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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-83, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another act.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I bring voices from coastal communities urging government action to deal with the backlog of abandoned vessels.

The petitioners call on the government for legislation that would direct the recycling and/or removal of abandoned vessels and to pilot a turn-in program modelled on the successful cash for clunkers program that different provinces use for automobiles.

It has been proven in Washington state and Oregon that the backlog of abandoned vessels that present an oil spill risk and jeopardize coastal jobs can be dealt with using a vessel turn-in program. Many other solutions in this petition would be in line with existing marine salvage businesses.

The petitioners are from Nanaimo, Duncan and other communities on Vancouver Island.

I commend this petition to the House.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to present a petition. The people who have signed this petition are concerned about the organ harvesting that is happening around the world.

In that regard, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to adopt Bill C-350 and Bill S-240 to ensure that this horrible scourge no longer takes place in Canada or around the world.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise again today to table a petition on behalf of constituents from Parksville and Qualicum.

Our oceans and our freshwater waterways are all under threat right now from ocean plastics. The petitioners call on the government to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution. They are looking for regulations to mitigate single-use plastics and the industrial use of plastics in our waterways. These petitioners are looking for funding for beach cleanups and education campaigns.

The petitioners support my Motion No. 151 to create a national strategy to combat plastic in our waterways.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table another petition on the pharmacare program.

The petitioners call on the Prime Minister, the Government of Canada and all members of the House of Commons to be aware that the federal government should develop jointly with provincial and territorial partners a universal, single-payer, evidence-based and sustainable public drug plan with the purchasing power to secure best available pricing. The plan should begin with a list of essential medicines addressing priority health needs and expanding a comprehensive permanent plan that would promote the health and well-being of all Canadians.

● (1005)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House and table this petition from Canadians regarding their increasing concern over the international trafficking of human organs.

The petitioners urge the government and all parliamentarians to work to pass Bill C-350 as well as Bill S-240 in the Senate.

Government Orders

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition in my hand from citizens of Canada in regard to Bill S-240 and Bill C-350. These are bills that would end the trafficking of human organs. Most Canadians would hardly believe that this goes on, but it does.

These petitioners are calling for fast passage of these two bills in order to prevent that from happening anymore.

FIREARMS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table two petitions today.

The first deals with firearms. Petitioners are concerned about arbitrary reclassification that affects property owners. This is a firearms issue and also a rule of law issue.

People own firearms that are arbitrarily reclassified, and that has an immediate effect on the value. Some people may have a great deal of their money wrapped up in firearms that could lose their value overnight. That could have a big effect on their well-being and their retirement.

In particular, these petitioners call on the House to remove the power of arbitrary reclassification from the RCMP and to make it the subject of decision-making higher up.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with organ harvesting and international organ trafficking. The petitioners call on the House and the Senate to work for the speedy passage of Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. These bills would make it a criminal offence for a Canadian to go abroad and receive an organ for which there was not consent.

The petition also deals with the admissibility to Canada of those who have been involved in the trafficking of organs.

The Speaker: I have to remind the hon. members that presenting petitions is not the time to tell the House what they think about a petition but to tell us in a concise form what the petitioners are calling for.

The hon. member for Provencher.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise today to present a petition signed by Canadians domiciled in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Their particular concern is with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically freedom of conscience, freedom of thought and freedom of belief. They believe these are fundamental rights that need to be recognized by the current government.

They would like to make it known to the Prime Minister that they would like him to defend their rights of conscience, belief and thought, and to remove the attestation from the Canada summer jobs program and any other government funding.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by a number

of residents of Canada who have increasing concerns about the trafficking of human organs. They are asking Parliament to quickly pass Bill C-350 in the House of Commons and Bill S-240 in the Senate to limit this practice.

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise this morning to present a petition from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands calling on the government to immediately halt any plans to purchase the Trans Mountain pipeline or to support its expansion.

Events may have transpired, but preventing the expansion is still a possibility to which the petitioners wish the government to turn its attention.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1010)
[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of amendments made by the Senate 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.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.) moved:

that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their Honours that, 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 House: agrees with amendments 3, 5(b), 6 and 7(a) made by the Senate;

respectfully disagrees with amendment 1 because replacing the word “means” with “includes” would result in a lack of clarity for both employees and employers;

respectfully disagrees with amendment 2 because, in focusing on harassment and violence, it would create an imbalance relative to all of the other occupational health and safety measures under Part II of the Canada Labour Code, and, in addition, other legislation, such as the Employment Equity Act, addresses some of those issues;

proposes that amendment 4 be amended by deleting paragraph (z.163) and by renumbering paragraph (z.164) as paragraph (z.163) because the addition of proposed paragraph (z.163) would mean that a single incident of harassment and violence in a work place would be considered to be a violation of the Canada Labour Code on the part of the employer, which would undermine the framework for addressing harassment and violence that Bill C-65 seeks to establish;

respectfully disagrees with amendment 5(a) because the complaints that are investigated under the section that would be amended do not include complaints relating to an occurrence of harassment and violence;

Government Orders

respectfully disagrees with amendment 7(b) because this would be inconsistent with the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board's other annual reporting obligations under both the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and Part I of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and because that Board would only be reporting on a small subset of cases in respect of which there are appeals, thus creating a high risk that an employee's identity would be revealed if such statistical data were published.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-65. First, I would like to recognize both chambers for their excellent work on the bill. Bill C-65 has had careful study over the course of many meetings, and both chambers have suggested amendments that would strengthen this historic legislation. All hon. members agree it is our responsibility and duty to end workplace harassment and violence, and Bill C-65 brings us closer to that goal.

[*Translation*]

This bill will change how we perceive and put a stop to unacceptable behaviour in workplaces under federal jurisdiction, including Parliament, but its ultimate goal is so much greater.

[*English*]

It is my hope that Bill C-65 will become the standard and the model for other jurisdictions in the country.

We have heard for years many stories of harassment and violence in the workplace and the extent of the problem. In 2017, more women than ever before came forward to share their experiences through the #MeToo movement. The flood of stories was overwhelming. Some were shocked by what we heard and read, but too many of us were not. So many women have experienced what can no longer be denied: a systematic and widespread tolerance of workplace harassment and sexual violence.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. minister. I believe we are having trouble with interpretation. Do we have sound? We have it now.

I will let the hon. minister continue then.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, sharing stories cannot be where this ends. It is time for us to take action, and we are. According to an Angus Reid poll, 52% of Canadian women say that they have been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace and 28% report having experienced non-consensual sexual touching in the workplace, and 72% of respondents who experienced harassment never reported it. In fact, these behaviours have become so normalized that the discomfort women feel is normalized. Women tell us that they do not come forward because it is easier not to, because it often is not worth it. They feel embarrassed, and many fear reprisal, up to even losing their jobs. Most disappointing is that most women simply do not believe that coming forward will make any difference whatsoever in their situation or for others.

It is time for a change. All Canadians deserve a workplace that is free of harassment and violence and where unacceptable behaviour is no longer tolerated. Bill C-65 would be a tool to help achieve that goal. It is how we would send the message that unacceptable behaviour in the workplace will not be tolerated. It would move us, as a society, from outrage to action. Bill C-65 would address all types of harassment and violence. It would strengthen the Canada Labour Code to complement existing laws and policies. It would

broaden the scope of legislation to include staff working right here and in constituency offices, both in this House and in the other chamber.

There are three main elements to Bill C-65: the prevention of incidents, a timely and effective response to incidents, and support for affected employees.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

This is a progressive and revolutionary bill that all Canadians can be proud of. However, I am well aware that Bill C-65 applies only to federally regulated employers and employees.

[*English*]

My hope is that the legislation would set the example and the standard for fairness and harmony in all workplaces in Canada.

I wish to thank the other chamber for its careful study. I also thank the witnesses who shared their expertise and their experiences, many of them deeply personal, which helped inform the committee's study. The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights took to heart the messages heard from these witnesses and proposed amendments to echo those voices and stories.

Many of these amendments are supported by our government. For example, we are supporting the removal of the terms "trivial", "frivolous" and "vexatious" to describe complaints that could be refused for investigation. While these terms are commonly used in law, there is no denying that they have powerful negative connotations.

There are some amendments we are unable to support, despite the fact that we understand their intent. These concerns did not go unheard. It is the government's perspective that the amendments have already been addressed through other legislation. My hon. colleagues will speak in more detail about each of the amendments.

Rest assured that this legislation would be meaningful for Canadians. It would create better protections, safer workplaces and swifter action for employees covered by this legislation. It would also start a cultural shift that would affect all workplaces and our society. In fact, I believe that it already has.

For example, during our consultations on the regulations, the majority of stakeholders we met recognized the need to change the status quo, and most expressed their willingness to help make that happen. It is important that as a government, we lead the way, that we provide an example, and that we take our responsibility to our workers seriously. We need this legislation simply because what is in place right now is not doing the job.

Government Orders

Let me tell members a bit about Hilary Beaumont, a *VICE News* reporter. Ms. Beaumont conducted some very interesting research. She interviewed more than 40 women who work right here on the Hill, including former and current members of Parliament, lobbyists, journalists, employees and trainees. In her presentation to committee, Ms. Beaumont said that she quickly realized that female employees were much more vulnerable to harassment than their male counterparts.

The women she interviewed reported personal stories of sexist comments and touching and even sexual assault. Some women said they had been fired or had lost job opportunities after trying to report the abuses they had suffered at work, in this workplace. Some currently employed on the Hill are not even aware of how to manage and report incidents.

Ms. Beaumont discovered that existing measures are not protecting employees from harassment and violence. However, if Bill C-65 had been in place, these women would have had better support and justice, and even better, these incidents could have been prevented. That is why this bill is so important.

From the outset, each member of this House agreed on its importance, and this was apparent during the meetings of the committee of this House, which worked very hard to strengthen the bill. Out of those meetings came important amendments: adding the definition of harassment and violence to the Canada Labour Code; adding a clause that required that the provisions on harassment and violence established in Bill C-65 be re-examined every five years; requiring the minister of labour to produce, each year, a report on harassment and violence in all workplaces under federal regulation; and for the application of part 3 of the law in Parliament, providing the deputy minister with powers normally attributed to the minister to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

These changes, which have already been adopted, along with the amendments from the other chamber that we propose to accept, have created a piece of exceptionally strong legislation that we can all be sure would reach its intended goal.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

I firmly believe that Bill C-65, as amended, will really change the lives of thousands of Canadians.

[*English*]

It would ensure better protection for employees in the public service and in federal Crown corporations.

[*Translation*]

This applies to people working for federal banks, railroads, marine transportation services and ferries, airlines and airports, and radio and television broadcasting.

[*English*]

Bill C-65 would also, importantly, protect political staff in this chamber and in the other one, where all too often we have heard of, and may have even witnessed, inappropriate behaviour, often to humiliate or belittle or to use power as a way to pursue intentions of assault.

I ask my hon. colleagues to support the advancement of this important bill; in fact, this historic bill. For every person who has come forward, for those who have felt that they could not come forward, let us stand up and declare together that we will not accept the status quo and that we will be responsible employers in this place. Let us be an example for Canada and for the rest of the world. We owe it to our citizens, and we owe it to the incredibly hard-working staff who serve us all, to take action now.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour for bringing forward a legislative measure of such importance to this country.

We worked together as members of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The Conservative Party of Canada will support this bill. We played an active role in the committee's work.

This is a step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough. It does not give employees the option of turning to the labour minister for support. The act merely requires businesses to follow procedures.

Does the minister plan to take things further by enabling employees to file complaints with Employment and Social Development Canada, as Quebec and other legislative bodies have done, making support available to them, and having an independent individual, a departmental official, conduct investigations?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, this proposed legislation is so comprehensive that at any time should someone feel that the process has not been followed, they would have the ability to come forward to the labour department.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent speech. It is true that we worked really hard in the House and in committee. There was a great deal of co-operation. I want to thank her for this so-called historic bill, which will not eliminate bullying and violence in the workplace but is nevertheless a step in the right direction.

I would like to take advantage of my colleague's expertise and ask her a more specific question. The government rejected the addition of the following to portion of section 21 entitled "Annual Report—Board":

The report must contain statistical data relating to harassment and violence in work places to which this Part applies, including information that is categorized according to prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act. The report shall not contain any information that is likely to reveal the identity of a person who was involved in an occurrence of harassment and violence.

The government claimed that this addition would create a serious risk that the employee's identity would be revealed if such statistics were published.

My question is clear. The Senate amendment clearly indicates that the report would not contain "any information that is likely to reveal the identity of a person". I would like to know what my colleague thinks. Why did the government reject the Senate amendment?

Government Orders

•(1025)

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, the reason we respectfully disagree with amendment 7(b) is that this amendment would be inconsistent with the federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board's other annual reporting obligations under both the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and part 1 of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act.

It would also create a very small subset of cases in respect of which there are appeals. The challenge is that because this would be such a small subset of cases, it would take very little information to identify the identity of someone who may have been subject to those appeals. Therefore, we feel that this amendment would have the unintended consequence of potentially putting in jeopardy someone's confidentiality. Something that was repeatedly stressed in almost all the testimony we heard was that the root of this had to be the assurance of confidentiality.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for what is a historic piece of legislation, Bill C-65. I want to add a dimension to it.

The minister mentioned that women often do not report and that their stories are often not heard. When we add intersectionality to that, either of race, disability or sexual orientation, the reporting is often a lot lower. I am wondering if the minister can elaborate on how this piece of legislation would adjust for that but also make more inclusive workplaces, not just within the federal jurisdiction but beyond that.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises the very important point that not all of us are equally vulnerable. In fact, those who have the experience of being racialized, LGBTQ community members, newcomers to this country, and people who may not have English or French as their mother tongue or first language experience a heightened sense of vulnerability. Therefore, having a baseline of legislation that would compel employers, first of all, to have a policy in place and to ensure that their employees know what their rights and responsibilities are would allow employers to take that very important step of prevention. It would strengthen a fabric that would set a baseline of intolerance for harassment and violence.

We have talked a lot about sexual violence in the context of this bill, but it would actually cover all forms of harassment and violence. Oftentimes we hear from vulnerable people that it may not be sexual in nature. They may be experiencing harassment, bullying or belittlement based on other criteria. People with disabilities, for example, often feel that they are harassed or bullied based on a perceived ability or capacity.

I thank my colleague for her work on ensuring that the folks most vulnerable in our workplaces have a strong fabric of protection and a voice to ensure that they have the fairest chance of success in the workplace.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, frequently in the House, we hear about the importance of consultation with the various groups that are going to be impacted by legislation. During the testimony at the Senate committee, the National Association of Women and the Law and the Native

Women's Association of Canada both said that they were not adequately consulted. In fact, they were not consulted at all during the drafting of this bill.

Francyne Joe, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, stated:

Moreover, there has been inadequate consultation with Indigenous people. Our understanding is this will apply to federally regulated First Nations governments and if this is correct, then the Government of Canada must carry out meaningful consultation with Indigenous people.

In particular, Indigenous women have not been adequately consulted. In the harassment and sexual violence public consultation report that informed this legislation, only 28 Indigenous women were surveyed and only one engagement session with the Ontario Native Women's Association was held. Findings from these consultations do not appear to be reflected in the legislation in its current form.

Does the minister agree with Francyne Joe that there was inadequate consultation specifically with indigenous women's groups?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I am particularly proud that this legislation would protect indigenous women in their workplaces as well. The member points out that some aspects of indigenous communities are covered by federal regulations, and so that means this protection would be there for indigenous women working in those spaces as well.

We are comfortable with the consultation we held. We talked to a wide variety of different experts such as legal groups, advocates, employers, labour unions and individual Canadians about their experiences in the workplace, and what needed to be in the legislation to ensure a strong regime so people would be able to use the legislation and employers would have confidence that the tool would allow them to move forward with their endeavours without onerous measures that would not result in change.

In fact, we have heard overwhelming support from both FETCO, the organization that advocates on behalf of federally regulated employers, as well as the CLC. I am excited to hear the comment around the Ontario Native Women's Association, which has headquarters located in Thunder Bay. I have had many conversations with Cora-Lee McGuire, its executive director. Anything that protects women in the workplace is a step in the right direction. There is a scourge of violence against women in this country. It is really encouraging to hear a member of the Conservative Party take this so seriously. It is certainly something I did not hear in the decade of work I did on the streets of Thunder Bay.

•(1030)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We have time for a very brief question, 30 seconds for the question and 30 seconds for the answer.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to tell us why the government rejected Senate amendment 4, which sought to add "ensure that the work place is free from harassment and violence" to clause 3 of Bill C-65. That would have been a very important addition.

I would like my colleague to quickly share her opinion on that.

Government Orders

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, we proposed that the paragraph from amendment 4 be deleted because the addition of the proposed paragraph would mean that a single incident of harassment or violence in the workplace would be considered to be a violation of the Canada Labour Code on the part of the employer, which would undermine the framework.

We want to make sure we have a continuum of responses from prevention all the way up to enforcement and responding to survivors. However, if we had every incident be a violation of the Canada Labour Code, one could see how this would, first of all, be incredibly onerous for employers because in some cases those allegations may not be accurate. It would actually undermine the framework that puts the responsibility for prevention on the employer, which is such an important part of this legislation.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's work on this matter, and I very much appreciate all the work that our shadow minister also accomplished in this matter.

I am very happy to announce that we will be supporting the government's response, predominantly because the amendments will strengthen the legislation to prevent workplace violence or harassment. Combatting harassment is a pressing need in our Parliament today. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment have no place in Canadian society, especially within our political system.

In January of this year, when introducing the legislation, the minister herself said:

Parliament Hill features distinct power imbalances, which perpetuates a culture where people with a lot of power and prestige can use and have used that power to victimize the people who work so hard for us. It is a culture where people who are victims of harassment or sexual violence do not feel safe to bring those complaints forward. It is a place where these types of behaviours, abusive and harmful, are accepted and minimized and ignored.

I take it that that is the motivation and the reasoning for the legislation to be introduced and where we are today in finalizing the legislation.

Those are incredibly profound words. They are incredibly disturbing words to be said by a minister, because it is talking about our workplace as members of Parliament. When I reflect on it, the fact is that it can be so easy for many of us as members to initially recoil from the language, saying that we are not all like that, and I do believe that.

At the very beginning, I do think it is important to remember that the collective reputation of all of us becomes damaged when we allow this kind of unacceptable behaviour and the allegations to be made without procedures in place for the complaints to be dealt with.

Not all of us are partaking in the actions that have been alleged against many of the members. Indeed, for the most part, we all do our work, and we all respect and truly appreciate the work that our staff members do for us. However, it has come to our attention through a series of incidents that this needed to be looked at.

I am going to take the House through a little retrospective about my experience with respect the issues surrounding sexual harassment, sexual violence and bullying in the workplace over the next couple of minutes. I hope to inform the House that this is not a

unique issue. This is not something we have not tackled before in other industries. This is something that is timely now. However, we can take lessons from other places in order to ensure that we get to the right end result. I will conclude by talking about relevant recent examples, which I believe put in jeopardy the actual implementation of this act in a fair and fulsome way.

I have been working in male-dominated fields for most of my life. What I understand and what I have seen in each of these fields is a similar evolution when it comes to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct in the workplace.

First of all, we need a simple awareness that certain language and actions are unacceptable. Sometimes people think that they are just telling a joke or are just saying something funny. Sometimes they are saying, "Well, I thought she was appreciative of what I was saying to her, or him."

The reality is that there has to be an awareness made that not everybody thinks the same way and not everybody takes actions in the same way. That is the first step: awareness.

The second step is training and education, where we go beyond the awareness of the issue and the need to amend behaviour to being shown the way, through training and education, of how one should behave appropriately. I am very pleased to report that we have done that collectively as Parliament. We have done that as members. We all sat through appropriate training and education. I commend the committee and the House of Commons for ensuring that we did all do this, because I believe that took us to the next step.

What we see today in the government legislation is a process. What many will say is that in order for complaints to come forward, in order to make sure that the most egregious issues are being dealt with, there needs to be a structure in place, a place where individuals could go and feel comfortable and confident in being able to enumerate their complaints, with the hope of getting some kind of action.

● (1035)

The final and most important part is that justice is seen to be delivered either in the case where an application or a complaint is shown not to be valid or, where a complaint is shown to be valid, that there is some kind of punishment, that there is some kind of activity that discourages this going to the future.

In order for this legislation to truly be accepted and believed as something that is going to be helpful in our culture, justice has to be seen to be delivered in the implementation. While we are talking about one part of it today in the process, we should always be mindful as members of Parliament that the work has not been finished by any means. This is not a time for a victory lap and I would not assume that things will go smoothly, but I know from all sides of the House that we will be definitely working to ensure that justice will be seen to be delivered in the cases that come forward.

Government Orders

In the 1980s, I was in the field of chemistry. My undergraduate degree was from St. Francis Xavier University. I did an honours degree in physical chemistry, which is not an area where there would be a lot of women. Ironically enough, we were fifty-fifty. It was a small class of six, three men and three women, but we were fifty-fifty in terms of gender balance. While in the eighties StFX was known as a great partying school and it is very proud of that, we did not oftentimes discuss or we were not even aware of the difficulties around sexual harassment and sexual violence.

I often wonder whether the issue did not come home to us in our small faculty because of the gender balance in the faculty. We had no discussion of the concepts. We had no issues that I knew of and we kind of blindly went through and went off to our next levels in life. After graduation, the six of us ended up going into different fields. Some of us continued in grad studies and some of us went to professional school. I went on to grad school to study biochemical toxicology at the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo, where my eyes were opened to the fact that with gender disparity did come unique difficulties.

I noticed very clearly that women who were faculty were ignored in the mailroom. They were looked down upon for their academic abilities, they were overlooked and shouted down at faculty meetings, and they were not necessarily given their space to come up with their ideas in the field of chemistry. I took all that to heart in the back of my mind determining whether this was a field I wanted to pursue. The reality is that what we see really does impact what we believe and what our decisions are going to be. There were not very many women in the faculty of chemistry at the time and very few role models to look up to, and very few shows of success that we could aspire to in terms of staying in that chosen field.

The good part about it that I was a terrible chemist, so it is not a great loss to the field of chemistry that I ended up not pursuing that field. Academically, it may have been made apparent to me that I was not going to continue to my Ph.D. but certainly in the back of my mind it did come into play, whether it was going to be a place where I would feel validated and listened to. It was not necessarily about wanting to not be harassed; it was about not being overlooked, bullied or put down, all of those insidious things that can happen.

Maybe more women in grad school in the sciences will make a difference, but putting the pressure on women in science all the time that we have to go into science and do better because if we do better then everything will be better is a complete fallacy. What women who choose to go into science need is good structure and to see that results are delivered when they have the right structure.

A lot of times when we see someone touting gender parity within this committee or that committee, or this faculty or that faculty, it is of interest, but that is not the point. The point of it all is whether or not there is a real institutional structure to recognize the value of each individual within that faculty regardless of their gender, taking the gender outside of the box in terms of academic abilities.

•(1040)

Therefore, I am not here to say today that if we have more women in politics it is going to get better, because I am not convinced it will. That is a nice marketing phrase, but I do not believe it is a solution to the real situations and issues that we have in different fields where

women may not feel they are welcome and where they may not feel they can have a career.

Not having had enough of a male-dominated area, I decided to go to law school. Law school is very different. It was very gender balanced. Indeed, in my first year at law school, in the incoming class at Osgoode, there were more women than men. We were definitely moving the dial in terms of the people studying there. Again, it was a wonderful facility, a wonderful space, where we did not feel there were any differences with respect to gender. We had a female dean who was extremely effective, and wonderful courses taught by both men and women. We were able to choose which direction we wanted to go in. In that space and time, I did not feel there were any difficulties around gender-based violence or gender-based discrimination, although there was, at the time, definitely a debate and discussion about whether a member of the faculty had been overlooked. Therefore, it was an issue that was circulating, but it certainly did not percolate to where our class was.

However, law firms are different. In 1998, after being called to the bar and doing some time at another summer job, I ended up articling and being placed at law firms. There, one could see that there was a real difference. That is where the stratification started to happen and where one could see that power imbalance that I spoke of in my opening remarks.

In 2000, there was an absolutely outrageous event in downtown Toronto of alleged sexual misconduct that really brought the issue of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the legal field in Toronto to the fore. Without getting into all of the gory details at the time, a senior partner was accused of sexual misconduct toward several female lawyers in a public bar. It was something that could not be swept under the rug because so many people were involved, so many people saw what happened and so many people reported what had happened. Therefore, it was an issue that the law firm of the time had to deal with, and it dealt with it very strongly. It removed the partner from that firm and made sure from that point forward there was serious education, awareness, and training within the company. I bring that up because I believe, in part, that it created a greater awareness among many of the downtown companies that perhaps had not gotten on the earlier bandwagon of dealing with sexual harassment or sexual violence in the workplace.

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I was working at the Toronto port authority at the time. I was its general counsel, and I decided to try to distinguish where we lacked policies in the workplace with respect to women and men and power. The organization had been around for about 75 years by that time, and it had no maternity leave policy. I guess no women worked at the port authority for 75 years. One of my first jobs was to draft the policy, which I drafted so that it was gender neutral. We became one of the first places where our male firefighters were grateful to take some parental leave as well when their partner was pregnant and after giving birth. After what had happened with the alleged misconduct in Toronto, it became almost imperative at that point in time that boards made sure they had appropriate policies in place to deal with issues that could come up in the workplace. With 100 employees, 90% of them men, we undertook the process of bringing people to an awareness of the issues, educating and training them, setting up a process, and finally showing that, if complaints came forward, there would be justice. I wish I could say it was easy, because it really was not easy.

When people start talking about something like sexual violence, sexual misconduct, harassment and bullying in the workplace, initially there is a great tendency for people to say, "That is not me; I am not like that; why are you accusing; why do I have to go through this process?" Those are all good questions. However, it is up to the management, up to the collective group putting the policies forward and in place, to assure everyone that this is not about seeking out and trying to find people who are to blame, but rather to put in place a system to allow people to come forward so that the bad apples within the mix of 100 are sought out, and not the entire reputation of the organization being questioned.

● (1045)

At the end of the day, I have had 20 years in this space of trying to bring policies into play to deal with these issues. I know I have said it before, but I want to say it again, because if we underpin everything that we are attempting to do within Parliament to try to protect everyone here, if we say that we are doing it, first, to raise awareness, second, to train and educate, third, to have a solid process in place and to have justice be seen to be done, then we are on the right path.

There are some high-profile cases that took place within our parliamentary family in 2018, as well as in the legal community in Toronto in 2000, that have brought us to this place today where we are discussing this legislation. The United Kingdom had the same issue. A study was prompted by a BBC investigative report about bullying and harassment in the U.K. House of Commons. As luck would have it, that report was released yesterday at their House of Commons. How they have approached their issues are different from how we have approached ours. We have approached this by jumping right into the legislative side of it and trying to figure out the best process, because we think that if we put that process in place, it is going to fix everything. A different approach was taken by the U.K. House of Commons. It set up an independent inquiry, run by a separate person, who then had permission to interview widely the people who had complaints, to talk to all MPs, and to develop recommendations. One of the recommendations was that they needed to take the time to get it right. It is a long report, over 155 pages long. However, it is well worth reading, not for the salacious details of what happened to certain individuals or the claims made

against others, but to give us more colour to the point of what could have happened or what could be happening if we do not deal with our culture in the appropriate way.

The number one issue that arose out of it was that there were obviously ineffective mechanisms for dealing with what was happening in the United Kingdom House of Commons. They focused on bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. However, what is very interesting is that they are calling for a fundamental change to rebuild trust and restore confidence, the point being that both men and women are making allegations of bullying and harassment within the U.K. House of Commons and that it should be taken seriously and dealt with in the most substantive way possible.

The most controversial part of the report, which is being covered by the U.K. media, is the last three paragraphs, which talk about who can best effect change. I am going to read them into the record because I think they give us a lot to think about.

This is how she concluded her report. She states:

If approached for advice by a constituent who was the victim of bullying or sexual harassment in their own workplace, I am confident that they would not hesitate in assisting them to take forward their complaints. I therefore hope that the recommendations I have made will receive the active support of those elected Members who will be appalled by the abusive conduct alleged against some of their number, but who will also be anxious to ensure that any process for determining disputed allegations is independent, effective and fair to both sides.

I have also referred throughout this report to systemic or institutional failings and to a collective ethos in the House that has, over the years, enabled the underlying culture to develop and to persist. Within this culture, there are a number of individuals who are regarded as bearing some personal responsibility for the criticisms made, and whose continued presence is viewed as unlikely to facilitate the necessary changes, but whom it would also be wrong for me to name, having regard to the terms of reference for this inquiry. I hope, however, that the findings in this report will enable a period of reflection in that respect in addition.

In considering how best to progress the change in culture that is accepted as essential, and how best to take forward the recommendations in this report, it may be that some individuals will want to think very carefully about whether they are the right people to press the reset button and to do what is required to deliver that change in the best interests of the House, having regard both to its reputation and its role as an employer of those who are rightly regarded as its most important resource.

● (1050)

It was heavy for the author of this report to come out swinging, as it were, against their House of Commons' management, but it was necessary that it be said.

One of the issues that I found very interesting when they were talked about why their culture has happened in the way it has was when they noted that it was "a culture, cascading from the top down, of deference, subservience, acquiescence and silence, in which bullying, harassment and sexual harassment have been able to thrive and have long been tolerated and concealed." Those are all very important words that we should reflect on to ensure that we are not promoting that here.

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The executive board of the U.K. House of Commons responded by saying that the report “makes difficult reading for all of us. Bullying and harassment have no place in the House of Commons and the Parliamentary Digital Service. We fully accept the need for change and, as a leadership team, are determined to learn lessons from the report. We apologize for past failings and are committed to changing our culture for the better.” That is by far the best response an executive board could possibly give to such a report, by apologizing for what has happened and vowing to move forward to do better.

As I said many times in my speech, legislation is not the end of the situation. Justice has to be seen to be done with a process that is working. Further, building on what the report said, we have to make sure that the people who will implement this are above reproach, that they absolutely do have the ability to say that they have clean hands and can help foster this changing culture.

How issues are dealt with and what is said will be watched carefully given the amount of press that we have received in the past about conduct in the House of Commons. This brings me to the uncomfortable position of talking about an incident that happened this summer.

This summer it came to the attention of the media through an online blogger that an editorial had indicated many years ago that the Prime Minister was guilty of inappropriate conduct. The writer in question wrote this many years ago. She was young; he was younger. In it she questioned whether or not it was appropriate for someone with that balance of power and fame to come in and be, in her view, inappropriate.

What I find interesting about this incident and why I talk about the culture of acquiescence and deference and subservience is the fact that this story had been around for months. Many people knew about the story but no one had a response or an answer to what actually happened. So, the story grew in strength and in importance, and the question then becomes, are there more rumours around? That does not do anything to help us determine whether or not the appropriate process is in place to deal with these kinds of allegations and that justice will be seen to be done.

The media was well aware of the incident. It knew what the editorial said. It refused to run with it. The Prime Minister over a series of many weeks ended up coming out with a final statement saying that the individual in response did not remember the situation as he remembered it, and that in these situations everyone remembers things differently. It was an unfortunate response and I will tell the House why.

It was not at all the full-throated apology made by the leadership team at the U.K. House of Commons. It was an explanation and an excuse. The difficulty with that is that in the midst of our introducing this legislation and debating and voting on it, and knowing the importance of showing an example to the rest of the country in dealing with these matters, the individual with the most power in the country did not do what would be expected, which was to apologize and move on. For me, that is an unravelling in the most basic form of what we can expect for this legislation to do for us going forward.

● (1055)

The difficulty as well is that I am protected in the House of Commons for saying things like this. I do not know if anybody is watching this speech right now, but I will definitely be noted in social media for once again bringing up this allegation of the Prime Minister and his groping that had been discussed all summer. I hope the House understands that what I am trying to convey in more than a 30-second sound bite is the fact that it does matter. It is not about a victim and it is not about whether or not something did happen; it is an inappropriate response to a real allegation that should show a path forward for other people to feel that they would get justice if they came forward with a complaint in a process against somebody of high power.

We lost an opportunity for the Prime Minister to show a path to making sure that we would have teeth and some kind of truth behind this legislation. It is a missed opportunity. I dwell on it a lot because, at the end of the day, as a woman of 30 years in this field, it does make me sad that a simple apology and acknowledgement would have gone a longer way.

We have not talked a lot about bullying. Bullying is a great difficulty as well within the House of Commons. It is a great difficulty in the workplace. For a period of time, I enjoyed being the minister of labour and we saw very clearly that sometimes overt bullying leads to violent conclusions, and we would never want that to happen. I am not suggesting that would happen here, but I am suggesting that bullying really does not have a place in any forum of discourse, including in this chamber. I would submit it is recognized in the Westminster model that bullying is not accepted, because we have this notion of unparliamentary language. In this space and this time, every member is honourable, and it is not allowed to besmirch the honour of a member. We are all equal and we are treated as such, and it is very important to ensure that we show our honourability at all times. However, this is a protected space for that. This is where this can happen.

I want to bring up two incidents in the past eight months which show to me that, again, a government that seeks to implement this legislation does not walk the talk. As a result, I have a very difficult time having confidence that the Liberals are going to be able to implement this legislation so that people have confidence in it.

Earlier in the year, I was at a committee meeting, and in that committee meeting I was testing and prodding the Minister of Finance, as is my role as a deputy leader. I made sure that I was testing him on some of the underpinnings of his budget. They had to do with gender and whether or not certain things were taken into consideration. In response, the minister grew frustrated and at some point in discussing it, at the very end of our time, he indicated basically that people like me who are putting these questions towards him were neanderthals that would have to be dragged along.

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First of all, it is laughable. I have been called far worse in my life. It was not a moment that I lost all of my self-esteem. It would take a lot for me to lose my self-esteem; I am a good politician. Nonetheless, knowing that he had no problem utilizing that word not only in reference to me tangentially but to my party as well shows us that the respect and honourability was not present in that moment. It is an important concept. It is an important issue for us to discuss.

The response from the media was that it was not that bad. It does not matter how bad it was. In that moment, in that time, instead of dealing with the issue and answering the question, the minister chose to use a personal slur in order to answer what was a substantive policy question. That is unacceptable. Again, can the government truly implement legislation that is dependent upon people being able to understand the importance of justice to be seen?

The last time it happened was in this chamber. It is still under consideration by the Speaker of the House, so I will say at the very beginning that, of course, we are awaiting the decision of the Speaker with respect to the use of unparliamentary language by the Prime Minister.

It was, again, on very difficult questioning, which was on the question of whether or not the Prime Minister had the power to move or cause to be moved a prisoner, Terri-Lynne McClintic, from one institution to another. The Prime Minister was asked many questions, first by my hon. colleague for Parry Sound—Muskoka and then by me. Instead of answering the issue, the Prime Minister became frustrated and annoyed and ended up calling me and the rest of our caucus ambulance chasers. An ambulance chaser is an unethical lawyer. The speaker before me was a lawyer and I was a lawyer. These things actually matter to us.

• (1100)

What matters more at the end of the day is the fact that the Prime Minister once again thought it was absolutely acceptable to go from discussing policy to throwing a personal slur across the floor.

One thing I will say is that those two incidents were not made in humour. Nobody was trying to be funny. These were directed. If I were a younger member of Parliament asking that question for the first time on my feet, the message I would receive is, “Be careful in asking that question because I am going to call you a name. I am going to embarrass you on television. You are going to be embarrassed in front of your constituents.” That is the impact and effect of allowing this.

I have been here for 10 years. I just celebrated my 10th anniversary with some of my other colleagues and I have grown a skin thick enough to deal with those kinds of things, but I am absolutely appalled that they would think it is acceptable to do that kind of thing.

Notice that in all of this discussion, not once have I mentioned the fact that I am a female member of Parliament, because it does not matter. Male or female, name calling in this place is recognized in our rules of procedure as being unparliamentary and it should also be held to account on the government side as much as it is on the opposition side. When we do not see laws being applied fairly, we

lose our ability to believe that the law and the process will work for us.

That is the danger in this piece of legislation, that while we can have the best process in the world and we can have fantastic outlets for people to discuss, for people to have counselling, for people to go through hearings and have support, the reality at the end of the day is if justice is not seen to be done, everything we have done is for nothing. It is only through the conduct of the government that we can determine from the outside whether or not it will actually do what it set out to do.

• (1105)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy in the member's comments is unbelievable. I was at that finance committee meeting and what we were actually discussing was having more women in the workforce. The member opposite and her party were talking about how it is not important and that it should not be a priority for the Minister of Finance to have women in the workforce and have equality in our economy.

That is the context of those comments. However, context and truth do not seem to matter. When the member opposite talks about being embarrassed, it is embarrassing to hear in this day and age another member in this House of any gender say that women should not be equal in our economy. This government has the most women in the workforce ever.

Given my colleague's recent statement, is the member opposite going to support this legislation? Does she believe that preventing incidents of harassment and violence in the workforce is important? Does she believe that we need to have legislation to protect employees from this behaviour? Do we need to support employees affected by harassment and support their privacy? Will the member support this legislation and stop harassment in the workplace for our employees?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, and as I said at the beginning of my speech we are supportive of the government. I thank the minister and shadow minister for their work. What I was talking about is my concern about the implementation of it going forward.

I appreciate the member's point of view as to what happened. We can all take a look at the committee Hansard to determine what happened and what was actually said.

I would just remind members that it is easy to get caught up in trying to make sure to defend a position without necessarily thinking all of the aspects through, and as it was said with respect to this report from the U.K., the culture is deference, subservience, acquiescence and silence. In that moment when the word “neanderthal” was used, it would have been very simple for the minister to apologize and withdraw it right away. He chose not to. That is the point of contention that I have.

By the way, for the member to submit here for the House that because he was provoked it was okay is a part of a word that I cannot say, but it is shameful.

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[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, as the saying goes, a leopard cannot change its spots. Everyone in the House agreed that we wanted to take a non-partisan approach to our study of Bill C-65. We were able to do a thorough job in committee, and I would really like to come back to the bill and its very essence.

We are talking about victims here. Some of the people who are listening at home have experienced harassment, violence or sexual intimidation themselves.

I would like to get back to the substance of Bill C-65. I moved an amendment in committee regarding the individuals responsible for an investigation providing a written report of the results of the investigation to specific people, such as the employer or employee. Following consultation with the employee, those documents could then be destroyed. My amendment was rejected.

The same thing happened in the Senate. A similar proposal was made, and the amendment was rejected. I do not understand why the government rejected both of those amendments, one at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and one in the Senate.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the fact that that amendment was rejected, as well as her comments on the importance of providing written results from the investigation to the victim and the employer, and then destroying those documents to ensure full confidentiality.

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reminder that people who have been victims may be watching and if they are, they should definitely come forward and go through the process that currently exists, as well as the future process.

With respect to the substantive question on the amendment that was proposed and not accepted by the government, I was not privy to the discussions of the committee, but having sat on a subcommittee with respect to harassment and the review of our code of conduct, I know we and the minister would have received good advice, both from the folks involved on the human resources side and those involved on the legal side, and it is not easy to decide. Amendments like this do not make it into a bill like this because we want it to be as bipartisan as possible.

I respect the point of view of the government that it chose to not accept that amendment. We support the bill as it is before us.

• (1110)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her passionate speech. It was very well thought out and measured. She is somebody I respect dearly.

We have a Prime Minister who, in the last session, called the member for Thornhill a derogatory term. My colleague gave a couple of examples of where the Prime Minister thought it was appropriate to stoop to name calling. There was also the time when Motion No. 6 was being debated. Everyone remembers the “elbowgate” incident, where he felt it was appropriate, as he walked

across the aisle, to swear at the opposition members and then physically grab our colleague and direct him to his seat. That was totally inappropriate.

I am a father of three beautiful daughters. With respect to the incident involving a reporter earlier on, I want to mention what the Prime Minister said in answer to this. First, he did not remember the incident and then he said, “I do not feel that I acted inappropriately in any way, but I respect the fact that someone else might have experienced that differently.” He went on to add, “This lesson that we are learning, and I’ll be blunt about it, often a man experiences an interaction as being benign or not inappropriate and a woman, particularly in a professional context, can experience it differently and we have to respect that and reflect on that.” That is not an admission of guilt. Indeed, it is a denial that the incident even happened. Is this not the same as the #MeToo movement now, when men in power are saying they thought it was consensual?

I was appalled when the Prime Minister offered that as an explanation. I expected more from the Prime Minister, regardless of who he is or where he is from. It is disappointing for me. I am glad to stand up on this and I will now offer my hon. colleague an opportunity to comment.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I will go back to what I believe was the gold-plated standard on how the board in the U.K. dealt with this yesterday, which was:

We fully accept the need for change and...are determined to learn lessons from the report. We apologise for past failings and are committed to changing our culture for the better.

This is the message that should be brought up every time something like this happens. We apologize and move on, be it Neanderthal, be it ambulance chaser or be it whatever happened at Kokanee many years ago.

However, on the member's point, and what I find interesting, it is a predilection of individuals in the world in general. Every time an issue is brought up that makes the government uncomfortable, its response is basically that we are remembering it differently. It just happened again with the member opposite. She who told me that I did not remember the incident at committee the same way, so she explained what actually had happened and why I should not have been upset by it. That is exactly what happened in the last incident as well.

There is a colloquial term for it and I will not use it because it is a silly term. However, in order to bring integrity to serious legislation like this we need to see the actions of the government as being serious, considering how it appears to people, not just that justice is done but that justice is seen to be done.

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

Mr. Speaker, action is important. We have before us substantial and historical legislation. We should be looking at the substance of the legislation. I believe we have unanimous support of the chamber for something that will move Canada forward on a very important file. Perhaps we should leave the personal stuff for another time. The personal stuff seems to be on the agenda of the Conservatives no matter what the debate of the day happens to be.

● (1115)

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I will not take lessons from anyone who tells me what I can and cannot say in the House of Commons. I get to say what I want to say. This is what is on my mind and in my heart. I am very concerned by the lack of balance, fair and equitable treatment when it comes to how the Prime Minister is treated with respect to obvious incidents of misconduct. As a result, I chose to use those examples in my speech, and I regret nothing.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I have said several times in the House today, my thoughts are with all the victims. To all those going through a tough time or who wonder what to do, hang on. There are people who can help you. This bill is a step in the right direction. It will not end bullying, harassment, sexual or other violence, but we are here today to improve legislation. My thoughts are with these people.

Every member of the House should have respect for the victims and I know that to be true. More often than not, victims of an unfortunate incident tend to feel very isolated. I believe I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we all stand with the victims.

I also want to acknowledge the important work done by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, and both chambers on Bill C-65, which seeks to prevent harassment and violence in the work place. This bill is of general interest and this is a non-partisan issue, as I keep saying.

Harassment and violence, especially sexual harassment and violence, are too important an issue to allow partisan politics and bickering to hamstring our efforts. On the contrary, this bill needs to free up speech once and for all and empower victims to speak out about sexual harassment, because workplace harassment and violence are still widespread today, even here in Parliament.

That is why the NDP supports the principle and spirit of Bill C-65. However, in its current form, the bill is not perfect. Sadly, I think Bill C-65 only partially meets its goal of strengthening the harassment and violence prevention regime. Bill C-65 falls well short of addressing all of our concerns or those of the many witnesses who came to testify before the Senate or House committees.

The Senate proposed some good amendments. Some were similar to what I had presented to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, although once again, the government rejected more than half of my amendments. At any rate, those amendments would

have improved Bill C-65 and helped us address the concerns raised by many witnesses who appeared before the House and Senate committees.

The suggestions were for simple things, such as recognizing that every employee has the right to employment that is free from harassment and violence, advancing gender equality, addressing issues of racism, and ensuring that the rights of women workers, including those who face intersectional forms of discrimination, are respected, protected and fulfilled. There was nothing particularly radical about these proposed amendments, but they were rejected nonetheless.

On April 26, the national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees contacted me to discuss the bill. Here is what he said to me:

I am writing to you today about two serious flaws in Bill C-65 that will undermine the rights of workers affected by violence and harassment in the workplace.

What flaws could be so worrisome that the union felt compelled to urge the minister to correct them immediately?

That would be the exclusion of health and safety committees from both the complaint and the investigation processes. The process for filing harassment and violence complaints and the investigation process must both continue to benefit from the expertise of these committees. Excluding them makes no sense to me.

● (1120)

The surprising reason given by the Liberals to justify their measures was the purported breach of victims' confidentiality, were they to take part in the investigations by these committees. This is barely credible for many reasons, which I would like to outline.

First of all, the decision to bring these committees into the process was made by the victims themselves. The bill eliminates without a valid reason some options available to victims. It was an additional choice available to the victim, not a constraint that was imposed.

Second, to date, these joint health and safety committees have always received these complaints and successfully carried out the harassment investigations. Their modern investigative methods have always emphasized respect for victims' privacy. By excluding these committees from the investigative process, Bill C-65 is about to eliminate decades of experience, training and work, to say the least.

That is not all. If the Liberals truly wanted to protect victims' privacy and confidentiality, then why did they oppose several of the amendments I put forward at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and why did they oppose Senate amendment 7(b)? I had the pleasure of proposing some twenty amendments to the committee, but the Liberals allowed only three of them. Many of the other amendments were not even discussed. The Liberals chose to go straight to a vote and would not even explain why they were rejecting the amendments.

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One of the amendments that was voted down without any explanation was a simple proposal from the Confederation of National Trade Unions. Under Bill C-65, joint health and safety committees would not be subject to investigations for privacy reasons. The problem is that such committees still provide a wealth of expertise to victims. Witnesses suggested a logical solution: give the committees codes of practice and a code of ethics that would ensure victims' privacy.

The government opposed this recommendation without any explanation out of stubbornness or because they did not understand it. It seems to me that excluding these committees from the investigation process is a serious decision. There was certainly no shortage of witnesses who supported the amendment. Unions, associations, and law firms were all in favour, and there are more.

My speech may not be interesting to some of my colleagues, but I think that the nature of Bill C-65 calls for a little order. If those who want to talk could do so outside or in the lobby, I think my colleagues who want to listen to my speech would appreciate it. I do not think my message was heard.

I will pick up where I left off and perhaps members in the House will keep it down. The expertise of the joint health and safety committees spans decades, but that alone does not explain why witnesses adamantly defended keeping them in the investigative process. The other reason, which is rather important, is the exceptional diversity of the investigators who make up the joint committees tasked with investigating harassment cases. The right of joint committees to conduct investigations has until now made it possible for victims to benefit from an incredible diversity of investigators in terms of colour, religion, age and sex. Such diversity in the profile of investigators is invaluable in a workplace.

Unfortunately, it is clear that this aspect has been removed from Bill C-65, against the recommendations of the International Labour Office.

• (1125)

In investigations into sexual harassment, the victims will no longer be able to benefit from the expertise or the extreme diversity within the joint health and safety committees.

It was still possible, at the committee stage, to include a provision in the bill to ensure the diversity of investigators, similar to that made possible by joint committees, that would have applied to all investigators.

That is exactly what one of my amendments proposed. It stated that the choice of investigators, although no longer the purview of the joint committees, must reflect the diversity of Canadian society. Thus, the diversity of investigators, which until now was made possible by the joint committees, would be perpetuated even though the committees were excluded from the investigation.

A balanced representation of Canadian diversity would be assured. Apparently, the recommendation made by the UN Secretariat on labour was not good enough for the government, because it did not let Canada adopt legislation to guarantee equality and non-discrimination in the investigators' profile.

We need to remember that minorities are disproportionately affected by workplace harassment and violence. By "minority", I mean members of an ethnic or religious minority as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex workers, and migrant workers.

That is why the profile of individuals responsible for the investigation must at all costs reflect diversity. However, it seems that our legislation will not take into account national diversity in the selection of investigators, and I find that very unfortunate.

Those are some of the aspects that were especially important to me, after spending all those hours listening to and reading the recommendations made by witnesses when they appeared before the committee and in their briefs.

In order to respond to their concerns and correct the deficiencies in Bill C-65, I drafted amendments that were not even debated. There has been nothing but radio silence from the Liberal members.

I would like to now move on to other aspects of the bill that the NDP is also concerned about. There are many of them and they have to do with the development of employer policies on harassment and violence, for example.

Some employers said on several occasions that they did not understand exactly what was expected of them when it comes to workplace policies. They need guidance on writing and implementing their anti-harassment policies.

Since the primary purpose of Bill C-65 is to bring about a major change in political and corporate culture when it comes to harassment, we had hoped for more from the government in this regard.

When the witnesses appeared before the committee, they expressed their concerns about the effectiveness of employer anti-harassment policies. The witnesses came up with one solution.

In order to give employers guidance and enhance protection for employees, the witnesses recommended that the Canada Labour Code set out guidelines for what is expected of a corporate policy on harassment in the workplace.

The guidelines should include information about the process for getting immediate assistance in the case of harassment and about the fundamental principles of privacy protection and the processing of complaints.

• (1130)

The NDP's amendment would kill two birds with one stone. It would help guide employers in developing their internal policies and also enhance protection for employees, who would now be covered by effective prevention policies.

That amendment also would have prevented potentially ill-intentioned employers from shirking their basic harassment prevention obligations through the use of deliberately complex anti-harassment policies that ultimately end up disincentivizing victims.

Government Orders

Unfortunately, it seems the Liberals would rather leave employers guessing about how to write their internal policies, since not one Liberal bothered to say anything about this measure, let alone come out in favour of it.

Over the course of our deliberations today and tomorrow, I hope to find out what prompted the government to oppose this measure, which witnesses offered up on a silver platter in committee. I hope to get some answers in the next few hours in the House.

Would it not make sense for expectations around policies, specifically anti-harassment policies, to be included in the Canada Labour Code? That is another thing that is conspicuously absent from Bill C-65.

Once again, there were certainly plenty of opportunities to address the problem, and plenty of witnesses who spoke in favour of such a measure. All our efforts to strengthen the prevention aspect of Bill C-65 were apparently for naught.

The Liberals put forward an amendment to include a five-year review, which was not at all objectionable and was in fact more than welcome. We all recognized the importance of including a provision to review the legislation over the years. Reviewing workplace violence and harassment provisions every five years is a perfectly justifiable improvement. What is less justifiable is that Liberals refused to support one of my amendments to make the five-year review more effective.

I will give a quick explanation. The Liberals proposed that the department publish statistics on workplace harassment and violence every five years. This is good. It complies with almost all of the recommendations of their own report published by Employment and Social Development Canada in March 2017. Almost.

In this report, the government lamented the “insufficient data on workplace harassment and violence”, in particular regarding sexual harassment.

The report also pointed out the need for ongoing data collection in order to address this lack of data.

The Liberals remedied part of the problem by proposing that the department publish a statistical report every five years. However, the reality is that we lack data. This lack of data in the statistical report is rather problematic because we will not have the information required to assess the evolution of Bill C-65.

I will stop here, but I have a lot more to say about Bill C-65. I will have the opportunity to answer questions here in the House and to participate in several more hours of debate.

The NDP supports the principle and the spirit of Bill C-65 but still finds the legislation lacking. We will therefore support the bill on division.

• (1135)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate many of the comments from my colleague across the way. As I pointed out earlier, we look at the legislation as somewhat historical in what it would do.

I would be interested in the member's comments on the importance of other jurisdictions, specifically of our provinces and our territories. It is important that we demonstrate strong national leadership, but there is also a role for provincial and territorial bodies to look at what they might be able to do. I am curious to know the NDP's perspective on that aspect. Here, we are debating and it seems to have fairly good support from all parties inside the House, but part of that is also to continue this very important dialogue in our communities and that includes those other jurisdictions. What are the member's thoughts with respect to that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. Bill C-65 makes some amendments to the Canada Labour Code that will protect all Canadians. With regard to Quebec, it will be up to those working in transportation and telecommunications, for example. I am thinking of Canada Post employees, who are governed by the Canada Labour Code in matters of health and safety. Some businesses and workplaces are unionized, while others are not.

Yes, the overall objective of Bill C-65 is to raise awareness among the provinces. However, there is one important aspect and that is to have clear provisions that are easy to apply. As I said in my speech, they did not include guidelines to provide direction to employers on how to intervene and establish clear workplace policies to prevent harassment and violence. It is important that we provide direction.

I believe that we amend legislation in the House in order to provide direction. It is vitally important that the Canada Labour Code provide guidance and direction when consultations are held between management and labour. The primary goal of Bill C-65 is to eliminate harassment and violence. We want that to be a thing of the past. Unfortunately, it will always be there. At the very least, we need to have guidelines and clear direction. Unfortunately, Bill C-65 has some gaps. We could have used this bill to make clear improvements.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Jonquière for her fine speech. I want her to know that I was part of the group of people who were listening.

I just want to reiterate that we are in favour of the principle of the bill, and that this is progress and a step in the right direction.

In answering my colleague's question, the hon. member pointed out that the Canada Labour Code should have been more specific so as to provide guidelines and standards for improving the situation at workplaces in every business governed by the federal Labour Code. As the hon. member mentioned earlier, there are certain conditions unique to Quebec.

Government Orders

I have a question for my colleague. We all agree that guidelines would be a good thing. I know that she will speak from her experience as a leader at the company where she worked, specifically Canada Post. Does she not agree that every case is unique, that every workplace has its own set of specifics in terms of gender balance, the male-female dynamic, the authority relationships?

It seems to me that setting guidelines is kind of the same as establishing basic principles, but the fact is that it is up to each individual employer and each individual employee to work together to improve things, right?

Does my colleague agree that, regardless of whether the law says so, the most important factor is the good intentions of the people who work in those workplaces every day?

• (1140)

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very important comments.

That is why the guidelines are necessary, but it is true that everything depends on people's good intentions. Everyone starts out with the best of intentions, but sometimes things happen, which is why workplace training is so important. Both management and employees have to be on board. This is about providing guidance, and as a government institution, that is our job.

We have the Canada Labour Code, which is a useful tool in all kinds of workplaces every day. As I explained, Quebec is unique in that only its federally regulated workers are subject to the Canada Labour Code, but the code does provide a framework and set out measures related to training and consultation.

I said earlier that the health and safety committees could no longer intervene, investigate workplaces, and submit reports, so how will we equip workers and businesses with the necessary provisions? That is one of my questions about Bill C-65 that remains unanswered.

I have even more questions. For example, at a unionized business, can the union representative still help the person who is filing a complaint or who is the subject of an investigation related to allegations of violence or harassment?

There are many questions, but the main thing for the businesses is to get the means and the provisions. Bill C-65 is a step in the right direction, but, again, it will not solve every problem. There was an opportunity to make it better and we are still prepared to make proposals.

I hope that workers and employers will be receptive to Bill C-65 and will lead the way on prevention.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I understand the long-standing involvement of the labour movement, with local health and safety representatives on the occupational health and safety committees, has been a very important part in ensuring that the Canada Labour Code works well and that investigations have people on the ground as part of the process.

It is my understanding that in the process of reviewing Bill C-65, the government's amendment to include harassment and violence in the workplace directly in the Canada Labour Code and make it also apply to the parliamentary precinct and the good men and women who support us in our work has been left out.

I would like to hear more about the efforts of our labour critic, the member of Parliament for Jonquière, to try to insert the advice of the labour movement into the draft version of this legislation. What is lost by the exclusion of that long-standing practice to have occupational health and safety committees and their representatives be involved in investigations of workplace harassment?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which goes to the main point of my speech.

Joint occupational health and safety committees are important. They consist of employer and worker representatives who often receive training. They are not experts, but they at least have expertise in their field of work as well as workplace health and safety training. These people investigate complaints about violence, harassment and bullying. We are going to lose many years of experience.

As an aside, I would like to remind members that complainants were not required to go directly to the health and safety committee. It was one of a number of options. Unfortunately, this option will not be included in Bill C-65. We are also losing cultural diversity. The complainant will no longer be able to choose whether they are represented by a woman or a man. That will not be in Bill C-65.

• (1145)

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-65.

The main goal of Bill C-65 is to ensure that all employees under federal jurisdiction, including those in federal workplaces and in federally regulated industries, are treated fairly and are protected from harmful behaviours such as harassment and sexual violence. The bill underscores our government's strong commitment to taking action that will help create healthy, respectful workplaces.

Harassment, sexism and any type of sexual violence are wrong and completely unacceptable. The tragic reality is that despite our country's progress toward a modern and respectful society, we know that harassment and violence are persistent and pervasive in Canadian workplaces and that incidents often go unreported because people fear retaliation.

These behaviours can have long-term negative effects, not just for people who experience them and their families but for employers as well through lost productivity, absenteeism and employee turnover. Underpinning these realities are the many power imbalances and gender norms still in our culture that have led to unacceptable tolerance of these behaviours for far too long and it is time they stopped.

Government Orders

One of the key building blocks leading up to this proposed legislation was listening to Canadians. The Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour engaged Canadian stakeholders and experts to gather their experiences and perspectives on these issues. Members of Parliament and senators were also consulted to ensure the government could fulfill its commitment to making Parliament a workplace free from harassment and sexual violence.

This engagement of Canadians resulted in the report released last November, entitled “Harassment and sexual violence in the workplace public consultations—what we heard”. In this report, Canadians indicated that incidents of harassment and sexual violence in the workplace were not only under-reported, but also they were often dealt with ineffectively when they were reported. The report found that women reported more sexual harassment and violence than men and that people with disabilities and visible minorities reported more harassment than other groups.

These discussions with stakeholders and experts provided insight on how to address these and other issues and helped inform the bill we are discussing today.

Bill C-65 would strengthen provisions in the Labour Code by putting into place one comprehensive approach that would take the full spectrum of harassment and violence into consideration and would expand the coverage to cover parliamentary workplaces, including the staff of Parliament Hill.

Simply said, the bill would prevent incidents of harassment and violence, respond effectively to these incidents when they would occur and support victims, survivors and employers.

The legislation we are discussing today also aligns with “It’s Time”, Canada’s strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence, which I was privileged to help the Minister of Status of Women launch last year. The title, “It’s Time”, was selected because it was time to learn more about the pervasiveness of this problem. It was time to believe survivors. It was time to invest in effective solutions.

Developing this strategy was a key priority of this government upon taking office. Listening to Canadians was a critical first step. As part of this engagement, approximately 300 individuals from over 175 organizations shared their views during meetings held across Canada. The Canadian public was also invited to provide comments via emails and through an online survey in which over 7,500 Canadians participated.

In addition, the Minister of Status of Women created an advisory council of experts on gender-based violence and engaged with provincial and territorial colleagues to receive additional feedback to further inform the strategy.

Our government has invested nearly \$200 million in this first-ever federal strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence. The strategy takes important steps to prevent gender-based violence, support survivors and their families and promote a responsive legal and justice system. The strategy will fill important gaps in support for diverse groups, such as indigenous women, LGBTQ2 people, women with disabilities and other populations.

●(1150)

Moreover, it takes a whole-of-government approach that engages a range of key stakeholders and partners across government, including Status of Women Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Safety Canada, the RCMP, the Department of National Defence and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

As the #MeToo and “Times Up” movements have made clear, gender-based violence is not isolated to the private or domestic sphere. It can take place in workplaces, online, on university campuses and in public environments, places where everyone has the right to feel safe. That is why legislation such as Bill C-65 is critical in making federally regulated workplaces safer for everyone by ensuring they are free from harassment and violence.

I would now like to recognize the excellent work of those in the other chamber. Following their careful study of this important bill, they proposed a number of amendments aimed at making Bill C-65 as strong as possible. Let me go into a little more detail about these proposed amendments.

The members proposed a revision of certain terminology, terminology that they felt could have an adverse effect on the very people we were trying to protect if left unchanged. Currently, the words “trivial”, “frivolous” and “vexatious” are used to describe the basis upon which a complaint can be dismissed. While these terms are generally understood in law and appear throughout the Canada Labour Code, they are, as a member of the other place so rightly pointed out, rooted in prejudice and pose a risk for a survivor’s claim to be mollified on a whim. Our government understands the power of language and we fully support the replacement of these terms with the more neutral term “abuse of process”.

However, there were a number of additional amendments, which our government respectfully does not support. For example, members from the other chamber proposed an amendment to the purpose clause. This is an important clause as it sets the context for all other provisions in the bill. They suggested to include two additional elements, which would:

...recognize that every employee has the right to employment that is free from harassment and violence; and...advance gender equality, address issues of racism and ensure that the rights of women workers, including those who face intersectional forms of discrimination, are respected, protected and fulfilled.

While we agree these are laudable goals, it is important to remember that part II of the Labour Code is about occupational health and safety. Adding a specific reference to harassment and violence in the purpose clause, in addition to the reference that was already added during the HUMA process, would have the effect of creating an imbalance in the code, focusing more on harassment and violence relative to other rights under part II, such as the ability to refuse dangerous work.

We must ensure that the bill balances all workers’ rights as they pertain to health and safety without favouring one over the other.

Since the purpose of the code is already clearly stated, which is to create fair and safe workplaces, which by implication includes freedom from sexual harassment, violence and discrimination, our government does not believe this clause needs to be amended.

Government Orders

The second proposed addition to the purpose clause would add a reference to gender equality, racism and the rights of women workers. This is also an important goal. However, it does not belong in this legislation. This amendment would create new expectations under the Canada Labour Code regarding discrimination, gender equality and human rights. Such amendments would simply be inappropriately placed in a code that does not currently address these issues in a fulsome enough manner. Furthermore, it does not include all grounds, for example, LGBTQ2, which is covered by existing legislation.

The intent of this clause is to clearly and succinctly explain the purpose of the Canada Labour Code. Adding these new expectations and additional elements would result in a lack of clarity regarding what would be expected of workplace parties in relation to these matters. More important, these issues are already addressed in numerous pieces of existing legislation, such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Employment Equity Act.

The code, which is not meant to address these issues, does not supersede these laws. Indeed, their inclusion in the code could potentially have the unintended effect of lessening these rights through the confusion that could arise around who would be responsible for enforcing them and how.

• (1155)

Another proposed amendment that our government believes would have a similar effect of introducing lack of clarity is modifying the definition of harassment and violence. This was added during the committee process in this House, and currently reads as follows:

harassment and violence means any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee, including any prescribed action, conduct or comment.

Members of the other chamber proposed replacing the word “means” with “includes”. This change would render the definition significantly more open-ended and result in a lack of clarity for both employees and employers, as it is essentially limitless. For example, appropriate performance management actions could possibly be captured under this revised definition. The term is far too open-ended and potentially all-encompassing.

What we consistently heard through our consultations with stakeholders was the need for clarity to the greatest extent possible. Employers in particular have consistently strongly opposed the inclusion of any definition. They believed it was already too broad without this proposal, which would make it even broader.

While all of the proposed amendments from the other chamber are noble in principle, we believe that some would be ineffective in practice. At this time, more than anything, we need clarity. If we want to create legislation that protects workers and gives them effective recourse, we cannot distort the purpose of the bill nor create open-ended and overly broad provisions. I know that protecting workers is the goal we all share.

In conclusion, the bottom line for Canadians is that harassment and sexual violence are unacceptable anywhere, including in the workplace. This proposed legislation sends a strong message that the federal government is prepared to take bold action and be part of the

solution on this critical issue. The bill also aligns with the whole-of-government approach we are taking to prevent and address gender-based violence in all its forms, yet even with the important step forward this bill represents, we know that government cannot do it alone. It is going to take all of us, employers, employees, stakeholders and Canadians, to help end workplace harassment and sexual violence.

Where do we hope our collective work leads us? To a place where violence of any kind, including gender-based violence, is never tolerated, where everyone is a part of the solution, including men and boys, and where everyone enjoys their right to live a life free of violence.

Finally, making Canada a safer, more inclusive place to live and work will not be easy, and it will not happen overnight. However, we can make it a reality if we work together.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was excellent, eloquent and provided details.

Could the member possibly explain to the House how this bill will help women to be able to work in a safe, secure, free and comfortable environment, free from all kinds of harassment, including sexual harassment, physical harassment and any issue related to harassment, and whether a zero tolerance will be applied?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate some of my remarks, today we are taking an important step towards making workplaces in federally regulated industries and Parliament Hill free from these behaviours with Bill C-65.

I would note that this piece of legislation is built on the gender-based violence framework, that I referred to earlier in my remarks, to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace, out there in Canadian society, to support survivors and their families, and to develop responsive legal and justice systems.

I would remind all members in this House that we have invested \$200 million in the first-ever strategy to address and prevent gender-based violence. This is having a dramatic impact all over our country. We are supporting women's groups. We are supporting other groups that are fighting this scourge that we have in our society.

I want to assure the hon. member and other members in this House that we cannot, we must not rest until we stamp out gender-based violence and sexual harassment once and for all.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passionate plea in support of victims of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

Listening to some of the points raised by my colleague from Jonquière, it is hard for me to understand the Liberals' position. For example, they refused to allow joint health and safety committees to exist and to allow experts from different backgrounds to represent the complainants.

Government Orders

As everyone knows, the majority of complainants are women of colour from vulnerable communities. Sexual harassment or violence in the workplace leaves victims shaken up. Having a trained expert by their side can often be reassuring. This is part of the trust-building process.

Doing away with joint committees means losing that expertise and training, which will cause complainants to lose faith in the process when they are being encouraged to file a complaint. More than half of abuse victims do not report their aggressors because they figure that nothing will be done.

Bill C-65 abolishes joint committees despite the fact that they provide a sense of safety, expertise and training in representing the interests of complainants and conduct investigations.

That is ridiculous, and I think those provisions should be returned to Bill C-65. That would give the bill some teeth and enable it to offer some real protection to those who are dealing with harassment and violence in the workplace.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for Jonquière for her work on this particular legislation. My understanding is that she was a very strong voice around the table.

I also understand that all parties support this legislation. There was a great deal of consensus and one of the reasons for the consensus was the fact that there was wide consultation. HUMA committee listened to many stakeholders, employers and employees. We are having a great debate here in the House and in the other place. Very importantly, the committee consulted the union movement.

We on this side of the House have been listening to the union movement. Our government has repealed a couple of egregious pieces of legislation that were introduced by the previous government.

To address the hon. member's question directly, as far as workplace committees go, an important item has been added to this legislation. We eliminated the option to not have one of these workplace committees. They are going to be mandatory, not optional. They will play an important role. They will be involved in prevention policies and developing them in the workplace. These committees will have a lot to say about workplace culture.

On the issue of whether they will deal with individual complaints, there has been a great deal of emphasis in this legislation on ensuring privacy and ensuring that these committees do not deal with individual complaints.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members that unions and even legal experts said that it was a bad idea to remove the joint workplace health and safety committees. I do not understand why the member keeps saying that it is such a good idea and that the Liberals held consultations because this was one of the things that legal experts and unions were calling for and it is not included in the Liberals' bill.

Including statistical data in the five-year review is also key to ensuring that the bill serves as an effective deterrent to harassment and abuse in federal workplaces. That would ensure that we have a detailed, ongoing report, but the Liberals are refusing to include that in Bill C-65. That is one of the tools we have to improve. It would give us feedback so that we could see what is working and what is not and what changes could be made to improve the situation. The Liberals seem to be making a habit of failing to monitor statistics.

The same goes for climate change: 14 out of 19 federal departments have no plan and no means of evaluating whether those objectives are being met. Once again, Bill C-65 contains no means of evaluating the statistical data regularly collected on how things are going in the workplace. This is a major flaw that needs to be—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. There is time for only one answer.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Status of Women.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of data, under our gender-based violence strategy, we are creating a knowledge centre. We are going to be partnering with Statistics Canada to dutifully collect data on harassment and gender-based violence in the country. We are going to be sharing best practices with groups from across the country, such as unions, employers and others. The data issue is very important to our government. We are an evidence-based government.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

I would not say that I am pleased to rise to speak in the debate today, but I think it is an important debate we are having on a very important issue that impacts women and men throughout the world.

I will quickly go over what the bill would do and where it is at in the process, and then I would like to share some personal reflections on why the bill would be so important.

On November 7, 2017, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour introduced Bill C-65, which would amend the Labour Code on harassment and violence, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017. It has been through the process, and we are talking today about some Senate amendments.

Government Orders

Part 1 of the bill would amend the Labour Code to strengthen the existing framework for the prevention of harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, in the workplace. Part 2 would amend part III of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act with respect to the application of part II of the Canada Labour Code to parliamentary employers and employees, without limiting in any way powers and privileges. Part III looks at a transitional budget.

For those who are watching who do not think Parliament comes together to try to do things that are important, this is an example of where all parties participated thoughtfully in the debate on this bill. They knew it was important. The Senate amendments were proposed in the House and were accepted. Amendments were proposed in the Senate, and the vast majority were accepted. When they were not accepted, there was a reasonable rationale provided as to why those particular amendments were not seen as helpful for this legislation.

I think we have agreement here that the bill is important and that we need to move forward with it. It really is a bit of an awakening, which perhaps has taken too long.

It is interesting, as we are debating the bill here today, that yesterday there was an important report released in the British Parliament on sexual harassment in the workplace. Some of the things said there, as my colleague referenced earlier, are important, because the same thoughts apply here.

There have been disturbing cases that have been tolerated and concealed for too long. Certainly when we look at what has been happening since I have been here, which is 10 years, cases have become more public. We have struggled with how we deal with them. However, do not for a minute think that there were no issues prior to those 10 years. These issues have been here as long as the House has been meeting.

The British Parliament's response was to apologize for the past failings and to commit to change the culture. Hopefully, not only would we pass this piece of proposed legislation, we would also recognize and make a commitment to change.

The British Parliament described a culture of "deference, subservience, acquiescence and silence". Those are very disturbing words, but they relate to what the impact was of that attitude of deference, subservience, acquiescence and silence on the people or the victims who were impacted. It was hugely distressing and long-lasting, and in many cases, had a devastating impact on people's lives. This is a serious issue that we are coming to a point of awareness on.

Of course, as we enter into these debates, we always look into our past and reflect on our own careers and experiences.

● (1210)

As I was considering this piece of legislation and how I felt about it, I reflected back to my first role in a management position. This was back in the 1980s. I was thrilled to be given an opportunity to have a pretty important job for someone in her late 20s. I answered to a board of directors. The chairman of the board of directors would come to the office to visit quite regularly, and it quickly became apparent that when this chair of the board of directors was coming to the office, we either wanted someone else in the office with us or we

needed to be out and about, because he thought nothing of grabbing a person and trying to sit her on his lap. It was the chairman of the board. As members can imagine, it was creepy, and it was highly inappropriate and uncomfortable, but what was at play here was that he was the chairman of the board, and I was in my late 20s. Acquiescence, silence, and just trying to avoid the situation was how one dealt with it. That was the example I should have brought. It was something that was sort of personal. As a nurse, I have certainly dealt with some very horrific abuses, but this was creepy and uncomfortable, and it was wrong.

This brings me to another issue I found very disturbing this year. As we are coming to an awareness of this issue, we are starting to talk about it, and we are trying to put policies in place. That was the story this summer in terms of the issue of the person in the highest office in this country and an incident many years ago, from his past, at a music festival, where there was an inappropriate interaction with a journalist. I have to give the journalist credit. She was very uncomfortable with the situation, and she acted on it. Unlike what I had done many years ago, when I just tried to avoid the situation, she acted on it. She wrote an editorial, at which time the response of the Prime Minister was quite telling: Had he known that she worked for a national newspaper, he might not have done it. Perhaps he thought that she worked for a small-town newspaper, and it was okay. Sometimes, for people who have famous names and are handsome, those sorts of advances are welcome, but clearly they are not always welcome.

In Canada, most people would say that this was a lot of years ago, it was an incident that was not too terrible, that we can see, so let us just move on, or he should make the appropriate comments and move on.

What happened next, though, is what was the most offensive to me. Instead of just saying, "It was a long time ago. I apologize. Obviously, there was something that was very uncomfortable, and I will endeavour to never let that sort of thing happen again," or, "It was related to a time in my past when I was having a difficult time," he did not say that. We did not get that message. At first he remembered being in Creston but did not think he had any negative interactions.

The next comments we got directly from the Prime Minister were, "We've all been reflecting on past behaviours. There is a collective awakening going on and we need to take opportunities to reflect on it".

He went on to say, "often a man experiences an interaction as being benign or not inappropriate and a woman, particularly in a professional context, can experience it differently".

I remember being in a professional context and having something happen that was incredibly inappropriate, and those comments were insulting. It should have been very easy for the Prime Minister to say, "I was young. I had had too many beers, I did something that was foolish, and I am sorry". Instead, he gave us this kind of nonsense. It was so offensive.

It was not about awareness. It was not about moving on. It was something that was terribly troubling, and I wish he could make it better. I wish he could make it right.

Government Orders

In closing, this is an important piece of legislation. It is incumbent on people that when they set a standard, they reflect on their past and are honest and do not try to say that they would have seen things differently and as a benign, professional interaction.

I will be happy to support this legislation, but there are many things that we in this House need to continue to reflect upon.

• (1215)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments the member across the way made in addressing this important, and as I argued earlier, somewhat historic legislation before us. From a national perspective, the government is demonstrating leadership by trying to deal with the issue.

The member reflected on her own personal experience. I have been a parliamentarian for many years, close to 30, and I have found that in the last number of years, such as with the #MeToo movement, many individuals have been brave enough to come forward and share their experiences. It has heightened the level of importance of this issue. It is encouraging to see all-party support and Senate support.

I am wondering if my colleague can provide her thoughts on why we have seen a significant change over time in dealing with this issue. In the first 10 years of my political career, it was never really talked about.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I agree that we have made tremendous progress and are actually talking about this issue, but there is a lot more we need to do.

I have to go back to the comment of the Prime Minister that he was a feminist prime minister, and then he said, “often a man experiences an interaction as being benign or not inappropriate and a woman, particularly in a professional context, can experience it differently”. It shows me that we have a lot more to do.

• (1220)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an unusual occasion when the NDP and the Conservatives have substantially the same position on Bill C-65. Both parties are looking for definitions and clarity within the act.

The Conservatives, we know, are primarily focused on psychological abuses. Will the Conservatives support the NDP's call for amendments to clarify the terms and objectives of Bill C-65, and do our colleagues in the opposition also believe that workers and employers need clear definitions of harassment, violence and psychological harassment?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, this is one of those bills on which there was substantial work done at committee. I was not on the committee, but I understand that amendments were accepted by parties on all sides of the House, and a number of Senate amendments were also accepted. Where amendments were not accepted, the government gave a reasonable rationale. No bill is ever perfect, but we are certainly in a very good place to start.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary and our hon. colleagues have said how far we have come with respect to the #MeToo movement.

Perhaps we have come far, but the Prime Minister missed a very real opportunity to stand up and be a leader this summer, instead of deflecting and denying in his answer about the serious allegation of groping.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague feels that the Prime Minister had a real opportunity to come forward and show true leadership and right a past wrong.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, when that story first came out, I asked myself who has not done something in the past that was perhaps wrong and that the person feels uncomfortable about. What does one do when one recognizes something? Yes, it was 18 years ago, but the Prime Minister himself has said that there is no timeline on being held accountable. An acceptable answer would have been, “It happened a long time ago. I was young, it was wrong, I am so sorry I made this young journalist feel uncomfortable, and I apologize.” Instead, we get that the rules apply to everyone else, but they do not apply to Liberals.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to debate Bill C-65 in the House today. This bill represents a major step forward in enhancing the rights of victims of sexual harassment and violence.

I would like to begin my thanking my Conservative colleagues who sit on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for their excellent work on this bill. They successfully brought in a number of changes to the bill. For instance, they proposed a change aimed at transferring certain powers from the Minister of Labour to the deputy minister, a non-partisan civil servant. This change ensures that there can be no appearance of political interference in an investigation into complaints of sexual harassment committed by a member of the House.

[*English*]

I have spoken before in this House about the #MeToo movement in general and its importance. It is a movement that has had a powerful impact. It has helped women who are survivors to see that they are not alone. It has helped many men who were previously unaware to gain a greater understanding of the all too common experience of harassment and violence that has affected the lives of many women. I have always believed that men need to seek to engage these conversations in a supportive way, especially in terms of talking to and challenging other men about their behaviour. We all need to be part of the solution.

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Before getting elected, I had the honour of serving on the board of a local organization called Saffron, which provides public education programs aimed at prevention, as well as counselling and support to survivors. Saffron was obviously engaged with these issues long before the #MeToo movement but it has found a significant increase in the number of people coming to it for counselling ever since the movement began. This growth is the result of people coming forward to talk about historic trauma, events that have happened in their past, maybe even decades ago, that they had not felt ready or empowered to speak about even in private until the current moment. It is certainly positive that people are now feeling able to come forward and discuss things that have happened to them in the past.

There is one particular issue, perhaps challenge, that I want to discuss today with respect to the #MeToo movement. I read with interest some discussion in the news recently revisiting the actions of former U.S. president Bill Clinton with a former White House intern. Hillary Clinton told a CBS correspondent that the relationship between the most powerful person in the world and an intern did not constitute an abuse of power because the 22-year-old intern was an adult.

About the interaction itself, that intern, Monica Lewinsky, recently wrote an essay in *Vanity Fair*, and I want to quote a passage from it. She wrote:

Just four years ago, in an essay for this magazine, I wrote the following: "Sure, my boss took advantage of me, but I will always remain firm on this point: it was a consensual relationship. Any 'abuse' came in the aftermath, when I was made a scapegoat in order to protect his powerful position." I now see how problematic it was that the two of us even got to a place where there was a question of consent. Instead, the road that led there was littered with inappropriate abuse of authority, station, and privilege. (Full stop.)

Now, at 44, I'm beginning (just beginning) to consider the implications of the power differentials that were so vast between a president and a White House intern. I'm beginning to entertain the notion that in such a circumstance the idea of consent might well be rendered moot. (Although power imbalances—and the ability to abuse them—do exist even when the sex has been consensual.)

But it's also complicated. Very, very complicated. The dictionary definition of "consent"? "To give permission for something to happen." And yet what did the "something" mean in this instance, given the power dynamics, his position, and my age? Was the "something" just about crossing a line of sexual (and later emotional) intimacy? (An intimacy I wanted—with a 22-year-old's limited understanding of the consequences.) He was my boss. He was the most powerful man on the planet. He was 27 years my senior, with enough life experience to know better. He was, at the time, at the pinnacle of his career, while I was in my first job out of college.

I think this episode from American politics and the striking contrast between Hillary Clinton's words and Monica Lewinsky's words are important for our understanding of the #MeToo movement and the dynamics around harassment which can exist in the workplace. The continuing way in which this episode is regarded by many partisan Liberal progressives is, I think, important as well.

●(1225)

The #MeToo movement calls on us to set a new standard for behaviour, to demand women be treated with respect, and to hold those responsible for violence and/or harassment accountable. That standard of behaviour and the appropriate standard of evidence associated with accountability must be set in a consistent way. There ought not to be a Republican standard and a Democrat standard, a Conservative standard and a Liberal standard. There ought not to be a difference between a prime minister of Canada standard and a

leader of the Ontario PC Party standard. There must be a human standard enforced in the same way in all cases.

Failure to apply an equivalent standard across parties allows any perpetrator to use political divisions and inconsistent application of standards as an excuse to avoid accountability. The infection of partisanship into the evaluation of cases very clearly risks weakening the universality of condemnation that should be associated with these kinds of abuses of power.

As an avowed partisan, I do understand the temptation to stand by one's man while firing arrows across the aisle. Standing with one's team is the instinctive human response, further enforced by the norms of our political system.

The #MeToo movement undoubtedly provides political parties with an opportunity to accuse their opponents and perhaps also even an excuse to purge unpopular people from their own ranks. We see elements of this as well of someone possibly being purged on the basis of allegations but also the same person having substantial policy disagreements with the leadership of the party.

Those of us who believe in the importance of this movement must ensure we resist the temptation to evaluate allegations through a partisan lens. This movement is too important for its impact to be lost in partisan rancour. That is true on either side of the border.

As with Bill Clinton, we also had a case here in Canada where a powerful self-identified progressive and feminist leader faced serious allegations of sexual misconduct. It has been alleged, and we have talked about this in the House, that the Prime Minister was involved in the past in a "groping" incident. This allegation was made against the Prime Minister before he had entered politics. Those who talk about believing women and believing these allegations need to consider it seriously and seek to put aside their partisan hats when they make those evaluations.

In response to these allegations, the Prime Minister has said that people can experience things differently. That is perplexing, in so far as it is true people can have a different response to the same events, but events are events. In the question of appropriate behaviour, there is a subjective as well as an objective element in harassment. Certainly, the word "groping" being used in the editorial implies very strongly the crossing of an objective line.

I do wonder parenthetically what the response of my friends on the left would have been if Justice Brett Kavanaugh had said in response to allegations against him that people experience things differently. As well, the response from members of this House is interesting. The minister responsible for bringing forward this legislation, the former minister for the status of women, had the following to say about the Prime Minister's response to these events:

I'm actually proud of a prime minister that understands that you can believe that you didn't have negative interactions with someone—I think we can think about this in all kinds of different situations—and find out later that someone perceived that interaction in a completely different way, and reflect on how our behaviour and the way that we make our way in the world impacts other people.

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Of course, we should consider how certain things can affect the subjective experience of others, but there is an objective element to inappropriate behaviour. There are things a person ought not do to another person and ought to know, and yet we have the former status of women minister standing up for the Prime Minister in this context. I would have thought that the role of the minister for the status of women would be to speak to the Prime Minister and cabinet on behalf of women, not to be defending the Prime Minister's action in every case, including in allegations of inappropriate action toward women.

• (1230)

The #MeToo movement responds to a reality that some men, who have often enjoyed disproportionate power and prestige in the workplace, take advantage of their position at the expense of women. It should trouble us then if the way in which the adjudication and debate about #MeToo allegations works out in practice is to make examples of some men while still allowing some of the most privileged and self-identified progressives to escape being held accountable. These are serious challenges that we must face up to as we go forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

As everyone knows, for our government, harassment and sexual violence of any kind are clearly unacceptable, period. I heard the criticisms advanced by the member opposite, but I would be curious to know what mechanisms his party has put in place specifically to ensure that harassment and violence against women are not tolerated.

What concrete action has his party taken?

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, certainly every time there have been cases of this, and I can think of some not impacting our caucus in particular but affecting our sister parties at other levels, there has been a very strong and very swift response. People within our political movement have not tolerated the kinds of alleged actions we have seen presented against people who have been involved across the political spectrum. If we see the responses that have happened in various provinces, we have seen the strong response, the way in which people within our party and our movement in particular view these things, that it is completely unacceptable that people would abuse their position in the ways that we talked about.

Again, the proof is in the pudding in terms of our response. We encourage other parties to be engaged with a similar level of seriousness.

• (1235)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time my colleague speaks, I listen with rapt attention and again, the member's speech was an amazing one.

One of the things he touched on briefly that I would like him to flesh out a little more was the media complicity in some of these scenarios. I noticed that the Canadian media was enthralled with the Kavanaugh case. From my perspective, it looked like we spent two weeks on that set of allegations and yet when our own Prime Minister is faced with allegations, we seem to spend about two

minutes on it. I wonder if my colleague has any comments regarding that.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do not have much experience personally in the media business. It is not really my area of expertise, the editorial decisions they choose to make and not make.

It does seem in general that in Canada we have a great deal of interest in what happens in the United States. Sometimes the dynamics are very engaging to watch, but at the same time, judicial legislative processes in the United States are not things that we have any kind of direct control over. Our focus should probably be on asking how we respond to these issues and hold people accountable in the Canadian context.

During the summer there was a very serious allegation. There was some coverage about the issue in the media in terms of the Prime Minister's alleged action, the allegations that came out involving groping a number of years ago. There has been some discussion of this in the media. It is a question of the response that has come from people at the political level. I mentioned the words of the former status of women minister, the minister responsible for bringing this forward and her decision about how to communicate about that issue. We have not heard any criticism from members of the government on the way the Prime Minister handled this or the words that he spoke.

My contention is that we need to respond to these issues in a way that sets a human standard for behaviour, not a this is the position for this party and this is the standard for someone else.

[Translation]

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to speak to the proposed amendments to Bill C-65, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code regarding harassment and violence, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the other place for the effort they put into studying Bill C-65 and proposing the amendments we are considering and debating today. The government believes that their work strengthened this bill.

[English]

I know that members of the other place heard testimony that impacted them, as our committee did as well. Hearing the experiences of those working with victims of workplace harassment and violence sent a very strong message to all of us as parliamentarians that we must act and work quickly, but also deliberately, to ensure that the bill works to protect victims and prevent any form of workplace harassment or violence in the first place, because we can all agree that harassment and sexual violence of any kind is unacceptable.

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I would like to thank all members of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons With Disabilities who extended the sittings and came back early from their constituency week to hear important testimony. As well, I extend the thanks of the House to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and the department for evaluating and providing guidance to our committee as we evaluated each clause and section. I also thank the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso for his work in support of our committee evaluating Bill C-65 effectively.

The committee heard from witnesses, all whom spoke with passion about the urgency with which harassment and violence in the workplace need to be addressed. While everyone in the House agreed to the urgency of the bill, we understood the complexities of ensuring that employees are protected from workplace harassment and violence.

The last time I rose in the House, I spoke of the Vice News journalist Hilary Beaumont, author of an investigation into workplace harassment. As I cited then, Mrs. Beaumont interviewed more than 40 women who work on Parliament Hill, including current and former MPs, as well as lobbyists, journalists, staff and interns. Mrs. Beaumont stated at committee that it quickly became apparent that female employees were more vulnerable to harassment than their male colleagues. The women she spoke with told her their stories and experiences, including sexist comments, touching and even sexual assault. Some women said they had been dismissed or had lost job opportunities after trying to report workplace abuse. Some of the women who currently work on the Hill said they would not even know how to report harassment if they had to. Harassment such as this and sexual violence have absolutely no place in any workplace. They are not okay.

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

With that in mind, we agree with the principles underlying some of the amendments proposed by the other place. I would like to focus specifically on those concerning the recourse available to victims of violence and harassment. During its study of Bill C-65, the committee raised several valid concerns.

An employee of any gender who feels their rights have been violated may be unaware that they have two options for recourse. The employee can file a complaint under the Canadian Human Rights Act, or they can file a complaint with the employer under Bill C-65.

A member of the other place said that “we must ensure that women who are victims of sexual harassment can still choose the type of recourse, including a complaint under the Canadian Human Rights Act”. She went on to say that she thinks it is important to clarify that the new framework will not preclude a discrimination complaint for sexual harassment from being filed because that could end up trivializing the harassment and violence that women are subjected to in the workplace and could take away these women’s hard-won avenues of recourse.

Bill C-65 is not at all intended to replace the Canadian Human Rights Act. On the contrary, the bill complements it by laying out a clear procedure for preventing and dealing with incidents of

harassment and violence in the workplace. However, we do see the need for absolute clarity on this issue.

A tremendous amount of work will be done to make sure everyone understands how to proceed if an employee believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or violence at work, but the message may not reach everyone, and that could cause confusion.

● (1245)

[*English*]

In reality, the law is often complex and difficult to grasp. During our committee discussions, we often heard differing views on the same principles from equally qualified legal experts.

The law can be even more complex and difficult to digest for someone who has just experienced a stressful, even traumatic, event at work and is trying to fully understand what remedy he or she has.

[*Translation*]

It is not hard to imagine how employees who are dealing with the consequences of such an experience may not realize right away that they are protected under both the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Canada Labour Code. They may think that they have to choose one or the other when, in fact, they are and always will be covered by both. That is why we support the amendments proposed by the Senate committee, which clearly explain that employees will not waive their rights under the Canadian Human Rights Act. More specifically, senators suggested that Bill C-65 be amended by adding a clause to the section relating to the Canada Labour Code and by amending clause 21, which deals with the way in which part II of the code applies to the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act.

The additional text proposed for the two clauses specifies that it is understood that the relevant sections will not infringe on the rights provided under the Canadian Human Rights Act. We think that is an important and valuable addition to Bill C-65 because it eliminates any ambiguity regarding the relationship between the bill and the existing legislation. Senators pointed that out and proposed the addition. In order to truly achieve the kind of cultural change needed to eliminate workplace harassment and violence, we need to ensure that all legislative measures that seek to put an end to such shameful behaviour are consistent. A consistent set of laws will help us to make a profound cultural change, a change toward civility and respect, a change that ignores differences and enables human rights to take their rightful place.

It is very important to condemn the acts of violence reported by victims, at all levels, so that these injustices do not go unpunished.

This is exactly what the bill will provide for. We must create a culture of equality in our country, so that all Canadians see themselves as equals and treat each other as equal in rights, dignity and aspirations.

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[English]

It is important that we create a culture of equality in our country so that all Canadians recognize each other as equals and treat each other with the respect we all deserve.

I know that today of all days, when many members of this place have young women students from the University of Toronto shadowing them, it is important that we work together to ensure that these principles are enshrined in law.

• (1250)

[Translation]

This bill is just the first step, and it is a necessary one. We urgently need to change the culture in Canadian society so that inappropriate behaviour is no longer reinforced.

[English]

While this is just a first step, it is an important and necessary first step, one that, along with the regulatory changes prescribed by Bill C-65, will work to change the culture of federally regulated work environments and demonstrate our joint commitment to ending workplace violence and harassment.

[Translation]

We must also teach workers about the means of recourse available to them if they are victims of harassment or violence. Bill C-65 will add to the existing recourse options, and workers must know that they are entitled to full protection guaranteed by the various legislative tools.

I therefore support the amendment to specify that employees are not renouncing their rights under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

[English]

Ultimately, we support this amendment because it strengthens Bill C-65, offering more clarity and thus more protections to those employees.

[Translation]

We remain committed to securing the timely passage of Bill C-65. I urge all members to support the government's position.

I would like to remind my esteemed colleagues that harassment and sexual violence of any kind are unacceptable, period. Our government made a commitment to take action on harassment and sexual violence in Parliament and in federally regulated workplaces.

With Bill C-65, the Government of Canada is taking an important step toward making workplaces in federally regulated industries and on Parliament Hill free from these behaviours.

As noted in this bill, our framework will prevent incidents of harassment and violence, respond effectively to these incidents when they do occur, and support victims, survivors and employers throughout the process.

That being said, no government can fix these problems alone. We live in a culture where power imbalances and gender norms create tolerance for these kinds of unacceptable behaviours.

It will take all of us, employers, employees, colleagues, family members and friends, to do better and change this culture.

[English]

As I was saying, it is important that we realize that harassment and sexual violence of any kind are unacceptable, period.

Our government ran on a commitment to take action on workplace harassment and sexual violence in Parliament and in federally regulated workplaces. With Bill C-65, we are taking an important and necessary step toward making workplaces in federally regulated industries and on Parliament Hill free from these behaviours. This framework will prevent incidents of harassment and violence. It will respond effectively to these incidents when they occur. It will support victims, survivors and employers.

However, no government can fix this alone. We live in a culture where power imbalances and gender norms create tolerance for these kinds of unacceptable behaviours. It will take all of us, employers, employees, colleagues, family members and friends, to do better and to change this culture.

The members of the committee worked very hard during those months to make sure that we would strengthen the legislation. Today we received suggestions and amendments from the Senate, and we believe that some of them need to be integrated to strengthen this legislation. I hope the members of this House will make sure we pass these suggested amendments, which we think can help strengthen the legislation, so we can move on and change the situation that exists in our government and in the workplace.

I will now answer questions.

• (1255)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for our hon. colleague. I listened intently to her speech. I have a very simple question.

In the member's opinion, do victims of harassment and violence experience such violations differently from the perpetrators?

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, during the committee's work, many examples and stories were shared. I believe that women and men who live with harassment or sexual violence in the workplace need to have a space to be able to say no, and to get help, making sure they have the possibility of being supported by their employer.

This legislation is very strong, and it will give us the tools to change the culture in our current system.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when Bill C-65 was at committee, there were repeated requests from the labour movement, from the NDP and from my colleague, the member for Parliament for Jonquière and NDP labour critic, to keep alive the role of occupational health and safety committees.

They have been extremely important, being made up of both employer and employee representatives, with a great diversity of representation, whether gender, indigenous or racialized. It is something that has worked very well for decades, supporting complaints and investigations under the labour code.

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All of those witnesses, including the Public Service Alliance of Canada and others I mentioned, asked that the role of those occupational health and safety committees be maintained. In the case of workplace or sexual harassment, they asked that the complainant have the option to turn to these committees and all the experience they have garnered. The NDP's amendment to have that included in Bill C-65 was rejected by the government side. The Senate proposed the same amendment, and that was also rejected by the government side.

Is it my colleague's view that these occupational health and safety committees truly have no utility here?

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, we had that conversation, and a decision was made to ensure that the privacy of the person was protected.

I truly believe the occupational health and safety committees play a role in helping to make this change in the current culture. It is crucial that we use them in this role and make sure we move forward to change and transform the culture in the workplace.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have some concerns with the bill. I agree with my colleague, and I commend the committee for its work in accepting amendments from various parties.

Looking through the bill, though, I believe there are still some gaps in terms of ensuring that we take politics out of the decision-making. In one aspect, there is a portion of the bill that states that no complaint can come forward after an employee has been out of that employment for three months. However, the minister of labour has the authority to extend or offer an exemption to that timeline, in perpetuity. I am concerned that this introduces politics into this legislation, which we worked very hard to eliminate.

I would like the member's opinion. Are there some opportunities to work further to improve this bill and remove any options or any optics of political influence in this legislation?

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, I will answer this question in French because that is easier for me. I am sure my hon. colleague can hear my answer through the interpreter.

I know we had this conversation in committee. After reviewing all the options, we realized that it was really up to the employer to carefully examine the problems identified in its workplace following the investigation.

There will be a whole process, and some measures will be taken in the regulations to ensure that the process is fair and is followed properly.

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the great pleasure to work alongside the member for Ottawa—Vanier, and I attended many of the meetings when the committee brought witnesses to deal with the legislation.

I would like the member to share with the House just some of the people who came and presented testimony. I was taken by how well

prepared they were and the consistency of what was heard through that testimony. Could she share with the House and put on the record those groups that had an opportunity to present, both at the committee and through a number of written submissions as well?

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, all the participants really understood the importance of this, which is twofold: one, to have legislation that will protect and help those who are affected by harassment and sexual violence in the workplace; and two, to make sure we have tools to prevent this. This is a major issue, and we need to give our employees the power to understand that they can be protected, they should not be going through this and they should be supported.

One testimony was from someone who had lived through it for many years. For privacy reasons, I will not say where she worked, but it was in our government. We were all very surprised that she did not have that space to be able to make a complaint and be supported.

This legislation would give us the necessary tools to move forward with prevention and methods and measures to empower employees in our government and in the workplace to be able to work safely.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask my hon. colleague this question one more time. Perhaps, in my delivery, I was not succinct and clear. I want to give her another opportunity.

In our hon. colleague's opinion, could the victims of violence and harassment experience such violations differently from their perpetrators?

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, I am having a hard time understanding what the member is looking for as an answer. However, when we worked on this bill with his colleagues, we made sure that we looked at both sides. We looked at how we can help employees or members in the workplace work together, and how we can make sure that it is a safe environment, that they have a process that will support them, and that they will be able to stay in their workplace and hopefully work in that environment after living through a critical situation.

• (1305)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill C-65, which is an important piece of proposed legislation. I gather from all the presentations today that all of us in the House understand that this legislation is overdue. As elected officials and members of Parliament in the House of Commons, I do not think there is any doubt that we should be the ones to set the example. Canadians across the country look up to us, and it behooves us as members of Parliament to ensure that leadership comes from the top down and that we are the ones taking the lead on an issue such as this.

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All forms of harassment, sexual violence, discrimination and bullying are unacceptable in our society today. That has been very clear, not only from the presentations and interventions in the House but in the media and society as a whole. We have seen that the time has come where these types of actions are simply no longer acceptable. They probably should never have been acceptable, but now with the coverage and the change in society, this has certainly come to a head. Therefore, it is important that we enact this legislation, Bill C-65, but I also think Canadians expect us to make sure we do it right.

Like many of my colleagues who have spoken today, I too am a father. I have three children. My youngest actually leaves her teenage years today. It is her 20th birthday, which makes me feel very old.

As my wife and I raised our three kids, we certainly encountered various instances of bullying and harassment in school and in sports. I understand, as I think every parent in the House does, the profound and long-lasting impact that had on my children from when they were in elementary school to their lives now as young adults. We cannot underestimate the long-lasting impact that these types of inappropriate activities have on our children, which certainly leads and shapes how they are as adults.

Therefore, I am very proud of the work that was done at committee and within the House on Bill C-65 to ensure that we get this right, that we lead by example, and that the example starts right here in the House with this proposed legislation, which is a good first step forward.

However, as many of my colleagues have said, I believe that some pieces of the proposed legislation are concerning. When we are hearing allegations that for powerful officials, elected representatives or people in business there is a two-tiered system or a two-tiered level of acceptance, that is where we have to ensure that we get this right and that we are going in the right direction.

As I said, I truly believe Canadians are looking at us today to set the right example. They want to see that we are taking action, and that the action we are taking means every single Canadian is treated equally and with respect, and that their stories hold the same weight as any other Canadian, regardless of that person's position of power or as an elected official.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that is in the spirit of the bill before us. We simply cannot have a system where people in power do not face the same consequences as any other Canadian.

I will tell members a quick story. I was watching the news on the weekend, as I do just about every weekend, and I saw an interview on CBS with former first lady and secretary of state Hillary Clinton. She was asked whether or not her husband and former president of the United States, Bill Clinton, should have resigned as president after the sex scandal with his intern, who was 22 years old at the time.

As a father, but certainly as an elected representative and member of Parliament, I was appalled by her answer. Her answer was that he should not have stepped down, that the intern was an adult, and that this was a consensual relationship. That is certainly not the type of answer or the attitude that we are expecting in today's day and age, especially from a well-respected Democrat in the United States who

tried to become the president of the United States. She just sloughed off this issue, saying that they were consenting adults despite his being 27 years her senior and in a very influential position of power. He was the president of the United States.

● (1310)

I would profess that had anybody else been in this situation, I think Ms. Clinton would have had a very different response. We have seen that across all spectrums of society, whether it is Mr. Weinstein or Mr. Cosby. It concerns me that in today's society, there seems to be this development of a two-tiered system, where people in power are somehow exempt from the same repercussions as any other Canadian.

That was also quite evident earlier this summer when the Prime Minister, albeit it occurred 18 years ago or in that range, was accused of inappropriate behaviour with a newspaper reporter. He did not apologize and there were no consequences within the House of Commons or Parliament. It is very important for us, as parliamentarians, that we send a very strong and clear message to Canadians with Bill C-65 that these actions will not be tolerated, regardless of one's position, one's job title and certainly if it is the Prime Minister.

That reaffirms why this bill is so important. It is behaviour such as this that Canadians and members of Parliament can no longer tolerate. We have to send a message and set the tone for the rest of Canada.

The legislation would impact more than 900,000 employees in federally regulated areas. It would cover nearly 8% of workers actively employed in Canada. Therefore, the impact of the legislation would be quite profound.

Bill C-65 aims to protect federal public service employees and federally regulated employees, including staff working on Parliament Hill. I think all of us would agree that these employees are exceptionally talented and very important to us as elected officials. If it were not for them, we certainly would not be able to do the day-to-day tasks expected of us. Before this legislation, things were traditionally kind of in a grey area for these employees. They were not sure where they fell when issues of harassment or even bullying occurred in an office and where they could turn for support. This is an extremely important point in the legislation.

Sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and bullying certainly have no place in Canadian society, especially within our political system and on Parliament Hill. By electing us, our constituents across Canada have shown an incredible trust and confidence in us. Each and every one of us should take that responsibility to heart. When they cast their votes, they expected us to represent them with the utmost professionalism, to be above reproach. I dare say constituents look to us and hope to be very proud of the men and women they have selected to represent them in the House of Commons. They look at us to personify their values and the things that are important to them, their friends, their families and certainly their communities.

Government Orders

It is our duty to act in a manner that behoves a member of Parliament, to set a very strong example not only for our colleagues in the House but our staff and certainly and foremost for our constituents. That is why I am voicing a bit of frustration with the bill today as there clearly seems to be two-tier treatment for how people in the House will be treated.

I have been here for just over four years, so I do not have the experience of some of my other very esteemed and honourable colleagues. However, in my short four years, I saw colleagues removed from NDP and Liberal caucuses when allegations of harassment were made. I do not want to judge the validity of those charges, that is not for me to do, but the action in those cases was very swift. A lot of those colleagues were not re-elected, which is the decision of their constituents. However, their leadership teams and caucuses acted very quickly in addressing these situations.

However, it is a much different approach for the Prime Minister and members of cabinet when similar allegations are made against them. It seems that serious allegations of harassment cannot be set aside simply by saying that we remember things differently. We cannot have ministers calling their colleagues ambulance chasers or Neanderthals. That is not acceptable behaviour. We are at a level where Canadians expect us to be beyond that.

● (1315)

I want to go back to this summer. We should focus on that with respect to where this legislation should take us. When the Prime Minister spoke about the allegations that were raised to him regarding the reporter in BC, he said that this should be a reckoning for us all. I agree. This legislation should be a reckoning for us all. It should be tighter, more succinct and stronger than it is.

Protecting our employees and ensuring we have a safe workplace should be unequivocally a non-partisan issue. All of us in the House should be working together to ensure we put the best legislation forward.

When we had some discussions with department officials about Bill C-65, I asked about the investigation guidelines. If members have a chance to take a look at it, it is a flow chart of sorts when complaints are made. Complaints against a staff member go in one direction and a complaint against members of Parliament goes in another. It was important to try to take the politics out of the investigation and the decision-making system.

When I asked department officials if some of the regulations in the bill would be equally enforced on members of cabinet and a prime minister as they would be on any other member of Parliament, I was concerned when they said they were unsure. They did not know if that was truly the case.

Another element in the bill is that a complainant cannot make a complaint against an employer after he or she has been out of the position for three months. Once a complainant has left that position for whatever reason, he or she can no longer file a complaint against the employer. However, the minister of labour of whatever party is in government would have the authority to waive that timeline in perpetuity. It could be three months, three years or 30 years. Again, that brings political influence into the bill. I again want to commend

members of the committee who worked to accept amendments from all parties to ensure we tried to eliminate that whenever possible

However, there are still some gaps in the legislation that are open to political influence and we have to be cognizant of that. The optics of the bill have to ensure that there is no political influence when it comes to cases of sexual harassment, harassment in the workplace and certainly bullying.

When I again asked department officials if the minister would be able to make a decision on exempting a former member of Parliament or an existing member, a cabinet minister or a prime minister, they answered that they did not know. We should be aware of that as we follow through on Bill C-65.

There are some good regulations within the bill. Again, the Conservatives will be supporting Bill C-65 as we move it forward. It is an important step but it is just one step.

For example, under the previous wording in the bill, a person who was a victim of harassment by his or her immediate supervisor had to deal directly with the harasser. With the changes to the bill, that would no longer be the case. Victims will not have to deal with the people they are complaining against or who have allegedly attacked or harassed them, which is important. It will ensure that anyone who does have concerns or does have a complaint can feel comfortable that he or she will not have to face the accused in that matter.

The previous wording would have put any victim in a very challenging situation. We heard that at committee when witnesses came forward with their stories, and I appreciate all of them for doing that. It can be very difficult to relive that situation. People do not want retell their story over and over again. I appreciate the effort the witnesses made because it helped us to build this legislation.

● (1320)

Prior to that, if victims or alleged victims had to face their accusers to tell their stories, I think it may have deterred a lot of them from coming forward. They once again would have felt violated. They would have had to confront their harassers and they certainly were not provided the proper resources or the proper tools to deal with that. This was why the proposed amendment, which was accepted, to ensure that victims would not have to go through that situation again was very critical. They would put forward their complaints to a third party.

A third amendment introduced clause 2.1. It added a new text which would amend the Canada Labour Code to explicitly guarantee the ability of complainants to see redress through the Canadian Human Rights Commission. This would also provide greater certainty to those who experienced workplace violence and harassment. That is another important piece of the bill.

Another amendment to clause 11.1 would ensure that the minister's annual report would contain and categorize statistical information related to the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act, which is also a very positive step forward.

Government Orders

I am proud of the initiatives that our Conservative caucus brought forward as part of the amendments to the bill. Through this process over the last year, we have certainly ensured that our staff are aware of the resources available to them and we have had training sessions. All members of Parliament went through mandatory harassment training, which I think was a very positive experience for all of us. It is very important for us because we want to eliminate harassment. We want to ensure that our employees, our colleagues and the people who we work with here for very long hours each and every day feel comfortable in their workplace.

It is important for members, not only as leaders in our offices but also as leaders in our community, to be aware of how we handle these situations if a staff member feels harassed or uncomfortable. It is important they be aware that there is a system and that guidelines are in place for them to file their complaints and have them resolved.

Knowledge is a powerful thing. The more people who know about their rights and responsibilities regarding issues of harassment and discrimination, the better off they will be and the happier they will be in their lives and in their workplace. We must let our employees know where they can go for assistance. We also need to give them the basic tools and support for them to speak up for themselves and resolve these issues as efficiently and easily as they can.

Staff members are critical to our everyday lives. However, this is larger than just what happens on the Hill. As a father, I want to see protections in our workplace and our communities and I want to see a cultural shift so everyone understands that harassment will not and cannot be tolerated. We are seeing a shift. It begins with us standing up against it, talking about it and proactively changing the dynamic. Creating a safe environment starts here, but we have to do that for everyone.

I urge all members of the House to practise what we preach and show Canadians that we are serious about zero tolerance for harassment and bullying. No one should be exempt from these new rules. No one should be able to shrug off a complaint or an allegation by simply saying he or she remembers it differently.

For this to work, Canadians need to know they will be protected, that they will be believed, that they will be treated equally and that they will be respected. No one is above the law. We in the House must set the example. We must be the leaders and that leadership comes from the top down.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate many of the comments that members have put on the record, addressing this important and arguably very historic legislation before us.

I want to pick up on one aspect, which is the whole issue of bravery. It takes a great deal of courage for victims to come forward. I go to a local restaurant every Saturday. Over the last couple of years in particular, people have come forward to share their stories. It is a very emotional time and it is very important we respect that. We have to try to see it through the eyes of the victim and demonstrate empathy where we can.

My colleague touched on the importance of people feeling comfortable in coming forward. Would he expand his thoughts on

that aspect, recognizing that the legislation is a significant step forward but that there still are other things we can do?

• (1325)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question really hits on one of the major themes in my presentation. Absolutely, we want to ensure any Canadian feels comfortable coming forward, whether to a colleague at work or through something more formal that we are trying to put together as part of Bill C-65.

The concern I have is that, as part of this bill, we are telling Canadians that in the House of Commons and the federal government there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying in the workplace. However, it is very important we practise what we preach. As my colleague said, if we want to take the view of the victim, I agree with that. If the victim comes to us or to somebody to make a complaint, then we have to take that complaint seriously. We cannot say that person experienced the incident differently.

I am very concerned we are sending a double message to Canadians that if they are in a specific position of power, or they are in a position of authority, their story would not have the same credence as anybody else. I am very concerned we are sending a very poor message to Canadians. What we should be sending is that no matter who they are, no matter what position they are in, they are under the same status as anybody else. That is a very important message.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a theme that was repeated throughout the committee review of Bill C-65, and has certainly been reflected in my colleague's speech, is removing barriers to victims of harassment in the workplace that prevent them from coming forward because they fear privacy concerns. The member alluded to this in his speech.

One of the amendments my New Democratic colleague, the member of Parliament for Jonquière, made at committee was blocked by the government, which blocked it again in the Senate amendments. It was a provision to ensure the investigation report could be released to the victim and the health and safety representatives, with details such as the workplace redacted, which might reveal things about the victim's identity.

The question is about how to share the victim's recommendations about changes to the workplace without revealing who that victim is. Are there any comments from my colleague about how that could be accommodated given my understanding is the government has refused those amendments?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I was not a member of the committee at that time so I do not know the background of that amendment, but I appreciate the member bringing it forward. I agree to some of her comments, and I do think it is the victim's right to understand as much information as possible that went into the decision, whatever the decision may be. However, as part of that, I also believe it is just as important to protect the privacy of those involved in an investigation.

Government Orders

I am pleased to see some of the portions of Bill C-65 go a long way to ensure the protection of both parties in an incident, whether it is the victim or the accused. Both parties have to ensure their privacy is protected. A very critical piece of this legislation is to ensure those people feel safe coming forward and that their identity may not be revealed to the complainant, but I think that goes both ways.

• (1330)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the parliamentary secretary for two things before I go forward. One, I know the restaurant he is talking about, and he eats there every Saturday when he is back in the riding. If somebody like myself just even drives by it, we gain five pounds or 10 pounds.

The other thing is that he said something very important in this debate. When somebody comes to us with a complaint or to share a story of violence or harassment, as leadership, we should always look at it through the lens of the victim. I want to give our hon. colleague another opportunity to talk about a real missed opportunity that the Prime Minister had. Rather than looking at it through the lens of the victim, instead he offered more of an excuse and a denial rather than an apology. I want to allow our hon. colleague to expand on his comments on that a little further.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I agree. When we are making legislation like this we are telling Canadians we are accepting a leadership role in trying to change how society views some of these issues. In this case it is harassment and bullying.

The leadership starts with the Prime Minister of Canada. He had a very unique opportunity this summer when these allegations came forward. I want to reiterate the Prime Minister did not deny this happened. He just said they viewed this occurrence differently. He had an opportunity to take a very strong leadership role and send a strong message to Canadians that no one is exempt from these types of charges. We were all in high school, or university, or college. We probably have all had our moments we were less than proud of, but the Prime Minister could have taken that chance to simply apologize, tell the young women he was out of line and that it is not something he has done in his adult years. However, he did not do that. Instead, he deflected and probably made this victim feel even worse than she felt 17 or 18 years ago when she made this allegation in a newspaper report and talked about how horrible she felt that the future prime minister treated her, and acted, this way. Not only did he not apologize, but he said if he had known she was a reporter for a national newspaper, he would have treated her differently. Again, it puts her on a different level. It belittled her that she was not important enough for him to even notice. That sends a very poor message.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important that we do not lose the focus on the legislation itself. It is a very progressive piece of legislation. As much as the national government is demonstrating a very strong leadership role, and we have seen the support coming from the Senate and members of all sides of the House, there is also going to be a role for other jurisdictions. I am thinking specifically of provincial entities and the labour forces they are a responsible for.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on how important it is that not only do we leave it at this legislation, but we

also look at what we could be doing to work with other stakeholders, such as provincial or territorial workforces.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my presentation, I will be supporting Bill C-65 because I believe it is an important step forward that we set the tone and show a leadership position on this issue and work with the provinces to come up with regulations and rules around sexual harassment in the workplace.

I know the parliamentary secretary is working very hard to change the subject on what our concerns are with this legislation. No matter how historic they believe the legislation is, we cannot put that forward to Canadians and say, "Do as I say, not as I do". That is not the message we should be sending.

The message we are sending is that this is for everyone else, but when it comes to cabinet and the prime minister of Canada, there are different rules. We have to be very cognizant of the fact that Canadians are looking to us to set the example and show leadership. That is what we are asking the Liberal government to do.

• (1335)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud to speak to Bill C-65, which amends the Canada Labour Code and the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act to help ensure that federally regulated workplaces, including the federal public service and parliamentary workplaces, are free from harassment and violence. With this legislation we can all look forward to a time when Canadian workers are better protected against workplace violence and harassment. We can look forward to a time when no worker in Canada has to fear coming forward after experiencing these inappropriate behaviours to protect themselves or their families.

I want to begin by thanking the hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour for bringing this very important legislation before Parliament. While it is not often that we enjoy support from our opposition colleagues, the way in which we have worked together across the aisle to support this legislation shows that it is truly time for change. Whether it is how sexual violence in the workplace is handled, or how power imbalances are reinforced in our culture, violence and harassment in the workplace are not partisan issues. They are issues that affect us all, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

[*Translation*]

Of course, the first thing that comes to mind when I think of this bill is that it benefits vulnerable minorities who are much more likely to be harassed in the workplace. Sexual minorities, including people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or two-spirit are at a particularly high risk of being victims of harassment and violence in the workplace. To me that is totally unacceptable.

Government Orders

[English]

Historically, LGBTQ2 community members have been targets of workplace violence and harassment. Progress is being made, but we need to continue to do more.

One example of such societal progress is the historic apology made to LGBTQ2 Canadians last summer by Prime Minister Trudeau. When most of us see Canada as a progressive and accepting nation, our past has not always been so open-minded. We know that from the 1950s to the early 1990s, the Government of Canada undertook a horrifying campaign of oppression against citizens suspected of being part of LGBTQ2 communities, setting a course for decades of discrimination in the Canadian workforce and destroying the lives of thousands of workers, including public servants and soldiers in the process. As we know, the Prime Minister made a historic apology that day. I apologize for using his name in this chamber.

Although we now see workplace violence and harassment as issues that need to be solved, this shows that for these communities in particular, workplace violence and harassment have been part of the lives of people for too long. Today, as a legacy of this dark period of our history, LGBTQ2 Canadians are still subjected to discrimination, violence and aggression at alarming rates. In fact, trans people did not even have explicit protection under federal human rights legislation until 2017. Occurrences of mental health issues and suicides remain higher among LGBTQ2 youth as a result of violence and harassment. In fact, LGBTQ2 youth are four times more likely to attempt to suicide than their straight counterparts. The homelessness and joblessness rates that face the LGBTQ2 community are high. Therefore, the steps we are taking today will encourage LGBTQ2 Canadians to be full participants in our workforce.

[Translation]

I must also mention the treatment of indigenous workers, for whom violence and discrimination are part of their daily lives. According to the 2014 Statistics Canada General Social Survey, violent victimization among indigenous people is more than double of that of the non-indigenous population. Research shows that regardless the type of violent offence, whether it is sexual assault, robbery or assault, the victimization rate is almost always higher in indigenous populations than in Canada's non-indigenous populations.

[English]

It is vitally important that indigenous peoples and LGBTQ2 citizens feel able to be 100% themselves without the fear of being harassed, treated poorly or made to feel insignificant.

Before I came out, I felt like I could only operate at about 60% or 70%. I spent 30% to 40% of my brain space trying to be a straight guy. It did not work and it ate me up from the inside. Once I came out, I was able to be 100% me. Even some of my friends said, "Could we just have the 80% Randy back? You're a lot to handle." Quite frankly, I am 100% now. I am not going back in that closet.

Guess what? We want LGBTQ2 Canadians to be 100% themselves, and that includes in the workforce. When we get this kind of legislation passed, when we practise what we preach inside

this chamber, all Canadians can feel like they belong in our workforces.

• (1340)

As I have said to friends and colleagues in the workplace since coming out, "Joke with me, not about me. I am a bald, gay guy. They can make lots of jokes about that, but just do it with me in the room, not when I am outside the room grabbing some coffee."

The results and the stats are real. A 2018 Human Rights Campaign foundation study noted that a little more than half of employees surveyed, 53%, hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at work, and a little over a third, 35%, do not disclose their personal lives. Could members imagine going through a week in this place not talking about what it is like to be part of a family, not talking about their kids, not talking about their loved ones, not talking about whether they are an aunt or uncle, and whether they are a proud member of a partnership that has lasted for 10, 15, or 20 years? That would be unthinkable to me, and yet it happens to far too many Canadians. That means they are not bringing their full selves to work.

The transgender community especially faces staggering challenges. Transgender people face an unemployment rate three times higher than average. Twenty-seven per cent were not hired, were fired or were not promoted in 2015, due to their gender identity or expression, according to the U.S. Transgender Survey, the largest of its kind looking at the American transgender community. In 2015, an astounding 80% of transgender people were harassed or mistreated at work or had to take steps to avoid it. We do not have data at the national level, but we are getting there. The Trans Pulse project in Ontario studied the impact of social exclusion and discrimination on the health of transgender people. Of those surveyed, 13% said they were fired specifically for being transgender; another 15% suspected that it might have been the reason for their dismissal; 18% said they were turned down from a job for being transgender, while another 32% suspected this was the reason.

Government Orders

I have faced this kind of discrimination in advance of the campaign trail. I was on a study tour, learning how to speak Spanish in Latin America. I was in Buenos Aires, and serendipity happened to lead me to hear a voice of a distinguished member of my community of Edmonton. We met in the kiosk at the local museum and we agreed to have lunch the next day. It was a long lunch. After about two and a half hours, I mentioned that I might someday like to be in politics and mentioned my partner at the time. He said, "Wait a second, you are gay?" I said yes, that I had been out for almost 20 years. "And you're francophone," he said. I said that I was. He said he could tell me what I needed to do, that I needed to take my francophone, gay self and go back to Montreal where I came from because I did not stand a snowball's chance in hell of ever being elected in Edmonton. I found that really interesting because my family does not come from Montreal. It comes from Quebec City and had moved to Alberta 126 years earlier. Therefore, I took what was overt discrimination and used that as fuel. I used that as fuel at the doors and won that election. Within a couple of days of winning the election and becoming a Liberal, gay, francophone person in Edmonton Centre, I found a postcard, *en français*, that said, "thinking of you", "*pensant à vous*". I wrote on the inside, "Looking forward to lunch soon. Can't wait to see you", and signed my name with "Edmonton Centre, member of Parliament".

[Translation]

We had a meal together and it went very well.

[English]

He totally fell on his sword and said, "I can't believe I said that to you. I was wrong, and please forgive me." Discrimination happens, but so does reconciliation.

What we are talking about here is stopping it, preventing it, and addressing it properly. Bill C-65 can help to further our fight for equality. The legislation builds on existing violence and harassment provisions in the code to create a comprehensive approach that would cover the full spectrum of harassment and violence, from bullying and teasing to sexual harassment and physical violence. This legislation extends the full suite of occupational health and safety protections, including harassment and violence protections, to parliamentary workplaces, such as the Senate, the Library of Parliament and the House of Commons, including our own political staff.

I was surprised, mystified and shocked when I was elected to realize the few protections afforded to parliamentary staff. As a new member of Parliament, coming from business, I was shocked. I am proud to be part of a Parliament that is taking steps to address that. As a result of this legislation, a single, integrated regime would be created to protect all federally regulated employees from harassment and violence in the workplace, including LGBTQ2 and indigenous workers, preventing incidents of harassment from occurring and supporting those employees affected by harassment and violence, including respecting their privacy.

I know that the other chamber has done extensive study of this bill and that it engaged in discussions with witnesses from many organizations to help in the study.

Having read the amendments made to Bill C-65, I find that these changes clearly help strengthen a powerful framework that will support every Canadian worker from coast to coast to coast.

The other place heard concerns that Bill C-65 would prevent employees from complaining to the Canadian Human Rights Commission when they experience workplace harassment or violence. As such, they proposed an amendment that explicitly states that "nothing in this Part shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the rights provided for under the Canadian Human Rights Act." Indeed, it is not the intention of this legislation to prevent someone from going to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. As such, we support this amendment.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada reiterates that it is essential for Canadian employees to know that they can file complaints without fear of those complaints being buried under a pile of red tape. Reprisals are already prohibited under the Canada Labour Code. Accordingly, a complainant who feels they are being punished for coming forward can contact the labour program for help.

This amendment also guarantees that the information concerning any complaint of workplace harassment or violence remains confidential, whether it is brought before one tribunal or another.

[English]

The other chamber has proposed additional amendments. A member of the other place proposed that the terms "trivial, frivolous or vexatious" be replaced with the term "abuse of process" to limit the negative associations of coming forward with a complaint. Language matters. It is important that we show the government that people who experience workplace harassment or violence will have their claims taken seriously and that experiences will not be dismissed as trivial, or frivolous, or vexatious. We know that it takes strength and courage for someone to come forward when they have experienced inappropriate behaviours in the workplace. We know that we must make it easier for those people to come forward.

[Translation]

This amendment shows that the government recognizes that abusive language can harm anyone who has been a victim of sexual harassment and wishes to file a complaint, but who is ashamed of what happened to him or her.

[English]

There were other amendments proposed by the other place that we were not able to accept, and I will address one such amendment in particular.

Government Orders

A member of the other chamber proposed that persons who investigate the complaint shall inform the employee and employer in writing of the results of the investigation. We agree with the intent of this amendment, which was thoughtful and positive. However, we are unable to accept this amendment because of its location in the legislation. The section of the Canadian Labour Code that would be amended by the other chamber pertains to investigations by workplace committees. In Bill C-65, incidents of workplace harassment or violence are not subject to this part of the code, in order to protect the privacy of individuals in cases of harassment and violence. Bill C-65 prohibits the involvement of workplace committees in the investigation of specific incidents.

[*Translation*]

If this amendment were included the Canada Labour Code, it would not apply to incidents of harassment or violence, and that is why it was not adopted. If an incident of harassment or violence is not resolved, the workplace committee investigates and proceeds directly to an investigation by a qualified person.

[*English*]

This concern is not lost. The process related to the investigation by a competent person will be set out in the regulations. That point was raised by the other chamber and will be included in the regulations as well. What we propose is that these regulations include who receives a copy of an investigative report, including the employee. Since the entire process related to the competent person investigation is set in the regulations, there is nowhere in the code where a reference to who receives the investigative report could be added.

Further, the reason why the process is set out in regulations is that it builds on the existing violence prevention regulations that were developed through tripartite consultation. The new regulations for Bill C-65 are also being developed through tripartite consultation to ensure that the process meets the needs of all parties and will result in timely resolution of incidents.

I am also glad to see that this legislation will apply to employees of Parliament who were not previously protected, as we discussed. It is also important to know that staff are being supported both on the Hill and in constituency offices like my own in Edmonton Centre. This legislation now extends all safety protections to Hill and constituency staff.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

The fundamental objective of this bill is to prevent not just physical illness and injury, but also mental health issues. This bill will apply to the entire spectrum of workplace harassment and violence. The amendments to the code will apply to federally-regulated workplaces, including international and interprovincial transportation, banks, telecommunications, most Crown corporations, the federal public service, ministerial exempt staff and interns employed in these sectors.

[*English*]

The proposed changes to Bill C-65 will show Canadians that these behaviours will not be tolerated.

There is a misconception brought to the House by the member for Foothills that I would like to address. The issue pertains to the possibility of perceived political interference in processes related to political staff and their employees.

Let me be really clear on this. To avoid any perception of conflict of interest where a matter involves a member of the Senate or their staff, or a member of the House of Commons or their employees, the powers, duties and functions of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour will be exercised by the deputy minister of labour. This includes the ability to extend the length of time for a former employee to bring forward a complaint. It is the deputy minister of labour who will grant this extension. There will be no political influence or interference in such matters, full stop.

It is important to circle back to why this matters so much. The federal government employs some 300,000 Canadians, as the largest employer in the country. A 2014 World Bank study estimated that the cost of intolerance in the Indian economy was \$31 billion U.S. a year. What does that mean in the Canadian context? If we take the average company, the average NGO, the average provincial workforce or, in our case, the federally regulated agencies, and we take 15% of the bottom line, 15% of the staff costs, and add up what that number is, it is the cost of exclusion. That is what intolerance in the workplace costs us as Canadians every day. Add up how much is spent on salary and benefits, take 15% of that, and ask how much is it worth to get workplace harassment under control, to stop it, to prevent it and to help people who are victims of it.

That is what we are talking about. I would like to be here in the future to talk about the benefits of inclusion, not the costs of exclusion. That is exactly what this kind of legislation will help us to achieve here today.

Here is a magical thing that happens. When an inclusive workforce is created, when people know they are protected, when the 15% of those who feel marginalized because of racism, bullying, misogyny, transphobia, homophobia and biphobia feel welcome, that workforce will include 100% of its employees. Something magical happens, because the other 85% know they are in a healthy ecosystem as well, and the whole workforce does better. The pie increases.

What we want to do here is to have workplaces where people can bring 100% of themselves to work. We want to have workplaces where people can be their full selves. We want people to be safe. We want them to have a good day at work and to go home to their loved ones and to be able to talk about how awesome it is to work for the Government of Canada, because we have put in place a system and a piece of legislation that keeps them protected.

Statements by Members

I am honoured to serve in the 42nd Parliament. I am even more honoured to know that we are working on an issue that not just Canadians face, but also people around the world. Workplace harassment is serious. We must stamp it out. With this legislation, we are taking great strides. We know that the measures in Bill C-65 will help make these changes possible. I hope that the bill will serve as a historic reminder of Canada's dedication to equality and strength here and from coast to coast to coast. I encourage all colleagues in the House and around the country to bring their 100% selves to work. Canadians would ask no less of them.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is the beauty of the House, that here we sit, three years in, and we have heard a great speech by a member of Parliament. We all have an opportunity, even in the most-spirited debates, to learn something about them. I want to thank our hon. colleague for that great speech and sharing a bit of his journey to get here.

I will offer this, that I am a bald, heavy-set guy, so I too have borne the brunt of some of the jokes, but I can take it. I just ask that when people do it, let me join in as well.

In explaining away the groping allegation this summer, our Prime Minister said, "I'll be blunt about it. Often a man experiences an interaction as being benign or not inappropriate and a woman...can experience it differently". Does our hon. colleague share the view that victims of violence and harassment may experience such interactions differently than their perpetrators?

• (1355)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that my colleague is in robust health. As he can see, my hairline is taking the same trajectory that his has taken. I do not know if that makes us wiser or just more experienced on the campaign trail.

However, I can tell the member that everybody's experience when it comes to unwanted approaches in the workplace must be taken with the seriousness that they deserve and they must be investigated. What we are talking about here in Bill C-65 is one regime to stop workplace violence, to help people who are subject to it, and to make sure that our political staff on the Hill and in our constituencies are afforded the same rights, protections and safety as all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for talking about his experience of workplace violence and harassment. That took a lot of courage and it informs the debate. That is why we want to pass a bill. We agree that it moves things along.

They want to change workplace culture, but the Liberals did not want to keep joint health and safety committees. They opposed letting the very diverse experts on those committees, which include people working with LGBTQ communities, racialized people and linguistic minorities, continue to support victims. Under Bill C-65, this will no longer happen.

I would like my colleague to explain why it is important to bring back these joint committees so they can support victims when they face their employers, who can be somewhat intimidating in the workplace.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague and his colleagues for their support on this bill.

What we heard from witnesses was quite clear: when someone is a victim of harassment in the workplace, it is extremely personal and traumatizing, so protecting victims' privacy is paramount. We therefore think it is important that these individuals have access to all the support they need.

The Speaker: The member for Edmonton Centre will have six and a half minutes to complete his remarks after oral question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the only thing in Saskatoon more exciting than the Blades' come-from-behind overtime victory against the Red Deer Rebels was the Saskatchewan NDP convention. As an automatic delegate, I was privileged to reconnect with many party stalwarts.

Provincial NDP leader Ryan Meili unveiled renew Saskatchewan, a plan to finance the upfront costs of energy installations and retrofits for homes, farms, businesses, municipalities and reserves, with the loans repaid from the energy savings over time. This initiative to create jobs and reduce emissions by tapping into Saskatchewan's tremendous potential for wind, solar and geothermal power should have us all running back to Saskatoon.

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VERONICA TYRRELL

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honour and remember the life of a great Canadian from Oakville, Veronica Tyrrell.

Originally from Guyana, Veronica came to Oakville in 1984 and made a remarkable impact on our community. She spearheaded some of Oakville's largest multicultural festivals and organizations, helping our community learn to celebrate our diversity. Veronica was the leader and the voice of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton for decades. She organized and led Black History Month celebrations and created leadership and empowerment opportunities for black youth in our community. Veronica championed the Oakville Emancipation Day Family Picnic.

With her husband Lloyd always at her side, family came first. For her, there were no brighter shining lights than her children, Andrew and Allison, and her grandsons, Andrew Jr. and Brandon.

Veronica was an inspiration, a leader and a friend. I ask all members to honour her legacy by celebrating diversity in our communities across our great country.

Statements by Members

●(1400)

SENIORS

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the celebration of the International Day of Older Persons in my riding of Oshawa.

This past October 1, members of my community gathered at Oshawa's City Hall to raise the flag to celebrate this great day. As Canadians, we must continue to care for those who helped Canada become the great country that we know today and ensure they get the respect and support that they have worked so hard to build over their lives.

I would also like to acknowledge the Oshawa Senior Citizens Centre and its wonderful staff and volunteers. Their dedication to Oshawa and its senior citizens has been incredible. Staff members, such as Sandy Black and Colleen Zavrel, have done fantastic work for our community and have made OSCC the great organization it is today. I would also like to acknowledge OSCC board members Nancy Bone and Ted Aldridge for their dedication to our community. Through their volunteer work, they have demonstrated a tremendous level of care for Oshawa.

* * *

IBM

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canada's oldest, largest and most important technology company, IBM has driven economic growth and innovation in Canada for over 100 years.

IBM is Canada's largest investor in research and development in the ICT sector. It contributes over \$13 billion annually to Canada's economy and creates thousands of jobs for middle-class Canadians. In Fredericton alone, over 250 people work with IBM in cybersecurity.

At the Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity, students from the University of New Brunswick partner with IBM to combat global cyber threats using the company's iconic Watson cognitive technology. UNB is one of three universities in Canada chosen by IBM to analyze massive amounts of cyber data. IBM supports thousands of girls and young women in the STEM disciplines and provides \$4.6 million annually in charitable giving.

I welcome IBM Canada's employees from across the country to Parliament Hill today and thank them for their leadership in our communities.

* * *

STEVEN FOBISTER SR.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, I rise today to pay tribute to a true hero, Steven Fobister Sr. of Grassy Narrows, an elder, former chief, former grand chief of Treaty No. 3 and a fighter for justice his whole life.

Steve fought against the poisoning of his people and the destruction of their way of life. He fought against the cover-ups of the corporate crimes on the Wabigoon and English river system. He

fought against the darkness or mercury poisoning, even though he lived with and died from mercury poisoning.

Steve loved his people and their long history of independence and he promised that justice would be done. He led a hunger strike to force the government back to the table. One day the full story of Grassy Narrows will be told. Let it not be about the pusillanimous acts of institutions like Parliament but about a people who were determined to rebuild and live better. In that story, Steve Fobister will live large.

Go to the angels, Steve. Justice will be done.

* * *

SUMINDER SINGH

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honour a leader in our community who made a difference in the lives of thousands of students. Mr. Suminder Singh, a beloved high school math teacher at Tamanawis Secondary School in Surrey—Newton, recently passed away in a tragic motor vehicle accident.

This past weekend, thousands of residents attended a vigil organized by Sukhmeet Singh Sachal and Sofia Walia, and more than \$15,000 was raised for the Suminder Singh annual legacy scholarship fund.

Mr. Singh made our community a better place and leaves behind a legacy that has shaped the young minds of countless youth.

I offer my sincere condolences to Mr. Singh's fellow educators, students and his family, including his wife Kirpaul Kaur, and three children Jeevan, Jodhan and Kiran.

* * *

STEM DAY ON THE HILL

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, jobs in STEM, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, are dominating our economy. We need more students to continue studies in STEM after they become non-compulsory in grade 10.

In order to ignite youth interest in STEM, Parliament Hill will be hosting the first STEM day on the Hill this Wednesday, October 17, between noon and 1:30 p.m. There will be interactive displays, including a Lego robot to spark curiosity in the STEM fields.

The members for London West, Nanaimo—Ladysmith and Simcoe North will be joining us for this event. I encourage all members of this House to come and support Canadian youth in STEM.

Canada's Donna Strickland just won the Nobel Prize in physics. Let us build on that big win and support the next generation of Canadians in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

* * *

●(1405)

DONALD MACDONALD

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and remember the Honourable Donald Macdonald, who died Sunday in Toronto.

Elected in 1962, he served as the MP for Rosedale until 1978, the president of the Privy Council, House leader, and minister of national defence, minister of energy, mines and resources, and minister of finance.

[Translation]

Donald Macdonald was a public servant in the noblest sense. He chaired the royal commission that led to the free trade agreement with the United States, and served as high commissioner to the United Kingdom. I met him when I was president of the Young Liberals at the University of Toronto. Not only did he take time to listen to young people, but he enjoyed spending time with them.

[English]

Donald Macdonald, “Thumper” to some, was a giant in every sense of the word, towering above us in graciousness, intelligence, wisdom and wit.

Our thoughts are with his daughters Sonja, Althea, Nikki and Leigh, and his wife Adrian, whose love and care for Donald were as boundless as his were for her.

May he rest in peace.

* * *

MARINE DAY ON THE HILL

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is marine day on the Hill. Today, members of the Chamber of Marine Commerce are hosting a celebration of the marine sector and championing inland and coastal shipping.

The contributions of the marine sector are undeniable and a large part of Canada's successful economy. This year, ship traffic is up, helping move goods to market, reducing congestion on highways and making a smaller carbon footprint.

How much of a contribution does the marine mode make to Canada? It creates 181,000 jobs, handles 185,000 metric tons of cargo, contributes almost \$26 billion in economic activity and generates about \$3 billion in tax revenue for the federal government. Indeed, the marine sector in Canada is a major part of our economy. Today, we celebrate this contribution.

I invite all members to attend the reception tonight at 6:00 p.m. in the Wellington Building.

Statements by Members

CANADIAN FINALS RODEO

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am excited to announce that Red Deer's inaugural Canadian Finals Rodeo will take place at Westerner Park from October 30 to November 4.

Central Alberta is a natural home for the CFR, and the whole community is looking forward to welcoming these amazing athletes, along with their families and spectators, to Red Deer.

Right on the heels of this rodeo will be the always excellent agri-trade exposition that will take place from November 7 to 9.

As always, I would like to acknowledge the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce and the Westerner Exposition Association, who have been the driving force behind agri-trade in this, its 35th year, and are excited partners on the new CFR venture.

I invite all hon. members to come to Red Deer's Westerner Park in the next few weeks to see some of the best rodeo athletes and stock in Canada, as well as cutting-edge agriculture equipment and techniques that showcase why Canada's farmers continue to be world leaders in their industry.

* * *

FOSTERING, EMPOWERING, ADVOCATING TOGETHER

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jessica Reid, co-founder of FEAT, Fostering, Empowering, Advocating Together. Located in my riding, FEAT was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 50,000 children in Ontario who have a parent in the criminal justice system.

The multifaceted impact of parental incarceration on children can be devastating. These children are faced with many challenges, including family instability, economic insecurity, as well as compromised self-esteem, trust and sense of security. FEAT is there to help.

On Saturday, October 6, Jessica began an 11-day walking marathon of over 400 kilometres, from Queen's Park to Parliament Hill. The goals of “Feet for FEAT” are to increase the awareness of the needs of these children as well as to raise funds for FEAT's family visitation program, which supports children and helps maintain healthy relationships with the imprisoned parents.

I welcome Jessica to Ottawa and congratulate her on her accomplishments.

Statements by Members

●(1410)

WORLD FOOD DAY

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, much divides us in this place but there is one thing that unites us all. We all need healthy food to thrive. Today is World Food Day. It is a day when we can think about the food we eat, how it is produced and how we can ensure that everyone has access to the food they need.

[Translation]

The Danforth Multifaith Community will be holding a walk on October 21 in honour of the national “Chew On This!” anti-hunger campaign, which aims to educate Canadians about food and food security.

[English]

Last night, we debated the IPCC report in this place. One of the things the report highlighted was the impact our food choices and our food waste that we generated had on climate change.

Today, on World Food Day, we can all think about how we impact the environment with our food. We can thank a farmer for making that food and we can think about our world food sources and how we can protect them.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government continues to defend the indefensible by repeating that the agreement signed with Mexico and the United States is a good agreement for our country when that is clearly not the case.

As a member from Quebec, I believe the Liberal government failed in its duty, which was to negotiate the elimination of the surtaxes on steel and aluminum. As a result, our Canadian products will remain less competitive than those of the American industries.

It is completely unacceptable that the government signed this agreement when President Trump only imposed those surtaxes on our products to force Canada to open negotiations on milk. The Liberal government agreed to open those negotiations without imposing any conditions, and thus agreed to allow the United States to maintain its surtaxes on steel and aluminum. In my opinion, this agreement demonstrates the Liberals' incompetence—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for London North Centre.

* * *

WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Science and Sport accompanied me to Western University for the grand opening of its new engineering building, for which I had the honour to announce, on behalf of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, a contribution of \$22.5 million in September 2016 under the post-secondary institutions strategic investment fund.

[English]

As an alumni and former faculty member of Western, it was remarkable to see a building open that would inspire students and faculty alike to learn, innovate and advance. An added surprise was when Western Chancellor Jack Cowin and his wife Sharon donated \$5 million and named the building in honour of the outgoing president, Dr. Amit Chakma.

Dr. Chakma has accomplished much in his role, including drastically increasing international student enrolment, significantly increasing—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

* * *

[Translation]

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GAULT NATURE RESERVE

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge the 60th anniversary of the Gault Nature Reserve in Mont-Saint-Hilaire. Bequeathed to McGill University by Brigadier Andrew Hamilton Gault to protect and conserve nature and the mountain, this reserve is central to the natural heritage of my riding.

The Mont-Saint-Hilaire Nature Centre was founded in 1972 with a mission of education and conservation, and in 1978, the Gault Estate was designated the first Canadian biosphere reserve as part of the UNESCO program.

I want to acknowledge the tireless work of the dedicated employees and volunteers of the Mont-Saint-Hilaire Nature Centre and the McGill University team, which helps advance research and conservation.

On the 60th anniversary of the nature reserve, I hope that the public will continue to support and celebrate the critical work being done to protect our environment. The reserve depends on it, and so does the planet.

Long live the Gault Nature Reserve. Happy 60th anniversary.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer, my Conservative colleagues and I launched the defend local jobs tour, travelling across the country to hear from workers and businesses impacted by steel and aluminum tariffs. I met with over 150 stakeholders at 26 different events in several provinces. What I heard was very concerning.

Businesses said that they were cutting back orders. Others said that they were laying people off. Zero businesses I talked to said that they had received support from the government, despite \$2 billion dollars being promised.

Let us be clear. The Prime Minister backed down to Donald Trump and signed an agreement that Trump wanted him to sign. To top it all off, steel and aluminium tariffs are still in place. So are softwood lumber tariffs, which now seem permanent.

Oral Questions

This is a major failure on the part of the government and the Prime Minister. This must be the first time in history of free trade deals that there are actually more tariffs after the deal is done than before negotiations started.

* * *

●(1415)

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ah ya yay. As we know, this month is the first time we are recognizing October as Latin American Heritage Month at the national level: *Excellente*. It is about time. We have the whole month to celebrate the magical stories, culture, traditions and contributions of the many Canadians with Latin American backgrounds that we are so blessed to have in Canada.

As the daughter of a Mexican Canadian and the MP for a riding with a growing Latin American community, this month is extra special for me.

This month, let us find a way to celebrate Latin America, whether by listening to a song by Selena Gomez, Shakira or Marc Anthony; watching football with Lionel Messi; reading a little Gabriel Garcia Márquez; dancing to cumbia music; or adding a little picante to our tacito or empanada. Also, do not forget tonight's celebration, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at John A. Macdonald, with over 700 attendees, amazing entertainment, food and, of course, a very special guest.

Gracias, señor presidente. Olé.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, British terrorist Jihadi Jack, a U.K. citizen, who may or may not have ever set foot in Canada, reportedly received help from a government representative. The Liberals proactively reached out to him to help him come to Canada.

Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we condemn the horrific and cowardly acts of Daesh and take the threats posed by travelling extremists seriously. It is a Criminal Code offence to travel abroad to engage in terrorist activity. Law enforcement pursues investigations and lays criminal charges when there is evidence to support them. We also have a full range of counterterrorism tools, such as surveillance, monitoring, intelligence gathering, lawful information sharing and revocations of passports.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he still fails to answer the question. Jihadi Jack is a U.K. citizen. The government proactively reached out to try to bring this individual, who has fought with a terrorist organization, back to Canada. It took it upon itself to reach out to bring this individual to Canada. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we condemn the horrific and cowardly acts of Daesh and take with the utmost seriousness the threats posed by travelling extremists and returnees.

It is a Criminal Code offence to travel abroad to engage in terrorist activity. Canadian law enforcement actively pursues investigations and lays criminal charges when there is evidence to support them. We also have a full range of counterterrorism tools, such as surveillance and monitoring, intelligence gathering, lawful information sharing, peace bonds, revocations of passports and legally authorized threat reduction measures.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was not which tools the previous Conservative government gave to our security agencies; the question was why was the government proactively reaching out to a known terrorist fighter?

This individual is a British citizen. It is unclear if he has ever spent any time in Canada. The government has reached out to try to bring him to Canada. He has an opportunity now to explain why.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, any government and all Canadians are united in wanting to keep Canadians safe and doing everything we need to protect Canada and our communities. We respect the work of our intelligence agencies and of our security officials. We work with them to continue to ensure Canadians are safe.

We will not play politics with this. We will continue to focus on keeping Canadians safe because that is what Canadians expect.

●(1420)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has an opportunity to explain to Canadians why his government is taking it upon itself to invite a British citizen who has fought with ISIS to Canada. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is once again trying to distort and create political crises where there simply are none. We take extremely seriously, as any government would, the safety and the security of Canadians. We will continue to work with our intelligence agencies and with our security officers to ensure Canadians are safe, and continue to demonstrate that we understand how important it is to keep Canadians safe.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no distortion here. It is well documented. The government's official reached out to a known ISIS fighter, an ISIS fighter who is British. This terrorist has now received services from the government, with the aim of bringing him to Canada. All we would like is for the Prime Minister to explain why.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we see here is the Conservatives yet again grasping at straws to try to scare Canadians, to try to make Canadians feel unsafe.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, I can tell you that Canadians can have the utmost confidence in the work of our intelligence agencies and our security officers in doing everything necessary to keep Canadians safe, to uphold our laws and our values and to demonstrate that the politics of fear have no place in our country.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the IPCC report is clear: unprecedented action is needed to fight climate change and try to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has said that she recognizes that “Every country in the world needs to take action, and then we need to be more ambitious about the action we are willing to take.”

However, the Liberals have no intention of being more ambitious. They are maintaining the same targets as the Conservatives and are clearly going to miss them, according to the government's latest performance report on climate change.

Why are the Liberals telling others to do more when they have no intention of doing more themselves?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are committed to reaching our targets by 2030, and we know that our work will not end there.

We are putting a price on pollution, we are phasing out carbon-based pollutants, we are investing in public transit and we are doing more to protect our environment. The Conservatives, meanwhile, have no plan to tackle climate change and no intention of developing one. Unfortunately, the NDP continues to pit the environment and the economy against one another.

We will continue to work to build a more secure future for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have some news for the Prime Minister. Climate change is hurting our economy. Our inaction is hurting our economy.

We are seeing a growing number of extreme weather events. There are droughts in eastern Quebec and the Prairies; endless heat waves in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa; and forest fires in British Columbia unlike anything we have seen before.

The Liberals claim to be doing more, but they have no intention of changing their plan.

Could the Prime Minister at least follow through on one promise he made in 2015 to eliminate the \$3.5 billion in subsidies to the oil and gas sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have made cuts to these subsidies and we will be eliminating them by 2025, as promised.

We will continue working on creating a meaningful climate action plan, since that is what Canadians expect. The Conservatives obviously have no plan, and perhaps even worse, the NDP continues to pit the environment against the economy. It is trying to force us to choose between one or the other. We understand that we need to grow the economy and protect the environment at the same time.

● (1425)

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, has anyone ever noticed that when the Prime Minister talks about the economy and the environment going hand in hand, it is always the environment that gets screwed?

The recent report from the United Nations has sounded the alarm on catastrophic climate change, but rather than waking up from their decades-long slumber, the Liberals are hitting the snooze button: “Five more minutes, ma, please.”

The Liberals promised to end fossil fuel subsidies. Instead, they dumped \$4.5 billion on a leaky old pipeline. Will the Liberals listen to 6,000 climate scientists and finally end their plan to spend billions more on yet another oil pipeline?

The Speaker: I want to encourage the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley to elevate his language.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working to meet Canada's 2030 target, and we know we will need to do more after that. We are pricing pollution, phasing out coal, investing in public transit and protecting more of our natural environment.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives have no climate plan and no interest in creating one, other than making pollution free again. The NDP continues to think that there is a choice to be made between growing the economy and protecting the environment.

We will continue to work with partners across the country to build a world that is safe and a good future for our kids and grandkids.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, record-setting floods and storms, historically devastating forest fires and a melting Arctic, and rather than bold action, we get more platitudes from the Liberal government.

If empty words and broken promises were going to solve climate change, the Liberals would have had this thing beat decades ago, but they adopted Stephen Harper's climate change targets, and they cannot even meet those. No wonder they were such experts on what Harper was thinking about. They have gone down the exact same path with the exact same result, which is the definition, by the way, of insanity.

When is the Prime Minister going to wake up to the reality and stop repeating the failures of—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward in a way that neither the Conservatives nor the NDP understand, because they still think there is a choice between the environment or the economy.

We know that moving forward on putting a price on pollution is an essential part of reaching our climate change targets. We also know that investing in greener energy and in better opportunities is also a part of it.

I certainly would highlight that the member opposite knows that the massive investment in LNG in his riding will be both good for the environment and good for the economy. He should be saluting it and celebrating it.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vice-Admiral Norman has the right to a fair trial, but by refusing to hand over documents, which the PMO has, it is, in essence, obstructing justice.

The Prime Minister has the power and the authority to hand over all the documents, unredacted. This could be done immediately if the Prime Minister would give the go-ahead, but he refuses.

What is the Prime Minister hiding, and who is he protecting?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that criminal prosecutions are not pursued on the floor of the House of Commons. Due process needs to be followed in all cases, and it would be thoroughly improper for any member of this House to comment on an outstanding criminal proceeding.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister used to say that sunshine was the best disinfectant. Well, I guess that does not apply when the scandal involves the PMO. These documents are needed to ensure that Vice-Admiral Norman receives a fair trial. The Prime Minister's own office has this information but refuses to hand over the documents.

Who is the Prime Minister protecting? It must be someone very important for the Liberals to go to these lengths. Who are they protecting?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the judiciary in this country, the rules of court in this country and the rules of proper procedure in our criminal courts are well known and respected around the world. They will be available to all parties in this particular case, both the Crown and the defence. Due process will apply, and justice will be done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like all Canadians, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman should have a legitimate opportunity to defend himself.

The Prime Minister's Office has important documents in its possession that could guarantee him a fair trial. Those documents include communications between an Irving lobbyist and the

President of the Treasury Board, another Liberal in the Prime Minister's cabinet.

Is that why the Prime Minister is refusing to be transparent and make the documents available?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the defence in this case is represented by very able legal counsel. They will avail themselves of all the appropriate rules of court and legal proceedings in order to ensure that in every case, justice is not only done but is seen to be done properly in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board, a Liberal, lobbied for Irving. Everyone knows the member has close ties to the Irving family. To lobby on behalf of a corporation, the member needs prior authorization from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

My questions are simple. Did the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner authorize his lobbying activities? Why is the Prime Minister's Office hiding these documents?

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Conservatives are politicizing an important matter that is before the courts.

The only engagement I had with Irving Shipbuilding during the period in question was being copied on a letter sent to two other ministers. My job as Treasury Board president includes expenditure review and due diligence to ensure the integrity of government contracting. That is exactly what I did, my job.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety said it is improper for any member of this House to comment on an outstanding matter. Maybe he should tell that to the Prime Minister, who deemed, even before an investigation had concluded, that the admiral would be charged.

The point we are arguing is one very salient for the government and very salient for this place. The Liberals are hiding behind a provision of the Canada Evidence Act to prevent the defence from getting documents they need to prove innocence. Why are they doing this?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Evidence Act is a very important criminal justice piece of legislation that was enacted by this Parliament. Its provisions will apply.

Oral Questions

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has the ability to waive the provisions of the Canada Evidence Act, and I would submit that it should do it for this reason: The regime as it currently stands is both wrong in law, the rule of law, and wrong because it prevents the admiral from having procedural fairness. For a government that is in love with the Constitution, I really thought it would understand that the right to a fair defence and the right to procedural fairness for the individual would trump its desire to hide some uncomfortable things that were probably said at a cabinet meeting.

Why is the government putting its self-interest above somebody's defence?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I underscore the fact that the defence in this case obviously is represented by very able legal counsel. They will pursue every proper avenue to ensure that a proper defence is put forward, and this matter will be disposed of according to law so that justice is done and is seen to be done.

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MARIJUANA

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is the eve of the legalization of cannabis, and thousands of people still carry records for small possession. The Liberals keep saying that they will deal with it. It is tomorrow. Where is the plan?

In the meantime, Canadians continue to have difficulties with employment, rentals and travelling. These barriers are felt even more by marginalized communities, including indigenous people, for something that is perfectly legal tomorrow.

Time is up. We need the Liberals to act now. What is their plan to expunge the records for simple possession?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud to have delivered on its promise to bring forward a strict new regulatory regime that is going to do an eminently better job of protecting our kids and keeping our communities safe. We have also said that we are prepared to address the existing records for simple possession in the appropriate way at the appropriate time. The law remains in effect until tomorrow.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today or tomorrow is not the appropriate time. The Liberals have had three years to work on this and have done absolutely nothing, while these records continue to pile up.

[*Translation*]

Too many people, many of whom are already vulnerable, as my colleague said, are finding that their quality of life, their employment prospects, and their freedom to travel are compromised because of a criminal record for simple possession. My colleague from Victoria proposed a simple, innovative bill that would immediately expunge simple marijuana possession convictions for all Canadians.

Will the Liberals support this bill or not? Will they do something? We do not want to hear another announcement. We want the government to take action now.

• (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the laws passed in the House remain in effect until they are repealed by the House, and that law remains in effect until tomorrow when the repeal comes into place. At that time, it will be the appropriate time for the government to deal with those records in the appropriate way.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be concerned. Canada's traditional security allies, like the United States and Australia, have banned Huawei from their 5G networks. We know that Huawei is controlled by Communist China. We also know that Communist China continues to conduct security breaches and security attacks against Canada and has a history of corporate espionage.

Will the Prime Minister quit playing politics with our Canadian security and ban Huawei from our 5G networks?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to highlight that our government has enormous confidence in our national security agencies. When they are going to do their due diligence, when they are going to properly look at all the relevant information and provide us with the evidence, we will follow that evidence, and we will follow that recommendation.

In the meantime, with regard to 5G, we are right now consulting industry. Make no mistake. We will make sure that we advance the interests of Canadians when we proceed with the rollout of 5G. We never have and never will compromise our national security.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Five Eyes fellow members the United States and Australia have looked into Huawei and determined that this company is a threat to telecommunications security. American senators even warned the Prime Minister last week. They sent him a letter saying that the Americans had grave concerns about Canada's decisions. The Prime Minister refuses to act, as though our two biggest allies were not important and had no credibility. Our head of government is never worried about anything, not terrorists, border security, not even spying and intellectual property theft.

Will the Prime Minister ban Huawei from Canada right now?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has raised intellectual property. It was actually our government that introduced the first national intellectual property strategy. This strategy is designed to protect Canadian companies. This strategy is designed to make sure that IP that is generated in Canada benefits Canadians.

When it comes to our national security interests, we have been very clear. We are going to follow the advice given by our national security agencies. We have been very clear: We never have and never will compromise on national security.

* * *

*[Translation]***MARIJUANA**

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has said that no police station in Canada is equipped to draw a blood sample to test for drugs. He also said that the legalization of marijuana will be much more difficult to manage in rural areas. In major urban centres or in the regions, police officers cannot prove a thing without a blood sample.

How do the Liberals plan on keeping Canadians safe if the police cannot do its job?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we kept our promise to legalize, regulate and restrict access to cannabis to better protect young people and keep profits out of the hands of criminals.

The provinces and territories asked us to wait six to eight weeks after royal assent so that they could prepare. We decided to wait longer. It has been 17 weeks.

The president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has confirmed that police departments across the country are ready for legalization tomorrow.

[English]

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the eve of marijuana becoming legal, we have learned that RCMP forensic labs are not equipped to handle the expected twofold increase in blood tests for drug-impaired drivers.

The delays caused in this spike in tests will create delays in our court system and likely lead to cases being thrown out as per the Supreme Court's Jordan decision. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Why are the Liberals rushing through legalization when they have not equipped the police to protect Canadians?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for a decade the police in this country urged the Harper government to provide them with the legal authorities, investments in their training and access to technologies, and that government did not listen.

We listened. Yesterday, the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police called a national conference. I would hope that

the members opposite would listen. He said clearly that the “police are ready”.

* * *

● (1440)

*[Translation]***DAIRY INDUSTRY**

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Quebec dairy farmers are angry and they are taking action. We understand why. Three trade agreements have created three breaches in supply management.

Family farms that have been around for four generations, such as the Laterroise farm in my riding, are at risk. Luc and his successor, his daughter Myriam, feel completely helpless.

Will the Liberals fully compensate farmers or will they simply abandon them once again?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that we are the party that implemented supply management, and we are the government that has defended supply management.

It is important to note that the Americans wanted to destroy supply management. We did not let that happen. We understand there will be impacts on our farmers, and we are committed to fully and fairly compensating them to make sure they succeed. We have supported and will continue to support our farmers.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the concessions to Trump in the USMCA are many, from supply management to patent extensions to weak cultural protections, but it still boggles the mind that the government signed a trade deal with the U.S. and Mexico without negotiating an end to tariffs on steel and aluminum.

At committee today, we heard clearly that under these tariffs, Canada is facing massive losses in our manufacturing sector that we will not be able to recover from. Jobs are leaving, and we will not get them back.

How long do Canadian steelworkers need to wait before the Liberals negotiate a permanent removal of the tariffs?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the unjustified and illegal tariffs imposed by the United States on steel and aluminum are harmful to the U.S. economy and of course our own. The national security pretext has been and remains absurd.

Oral Questions

That is why we have imposed retaliatory tariffs, and it was really in sorrow and anger, of course, that these were implemented. Now is the time for us to come together, work through, and get rid of these illegal and unjust tariffs on our steel and aluminum products.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, citizens of Beauharnois and the greater Lac Saint-Louis region have been asking for years for the removal of the *Kathryn Spirit*. This derelict vessel was not only an eyesore, it was also a threat to the environment, coastal communities and the people of my riding.

Can the Minister of Transport update my fellow citizens from Lac Saint-Louis and all Canadians on what our government has done to address this issue?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis for his excellent question and for his dedication to all water-related issues. He is known for his expertise in that area.

[English]

As we know, the Harper Conservatives did absolutely nothing to address this matter. That is why our government, under the oceans protection plan, developed a national strategy to prevent incidents like the *Kathryn Spirit* occurring again.

[Translation]

That is why, on October 12, I was very proud to announce that we have dismantled the *Kathryn Spirit* and thus kept our promise to the people of Beauharnois.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals brought in their tax increases on farmers, plumbers and pizza-shop owners, they made sure that the millionaire finance minister and Prime Minister were excluded from any new taxes. Their income tax increases actually only applied to the middle class, which is paying \$800 more per family, while the wealthiest 1% has paid \$4 billion less. Now their carbon tax will hit single mothers and seniors, but 90% of the emissions of the large industrial polluters are exempt altogether. Why do they always tax most, those with the least?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from across the country are seeing the impacts of climate change, whether it is forest fires or floods or extreme heat or in the Arctic, which is quite literally melting. We have a plan to tackle climate change, to do our part and also to grow the economy. We are taking measures, which include phasing out coal, net-zero building standards, investments in renewables, investments in clean technology companies and, yes, putting a price on pollution. There is a cost to pollution, but we have always said that we will give money back, more money in the pockets of the people who live in a province—

● (1445)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is going to be no cost for pollution for large industrial polluters. Let me quote a strong supporter of the government, the *Toronto Star*, which said, “Ottawa downplays carbon price plan that gives more tax relief to heavy polluters”. In other words, large industrial polluters get off scot-free, while the average Canadian household has to pay more. Why is it that those with lobbyists always get breaks, while those working Canadians who carry this country on their shoulders always bear the heaviest burden?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell you how much it warms my heart to hear the member opposite talk about how there should be a price on pollution. I am surprised, though, because the member opposite did not vote in support of a price on pollution. Yes, we have said that big polluters have to pay and we will give more money in the hands of Canadians. We know we need to take action on climate change. We have a climate plan, but the big question is this: What is the Conservatives' plan to protect the environment and grow the economy?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the minister failed to answer the question. Her government has released documents showing that there will be up to a 90% exemption from the carbon tax, for large industrial polluters. Therefore, those who pollute the most will get the lowest cost on their tax bills, while single mothers and seniors, who have no choice but to heat their homes and drive to work, will pay tax on 100% of their emissions. Why?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, will the party opposite release a plan with a price on pollution? We have a plan. Our plan is working. It is growing the economy. We have created more than 600,000 jobs with Canadian—

The Speaker: Order. We heard the question and we need to hear the answer as well. Whether members like the answer or not, it has to be heard. The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill will come to order. Order.

The hon. Minister of Environment has the floor.

Oral Questions

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect us to have a plan to protect the environment, to tackle climate change and to grow the economy. We have that plan. We have been able to create more than 600,000 jobs with Canadians. We have the fastest-growing economy in the G7. We have historic low rates of unemployment. Guess what? Our emissions are going down and we are doing this with Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is going down is the burden on the large industrial polluters. They are getting off because they can afford powerful lobbyists who influence the government. People living below the poverty line, single mothers and seniors on a fixed income cannot afford to send powerful lobbyists and consultants to Ottawa. They cannot afford to donate to Liberal coffers, but they have important costs that they have to meet. Why is the government giving an exemption to the politically well-connected and putting the burden on working-class Canadians?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I am confused, because this is the party that does not support a price on pollution. This is the party that voted against the Canada child benefit that has raised 300,000 children out of poverty. This is the party that voted against middle-class tax cuts and an increase on the 1%. This is the party that does not have a climate plan. This is the party that does not understand that there is a real cost right now to the environment, and we are paying right now for the inaction of the previous government for a decade. We are also growing the economy.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World Food Day, an important day to recognize and take action to address food insecurity, and to inspire solutions for change at home and abroad. Unfortunately, far too many Canadians still struggle with putting food on the table.

The NDP has long fought for a national food policy, which would link the farm to the factory to the fork. We know that the Liberals love to borrow from the NDP policy book, but it has been over a year since the government launched consultations on the development of a national food policy.

My question is simple. Where is the policy?

• (1450)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we held extensive consultations, as my hon. colleague has said. We had 45,000 Canadians respond online and we had many round tables right across the country. I want to thank all the hard-working farmers, stakeholders, members of Parliament and Canadians who participated in this. We are currently working to develop a food policy with input from Canadians and stakeholders from our consultations.

We are committed to developing a food policy that will put safe, top-quality food on Canadian tables right across this country.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 4 million people are living with food insecurity and 850,000 people visit food banks every month.

In Canada, 31 billion dollars' worth of food ends up in landfills or composters. The Liberals keep telling us that they want to protect the environment and really help those in need.

Justin Kulik just gave the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food a petition signed by 167,000 Canadians who are calling on the government to implement measures to put an end to food waste in Canada.

Will the federal government commit to implementing a national strategy to reduce food waste, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reducing food insecurity and food waste were among the topics discussed during the consultations. We are considering how these issues can be put together in a policy.

We have indicated that we are going to put a food policy in place for Canadians right across this country that would put top-quality, safe food on the tables of Canadians. We have indicated quite clearly that we are going to do that, and we will do that.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has added its voice to the opposition of the Liberal carbon tax cash grab. Small businesses are struggling under this Prime Minister, and the carbon tax is only making things worse. More and more small businesses are facing a difficult decision on whether they can even continue to afford to operate with these added costs.

Do the Liberals really think that a tax that harms small businesses disproportionately is a fair tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just heard another member from the party opposite say that he believes there should be a price on pollution. I am confused.

We know we need to be working with small businesses, and that is exactly what we are doing. I have seen small businesses across the country take action on climate change. VeriForm is an aluminum manufacturer in Ontario that reduced its emissions by almost 80% and saved \$2 million. It would have taken action even if it did not believe in climate change.

We have an opportunity to do right by the environment, to save money, to support small businesses and to create jobs in Canada, and that is exactly what we are going to continue to do.

Oral Questions

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is doing horribly at all of those things. Small businesses continue to worry about being less competitive and about paying more. Maybe, eventually, the Liberals will realize that their carbon tax is killing our small businesses and will do what the CFIB and small business owners have been calling for: Stop the Liberal carbon tax.

On Small Business Week at least, will the Liberals finally stand and defend small businesses and stop introducing policies that hurt their ability to compete?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy, which is why our government lowered taxes on small businesses to 9%. We worked hard for small businesses, and we will keep working hard for small businesses.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where I come from, small businesses drive job creation, and I thank them for their work.

Every month I organize and chair meetings of Beauport's business network. Last week, we held an economic round table, and it will come as no surprise to anyone that the main issues we discussed had to do with the labour shortage.

The labour shortage could have a serious impact on our GDP. Every MP has seen businesses in their riding scale back their activities. Some are even closing their doors. This is a very worrisome situation.

I would like to know if the Liberal government wants to make this issue its top priority. When will the government take action, and how will it address this situation?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right. Since we formed government we have seen a growing economy, which means that small and medium-sized businesses have been hiring, that our unemployment rate has been dropping, and that now we have a new problem: We need more Canadian workers.

That is why I am working so closely with my provincial, territorial and educational colleagues to make sure Canadians have the skills they need to take those opportunities. We have to make sure that everyone has a fair opportunity to succeed in this labour market, and that is why we are investing heavily in indigenous people, in women, in newcomers and in people with disabilities. We will make sure employers have the labour they need.

* * *

● (1455)

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government was elected on the promise to fight for our small

businesses, to reduce red tape and to help them scale up, grow and become export ready. Small businesses are the restaurants, stores, services and artists we love, as well as the high-growth companies that are innovating across sectors and creating good middle-class jobs.

Could the minister tell the House, Canadians and the businesses in Whitby what is being done to highlight the contributions of these hard-working Canadians to our country's economy?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is small business week, which is a time to recognize the important contributions of small business owners to our community and our economy. Small businesses make up 98% of all Canadian businesses and employ over eight million people. They are truly the backbone of the Canadian economy.

Our commitment to our small business owners is that we will lower the small business tax rate to 9% in January, while providing access to help them start up, scale up and access new markets.

This week and every week, I invite members to join me in thanking Canada's small businesses.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government prioritized pluralism and peaceful coexistence in educational programs we funded, but this government just gave \$50 million in new money to UNRWA. UNRWA does not promote peaceful coexistence, with books denying the historic Jewish presence in the region and UNRWA-employed teachers posting violently anti-Semitic and even pro-Hitler content on social media.

I have personally visited an UNRWA school and seen the failure first-hand. Palestinian children deserve better, so why are Liberals sending taxpayer dollars somewhere where they know those funds will support the propagation of anti-Semitic hatred?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, visited the West Bank this summer, and I observed the UNRWA at work in clinics and schools.

We have renewed the UNRWA's funding in full for the next two years. I can assure the House that we are monitoring teacher training and other activities closely to ensure they are neutral.

Oral Questions

[English]

PENSIONS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister went from arm's length to cheerleader when he stated the decision by the CPP Investment Board to invest in privatized American prisons was not just ethical but represented the highest of ethical standards. They may be making record profits, but they rightly received worldwide condemnation, particularly for the tactic of targeting migrant families where children are separated from their families and caged. This is a human rights abuse, not an opportunity to make bank.

Could the finance minister explain what it is about privatized American prison camps that he thinks represents any kind of ethical investment standard?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadian Crown corporations and all Canadian government institutions are expected to live up to the highest standards of ethical behaviour and corporate governance. That includes the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board. This is important. We monitor it and we stay on top of it.

The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board is also independent of government, so it can invest to ensure that Canadians can retire in dignity. We think it is important to maintain these standards and that independence.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government promised Canadians we would reform question period so that the prime minister is directly accountable through a prime minister's question period. Could the government House leader inform the House of the progress that has occurred to make this pledge a reality?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington is absolutely correct. This government committed to having a more open and transparent government, making sure that the Prime Minister was accountable to Canadians across this country.

Since taking office, this Prime Minister has had 27 prime minister's question periods, answering over 1,000 questions. He has answered questions not only from leaders of the official opposition but from private members from both sides, so that we can hear the challenges that constituents in their ridings are facing. I hope other members will also be following this practice.

* * *

● (1500)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is we asked a lot of questions but we did not get any answers at all.

[Translation]

On a comedic note, this weekend, in a theatrical gesture, the member for Shefford literally spit on the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement signed by his Prime Minister. He too believed in the Prime Minister's fine words, but it seems the results of the negotiations sickened him instead. His party cannot be trusted.

Why did the government fail so dismally at protecting dairy, egg and poultry farmers?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the aisle and Stephen Harper said over and over that Canada needed to drop its demands and agree to a bad deal. We refused to capitulate, and we secured a good deal for Canadians. The agreement is supported by leaders on all sides, including union leader Jerry Dias, provincial premiers, and former ministers from the Conservative Party and other parties.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's Irving Group has good connections in the federal government. When the Conservatives were in power, Irving received \$65 billion in shipbuilding contracts, while Davie shipyard in Quebec had to settle for a single contract.

Now that the Liberals are in power, they have tried to derail the only contract awarded to Quebec, probably under the influence of the President of the Treasury Board, a minister from Nova Scotia.

Is this the real change that the Liberals had in mind for Davie's workers?

[English]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Irving shipyard, during the period in question a letter was sent to other ministers and copied to me. I did my job as Treasury Board president, which was to ensure due diligence in the contracting process to make sure we took our responsibility seriously to get the best possible equipment for our Canadian men and women in uniform and the best value for Canadian taxpayers. That is exactly what we did.

*Government Orders***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, last night in this place, we had an extraordinary emergency debate on the subject of the IPCC report. That report tells us and all Canadians clearly that we are not doing enough; that the target we have adopted, which is sometimes loosely referred to as the Paris target, is inconsistent with holding the global average temperature increase to 1.5°; and that we need to do twice as much and do it faster. Our best opportunity is to move other governments by announcing a new target, one consistent with the IPCC, at COP24 in December.

Will the Prime Minister commit to doing so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her long-time advocacy towards environmental causes in Canada, and I thank all members who participated in last night's extremely important debate.

As I said earlier, we are working hard to meet our 2030 targets. However, we know the job will not end there and that there will be more to do. We are finally putting a price on pollution. We are phasing out coal. We are investing in green infrastructure. We are reversing the Conservatives' reckless changes, which harmed the environment. We will continue to work with all our partners to meet our objectives.

* * *

• (1505)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

In 1993, Canada signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Article 24.3.1 required Canada to develop and implement procurement policies to support Inuit-owned businesses. Not supporting these businesses is a barrier to building a sustainable economy for Nunavut.

A court settlement in May 2015 required Canada to have these policies in place by July 31, 2016, yet it has not. Why has the government not honoured its legal obligation, and when will it do so?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no relationship more important to this government than our relationship with indigenous peoples. We are working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on the successful implementation of the Nunavut agreement. We are taking a whole-of-government approach to this, to developing a procurement policy directive that effectively supports economic development and jobs for the Inuit of Nunavut. We continue to make significant progress to address the concerns raised by the NTI, and we will continue to work in good faith.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-79, An Act to implement the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership between Canada, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It being 3:07 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, October 15, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-79.

Call in the members.

• (1515)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 897*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barlow	Baylis
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boucher
Brassard	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins
Carr	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cuzner
Dabrusin	DeCoursey
Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fillmore	Finley
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Gallant
Garneau	Généreux

Genius	Gerretsen
Gladu	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Gourde	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Harvey	Hébert
Hoback	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Kent
Khalid	Khera
Krniec	Kusie
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leslie	Levitt
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	Lukiwski
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Maloney	Martel
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McCrimmon	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Morneau	
Motz	Murray
Nassif	Nater
Nault	Ng
Nicholson	Nuttall
Obhrai	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	O'Toole
Ouellette	Paradis
Paul-Hus	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Picard	Poilievre
Qualtrough	Raït
Ratansi	Rayes
Richards	Rioux
Robillard	Romanado
Rota	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi	Sopuck
Sorbara	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tilson
Tootoo	Trudeau
Van Kesteren	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wong	Wrzesnewskij
Yip	Young
Yurdiga	Zahid — 236

NAYS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Aubin	Barsalou-Duval

Points of Order

Beaulieu	Benson
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias	Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau	Cannings
Caron	Choquette
Christopherson	Cullen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall	Gill
Hardcastle	Hughes
Johns	Jolibois
Laverdière	MacGregor
Malcolmson	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanch—Gulf Islands)	Moore
Nantel	Paupé
Plamondon	Quach
Ramsey	Saganash
Sansoucy	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Thériault
Trudel	Weir — 44

PAIRED

Members

Cormier	Fortin — 2
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

USE OF PROPS IN THE HOUSE

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier today during statements by members, the member for Regina—Lewvan stood and was quite clearly displaying a delegate's badge from the most recent Saskatchewan NDP convention.

While I understand that there has traditionally been a prohibition on the use of props in the House, I also understand that on many occasions members, including me, have come in here wearing badges or buttons or ribbons signifying support for a particular charitable organization. I also understand that normally the Speaker rules on such matters, determining whether or not the badge or the prop in question caused disorder in the House.

In this particular case, I did not see any disorder in the House, although I suspect the member might have caused some disorder within the NDP caucus.

My question is whether you, Mr. Speaker, could clarify for all members of the House what you consider, in your opinion, an agreeable or approachable or appropriate badge or prop to be used by members during their statements?

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan for raising this. I did not notice the badge at the time.

I would discourage members from wearing badges that convey a message, especially when they are speaking. If they are going to rise to speak, I do not think members should have a badge on.

Now having said that, members will know that during members' statements, members will occasionally wear things like a hockey jersey when they are talking about their home team, what it has done and so forth. That is acceptable to the House and has been an ongoing practice.

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However, I would encourage members not to wear badges that carry messages that might be interpreted to be of a political or partisan nature.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize for my lack of caution in this case. I did not realize that my delegate badge from this past weekend's Saskatchewan NDP convention might be considered as a prop. I would be willing to table the badge.

The Speaker: It would appear the member is disregarding the rule against props. I would ask him not to do that.

Is the hon. Minister of Public Safety rising on a point of order?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, in the interests of Saskatchewan solidarity, I think you should also put under investigation that provocative blue shirt being worn by the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

The Speaker: My mother is in Saskatchewan, as you know, so I will take that under advisement.

* * *

• (1520)

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on October 2, 2018, by the hon. member for Montcalm regarding the government's alleged disregard of a motion adopted by the House.

[English]

I would like to thank the member for Montcalm for having raised the matter, as well as the deputy government whip and the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for their observations.

[Translation]

During his intervention, the member for Montcalm argued that the government disregarded a motion adopted unanimously by the House on September 26, 2017, that stated:

That the House reiterate its desire to fully preserve supply management during the NAFTA renegotiations.

The member feels that the concessions made with respect to access to the Canadian dairy products market in the new trade agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada constitute a clear disregard of the will of the House and, thus, are a grave offence to the authority of the House and constitute contempt of Parliament.

[English]

In response, the deputy government whip stated that the matter raised was more a question of debate on the facts; therefore, it could not constitute a question of privilege.

For his part, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford contended that the terms of the motion adopted on September 26, 2017, are fundamentally different in English and in French in the House of Commons' records which should be taken into account when examining the question at hand.

[Translation]

The House regularly adopts motions, by unanimous consent or by a simple majority, intended to allow members to express themselves on all sorts of matters. Depending on their intent, these motions take the form of a resolution or an order. Resolutions, such as the motion adopted on September 26, 2017, are intended, regardless of their precise wording, to be expressions of opinion and do not order or require that measures be taken by the government. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states on pages 536 and 537:

A resolution of the House of Commons is a declaration of opinion or purpose; it does not require that any action be taken, nor is it binding. The House has frequently brought forth resolutions in order to show support for an action or outlook.

Such motions can not bind the government or prevent it from pursuing a particular course of action.

[English]

In response to a charge that the then prime minister was in contempt of Parliament for disregarding a motion to concur in a committee report that had been adopted by the House, Speaker Milliken stated in a ruling on May 3, 2005, which can be found at page 5548 of Debates:

While the government can be guided by recommendations of a standing committee...the Speaker cannot compel the government to abide by the committee's recommendation nor by the House's decision on these matters.

[Translation]

Consequently, I cannot conclude that the matter raised constitutes a prima facie contempt of the House, and, thus, it is not a question of privilege.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

* * *

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of amendments made by the Senate 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 Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by nine minutes.

There are six and a half minutes remaining in questions and comments following the speech of the member for Edmonton Centre.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand today and reflect on the speech my colleague from Edmonton Centre gave earlier today when he spoke about the need for a sense of belonging in the workplace, tolerance and inclusion. I am wondering if the member could tell us how Bill C-65 will change the role of workplace committees in investigating harassment allegations.

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• (1525)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is really important about Bill C-65 is our new approach to workplace committees and their role in investigating alleged harassment in the workplace.

In the consultations that were held across the country, it was very clear that a matter of allegation of harassment or unwanted sexual touching in the workplace is so serious and such a private matter that our government has decided it is best for the individual to be able to raise this with one person in the workplace and not involve a whole workplace committee. Many people who said they were victims of workplace harassment did not bring it forward because they did not want a whole workplace committee involved in the investigation process.

It is important to note that should an alleged victim want to have someone accompany him or her in that process, the person is able to do so but that is the person's choice. It is not an automatic role and the workplace committees will not have involvement in that process.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier how historic this legislation actually is. It deals with a very important social issue and it will make our workforce a happier place to be in. Perhaps the member could comment on the significance of the legislation. We had all-party support inside the chamber and even from the other place.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, when I became a member of Parliament, I was surprised, even shocked, at the lack of protections that were afforded to parliamentary staff both here on the Hill and in our constituency offices in terms of the safety provisions in place for them, in terms of the regime that existed for protecting people against unwanted sexual advances in the workplace.

Bill C-65 is a historic change. It is one regime. It extends to parliamentary staff both on Parliament Hill and in our constituency offices. I think it boils down to three verbs: prevent, respond, support. We are preventing incidents of harassment and violence from occurring. We are responding effectively to them when they do occur. We are supporting employees affected by harassment and violence, and protecting their privacy. That includes LGBTQ2 Canadians, indigenous Canadians, all staff in federally regulated agencies and in parliamentary offices. It is about time.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having had the opportunity to sit through much of the testimony when the bill went to committee, I know that the member is aware of some of the research and the testimony that has been shared. A common theme that went through the entire session was that it is important to get this done now.

I would ask the member to elaborate on why this is essential, why this piece of legislation is so significant and why it is imperative that we move this forward as a House here today.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his diligent work on this file.

It is 2018. We are living through the #MeToo movement. I want every woman, every man, every gender non-binary person who

works in a Parliament Hill office or in a constituency office, and any person who works in a federally regulated agency to know that they can go to the workplace and feel safe, be safe, and should the unfortunate incident of an unwanted sexual advance happen, they know their workplace is equipped, trained, ready to respond, and able to support them so that they can get through this unwanted issue quickly, and that the preventative aspect of this is in place and that all of us receive training.

It is a historic opportunity to get something right. It is one regime. It protects Canadians. It is about time.

• (1530)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I am honoured to have the opportunity to talk about Bill C-65, which deals with workplace harassment and violence.

Violence against women is not new. While I would like to believe that in a predominantly rural riding like mine in eastern Ontario violence against women is an urban problem, we know that is not the case. Violence against women continues to be a fact of life in Canada and in rural Renfrew County.

Carol Culleton, Nathalie Warmerdam, and Anastasia Kuzyk were killed on September 22, 2015. Their killer was known to all of the women and to police for a long history of violence. He had been released from prison just shortly before the murders. The system failed these women.

On average in Canada, one woman is killed by her intimate partner every five days. The man arrested and accused of their murders had a long criminal history, including charges involving two of the three women. I am not prepared to let Carol, Nathalie, Anastasia and all the other women who have been murdered by their intimate partners die in vain. My memory of their senseless murders pushes me to speak out in this debate.

When I was first elected in 2000, I immediately recognized the transient and precarious nature of politics in general, and Parliament Hill in particular. For a female in a new political party with an evolving political culture, my position was even more precarious. Uncertainty after each election, and with the change in assignments in the ebb and flow of duties, was compounded by the hierarchical nature of Canadian politics and the fact that we serve at pleasure.

To quote one of my colleagues:

At any moment, everyone here weighs the opportunity cost of making a complaint or committing a non-acquiescent action with the threat of quiet dismissal, being overlooked for a promotion, being shuffled out of a spot, having a nomination candidate quietly run against us, or not having our nomination papers signed at all.

She went on to say:

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To say that there is a power imbalance here is an understatement. Further, for all the talk of feminism and pursuit of women's rights, there is not gender equality in the broader context of Parliament Hill. Women are still used as photo-op props, included for quotas or optics without having the authority of real decision-making automatically attached to their perceived utility. For that, women have to fight, and fight hard, and put up with being accused of not being a team player, or being an "insert choice of gender expletive here" when they do. That is only for those of us who are lucky enough to have built a platform and a profile that allows us to do that without those in the top tiers of power having to take a bit of damage in order to suppress our voices.

When this legislation was debated in the House of Commons previously, I did not have an opportunity to be part of this discussion. I was successfully defending my right to represent my party in the next federal election.

Bill C-65 is being supported by the Conservative Party. Today we are discussing amendments made by the other place, which allows for a re-examination of the legislation and the context in which it has been brought forward. At the time the legislation was previously in this chamber, it was presented by the government as partisan politics being set aside for a common purpose. All parliamentarians were prepared, or so I thought, to stand together and send a strong message to all Canadians that workplace harassment and sexual violence are unacceptable and that they will not be tolerated any longer, period.

It was that implied spirit of co-operation that encouraged my party to support Bill C-65. As a long-standing female member of Parliament, I am very cognizant of my position as a role model. I am reminded of my responsibility as a positive role model by the Daughters of the Vote program.

Young women are smart enough to spot a hypocrite when they see one. All parliamentarians have a responsibility to be a positive role model, starting with the Prime Minister.

● (1535)

I was hopeful that Bill C-65 would not be just another example of virtue signalling by the Liberal Party, where the Prime Minister directs his attack dog Gerald Butts to throw social media mud from the political ditch he occupies while claiming to take the high road. Subsequent events have proven me wrong.

Sexual violence and harassment in the workplace are nothing new.

I was particularly encouraged by the comments made by newly elected members of Parliament on the government side, such as the member for Oakville North—Burlington, who talked about taking a stand together. She shared her personal experience of harassment and bullying on Parliament Hill when she worked as a staffer prior to seeking elected office. She made reference to the #MeToo movement, #AfterMeToo and Time's Up and to having the courage and the strength to speak out and be a positive role model. In that context, her brave words in the House of Commons and her subsequent total capitulation to the Gerald Butts, "Kokanee grope" talking points were all the greater disappointment.

The greatest disappointment in this entire discussion has been the deafening silence from the female caucus on the government benches, who have quietly condoned the Prime Minister's behaviour with their silence. Not one female Liberal MP rose to defend the female reporter who was subjected to an unwanted sexual advance by the Prime Minister in her workplace. Not one government MP

rose to demand a coherent explanation of what the Prime Minister admitted to doing when he belatedly provided an apology to the young female reporter who was the subject of his unwanted advance.

Enabling bad behaviour almost guarantees that it will continue. After all, is that not the subject of Bill C-65, which is what we are discussing here today? Silence is tacit approval.

Certainly in my career as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, spanning six elections over 18 years, I have experienced sexual harassment and bullying. It would be impossible to find a woman in politics who is not expected to put up with misogynist fools like Dan Leger or the tiresome Dick Mercer, let alone similar dinosaur attitudes in their own parties.

From the time Bill C-65 passed third reading and returned from the other place with amendments, something has changed. Canadians learned something about the leader of the Liberal Party. Canadians learned that the Prime Minister admitted to groping a young woman reporter at a music festival before he sought elected office. This is a very important discovery.

Unlike the recent events in the United States during the confirmation hearings for U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh about alleged events before he started his professional career, the Prime Minister has avoided a rigorous examination of his inappropriate behaviour.

South of the border, the Prime Minister has been referred to as the Bill Clinton of the great white north.

The Prime Minister had an opportunity. Rather than making up one answer, the Prime Minister chose to come up with a series of tortured explanations for the groping allegation against him. Constantly changing his story, he had an opportunity to come clean with Canadians.

In the process, the Prime Minister dodged questions about the need to call an investigation on his own conduct, the way he did with Liberal MPs Scott Andrews and Massimo Pacetti in his caucus, who faced similar allegations in the past and were removed from the Liberal Party.

The Prime Minister has single-handedly "terribly set back", to quote Kathleen Finlay, founder of the Zero Now campaign to fight sexual misconduct in the workplace, progress on women's issues.

Ms. Finlay said:

He went from saying he had a good day and sort of smiling about it, and dismissing it that way...and then he went on to explain it, in a tortured explanation about different perceptions, how men and women can perceive things differently. And from where I was sitting, that just re-opened the whole "he said, she said" kind of explanation...which is something women who have suffered incidents of sexual misconduct do not want to hear.

● (1540)

The incident was first published in an editorial in the Creston Valley Advance, a community newspaper in British Columbia. The Prime Minister, who was in Creston to attend the Kokanee Summit festival, put on by the Columbia Brewery, admitted later to inappropriately groping the reporter while she was on assignment.

In addition to being on assignment for the Creston Valley Advance, the female reporter was also on assignment for the National Post and the Vancouver Sun. While her connection to the big city newspapers may have prompted remorse after the fact, that is a topic for a proper investigation.

The incident resurfaced online, including in a scandal magazine earlier this year. The allegation came into wider circulation the first week of June, when photos of the Creston Valley Advance editorial were widely shared on social media, and it received further comments when prominent online media outlets reported on it that same week.

The now former female reporter for the Creston Valley Advance community newspaper, the Vancouver Sun and the National Post confirmed that the Prime Minister groped her, or in his words, “inappropriately handling”, while she was on assignment at the festival.

After the incident, she wrote an unsigned editorial blasting the Prime Minister for his misconduct. The editorial did say that the Prime Minister told the female reporter that had he known the reporter was working for a national paper, he never would have been so forward.

The reporter wrote this about the Prime Minister:

...shouldn't the son of a former prime minister be aware of the rights and wrongs that go along with public socializing? Didn't he learn, through his vast experiences in public life, that groping a strange young woman isn't in the handbook of proper etiquette, regardless of who she is, what her business is or where they are?

After the incident, the female reporter, who is not in journalism anymore, held meetings with Valerie Bourne, the then publisher, and Brian Bell, the then editor of the newspaper, and communicated her displeasure about the Prime Minister's conduct. In a statement, the female reporter said she reluctantly went public to identify herself and to confirm the incident because of numerous media requests. She would not offer any comment or take part in any discussion on the subject, she said, adding that the incident happened as reported.

This is what the Prime Minister stated on CBC Radio, on January 30, 2018, before details of the groping incident were reported in the national and international media. He stated:

I've been very, very careful all my life to be thoughtful, to be respectful of people's space and people's headspace as well. This is something that I'm not new to. I've been working on issues around sexual assault for over 25 years.

My first activism and engagement was at the sexual assault centre at McGill students' society where I was one of the first male facilitators in their outreach program leading conversations—sometimes very difficult ones—on the issues of consent, communications, accountability, power dynamics.

To connect the dots, it was after the Prime Minister left university in Quebec when the groping incident occurred.

The following is from the newspaper editorial following the groping incident. It states:

It's not a rare incident to have a young reporter, especially a female who is working for a small community newspaper, be considered an underling to their 'more predominant' associates and blatantly disrespected because of it. But shouldn't the son of a former prime minister be aware of the rights and wrongs that go along with public socializing? Didn't he learn through his vast experiences in public life, that

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groping a strange young woman isn't in the handbook of proper etiquette, regardless of who she is, what her business is, or where they are?

And what makes the fact that she was working for the *Post* of any relevance? Big stories break first in community newspapers after all.

It may not have been an earth-shattering find, but one thing could have been learned from the experience. Like father, like son?

That was from the Creston Valley Advance, Monday, August 14, 2000.

● (1545)

What are Canadians expected to take away from this incident of groping that took place between the Prime Minister and a young female reporter? First and foremost, this incident is about hypocrisy, saying one thing and applying a different set of rules to one's own behaviour. It is about believing women, until it happens, then it is deny and hope that the clock runs out on the media cycle.

It has been noted by the CBC that there is no dispute that this incident happened. In 2018, the excuse “I did not think I was doing anything wrong” does not pass the smell test. Worst of all, the Prime Minister has shown no ability to grow with the job and learn from his mistake. Women in Canada deserve better from a Prime Minister who claims to be a feminist.

What this incident has also taught Canadians is that they cannot trust the Prime Minister, when he tells the public he is doing one thing but legislatively does another. It was finally figured out by the temporary socialist government of Alberta that the current government has no intention of seeing any pipelines built, let alone the Trans Mountain pipeline. In response, the NDP in Alberta pulled its support for the scam carbon tax, which is all about getting the provinces to take the blame for raising taxes while using the environment as an excuse to raise taxes.

If dragging the government's feet on this issue somehow does not work, Bill C-69 will be sure to suffocate any resource project from going forward.

There are ethics rules for parliamentarians, versus the Prime Minister's trip to a tropical island. When the Ethics Commissioner rules that opposition members are in violation of the rules, charges are laid by the RCMP. Where are the charges against the Prime Minister for his breaches of the code of ethics for parliamentarians?

In public, the Prime Minister claims that his government is going to crack down on guns and gangs but it cranks out Bill C-71 instead, which cracks down on law-abiding citizens who are already obeying the law. Then there is Bill C-75, which would soften the penalties for gang violence, among other atrocities.

The biggest lie of all is the Prime Minister's betrayal of veterans. It was announced by the government that no Canadian Armed Forces personnel would be medically released until their benefits were in place, yet last week, not only was it confirmed that soldiers are being released without their pension amounts and benefits confirmed but that soldiers should be told to wait longer.

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In the last election, the Prime Minister claimed that the problem was that there were not enough offices open to service veterans. The government went ahead and spent funds intended for veterans to open offices in government ridings, and it now tells veterans that it has just doubled the official wait time, if they even qualify.

How much is the political decision to direct shipbuilding contracts going to cost Canadians?

I had high hopes for Bill C-65. It now appears that Canadians will be disappointed, as they have been disappointed with everything else this Prime Minister has touched.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member across the way never ceases to surprise me when she addresses legislation or other matters in the House, because she is always inclined to make it personal and to attack.

If we look at what we are debating today, it is a very progressive piece of legislation that those who are following the debate should understand is good, sound, solid legislation. It has the support of the Senate. It has the support of individuals on all sides of this House. However, once again, true to the messaging from Stephen Harper, we have targeting or attacking in a personal way, whether it is the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance. Attacking through character assassination is what I have made reference to in the past.

I am wondering if I could get my colleague across the way to stop the personal character assassination for today, or at least up to this point, and to maybe comment on how this bill is being received quite well among the public. In fact, what we will see is a healthier workforce as a direct result of this. Maybe she can save some of that personal character assassination for another day.

• (1550)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I thank my number one fan in the House for standing and asking me a question. In fact, he was truly groping for a way to criticize me and my speech.

However, the reason we are here today is to talk about what is missing. Even though we will be supporting Bill C-65, the problem is that the bill will be passed, but one set of rules will apply to the Prime Minister and his cabinet and another set of rules for the rest of Canadians. It legislates one thing and does another. That is the point I am trying to make.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I read some of the facts of what women were really experiencing, things like 60% of respondents for the “what we heard” report said that some form of harassment in the workplace had happened and nearly half of those people experienced that harassment from someone with authority over them. As a women in politics, it is very important that we in the House always be mindful of the power we have and the work we do.

One of the concerns I have is around the amendments and the lack of action, unfortunately, by the government, and that is the ability of local health and safety committees to do the work, to be part of the process. These are the committees in the workplace that really set up the training. They look at opportunities to ensure they beef up the code of conduct. There are a lot of actions and work. For this bill to

take away that ability is very concerning for me. What are the member's thoughts are on that?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, we will have to look at the implementation, certainly the regulations, and how exactly the different aspects, with the addition of harassment and violence being two additions to many of the aspects of the code in this bill as well as the amendments, will come to pass. It is hard to say exactly how this will play out, but it will be up to our colleagues, like the one who just spoke, in the NDP together with all other parliamentarians to ensure the intent of the bill does come to pass.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague across the way from Winnipeg North was concerned about the personal attacks, but this goes to a large part of the essence of the bill. There seems to be a lot of “Do as I say, not as I do” from the government. What are the implications of the message we are sending with Bill C-69?

The intent of this bill is very important. We do want to address sexual assault and harassment in the workplace. However, as parliamentarians, it is also very important that we send the message that this applies to everyone, no matter what his or her position is, no matter if the individuals are regular parliamentarians, regular Canadians, a cabinet minister or the prime minister.

Could the member talk about why it is important that we discuss the hypocrisy of what the Liberal actions have been when it comes to these types of issues and what Bill C-65 is intended to accomplish?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure because my colleague mentioned Bill C-69 and the hypocrisy. Bill C-69 is the new legislation that would require the energy companies, any resource companies, to be more intense, spend more time and more resources in getting the proper assessments through.

I will speak to the hypocrisy to which my colleague alluded. On the one hand, the Prime Minister is saying that he wants to have this pipeline built, yet on the other hand what he is really doing at the same time is putting in legislation that would kill any pipeline, not just the one he says has been okay.

Likewise, we are concerned about Bill C-65. He is putting forth that he is trying to eliminate sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Would Bill C-65, like the concerns of my colleague, truly accomplish what we set out to do?

• (1555)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agriculture committee is studying mental health right now. Something I did not hear in the member's speech that maybe she could comment on are the mental health impacts on women when harassment and violence occur. There are impacts on businesses. It stops people from reaching their full potential. It stops business growth and does not do much good in the workplace. What about the individuals who are impacted and the mental health concerns I have around what happens to them personally?

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Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to the specifics of mental health per se, but I can say that it demeans a woman, it makes her less confident in herself and more submissive to males, even though she is already being victimized, or harassed or put in her place.

As to mental health, I will leave that to the experts and psychologists.

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague to elaborate a little on Bill C-65. Throughout her speech, I did not hear a whole lot of substance about Bill C-65. Rather, I heard a lot of accusations and character attacks against the sitting Prime Minister. Maybe she would like to take a bit of extra time and actually focus on Bill C-65.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, we are speaking to a motion about the amendments proposed by the other place. If he wants to know more specifics about Bill C-65, I suggest he read it the way I did.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague across the way could provide her thoughts as to some of the mechanisms in the legislation that would be utilized by individuals in the workplace.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, people who have been victimized, or feel they are being harassed or have experienced violence can report it and it will be documented. We are curious, though, as to whether this would apply to parliamentarians in the workplace.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to offer some remarks in support of Bill C-65 so we can continue to move this important legislation through the legislative process and toward being implemented as law in Canada.

I would like to thank the minister responsible for the bill, as well as all of my colleagues from different parties who have taken part in the debate from inception to today. I had the pleasure of substituting in for a handful of studies while the bill was going through the standing committee process after second reading, and I am pleased to have it return to my attention today.

The bill is meant to address harassment and violence in federally regulated workplaces, Crown corporations and the federal public service. Over the course of my remarks, I hope to offer some thoughts on the scope of the problem of workplace harassment and violence, as well as address some of the measures included in Bill C-65 to combat these social problems. If time permits, I will address some of the Senate amendments.

It is my pleasure to begin by discussing head-on the subject of workplace harassment and violence. This social phenomenon, quite frankly, is a serious problem that has no place in Canadian society whatsoever. It is disappointing to me that while most people we speak to would acknowledge this, workplace harassment and violence continues to persist.

I note that in a study conducted by Abacus Data, one in 10 people believed harassment in the workplace was really quite common. This is unacceptable. The standard of one in 10 thinking it is quite common should shock the conscience of every Canadian. We need to

be promoting healthy workplaces where people can feel free to be their best selves and ensure they are able to contribute fully.

What makes it worse is I anticipate that most people who actually experience harassment or violence in the workplace do not come forward as often as we would like to think they do and when they do, they feel the measures are extraordinarily ineffective. This is a very serious problem. In my opinion, the system we have today disincentivizes people to report harm done to them in the workplace, incidents such as harassment or violence in the workplace.

The impact of harassment and violence at work should concern every one of us. It obviously has an impact on the individual who is the subject of this harassment or violence. We can imagine that people who are subjected to harassment or violence at work experience a far higher degree of stress or anxiety when they go to work in the morning and put in their shift. I am sure as well that it is a less satisfying experience as an employee to go to work and face this kind of harassment. It will also impact work performance if an employee is worried about physical violence or emotional harassment of any kind in the workplace. It is hard to imagine how the individual could be his or her best.

This can also have a ripple effect over the course of a person's career. We know that if people are experiencing this kind of subjugation at work from another person, it has the potential to cause them to miss work. They could actually have their careers thrown off track. People leave jobs over these kinds of incidents. Often the person who suffers the greatest consequences from harassment is the victim rather than the perpetrator, which is unacceptable in today's Canada.

However, it is not just the victim or survivor of harassment and violence who suffers consequences. Quite frankly, everyone suffers.

To remove the emotional or social context from this and to just look at hard and crass economics, it does not make sense to continue with the current system that helps to perpetuate violence and harassment in the workplace. When employees are subjected to harassment and violence, productivity of our companies go down. We know there can be reputational damage done to employers as well as severe reputational damage done to the employees when there are allegations of harassment, true or untrue, in the workplace. We need to consider this. We also know that workers who are subjected to violence have a poorer attendance records at work, through no fault of their own, by the way, and this also brings down the ability of companies to succeed in the Canadian economy.

However, this cannot be dealt with simply in terms of the hard and crass economics. We have to understand that there are individual human beings at the centre of this and that there is a disproportionate impact on different kinds of people based on the rate at which they experience violence and harassment in the workplace.

● (1600)

In particular, marginalized groups such as women, the LGBTQ community, indigenous people, people living with disabilities, racial and religious minorities and linguistic minorities suffer harassment and violence in the workplace at a far greater rate than the ordinary Canadian citizen. That is not okay.

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I have been given every advantage in life. I am a white male from a good family. My parents both had good jobs. People whom I have worked with through my life have faced so many obstacles I have not faced. I am not okay with continuing to obtain advantages that my neighbours do not have. We live in an unfair society. Until every one of my neighbours is free and has the same advantages I had growing up, I cannot give up fighting inequality in our society.

If we want to take, for example, the experience that Canadian women have as opposed to Canadian men when it comes to workplace harassment and violence, the examples will shock members. For my first three years as a parliamentarian, I had the pleasure and privilege of serving on the Standing Committee for the Status of Women. It was an eye-opening experience for me, to say the least. We conducted studies on things like gender-based analysis, on ending violence against young women and girls, and on seeking equity in the Canadian economy.

I had the opportunity to sift through testimony. It is something that I will never forget. I have spoken personally with women whose careers have been completely derailed because of harassment in the workplace, including in Crown corporations and the federal public service and in certain agencies where the rules will change when Bill C-65 is implemented. I have heard stories about women who have been pushed into divorce because of the harassment they experienced when a husband and wife worked in the same workplace. I have heard tales of women being harassed so much that when they requested a transfer to another location, the employer would not accommodate their family being transferred as well. Those are consequences that we cannot accept, because they are having such a devastating impact on individual Canadians and a systemic impact on large groups of the Canadian population.

We know that women experience rates of workplace harassment and violence three times the rate experienced by Canadian men. We know that women are more likely to find themselves in an occupation that is subject to workplace harassment. We know, for example, that women are disproportionately represented in positions such as clerks or administrative assistants that report higher incidents of harassment and violence in the workplace.

This is holding our society back. We know that if we have rules that might in effect discriminate against women, though may not seem to do so, then those rules need to change. We will all benefit when they do.

Over the past couple of years in #MeToo era, we have come to better understand this problem in society and it is time that we do something about it. I cannot, in good faith, stand up here and argue that Bill C-65 is the panacea that will erase all of our social problems when it comes to gender and equity, but it will move the ball forward. I hope that some day we will get there, one step at a time.

It is not just women who suffer disproportionately when it comes to the social problem of workplace harassment and violence. If we look at minorities or marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ community, we know that they also face higher rates of violence and sexual harassment.

I had the opportunity to work for a human rights organization in Johannesburg in a position funded by the Canadian government.

While I was there I did a fair amount of work with the LGBTQ community, helping them to access information held by the government. One of the key issues we focused on was employees who were wrongfully dismissed based on their sexual orientation or gender status. I have worked with clients who have been fired for reporting bullying as a result of their being transgender. That is not okay.

• (1605)

We have to remember that whatever one's sexual orientation, whatever one's gender, one does not deserve discrimination. I am talking about people who had spotless performance records, people who got along very well with their fellow employees but who, when they went public about going through a transition, were discriminated against and heavily bullied. When they reported to their employers they were experiencing this kind of bullying based on who they were as a person, the employers terminated their positions. Although it took years of fighting, we were able to obtain records demonstrating that the reason they were let go was that they had filed complaints that had caused their employers headaches. That is not okay. The rules in South Africa are not the same as the rules in Canada, but I want to highlight that we can always do better to make sure that everyone is treated equally.

If we consider indigenous people in the workplace, we need to do a better job at creating an environment and circumstances that make them feel welcome in the Canadian economy. We are dealing with the fastest growing and youngest segment of the population. This should concern not just indigenous Canadians but non-indigenous Canadians as well. If we are going to make progress as a country, we need to embrace the youngest and fastest growing sector of the population. Right now these people are being discriminated against. They experience violence in the workplace at more than double the rate of non-indigenous people.

If we consider persons with disabilities, one would not believe the lack of accommodation for them throughout our society. On a separate but related piece, I am so pleased that our government is moving forward with Bill C-81. I note that we have members in the House who strongly support those who live with episodic disabilities as well. I congratulate those who took part in that debate.

We know that individuals living with disabilities, and particularly those living with intellectual disabilities, suffer from harassment and workplace violence at an extraordinarily high rate, sometimes more than four times that of the average population. We know that those facing mobility challenges face an extraordinarily high rate of violence in the workplace as well, and are treated far too often as victims because they are seen as not having the tools to defend themselves like many other Canadians have. This is absolutely disgusting and we need to ensure that we have a process that prevents these kinds of incidents from occurring, one that offers a meaningful response, that delivers justice to the victims of harassment and violence and also creates a change in workplace culture.

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My point is that workplace harassment and violence is a serious problem that we all need to play a part in addressing to ensure that we can move forward in Canada by supporting Canadians, no matter what their background.

That leads me to the measures contained in Bill C-65. It takes us to where we are today. I think it is appropriate to take a snapshot of where we are today and how today's rules can change for the better. Presently, if I can oversimplify things, there are two regimes for workplace harassment and violence in Canada. Those two regimes have different mechanisms for resolving the issues facing those who have been affected by harassment or violence in the workplace. This creates an imbalance between workplaces. To point to a defining kind of example, current sexual harassment rules only apply in the federally regulated private sector, whereas rules pertaining to violence apply to the public service as well. This kind of two-tier approach makes absolutely no sense. Whether one works in the private sector, in transportation for example, or the banking sector, as opposed to working for a branch of the federal public service, one deserves the same remedy if one is treated inappropriately, no matter where one works. This is incredibly important.

What really bothers me as well is that the workplace we all share here in Parliament does not fall under either of these categories. That has been newsworthy over the last number of years, particularly when dealing with the power imbalance between elected officials or senior members of government or of a different political party, who often deal with young people who are having their first experience in politics. There is an extreme power imbalance.

● (1610)

Today there is not really an effective remedy, in my opinion. We are getting better as a parliamentary community and a parliamentary family, but realistically, the stories we hear through the grapevine are predominantly of young women leaving politics after a few years of being exposed to it, if they have been victimized by sexual harassment or violence in the workplace. We need to do better and Bill C-65 is an opportunity to make us be just a little better.

There are three real pillars to Bill C-65 in how we are going to approach things moving forward. The first is that we are going to try to prevent incidents from taking place in the first place; the second that we will try to offer a meaningful response to incidents when they occur; and the third, and perhaps most important, that we will try to better support employees who have been victimized and lived through episodes of violence or harassment in the workplace.

On the point of prevention, Bill C-65 will require employers to train employees and undergo training. I was very pleased to take part in the training organized by the House of Commons to ensure that I could better understand what harassment and violence in the workplace look like. Some of the examples might be very obvious when it comes to a violent outburst and some of the more subtle instances of harassment, when viewed through the eyes of one person, who may be giving direction but can be interpreted and felt as harassment by another. Through training, employees and employers can better understand where the line that should never be crossed is.

Still on the point of prevention, employers will be required to work with their employees to develop a harassment and violence

prevention policy. It is essential that this not be dictated from the top down. The feedback from those living in a work environment can contribute to the development of policy. When more voices from different perspectives come to the table, the quality of the policy on the back end will improve.

Under the second pillar of the changes under Bill C-65, the need to respond to incidents of harassment and violence, the bill would implement a number of measures. The first is the establishment of a timeline for responses and attempts to resolve a dispute. It will require that employers appoint a competent person to conduct proper investigations of incidents when they occur. It would also empower employers to share information with the workplace committee when it would not compromise the privacy of the persons involved in a given incident. It would also require that when an investigation by a competent person does take place, the recommendations of that investigation be implemented. Finally, it would require that when incidents occur, they be recorded and reported in a systemic way.

The final pillar is that employers will be required to provide assistance to employees who subjected to harassment or violence in the workplace and that employers engage the workplace committees in developing policies to help make their workplaces safer.

Bill C-65, as I mentioned, will not have every answer and will not cure every problem in a day, but it represents meaningful progress. One of the features included in the bill that would ensure that we are moving in the right direction over time is the five-year review. It would ensure that we revisit these policies after we have had enough time to determine whether they are having a meaningful impact. With the co-operation of the Parliament five years from now, hopefully we can examine how things have gone in this new world and continue to improve them.

In conclusion, it has been a privilege to learn about the issues that employees face when they are subjected to harassment and violence. It is completely inappropriate and unacceptable that we continue to discriminate against marginalized groups in the workplace, in federally regulated sectors, in the public service and in any employment situation in Canada, quite frankly. We need to do better and Bill C-65 helps move us in the right direction.

● (1615)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member obviously cares a lot about this subject and has worked to deal with these sorts of situations. He talked a bit about the importance of privacy. Could he perhaps expand on how Bill C-65 would protect anonymity in smaller workplaces and the parliamentary workplace?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, this is very important. First, on the issue of privacy, obviously there can be extraordinary sensitivities at play when a person is dealing with the subject matter that might involve something like sexual harassment or sexualized violence. The harassment people experience when they come forward will shock members. If we sit with someone who has been through that experience who is brave enough to come forward and say they have been subjected to this kind of treatment, oftentimes they are disbelieved. People come out of the woodwork to criticize them, tell them they should not be doing this to the perpetrator of sexualized violence and that is not okay.

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One of the things I had real concerns about and I know it is a controversial issue, particularly in a small workplace, is the potential for workplace committees to have previously been involved with investigations. My opinion is that the better approach is to have a confidential process through a competent person that does not involve all the people an employee has to sit next to when they are at work the next day, being aware of some of the rather intimate details of a very sensitive personal situation.

Measures like this would help ensure that we can get to the root of individual complaints, but share the systemic nature of problems that exist in the workplace that change policies that will help people going forward while maintaining the privacy of the individuals.

• (1620)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate the fact that all of us in the House understand the importance of a bill like Bill C-65 and the direction it takes us to ensure as leaders in the community and elected officials that we are taking a role and sending the message that sexual assault and harassment are no longer tolerated anywhere in the workplace.

There are some concerns with the bill. One area I mentioned earlier today was the provision where a complaint cannot be filed after that employee has been terminated from their position for three months. However, the minister has the authority to override that timeline, meaning the minister can make a decision that an employee can bring a complaint against a sitting member of Parliament or another staff member well after the timeline.

We worked very hard and I appreciate the work that the committee did to accept amendments from all parties, but I am concerned that there is still political interference or the optics of political interference in the bill.

I would like the member's comment on how important it is to ensure that we do not have those optics, that there are very clear mandates that the third party will deal with complaints against elected officials.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I really hope happens is that more Canadians can watch debates like this. Our reputation sometimes collectively in Parliament is that we point and scream at one another and I appreciate that the question is a productive one that seeks to identify problems with the legislation and potentially improve upon them.

When I was at the committee after second reading, there was the issue of the potential problem with independence that might exist if there is a political advantage to be had when the minister is in charge. My understanding is as follows, and if I am incorrect I would be happy to have a follow-up conversation with the hon. member. In circumstances where the complaint would actually come to the minister, where there is a political element of that nature, the decision is delegated to the deputy minister in those instances.

To the extent that there is the potential for political interference, if a Liberal minister has the opportunity to chastise a Conservative member months after they are no longer in the job, or the other way around, then that would obviously be inappropriate. We cannot have ministers exercising their powers and prosecuting or dealing with a particular claim for political gain. We need to be centred around the

impact on the person who has been subjected to the harassment and the violence and the need to change rules to ensure that going forward, fewer incidents like that take place.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank to the hon. member for the level of debate we are having. He mentioned the finger pointing and screaming that goes on in this place. An hour ago we had question period and one of the things I have been very disappointed in since I was elected is the discourse during question period and how members harass, yell, scream and try to belittle other members to try to build themselves up.

This legislation seeks to build up people around us and the impact that we have on people around us through our actions and words to build them up versus tear them down. Could the hon. member comment on the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act where we have to behave consistently whether we are in this place as members of Parliament talking to each other or whether we are in our offices as members of Parliament speaking with our staff? In either case, we have to look at our impact on the other people around us, at their mental health and their ability to do their jobs.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague who represents the good people of Guelph for the question.

Before we get into how Bill C-65 addresses this, the member makes a good point that we all need to look inward. It is awfully difficult for the public to accept that they should behave differently under the laws we pass if we do not model that kind of behaviour ourselves in this place and on Parliament Hill.

On the issue of the dynamic between elected officials and staff, which I touched on in my speech, it is something that the public is not aware of. One of the problems with the rules that we have today, as I mentioned, is that here on Parliament Hill the recourse for episodes of violence, if one works in the public service, or episodes of sexual harassment, if one works in federally regulated private sectors, just do not exist. Young people are actually rewarded for essentially keeping their mouths shut because they do not want to be viewed as a problem.

This is not okay. By creating a single, integrated system that allows us to be subjected to the same rules that other aspects of the public world are subjected to, we can ensure that the power imbalance that exists between an elected official, for example, and a staff person will not cause that staff person to see that there is no possibility for recourse if they come forward with a complaint against someone who may be in a position that makes that difficult for them.

• (1625)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I often think that we over here are forgotten.

I have a question for the member who has obviously been very thoughtful on this bill and in his previous experience. I note that this bill will also apply to federally regulated workplaces, including banks, telecommunications and transport. Of course, that would include rail and airlines.

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I wonder if the member could speak to this issue. It is one thing to pass a law; it is another thing to have a strategy for compliance. I am wondering what actions are going to be taken by the government to ensure that these federally regulated workplaces actually comply with this law and, in fact, give the remedies that will be available under the legislation, ensuring that all employees working in those work situations will have the full protection of this law.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I have previously had the pleasure of serving with my colleague on the transport committee. I recall on a number of occasions her advocacy to ensure that Transport Canada had the enforcement capacity to make sure the rules we adopt in this place can be fully implemented on the ground where it matters.

It is not just rail, banking, telecommunications and aviation that I have a concern with, I have a concern with the fact that any Canadian could go to work and not have the same protections. However, our constitutional authority only goes so far. The bill will aim to protect folks who work in those federally regulated sectors. Of course the employers in those sectors are subjected to the Canada Labour Code, and regulations are going to breathe life into the framework that is established in Bill C-65.

One of the things that we absolutely need to do, and I expect members in opposition should hold us to account if we fail to do, is ensure that the enforcement agencies responsible for ensuring that the protections on paper have an impact on the ground are present in Canadian society. The rules need to be worth more than the paper they are written on. We need to be able to have somebody out there in the communities to make sure that these employees have the protections they need.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): 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 Vancouver East, Indigenous Affairs; the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove, Foreign Investment; and the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the amazing member for Drummond.

I am happy to be here to speak to Bill C-65 and the amendments that the Senate has sent our way. Just as a reminder to those folks back home, this is an act to amend the Canada Labour Code, harassment and violence, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act. I want to take this opportunity as well to recognize and appreciate the member for Jonquière from our caucus who worked so hard on this and presented many important amendments.

This is a serious topic that we are talking about today: safety from violence and harassment in the workplace. We have heard too many stories that are shocking and upsetting for us to hear, and it really speaks to a culture in our country and in our workplaces that it is important that the federal government take some leadership on. I am happy to see some of those steps happening.

This past week that we spent in the ridings, I had a constituent come to me and share with me a rather horrific story of sexual abuse for some of her family members. She talked to me about the reality that, with the #MeToo movement and some of the movements that we are seeing, we have to make space to hear from women and children some of the most horrific and painful things. She talked to me about the role that she sees in all levels of government to create an environment of safety so that people feel they can come forward, and really ask the questions of ourselves, of our functions, of our legislation and of the places we work and what things are putting barriers, closing doors and not creating safe environments for people to come forward. Therefore, it is important that when we are in this place we have this conversation and we continue to look at those doors and make sure we are opening them so that people feel safe.

The Senate has sent us back some amendments, and it is important that we look at them closely. One of the concerns I have is that this bill would end the ability of local health and safety committees and representatives to continue to participate in the investigation process. It is important that we protect people who come forward and that we create a safe environment for them to come forward. One of the things that is so important about having the health and safety people participate in these activities is they are the folks who are looking at what we can do better in the workplace. They are the people who will put together and present ideas of different types of training. They are really the ones who will support moving forward to change the culture of the workplace. Therefore, it is unfortunate that one of the amendments is not really directing this to move forward. That is too bad.

When it comes to the case of this bill, health and safety committees set up the process and identify the training needs. That is important because we need to know what people need to learn more about. In this place, we have all had to take some more training to understand more functionally what harassment looks like and what violence looks like. That is a great step in the right direction. This encourages us all to be accountable in this place, in the role that we hold as members of Parliament, in the work that we do and the staff that we work with. It is important that we create an environment of support, one that is safe and where we can open up those opportunities for people to come forward when they have experiences that are not very good and are very hard to share. It remains a concern for me that these committees cannot be involved and they cannot come in and support some of the work with controlling some of those gaps.

It is important that we review some statistics. The Abacus Data publication on sexual harassment of women shows that it is widespread in the workplace. Some of the publication's stats are that 53% of Canadian women have experienced unwanted sexual pressure and just under 50% of Canadian women have experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace; that number explodes to 64% of women in the workplace between the ages of 30 and 44. Seventy-seven per cent of the women surveyed and 63% of the men surveyed said that individuals who engaged in harassment in the workplace often do not face consequences.

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•(1630)

As we sit in this place and talk about this legislation, we have to remember that when people are brave and come forward, they are not getting the support that they deserve. They do not see the people who engage in that harassment actually being held to account. I want to make sure that all of us in the House recognize that people who do not come forward are often brave in their own way. They have seen it happen again and again where they do not get the support they desperately need to move forward and the people who are engaged in that process are not held to account.

It is important that we remember that according to the “What We Heard” report, 60% of respondents experienced some form of harassment in the workplace. Nearly half of those people experienced harassment by a person with authority over them. It can be very scary for an individual to come forward when a person in authority is doing this type of activity to him or her. The victim often has to support his or her family and has to think of the consequences of any action taken. At the federal level, it is important that we take this into consideration and that we make sure the policy is strong enough so that people feel safe to come forward.

We also read in this report that racialized women, queer women, those with lower wage positions and precariously employed people are the most likely to be harassed in the workplace. This is really about vulnerability. This is about looking at that vulnerability and how to address some of these issues. I think of my own experience with constituents from the LGBTQ2 community who talk to me about how hard it is in some workplaces in the riding that I represent to come out and be public about who they are. At the federal level we need to ensure that people feel included and that they are not in an unsafe environment.

I am the NDP seniors critic. How many seniors are going into care facilities where they experience homophobia again and often go back in the closet? We have to set a tone. We have to encourage people from all sectors to recognize this behaviour and to stop it whenever they can. We do not want our elderly loved ones who go into a care facility suddenly having to hide their identity. That is simply not what we are about in this place, I would hope.

One of the things that I am a little disappointed in is that amendment 5(a), from my understanding, will not be supported by the government. This is really about releasing the investigation report to the victim. It is important that some of the information be redacted but the victim absolutely deserves to look at the report, to understand what is coming from the report, the recommendations that are going out, so that he or she can take the next step in knowing that his or her workplace is going to be safe.

These are serious conversations but they are also very precarious conversations. I am glad that every five years this legislation will come back for review.

We must always engage in a process where we create a safe environment for workers, where we have these meaningful discussions. We need to make sure that people are not shut down. We need to be leaders in this country. We need to see more people come forward.

There is a reason that the #MeToo movement is happening. It is definitely a time of hard battles, some of which are won and some of which are lost. We have to think about how we can create an environment where women, people from different communities, people with disabilities can actually feel included.

I remember not too long ago spending a day in a wheelchair. I met with a lovely woman in my riding. Karen has been in a wheelchair for many years. She talked to me about some of the discrimination that she faces and how hard it can sometimes be for this population to find meaningful work, because people do not support them and how they deal with that type of harassment.

It is important that we include people. It is important that we have legislation like this that really outlines what that looks like. We must always be accountable.

•(1635)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her contribution this afternoon and particularly for her comments with respect to amendment 5(a). I also had some struggles with that amendment, but thinking along the lines of the person in the workplace, how important it is to protect that person so as complaints are coming forward we are not aggravating an already terrible situation but we are bringing things into a private area where we can have honest and frank discussions and try to de-escalate what is going on in the workplace.

Could the hon. member talk about the impact this legislation might have on the perpetrators of violence in the workplace? How can we try to de-escalate their behaviour which in many cases has been lifelong behaviour?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, as we look at the movements that are happening across the world where women are coming forward and talking about their history, I think we really have to look at the reality that sometimes non-productive and very inappropriate behaviour has been normalized. It is important that we have that conversation.

At the end of the day, when we look at these reports, we redact information. However, the victims definitely need to see that steps are going to be taken. We cannot just promise that there is a good report and hopefully things will get better for them. We have to look at it as something these people have to believe in because when they are victimized, they have to put their trust in the process. That needs to absolutely work. It needs to create an environment where the people who are the perpetrators are actually seeing that behaviour change in a meaningful way or they are removed from that space. This is really important. It really speaks to a lot of men saying that they do not know how to act anymore with the #MeToo movement, but that is okay, because women have been really uncomfortable with a lot of behaviour for a long time. It is absolutely appropriate for people to reflect on what they are doing, have a meaningful internal discussion with themselves and absolutely change some of that.

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•(1640)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to sit in on quite a bit of the testimony and the member's colleague from Jonquière made a considerable contribution not just to the legislation but throughout the hearing process. I know the member worked very hard on this particular piece.

The one way in which we are fortunate is that all parties see the merit, the significance and the importance of this.

The member raised the point that at committee there were concerns raised throughout the testimony that the witnesses believed that if information was shared with the committee it might be less likely for people who experienced harassment or assault to come forward because everybody in the office would know about it. Does she see the challenge in that or does she see the merit in the position that they would sooner have a trusted arbitrator as opposed to a committee?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, first of all I think it is really important for us all to remember that this process should be very complex. It should be one that is focused on the victim. We absolutely have to listen to the people who have come forward, look at the process that has unfolded for them and make it as robust as we can. Let us continue to look at those processes, but at the same time, let us not forget that these are some of the folks who actually make sure that this is a workplace environment that needs to be changed. They address the training. They look at building a safer environment. It is important that we find a way to absolutely honour the victim but look at the work and how it is laid out. We need to see change in these workplaces. These are drivers of change, so let us use them as much as we possibly can.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from North Island—Powell River for her excellent speech. She gave a really good speech and delivered it with passion. She also gave many examples of what she and her constituents experience.

It is extremely important to point out that the context for this speech is Bill C-65. The bill would amend the Canada Labour Code with respect to harassment and violence, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1.

Bill C-65 is a very important bill. As my colleague mentioned, the member for Jonquière worked very hard on this bill in committee. She proposed 17 amendments and three of them were accepted. This means that not only were the amendments warranted, but she managed to persuade our Liberal and Conservative colleagues of their merit. Naturally, that is very important.

For the record, the NDP has always fought to give workers better protection.

This bill sets out a clear, standardized procedure to help workers and employers address allegations of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. Strict rules will be put in place to protect the privacy of victims of harassment or violence, which is good news.

The bill will harmonize separate labour standards related to sexual harassment and violence. The two existing standards will be amalgamated to create a single standard.

Part 1 of the bill amends the Canada Labour Code to include sexual harassment and sexual violence. Some of my colleagues pointed out that psychological harassment could have been included as well. This bill covers harassment in general, but it does not get into a lot of detail about psychological harassment. That would have been an improvement to the bill. Part 2 amends part III of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act with respect to the application of part II of the Canada Labour Code to parliamentary employers and employees. Basically, it deals with labour relations in Parliament.

Violence and sexual, physical, psychological or emotional harassment in the workplace are neither tolerable nor acceptable. That is why it is extremely important to advance this bill. However, it is important to point out that the bill does have a small flaw that must be corrected: it excludes joint health and safety committees from the investigation process, to the dismay of unions. The joint health and safety committees should continue to operate.

It is vital that they continue participating in the investigative process, as was previously the case. There are three types of joint committees that can be set up depending on the size of the business. It could be a health and safety policy committee, a local health and safety committee, or a committee with just one health and safety representative. These committees are being excluded from specific aspects of the investigative process. Under Bill C-65, the committees would no longer be able to conduct investigations of harassment or violence, or to receive complaints. The unions criticized the change because this worked in the past. We could improve the bill by keeping the unions involved.

There are a number of reasons why unions absolutely want to continue to participate in the investigative process. First, they have the expertise. They have extensive experience on joint committees that investigate harassment and violence. Therefore, it is deplorable that they are being sidelined.

•(1645)

Second is that the joint committees allow for an extreme diversity of investigators that is not found anywhere else. They make it possible to achieve the ideal representation, whether we are talking about sexual, ethnic or other minorities.

These committees exist. They have expertise and experience. They are legitimate and recognized. That is why unions are disappointed that these committees are being excluded from some stages of the investigation process.

Bill C-65 is essentially a procedural bill that establishes an investigative process. It is therefore very important. We know that low-income workers and those in precarious jobs, as well as racialized and queer women, are more likely to be harassed or experience violence at work. Once the bill is passed, it will apply to all federally regulated workplaces. That is good news.

Government Orders

However, some questions remain unanswered, so let us hope that the Liberal government answers those questions quickly. For example, will the bill be accompanied by the necessary human resources and training? When a bill is passed, the government must be sure that it can be implemented. In this case, that will take staff and training.

Will unionized workers have the right to union representation throughout the complaint resolution process? Many people are concerned about that. They need to have all the necessary information.

I am very proud of the work of the hon. member for Jonquière, who proposed 17 amendments in committee, three of which were passed. This shows that the NDP does an excellent job. Allow me to digress. Yesterday evening, I was very proud of the work of the NDP in getting a motion adopted to hold an emergency debate on the alarming IPCC report. In light of the report, the government cannot just go to Paris and say that Canada is back and then settle for keeping the Conservatives' same terrible targets. These targets do not enable us to do our fair share of the work to hold global warming at 1.5 degrees, as required.

It is also necessary to make investments in the right places. We have to stop the subsidies to the oil and gas industries, which account for nearly \$2 billion in spending. Instead, we could invest that money in energy transition. To make matters worse, the government bought an old pipeline. That is terrible. It shows that the government is not serious about this. That is why I am proud that the NDP requested this emergency debate and the request was granted. Last night's debate, which lasted several hours, gave us the opportunity to stress the importance of acting quickly to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

In closing, we will support Bill C-65, which seeks to amend the Canada Labour Code. We are pleased with the improvements that were made. Some questions remain unanswered, but the work in committee helped clarify many things. Again, I congratulate the hon. member for Jonquière, who proposed 17 amendments, three of which were adopted.

• (1650)

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my NDP colleague voiced concern about whether resources would follow this legislation. I will put on the record for clarification that in budget 2018, our government announced it was providing \$35 million over five years, starting in 2018-19, with \$7.4 million per year ongoing to support Bill C-65. That money would be used to develop training programs for labour program inspectors; create an awareness campaign; provide educational materials, tools and workplace priorities; hire additional labour program investigators; put in place an outreach hub accessible through a 1-800 number; and support regulatory development and enforcement activities. I want to ensure he understands that those would be available.

Beyond that, what came out in much of the testimony was the importance of changing our culture. One piece of legislation will not do that. I would ask the member if he sees a shift and different approach throughout workplace culture happening and evolving.

• (1655)

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his clarifications regarding the budget allocated to properly support the bill's amendments to the Canada Labour Code regarding harassment and violence.

As my colleague mentioned, implementing these measures and the subsequent regulations is crucial, as is allocating the necessary financial and human resources, particularly with respect to training, in order to continue monitoring and improving working conditions.

Unfortunately, workplace harassment and violence, whether psychological or sexual, still exist today and it must stop. We must do everything we can to put an end to this abuse. I therefore support my colleague's comments.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the government has been commended on moving forward with stronger laws for the protection of workers in federal areas of employment, one of the issues that has been raised is that a good number of the workers are covered by collective agreements and others are not.

Could my colleague speak to whether he thinks that may be an issue, or does he have any experience with whether the rights under both may interfere with each other or is it important that the federal legislation also take that into account and figure out a way to resolve any overlaps or differences in those two processes?

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent and important question. As I have already mentioned, unions and some health and safety committees were excluded from certain steps under this bill. They were frustrated by that.

Much like my colleague, I am wondering how this bill will interact with certain collective agreement provisions, such as those relating to third party arbitration. We need to have that discussion when drafting regulations. We need to make sure that this will not undermine what is already in place and is working well. This reflection will be important. We do not yet know how we are going to sort out these two things.

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand and contribute to this debate today.

We are having a fairly productive debate on the legislation. The fact that it is being supported by all parties in the House is good news. It is good news that has been reported. The editorial in the Hill Times identified and applauded all members for coming together. It said "MPs from all sides of the House are getting behind this landmark legislation" and that "should be applauded." Of course, the Hill Times is the de facto authority on what should and should not happen on the Hill, so I thank the Hill Times for that.

Government Orders

I have some prepared comments, but first I want to ensure this is not a silver bullet. It has been referred to as landmark legislation. I think we can agree that it has been proven necessary and it is a tremendous step forward, but so much more has to be done.

Just recently, I was able to meet with Canada building trades and we talked about women in the workforce. We talked about under-represented groups in the workforce, indigenous Canadians, women, young Canadians, persons with disabilities, and how today's workforce could better reflect today's society. We talked at great length about recruiting those groups to the building trades, but it goes beyond that.

As a party and a government, we have done some very positive things and have put programs out there that encourage those under-represented groups to engage and get the training and support they need as they develop the skills to become important and contributing members of the workforce.

However, it is important as well not only to recruit, but to retain those workers. When people invest in themselves to take that training, when a company invests in them to provide that training to have good, skilled and productive workers, then it is important that the culture around those workers is a positive and enabling culture that allows those workers to grow, prosper and be more productive. Therefore, it is not just the recruitment, but the retention of those workers is paramount. The building trades themselves have tried some very novel and progressive measures, but we still see only 4% women in those trades.

I had the opportunity to work in Fort McMurray for 10 years. For the first couple of years, I worked with LiUNA in the Great Canadian Oil Sands, now Suncor. It was an opportunity to see a part of the world that has been such a great asset to our country. The oil sands have really been a nation builder. When I think back to those days, sitting around the lunchroom table or on the shop floor, there was not a whole lot of diversity. I do not know if the culture would have been one that would have promoted or helped to nurture any type of diversity.

We are faced with a great predicament. Youth unemployment rates in the country are at a 40-year low right now. More young people are working and unemployment rates are at record lows.

● (1700)

This presents a whole new problem, which is where we get our workforce and how we grow our workforce. How do we make sure that those under-represented groups have the opportunity that has been denied to many, for many years? Giving them that opportunity is positive for the individual. It is positive for the company. It is positive for the Canadian economy.

We have to do what we can to make sure they are given the opportunity, that they have the skills they need to perform the job, and that the culture they work in is positive and supportive. This proposed piece of legislation takes us on a path toward helping to find that place where everybody on that shop floor or in that office space stands as an equal, is respected and is treated with dignity.

The witness list for the committee was pretty impressive. I was at most of the meetings, and one of the things I was most taken by was the testimony from those who had experienced sexual harassment

and sexual assault. Their testimony was given to the committee. It was absolutely confidential. It was very compelling, moving and disturbing.

Every member around that table from all parties paid notice to this. Hopefully, those horrible situations that those witnesses shared with us will be of benefit to other Canadians as we go forward.

To get to my prepared comments, I am pleased to be among those rising today to speak to Bill C-65. As some of my hon. colleagues have mentioned, our government believes that the bill we have put before the House today is an exceptionally strong piece of proposed legislation that will make a real difference in the lives of thousands of Canadians working in federally regulated workplaces and right here in our own workplace on Parliament Hill. We also firmly believe that this proposed legislation will make a difference in the lives of many who hear our government's message of support and who feel encouraged by our refusal to tolerate these toxic, destructive behaviours any longer.

It takes a great deal of courage to come forward. We can all agree that the #MeToo and Time's Up movements have helped reduce some of the stigma associated with being a victim. We have made progress over the course of the last year, since workplace harassment and violence came into the spotlight and more people started to speak about their experiences and to speak out against these behaviours. However, there is still much work to be done.

The reality is that many individuals still fear coming forward. Some fear reprisal at work or even losing their job. Some fear embarrassment. Others fear they will not be taken seriously, or that they will be blamed. Many individuals fear all of these things, and when they weigh the risks against the benefits when deciding whether or not to come forward, they decide that it simply is not worth it, because they believe that in the end it will not make any difference anyway. That is unfortunate.

Unfortunately, history has proven that these fears are completely founded. This is why we need Bill C-65. I believe this proposed legislation is exactly what is required to help put these fears to rest once and for all, and to empower those who feel powerless in the wake of the reprehensible transgressions of others that we can no longer afford to tolerate.

● (1705)

It is a strong piece of legislation that has been made stronger over the course of the last year, since it was first tabled. The dedication of the members in the House and the others who contributed their careful study of the bill, as well as the generosity of the many witnesses who informed that study, have resulted in important amendments. Amendments were made as the bill passed through the chamber, and several more were proposed as it passed through the Senate.

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As detailed by several of my hon. colleagues, our government supports a number of these amendments. The amendments we are accepting help us to strike a balance between what different stakeholders told us at committee. We need a strong bill that can reflect real cultural change, that provides employees with the protections and support they need, and that provides clear direction to employers on what they are required to do.

However, as mentioned, we do not support all the amendments. While all of the other chamber's proposed amendments stem from laudable goals and are certainly noble in their principle, we believe that some would be ineffective in practice, particularly those amendments that could compromise the clarity of the bill's intent. The need for such clarity was emphasized by various stakeholders, including employers and employees' representatives, time and again during the committee meetings.

I hope the Senate will consider our reasoning and understand our rationale. I truly believe that we have done our best in our role as parliamentarians to make this the strongest bill possible. We are now at a point where we must make a decision that will move the bill forward, bringing us one step closer to royal assent and ultimately implementation of this important legislation.

We need the bill in place as soon as possible. This is why I urge all in this chamber to vote in favour of the message our government intends to send back to the Senate. We cannot afford to wait any longer for the bill to be in place, and the reality is that implementation will take time. Anyone who has been in this chamber for any length of time can certainly appreciate that. Beyond the practical challenge of putting into place the regulations and completing the necessary outreach and education, it takes time to effect the kind of lasting cultural change we hope to accomplish with Bill C-65.

On another practical note, I would like to remind my hon. colleagues that the bill could be amended down the road if it becomes clear that adjustments are necessary. In fact, one of the amendments our government is proposing to accept would facilitate such a course of action.

I am referring to the Senate's proposed amendment to have the minister's annual report contain statistical data related to harassment and violence categorized according to prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act. Information that is categorized according to prohibited grounds of discrimination under CHRA includes such information as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability and others.

The collection of this information, provided voluntarily to avoid encroaching on the privacy of those affected, will enable us to identify with greater certainty whether or not Bill C-65 is fulfilling its intended purpose. This will particularly affect individuals who generally experience higher levels of workplace harassment and violence, such as those who identify as members of the LGBTQ2 community. Any members who were in the chamber earlier today, when my colleague from Edmonton Centre gave his speech, will remember that it was pretty enlightening.

● (1710)

We find that certain groups and individuals continue to experience higher levels of harassment and violence. We could look at ways to better protect them in the future. What we need right now is better protections for employees in federally regulated and parliamentary workplaces and we need those protections in place as soon as possible.

With these points in mind, I once again urge everyone here today to help move this bill forward by voting in favour of the message to be sent to the other chamber. Canadians are counting on us to do this. I ask all to consider that as we go forward with the vote on this legislation.

● (1715)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate the fact that the Conservatives will be voting in support of Bill C-65. We understand how important this legislation is to send a message to Canadians that we are playing a leadership role when it comes to addressing harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace.

I do want to commend again the committee and all the parties involved for accepting amendments from the different parties. I think that is what makes this legislation that much stronger.

The member talked about the amendment from the Senate that is going to ensure there are opportunities to amend this bill in the future. If a government can amend this bill in the future, our future government may do that.

An amendment brought forward by the Conservative Party puts a sunset clause on this bill which allows it to be reviewed after five years. I think that is an important component of this legislation as well. We do not know what could happen in the future in terms of cyberbullying and technology and those types of things.

I would like my colleague to talk about the importance of that clause in the legislation and why it is important that we have an opportunity to review Bill C-65 in the future.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, there were a number of amendments brought forward. The Senate proposed 10 amendments. We accepted four outright and amended a fifth going forward. We would hope that the Senate sees the merit and the rationale why we will not support the other five. As the member for Foothills indicated, a number of amendments were from the NDP member for Jonquière.

Another amendment was put forward by the Conservative Party. I am not sure if it was the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis or if it was the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster who put forward that particular amendment. We felt that it was well reasoned, well argued and added to the legislation. At committee the vote was unanimous to accept that amendment. We think it will further enhance the legislation.

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Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon member always gives a thoughtful speech and always extends kindnesses to other members in this place who contribute to the work of the government. I also wish to commend him and the members of the committee who did the review of this policy. Based on what the member has shared with us, I think that Canada is showing that we can conduct ourselves in these kinds of reviews perhaps better than what we have seen south of the border.

I would like to raise with the member the same question that I put to one of his colleagues. I had the opportunity in the 1980s and 1990s to work with the federal governments of the day on enforcement compliance policies, particularly in the area of environmental law and agriculture. I learned from those experiences, as well as when I worked in the Yukon and overseas, that an important thing when bringing forward legislation is to also think about how to ensure compliance with the legislation. I understand there will be a review after five years.

I wonder if the member could speak to two concerns I have. I am less concerned with the behaviour in the House of Commons because there is great interest in protecting our civil service at the federal level. What I am deeply concerned about are the federally regulated entities. Of course, the federal government owns the pipeline so that entity presumably will be bound by these conditions as well.

Could the member speak to whether he thinks it is a good idea to be collecting some data or information so that we have an evidence-based decision on that five-year review and to use that information toward potentially tabling an enforcement and compliance policy for how we will actually deliver on the undertakings in this legislation?

• (1720)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Strathcona, who recently announced she would not seek re-election, will be missed in the chamber. She has always been thoughtful and well prepared in her interventions here, especially on environmental topics, but really on a broad range of things. She has been a great member of Parliament.

There has been a mishmash of policies. Debi Daviau, from PIPSC, summed it up pretty good. She liked the new bill and said that it was a major improvement. She said that public servants have a process that just does not work and that it is very difficult to address harassment through the existing mechanisms, as the process is largely internal and left to the discretion of management.

What the legislation would do is formalize a lot of the stuff that has been out there. I think it will have a significant impact on the broader workforce in this country. I was impressed that many of the people and organizations that testified during the committee's work on the bill were really ahead of where the government has been. Many of the banks have very well defined programs and policies in place, which have been part of their culture for many years. There will be some sectors that will obviously be playing catch up.

Beyond this, there is always the Canada Labour Code. We can agree that we are very fortunate that the Canada Labour Code is that safety net for all workers in this country. There are exceptions and anomalies, but by in large, the Canada Labour Code is one that

allows workers in this country to go to work and feel safe, that they are going to have a good opportunity to return home at the end of the day.

Those provisions within the code would still be in place and will always be there, but the five-year provision for revision has been an excellent part of this legislation. The member mentioned what is going on south of border, and there is nothing more troubling. For Lent this year, I gave up watching CNN and screaming at the television. It is great for the soul. When we look at cyber-bullying and how the workforce has changed over the last number of years, the five-year review will be of benefit and has really enhanced this legislation.

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since this bill would affect mostly federal jobs, in the member's experience in the House as a parliamentarian, would he say that these regulations would eventually trickle down to the provincial level or the private sector? How does he see this in the future protecting workers in all walks of life in Canada?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, there are some federal corporations and even some federal sectors that have been ahead of the federal government on this. They have gone out and developed their own policies around this. They know that a workforce that shows up for work and is in a safe, healthy, supportive and positive environment looks forward to going to work each day. When we see that happening, it is a productive workforce. Many of those sectors have gone forward and developed their own policies around that, but with the federal legislation, I think it would be a matter of growing and learning. As the whole issue around harassment and abuse has come to light of late, we believe the bill will have a great impact down the road.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-65. I will be sharing my time with the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Yesterday marked the first anniversary of the #MeToo movement. Obviously, we still have a long way to go before we can say mission accomplished and that women are adequately protected, represented, heard, respected and defended in their workplaces and elsewhere. I say “women”, but of course I also mean the LGBTQ+ community and anyone who is harassed. In an ideal world, no one would be harassed in the workplace.

Bill C-65 applies specifically to federal workplaces. Despite the underlying good intentions of Bill C-65, which seeks to ensure that all federally regulated workplaces, including Parliament Hill, are free of harassment and sexual violence, it still has some important weak spots that will be detrimental to victims of workplace harassment.

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Canada's Conservatives believe that all forms of harassment, sexual violence and discrimination are unacceptable, that all employees deserve respect and that these employees must feel safe at work. We also believe that it should be easier to report. Reporting a perpetrator is the first step in helping a harassment victim move forward and heal from a traumatic event that too often scars victims for life.

I obviously support this bill, but it is my duty to ensure that it achieves its objectives. Unfortunately, Bill C-65 does not work in favour of victims reporting harassment in the workplace. The bill is actually quite restrictive in this sense. Bill C-65 stipulates that victims must report harassment or violence in the workplace within one year after the abuse. It is inconceivable that the time frame set by the Liberal government is shorter than that of the provinces' for the same type of abuse, which is three years.

First and foremost, the government should be a national role model and set the example in protecting and respecting victims of harassment and violence in the workplace. It should not trail behind. It is completely unacceptable and inhumane to set a one-year time frame for filing a complaint, and this simply contributes to revictimizing a person after a traumatic event.

Many advocates for victims of harassment, health professionals and victims themselves have proven many times that one single year is too short a period to decide to report, and more often than not, this deadline adds to the victims' stress. Victims of harassment are usually in subordinate positions to their abusers.

Everyone in the House knows that our employees' positions are not protected, that they can be relieved of their duties on the spot, without cause or notice. That alone makes it extremely difficult for an employee to file a complaint. For one thing, to complain is to automatically risk one's job, and for another, such employees are already vulnerable on top of being traumatized by assault.

● (1730)

Bill C-65 gives victims one year to file a complaint, but that limitation actually discourages them from filing a complaint. One thing we know from years' worth of victims' accounts of workplace harassment and violence is that they continue to feel vulnerable during that first year after the assault. They may suffer from major health problems. It is often difficult for them to cope with what happened and confront their aggressor, to ask for and get the help they need to function from day to day so as to keep their jobs and not compromise their career prospects, and to fulfill their professional and personal obligations.

We have all heard victims of harassment tell their stories. I know some victims. Having heard their stories, how can we do anything but speak out against the one-year limitation period that makes the reporting process harder for them? Failing to speak out against it would exacerbate the problem. I absolutely cannot turn a blind eye to this.

Consequently, there must be a reasonable time frame for filing a harassment complaint, so that victims are completely protected by Bill C-65. This is not about passing a bill to ease our conscience and to say that Parliament now has a bill that protects its employees against all forms of harassment and violence in the workplace. This

is about doing things right the first time, and above all, it is about not making an already trying situation even worse for victims. It is about considering victims, their well-being and their needs first before passing a bill that could obviously do them more harm than good in some respects. This bill needs to be more than symbolic. It needs to have positive effects for victims.

Since this bill also affects former employees of the House, a limitation period of at least three years to file a complaint is the minimum period that is acceptable to victims. That should also be the minimum period for filing a complaint for those who are still employees of the House.

What is more, in order to facilitate the reporting process, respect the well-being of the victim and protect the victim's job, we need to avoid imposing a limitation period on victims while they are still employees. That is a necessary change because Bill C-65 also includes the possibility of having to participate in mediation but does not contain any legislative measures to ensure that the complainant's job is protected. That is yet another thing that puts further unnecessary stress on victims.

Despite all of the movements and measures encouraging victims of harassment to report their abusers, speaking out is still a tough decision. It is our responsibility to facilitate that process as much as possible.

I will vote in favour of this bill, but I hope that the one-year limitation period will be increased. A three-year period would give victims some breathing room and alleviate unnecessary stress.

● (1735)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the potential impact of this legislation is fairly significant. I referenced in previous comments that it is somewhat historic as we try to improve the workforce and the quality of life for individuals in the workforce. It has been fairly well received by the population as a whole. We have seen good support coming from the Senate. We have all-party support in the chamber on this important legislation.

How important is it that we go beyond this to look at what provincial entities might be able to do? I think of provincial legislatures and so forth. Ottawa is playing a very strong national role, but there is also room for other stakeholders to play a role at the same time.

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[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. As my colleagues know, and as I said in my preamble, we have to set an example for the rest of the country. Our legislation must not be inferior to provincial legislation, which provides for a three-year limitation period. Our legislation calls for a one-year limitation period. That is why I am asking that the limitation period be changed to three years, so that we can lead the way on this type of legislation. This is a first. It has never been done before. It is likely that 10, 15 or 20 years ago, no one would have thought that this could have such a significant impact on victims of abuse.

Today I am voting in favour of Bill C-65 and hoping that the government understands that parliamentarians do not have to be partisan and that we must become leaders on this type of bill.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague on her speech. I have a question on the matter of objectivity in situations of harassment. An hon. member in the House said that some people can experience things differently. At the same time, there is certainly an element of objectivity in certain actions. They can be acceptable or unacceptable.

Does my colleague think that it is necessary to implement an accountability mechanism should an hon. member do something that is unacceptable, even if that member is a minister or even a prime minister?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I have to say that no one, not a minister, prime minister or member, should abuse their position and harm a person's reputation, victimize a person, or touch or assault a person.

We are only human, but whether we are talking about a prime minister, a minister or a member, it is unacceptable, and no one should ever abuse their position to do this type of thing.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's debate on Bill C-65, legislation that I also had the opportunity to study as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons of Disabilities.

Throughout the study of this bill, there has been common, all-party agreement that this legislation is needed. This legislation is necessary today and it was needed yesterday. It is an unfortunate reality that sexual misconduct is pervasive in our society. This includes many workplace cultures, including our own and those that are addressed in this legislation.

The recent #MeToo movement has shone a light on this reality in a societal context, but the prevalence of this issue is not new and is much broader. For far too long, individuals, and more often women, who have been victims of sexual harassment or violence have chosen not to come forward. Some may have chosen not to report their experiences because they fear shame or even humiliation. Others may fear the repercussions of coming forward. Others may have come to this decision for other various reasons. Regardless of the reasons, the common denominator is that victims of sexual

misconduct have weighed the options of reporting their experience or keeping it private and, sadly, many have found it safer or preferable not to report or share their experiences. It is not a healthy state of affairs when incidences of sexual harassment and violence are swept under the rug. When that is the norm, something is broken.

It is positive that many victims of harassment are finding the courage to come forward and to share their stories. In fact, some courageously came to committee, at HUMA, to share their stories with us as we studied the legislation. It is paramount that the response to individuals coming forward is not to leave them exposed to additional trauma or additional hurt. We need to change our culture so they feel protected and supported. A part of that change is ensuring that when someone comes forward with allegations, there is a fair system in place to address the allegations.

The existing mechanisms to deal with workplace violence and sexual harassment are insufficient and do not even cover the employees of Parliament. This legislation takes steps to regulate and create a process to address sexual harassment and violence for federally regulated workers and federal workers, including those in our own place of work here in Parliament. This is particularly important as Parliament employees are not covered by existing regulations, and we all know our workplace is not immune. In fact, there is reason to suggest that our unique work environment actually aggravates a culture of sexual misconduct and violence. When victims do not feel safe to bring complaints forward, this can create an environment where harmful and abusive behaviours of a sexual and violent nature can be normalized, minimized and ignored.

As we have studied this legislation, it has been stated repeatedly by members of all parties that sexual harassment and violence have no place in Canadian society and certainly no place in our workplace. We have repeatedly heard that we need to believe victims and to support them. It is not enough just to express it, we must practise what we are preaching. That is why the Prime Minister's hypocritical response to an allegation against him was so very disappointing. He, himself, has emphasized the importance of believing victims and he has said repeatedly that he has no tolerance for sexual misconduct. However, this past summer, when an allegation resurfaced that the Prime Minister groped a young reporter in British Columbia in 2000, that was not his response. He did not live up to his own standards.

• (1740)

When this story resurfaced, the Prime Minister said that he could not recall any negative interactions that day. By saying what he did, he minimized the past conduct and the experience of the individual who made the allegation.

He later dug in his heels and said, "I do not feel that I acted inappropriately in any way, but I respect the fact that someone else might have experienced that differently." I am certain we can all agree that an individual who experienced sexual harassment or violence would indeed have a different experience.

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We need to ensure that we remove the ability of a person to hide between power and prestige. We need to ensure that government is focused on supporting victims. We need to work toward safer workplaces in Canada. We need to ensure that legislation does not just have the right intent, but that there are actual teeth in the legislation. We worked hard at committee to do this.

Our Conservative team successfully introduced an amendment that transferred powers from the Minister of Labour to the deputy minister in investigations of harassment involving political offices. This amendment will prevent political interference or even the perception of it in any harassment investigations in the offices of members of Parliament.

We also successfully introduced amendments to ensure strict timelines for investigations. This amendment is so important for our goal of supporting victims. To know that if someone reports an allegation, it will be investigated and dealt with in an appropriate timeline will give victims more confidence to come forward and share their experiences.

We also introduced and supported mandatory sexual harassment training. This measure will help prevent incidents of sexual misconduct, which of course is a much better reality.

As we all know, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Training will also allow individuals to know their rights and responsibilities. Through training, we can take steps toward a change in our culture. I was very pleased that this amendment was passed at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

We also introduced and supported a mandatory review of the legislation after five years. This will allow Parliament to assess if the legislation is meeting its intent.

I am proud of the work that was accomplished at committee. The legislation that passed through the chamber was a better bill. It ensured a more fair process that would be impartial and ensure consequences for sexual harassers. I am pleased the other chamber also studied this legislation, with the intent of providing a fairer system with better recourse for victims of sexual harassment and violence.

I support the government's response to the amendments proposed by the other chamber because it will make this legislation stronger and better. It will offer greater clarity and give victims greater confidence in the mechanism and systems that are being created through the legislation.

Bill C-65 is important and timely legislation. Combatting sexual misconduct is a pressing need and this bill moves us in that direction. Its passage and the subsequent creation of regulations will be positive steps. It will provide better mechanisms for those working on Parliament Hill, in the federal workforce and in federally regulated workplaces. It will give better tools and resources to those working in those related workforces. It takes steps toward changing our work culture and it can contribute to a broader cultural shift.

That said, it is important that we all recognize that a process to address sexual misconduct alone will not change our culture. I sincerely hope that in addition to supporting this legislation every

member in the House also acknowledges his or her role and responsibility to be a positive change in our workplace culture and in the broader context.

• (1745)

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the presentation by the member opposite.

Before I became a politician I used to run a large health organization and I know how important it is to have proper frameworks in place to deal with harassment, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

What I personally like about this particular legislation is that it would ensure that employees receive training, that employers undergo training themselves, and that it directs there be fast and timely responses to incidents of harassment and violence, and then, of course, that employees who have been subjected to harassment or violence be properly supported.

Those are critical elements, but to me the most important thing is education and awareness of what sexual harassment is and how it is perceived. These are important elements that come in early on.

Has the member opposite taken her staff through sexual harassment training? Has she herself had that training? Has she begun to develop her own office culture around this kind of bill, because those employees now fall under the definition of this legislation?

• (1750)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, the very basis of this is the point that people should just not be jerks. People should not assault or harass others or put them in those situations.

I definitely agree that we do need to have public education, but we also have to foster a safe environment for victims so they feel they can come forward and that they will not be penalized or fired.

Leadership comes from the top. As I said in my speech, the way the Prime Minister handled the allegations against him goes against the #MeToo movement.

The fact is that people experience things differently. It is about having a conversation. My office is a very open office. We talk about things that make people uncomfortable. For example, today I talked about marijuana with my staff.

I appreciate the sentiments of the member opposite and I thank him for giving me the opportunity to answer his question.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things I heard in the member's speech and that I talked about as well is how we can make the way safe for people who are facing these kinds of harassment to come through the doors and talk to people. That is really important. I recognize what the other member said about making sure there is training in place and making sure a process is in place.

Could the member tell the House what those steps would look like for the people who work in MPs' offices?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, I went through the harassment training, as I am sure all members have.

Government Orders

It was interesting during that training to note a fact that was reiterated to us, namely that everybody experiences something differently. It is about having the opportunity for staff to come forward if they have a complaint and that we provide them with the proper channels to go through with that. It is important that we always remain mindful that everybody's experience is different and that we have to be respectful and have empathy toward those conversations and our staff.

Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague for Winnipeg Centre.

I am pleased to provide some perspective on some of the amendments proposed as part of the other chamber's consideration of Bill C-65.

The issue of workplace harassment and violence is complex. The measures required to eradicate these behaviours must take many factors into consideration. For example, women tell us that they do not come forward because they feel that it is not worth the risk or it is embarrassing. Many fear potential consequences. Perhaps most disappointing is that many simply do not believe that coming forward will make a difference.

Reporting an incident requires courage. Women fear reprisals or even losing their jobs, and the stigma associated with being a victim can make it extremely difficult to report an incident. It is clear that if people know that they can come forward without fear of being identified, it will reduce their hesitation around speaking out.

One of the key elements of this proposed legislation is support for affected employees. Privacy is integral to that support. We believe that the success of Bill C-65 is closely linked to ensuring the privacy of those involved in incidents of harassment and violence. It is with this perspective that we considered some of the other chamber's proposed amendments.

The other chamber put forward two amendments that proposed that the minister's annual report and the annual report prepared by the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board contain statistical data related to harassment and violence, categorized according to prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act. Information categorized according to prohibited grounds of discrimination under the CHRA would include information such as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability and others.

Our government supports the amendment being proposed with respect to including this information in the minister's annual report. However, we do not support the amendment to the section that would apply to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board's annual report. I will explain.

The first amendment proposed relates to the annual report the Minister of Labour would publish each year providing data on incidents of harassment and violence in federally regulated workplaces, including parliamentary workplaces. The proposed amendment would require that the data collected from employers for the annual report by the Minister of Labour include information on whether the incident could be considered a prohibited ground of

discrimination. This would provide very useful information on the nature of these incidents so that together, we could work to prevent their occurrence.

However, we also recognize that collecting this data would represent certain risks to colleagues. Perhaps the most pressing would be the risk to the privacy of the individuals providing the information. This is particularly true for smaller organizations with fewer employees, where the risk of being identified is very real. To mitigate this risk, the provision of this information would be entirely voluntary. It would be up to the employees to decide whether they felt comfortable disclosing any details about themselves that could potentially identify them down the road. We feel that this is the best approach.

• (1755)

We felt it was important to support acceptance of the amendment to include the data in the minister's annual report because we believe that this risk would be effectively mitigated, and because the potential benefits are significant.

The data that would be collected could be used to determine whether Bill C-65 is doing the job it is supposed to do, particularly for those who are most vulnerable to incidents of workplace harassment and violence. This data, which would cover incidents in both federally regulated and parliamentary workplaces, could be used to make adjustments if there is evidence that this is not the case.

Our government is committed to making evidence-based policy decisions. The more data we have to work with in the future, the better our ability to do just that. However, as I mentioned, we do not support the other place's proposed amendment to require that the statistical data in the board's annual report include information that is categorized on the same grounds. While we support the intention of the amendment, we do not think it would be feasible. The report that is produced by the board captures only appeals made in relation to part II of the code. Only a smaller subset of those appeals would apply to harassment and violence. These appeals would not relate to investigations of the incidents themselves, but whether or not the process to deal with the incident under the code has been followed.

Given that the report would cover only the appeals that the board hears, and these appeals would relate to the process followed, the dataset would be far too small to report according to prohibited grounds of discrimination without revealing the identities of the individuals involved. I think we would all agree that breaching privacy and in any way discouraging individuals from coming forward is the last thing we want to do.

Let me be clear. This report by the board would only capture appeals, it would not capture the total number of incidents of harassment and violence occurring in parliamentary workplaces. Those incidents would be captured in the previously mentioned minister's report.

We know that these behaviours are not exclusive to our workplaces. However, with the rise of movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp, we are understanding where we need to act and how we need to enable people to come forward. This legislation would help to create a culture where certain behaviours are simply not tolerated.

Government Orders

This is what Bill C-65 would help accomplish: a profound change in culture, a culture where people work in a safe workplace, one that is free from harassment or violence. For this to happen, people need the option of reporting reprehensible behaviour without fear of retaliation. Bill C-65 would help ensure that is the case.

• (1800)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to our hon. colleague's speech and I appreciate what he had to say.

As I have with many of our other colleagues throughout the day, I want to ask our hon. colleague this.

Earlier this summer our Prime Minister had an opportunity to deal with an issue that was brought forth to the media with respect to something that happened about 18 years ago. Instead of actually apologizing, he shared that perhaps in certain circumstances men and women would experience that situation differently. Therefore, I would like to ask our hon. colleague this. Does he feel the same? Is it his opinion that victims of harassment and violence experience such incidents differently from the perpetrators?

Mr. Jati Sidhu: Madam Speaker, Bill C-65 is trying to create a single, integrated regime that would protect federally regulated employees from harassment and violence in the workplace. We are trying to create a level playing field so that harassment and violence is reduced in the workplace, regardless of whether the employee is parliamentary staff, exempt staff, an employee of a Crown corporation or part of the federal public service.

• (1805)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is all very well and good, and we support these steps forward, but will there be any real money, any federal money, to support the work that will be needed to help workplaces train and support the staff who would be going through these processes?

Mr. Jati Sidhu: Madam Speaker, it is very important that we ensure that victims feel supported when they come forward. Bill C-65 would ensure that victims are provided with adequate assistance and that workplace committees were put in place to help support victims.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that we have to make sure that victims of violence and harassment feel that they are going to be supported and that they are going to be believed, but leadership starts at the top. We have to make sure that the rules apply to everyone, regardless of position.

When the HUMA committee was studying this, a question was posed to the officials about whether this legislation would apply to the Prime Minister and the ministers. The answer was that they were not certain it would.

Does our hon. colleague feel that the rules should apply to all, regardless of their position?

Mr. Jati Sidhu: Madam Speaker, I am going to get to the bottom of why Bill C-65 was introduced. Research shows that harassment and violence in Canadian workplaces is persistent, and often incidents go underground, because people fear retaliation. Bill

C-65 seeks to create an environment and culture that would make victims feel safe coming forward. It is extremely important for employees to come forward without fear of retaliation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon for his speech.

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

[*Translation*]

I am very proud to be here today.

[*English*]

As leaders at all levels of society, as leaders in all organizations, as leaders in our communities, we have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure a harassment- and violence-free workplace. Too many women and men suffer harassment and violence in the workplace, and no one should be exempt.

[*Translation*]

I am also extremely proud to have the opportunity to talk about Bill C-65, which amends the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, to eradicate harassment and violence from federally regulated workplaces, including the federal public service and parliamentary workplaces.

Bill C-65 draws on existing Canada Labour Code provisions pertaining to violence and sexual harassment to design a comprehensive approach that covers all forms of violence and harassment, from bullying and teasing to sexual harassment and physical violence.

This bill also applies to all health and safety protections, including measures relating to harassment and violence in parliamentary workplaces, such as the Senate, the Library of Parliament and the House of Commons, and to political staff working on Parliament Hill.

There are currently two separate regimes in place to deal with issues of violence and sexual harassment under the Canada Labour Code. They each have their own requirements and mechanisms for settling disputes, which creates an imbalance in how these matters are dealt with.

The current regimes do not apply to the same workplaces. Current sexual harassment rules only apply in the federally regulated private sector and most Crown corporations, whereas rules pertaining to violence also apply to the federal public service. Neither framework applies to parliamentary employees.

Bill C-65 would create a single, integrated regime to protect all federally regulated employees against harassment and violence in the workplace. As part of the Government of Canada's strategy to combat gender-based violence, the bill proposes a new framework that will prevent incidents of harassment and violence from occurring, respond effectively to these incidents when they do occur and support victims of harassment and violence while also protecting their privacy. Protecting victims' privacy is extremely important.

Government Orders

More specifically, Bill C-65 would amend the Canada Labour Code to expand the existing violence prevention requirements in part II of the Canada Labour Code, which deals with occupational health and safety; ensure that employers take preventive action and protect employees from harassment and violence at work; and repeal the existing sexual harassment provisions in part III of the code, which deals with labour standards, to create a single integrated regime to protect federally regulated employees under part II of the code.

Furthermore, the bill would amend the Canada Labour Code to require employers, through the regulatory framework and the corresponding regulations, to prevent harassment and violence. This includes ensuring that employees receive training, or even that they take the initiative themselves, and working with employees to develop a harassment and violence prevention policy.

The bill would also require employers to respond to incidents of harassment and violence, within a specified time frame; resolve the complaint and, if a resolution is not possible, designate a competent person to conduct investigations; inform the complainant and, in accordance with privacy measures, update the workplace committee on the investigation; implement the recommendations resulting from the investigation; and record and report all incidents of harassment and violence.

The bill would require employers to support employees who are victims of harassment and violence, as well as protect their privacy, which includes providing assistance and giving access to the workplace committees.

● (1810)

The bill will repeal the sections of the Canada Labour Code that permit exemptions to the establishment of a workplace committee, and will only allow exemptions when there is already a committee with the same health and safety responsibilities. It will broaden the scope of part II of the code to include staff of ministers' offices, who are also known as exempt staff.

The amendments to the Parliamentary Employment Staff Relations Act are extremely important. Bill C-65 would enact part III of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, which incorporates by reference part II of the code. The act applies to parliamentary employers and employees, without limiting in any way the powers, privileges and immunities of the Senate and the House of Commons and their members.

More specifically, Bill C-65 would amend the act in order to incorporate by reference the provisions concerning workplace health and safety found in part II of the code with certain changes. First, the Deputy Minister of Labour will exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions of the minister when a member of the Senate or House of Commons is involved. Furthermore, the application of all directions and any appeals of these directions will be undertaken when they are tabled in the House of Commons or the Senate, or both. Appeals of these directions will be referred to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board.

The bill would amend the act to ensure the protection of parliamentary privileges by stating that all powers, privileges and immunities conferred or imposed may be exercised as long as they

do not interfere, directly or indirectly, with the business of the House of Commons or the Senate.

● (1815)

[English]

Bill C-65 would require annual reporting and a five-year review, which is also appreciated. More specifically, the bill's proposed amendments will require: the Minister of Labour to prepare and publish an annual report that contains statistical data relating to harassment and violence in federally regulated workplaces, including parliamentary workplaces; that the harassment and violence provisions introduced in the Canada Labour Code and the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act by Bill C-65 be reviewed five years after coming into force and every five years after that and that the responsible minister prepare and table reports on these reviews in every House of Parliament; and that the federal Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board submit an annual report on its activities under part III of the PESRA and part II of the code as it applies to parliamentary workplaces and that the responsible minister table the report in each of the House of Parliament.

There are 10 Senate amendments of which four will be accepted by the government, one is to be amended and five rejected.

The amendments that are to be accepted will strengthen the legislation to prevent workplace violence or harassment. They are: amendment 3, which will provide greater certainty to those who experience workplace violence and harassment by explicitly stating that nothing in this part shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the rights provided for under the Canadian Human Rights Act; amendment 5(b), which replaces the term "trivial, frivolous, or vexatious" with the term "abuse of process" so as to eliminate negative associations regarding coming forward with complaint; amendment 6 so that the annual report prepared by the minister regarding incidents of workplace harassment and violence includes information that is categorized according to the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act; and amendment 7(a), which will provide greater certainty to those coming forward with complaints, including complaints outside of harassment and violence, that Bill C-65 would not limit one's ability to take a case to the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Amendment 4 is to be accepted with amendments. The suggestion from the Senate is to add two paragraphs to clause 3 of the bill. We are rejecting these two amendments and renaming them. The addition of these names aligns with the intent of Bill C-65 regarding the training of designated persons to whom complaints can be made.

The government respectfully disagrees with amendment 1. Replacing the word "means" with "includes" would result in a lack of clarity for both employers and employees.

Government Orders

The government respectfully disagrees with amendment 2. In focusing on harassment and violence, it would create an imbalance relative to all of the other occupational health and safety measures under part II of the Canada Labour Code.

We propose that the paragraph from amendment 4 be deleted because the addition of the proposed paragraph would mean that a single incident of harassment and violence in a workplace would be considered a violation of the Canada Labour Code on the part of the employer, which would undermine the framework for addressing harassment and violence that Bill C-65 seeks to establish.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for our colleague across the way. That was probably one of his most enthusiastic and well thought-out speeches, so I want to thank him for that.

We have talked a lot in the course of this debate. It has been very enriching and we are learning a lot from colleagues on both sides of the House. Does our hon. colleague feel with regard to how our Prime Minister explained away his groping incident that he should, at the very least, have instead issued a formal apology to the victim?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, I cannot speak to other people's experiences; I can only speak to my own. In the workplaces I have been involved in, whether in the military or the University of Manitoba, we have always tried to follow a very high code of conduct, especially at the University of Manitoba. In my time in the military there were times when we sometimes did see behaviour that was not in the best interests of the Canadian state or in accordance with the values of the Canadian people. It was unfortunate. That was early in my career. I remember joining in 1996 and seeing some of those behaviours occurring during basic training. At the University of Manitoba I know there are a lot of codes in place that attempt to get to the nature of this and try to be respectful of people in all ways.

The problem sometimes in the politically charged atmosphere of the House of Commons is precisely that. It is politically charged. The motivations of the people involved make it difficult to come to a resolution on this. That does not mean a resolution cannot happen, but it becomes very difficult, because it is not done in full respect to the people who are involved, the victims, and others who might have been involved in any incident.

• (1820)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we heard some concerns about privacy today and I wonder if the member could comment on how Bill C-65 addresses those issues of privacy, how it would protect the anonymity of complainants in small workplaces or here on Parliament Hill.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, the issues surrounding committees, for instance, are very important. In a workplace that is too small, under 20 employees, these things obviously need to be handled with a great deal of delicacy to ensure that everyone's privacy is taken into consideration. There has to be good sense in ensuring that occurs. The bill would bring two disparate ways of doing things under one code to ensure that there is equitable treatment of everyone across the board.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think we can all agree that leadership begins at the top and that no one should be above the law, regardless of their position, when serious allegations are levied against them.

Does my hon. colleague feel that victims of violence and harassment may experience such incidents differently from their perpetrators?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, that is an interesting question. We know that human memory is very different for different people. The way one person experiences something is very different from any other person. That is important when we look at harassment. As it is defined, for instance, in the military, it is not about the perpetrator but the victim. We have to understand what is occurring if there is perceived harassment or someone feels they have been wronged, or if someone has said something.

In the military I have seen violence and things done against people. Those things could be real and they could be perceived by that person, but it does not matter because they need to be treated with the utmost respect to ensure that the situation is rectified in the long term and does not occur again. At the end of day, we have to ensure that there is a safe workplace so that it accomplish its mission and mandate and is functional, with all employees working together.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time this evening with the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-65, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1. We all know harassment is serious, and it is a pressing matter that faces Canadian society today. It is good that this Parliament is debating legislation that would seek to address harassment in this very workplace and workplaces across Canada.

Harassment is a very volatile offence, because it is not subject to whether the offender intends to harass or not. Irrespective of the intent, the *mens rea* of the harassment, the act still harms the victim. This is why we must put a special emphasis on protecting victims' rights when implementing legislation aimed at stopping harassment. That is a Conservative principle, and it is a principle the Liberal government promised it would uphold.

It is wonderful that we are enjoying a political system where every party seems to understand the gravity of harassment, but statements must lead to thoughtful action. Harassment is an evolving issue, and any legislation regarding harassment needs to recognize this. As parliamentarians, it is vital we understand that protecting people from harassment requires a continual effort, and that harassment comes in many forms. Unfortunately, no two cases are exactly the same and there are always new cases emerging every day.

In addressing harassment, all people who feel they have been harassed simply deserve the right to be heard. As an example, we have to bring into this conversation the fact that our Prime Minister was alleged to have engaged in sexual harassment. Even though he was accused, he claimed that he had a different perspective from that of the accuser. This gave him the explanation he needed to protect himself.

Government Orders

I believe it is possible and even plausible for two individuals to have two completely different perspectives on an occasion, but it does not mean one person's perspective is not real. Canadians, women and I myself were very disappointed in our Prime Minister for not being up front from the very beginning when this behaviour came to light.

The young reporter took immediate action in putting her experience on record with her colleague and in writing an article. In light of that fact, it was disappointing that our Prime Minister did not lead by example for others in his response. He truly should have apologized.

The Prime Minister is the head of our country. He is the leader who insists he is the ultimate feminist. When one makes a mistake, it is important to admit that mistake, to deal with it appropriately and to take every decisive action possible to apologize. We have to take note that how he has treated his own circumstances is very different from how he treated members in this House who were simply accused and immediately faced repercussions.

In this particular case, Ms. Knight chose not to pursue the matter any further, which is her right. However, due process should be afforded in every case out of respect for the accuser and the accused. We cannot rush to conclusions or opinions on matters that are so delicate. We cannot dismiss claims without a fair and honest investigation, nor can we be so quick to convict someone of a claim. We are living in an age where the court of public opinion is quick to convict and does not often provide fair or accurate assessments of harassment claims.

That is why I am grateful that this Parliament is looking to enact legislation on workplace harassment and violence. We should be a true example to the rest of Canada, to the people we represent, and certainly to our own families and children about what our priorities are and what we want them to be for all Canadians.

• (1825)

We need to ensure that there is a transparent process, which respects the privacy of the victim, to assess harassment allegations. All people, irrespective of gender, have a right not to be harassed at their place of work, period.

Madam Speaker, we know that even you, as Chair of this House, take very seriously the responsibility to ensure that the employees of the House of Commons do not have to face harassment. To everyone's chagrin, we still know that it is a reality here on Parliament Hill. Every parliamentarian in this House is an employer to staff, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure a harassment-free workplace. Each one of us, within our own offices, must do everything we can to make it a place where it is a pleasure to come to work and there is no sense of apprehension or fear.

As Canada's leaders, we must set the standard in ensuring that our employees have protection from harassment, and I believe that Bill C-65 is a step in the right direction. However, in formulating this bill, I think the government dropped the ball in adequately consulting stakeholders on the matter. The National Association of Women and the Law and the Native Women's Association of Canada both said that they were not consulted during the drafting of the bill. Both organizations represent important demographics in Canada,

and I believe that they could have contributed greatly in making this bill even better.

I would implore the government to remember to consult with key stakeholders, as there is safety in a multitude of counsellors, and Bill C-65 is all about making sure that workers are safe. When we say that we are going to consult, we need to be willing to consult people who agree with our perspective and with those who do not agree with our perspective but have things to offer that we have not thought about. In that case, I think that may be what happened here.

I will be supporting this bill, as combatting harassment is a pressing need in Parliament. It would set us on the path to safer workspaces in Canada. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment have no place in Canadian society, especially within our political system, or actually anywhere.

Quite honestly, I feel that there is a lot more we need to do as a government to deal with sexual harassment beyond creating a legislative environment for rules and regulations within this place. We should be setting an example in a lot of the policies that are coming forward from various committees, such as the status of women committee, where we put the value of women far higher than I believe it is being placed today.

The bipartisan teamwork on the HUMA committee between the Conservatives and the Liberals proved that Bill C-65, if passed, would have a meaningful impact.

The Conservatives successfully introduced an amendment to prevent political interference in political offices during harassment investigations. Considering the sensitive nature of harassment claims, it is important that harassment investigations are not undermined by the perception of political interference or by actual interference. This was done by amending the law to have powers transferred from the Minister of Labour to the deputy minister, a non-partisan civil servant, in investigations involving the offices of members of Parliament. This would preserve the integrity of the investigation process. I am proud of that amendment that came forward from us.

The amendment to ensure strict timelines for investigations into incidents of harassment to ensure that investigations are carried out in a timely manner would also add to the integrity of the process.

The introduction of mandatory sexual harassment training is an essential part of this bill.

The preservation of the integrity of the process and the prevention of vexatious complaints would be ensured by requiring that such complaints were made within a prescribed time. I feel that this is a good move, and I am so pleased to see it in here, because we have to bring a balance to how we deal with these issues. We cannot afford to have public opinion determining what is right and wrong. It has to be the rule of law that ultimately succeeds, or we will find ourselves in chaos.

Bill C-65 would ensure that a mandatory review of the bill would occur every five years.

Bill C-65 would implement a fair and impartial process to ensure that the appropriate consequences would be applied to the offender.

Adjournment Proceedings

I invite all members of this House to join me in support of Bill C-65 so that better protections from harassment for all Canadians are in place.

• (1830)

Mr. John Oliver (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member made some thoughtful comments and I thank her for her clear support of the bill.

We all agree in the House that harassment and sexual violence of any kind are completely unacceptable, full stop. We all need to do what we can to make sure that harassment and sexual violence do not happen.

As I said earlier, there are very important components in this to encourage people to report harassment and to report sexual violence. One is to make sure our employees have received proper training to understand what it is, how to stop it and to identify practices that are unacceptable. It is important that the employer follow up in a timely way on any complaints that come in, and where there has been sexual violence or sexual harassment or violence of any kind that there is appropriate support.

For me, it begins with leadership. I can say quite categorically that, because it was mandatory, all the political staff and our staff in offices here on the Liberal side have received training online. Some have received it in person, as well.

I am curious. Has the member taken her staff and her office through this kind of training? Can she say collectively whether the Conservative MPs have taken their office staff through that training?

• (1835)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear that all of the Liberals have fulfilled their responsibilities on that side of the House. One thing about Conservatives that I will mention is that when there are laws in place, or expectations, we follow through. That is just what we do. When it comes to this particular issue, of course my answer is yes.

However, I go beyond that. I am doing my very best to make sure that all of my employees in my office always know, no matter what their issue is or what they are feeling in regard to me or what I am expecting of them or what they think should happen in comparison to what I am suggesting they do, they always have that freedom in my office, that my door is always open and we are there to communicate.

If the member would like to know for sure, I am sure there is a record somewhere as far as what every person in this House has done to comply with the requirements.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Conservative caucus, from what I understand in terms of the member's answer, has participated in ensuring that all of her caucus colleagues have taken that course. It was something that was highly recommended. I know that all the members of the Liberal government and caucus have gone through the course, from what I understand. It is a good thing.

Having said that, I wonder if my colleague and friend across the way can comment on how important it is that whether someone is a

member of Parliament, a leader in a community or a business person that they become better educated as a whole on the importance of harassment in whatever form it might take. One of the nice things about this legislation indirectly is that it can be used as a great educational tool.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I totally agree. Those in positions of power and leadership have a huge responsibility here, which brings to my mind this question: Did our Prime Minister get the training? I am sorry, but he is a leader, and we know of a circumstance in which he was involved and, quite honestly, Canadians are disappointed in his response in that situation. We always have an opportunity to apologize if there was a circumstance where another individual felt that behaviour was not appropriate for him or her.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, our hon. colleague brought this up in her speech. She talked about *mens rea*, the guilty mind. Did the person who was committing the crime intend to commit that crime?

When the Prime Minister angrily walked across the way and grabbed our colleague by the arm and then subsequently elbowed one of the NDP members, the question was whether he intended to do that. Was it *mens rea*? Did he have a guilty mind?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I have to allow the member to answer because we are running out of time. I will let the member for Yorkton—Melville give a very quick answer.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Quite honestly, Madam Speaker, that day was very confusing to me from the beginning to the end when I think of the behaviour of the Prime Minister of my country. I cannot fathom what was in his mind, that he thought he had the right or authority to go across the floor and do what he did that day.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Vancouver East is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly the notice is deemed withdrawn.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, tonight we are here to discuss the government's foreign policy with respect to the Middle East and to follow up on a question I asked, which touched on both Canada's relationship with and support for Israel, as well as our interactions with Iran.

Israel is the one nation in the Middle East that most clearly aligns with our values and strategic interests. It is a fellow democracy. At a level of verbal attestation, there would be agreement from the official opposition and the government around the language of supporting Israel, but very clearly there would be some differences with respect to the particulars.

Adjournment Proceedings

We believe that support for Israel and the Middle East's democracy, a free democracy with diversity, tolerance and citizenship for people who are not part of the majority groups, requires us to vote against one-sided UN resolutions that signal out Israel. It calls for us to recognize Israel's right to exist, to recognize Israel's capital and to do all we can to resist and stand against genocidal powers in the region that are opposing Israel.

When we asked questions of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about the government's decision to abstain from a UN resolution that singled out Israel, to abstain as opposed to voting against it, we got an angry response from the member. He told us that apparently we had been told not to ask such questions. That demonstrates a fairly fundamental misunderstanding of what question period and parliamentary democracy are supposed to be about. I replied to that in my response in question period at that time.

However, I went on to speak about issues involving Iran and highlighted a real failure of the government to align its actions with its vote in the House. An opposition day motion called for the listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code. That was supported by every present member of the government. I will note that there were some absences from the chamber when it came to vote on listing the IRGC as a terrorist entity, but those who were present on the government side voted in favour of the motion.

The motion that called for that immediate listing has, nonetheless, not led to any action. We are here almost four months later and the government has not done what it said it would do, which was to immediately list the IRGC. I wrote to the public safety minister about this matter and noted in my letter that perhaps he and I had a different definition of the word "immediate".

As we look at Canada's foreign policy in the region, I will make a few key comments. Although we hear a lot in the media, and it is important that we do, about terrorist organizations like Daesh, the larger long-term strategic security threat comes from the Iranian state and its allies. It is fair to say that their operations are very sophisticated, very much contrary to our interests and values, and they require a strong response, including the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist entity.

We need to oppose this Iranian aggression. Therefore, I am calling on the government again to do what it voted to do, to follow through on its commitment finally and list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. Will it do it, yes or no?

• (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government is committed to ensuring that Canada takes all appropriate actions to counter terrorist threats to this country, its people, our way of life, and our interests around the world while co-operating with international partners as appropriate. Listing an entity under the Criminal Code is one of the many tools Canada uses to combat terrorist financing, operations and support to terrorist activities.

Regarding the listing of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or the IRGC, I would point out that there are restrictive measures

already imposed against entities and individuals within the IRGC, and against Iran, that have a similar effect to a listing. These include the listing of the IRGC's Qods Force under the Criminal Code. The Qods Force is a branch of the IRGC responsible for extraterritorial operations, and for exporting the Iranian revolution through activities such as facilitating terrorist operations. It provides arms, funding and paramilitary training to other listed groups, including the Taliban, the Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas.

Other existing measures against the IRGC include the sanctions imposed under the Special Economic Measures Act. These actions were partly coordinated with like-minded countries to explicitly target IRGC organizations and the leadership by prohibiting any dealings between Canadians and these entities. Furthermore, Canada has listed Iran as a state supporter of terrorism under the State Immunity Act.

When we talk about listing the entire IRGC under the Criminal Code, I can assure the member that officials have begun their assessment. As the terrorist listing chapter of the National Security Green Paper, 2016, outlined, the process for listing an entity under the Criminal Code is thorough, fair and robust to ensure that national security threats are addressed while protecting the democratic values, rights and freedoms of all Canadians.

To be listed under the Criminal Code, an individual or group must meet the legal threshold of reasonable grounds to believe they have knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity, or are knowingly acting on behalf of, at the direction of, or in association with an entity that has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity.

This is determined by drafting a criminal or security intelligence report, which documents the entity's activities. The report is reviewed by independent counsel at the Department of Justice to ensure that the entity meets the legal threshold for listing. If the Minister of Public Safety agrees that this test is met, he may recommend to cabinet that the entity be listed. This is the process we are undertaking for the IRGC and, understandably, it takes necessary time in order to be completed.

Adjournment Proceedings

●(1845)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, this really should not be so difficult. As a matter of policy, the Iranians state that the IRGC is very much involved. I think it is well known and established in precisely the activities the member talked about. Moreover, the Prime Minister, cabinet and government voted in favour of a motion to immediately list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. That was a commitment, that was an affirmation, that was a vote they made in the House, and they have not done it. The member talks in a way that makes us wonder if they ever intend to do it. Even in the midst of describing the elongated process, he does acknowledge that it is ultimately the decision of the minister and the cabinet.

They made that decision, they made that vote and now it is time for them to do the right thing and follow through. Will they list the IRGC, yes or no?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, listing an individual or group as a terrorist entity is a public means of identifying their involvement with terrorism and curtailing support for them. Listing is just one component of the international and domestic response to terrorism.

With that in mind, I would reiterate that Canada has already taken action against Iran and the IRGC specifically. These actions are broadly consistent with our international partners, such as the U.S., U.K. and Australia, which have designated components of the IRGC under their own sanctions regimes. Canada is also in line with the U. S. in its listing of the IRGC's Qods Force under the Criminal Code. I would also restate that officials are assessing the listing of the IRGC using the necessary due diligence as part of the established process.

This government remains unwavering in our commitment to keep Canadians safe, including by taking all appropriate action to counter terrorist threats in Canada and around the world.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:49 p.m.)

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