental health, we see the priority has been put on spending \$20 million on mental health for inmates. I would say that inmates certainly need just as much mental health care as others, but when we do not have it in the rest of the country, why is that a priority? It just does not seem to be the right priority.

• (1535)

Meanwhile, the government is spending a lot of time and energy on doing things like working on the food guide. The Liberals have been consulting and consulting, but there is nothing coming forward with it.

The Liberals are implementing a new program to change how the PMPRB approves and prices drugs to make the process even longer. All the stakeholders and people who have been commenting are saying that this is going to be a problem. Not only is it going to eliminate the clinical trials that are being done in Canada, but it will actually prevent Canadians from having access to the new drugs that are being developed.

When I look at this budget, it seems to me that the government has its priorities wrong. It is spending an inadequate amount of money to address crises that exist. Of course when it comes to my riding, I cannot see at all that the government is keeping any of the promises that it was elected on, such as to spend money, to go slightly into deficit, and to build infrastructure in municipalities. Certainly that is not happening in my riding.

I want to finish by saying that I was disheartened to hear that instead of the \$6-billion deficit the government intended to run this year, it is now going to be \$22 billion. Never has a government spent so much to accomplish so little.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the opioid crisis. This government has expanded safe consumption sites, expanded the use of naloxone, and in the most recent budget has invested \$230 million to immediately inject \$150 million in the provinces to expand treatment. It has also spent millions of dollars on a public education campaign to address the stigma associated with seeking treatment.

We know that the number one stigma associated with seeking treatment is the criminalization of low-level possession. We are not talking about legalizing production or trafficking, but we know from around the world that the single biggest way we can save lives is by removing the criminal sanction for low-level possession, and to treat patients as patients and not as criminals.

I wonder what the member would say to that.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member would bring this up, because people do talk about the decriminalization of drugs, and they cite Portugal as a place that has been successful. What they miss is that Portugal put in place huge numbers of treatment centres in advance of any of this to get people off drugs. That is where the government has totally missed the point.

It is about preventing people from getting on drugs in the first place and building treatment centres, not safe injection sites where people can safely keep themselves addicted to drugs on the public dime in perpetuity.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. Two weeks ago I was in a cab in Toronto, and the cab driver was a retired aeronautical engineer. He was 74 years old, and he was driving a cab because his wife had kidney failure and they could not afford the medications. I think there is something fundamentally wrong in our country when people have worked their whole lives and they have to go out and drive a cab at age 74 because our medical system cannot help loved ones who are senior citizens.

Previous to that I met a 68-year-old man who told me that he had to go back underground to work on the drills in a mine because his pension was insufficient for him and his wife to be able to pay their hydro bills.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague about the sense of priority we see from the government, which seems to think that issues facing senior citizens are maybe not cool enough, not sexy enough, or not hip enough. These are issues facing seniors who are falling through the cracks. They have worked hard, have paid their taxes, and have done everything right their whole life. They are being left behind.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely true that the government has not put a priority on seniors. We see this in the fact that the Liberals removed the minister for seniors. It used to exist as a full portfolio. With one in six Canadians being a senior now, and that number going to one in four, this has to be a priority area.

My colleague is absolutely right. Some seniors have worked their whole lives and they cannot afford to live in retirement. This is happening more and more, especially among single seniors. The government's response is totally inadequate. I certainly saw this as I was door knocking. Seniors were in tears telling me they could not afford to get hearing aids, dentures, or cataract surgery, and they were really struggling to pay the hydro bill and buy food to eat.

The government needs to put a priority on seniors, and it needs to put adequate funding toward addressing the issues. These people built our country, and we have a duty to support them in return.

Government Orders

• (1540)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member has looked at the public safety committee's unanimous report on mental health and public safety officers, a term that includes first responders. This budget actually includes \$20 million for a new national research consortium and \$10 million for an Internet base to reach out to rural and remote communities, plus additional funding for RCMP officers. Has the member spoken to public safety officers in her community? I have spoken to public safety officers in my community and across the country, and they are thrilled with the investments we are making in their mental health.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, the people I have talked to are not thrilled with the response. They see the need as being much greater, and this \$10 million is a drop in the bucket to address what is really a chronic problem, not just among first responders but even among nurses in hospitals.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the last two years, Canada's economy has been fuelled by the hard work of a stronger middle class, combined with our government's historic investments in people and communities. Canada now has the fastest-growing economy in the G7 and has added more than 600,000 good, well-paying jobs since we were elected.

I am pleased to speak today to budget 2018, which supports our commitment to building an equal, competitive, sustainable, and fair Canada. Our strong economy, anchored by a low and consistently declining debt-to-GDP ratio, means that our government has the confidence to make the investments in our future that will strengthen and grow the middle class and lay a more solid foundation for future generations of Canadians.

As vice-chair of the status of women committee, I have had the privilege over the past two-plus years to work extensively on the issues of gender equality, gender-based violence, women's access to justice, and women's economic security. That is why I was so pleased to see so much of this work reflected in this year's budget, which puts gender at the heart of decision-making, helping to support women and girls, address harassment and gender-based violence, reduce the gender wage gap, and increase the participation of women in the workforce, which in turn helps boost economic growth for all Canadians. Recently, in my riding, I held a budget breakfast with business and stakeholders like Halton Women's Place, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services, and the Halton Multicultural Council to highlight this focus.

There is no reason that women should earn less than their male colleagues for the same work. Budget 2018 would move forward with new, proactive pay equity legislation to ensure that employees in federally regulated workplaces receive equal pay for work of equal value. Our committee heard about the importance of both parents sharing parental leave to support gender equality in the home and in the workplace. Budget 2018 would provide \$1.2 billion to introduce a new employment insurance parental sharing benefit, giving greater flexibility to parents by providing an additional five weeks of "use it or lose it" parental benefits when both parents agree to share parental leave.

During the course of our committee study on gender-based violence, we heard that there is a need for federal leadership to support a national approach to eliminating sexual violence on post-secondary campuses and removing the stigma for survivors seeking support, and the government is delivering. Budget 2018 would commit \$5.5 million over five years to develop a national framework to ensure comprehensive and consistent approaches in addressing gender-based violence in post-secondary institutions across the country.

This government believes that advancing gender equality is a responsibility that should not fall exclusively to women and girls. In my community, we have seen the success of the engagement program at Halton Women's Place and the SAVIS male ally network in engaging men and boys to end gender-based violence. The government would provide \$1.8 million to Status of Women Canada to develop an engagement strategy for men and boys that would promote equality and pilot innovative, targeted approaches to addressing inequality, making Canada a world leader in this area.

The government would provide an additional \$86 million over five years, and \$20 million per year thereafter, to expand Canada's strategy to address gender-based violence. New investments would focus on preventing teen dating violence, developing anti-cyberbullying initiatives, expanding investments to front-line crisis centres, and equipping health care professionals to provide appropriate care to survivors.

We know that there are not enough women in skilled trades. To encourage women to pursue careers in the trades, the government has allocated \$19.9 million over five years to pilot an apprenticeship incentive grant for women that would result in a combined \$8,000 of support over the course of a woman's apprenticeship as she works to become a welder, a machinist, or a pipefitter, or work in other skilled trades.

A few months ago, I hosted the Minister of Small Business and Tourism at a round table in my riding with a group of female entrepreneurs. We heard about the need for resources to help them scale up their businesses. Therefore, I am thrilled that budget 2018 would help women entrepreneurs do just that, with the new women entrepreneurship strategy.

Budget 2018 would also commit \$50.4 million over five years to address sexual harassment in the workplace, \$25.4 million of which would be dedicated to boosting legal aid funding across the country. In addition, the government would invest a further \$25 million to develop a countrywide outreach approach to better inform workers about their rights in cases of workplace harassment.

Government Orders

● (1545)

Our Oakville North—Burlington community is growing rapidly, and as it grows, the needs of the community grow and change with it. With budget 2018, the government takes a people-centred approach to investing in Canadians, from helping young people find work placements to empowering new Canadians to contribute to a growing economy that benefits us all.

I know that my constituents are excited about the creation of an advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare, which was announced in the budget. The council would begin a national dialogue that would include working with experts from all relevant fields, as well as with national, provincial, territorial, and indigenous leaders.

In my region, over 13,500 children live in low-income housing, and over one in 10 children live in poverty. To encourage a stable supply of affordable rental housing across the country, the government is committed to providing \$3.75 billion over the next three years to support housing projects that address the needs of modest- and middle-income households struggling in expensive housing markets.

Our government would also provided an additional \$448.5 million over five years to the youth employment strategy.

Employment is the key to the successful integration of newcomers in Canada, but for many newcomer women, there are significant barriers, including both gender- and race-based discrimination, precarious employment, and lack of community and social supports. To help reduce these barriers, the government has allocated \$31.8 million to support programming for newcomer women who are also members of visible minorities.

Moving on to public safety and access to justice, whether through the guarantee of a fair and equitable justice system or the knowledge that their private information is secure, Canadians deserve to feel safe and protected. The budget commits to a number of measures that would benefit the efficiency of Canada's safety and security institutions, without compromising our shared values as an open, inclusive, and welcoming society.

Addressing operational stress injuries and post-traumatic stress injuries in public safety officers is an issue I have been deeply committed to. Having studied the issue at the public safety committee and spoken to first responders and public safety officers both in my riding and across Canada, I know that our investment in mental health has been well received. There is \$20 million over five years to support a new national research consortium to address the incidence of post-traumatic stress injuries among public safety officers, as well as an additional \$10 million to develop an Internet-based cognitive behaviour therapy pilot to provide greater access to care and treatment across Canada. Recently, I was joined by first responders in my riding to share this news locally, and I know they appreciate the government's recognition of the issue and the funding we are providing toward their mental health.

Budget 2018 proposes investments of \$506.6 million over five years, and \$108.8 million per year thereafter, to fund a new national cybersecurity strategy that would ensure secure and resilient Canadian systems, provide a trusted federal source for cybersecurity

information for Canadian citizens and business, and support effective collaboration between different levels of government and international partners.

Finally, I know that my constituents place a great value on preserving Canada's nature, parks, and wild spaces. In budget 2018, the government is making investments to preserve Canada's natural heritage, while helping to grow a healthy and sustainable clean economy. To support Canada's biodiversity and protect species at risk, the government would make historic investments totalling \$1.3 billion over five years, one of the most significant investments in nature conservation in Canadian history.

These are just a few highlights of budget 2018, and time does not permit me to further outline the investments our government is making to grow our Canadian economy for all Canadians.

● (1550)

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the special committee on pay equity tabled its report in June 2016. Canadian women have been advocating for pay equity legislation for over 40 years. We talked about it in 2016. It was mentioned in the budget, but unfortunately we have seen no money in the budget implementation act as far as implementation is concerned.

I wonder if the member might wish to comment on how people might be cynical to think that this legislation is not coming very soon. With no money to implement it, how can we actually see it roll out on the ground for Canadian women?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her party's advocacy on this issue.

There was a special committee on pay equity, which was one of the first things our government did after being elected, and it came forward with recommendations. I would be disappointed if anyone was cynical based on what was in the budget. We have committed to introducing proactive pay equity legislation, something this government feels is incredibly important for federally regulated employees to have. There is no reason that women in the workplace should not be making the same as their male counterparts.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the last campaign, our colleague, as did many of her colleagues, promised that there would be no more omnibus legislation by the new government. The Liberals promised there would be no time allocation. However, we have both of those things happening in one day.

A couple of weeks ago, the finance minister tabled a budget in the House that indicated Canadians could expect a deficit of \$18 billion in this budget, which is three times what was promised in the campaign. Today we find out through the Parliamentary Budget Officer that it is not \$18 billion, that it has risen now to \$22 billion for the next year. Is the member proud of the inability of her finance minister not to more accurately predict what the budget deficit will be?

Government Orders

There are many other things we could talk about with respect to broken promises in this budget. Could she indicate to the House how she feels about those broken promises?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I do not see any broken promises in this budget. In fact, I see the commitment our government is making to invest in Canadians.

We have the fastest growing economy in the G7 and we have one of the lowest debt-to-GDP ratios. This means we can invest in all Canadians today and ensure that everyone can participate in the economic recovery happening right now.

I am very proud of what is in the budget. I am very proud to be delivering on what we promised. We actually put a gender analysis on a budget for the first time in Canadian history, of which I am incredibly proud. I am proud to take it back to my riding of Oakville North—Burlington.

• (1555)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned repeatedly the “fastest growing economy”, but what we heard today from the PBO is that the U.S. economy this year will grow 50% faster than ours. Next year, it will grow 25% faster. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the world economy is expected to grow 100% faster than the Canadian economy.

I wonder if my colleague would care to correct her comments about Canada being the fastest growing economy this year.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, we can look at what is going on in Canada right now. Just recently, UPS, which is headquartered in my riding, announced it would be investing \$500 million to create 1,000 new jobs. I am really proud of that. It shows that businesses are confident in where the Canadian economy is going, so they are making the investments they need to grow their workforce in Canada. Five hundred million dollars is not a small investment to be making to create 1,000 jobs.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF CONTENTS OF BILL C-75

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to provide a response to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Niagara Falls on April 17 with respect to the alleged premature disclosure of the content of Bill C-75.

My hon. colleague, in his statement, argued that the right of the House to first access to the text of the bill had been infringed. Our government takes these allegations, and the Speaker's recent decisions on related matters, very seriously.

I would argue that the matter before us today does not meet the requirements to be considered a prima facie breach of privilege. In fact, there was no premature disclosure of the bill.

On the subject of the confidentiality of a bill, the Speaker previously stated in his April 19, 2016, decision that:

...the House cannot allow precise legislative information to be distributed to others before it has been made accessible to all members.

This statement echoes the decisions of previous Speakers, such as Speaker Milliken's October 4, 2010, decision, which stated:

It is indisputable that it is a well-established practice and accepted convention that this House has the right of first access to the text of bills that it will consider.

Speaker Milliken also stated, in his November 1, 2006, decision, that:

The key procedural point...is that once a bill has been placed on notice, it must remain confidential until introduced in the House.

Again, I reiterate that all the rules have been complied with. In the present case, the article that the hon. opposition member referred to was published after the bill was tabled in the House.

At the core of the current debate lies the concept of parliamentary privilege. Matters of privilege and contempt can be broadly defined as: (1) anything improperly interfering with the parliamentary work of a Member of Parliament; or (2) an offence against the authority of the House.

The situation brought forward by the hon. member for Niagara Falls does not fit any of these categories, as no individual MP has been impeded, and there has not been any offence against the authority of the House.

Failing to see how anyone's right have been compromised or infringed, I would respectfully submit that this matter does not constitute a prima facie question of privilege.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the additional information that the parliamentary secretary has provided. We will certainly take it under advisement as we look into this a little further.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that C-74, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-74, the budget implementation bill. It is a daunting task, given the bill is over 500 pages and amends 44 pieces of legislation. It is an omnibus bill for sure, which is unfortunate in and of itself.

What is even more unfortunate is that the bill does not include all the things the government put forward in the budget. Just prior to getting up to give my speech, I made a comment about the fact that the pay equity legislation was not included and no dollars were in the budget to implement that pay equity legislation should it eventually come. This is disappointing.

The bill misses bringing a lot more needed change to address the inequity in the lives of people, to ensure the change that everyone pays their fair share of taxes, and the change we need to build an economy that is working for everyone, not just a few.

Government Orders

Child care, housing, and affordable prescription medication are the three issues that my constituents in Saskatoon West see as a need for real change, and fast. I raised these same issues in my very first speech as an elected member of Parliament. Three budgets later, I am still raising these issues, and those whom I represent are still waiting for the promised change.

Many in my riding had high hopes that the Liberals, given their promises on the campaign trail, would have moved the needle substantially on all three issues by this point in their mandate.

Let us start with child care. There are zero new dollars for child care in this budget. To date, the government's investment in child care has been more symbolic than anything. It is not a priority for the government. If it were, three budgets later we would not be talking about the lack of affordable and accessible child care.

In December of last year, I had the honour of meeting with an extraordinary group of women. They were participants in the trade journey program at the YWCA in Saskatoon. The trade journey program is a bridging program for women who are seeking a career in one of three trades: carpentry, plumbing, or electrical. I was invited to share some of my tips and, dare I say, survival skills for working in a male-dominated profession. My workplace was politics and their soon-to-be workplaces would be in the skilled trades.

As often is the case, I find myself so impressed and in awe of the determination of these women and their tenacity in the face of the both personal and institutional challenges of sexism and racism. As with almost 99.99% of the conversations I have with women in my riding, the conversation turned to child care. They were emphatic of the need for and the importance of affordable and accessible child care to their success as journey persons. They just could not understand why the government did not understand how critical child care was to their success in the workplace and to the health and well-being of themselves and their families. I agreed with them. I really did not have an answer for them as to why, regardless of what political party was in power, women continued to have to fight for child care.

The fight continues as we once again see a federal government paying lip service to one, if not the one, social policy that would improve the lives of so many women in our country and really increase the productivity of the country as a whole. A truly feminist government would understand this and by now would have invested what was needed to bring about real change for women.

Let me turn to affordable prescription medication. Almost a million Canadians give up food and heat to afford prescriptions in Canada. Affordable prescription medication is key to the health and well-being of all Canadians, to a sustainable universal health care system, and to the people in my riding of Saskatoon West. In conversation with older adults in my riding, the high costs of medication always comes up. It is raised because of the challenges of living on a fixed income and with that, the challenges of maintaining a home or an apartment, to be able to pay rent or a mortgage, and to pay for medication.

• (1600)

What happens, as was documented in a recent study, because of the unaffordability of medication? People get sick, they stay sick,

and they end up going to the doctor for multiples visits and, in some cases, even end up in the hospital.

More than 1.6 million Canadians, just over 8% of people who were prescribed medication in Canada, did not fill their prescriptions or skipped doses because they could not afford it. In a riding with a median income below \$40,000 a year, I represent a lot of people who are doing just that: skipping doses or not filling prescriptions at all. The UBC study that surveyed over 28,000 people found that people without insurance, lower-income people, and young people were more likely to struggle to afford medication. Women were twice as likely as men to report that they struggle to afford medication, as were indigenous people.

Canada is the only country with a universal health care system that does not include free access to prescription medication. It is time, after studying the issue to death, by governments, researchers, by Parliaments, to stop kicking the proverbial can down the road. I would like to use a phrase made famous by a certain shoe company, "Let's just do it". However, instead we are going to study it again and offer ourselves further advice. It is time that the government moved from the hope to the hard work of pharmacare.

The only people benefiting from yet again more talk, more consultation, and no action are the pharmaceutical companies, which continue to gouge Canadians and the health care system. Canadians pay some of the highest drug costs in the world. If, right now, Canadians were paying even just the average prescription drug costs of OECD countries, we would have paid \$3.6 billion last year. Instead, we paid \$13.7 billion. That is a lot of home care services. That is a lot of money to address the crisis in mental health for young people.

Most of us are tired of hoping and wishing for the day of a universal prescription drug plan for all Canadians. It is time to stop giving excuses and start the work of implementing pharmacare in this country.

My final comments on the trifecta of challenges that folks in my riding face are on housing.

Last November, the highly anticipated national housing strategy was released. However, in the budget implementation act, we see no new legislation. The Prime Minister clearly stated at the launch of the national housing strategy that housing rights are human rights. However, instead of legislation and debate on a bill to legislate the right to housing, we continue with consultation. I believe that we need much more hard work on this file. We need more specifics. We need promised new investment now and not years down the road, and certainly not after the next federal election.

Government Orders

To elaborate, the \$40-plus billion of planned spending connected to the national housing strategy over the next 10 years only budgeted \$11.2 billion of new money. The rest of the funding envelope is a rearranging of current programs, loan funding, and of course the important matching funding from the provinces and territories.

The government's response to what, for many, is a crisis in affordability and a rising number of people living on the street is not good enough. We have a minimal investment of new dollars, the largest allocation of new investment coming three years down the road, and we have a huge 10-year horizon for the investment. The speed and the amount of the investment does not match the urgency faced by many communities, including my own. When we look at the amount of investment specifically focused on those Canadians with no roof over their heads, and the target number of reducing the number of Canadians who are homeless by 50% over 10 years, we do not see a government with the resources or the plan in place to truly recognize housing as a human right.

We know that the growing number of Canadians living on the street without the safety and security of a place to call home are often young people, and a large number of those young people are those who have aged out of the foster care system and are LGBTQ2 youth. We must speed up the investment. We must set more aggressive targets. We must work harder and set a much more courageous timeline if we are to make a difference in the lives of these young Canadians.

We are still waiting for a separate strategy for indigenous people living in urban centres. We saw a very modest amount of funding in the previous budget, but no detail.

• (1605)

Sorry, I did not realize that I had run out of time. I look forward to offering more during questions.

• (1610)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always good to hear from my colleague from Saskatchewan. I think we share priorities in terms of child care, affordable housing, and pharmacare. On the issue of child care, it is not this budget that she should look to, but the budget of 2016, which invested \$7.5 billion over the next 10 years. Those accords have been signed with the provinces. That money is being spent. In my province, 100,000 new regulated day care spaces are being funded as a direct result of that budget.

On the issue of pharmacare, I agree that it is not being implemented immediately. There is a strategic plan being produced by a panel of experts that will show us exactly how to do that. I invite her to be standing in this House next year when we do just that, in terms of acting on those recommendations.

On the issue of affordable housing, I am gobsmacked. I remind the member opposite that her party only promised \$40 million for homelessness over four years, which was \$10 million extra a year. In our very first budget, we spent \$100 million more than the previous year. We doubled it from \$100 million to \$200 million, which means we are going to be spending \$400 million on homelessness over the

four years of our term of office, not the paltry, meek, timid \$40 million promised by her government.

Where it really gets me is when she says there is no new money for housing in this budget. There is close to \$2 billion that is new for rental housing in this budget. If we look at her platform in the previous election, the final three years of their mandate there was zero, zero, zero. That is the NDP platform they think we should follow as bold advice.

Is she serious that no money is being spent, or is she just pretending that no money is being spent to make a political argument?

Ms. Sheri Benson: Madam Speaker, I guess I will thank my hon. colleague across the way for his comments, although he did not quite reflect what I said. What I had talked about is that the majority of the new investment into housing is coming after the next federal election. Of the \$40 billion I have heard my hon. colleague repeat over and over, only \$11 billion is new investment. I am not denying that the government is not looking at rearranging programs. We are hopefully going to hear some of the details about this next week, and maybe there will be improvements.

My point was that from my perspective as a member of Parliament, and from the work I have done in housing and homelessness, it is not enough money and it is coming much too late. The largest investment is after the next federal election. I think we can do better.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am seeing this recurring theme with the NDP whenever we bring forward a piece of legislation or proposition. It is always asking why we are not doing it faster. With respect to cannabis, why are we not doing this faster? With respect to pharmacare, why are we not doing this faster?

The reality of the situation is that these things take time. It takes time to properly plan this so it is executed correctly. However, I take issue with her comments with respect to child care. The truth of the matter is that when this party came into government, we changed the rules for the CCB. We created a new program where nine out of 10 families get more money for children now. This particular budget goes on to strengthen that. An individual single parent making \$35,000 a year will now see an additional \$560 a year to help with their children's expenses.

I am wondering how she will bring herself later on today to vote against this when we are doing real, solid things for children and families who have children.

Ms. Sheri Benson: Madam Speaker, I guess what I am saying is there is not enough in this omnibus budget for the residents in my riding, in particular for those women I met at the Trade Journey program.

Government Orders

I am not denying that the Canada child benefit has helped people. However, the program does not matter if there is no access to affordable universal child care; it was not going to be helpful for these women. They were not saying that they were not appreciative of the Canada child benefit; they were saying that what they wanted and needed was universal affordable child care.

What they asked me is why governments do not understand that, and why has it taken so long for child care to be a priority for governments at the same priority level as other things?

• (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what a pleasure and privilege it is to be able to stand in this chamber and speak to the budget implementation bill. It is a bill that continues to build on what I believe is a very progressive government that understands how important it is to support Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, to give a helping hand in trying to deal with the issue of tax inequities by having a special tax on Canada's wealthiest one per cent. We have had so many accomplishments in such a short period of time. I have said this in the past and I will repeat it now. Under this particular government, we have seen so much take place in terms of budgetary measures and legislative measures, which have had a positive and profound impact on supporting those who need it the most, Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it.

When I listen to opposition members, if I may focus on the Conservatives first and foremost, there are two things that I have come to realize. The Prime Minister talked about it at our wonderful convention that we had over the weekend. One of those is the fact that there is no change with the Conservative Party. It is almost as if Stephen Harper is still leading the party. It is absolutely amazing to see how much the Conservatives still remain out of touch with what Canadians expect of government. When I look at the ideas that the Conservatives attempt to bring over to this side of the House, it can be confusing at times. Last week, for example, we were supposed to talk about the priorities of the government. As members will recall, the members of the official opposition did not want to debate Bill C-74. Today the Conservatives are saying that they want to debate it more, yet last Monday they did not want to debate it. In fact, they brought in a motion to deal with another report as opposed to the budget. I can understand why. I can appreciate that they see how effective our budgets have been since we have taken governance.

We have worked with Canadians. We have empowered Canadians through things such as tax breaks, the Canada child benefit, something that will be indexed because of this piece of legislation. We are working with and supporting Canadians. We are supporting our communities through infrastructure dollars, with record amounts of money going into Canada's infrastructure in every region of our country. By doing that, we are giving additional strength to Canada's middle class and building our economy. By working with Canadians, we are seeing some amazing numbers. Most important is in the area of jobs. There are 600,000-plus jobs that have been created in just over two years by this government in working with many different stakeholders, in particular Canadians in every region of our country. I believe that this government has been acting on what we committed to Canadians back in 2015, and that

was real change. We have seen that day in and day out, in terms of the different types of policies we have debated inside this chamber, and most importantly shared with Canadians coast to coast to coast.

I want to pick up on one issue that has been very important to me personally, and I know has been also very important to my daughter Cindy, who is an MLA in the Manitoba legislature. That is the issue of pharmacare. The pharmacare issue embodies what I believe is a very important and progressive step forward that we need to take, that we have been waiting for generations to see some tangible movement on. This Prime Minister along with this cabinet and caucus believe that we need to advance the idea. In fact, we had a standing committee, made up of members from all sides of this House, which reported last week some ideas in terms of how we can advance the idea of "one prescription", where prescription drugs would be part of the Canada health system.

• (1620)

Canadians want our national government to demonstrate some leadership on this issue, and I believe we have. Earlier today, we heard the Prime Minister talk about some of the interim measures we have taken to ensure that prescription drugs are more affordable. At the constituency level, there have been many petitions and many discussions. In fact, in the last number of months I have tabled many petitions dealing with a strong national pharmacare program. If there ever was a reason to believe that it is actually doable, all one needs to do is take a look at what the government has done on a couple of specific initiatives in the last two years, in particular the Canada child benefit program.

I believe the government today has put into place, through the Canada child benefit program, a fantastic social program that has lifted tens of thousands of children out of poverty. We were able to do that in a relatively quick fashion.

On the issue of pharmacare, we recognize that there is a responsibility on the part of the national government to work with the different stakeholders. That is why, in the most recent budget, we see that there has been a task force of sorts put together, headed by a former minister of health in the Province of Ontario, to look at ways of possibly implementing a national pharmacare program.

We just came through a fantastic convention in Halifax, where Atlantic hospitality was at its best. I was very proud to listen to the speech delivered by the Prime Minister. If some of my colleagues across the way want to get a good sense of what has been taking place in the last couple of years, I would highly recommend that they YouTube it. I am sure they will enjoy it. There were 3,000-plus Liberals in Halifax who loved it.

Personally, I really enjoyed the fact that every constituency was represented. I believe there were 3,000 Liberals attending, and I think 50% of those were individuals who were attending a national convention for the first time. The number of young people attending that convention was truly amazing.

Government Orders

The number one resolution was on pharmacare. The Liberal Party, under the leadership of our current Prime Minister, has recognized the value of yet another fantastic social program. For those who try to cast doubt on the desire and the drive of the government, I would recommend they take a look at what we have accomplished in the last two years, in particular with the Canada child benefit.

I believe there is the opportunity for Canadians to have hope once again that after many years of no leadership on the health care file, we finally have a Prime Minister, a Minister of Health, and a government caucus who are committed to finding out if we can make this happen. If we can make it happen, it will happen.

We are working hard and being diligent in crossing the t's, dotting the i's, working with the different levels of government, and working with Canadians to find out what they would like to see and how we might be able to proceed on this particular file.

An hon. member: More, more.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: There is lots more. There is not enough time. That is the problem.

When I think about what we have been able to accomplish, I think about about the tax breaks for small business, an issue that is so important. The Minister of Small Business and Tourism has talked a great deal about small business being the backbone of Canada's economy, and reducing that small business tax was an important step. It is consistent with what we did in the first budget through the middle-class tax cut, by supporting guaranteed income supplement increases to our seniors, and by enhancing the Canada child benefit program, as no other government has done previously.

We have put more disposable income in the pockets of Canadians in every region of our country, thereby supporting small businesses, because they are the great consumers. Those small businesses cultivate the economy, generating the jobs that are necessary.

There is so much more I could say, but unfortunately my time has come to an end. It has been a privilege to address yet another great budget.

• (1625)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to hear this entertaining speech today and hear the member opposite give himself and his government so much credit for all these achievements they have made throughout the last two and a half years. He never mentioned anything about the disastrous policies, the tax increases on Canadians, the deficit, the borrowing, or the debt services, and the list goes on and on. What the Liberals were able to achieve in two and a half years would take a failed government 25 years to do. Why does the member opposite not tell Canadians about the disastrous policies and the results of them that we see every day?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the only thing I can think of that might be somewhat relatively close to what the member is talking about is when we identified that we needed to put a special tax on Canada's wealthiest one per cent, something which the Conservatives voted against.

Most significantly, with regard to taxes, we actually decreased taxes for the middle class. Imagine hundreds of millions of dollars

taken and given back to Canada's middle class. What did the Conservative Party do? It voted against it. The Conservative Party voted against one of Canada's single greatest tax breaks to Canadians, to Canada's middle class. The Conservatives actually voted against it. They are not necessarily consistent in what they say.

This government continues to remain focused on what we can do to enhance and give more power and authority to Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, and give a helping hand for those who need it most.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague is all the more convincing because he is talking so loudly. At least it is entertaining.

I am sure those watching at home must feel sorry for the Liberals because they are constantly being told that they said all kinds of things during the campaign and that they are not keeping their promises, which is true.

A year ago, at the Montreal electric vehicle show, the Minister of Transport promised to establish a strategy for the electrification of transport, but there is nothing about that in this year's budget.

Can my colleague explain why there is nothing in the new budget about the electrification of transport?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, over the last couple of years the government has invested hundreds of millions. In particular, with regard to infrastructure and green technology, we have a government that has not only been talking about it but has committed millions going into hundreds of millions of dollars. Much of that money is going into our rural communities. In fact, we designated \$2 billion of infrastructure dollars to go specifically for rural communities.

There are many different ideas out there. When it comes to public infrastructure, public transport, we would have to go back many years prior to see a government that has been more committed to advancing green technology and investing in Canada's public infrastructure and public transit.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague went on and on about how the Liberal government has delivered on its promises. Not so fast.

First of all, there was a promise to end omnibus bills and then a promise to end time allocation. There was a promise to give individual members of Parliament freedom of speech to represent their constituents and a promise to have only a \$10-billion deficit this year. It is \$22 billion.

How can we go on and on about delivering on promises when there are so many broken promises? When will the budget be balanced?

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, when Stephen Harper inherited governance, he also inherited a multi-billion-dollar surplus. He converted that into a multi-billion-dollar deficit, and that was prior to the recession. The Conservative government continued to have deficits year after year, accumulating well over \$150 billion. This government has nothing to learn or any advice to take from the Conservatives in dealing with how to manage a budget.

• (1630)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always nice to get up in the House and talk about sensible policies and not shout, the way my hon. colleague does, with all his fluff and bluff. I have been listening for the last 16 years. He was in the opposition, and now he is over there.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the hon. member to turn down the volume on his hearing piece. We are getting a lot of feedback.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, it is all clear now, right? I was just trying to speak as loudly as he was speaking.

Today the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued his report. It is timely, as we are debating the budget bill. Of course, I would remind all my listeners out there that today the government brought in closure so it could stifle debate, because there are a lot of issues, as has been pointed out by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Very clearly, when the government was over there, it was telling Canadians that it would not increase the deficit by more than \$10 billion and would be bringing in a balanced budget by 2019. These were the promises the Liberals made. Today the Parliamentary Budget Officer said quite clearly that everything they did was wrong. Their projections were wrong. The estimates are wrong. They are fooling Canadians by using different numbers. It is good that the Parliamentary Budget Officer talked about it today.

Most importantly, he talked about the carbon tax the Liberals are forcing on all Canadians and all the provinces, and the fact that the carbon tax is supposed to be good for the economy and the country. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has quite clearly stated that the way they are going is not the right approach.

Let me be very clear on one issue in reference to carbon taxes. All of us want clean air. All of us look out for the environment. We live in this country. It is our environment. We want a clean environment, but not the way the Liberals are going, by forcing carbon taxes on provinces that do not want them. Saskatchewan does not want it, and the, hopefully, Conservative government in Ontario does not want it. The, hopefully, Conservative government, in Alberta does not want it. Then, lo and behold, we have the government in British Columbia being held hostage by three Green members.

Three Green members are holding hostage the whole of Canada on the Trans Mountain pipeline. Premier Horgan will not agree because he would lose the government. He does not want to go to the people. If he is so confident about speaking to the Trans Mountain pipeline, and all the polls are showing that British Columbians want it, someone just said that the easiest way to resolve it is to go to the people. That is the best way in a democracy. He would probably find that he would get a pink slip to go back to the unemployment line.

However, the question here is about the government and its budget. We just heard the government side talk about reducing taxes for the middle class. We hear the Liberals talk about it here, but we never hear them talk about their increase in taxes, the payroll taxes. Actually, the great indication by the Fraser Institute showed how much Canadians are paying in direct and indirect taxes. It is what they call "freedom day". For the first time in the history of our country, under the previous Conservative government, we pulled that back into June. The date was sometime in June because of our reduction of taxes, but under this government, freedom day has gone back into July. That is the real issue.

That is where it really shows where the government, by not by showing the whole picture, is raising taxes. We have had a serious problem over here on this fact. The Liberals are just blindly spending money.

One of the key issues I talked about last time was the government of China's infrastructure bank. We have already given half a billion dollars to it. Why is that? Why are we giving it to that bank? It does not do anything good for us. It is great for China, but not for us. We already contributed to the African Development Bank, to the Asian Development Bank, and to the Inter-American Development Bank. We are already doing our bit to help countries through these development banks. Why are we following this with a half a billion dollars?

These are questions Canadians are asking. Where is our money going? Why does the deficit keep increasing?

• (1635)

The Liberals came out with infrastructure funding. However, in a province like mine, Alberta, we do not know what the government is doing. Where is this infrastructure funding going?

The issue here is on the fundamental issues of economic progress, and in this case it is the Trans Mountain pipeline, which everybody agrees is good for Canada. Of course, the NDP members do not agree, but that is all right; they are a small bunch. The fact remains that it is good for the country. However, the question is on leadership. This is where leadership needs to be shown, and it is not coming from the government. We have waited and waited, but nothing is happening.

We agree that we also want a clean environment, but there are ways and means of doing that, and it is not in stifling economic growth. When jobs and economic growth are lost what happens? The budget goes up and taxes go up. Somewhere down the line, we will have to pay this deficit.

Government Orders

Let us look at the deficit. The PBO came out and said that there would be a \$22.1 billion shortfall this fiscal year. The Liberals projected \$18.1 billion. Again, according to the Liberals' figures, the projected deficit would be \$17.5 billion. However, the PBO projects \$21.4 billion. The total is a \$8 billion difference in deficit. Also, according to the PBO, there is a 5% chance of the budget being balanced by 2025. However, the Liberals are not interested in that, because, after all, when they lose power, they will leave this whole mess behind.

We left the economy in very good standing, and the Liberals quoted all these figures. I remember when they wanted change in Canada and sunny ways, but as they progressed, all the policies we had put in place they carried on with and implemented. Why? Because they were good policies. Despite the fact that the Liberals keep trying to blame the Conservatives for everything, it is not going to fly. They had good management from us when they took over. When they are gone, and hopefully we will take over, we will have to clean up their mess and look at the deficit.

Canadians are concerned where the government is going. What is the purpose of the government? Back home in Africa, we say that the ostrich has its head in the sand. The Liberals have their heads in the sand. They are not looking around at what is going on. They will not answer to the future generation, because they will not be around.

However, the issue is always on how we bring confidence to Canadian businesses. It is interesting that in Lima, the Prime Minister said that big projects would go ahead. Well, big projects are not going ahead in our country under the current government.

The Liberals keep talking about Conservatives not building pipelines. We built the environment where the energy industry grew up. The Liberals are running something where the energy industry is going down under their leadership. However, it is good to see that the NDP government in Alberta agrees with us.

The fact is that we need common-sense policies, but they are not coming from the Liberals. We cannot expect any common-sense policies coming from that side.

• (1640)

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my friend talked about the deficit. I wondered if he could point out in *Hansard* a time when he rose and condemned the Harper government for all those deficits it ran. It is probably zero.

The member also mentioned that he wanted to clean up the environment, that the Conservatives were behind that, but then he glossed over the fact that there was no plan. The Conservatives have offered nothing. They did nothing for 10 years. Could the member stand in the House and offer any type of plan as we are seeing the dramatic effects of climate change? Spoiler alert: it is probably zero again, but I would like him to have the opportunity to do so.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, if I recall correctly, the current government carried on with our targets, the targets we had put in place. The Liberals carried on implementing those targets. They did not change those targets because those were common-sense targets.

Therefore, the government has been acting on the environment, but it has its head in the sand. The question still remains. Will

Canadians pay for the reckless policies of the government? That is the question every Canadian is asking.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canada has a number of key infrastructure issues with respect to keeping our economy going, and one of them is our highway system. If we travel across the country and travel on the Trans-Canada, we will be on four-lane highways. Then, when we get to northern Ontario, we get to two lanes, Highway 17 and Highway 11, which twist and turn through rugged rock country. This is the main truck transportation for the country. All the goods of the country travel on those roads. Year after year, we see them getting more dangerous. We see, with the privatization of truck maintenance by the Wynne government, the number of deaths we have had on the road.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague about the disregard we have from the present government toward the people of Ontario on issues of infrastructure that are literally life and death, that are issues about our economy, and the lack of involvement of the federal government in working with the province to establish a credible system of transportation that ensures the safe passage of goods but also the security of people who travel on these roads.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I will answer that because northern Ontario is part of Canada. The question the member very rightly asks is where the government's priority. Is its priority to ensure there is infrastructure? Good roads are prosperous for everyone, like good pipelines are prosperous for everyone.

When we were in power, our government had infrastructure programs, which was why we built a highway up north. They opened it up, but remember the construction was started by us. I agree with the member. Absolutely the government, in co-operation with the province, and, by the way, a Liberal government in Ontario, could easily work with Ontario to look after the needs of northern Ontario.

Good infrastructure in northern Ontario and all across the country is extremely important for us to ensure economic growth in our country.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I take issue with one comment made by my colleague with respect to not having to answer to future generations. The fact is that this government is all about looking out for future generations, whether it is the social well-being of them or the environmental well-being of them. How can that member suggest this government and this party are not looking out for the future of Canadians and our children?

Government Orders

•(1645)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, the Liberals have reckless policies that are not looking out for our future. I look at what they are doing to the deficit with this budget. That is spending recklessly, writing cheques without thinking. I look at what the Liberals are going to leave for the future generations. I look at what the PBO said today as to the amount of deficit and the cumulative deficit of the budget. At the end of the day, the government has yet to bring in some good policies. It is the future generation that will be paying.

[*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 Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Indigenous Affairs; the hon. member for Saskatoon West, Health; the hon. member for Drummond, Justice.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-74, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018, and other measures.

First, I would like to talk about why this bill is so important to Canada as a whole. Then I will highlight some of the specific measures that will help my beautiful riding of West Nova and, most important, its people.

This budget continues to build on the strong foundation for growth that our government began putting into place when it took office just over two years ago. In that time, Canada's economic growth has been fuelled by the middle class, and there has been more support for those working hard to join it. Because of the hard work of Canadians, together with historic investments in people and communities, more than 600,000 good new jobs have been created right across Canada. Most of these are solid, full-time jobs. Consequently, under this government, the Canadian unemployment rate is at its lowest in my lifetime.

Also, Canada now has the best balance sheet of any G7 country, with the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio, and the downward trend of that ratio will continue into the future. Our debt as a portion of our economy is shrinking steadily and will soon reach its lowest point ever in my lifetime.

However, while the Canadian economy is doing very well, the most important indicator for any government is not some economic formula, but rather how people are doing. Do people have the tools to lift themselves up, to make their communities stronger and more vibrant, to be secure in the knowledge that they will have a dignified retirement, to help children living in poverty, to ensure veterans are looked after, and to ensure we position Canada to allow our industries to flourish?

While we know the economy is doing well and that things are on the right track, we also know there is much more work to do so all Canadians have the opportunity to reach their full potential and, indeed, so people end up doing well. Our government wants a real and fair shot at success for all our people.

Let us start with the Canada workers benefit. Budget 2018 introduces the new Canada workers benefit, a more generous and accessible benefit that will put more money in the pockets of low-income workers than the income tax benefit it replaces. For example, a worker making \$15,000 a year will get about \$500 more in 2019. By allowing these low-income workers to keep more of their paycheque, it encourages more people to enter the workforce and it will deliver real help to two million Canadians, including 45,000 Nova Scotians who are working hard to join the middle class. This new measure will lift about 70,000 working individuals out of poverty and will promote economic independence for so many who would otherwise be left behind.

Let us turn to the Canada child benefit. Speaking of lifting people out of poverty and giving them opportunity, the CCB was introduced in 2016 and provides more support for nine out of 10 Canadian families. With the measures in budget 2018, the six million children currently benefiting from the CCB will continue to benefit for the long term, because it will be indexed, starting this July, to keep up with the cost of living.

In West Nova, the effects of the CCB are real. Thirteen thousand children are benefiting and over \$4.5 million each month are being invested in the well-being of the kids in my riding. As a result, hundreds and hundreds of children in western Nova Scotia are no longer living in poverty and many are now able to receive adequate school supplies, join minor hockey, take dance or music lessons, have warm clothes for the winter, or go to summer camp. This is real and this is making a substantial difference in the lives of children in West Nova while also helping our local economy.

Let us talk about security retirement for our seniors. Like many members of rural ridings, I represent many seniors and I am so pleased that our government supports them. While there is more work to do, we restored the eligibility age of old age security and GIS from 67 to 65, and increased the GIS by 10% for single seniors. Also, working co-operatively with the provinces, the Canada pension plan has been strengthened for the long term. In fact, it will result in an increase of the maximum CPP retirement pension by about 50%, phased in over time, and it will mean even greater support to persons with disabilities who need support from their government.

As the member of Parliament for West Nova, an area with Canada's most lucrative fishery in lobster, scallops, and other seafood, it is critical to me that the fishing industry, which is the backbone of the economy in southwestern Nova Scotia, is supported. That is why I, along with other colleagues, have been advocating for increased investments in our small craft harbours to allow for the continued growth of fisheries operations.

•(1650)

I am very pleased the government has responded in budget 2018 with an investment of an extra \$250 million over two years into our critical harbour infrastructure. This will help expand capacity and support the flourishing seafood industry being able to get its product off the boats and to world markets.

Government Orders

We know that with the coming into force of the European trade deal, CETA, and now the CPTPP, the demand for our seafood exports will continue to grow. This will diversify our customer base and sustain the high prices our fishermen have been getting for their lobster and other high-quality seafood. This makes a huge difference to our local economy in southwestern Nova Scotia.

I am also fortunate not only to represent an area with one of Canada's most important fisheries, but also to represent 14 Wing Greenwood, the largest air force base on the east coast. As a result, I represent many veterans all across my riding. It is vitally important that we support them for all they have done in their service to Canada. We know there is lots more to do, and we know that some may not yet know about the investments being made, but we are on the right track, and we are making things better for our veterans.

The government has made substantial investments to benefits and services for veterans and their families, so far totalling \$10 billion. This includes new education and training benefits and expanded services to families of medically released veterans. We have reopened offices, increased the earnings loss benefit, and the disability award. There will be an option for a pension for life rather than the lump sum amount. There will be more front-line staff, more for mental health, and a new caregiver benefit for those taking care of ill and injured veterans.

Budget 2018 will expand the medical expense tax credit to include the cost of psychiatric service dogs that are so important in the support they provide to many of our veterans.

We know there is more to do, and I am committed to working with our government and continuing to advocate for the veterans I represent, but the fact is clear that we have made substantial investments and we are really beginning to fix the damaged system left to us by the Conservative government.

I am proud of the Acadian communities in West Nova, and I fully support them in protecting and promoting their cultural heritage, as well as our official languages.

[*Translation*]

Our government recognizes the importance of supporting official languages across Canada and is serious about its duty to actively promote the development of official language minority communities. We recently announced an action plan for official languages, which represents the largest investment in official languages in over 15 years. We have listened to the needs of these communities, and budget 2018 meets their expectations.

Our budget will invest in our community and cultural organizations, such as the Société acadienne de Clare, the Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas, and the Université Sainte-Anne in my riding of West Nova, so they can continue their important work preserving and promoting Acadian culture and the French language in my riding.

Budget 2018 will support radio stations and newspapers like CIFA and *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse*. Despite the challenges faced by francophone media outlets in minority communities, they continue to offer content that reflects the French-speaking Acadian community they serve.

• (1655)

[*English*]

When we look at this bill to implement budget 2018, we see a vision for the future of Canada, one that builds on the foundation already laid by this government and one that continues to invest in our communities and their people so that all Canadians have a real and fair shot at success no matter what circumstances they were born into, so they can have a dignified retirement. It is a budget that continues to sustain our strong economic performance well into the future and keeps Canada on top as the very best country in the world.

That is why I am proudly supporting Bill C-74.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague commented on his vision for Canada and that this budget clearly lays out a vision for Canada.

What my colleague did not do was tell Canadians that part of that vision includes a massive debt that will be left to future generations of Canadians. He commented about the Canada child benefit. We champion the Canada child benefit, but it would be nice if, along with the cheque the government is sending to the parents of the children of Canada, there was a little disclaimer on the bottom to say, "P.S. You, your children, and your grandchildren will be obligated to pay for the out-of-control spending that the Liberal government is currently incurring on your behalf."

How can my colleague actually believe this is a positive vision for Canada when it leaves us paying \$26 billion a year just in interest, going to \$33 billion in just a few years? That is not even counting the carbon tax. It is not counting the extra \$4 billion that the Parliamentary Budget Officer indicated today would be added to this year's deficit, which was forecast to be \$18 billion and is now \$22 billion.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Madam Speaker, I always find it interesting when I hear Conservatives talk in this place about deficits and debt. Most Canadians understand the fact that the last government ran up over \$150 billion in deficits and debt. That has to be paid by Canadians. The result of that deficit and debt was one of the lowest and worst-performing economies in the G7, and a stagnant GDP.

This government is investing in Canadians and their communities, including the Canada child benefit, to put Canada on the right track for the future. It will strengthen local communities. Investing in our children is the best investment we can make. We are seeing the results. Canada has the highest GDP in the G7 right now because of wise investments like this one.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is not enough for the Liberals to tell Canadians they are going to implement pharmacare, or ask Canadians to just trust them, or tell Canadians they are going to have an advisory committee but it takes a long time, that kind of thing.

Government Orders

It would really be helpful if Liberal members stood up in the House and said they were going to implement pharmacare and that they were going to do the hard work to see that happen. Simply asking us to go along with a vague promise is not respectful to parliamentarians and it is not respectful to Canadians, who are looking for real timelines and for the government to move from talk to action.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Madam Speaker, I agree with my friend that we need to get there. I support the implementation of pharmacare, as do many of my colleagues. Many members in the House support it, as do most Canadians. However, we need to have a real plan to get there. We cannot just go ahead with something that is so vitally important and risk not getting it right. We have to work with the provinces to make sure the framework is properly put into place so that the investment we make will be a wise one, one that will sustain pharmacare for the long term, and make sure that people in Canada, including the vulnerable seniors I represent in my riding, will be able to count on that program for the long term.

We have to get this right. The government is committed to doing it and putting in place the right policy to do so.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was hearing a lot of hyperbole and fiction and I was going to give my hon. colleague a pass because it is Monday, but then he started to talk about pensions. I mean, really? The Liberal government walked away on Sears workers. The finance minister came into the House to promote the interests of his family business, Morneau Shepell, and told investors that they needed legislation to take down defined pensions. Bill C-27 was the first pension bill the finance minister brought in; his family's company dealt with the Sears pensioners, and we expect the Liberal government to stand up for pensioners? This is ridiculous. The Liberals have a lot of gall to come into the House and pretend that they will do anything for pensioners.

• (1700)

Mr. Colin Fraser: Madam Speaker, I respectfully disagree with all of the assertions my friend has made. It is not helpful in the course of this debate to make personal attacks against members of the House. We can disagree on policy, but to call into question the integrity of an hon. member is beneath contempt and does not show proper respect for this place or for all Canadians.

The Canada pension plan has been strengthened for the long term because of the policies of this government. That is going to have real results for retirement security for all of our people.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, this budget is another failure by the Liberal Prime Minister and his finance minister: more taxes, more debt, and more spending that does not offer solutions for hard-working Canadians. Instead, it saddles us, our children, our grandchildren, and even our great-grandchildren with billions of dollars' worth of debt at a time when interest rates are rising.

Budget 2018 was a huge opportunity for the Prime Minister. The world economy is roaring, but the Liberal government is failing to turn this favourable climate into results for Canadians. Instead, the Prime Minister is raising taxes on over 90% of Canadian middle-class families, and this budget announces new tax hikes on local businesses.

The Liberals are also borrowing an additional \$18 billion, which actually has now risen to \$22 billion since this morning, which is adding another \$22 billion in deficit to the budget. However, despite all the spending, middle-class Canadians are no further ahead and Canada's GDP growth will slow to 2% by the end of the year.

After the budget was presented, I spoke with the chairs of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce and the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. Their words speak volumes about the measures in this failed budget.

Greg Durocher, the president and CEO of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, said, "This seems to be a typical budget from a government that has seen better days in the battlefield. As a result of the massive campaign led by the chamber movement across the country, there was some moderate tweaking of the passive income tax calculation for small business owners. The real problem with this legislation is that it is not going to achieve the objectives they intended it to. You cannot get to the wealthiest 1% by targeting middle-class entrepreneurs, it is simply wrong and will still cost small business owners \$1 billion taken out of our economy. There is nothing to make Canadian business more competitive given the massive tax reductions in the United States, our biggest competitor, and possible derailing of NAFTA talks which would cause a travesty in Canada for the business community. Supporting female entrepreneurs is a good thing, but frankly it is a shame we have to do this, and gender equality should be a foregone conclusion."

He went on to say, "We are still very much concerned with a government who simply believes that a spending spree will be good for Canadians, and more importantly, good for our future leaders. We cannot continue to spend more than we take in. The time was right during the recession of 2008-09. Now, when the government itself says our economy is good, is the time to eliminate deficits, pay down debt and provide relief for businesses and individuals who are still struggling to grow and get into the prosperity of the economy this government keeps talking about."

I am not sure I could have said it much better myself.

I also heard from Art Sinclair, the vice-president of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce who had this to say:

Small businesses across Waterloo Region and Canada need a tax system that is fair and straight-forward in its application. Our chamber has been consistently informed by our membership that new rules are making the system more complex and time consuming for companies who should be focused on growth and job creation.

This budget fails Canadians in many areas, but let me focus on three for the next few minutes.

Government Orders

First is infrastructure. This government campaigned on increasing spending on infrastructure, a promise that was popular across Canada. However, what we have seen is that even though this government is spending at record levels, very little is going into infrastructure. Meanwhile, the government is squandering \$35 billion on a new Asian infrastructure bank that helps wealthy investors and ignores Canadians who want shorter commute times. In fact, this budget indicated the Liberal government is planning on cutting funding for infrastructure over the next few years.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer wrote in the report entitled “Budget 2018: Issues for Parliamentarians”:

Budget 2018 provides an incomplete account of the changes to the Government’s \$186.7 billion infrastructure spending plan. PBO requested the new plan but it does not exist. Roughly one-quarter of the funding allocated for infrastructure from 2016-17 to 2018-19 will lapse. Both legacy and new infrastructure programs are prone to large lapses.

It is another broken promise by the Liberals.

Second, I will talk about the carbon tax. Over 200 pages of the budget bill create a complicated and costly new carbon tax in all provinces that do not already have their own.

● (1705)

That tax would raise the cost of heat, gas, groceries, and everything else that Canadians need. A carbon tax would not work. Carbon taxes do not decrease emissions. They hurt the national economy by increasing the cost of living, all the while making the country less competitive globally. In fact, just today, as I mentioned, the Parliamentary Budget Officer announced that a carbon tax would take \$10 billion from our Canadian economy.

Knowing all of this, the Liberal government is moving ahead with this bad decision. Unfortunately, that is not even half the problem. The Liberal government knows full well how much the carbon tax would cost the average family, but it refuses to let Canadians know. Officials from the Department of Finance have let us know that we can expect to see an 11¢ increase per litre on gasoline, and an extra \$264 for natural gas home heating per year, with oil heating costs being even more. Trevor Tombe at the University of Calgary estimated that the carbon tax would mean \$1,100 in additional costs per family. Other estimates are as high as \$2,500 per family, just from the carbon tax implementation. That might not sound like a lot of money to the members opposite, but I have spent 12 years in this House making sure that my constituents in Kitchener—Conestoga get to keep more of their hard-earned money in their own pockets, not less, and I will keep fighting that fight.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer wrote the following in the most recent economic and fiscal outlook:

Implementation of the federal government’s carbon pricing levy will generate a headwind for the Canadian economy over the medium term as the levy rises from \$10 per tonne of [carbon dioxide] equivalent in 2018 to \$50 per tonne in 2022.

Based on analysis conducted by the Ecofiscal Commission, we project that real GDP will be 0.5 per cent lower in 2022 than it would otherwise be. This amounts to \$10 billion in 2022.

Therefore, not only would families be paying more, but our economy would be guaranteed to suffer as well as a result. The government also knows whether its carbon tax would decrease emissions, but again we get no answers. My colleague, the hon.

member for Carleton, has asked time and time again, and I will ask it now: What exactly does the Liberal government have to hide?

Third is the national debt and out-of-control spending. Canada started the new fiscal year on April 1, 2018 with a trillion dollars worth of market debt. This is the total debt upon which the Government of Canada pays interest. The net debt is \$669 billion. We all remember during the 2015 election campaign when the Prime Minister, then the leader of the third party, promised that, if elected, a Liberal government would run a small deficit and return to balance by 2019. Instead, the deficits have been twice what he promised. Finance Canada now projects deficits for another 25 years, totalling almost half a trillion dollars.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer, in his review of budget 2018, had this to say in regard to the growing deficit and debt:

Despite commitments made in the Minister of Finance’s mandate letter and in Budget 2016, the Government has not explicitly mentioned its fiscal anchors of balancing the budget and continuing to reduce the federal debt-to-GDP ratio in subsequent Fall Economic Statements or budgets, including Budget 2018.

The Liberal deficits today will require massive new tax increases soon after the election. Canadians will pay more tax to fund interest payments to wealthy lenders. That is money that is not being spent on our veterans, health care, national defence, or on real tax relief for the middle class.

We, as Conservatives, have a positive vision for our country. We on this side of the House have introduced legislation that supports young families, new parents, and persons with disabilities. We introduced legislation that provides more transparency about how taxpayer money is spent, and we will always support policies that create jobs and grow our economy. We will remove red tape and remove obstacles that are in the way of young entrepreneurs who are trying to start and to grow their business. I know that our leader, the Leader of the Opposition, has his private member’s bill up for debate soon. I hope that members across the way will support this common sense legislation that would actually help new families, not saddle them with higher taxes.

● (1710)

This budget has been described by some as an election budget. While the Liberals are focused on trying to get re-elected, I will keep focusing on the hard-working people in Kitchener, Wellesley, Woolwich, and Wilmot. The people in my riding know how to work hard and contribute to the improvement of our community. I want to see them rewarded for their efforts, not saddled with mountains of debt.

Government Orders

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed listening to my colleague's remarks. He has a single vision, with a number of pieces that he has pulled out of a number of reports without any context at all, some of which are quite misleading. When he talks about the billion-dollar market debt, what he forgets to mention is that it first went to that number in 2012 under the Harper government. Indeed, that market debt includes crown corporations and others.

The misleading statements are not helpful to Canadians in terms of their understanding of what it really is. I would ask the hon. member if he does not think it is irresponsible to provide only partial information.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Madam Speaker, that has been the argument that I have been making all day in this House. We are getting partial information from the government in this budget implementation bill. There is nothing in here to tell us what the carbon tax will cost us. There is nothing in here to tell us when the budget will be balanced, in spite of a very clear promise made by virtually every member of that party during the last campaign. I remember it was to be a maximum deficit of \$10 billion, to be balanced by 2019. This year it should have been \$6 billion, according to their projections. However, today the Parliamentary Budget Officer said it is not only \$18 billion, but \$22 billion.

Thus, I am absolutely opposed to partial information.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, it seems like those two parties really rub off on each other, sometimes for the better, but more often for the worse. We were given an omnibus bill of over 500 pages, a little strategy that they liked to use. Somewhere in all this mess, there were supposed to be measures to promote gender equality. In reality, there is not a single penny in the budget allocated for that.

I would like my colleague's thoughts on that. Does he think it would have been a good idea to include concrete measures for gender equality in the budget?

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the comment that my colleague made about the omnibus budget, which is 540 pages. Of those 540 pages, well over 200 pages are dealing directly with the carbon tax, and again there is no indication of cost.

I cannot answer specifically the question as to how much is directed towards gender equality, but based on the misinformation in this budget and the misinformation we have been given all day, I am not very confident that we will get an accurate figure for that either.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned a couple of quotes. I want to give him a quote from the Business Development Bank of Canada: "Canada had solid economic growth...in 2017. Our economy is on a solid footing. [...] Canada should have a solid growth of 2.2% in 2018". Some estimates are even higher.

I want to quote the member when he said that infrastructure spending is very little. He should take a drive in his constituency,

because we have invested \$97 million to expand the highway. We have spent billions of dollars getting the light rail transit in the region. We have spent millions of dollars in infrastructure, underground maintenance, water mains, and waste water treatment programs. There have been millions of dollars spent in the riding.

I would encourage the hon. member to take a drive and see all the construction in the region.

• (1715)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Madam Speaker, I am thrilled that my neighbour, my colleague from Kitchener South—Hespeler, mentioned light rail transit.

When I was elected in 2006, light rail transit was one of the things that I championed as a member of Parliament for the Waterloo region. I was honoured to stand with our former prime minister, the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, when we announced federal funding for the light rail transit in the Waterloo region. It is because when we were the government and made an announcement of that funding, much of that infrastructure spending was done toward achieving the results my colleague mentioned. I am grateful for those results.

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House and discuss measures we are introducing through Bill C-74. The bill proposes important measures related to our budget 2018. With our latest budget, we are putting people first and ensuring equality and fairness for all Canadians.

We are doing this in a number of ways. These include initiatives that allow for more equal share of parental leave, an initiative to support the participation of women in the workforce, and the introduction of proactive pay equity legislation in federally regulated sectors.

We are also working hard to support Canada's most vulnerable segments of society, including seniors. The measures introduced in Bill C-74 help to do just that. It is no secret that Canada's population is aging, and Canadians are living longer and more healthy lives. This increasing longevity is good news and should be celebrated, because it brings with it more wisdom, expertise, and experience in society. However, this demographic shift also means that we need to adjust our policies and programs to ensure they remain relevant.

We have a growing seniors population, with over six million people who are 65 years of age or older. In the next 25 years, that number is estimated to almost double, to 11 million people, representing one-quarter of Canada's population. There is no doubt that private and public institutions alike must adapt, as the significant demographic shift creates new opportunities as well as challenges.

Government Orders

Our government places enormous value on the contribution that seniors have made and will continue to make in our communities, workplaces, families, and our country. It goes without saying that they should have access to income security that will allow them to live a safe, secure, and dignified retirement.

We have already taken concrete steps to ensure that seniors will have that dignified retirement. In the area of income security, it is well known that we have restored the eligibility age for old age security and guaranteed income supplement from age 67 back to 65, and for allowance benefits from age 62 back to 60. This is putting thousands of dollars into the pockets of Canadian seniors and keeping approximately 100,000 future seniors from falling into poverty. Since 2016, we have also increased the top-up of the guaranteed income supplement payment by \$947 per year for single recipients. This has improved the financial security of close to 900,000 vulnerable seniors and is lifting approximately 13,000 seniors out of poverty. Seventy per cent of those seniors happen to be women. We are also ensuring that senior couples who receive GIS and allowance benefits and live apart for reasons beyond their control, for example, because of long-term care requirements, can receive higher benefits based on their individual incomes.

The Canada pension plan is one of the most important parts of our social support system. It is with great pride that I remind the House that in March 2017, our government enacted legislative changes to enhance the Canada pension plan to ensure greater financial security for future seniors by increasing CPP retirement benefits, and providing larger benefits for disabled contributors, widows, and widowers. The amount that Canadians pay into the plan before retirement will gradually rise over a seven-year period, starting in 2019. Increased benefits will build up gradually with each year of contributions to the CPP enhancement. When workers who participated in the enhancement for their entire careers collect retirement pensions, the CPP enhancement will increase the maximum CPP retirement pension by approximately 50%. These CPP enhancements mean more money for Canadians when they retire, so they can worry less about their savings and focus more on enjoying time with their families.

• (1720)

With the action taken by Quebec to enhance the Quebec pension plan in a similar fashion, all Canadians can now look forward to a safer and more secure retirement.

Building on that success, as part of the 2016-18 triennial review, federal and provincial ministers of finance agreed to more changes that will improve the CPP without increasing legislated contribution rates. These changes will provide further support from CPP enhancements for parents and people with disabilities. In our latest budget, we have confirmed that the government would move forward with these changes in 2019, in addition to those established through the CPP enhancements. With Bill C-74 we would put our promise to Canadians in action to create a better CPP for seniors today and into the future. This is why we are asking for the House's full support of Bill C-74.

The changes we are proposing in this bill include features that would protect the value of retirement benefits under the CPP enhancement for parents who take time off work to care for young

children and for persons with disabilities. They also include a raise in the survivor's pension for individuals who become widowed under age 45 as well as a top-up benefit for disabled retirement pension recipients under the age of 65. We would increase the death benefit to its maximum value of \$2,500 for all eligible contributors.

It is important to note that Bill C-74 would also make the required amendments to maintain portability between the CPP and the enhanced Quebec pension plan when those enhancements come into effect.

As I have stated, with budget 2018, we have committed to putting people first and ensuring quality and fairness for all Canadians. Part of that commitment means taking informed steps forward in our efforts to advance equality, especially for women, because we believe that equality between Canadian women and men will lead to greater prosperity. We are applying this lens to everything we do, and the changes we are proposing in Bill C-74 are no exception.

The changes we are making to the Canada pension plan are going to go a long way in supporting all future retirees, including, in particular, women. We know that women are more likely than men to take time away from work to raise their children, and let us not forget that women are also more likely to outlive their partners. We are making these changes because it is the right thing to do and is the smart thing to do to help seniors and advance equality for women to the benefit of all Canadians.

We know that Canadians work hard every day to support themselves and their families and to keep our economy growing. When it comes time to retire, Canadians deserve to do so with support from the very society they helped build and maintain. It goes without saying that Canadians should have access to income security that will allow them to live a safe, secure, and dignified retirement.

I am proud to say that through Bill C-74, we would continue to make that goal a reality. I encourage my colleagues in this House to support this bill and help create a better retirement for those who work so hard, for this generation and for generations to come. We owe it to all Canadians to pass this bill.

• (1725)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, what is missing from my colleague's speech is any critical analysis. What is interesting is that he made reference to the move of benefits for old age security from age 67 to age 65. What he does not understand is that our economy actually needs people to stay in the workplace longer. That political move made for the election has actually been criticized by Dominic Barton, the chief economist on the finance minister's advisory council.

Speaker's Ruling

An analysis of the expansion of the CPP he talked about said that it will actually lead to thousands of job losses, because it is a tax on small business, an input tax. It predicted that in the future, only five per cent of Canadians would be helped by those changes. Much like we heard in the House today, there would be extra spending, extra tax on businesses, and the loss of jobs to help only a very small number of people.

When Dominic Barton himself and the chief actuary of Morneau Shepell, Fred Vettese, criticize the move from 67 to 65, does that member not agree that the government needs to think better about Canada's long term?

Mr. Raj Grewal: Madam Speaker, what the hon. member and the hon. member's party fail to understand is that our commitment made in the 2015 election to return to the age of 65 for the GIS and old age security has lifted hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty. Those are the same seniors the member's party turned its back on. That was the commitment we made in the 2015 campaign.

The member opposite wants to talk about jobs. Let us talk about jobs, no problem. Since we were elected in 2015, we have created over 600,000 jobs. That is more than the Conservatives created in 10 years of government. The unemployment rate is at a decade low of 5.8%. The Conservatives had the lowest-growth job rate, for 10 years, of any prime minister.

The member opposite and his party like to get up and talk about experts. We take our advice from the Canadian people. That is why we are sitting on this side of the House. If the Conservatives keep that mentality, they will be comfortable on that side for a very long time.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always interesting to hear people in this place fill themselves up with their own rhetoric and the arrogance that comes with it. It is very disconcerting. The more I hear the heckling in this House, the more it shows me how out of touch these people are with real Canadians.

In particular, in the 500-some pages there is nothing that addresses our seniors' conditions today, here and now. When the Liberals talk about advisory committees or money that is going to be allocated at some future date, they are actually insulting people who cannot articulate in a very candid fashion the way they are struggling, because it is embarrassing. We have had two different governing parties for 150 years that have provided the narrative, "Shame on you. If you are struggling, you made bad choices."

I want to know exactly what you are doing in this budget, right now, to address struggling seniors who cannot afford their pharmacare and who cannot afford—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member to address the questions to the Chair and not to the government side.

Mr. Raj Grewal: Madam Speaker, I always find it absolutely amazing when members from the NDP get up and talk about helping the most vulnerable people in our society.

When the opportunity came to help middle-class families with a tax cut, and when the opportunity came, through the Canada child benefit, to lift 300,000 children out of poverty, the NDP members

voted against it. They always go out and talk about helping Canadians, but when the opportunity came, they voted against it. We are not going to take any lessons from the NDP members on helping Canadians.

This side of the House is doing its job. In the 2015 election, we promised that we would invest in middle-class Canadians, and we have done that by reducing taxes and investing in the Canada child benefit. We promised to reduce the age from 67 to 65, and we have done that. We have invested billions of dollars in affordable housing.

* * *

● (1730)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-74 — PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1 — SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised earlier today by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby concerning the applicability of Standing Order 69.1 to Bill C-74, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures.

I would like to thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for raising this matter, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons for his comments.

[English]

The hon. member argued that Bill C-74 is an omnibus bill, as defined under Standing Order 69.1, as it amends more than 40 acts and contains several different initiatives. He is concerned, in particular, by a new act contained in the bill, namely the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act. The hon. member acknowledged that this measure has been mentioned in the budget documents. However, he found it disproportionate that these few paragraphs, providing a brief overview of the government's intentions in relation to carbon pricing, represent 215 pages in the bill. He is of the view that this goes against the spirit of the Standing Order. For this reason, he feels the exemption provided for budget implementation bills by Standing Order 69.1(2) should not apply and that the measure should be voted on separately.

In his intervention, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader expressed his disagreement. He noted that page 151 of the budget document contains a section called "Pricing Carbon Pollution and Supporting Clean Growth". In his view, this passage contained in the budget satisfies the requirement contained in Standing Order 69.1(2), thereby excluding Bill C-74 from the application of Standing Order 69.1(1).

Government Orders

[Translation]

The Speaker has the power to divide the questions, for the purposes of voting, on any motion for second and third reading of a bill in circumstances where the bill contains a number of unrelated provisions. The matter before us today concerns paragraph (2) of that Standing Order, which makes an exception for budget implementation bills. Standing Order 69.1(2) reads as follows:

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

[English]

The provisions identified by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby were indeed announced in the budget, as he himself acknowledged. The Chair has reviewed the relevant sections of the budget document cited by both the hon. member and the hon. parliamentary secretary, as well as the relevant portion of the bill. I believe there is a direct link between what was announced and what is contained in Bill C-74. I do not, however, believe it is for the Chair to determine if the proportions of a measure correspond sufficiently to the amount of the reference to it in the budget documents. If the measures are contained in the budget documents, the exemption of Standing Order 69.1(2) applies. Therefore, I do not believe it would be appropriate to have a separate vote on the provisions relating to the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act.

Finally, I would like to point out that Bill C-74 was introduced almost four weeks ago and debated on several days since then. As I mentioned in my ruling of November 7, 2017, for everyone's benefit I would encourage hon. members to raise their arguments as early as possible after a bill is introduced.

[Translation]

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

* * *

●(1735)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-74, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I happened to catch Stephen Poloz's speech on budget 2018. Hearing the governor of the Bank of Canada's remarks on our federal budget filled me with pride. Hearing his optimism about the present macroeconomic situation, including the creation of over 280,000 jobs in the past 12 months and the lowest unemployment in 40 years, made me proud to be a part of this government that believes in evidence-based policy and uses it to make informed and sound financial decisions for this country.

The notable takeaway from Bank of Canada Governor Poloz highlighted the groups of people in Canada who represent sources of untapped potential. These include youth, women, indigenous people, and the growing number of recent migrants. Let us focus on youth for a minute.

The governor cites young people as one of the sources of untapped potential, and I wholeheartedly agree. There is a decline in youth participation in the economy, and for Canada to truly prosper, more young Canadians will have to have jobs and pathways to these jobs must be created. This where budget 2018 comes in.

In budget 2018, the new Canada workers benefit would encourage more people and more youth to join the workforce. Our plan will offer real help to more than two million Canadians who are working hard to join the middle class. Our plans anticipate raising roughly 70,000 Canadians out of poverty. At the same time, starting in 2019, the government will also make it easier for people to access the benefit they have earned, making changes that will allow the Canada Revenue Agency to calculate the CWB for any tax filer who has not claimed it yet.

The Canada workers benefit replaces the working income tax benefit. This means that low-income workers earning \$15,000 would receive up to almost \$500 more from the CWB in 2019 than in 2018 to invest and spend on things that are important to them, such as groceries, utilities, and other essentials.

Our government ensures the smooth running of any new measure we introduce. As such, over the next year the government will work to determine if the delivery of the CWB can be further improved to provide better support to low-income Canadians throughout the year, rather than through an annual refund after filing their taxes.

It is no secret that budget 2018 has been referred to as a "gender budget", and I am proud to say that every single decision on expenditures and tax measures in this budget was informed by a gender-based analysis. A gender-based analysis such as this is important to target particular groups and produce evidence-based policy, and to help end the income gap between women and men doing equal work.

The most notable example of this in budget 2018 is the promise to fund a dedicated second parent leave under employment insurance that will see \$240 million in funding a year rising to \$345 million. This includes giving couples who share parental leave an additional five weeks of paid benefits, starting in June 2019. These measures seek to increase the number of men who take time off after the arrival of a new child. The new parental sharing benefit will allow two-parent families, including same-sex parents and people who adopt, to share the opportunity to take an additional five to eight weeks away from work to spend with their children.

Despite these efforts, much work needs to be done to make child care accessible to parents. Lack of child care is what keeps women out of the workforce, as research has shown. In order to encourage and facilitate more women's participation in the labour force, we must lower the cost of child care. Our government is committed to making affordable early learning and child care more accessible.

Government Orders

In budget 2017, the government announced a long-term investment of \$7.5 billion over 11 years to support more accessible and affordable early learning. Following this, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments reached an agreement on a multilateral early learning and child care framework. The government is now entering into a three-year bilateral agreement with provinces and territories in order to review and adjust these agreements as needed over the 11-year framework. So far, we have reached nine agreements.

• (1740)

While I am on the topic of women's participation in the workforce, it is important to mention the important contributions of women entrepreneurs. Budget 2018 recognizes this in its strategy for women entrepreneurs, with \$1.65 billion in new financing being made available to women business owners, which will be delivered over three years through the Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada.

I want to talk about the Fierce Founders in Communitech in my riding. They are the first female-focused accelerator group created to encourage gender diversity in tech and encourage women entrepreneurs to start tech companies. Communitech helps with financing with this program, and it has done tremendously in our region to help female entrepreneurs get into the start-up sector and pursue high-tech jobs.

Budget 2018 proposes an additional \$511 million over five years on a cash basis, starting in 2018-19, to the regional development agencies to support the innovation and skills plan across all regions of Canada. Of the \$511 million, \$149 million would be allocated to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, of which \$33 million will be for nationally coordinated, regionally tailored support for women entrepreneurs.

In addition, our government recognizes the barriers that make it difficult for women to launch their own businesses. Therefore, we are committed to providing \$105 million over five years to reduce such barriers. Our government also has a commitment to make grants and programs for scientific research more accessible to women.

As a member of Parliament in the tri-cities, I want to talk about innovation and infrastructure, which is welcomed our region, especially in light of the federal government's \$950-million innovation superclusters. I am proud to say that the University of Waterloo in my region will take a leading research role in two of the five winning bids as part of the innovation supercluster initiative. The government announced the advanced manufacturing supercluster, an innovation hotbed that is home to strong industrial clusters linked through their shared reliance on specialized inputs, including technologies, talent, and infrastructure. This supercluster will connect Canada's technology strengths to our manufacturing industry to make us a world manufacturing leader in the economy of tomorrow.

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario currently supports economic growth in southern Ontario through the delivery of federal programs and services. The agency's funding will be renewed to continue supporting that growth with a commitment of \$920 million over six years.

Specifically in my region, as I mentioned, there is \$950 million, and part of that is part of the superclusters where we are encouraging more innovation and industry to develop high technology to work to advance manufacturing and high-tech jobs so that we can grow our economy.

I would like to conclude by echoing the sentiments of Bank of Canada Governor Poloz. We are living in an incredibly optimistic economic time in Canada. Our labour market needs to work, but things are looking up as we pave the way for women, youth, and other groups to participate in our labour force. New opportunities and technologies are on the horizon, and budget 2018 is laying the groundwork for their success.

I am proud that we brought this budget forward. I am proud that I represent the riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler, where we are embracing this budget with technology, innovation, and investment so that we can grow our economy and ensure that everyone in my region and in the rest of Canada prosper.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his comments. As geographic neighbours in our ridings, we have the privilege of representing the greatest part of Canada in the Waterloo region, so we certainly have a lot in common.

In the early part of his comments, my colleague focused on youth. He said he wanted to tap the untapped potential and he wanted more youth to join the workforce. However, there are not going to be more workplaces to go to if the government keeps on with its financial policies, which are driving investment out of the country. Companies are leaving fast and furious. That is one concern. The other concern is about the massive debt that the government is leaving these very youth who are trying to find jobs today.

Finally, my question is on the Canada summer jobs program. We have thousands of youth this summer who will not be working because of the discriminatory policies that the government requires of those who are providing those jobs. I wonder if my colleague could comment on how that actually helps the youth he is concerned about.

I applaud his concern for youth. We need to be concerned about the youth of our country, but I would like answers to those questions.

• (1745)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, the member asked great questions.

I want to lay out what our government has achieved since we have taken office. Some 600,000 jobs have been created since we have taken office. Canada is doing the best of all the G7 countries. Our government has lifted over 300,000 children out of poverty.

Government Orders

The member mentioned youth. Our youth are facing challenges at this time. I think my colleague can relate to the fact that housing prices in our region have gone up quite significantly. A lot of young people are unable to purchase their first home. I agree with the hon. member that we have a lot of work to do for our youth.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest when my colleague talked about regional economic development. My own riding is bigger than the United Kingdom. Northern Ontario is on the other side of the map, and most people in southern Ontario in political life do not even know we exist.

When the Liberals talk about superclusters, it shows the Liberals' lack of vision. They throw supercluster here, supercluster there, as though we get three or four great winners and we are going to build a national economy. I am so pleased they are making that investment in Waterloo. However, our region is a vast region of resource-based, agricultural-based small communities, and the only supercluster we see in regional economic development is the supercluster that is forming in the office of the minister from Mississauga as he shuts down the regional voices and conglomerates them all under his watch.

We look at the Liberals' vision for FedNor, which they have atrophied year after year, and the loss of staff at FedNor. The fact is that the Liberals do not even mention FedNor any more when they do consultations. For example, on broadband, the Liberals cancelled the FedNor broadband projects, and we lost two years.

I would invite my colleague to get outside of the Liberal supercluster and come to rural and resource-based Canada. We are wonderful people. We will not bite. We will show him around. We will invite him to understand what a national economy looks like.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, we have invested historic numbers in infrastructure. With this investment we have been able to get Internet and broadband access to many rural communities. That did not happen under the previous government.

In terms of the superclusters, \$950 million has been given to superclusters. This is not only good for Waterloo region, but it is good for areas that have manufacturing sectors that now are transitioning to advanced manufacturing sectors, which are growing our economy and increasing jobs. That is our record. Six hundred thousand jobs have been created under our government.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): The Liberal omnibus budget implementation bill is quite the tome, coming in at 556 pages. One can only begin to imagine the multitude of changes it would impose on Canadians. For a party that decried omnibus bills, it really did not take long for the Liberals to break another one of their campaign promises.

To put the length of this legislation into perspective, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and *The Handmaid's Tale* were all written with fewer pages. While one can only begin to wonder what genre the Liberal budget implementation bill would fall under, I can assure Canadians that its negative implications for the pocketbooks of hard-working families all across the country and its impact on our economy would be very real.

Throughout the proposed legislation, there are numerous measures that would hike taxes and impose new taxes, and it still does not provide any meaningful plan to get spending under control. Only the Liberals could do a spending review and find no savings. I would even argue that it probably cost the taxpayers more money for the government to set up its internal spending review than what it would end up saving.

Now, after three years of the Liberals in power, Canadians have a deep understanding of the consequences of the Liberal decisions. Outside private investment has plummeted. Taxes are higher. There are deficits as far as the eye can see, and the Liberals still do not have a comprehensive plan to justify their spendthrift ways.

At a macro level, spending has grown at a furious pace. The Liberals have increased spending at a rate of roughly 6.5% to 7% per year. That means they have increased spending by 20% in the last three years.

While some of the new spending measures are welcome, we have to question where all the money is going. According to the PBO, the Liberals' infrastructure spending has contributed only 0.1% of GDP growth. We also know that a quarter of their infrastructure funding has lapsed and is not getting out the door. Worst of all, the PBO said that the Liberals do not even have a plan when it comes to infrastructure investments. How they plan on spending billions of dollars with no plan boggles the mind. Perhaps that is indicative of many other underlying problems that the government has created for itself these past few months.

The issue of everlasting deficits really does not bother my hon. Liberal colleagues across the way, and I have yet to hear a single Liberal MP openly question the finance minister as to why he failed to keep the Liberals' promise to return to balanced budgets by 2019. As noted, the deficit has gone from an election promise of \$6 billion for this year to the government's broken promise of \$18 billion, to be levelled at \$22 billion today, according to the PBO. As interest rates rise, and they have for the last three budgetary quarters, this out-of-control spending becomes even more irresponsible.

The real question, though, is about future governments, in this case future Conservative governments, which will have to deal with the fiscal mess that is being passed down to all Canadians, and particularly to our young Canadians. Let us never forget that today's deficits are tomorrow's taxes. Money does not grow on trees. It does not magically appear out of thin air. Budgets, contrary to what the Prime Minister says, do not balance themselves.

As I have said before, the Liberals have provided zero rationale for why they need to rack up the credit—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Government Orders

• (1750)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just want to remind the hon. members that there is nothing stopping them from crossing the floor to speak to each other, rather than shout across. It just makes it a lot easier for me to hear what the hon. member for Brandon—Souris is saying, which is very interesting.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris, please continue.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it is just another opportunity for them not to hear what they do not want to hear.

There is no economic calamity. There is no recession. We are not in one. There is no economic calamity transpiring across the border, as was the case during the great world recession of 2008-09. The only logical conclusion is that the Liberals have lost complete and utter control of the nation's finances.

Not once has the Minister of Finance provided any concrete answers as to when he plans to stop spending more than the Liberals are bringing in. Not once has the Minister of Finance actually provided a coherent answer as to why they broke their election campaign promises of a balanced budget in 2019, which just happens to be the next election year. Now, the Minister of Finance is asking parliamentarians to give him approval to continue his out-of-control spending. It sounds like the losing Wynne budget plan of Ontario, but then, it is from the same architect, after all.

For example, tucked away in the legislation is a giant \$7-billion slush fund. What is it for? We do not get an answer. The Liberals say they have no idea. I believe it is safe to say that this would be the largest blank cheque in Canadian history. It would be highly irresponsible to approve their plan and give them the authorization to spend \$7 billion of taxpayers' money without any explanation.

Due to the length of their omnibus legislation, I want to use the remaining time to focus squarely on their carbon tax, which takes up about 200 pages of the bill. Never before has a government introduced such sweeping tax changes without providing any meaningful information. Actually, I take that back. We only have to look at how they tabled their plan to tax local businesses the day before the House rose for Christmas. There should be no taxation without information.

Multiple requests for information filed with the government have resulted in the release of documents that have key information blacked out. The "potential impact of a carbon price on households' consumption expenditures across the income distribution" was withheld. If the Liberals want to take hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars out of the pockets of my constituents, they had better be upfront about what their carbon tax would do. Particularly for a constituency as rural and diverse as mine, families have to drive long distances to go to work, drop off their kids at school, run errands, and pick up groceries. There is no public transit picking up passengers in Elgin, Manitoba.

I would suggest that many of my rural colleagues are in the same boat. We have thousands of constituents who are going to be negatively impacted by the Liberal carbon tax, and yet the Minister of Environment is refusing to answer the most obvious question: How many tonnes of CO₂ are projected to be eliminated by this carbon tax?

It is not for a lack of trying from our side to get the information. The Minister of Environment has been asked dozens of times how much Canada's emissions would be reduced by implementing a \$50 carbon tax. Each and every time she has been asked, she has refused to answer. She has evaded the question. She has failed to present even the most basic information on what the impact of the carbon tax would be, and then has the audacity to say that she has "no time" for elected representatives who do not support the carbon tax. This sort of tone is what some call the Liberals' kryptonite. It is demeaning, condescending, and patronizing. I would call that the Liberal hat trick.

It is unacceptable that the Liberals refuse to outline the true cost of their carbon tax and the impact it would have on Canadian families. It is unclear what impact the Liberals' national climate change plan would have on the economy, and that uncertainty is causing businesses to stand on the sidelines and wait, discouraging investment and hurting the economy.

The only information we are getting is from the PBO, who released a report this morning projecting that the carbon tax would take \$10 billion out of our economy by 2022. The report warns that the carbon tax would "generate a headwind" for the Canadian economy as it is escalated from \$10 per tonne in 2018 to \$50 per tonne in 2022.

Another story came out this morning by Blacklock's, which stated that according to information provided to the Senate energy committee, the Liberal carbon tax "would have to more than double [the \$50-per-tonne tax] if Canada is to meet greenhouse gas emission targets".

• (1755)

That would mean a target of at least \$130 a tonne, the equivalent of an extra 22 cents per litre on gasoline. If we thought gas was getting expensive again with the rise of the price of oil, we just have to wait until the Liberals spring that extra 22 cents on gasoline. The trickle-down effect will be disastrous for household incomes. It will cost more to heat our homes, purchase our groceries, and purchase almost everything at the store.

While the Liberals want to sneak their carbon tax through the House inside their omnibus budget bill, I want to remind them that threatening provinces will get them nowhere. Imposing this massive tax grab on Canadians without even providing the most meagre information is the complete opposite to the approach they should be taking.

I will never support this Liberal carbon tax. I cannot in good conscience support their out-of-control spending, and I will oppose the tax hikes contained in their budget implementation bill every step of the way.

• (1800)

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard my hon. colleague across the aisle say that we do not want to hear what we do not want to hear, and he talked about actions being demeaning and condescending.

Government Orders

In 2014, I know what it was like living in New Brunswick Southwest. I know what it was like in the field of education, as a post-secondary educator, with the cuts to science. When I decided to run, it was on the premise that we were going to restore science and the confidence the public would have in our policies and our decisions.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague could respond to why the Harper government made significant cuts to science, not to buildings but to the science itself, that inevitably discouraged young people from jumping into scientific fields.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I would assure my hon. colleague that the Harper government created 1.2 million full-time jobs. Canadians had a balanced budget when we left government. The Liberal government has created a huge deficit and has still only created a few jobs.

It is certainly a misstatement to say that we were not in favour of science. As my hon. colleague indicated a number of times, when we look at greenhouse gas emissions, Conservatives were not proposing a carbon tax. We are the only government in Canadian history, as was pointed out earlier today in comments, that reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The Liberal government still has to pick up and do something to come anywhere close to what we accomplished under the Harper government.

The premise of hon. member's question is completely wrong.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since my colleague represents the Brandon area, with its high population of military personnel and veterans, given its proximity to the military base, I would like to know whether he finds that the changes made to veterans' pensions in the Liberal budget are consistent with the promises the Liberals made in the election campaign or whether he thinks that the Liberals are incapable of keeping any of their promises in the budget they presented.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, that question is a very appropriate one. The Liberals did a lot of talking during the election campaign, and they promised that they would not take our veterans to court again. They have. In fact, they have gone to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In relation to my hon. colleague's question, the Liberals certainly have not met the pension obligations they promised in the platform they had when they came forward in the 2015 election. From speaking to many veterans, I know that they are very discouraged about what they have been dealing with so far with the government. They are looking forward to the day when that changes with a new Conservative government.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Brandon—Souris, my neighbour to the east. We both have farmers and ranchers in our ridings, and they will be hugely impacted by this carbon tax the member mentioned.

The minister has stood many times in this House to say that all the money that would be collected from the carbon tax would be given

back to the provinces. Now we know for a fact that the money would not be given back. The GST would not go back to the provinces. It would stay in the Liberal coffers.

My question for the member is on that aspect of it. The budget talks about \$120 million to have carbon police. I wonder if the member could comment on this \$120 million expense to police this aspect.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it is another good make-work project that we will not need when we get a Conservative government, because we will do away with the carbon tax. Therefore, we do not need that \$120 million.

It is very clear that the government has no plan. It is parallel to what they were doing on the marijuana bills, Bill C-45 and Bill C-46. The government was really quite anxious to put out how many dollars it thought it could make with it. However, when I wrote to the Parliamentary Budget Officer about the costs of it, he said that he would tell me what they were if he knew them, but the Liberals would not tell him. This is the same. The Liberals are quite ready to talk about all the money they can make out of a carbon tax, but they will not tell anybody what it will cost.

• (1805)

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to help the House advance its understanding of budget 2018.

As the third budget our government has introduced, budget 2018 outlines our government's next steps to advance the mandate given to us by Canadians so thunderously in 2015.

We were sent to Ottawa on a promise to grow the economy, support Canada's middle class and the vulnerable, and to build a more inclusive, prosperous nation for all. Over the last two and a half years, our government has made stunning progress toward this promise. In fact, our very first act as a government was to cut taxes on nine million members of Canada's middle class. Shortly after that, we began inputting more money in the pockets of middle-class and low-income families that needed it through our brand new Canada child benefit, the now famous CCB.

The CCB today is celebrated by families and economists alike as an extraordinary success, making a positive impact on our economy but, more important, a real difference in the day-to-day lives of struggling families. In my riding of Halifax, the CCB supports 11,000 kids and the average payment to Halifax families is \$6,300 a year. What is more, across Canada, the CCB has lifted 300,000 children out of poverty, and that is a 40% cut from the rates in 2013.

Government Orders

We also promised to invest in early learning and child care, and in recent months we have seen the scope of that investment and the impact it will have on our communities. I was pleased to join the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Premier of Nova Scotia, as we signed a bilateral funding agreement totalling \$35 million.

That investment will create 500 new spaces in Nova Scotia, 15 new child care centres, and 90 new home-based care sites. It will mean significant improvements to child care subsidies in our province. Now families with annual incomes of \$35,000 or lower will receive the maximum subsidy, up from the previous threshold of just \$25,000. Remarkably, this means 80% of children will now receive the maximum subsidy compared to 66% before.

Access to affordable housing is also a serious challenge facing families across Halifax and Canada. Far too many middle and low-income families require a decent, safe, secure place to call home, which is simply unattainable for them. Across Canada, over 1.7 million families are in housing need and another 25,000 are chronically homeless.

That is why our government released the first-ever comprehensive national housing strategy, focused on giving middle and low-income Canadians better access to affordable housing, with an investment of \$40 billion over the next 10 years, including in the new Canada housing benefit, the CHB. Under this plan, we have set some ambitious goals, including a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness and removing over 530,000 households from housing need.

Supporting seniors is yet another promise we made to Canadians, and we have done exactly that through enhancements to the Canada pension plan and by increasing the guaranteed income supplement, or GIS, for nearly 900,000 seniors.

At the other end of the age spectrum, we have kept our promises to students, with increases to Canada student grants; improvements to student loan programs; by doubling the number of Canada summer jobs, which means that instead of 200 summer jobs in Halifax we now have 400; by investing heavily in skills development, training, and apprenticeships; and by ending unpaid internships.

Actions like these have paid off. The Canadian economy is booming. Since our election, Canadians have created 600,000 new jobs, unemployment is at its lowest level in over four decades, and we have the best rate of GDP growth in the G7. Stats like that hardly leave anything else to be said, but I will persevere.

As I said, we were elected on a promise to do better for the Canadians who the previous government left behind, and that is exactly what we have done. This is the impact that can be made when we are in an ambitious government, a government that is not satisfied to accept the status quo, a government that believes there is a better way for our middle class and most vulnerable, and a government that is focused on improving the lives of Canadians and not on the politics of fear and division.

Budget 2018 is a reflection of the positive change we have seen so far and the bold continuation of our important work. I would like to talk a bit more about it, beginning with its focus on gender equality.

Every decision that was made in budget 2018 was informed by gender, through a process called gender-based analysis plus, or GBA+, a tool used to analyze how certain policies, programs, and initiatives impact different groups, women, and gender-diverse people.

• (1810)

In budget 2018, we commit to introducing new GBA+ legislation to make gender-budgeting a permanent part of budget-making in the future in Canada. That is important. We can no longer continue to make decisions without considering the impact those decisions have on women.

Historically, we have seen how doing the opposite has led to inequality between genders, where women today earn just 69¢ for every dollar earned by men. To further address this inequality, we are moving forward with pay equity legislation in federally regulated workplaces. This will ensure that, on average, women and men in these workplaces receive the same pay for work of equal value.

At the same time, in budget 2018, our government recognizes that child care disproportionately falls to women and therefore has a disproportionate impact on the careers and salaries of women in Canada, many of whom face challenges re-entering the workforce. In response, we are introducing progressive changes to parental leave, creating a benefit to encourage both parents to take leave to share in the work of raising their children, and to even the playing field when it comes to men and women leaving and re-entering the workforce as new parents. Through this new benefit, if both parents take parental leave, they will receive an additional five weeks of parental benefits, for a total of 40 weeks of leave split between the parents as they choose, so long as each parent takes at least five weeks of leave.

The next topic I want to address in budget 2018 is the redevelopment of the working income tax benefit, now improved and called the Canada workers benefit, the CWB.

In Halifax, I often hear constituents say that they see our government doing a lot for families, for children, for seniors, but what about single working Canadians who need more support? We heard the message loud and clear, and budget 2018 introduces a new and improved Canada workers benefit to answer that call. This improved benefit will offer more money to low-income workers and let them keep more of their paycheque. Specifically, the CWB will increase both the maximum benefits and the income level at which the benefit is phased out. As a result, a low-income worker earning \$15,000 would receive up to \$500 more from the CWB in 2019 than they did in 2018.

In Nova Scotia, this benefit will help about 45,000 low-income Nova Scotians. Single workers without kids will receive up to \$1,300 per year and a single parent will receive up to \$2,300 per year. All told, this means the government is investing almost \$1 billion in new funding per year in helping low-income workers get ahead, and raising 70,000 Canadians out of poverty.

Government Orders

The next measure I want to talk about from budget 2018 is our amazing investment in science and research.

Nova Scotia is home to some of the brightest scientists and researchers in the world, at leading research institutions like Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, the IWK Health Centre, and more. For the last year, they have rallied around the recommendations of the fundamental science review, also known as the Naylor report, which was commissioned by this government under the leadership of our Minister of Science. The report called for significant investment in investigator-led research.

Our government agreed with those calls for action. Research expands our understanding of how the world works, allowing us to address existing and emerging challenges in our region in new and more effective ways.

Equally important, basic research also serves as the foundation for the knowledge-based economy. That is why budget 2018 includes the single largest investment in investigator-led fundamental research ever, \$4 billion for fundamental research infrastructure and science. It includes a 25% increase in funding to the tri-council of NSERC, CIHR, and SSHRC. We have said it before. Science is back, but more than that, with budget 2018 it is unstoppable.

These kinds of investments will keep Canada on a path to prosperity, along with the others I mentioned in my speech today, and countless additional initiatives from budget 2018 that I did not have time to address.

I hope my colleagues from all corners of this place will agree that our plan is working for Canadians and will vote to keep this spectacular momentum going forward by supporting it.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear from the member's speech that he thinks he is doing a very good job, and I congratulate him for telling us that.

If I understand the government's message, it is to be afraid because the other guys are spreading fear and the bad guys across the way need to be stopped because they are sowing division.

The funny thing is that in speeches and in the budget we cannot hear responses to basic fundamental questions. Therefore, I will ask the member three very basic questions about the government's economic plan, and I will ask him to answer one of them. This is really easy.

The first question is, when will the budget be balanced? The second question is, how much will the carbon tax cost ordinary Canadians? The third question is, how much of an emissions reduction will result from the government's carbon tax plan?

Could the member answer one of those three questions?

• (1815)

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, I am going to choose to answer the first question, if that suits the member.

When the budget is balanced, it will not be on the backs of veterans. It will not be on the backs of families nor on the backs of our service men and women. It will not be on the backs of people

who provide health support to our communities. It will not be on the backs of people who keep our country safe and secure. The budget will be balanced because we have the economy going in the right direction.

This historic investment in infrastructure comes not a moment too soon. Any further delay in repairing the state of Canadian infrastructure will only cost the next generation unimaginably more than what we are investing now, and it is exactly the right time in history to be investing.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I share a passion for old homes. My house was built in 1840. In 2014 it was in much better shape than it is now in 2018.

Perhaps my hon. colleague could comment on the outcome when we do not invest in infrastructure and do not invest in people, but invest in areas where it is not necessary. Why would we make the kind of changes we have made in that investment?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, my home was built in 1892, so I know about these issues as well.

The decision to invest heavily in Canadian infrastructure now is not just a good idea, which we know because it is working, but it is also a moral imperative. I already mentioned to another member in the House today about deferring investment into the state of infrastructure in Canadian communities to which the FCM is giving a failing grade. A very high percentage of Canadian infrastructure needs complete recapitalization and another great percentage requires a great deal of maintenance. If we do not invest now, we would only be putting that investment onto the shoulders and backs of generations to come. We simply cannot afford to do that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

The Parliament website informs us that the two last bills that the member spoke about are Bill C-377 and Bill C-364, which are between two and four pages. He must therefore have worked hard to prepare the speech he gave today about a bill that is 556 pages long.

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, there are many ways to judge the quality of a bill, but I do not believe that it being long or short in length is one of them. The way we measure the impact of the bill is not by its size, but by its impact on the lives of Canadians every day.

What we have clear evidence of, two and a half years into this government and after the three budgets we have presented, is that our bills of any size are having an enormous impact on Canadians.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, obviously, there are many, many things to say about the budget, considering the record number of pages, 566 to be exact, and the fact that it amends 44 laws. It would be exhausting, but I could probably talk about it for three days. Unfortunately, I do not have three days to analyze the budget. Thus, I will concentrate on issues specific to rural areas because it is very important to understand what this budget means for people living there.

Our rural communities face many issues on a daily basis. Unfortunately, the government never has any solutions for them, and sometimes there is a real lack of understanding. For example, the labour shortage is a huge problem in rural areas. There is a shortage of not just skilled workers but also of unskilled workers. What this means is that we cannot find people to work in fast food chains, scrub the floors, all the basic tasks that require no specialized skills. People could fill these jobs quickly. Companies have closed their doors because they were unable to continue operations for lack of workers. Some companies have had to cut their hours. Companies operating as a franchise are threatened by their head office because they are unable to meet their contractual obligations due to a lack of workers. In the meantime, many migrants have crossed the border. Many people in my region are wondering if these people could be of some help to them. They have jobs for everyone who is prepared to work and no special skills are required.

Furthermore, housing prices are lower in Abitibi—Témiscamingue. There are some cities where housing prices have risen significantly, but a house in Rouyn-Noranda still costs three times less than a house in Toronto. Why can the government not inform immigrants who come here wanting to work, and whose unemployment rate is typically much lower than in the general population, that rural regions offer not only job opportunities, but a chance to build a new life?

There is no shortage of immigrant success stories to draw from. We have only to think of the late Ulrick Chérubin, who was born in Haiti and served as mayor of Amos for 17 years. He made an immeasurable contribution to Abitibi—Témiscamingue and made quite an impact on the community as Quebec's first black mayor. He was widely known as a staunch champion of the regions. There are many more examples of immigrants successfully integrating into the Abitibi—Témiscamingue region. They made the choice to not just live in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, but to become a part of the community. However, it is apparently impossible for the government to let new immigrants know that there are opportunities waiting for them in rural regions. The jobs available would be entry-level jobs, but filling them would have an impact on the economy and help us keep local businesses open. However, the government is not lifting a finger to help.

I touched on housing. Abitibi—Témiscamingue has been grappling with a housing shortage for a decade or so. Businesses are thinking about leaving because they cannot find housing for potential future workers. Instead of finding places for people to live locally, they end up in fly-in, fly-out situations. It is absolutely ridiculous. If the government builds social housing units, that will free up housing that is not at all affordable for people who have to pay rent they really cannot afford. If people have access to social

housing, that will free up housing for people who can pay. I think that is important. Many other rural regions have housing shortages, but the government does not seem to understand. Every time they announce social housing programs, they talk about having to build 48-unit buildings. How about offering the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue projects that actually meet their needs?

• (1820)

Can we get projects whose administrative demands are realistic given the size of our population? I think that would be entirely appropriate.

With regard to fly-in, fly-out systems, have my colleagues ever seen the price of airline tickets in Abitibi—Témiscamingue? It would almost be easier to book a flight from Rouyn-Noranda to Paris, then forget about Paris and get off in Montreal. It is cheaper to do that than to fly from Rouyn-Noranda to Montreal. It is completely ridiculous. What is more, in many regions of Quebec, there is a monopoly, unlike in Ontario where there are often at least two competing companies. That has a major impact. If I drive 45 minutes more to Timmins, Ontario, it generally costs \$400 to \$500 less for a return flight to the same destination than it does if I depart from Rouyn-Noranda. It takes me an hour and fifteen minutes to drive to Rouyn-Noranda and two hours and fifteen minutes to drive to Timmins. It is completely ridiculous.

This has a major impact on the economy because many workers use regional airports. Employees and executives often need to travel quickly from one place to another. Companies cannot send them by road because it takes three days, one day for the meeting and two days of driving, not to mention two nights accommodations, whereas, if they fly, employees can go and come back in the same day. Air transport is used extensively by companies, but if they have to pay ridiculously high prices, then they will be forced to move because that is not good for business.

There are some people that fight every day to stay in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, even if it would be much easier to leave. Take for example, Steve Jolin, also known as Anodajay, who owns Disques 7ième Ciel and does great work in support of Quebec's rap and hip-hop scene. It would be much easier for him to move to Montreal and manage his business from there, but he chooses to remain in the region. If there are no concrete measures to help our entrepreneurs to continue to work from the regions, very little progress will be made. This sort of thing directly impacts the economy.

Government Orders

One of the major problems is the infamous cell phone. I do not know how many times I have asked the minister about it. Every time I ask questions about half of our region being without cellphone service, even on major highways with a lot of traffic, the response I get is about the Internet. Those folks over there do not even know the difference between Internet and cellular service, or perhaps they simply cannot understand that there are places with no cellphone coverage. I would venture to say that the places in Abitibi—Témiscamingue where cellphones do not work outnumber those where they do. I think it is high time that the members opposite understood that without cellphones, it is very difficult for regional economies to work. It is very difficult for businesses, and a lot of time is wasted. Imagine if you had to go to a meeting and, in the end, after driving an hour to get there, you find out that the meeting is cancelled and you have to turn right around and go back home. You will have wasted two hours of your day, driving for nothing. Meanwhile, if you had a cellphone that worked all along the route, you would have gotten the message that your meeting had been cancelled and not to drive all the way there for nothing. It is as simple as that, but unfortunately, they just do not get it.

Another thing is the mineral exploration tax credit. For years, we have been pleading with the Conservatives and now the Liberals to make it permanent instead of extending it year after year. Mining companies need to be able to plan their exploratory work over the long term. When metal prices are low, it is the perfect time to explore for deposits that they can mine once mineral prices go up. In order to do that, they need to be able to plan, but that is hard to do when they are never sure if the tax credit is going to come back. Furthermore, consultation-related expenses are not eligible for the tax credit. This means that consulting local populations, especially indigenous communities, to find out what they think about the possibility of exploration work and how they view the situation is not even considered part of the mineral exploration process. It is viewed as something that should be done, but unfortunately, an attitude like that toward consultation and mining work makes it all too clear that natural resource companies are not being encouraged to think about consultation and social acceptability.

• (1825)

Unfortunately, this budget does not meet the expectations of rural Canadians. I am extremely disappointed. I will now take questions.

• (1830)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I have seen over the last two and a half years, whether it is budgets or budget implementation bills, is that the NDP has consistently voted against them. However, I would argue that in the last two and a half years, we have very much seen a progressive government on a number of wonderful and positive social fronts. We have seen that with things such as the Canada child benefit program, increases to the guaranteed income supplement, tax breaks for Canada's middle class, and a special tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%. We have seen literally hundreds of millions of dollars invested in Revenue Canada to go after those who try to avoid paying taxes. We have seen a pharmacare program being advanced, the health care act, and the expansion of the CPP. There has been so much that has been done.

My question for the member is, what more does she believe the NDP could have done, given the fact that its campaign commitment was to have a balanced budget, yet NDP members constantly criticize us for not spending enough?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals ever decided to eliminate all of the loopholes CEOs use to hide money in tax havens, we would probably have enough money to do some much more useful things for rural regions. It would be dishonest to state that not a single positive measure can be found in these 566 pages. However, on average, I believe that the bad outweighs the good in this 566-page budget. When the time comes to vote on a 566-page budget, we have to find a balance. Unfortunately, the Liberals do not deserve my vote on this budget, because there are not enough measures for people in rural areas. Out of respect for my rural constituents, I cannot support a budget that does not do enough for them.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we hear so much from members across the way about the alleged progressivity of this budget in comparison to what has happened in the past. However, the Liberals forget that the government is imposing taxes that have a punitive effect on low-income Canadians, in particular the carbon tax. They will not release information about how that budget impacts Canadians based on income.

Contrast that to the previous government, which raised the base personal exemption, lowered the lowest marginal tax rate, lowered the GST, and introduced a taxable child benefit. All of our tax reductions on the income side were targeted at those who needed that relief most, those who were taken off the tax rolls completely, or those who were paying the lowest marginal rate. I think objectively that it is decidedly more progressive in terms of targeting benefits to lower-income Canadians than anything we have seen out of the government.

I would be curious if my friend and colleague can comment on that.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, the government could have proposed all kinds of measures to help people who are struggling to make ends meet. I introduced a private member's bill featuring a budget measure that had the support of some Conservative members. It sought to eliminate the GST on basic baby products. This is a simple measure that can really help parents who simply need to buy these products. All parents buy things like diapers. This measure would have been easy to include in the budget, but sadly, the Liberals did not. I know that this measure has the support of some Conservative members. It is a very simple measure that the Liberals could have implemented to help low-income Canadians. They did not. This shows that the Liberals have their own vision and are not thinking about the daily reality facing people who are struggling to meet their family's basic needs when shopping at the grocery store, for example.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kitchener Centre. I would point out that the hon. member will only have nine minutes, and then we will bring the bill to a vote.

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to take a moment to offer my condolences to the victims of the van attack in Toronto. My thoughts and those of my constituents of Kitchener Centre are with the victims, their families, and the first responders on the scene.

Our government supports researchers, scientists, and organizations that drive fundamental research as we seek to foster the innovation which will create a better world for everyone to live in.

We believe in science. We believe in the power of ideas and the benefits of technological innovation and investment, and in supporting the work of the brightest minds as they come together to create a bright future for Canada.

● (1835)

[Translation]

That is why I am so proud to rise in the House today to talk about our 2018 budget. It is a budget that builds on our work to foster innovation while ensuring that economic growth and social progress benefit the lives of every Canadian.

[English]

Innovation is everywhere, and innovation is certainly at the heart of my own community of Kitchener-Waterloo. As we speak, Redtree Robotics is busy developing chipsets that enable users to connect sensors to robots, Miovision is finding solutions for advanced traffic signal operations, Thalmic Labs is on a mission to merge people and technology, and Clearpath Robotics is working to develop self-driving vehicles and to get drones to factory floors.

In order for us to remain at the forefront of global innovation breakthroughs and scientific discovery, we need to keep this momentum going. We need to be investing now to support our future thinkers, scientists, and innovators.

[Translation]

That is why I am so proud that budget 2018 proposes a historic investment in support of researchers, in big data and in the equipment Canadian researchers need in order to succeed and become world leaders in their field. This includes more than \$1.7 billion over five years to support researchers, and \$1.3 billion over five years that will be invested in labs, equipment, and the infrastructure they need.

[English]

As we invest in the next generation of innovators, Canada is also responding to the ongoing shift toward a knowledge-driven global economy. Brilliant minds will travel to wherever they can find a good home. We intend for Canada to be that home.

[Translation]

In budget 2018, our government proposes a new investment of \$210 million over five years, with \$50 million per year ongoing, to support the Canada research chairs. This program supports researchers and will help Canada attract and retain the best minds in the world, in the hope that we can benefit from their energy, their skills, and their potential. Their initiative will help Canada shine on the world stage.

[English]

Fostering innovation and investing in technology also fosters unprecedented opportunities to change social norms and foster equality.

Speaking at the SAP Next-Gen program last year, the UN Women deputy executive director highlighted that innovation, technology, and partnerships are prerequisites for the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Social progress and innovation must go hand in hand. When small, medium-sized, and large companies, government, academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations come together to generate bold ideas, all Canadians benefit from more well-paying jobs, groundbreaking research, and a world-leading innovation economy which fosters opportunities and improves quality of life.

[Translation]

Bold ideas will come out of collaborations like the ones proposed in budget 2018. In the budget, the government is proposing to provide \$140 million over five years to enhance support of collaborative innovative projects involving businesses, colleges, and polytechnics.

[English]

Our government is working hard to make sure that every Canadian has the opportunity to be part of the success in an innovation-driven economy.

In part, this involves ensuring that Canadians are given opportunities to build new skills which will help them adapt to a changing economy.

Government Orders

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

Budget 2018 also contains measures that will protect workers in this new environment. In it, the government proposes legislative amendments to the Wage Earner Protection Program Act that seek to make the program fairer and to increase the maximum payment to seven weeks from four.

[*English*]

Our plan is working. Unemployment rates are at historic lows and we lead the G7 in economic growth. Of particular note is that over the past six months, there has been a 16% drop in EI claimants from the manufacturing and utilities sector. We are making progress, but there is still much work left to do if we want to unlock Canada's true potential.

[*Translation*]

In Canada today, women earn 31% less than men. For every dollar of hourly wages a man working full-time earns in Canada, a woman in the same position earns 88 cents. Our government knows that, when women have more opportunities to earn a decent income, everyone benefits. To advance women's equality, budget 2018 will introduce a new proactive pay equity bill. To close the gender wage gap, the government will adopt measures in budget 2018 that enable women to access leadership positions and encourage them to choose non-traditional careers.

[*English*]

Women still only receive 38% of doctoral degrees, and in the STEM fields, that number drops to 20%. The participation rate for women in the economy is 10% lower than it is for men. The Canadian gender wage gap is larger than the OECD average. Just 25% of senior management positions are held by women. Not only are these numbers unacceptable, but this gap is potentially damaging to our economy. Clearly, we must do better.

We recognize there is a need to deliver positive systemic change. Innovation in every sector works best when diverse voices have the opportunity to be part of the conversation. It was with this in mind that in budget 2018 our government has committed to improving diversity in the research community through investments in the granting councils, data collection initiatives, early career researchers, new gender equality planning, and to investments in new EI benefits through a use it or lose it incentive which encourages a second parent in two-parent families to share the work of raising their children more equally and allow greater flexibility for new moms who want to return to work sooner.

We have also committed to investments which will help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses through the new women entrepreneurship strategy, and to supporting the advancement of women in senior positions by publicly recognizing corporations committed to promoting women leaders.

We live in an era of social progress, economic prosperity, and technological change. I am proud to live in a time and place in which the celebration of diversity and the commitment to strive to equality are at the heart of policy-making, and in which we realize that our

country's economic advancement and our work towards the elimination of barriers to equality must go hand in hand.

As we foster this innovation, as Canadians explore new ideas and build new paths to the future, I believe that the policies of budget 2018 will work to ensure that our country has the brainpower, the diversity of thought, and the potential to continue Canada's success tomorrow and well into the future.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:45 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 second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

● (1845)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Call in the members.

● (1910)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 651*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Abouttaif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Allison |
| Arnold | Benzen |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Berthold | Bezan |
| Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) | Block |
| Boucher | Brassard |
| Brown | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Cooper | Deltell |
| Diotte | Eglinski |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Fast | Finley |
| Gallant | Généreux |
| Genuis | Gladu |
| Gourde | Harder |
| Hoback | Jeneroux |

Government Orders

Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
Lukiwski
Maguire
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Reid
Richards
Schmale
Shipley
Stanton
Stubbs
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Yurdiga

Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Leitch
Lobb
MacKenzie
McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson
O'Toole
Rayes
Rempel
Saroya
Shields
Sopuck
Strahl
Sweet
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Zimmer — 84

Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Mathysen
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs
Monsef
Morneau
Murray
Nassif
Ng
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Philpott
Plamondon
Quach
Rankin
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Stetski
Tabbara
Tassi
Tootoo
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Yip

Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Moore
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Picard
Poissant
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Saijan
Sangha
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
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Sohi
Spengemann
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NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Angus
Arya
Aubin
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bennett
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Bossio
Boulerice
Bratina
Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes
Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Champagne
Choquette
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
El-Khoury
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gill
Graham
Hajdu
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Jolibois
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre

Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Badawey
Bains
Baylis
Beech
Benson
Bittle
Blair
Boissonnault
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Brosseau
Cannings
Carr
Chagger
Chen
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Donnelly
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Grewal
Hardcastle
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khalid
Kwan
Lametti
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lebouthillier
Leslie

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Government Orders

● (1915)

[English]

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

(Division No. 652)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alleslev |
| Amos | Anandasangaree |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baylis |
| Beech | Bennett |
| Bibeau | Bittle |
| Blair | Boissonnault |
| Bossio | Bratina |
| Breton | Brison |
| Caesar-Chavannes | Carr |
| Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) | Chagger |
| Champagne | Chen |
| Cormier | Cuzner |
| Dabrusin | Damoff |
| DeCoursey | Dhaliwal |
| Dhillon | Di Iorio |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Dzerowicz |
| El-Khoury | Erskine-Smith |
| Eyking | Eyolfson |
| Fergus | Fillmore |
| Finnigan | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fraser (West Nova) | Fraser (Central Nova) |
| Fry | Fuhr |
| Gerretsen | Goldsmith-Jones |
| Graham | Grewal |
| Hajdu | Hardie |
| Harvey | Hébert |
| Hehr | Hogg |
| Holland | Housefather |
| Hussen | Hutchings |
| Joly | Jones |
| Jordan | Jowhari |
| Kang | Khalid |
| Khera | Lambropoulos |
| Lametti | Lamoureux |
| Lapointe | Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) |
| LeBlanc | Lebouthillier |
| Lefebvre | Leslie |
| Levitt | Lightbound |
| Lockhart | Long |
| Longfield | Ludwig |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacKinnon (Gatineau) |
| Maloney | May (Cambridge) |
| McCrimmon | McDonald |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Mendès |
| Mendicino | Mihychuk |
| Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs) | |
| Monsef | |
| Morneau | Morrissey |
| Murray | Nassif |
| Nault | Ng |
| Oliphant | Oliver |
| O'Regan | Ouellette |
| Paradis | Peschisolido |
| Peterson | Philpott |
| Picard | Poissant |
| Ratansi | Rioux |
| Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Rogers | Romanado |
| Rota | Rudd |
| Ruimy | Rusnak |
| Sahota | Saini |
| Saijan | Samson |
| Sangha | Sarai |
| Scarpaleggia | Schiefke |

Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
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Virani
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Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Yip

NAYS

Members

| | |
|--|--|
| Aboultaif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Allison |
| Angus | Arnold |
| Ashton | Aubin |
| Barsalou-Duval | Beaulieu |
| Benson | Benzen |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Berthold | Bezan |
| Blaikie | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) | Block |
| Boucher | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Boutin-Sweet |
| Brassard | Brousseau |
| Brown | Calkins |
| Cannings | Caron |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Choquette | Clarke |
| Clement | Cooper |
| Deltell | Dotte |
| Donnelly | Dubé |
| Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) | Dusseault |
| Duvall | Eglinski |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Fast | Finley |
| Fortin | Gallant |
| Généreux | Genius |
| Gill | Gladu |
| Gourde | Hardcastle |
| Harder | Hoback |
| Hughes | Jeneroux |
| Jolibois | Julian |
| Kelly | Kent |
| Kitchen | Kmiec |
| Kusie | Kwan |
| Lake | Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) |
| Laverdière | Leitch |
| Liepert | Lobb |
| Lukiwski | MacGregor |
| MacKenzie | Maguire |
| Malcolmson | Masse (Windsor West) |
| Mathysen | May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound) |
| Moore | Motz |
| Nantel | Nater |
| Nicholson | Obhrai |
| O'Toole | Paul-Hus |
| Plamondon | Quach |
| Ramsey | Rankin |
| Rayes | Reid |
| Rempel | Richards |
| Sansoucy | Saroya |
| Schmale | Shields |
| Shipley | Sopuck |
| Stanton | Stetski |
| Stewart | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Sweet |
| Thériault | Trost |
| Trudel | Van Kesteren |
| Van Loan | Vecchio |
| Viersen | Wagantall |
| Warawa | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Weir | Yurdira |
| Zimmer— 129 | |

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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1920)

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the fifth time I have stood in the chamber to ask why the Liberal government would not have removed all sex discrimination against indigenous women from the Indian Act. The Liberals had multiple opportunities proposed by the Senate and my colleague from the NDP, which on National Aboriginal Day, of all days, the government and the Conservatives voted down. They did a half-way measure and said that they would consult on removing the sex discrimination for indigenous women.

To be clear what this means is that in the past indigenous women who married white men lost their Indian status, which then affects all of their subsequent children. There is a not a concomitant penalty for indigenous men who marry white women. It is an obvious case of discrimination and has been adjudicated in Canada's courts for 40 years.

Therefore, Ms. Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell, Ms. Yvonne Bedard, Senator Sandra Lovelace-Nicholas, Dr. Sharon McIvor, Dr. Lynn Gehl, and Senator Lillian Dyck fought this hard in the courts and won. The courts ordered the government to act. Instead, it took the narrowest measure, the most narrow interpretation of what it had to do.

Again, on Wednesday night last week, I asked the parliamentary secretary why the government believed it was necessary to consult on whether indigenous women should have full human rights. To my amazement, she said, "We are restoring rights to indigenous women...that cannot be denied as it is clear in the legislation....I would ask the member opposite to understand and accept that." The famous six indigenous women who fought this in court do not support what the government has done. They consider it a half measure.

To lead up to my question, where once again I will ask the government why it is necessary to consult on whether indigenous women should have full human rights, I will read today's blog from the Native Women's Association.

But here's the catch – Bill S-3's provisions haven't come into force with the bill's passage; in fact, there is no fixed date for their implementation.

Not only does this leave thousands of Indigenous persons in limbo, but the bill also neglects to address several other forms of legislated sex-based discrimination: the existing hierarchy between men with 6(1)(a) status and re-instated Bill C-31 women with less conferrable 6(1)(c) status as well as issues related to sperm donors,

surrogacy and adoption, such as a child adopted into an Indigenous family who receives 'higher' status than an Indigenous child born into an Indigenous family.

There is more. It is a great read. I do recommend it to all parliamentarians. NWAC goes on to say that:

But don't worry – the government will be engaging in consultations with Indigenous groups to discuss barriers and discrimination related to status registration. That is to say, the government is consulting Indigenous peoples on just how much discrimination against them is acceptable.

Therefore, one more time, the sixth time at least, I ask this. Why on earth would a feminist government committed to a nation-to-nation relationship built on respect continue to discriminate against indigenous women in our country?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people to answer this question again from my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

We are a strong feminist government, and we are proud to be such a strong feminist government. Not only that, we are the first government to ever accept and enter into full nation-to-nation co-operation with indigenous people in this country, and we are doing so totally on the premise of respect.

Our government is committed to ensuring equity for all women in Canada, and that includes ensuring sex-based equity for women with respect to registration under the Indian Act. Our government is pleased that Bill S-3, which finally eliminates all sex-based discrimination from registration provisions in the Indian Act, has now received royal assent and is law. That itself is a tremendous accomplishment, and I would expect the member opposite would be saying that the government is on the right track. More needs to be done, and that is why I am here this evening to tell her that more will be done.

This is a step toward reconciliation for first nations' women's rights, as well as for respect and equality in this country. Bill S-3 responded to the Descheneaux decision, but it went beyond the charter considerations that were addressed in the case. This included sex discrimination and circumstances prior to 1951. In fact, the bill remedies sex-based inequities dating back to 1869.

While the balance of Bill S-3 was brought into force immediately after royal assent, the clause that deals with the 1951 cut-off will be brought into force after the conclusion of co-designed consultations. That is the piece that the member opposite does not agree with. She does not believe that we should consult with indigenous people in this country on how that will happen. However, we will be tabling and updating a co-designed consultation process on the broad-based Indian Act registration and membership reform in Parliament next month. She will get to see how that process will be launched in June of this year.

Adjournment Proceedings

The government has also made it very clear that consultations and partnership are essential prerequisites for any major changes that involve first nations in this country. That is what we call nation-to-nation working together. This approach is in keeping with our government's commitment to renewing our relationship with indigenous people, one based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. We will not throw that out the window simply because the member opposite cannot wait to do what is right.

In fact, our consultations are focused on identifying what measures and resources will be required to do this right, and working in partnership to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. It has nothing to do with consulting on gender equity.

• (1925)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, with respect to my colleague, I will point out once again that the six women who fought this in court for 40 years do not agree with the government's approach. The Native Women's Association of Canada does not agree with the government's approach. Just last week, the Ontario Native Women's Association reminded many parliamentarians that they do not agree with the government's approach. There is no fixed date for the implementation of the bill. The 1951 cut-off is still in place, and the government voted down the proposed paragraph 6(1) (a) "all the way" amendment, which was supported in the Senate and by my colleague and urged by the women who have the most to lose and have been fighting this for four decades.

I promise that this is not my opposition; this is what we are hearing from indigenous leadership. I wish the member opposite would understand and respect that.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, what we respect is the process and the relationship that we have with indigenous people in Canada. That relationship is built on respect. It is built on dialogue. It is built on talking to one another.

I want to be very clear that as I said, our consultations will be focused on identifying further measures or resources that are going to be required to do this right, working in partnership with indigenous governments across Canada to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. This way of proceeding is responsible and prudent and will ensure that the government implements this measure in a way that eliminates or mitigates any unintended negative consequences that could happen for communities, for indigenous governments, and for individuals.

It is fair to say that our government has gone where no other government has ever gone on gender equity for indigenous women.

• (1930)

HEALTH

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it pains me to once again ask the government about its commitment to health funding in my home province of Saskatchewan.

Five months ago, on World AIDS Day, I asked the government if it would declare a public health state of emergency in Saskatchewan, as our doctors have been calling for, for over a year. Saskatchewan has the highest rates of HIV in Canada, and 79% of those newly diagnosed are indigenous people. Instead of heeding the calls for action, the federal government has cut funding for some of the

organizations that are doing the important work of education and prevention not just in cities like Saskatoon, but also in northern communities.

As the media have reported, two Saskatchewan organizations have been left in the dark about why their federal funding was cut for AIDS and HIV outreach work. AIDS Saskatoon provided services to central and northern Saskatchewan. Together, the two organizations provided services to a significant percentage of Saskatchewan. AIDS Saskatoon and All Nations Hope in Regina have had a combined total of \$643,000 of federal funding cuts as of March 31, and they are not really sure why.

The government has not bothered to explain why it cut funding to one-third of all AIDS organizations. Given the growing number of HIV infections in Saskatchewan, these cuts are short-sighted and counterproductive. All Nations Hope had \$350,000 cut in federal funding while AIDS Saskatoon had \$293,000 cut in funding. The AIDS Saskatoon affiliated office has been in La Ronge for five years, and its executive director, Jason Mercredi, said it was heartbreaking to learn the federal funding would be pulled. "We're pretty choked we won't be able to continue some of those activities", he said.

This is part of a wider series of cuts to HIV organizations across Canada. Thirty-three per cent of all AIDS service organizations across Canada have lost their federal funding. According to information released from the Government of Saskatchewan, the province's HIV rate of those newly diagnosed with HIV in 2016, 14.5 per 100,000 people, is two times higher than the national average. There were also 170 new cases in 2016, with 10 of those people living in the Mamawetan Churchill River health region, which included La Ronge. "We're in the middle of an HIV epidemic", Mercredi has said.

As the federal government develops an updated national framework to guide Canada's response to HIV and other sexually transmitted blood-borne infections, one key thing is missing: a commitment to an adequately funded, made-in-Canada strategy. In fact, so far there has been no commitment even to simply reverse the chronic underfunding of the HIV response in Canada, now entering its 15th year. The funding erosion continues even as Canada has made international commitments to HIV treatment and prevention efforts with a view to achieving the global goal of ending AIDS in 2030. Canada's HIV response has clear gaps that need to be addressed urgently. Lives and public health are at risk.

It is time for the federal government to restore the diverted and lapsed resources that are so desperately needed. HIV is not over, especially in Saskatchewan. How can the government cut funding for such important work in the face of a worsening epidemic?

Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional lands of the Algonquin people.

Adjournment Proceedings

As the Prime Minister has said, there is no relationship more important to Canada than the relationship with indigenous peoples. Our government is deeply committed to addressing HIV-AIDS and hepatitis C in Canada, including in first nation communities in Saskatchewan. Budget 2017 included initial investments of \$37.5 million over five years to support the prevention and control of HIV and hepatitis C among first nation and Inuit communities. Our government is also investing an additional \$3.35 million in 2017-18 to directly support first nation communities in Saskatchewan.

Further to this, our government has been working closely with first nation partners, communities, and leadership in support of implementing know your status initiatives within Saskatchewan. Know your status is a community developed, client-based approach that brings sexually transmitted or blood-borne infection-related services to locations that are best for the client. The know your status model employs a multidisciplinary, multisectoral, and cross-jurisdictional approach, making it easier for clients to receive the support they need.

I am proud to say that by 2021, our government will have nearly doubled the investment in know your status to support the health of first nations communities in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan there are currently 23 local testing sites, 19 harm reduction sites, and 13 mobile specialized community health nursing and outreach services.

Measurable indicators have been set to ensure support of existing fully implemented programs, completing the development of partially implemented programs, and supporting community readiness. In 2016, the number of HIV tests in Saskatchewan increased by 11 % among first nations, and the number of harm reduction sites increased by 27%.

Our government strongly believes that indigenous families should have seamless access to health services provided by both the federal and provincial governments to make sure that nobody slips through the cracks. To achieve this, the non-insured health benefits program provides first nations and Inuit with medical transportation to access medically necessary health services that are not available locally. Once a patient reaches a provincially run facility, inter-facility transfers that are necessary to the patient's care are paid for by most provinces.

The closure of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company falls within provincial jurisdiction. The department is aware of the challenges with access to transportation in some areas of the province as a result of this closure. Departmental officials have worked with new transportation vendors in some areas to secure provider arrangements. Funding has been provided to some communities to purchase and operate vans designated for medical travel.

• (1935)

Ms. Sheri Benson: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague to hold his government to account. It is unconscionable, given the statistics, to remove a third of the funding for these programmes without any real explanation or any other replacement in place. In the face of the undeniable evidence that HIV rates are rising in Saskatchewan, we should be investing more, not just sort of moving it around the province.

The government decided to cut funding to some of the most effective outreach and prevention programs that existed in the province. I believe the minister needs to answer for that, and so far, we have not received a one word of explanation. To add insult to injury, the government has done nothing to mitigate the devastating impact of the provincial government's move to sell off the STC.

On January 31, the hon. Minister of Innovation promised to work with me and my office to address this issue in a meaningful way. I have not heard a word since. How much longer do the people of Saskatchewan have to wait for the government to act?

Mr. Don Rusnak: Mr. Speaker, our government continues to provide medical transportation for first nations, regardless of where they live, through the non-insured health benefits program.

I would like to stress the importance of the efforts of the first nations in Saskatchewan in the development of the successful know your status model of health service delivery. The core components of know your status are testing, specialized nursing, outreach, harm reduction, and prevention. The complementary components include mental health and addictions services, primary care and lab services, and linking with infectious disease specialists.

I am pleased to share that because of our government's collaboration with first nation partners, there is rising evidence of Saskatchewan first nation communities achieving tremendous progress, and even exceeding the UNAIDS target that by 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, that 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and that 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Drummond.

JUSTICE

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak once again about an issue concerning our official languages.

On December 1, 2017, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada an important question about an internal Department of Justice report that the government had been hiding since March 2017. We had been waiting for that report, which had not been publicly released. What was hidden in that internal report and why did the government want to keep it under wraps?

The report reveals that between 2008 and 2018, consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments diverted over \$40 million from the Contraventions Act fund that was supposed to be spent on the roadmap for official languages. As a result, that money, which should have been invested to improve access to justice through the roadmap for official languages, was spent elsewhere. It is extremely disappointing that the money was not invested in our official language minority communities. Many people were surprised and wanted answers.

Adjournment Proceedings

With that in mind, we asked for some clarification on this situation and called on the new Minister of Canadian Heritage to come up with a plan to make sure that this shortfall is reinvested in the next action plan for official languages, specifically the 2018-23 plan.

The Fédération des associations des juristes d'expression française wrote to the Minister of Justice to ask her to explain this situation, to take action, and to do something to address the situation. She did not respond. In 2016, the Réseau national de formation en justice asked Canadian Heritage questions about what was happening with the Contraventions Act fund. This organization wanted to know whether monies from this fund had been spent on official languages. There was no response. Access to justice in both of Canada's official languages is already difficult and this only compounds the problem. There are still many challenges to overcome.

For example, we still do not have a law to ensure that Supreme Court justices are bilingual and that they can properly understand, speak, and read both official languages.

I tabled a bill to address that. Unfortunately, the Liberals voted against it because they said they already had a policy to that effect. A policy, however, can be changed with the snap of a finger or it can just be ignored. We have seen other files where policy has not been followed. That is why we need legislation. The December 2017 report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages called for justice to be done in both official languages. It rightly called for the Supreme Court to be bilingual and that this be enshrined in law. It also called on the government to stop diverting the \$40 million that was to be used to improve access to justice. I really want to get some answers about this matter.

• (1940)

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to clear up a misunderstanding regarding the Contraventions Act fund.

The contraventions regime is an alternative to the summary conviction procedure set out in the Criminal Code for prosecuting certain minor federal offences. The provinces and territories, which already had ticketing systems, came to an agreement with the federal government to implement and enforce the contravention regime on the federal government's behalf. Since the provinces and territories are acting on behalf of the federal government, they must ensure that the language rights of offenders are respected when issuing and managing federal contravention tickets.

The Contraventions Act fund provides the provinces and territories with the funding required to meet these legal obligations. In other words, the sole purpose of Contraventions Act fund is to enable the Department of Justice to meet its legal obligations when minor offences are prosecuted outside the procedure set out in the Criminal Code.

The provinces and territories can receive this financial assistance only once they have signed a general agreement for the enforcement of the Contraventions Act. There is a surplus in the fund because some provinces are not prepared to implement the regime or to sign an agreement. However, our government, through the Department of Justice, has worked and will continue to work diligently with the

provinces and territories to ensure that the contraventions regime is implemented across the country.

These efforts are not in vain. Newfoundland and Labrador recently signed an agreement to implement the regime starting at the beginning of 2018. Members must understand that, unlike other funding programs for official languages, the Contraventions Act fund was not created in order to promote the vitality of official language communities. It was created so that the Department of Justice could fulfill its legal obligations to offenders.

The Contraventions Act fund was never designed to help federal institutions fulfill their duties under subsections 41(1) and 41(2) of Part VII of the Official Languages Act, entitled "Advancement of English and French". At no time did the Department of Justice promise to use this fund to promote access to justice in both official languages, which it would not have been permitted to do. That being said, through the access to justice in both official languages support fund, the Department of Justice is fully committed to enhancing the vitality of both official languages and the communities that embody them, enabling them to contribute fully to Canadian society.

Through this plan, the government remains committed to official languages. The plan proposes an additional sum of \$499.2 million, above our government's current investments totalling \$2.2 billion. Our government is taking its responsibilities with regard to access—

• (1945)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe what the parliamentary secretary has just said.

The action plan for official languages clearly states that the Contraventions Act fund is meant to improve access to justice in both official languages. The same goes for the infamous policy. If the action plan for official languages is being set aside, then where are we headed? Why even make plans in the first place? If it is part of the plan, I should hope it would be followed.

Furthermore, the Minister of Canadian Heritage's new action plan for official languages promises an additional \$10 million over five years for the access to justice in both official languages support fund. However, the fund has been depleted of \$40 million over 10 years. Something does not add up. There is a gap that will have to be made up.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand the objective of the Contraventions Act fund, as well as the compulsory nature of the measures it establishes within the court system. Unlike other funding programs, the Contraventions Act fund was not created to advance another departmental direction or to contribute to the promotion or development of official language minority communities. Rather, it was created to enable the Minister of Justice to fulfill his or her legal obligations to offenders.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:49 p.m.)

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| Ms. Gladu | 18614 |
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Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

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