



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, November 22, 2018**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 22, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)  
[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

\* \* \*

### POSTAL SERVICES RESUMPTION AND CONTINUATION ACT

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-89, An Act to provide for the resumption and continuation of postal services.

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

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### FINANCE

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-86, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures. The committee reports the bill with amendments.

While I am on my feet, I move, seconded by the member for Yukon:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1040)  
[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 943)*

### YEAS

#### Members

Aldag  
Amos  
Arseneault  
Ayoub  
Bagnell  
Bennett  
Blair  
Bossio  
Breton  
Casey (Charlottetown)  
Cuzner  
Damoff  
Dhillon  
Dubourg  
Dzerowicz  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Eyking  
Fergus  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fragiskatos  
Fraser (Central Nova)  
Goldsmith-Jones  
Gould  
Hajdu  
Harvey  
Hogg  
Housefather  
Hutchings  
Joly  
Jowhari  
Khera  
Lametti  
Lapointe  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre

Alghabra  
Anandasangaree  
Arya  
Badawey  
Baylis  
Bibeau  
Boissonnault  
Bratina  
Carr  
Chagger  
Dabrusin  
Dhaliwal  
Drouin  
Duguid  
Easter  
El-Khoury  
Erskine-Smith  
Eyolfson  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fraser (West Nova)  
Fuhr  
Goodale  
Graham  
Hardie  
Hébert  
Holland  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jones  
Khalid  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)  
Lebouthillier  
Leslie

*Government Orders*

Levitt	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Morrissey	
Murray	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tootoo	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Yip	Young
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**NAYS**

## Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Alleslev	Allison
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Barlow
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Chong	Choquette
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Eglinski	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kwan	Lake
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Martel	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore	Motz
Nantel	Nater

Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Sansoucy
Saroya	Shields
Shipley	Sorenson
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PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.**GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***POSTAL SERVICES RESUMPTION AND CONTINUATION ACT****Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:**

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, a bill in the name of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, entitled An Act to provide for the resumption and continuation of postal services, shall be disposed of as follows:

- (a) the said bill may be read twice or thrice in one sitting;
- (b) not more than two hours shall be allotted for the consideration of the second reading stage of the said bill, following the adoption of this Order;
- (c) when the bill has been read a second time, it shall be referred to a Committee of the Whole;
- (d) any division requested in the Committee shall be deferred until the end of the Committee's consideration of the Bill;
- (e) not more than one hour shall be allotted for the consideration of the Committee of the Whole stage of the said bill;
- (f) not more than one half hour shall be allotted for the consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill, provided that no Member shall speak for more than ten minutes at a time during the said stage and that no period for questions and comments be permitted following each Member's speech;
- (g) at the expiry of the times provided for in this Order, any proceedings before the House or the Committee of the Whole shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the stage, then under consideration, of the said bill shall be put and disposed of forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment, and no division shall be deferred;
- (h) when the Speaker has, for the purposes of this Order, interrupted any proceeding for the purpose of putting forthwith the question on any business then before the House, the bells to call in the Members shall ring for not more than thirty minutes;
- (i) commencing when the said bill is read a first time and concluding when the said bill is read a third time, the House shall not adjourn except pursuant to a motion proposed by a Minister of the Crown;
- (j) no motion to adjourn the debate at any stage of the said bill may be proposed except by a Minister of the Crown; and
- (k) during the consideration of the said bill in the Committee of the Whole, no motion that the Committee rise or that the Committee report progress may be proposed except by a Minister of the Crown.

*Government Orders*

•(1045)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am here today to talk about our intention to take action to end the labour dispute between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, also known as CUPW.

[*Translation*]

Since the start of negotiations between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, we have been doing our best to help the parties find a solution.

[*English*]

We believe in the collective bargaining process. Negotiated agreements are always the best solution. We would not come down this road, however, we have exhausted every option.

Our government ran on a commitment to restore fair and balanced labour laws and relations, but we also have a responsibility to Canadian businesses that drive our economy.

As our country's primary postal operator, Canadians and Canadian businesses rely on Canada Post. Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers provide postal services that are of vital importance to Canadians and to Canadian businesses.

Older Canadians, persons with disabilities, low-income earners, as well as Canadians living in rural, remote and northern areas who rely on physical mail delivery, including indigenous peoples, are disproportionately affected during postal strikes. The costs of postal alternatives, such as courier companies, can be prohibitively high, especially in rural and remote areas. In some remote northern areas, there are no alternatives.

Canadians living in the north are more reliant on parcel delivery services than other Canadians, receiving approximately double the per capita parcel average in Canada in 2017. While e-commerce and e-communications are the norm for many, almost nine million Canadians, about 30% of the population, live in rural and remote areas where access to the Internet can be extremely limited.

We know that some of the most vulnerable in our country count on Canada Post for their cheques. These Canadians count on this money to scrape by, and they are put in very precarious positions by any delay, like Jack, who told me that as a person on Ontario disability any delay could mean a loss of housing for him. Many others rely on prompt payment to survive month to month.

The strikes have been going on for five weeks now. Canada Post said that it could expect delays of parcel and mail delivery into 2019 as a result of these rotating strikes. Canada Post has also told its commercial customers that at this point it cannot honour its delivery standards for any product because of the prolonged strikes. The strikes have created backlogs of mail and parcels just days before an expected rush of millions of additional parcels from Black Friday and Cyber Monday online sales.

Businesses are already feeling the negative impacts of the strikes. Significant delivery delays are resulting in order cancellations for the many Canadian businesses that are dependent on sales from Black Friday through to the end of the holiday to survive. There are reports

of declines in e-commerce demand. The impacts of the rotating strikes are particularly pronounced for small and medium-sized businesses, because the fourth quarter is their busiest.

The reality is that if the strikes are left to continue through the holiday season, they would create significant hardship. That means job losses and fewer hours for Canadians who count on the extra money to get by.

At the same time, Canada Post has asked its international partners to halt mail and parcel shipments to Canada, as it continues to deal with a major delivery backlog that has grown as a result of the rotating strikes. This affects not only Canadians and Canadian businesses, but also Canada's reputation as a reliable market for commerce and trade.

Small and medium-sized businesses that rely more heavily on Canada Post for billing and order fulfillment are struggling. Some of these smaller companies, operating on eBay, Etsy and Amazon platforms as e-sellers, are disproportionately affected. According to a survey conducted on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, or the CFIB, two-thirds of small and medium-sized enterprises surveyed said that they were being affected by the rotating strikes at Canada Post. According to the CFIB, costs are around \$3,000 per business in terms of lost sales, cancelled orders, delays, or costs due to the use of more expensive delivery alternatives.

E-commerce is a significant source of economic growth in Canada. Compared to the 2011 postal strike, Canadians in 2018 have become greater consumers of e-commerce generated parcels. According to Statistics Canada, Internet-based sales from all retailers rose 31% to \$15.7 billion in 2017. Up to 40% of these sales take place in the fourth quarter, which is currently being affected by the strike. In the event of an even longer postal strike, many companies, particularly smaller e-commerce companies, are saying they may not make it through the season.

•(1050)

Let me provide some of the real-life stories.

There is a company called Monkeys & More based in Halifax, which is run by Dale Kearney and his wife Sherrie. They specialize in selling handmade scarves, mittens and aprons online. They get orders from Canada and the U.S. during the holidays. However, this year, customers are reluctant to place orders for fear they will not receive their purchase by Christmas. Mr. Kearney said, "Normal years we're sold out by now. The rotating strike, it's killing us."

How about Red Ribbon boutique? This is a shop on Edmonton's High Street. It is run by owner Rychelle Tuck, who relies heavily on Canada Post, as most of her sales are done online. Mrs. Tuck said that she knew packages would be late arriving to customers, but exactly how late was a mystery to her.

*Government Orders*

Small businesses like theirs are slowly becoming casualties of the ongoing Canada Post dispute.

In an article, Craig Patterson, director of Applied Research at the University of Alberta's School of Retailing, said that the margins of small businesses were "a lot thinner than the major retailers" and "They're relying on Canada Post a lot more, whereas bigger retailers can go to an alternative supplier". He said that instead of taking the chance, many customers "will choose to go to...malls, as opposed to seeking out local businesses", meaning money will often leave the local economy.

The strike is having an impact on the workers as well. Canada Post workers and other businesses affected are counting on the extra wages from this time of year as part of their revenue. In some cases, they need these wages to get by. Canadians are calling on us to take action.

The Retail Council of Canada sent an open letter to the Prime Minister, which said that the situation was heading into crisis territory, that the pace of parcel traffic was about to double and that the postal system was already overstretched.

We are not debating this legislation today because we still believe that Canada Post and CUPW can get a deal. I believe the two parties can still reach a negotiated agreement.

[*Translation*]

We still believe a deal can be reached, but we must be ready to step in if the parties cannot come to an agreement.

[*English*]

The parties are still negotiating, and nothing in this motion prevents that from continuing. We continue to provide them with all of the tools necessary to reach an agreement. Their negotiations started this time last year. The existing collective bargaining agreement expired on January 31, 2018, and these agreements covered approximately 8,000 rural and suburban letter carriers and 42,000 urban operations employees.

On June 29, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service received two notices of dispute from the union. The following week, on July 6, two conciliation officers were appointed to assist in the negotiations. On September 5, I appointed two mediators. CUPW began strike action on October 22. On October 24, I appointed the special mediator, Morton Mitchnick, and I have reappointed him twice since then to facilitate an agreement. Voluntary arbitration was offered and declined.

My colleague, the Hon. Carla Qualtrough, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, and I have reached out to the parties directly on many occasions to urge them to continue to work toward reaching agreements. We have worked hard to restore fairness and balance to the labour landscape in Canada, and these efforts demonstrate that.

Through Bill C-4, for example, our government's first piece of legislation—

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wanted to point out that in this

place, as you have so lengthily reminded us, it is not appropriate to name a member by name but rather by riding or role.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for pointing that out. I did in fact hear the hon. member make that error in the course of her remarks. Quite often when that occurs, if there is no disorder at the initial moment, and I will see if it happens a second time, I will often not interrupt the member when that occurs. I think the hon. minister will keep that in mind for the remainder of her remarks.

The hon. Minister of Employment.

● (1055)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that error.

As I said, we have worked really hard to restore fairness and balance to the labour landscape in Canada. One of the first pieces of legislation we introduced was Bill C-4, which repealed two private members' bills that were intentionally meant to undermine the rights of unions in the country. One bill imposed excessive reporting requirements on unions. The second bill made it harder for workers to unionize. This was important to us. We understand that organized labour support these good middle-class jobs that we talk about so often in this place.

In fact, we have taken other action, prompted by the union movement. We introduced modern labour standards as recently as last month. These are going to work in direct opposition to other Conservative governments that are repealing the rights of workers. We introduced pay equity to ensure women would have an opportunity to receive equal pay for work of equal value. We were successful in passing and receiving royal assent on Bill C-65, legislation on which we worked closely with organized labour, to ensure people were free from harassment and sexual violence in the workplace.

We will continue to work with organized labour to ensure that workers across the country can work for companies and organizations in which they are respected and have decent work.

We have not intervened early because we believe in the collective bargaining process. We have worked with the parties during this labour disruption to assist them in getting a deal with every tool we have. However, we also have a responsibility to all Canadians and to the businesses that drive our economy. When the consequences of a work stoppage become so great that they begin to result in serious or lasting harm, we must act. When a strike or lockout affects thousands, or even millions of people, the government must intervene.

The Canada Labour Code gives the parties in a dispute the right to a strike or lockout and back-to-work legislation should be used as a last resort. We will continue to support the parties through every means possible. As I have said, we still believe a deal is possible.

Canadians can be assured that our government has done everything in its power to help the two parties reach an agreement. We believe in the collective bargaining process. We believe in fair and balanced labour relations. We will continue our work with organized labour to support decent work and middle-class jobs in the country.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, some things the minister said in her speech are not true. Cheques are being delivered on time, and everyone who is supposed to get money is getting it. These are rotating strikes, not a full-on strike. For over four weeks, the job action has been respectful. Workers want to deliver money and parcels on time. That is why they chose to do rotating strikes.

I would encourage the minister to leave the House of Commons, put on her toque and her boots and go see those workers on the shop floor. She should also go observe them on their routes so she can see that they truly want to deliver the mail. However, their safety is important.

Why is the minister on Canada Post's side? Why is she standing up for Amazon and eBay when all the mail is being delivered on time?

[English]

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, of course we know this strike is affecting Canada Post workers as well. It is a hardship for the workers, the small businesses that rely on the service and individuals who rely on a variety of mail and cheques to get through their everyday lives and to deal with their financial affairs. That is why we have worked so diligently on supporting these parties to reach a deal.

We do not take this lightly. We are not going to be debating the legislation today. We still believe a deal is possible. We encourage both parties to work together to find that deal so they can bring an end to this labour disruption and ensure people get the essential mail they need.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it a little ironic that when the Conservatives were in government in 2011, we brought forward back-to-work legislation on Canada Post and the Liberals were extremely critical of that move. The minister has said that today the situation is a crisis for many small business owners. She has mentioned some specifically and has said that as we go through Black Friday, Christmas and Cyber Monday, they need dependable postal service to ensure they can be successful. I think the minister even mentioned that some businesses were in jeopardy of being able to stay in business and may close their doors if Canada Post workers did not go back to work.

If this situation is such a crisis and small businesses across the country are depending on Canada Post running, why is she not being more forceful and acting on this more quickly instead of just talking about it today?

• (1100)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight the contrast between our government and the previous Harper Conservative government, which did not believe in fair and balanced labour relations; whipped in legislation as quickly possible, not only to end labour disruptions but to prevent them; and interfered in the collective bargaining process by introducing harmful legislation, which we repealed with Bill C-4.

That is why we have waited, because we want to make sure that we are doing everything possible to support the collective bargaining process to help these parties find a deal. We know that a deal arrived

at by both parties working together is the strongest deal for Canada. We are going to continue the work we do to build up the labour movement and support the labour movement and take action when absolutely necessary.

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF):** Mr. Speaker, the last time the Government of Canada ordered Canada Post employees back to work, the courts ruled that legislation to be unconstitutional. One of the ways we normally try to make sure legislation is constitutional is by having a full debate on it in this House and by having a full study of it at committee.

Why is the minister putting forward a motion to limit consideration of this potential legislation to only a couple of hours, and how is she so confident that it is going to be constitutional this time?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I am putting forward a motion today, which does not necessarily mean that we will be debating the legislation. I am hopeful that the parties will reach an agreement, and we encourage them to stay at the table and get that deal. Having said that, we know that Canadians are expecting us to act quickly. As I mentioned in my speech, Canadians are struggling, whether it is individuals waiting for payments of a variety of different kinds, small businesses on the cusp of potentially going out of business or other businesses that rely on this time of year as their most profitable time. Therefore, we will take action, as the Government of Canada, to ensure that all Canadians' needs are met.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised by the gall of the minister standing in this place and saying that she is still hopeful that the two sides are going to come to a deal, when two weeks ago, the government signalled publicly, and we do not know when it signalled Canada Post privately, that it was prepared to introduce back-to-work legislation. That is what considering all options means, and nobody was fooled into thinking otherwise.

When the minister herself is signalling that the government is prepared to legislate workers back to work, she has to know, if she has any decency as the Minister of Labour or appropriateness for the position, that this undermines the possibility of a fair deal coming out at the bargaining table, because the company knows that the workers are going to be legislated back to work. How dare she get up in this place and say that she is hopeful that they are going to reach a deal, when she has been threatening for weeks to legislate those workers back to work, taking their leverage away at the bargaining table?

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, it is my job as the Minister of Labour to make sure that we have fair and balanced labour relations in this country and also to make sure that we take action when we know that Canadians and the Canadian economy need it to be taken. In fact, legislation is a tool the Minister of Labour has in the case that a negotiated agreement cannot be arrived at. We know that these parties are still at the table and are still negotiating. As I said, I expect them to stay there. We have discretion about when we will debate this legislation, and I will be monitoring it very closely.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a difficult decision for the minister to put this forward, but I know full well the effort, time and energy she and her whole team have put into trying to find a way forward on this particular issue.

The Conservatives have said that we were very critical when they came forward with back-to-work legislation, and we know that they made record use of back-to-work legislation while in government. They had pieces of legislation on the shelf, and once a strike had been called, they would pull that down, insert the name, and the back-to-work legislation would be put forward. As a matter of fact, when they legislated Canada Post back, they legislated the workers back for less of a wage than Canada Post had actually offered during negotiations.

I would like the minister to again share with the House how the actions undertaken by this government certainly stand in stark contrast to what took place before under the Conservatives.

• (1105)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. My colleague is right to highlight that this is a dramatically different approach than the previous government's. The previous government, as my colleague pointed out, did not allow for labour disruption. In fact, sometimes it pre-empted strike action by introducing back-to-work legislation in a way that was extremely harmful to the labour movement and extremely harmful to workers across this country.

As noted in my remarks, we have taken every effort over a long period of time to assist these parties to come to a negotiated agreement. As a matter of fact, the parties are still working together today, and I thank them for that. I encourage them to stay at the table and get a negotiated agreement.

We have worked hard to ensure that the labour movement has the protections it needs. We have listened to the labour movement. We have introduced modern labour standards. We have introduced pay equity. We have actually passed legislation that strengthens the rights of workers and protects workers in Canadian workplaces.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if there ever was a lesson in talking out of both sides of the mouth, this would be the moment. I should not be surprised, because the minister learned that from the Prime Minister. We see it all the time.

Does the minister not understand that the very fact that she is speaking here today signalling that the government is prepared to bring back-to-work legislation for the postal workers is stacking the deck and will skew the entire negotiation process for the corporation against the workers? How can she get up here and claim that this will allow for a fair negotiation process for both parties?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that we have used every tool in our tool box to get a negotiated agreement. I am still hopeful that the parties will arrive at that agreement.

As a matter of fact, the parties are working together today. I encourage them to work diligently to find that agreement. Having said that, as the Government of Canada we have a responsibility to all Canadians, and we take that responsibility seriously. We have small businesses that are suffering. We have rural and remote communities that are suffering. We have individuals who are concerned about how they are going to make rent next month. We have had calls to act, and that is, in fact, what we are doing.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this motion.

We have certainly heard from both sides of the floor different points of view. However, my NDP colleague put it quite profoundly. She took my opening line about talking through both sides of their mouths.

In the minister's presentation today, we heard the reasons for tabling this motion on back-to-work legislation for Canada Post. She said that small businesses across Canada are facing a crisis. She even talked about specific business owners who have reached out to her office saying that they are in jeopardy of closing their doors if they cannot have a dependable postal service. She talked about how important it is to address the issues business owners across Canada are facing, and that is the reason she is taking this step today.

However, at the same time, she said, in response to my question, that they are going to do everything they can to ensure that they come to some sort of agreement. She did not finish that sentence. The end of that sentence is, "small business be damned, regardless of the consequences this is going to have."

Small-business owners have raised the alarm bells on some very real concerns, as we head into their busiest time of the season, that if they do not make the revenue during the holiday season, it impacts the rest of their year. I certainly have had those conversations with small-business owners in my riding. They make sometimes 60% to 70% of their revenue during the holiday season, and a lot of that business is through online sales.

I will name a couple of examples. Frontier Western Shop, in Claresholm, was a very small western wear business that grew over the last decade into an international success story. It sells its wares across the world. Who would have known that people in Europe want belt buckles and cowboy boots? They do. It has grown into an extremely successful business, built on an online platform. The same can be said for Flys Etc., in High River. It was a very small business that started as a one-man shop, but because of his success in selling reels and rods and his handmade flies online around the world, this small High River business has grown into a great success story.



*Government Orders*

We can talk about the big businesses that are going to be impacted, but the messages we are getting from our constituents is that the very small rural businesses are the ones being impacted as well. The minister said in her presentation that she has heard stories from business owners who have asked her to take definitive action to get Canada Post back to work. Today the minister said, yes, she has heard their stories, but she is just going to put a motion on the table to talk about it. She is not taking definitive action. She just wants to talk about this some more, while each minute and each hour this goes on, small businesses across the country are suffering.

This is a bigger trend we have seen from the Liberal government. It is its inability to take action when it is needed. There is that desire to stand on both sides of the fence, and we all know what happens when people sit on the fence for too long. They get slivers, very painful slivers. Unfortunately, our small businesses are the ones who are feeling the consequences and the pain of that.

We have seen this story many times during the Liberals' three-year mandate. Let us go back a bit to the grain backlog. We had grain farmers across the country, specifically in western Canada, talking about the pain they were going through not being able to get their commodities to market. We encouraged the Liberal government for months to take action on this issue. It had definitive tools in its tool box to force the railways to start hauling more grain. This started last fall. We went through the winter. Every single time we brought this up to the Liberal government, the response was, "We really trust the railways to resolve this on their own. We are not going to get involved. They are meeting their targets. This is all going to resolve itself." Meeting their targets meant sometimes meeting six per cent of the contracts they had signed. Six per cent is certainly not what I would say is meeting their obligations. We then went through the spring seeding period, and still no resolution. Finally, the summer came, and the Liberals tabled Bill C-49, the transportation bill, which we asked them to do eight or nine months earlier. If they had taken the legislation the previous Conservative government had done and put it forward, we would have resolved that grain backlog when it still could have made a difference to Canadian grain farmers. However, the Liberals wait until we are in crisis mode.

• (1110)

That is exactly what the minister said today in her presentation, that our small businesses are facing a crisis. What are the Liberals going to do about it? They are going to do almost something, but not quite anything. We are going to come here and debate it a little more and once again try to walk the fence. Our grain farmers in western Canada sure felt the ramifications of that. Even with Bill C-49, it does not force the railways to haul grain. There is no accountability in that bill. Again, it is window dressing so that Liberals can say eventually, when it really does not matter any more and it is way too late, they did something. Really, Bill C-49 does not address anything and hopefully this fall and winter as we go through the harvest once again, we will see what kind of an impact Bill C-49 will have on our grain producers.

Let us also go back to the Phoenix pay system, something that we have all dealt with. The Liberals like to pass the buck onto somebody else. They were told when they won the election that the Phoenix pay system was not ready to go. They needed to take some definitive action to address this situation, which would have impacts on federal

employees across the country. Again, they did not take definitive action. They did not address the situation. They just pressed the green button and hoped for the best because hope and hard work solves all one's problems apparently. We have seen the consequences of that inaction. Federal employees across the country can certainly share that information and the impact this has had on their livelihood. Some of them have been overpaid and then been asked to reimburse the federal government. Some of them have not been paid at all. Again, we hear from the minister that they are taking definitive action and are fully aware of the crisis situation. Then what are the Liberals doing? Nothing or very little.

It is unfortunate, because our small business owners are now put in the crosshairs because of the labour disruption with Canada Post. As I said in my question to the minister, in 2011 when the Conservative government took similar steps to address the Canada Post work stoppage, we were criticized severely by the Liberal third party opposition members that we were being overly aggressive, that it was not something we should be doing. How interesting that the tables have turned just a few years later and now the Liberals are in the situation. They think this is something they should do, but they want to go halfway all the time. There is no ability to make a tough decision and follow through on that decision, to remedy the situation for businesses across Canada.

I want to bring some examples in the trend we have seen with the Liberal government over the last few years. One would be the outcry from Canadians, especially in Ontario and Quebec, with the illegal migrants coming across the border. This is a crisis. There is no question about it. We have seen the numbers increase over the last few years. Liberals like to take little snapshots to say in this week of July the numbers went down between two and four o'clock in the afternoon, so they have a handle on the illegal migrant crisis. If we look at the numbers in a broader vision, the numbers have continued to go up.

That is certainly not the impression that Canadians have of the situation, and this would resonate with my colleagues in southern Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. The situation is not in control. Building permanent housing with tents and trailers along the border is not what I would consider a long-term solution to an illegal migrant crisis. Again, the Liberals do not want to do anything about it except talk about it. They say they are putting things in place. The Minister of Border Security, the minister with no portfolio really, has said ad nauseam that they have the numbers under control. However, in every statistic, in every media report and certainly when we talk to people on the ground, that is certainly not the case. Again, we see this inability to take definitive action when definitive action is needed.

*Government Orders*

• (1115)

I compare that to the situation we are in now. Canadian businesses across the country are saying that the crisis they are facing now is real. As we get into this holiday season, we have seen the stats, and I think the minister even mentioned them today, that the rotating postal strikes are costing small businesses an average of \$3,000 a month. That includes not only lost sales, but also receivables that are not getting to those businesses.

Let us talk about what that impact would be at \$3,000 a month. That is two employees who would now have to be laid off. However, if they had that \$3,000 over the holiday season, then a couple of employees could be hired to help through this very busy season. The Liberal minister talked about how much of a crisis this is for businesses. There is a ripple-down effect to this inaction.

I have a 20-year-old daughter who is looking for some part-time work over the holiday season. She has gone to some of the retailers for work during the holidays, but a lot of them have said that they are not hiring until they know what is going on with the labour dispute. They do not know if they can afford to hire those additional part-time workers over the holiday season.

A lot of Canadians rely on that extra income. It helps them pay for their own Christmas presents and holiday celebrations. University and college students over the Christmas break absolutely rely on that additional revenue to help them pay for their tuition and school books, which have become more expensive. On a side note, the Liberals felt that tax credits for tuition and school books were not really necessary and that university and college students were too wealthy to qualify for these tax credits. Unfortunately, because of that, they are now having to rely on those part-time jobs over the Christmas holidays; part-time jobs that are not going to be there, because these small businesses are losing up to \$3,000 a month due to the disruption in Canada Post services.

My Liberal colleagues were demeaning this by saying that the contrast between the Conservative action and the Liberal action when it comes to these types of situations is that the Conservatives acted quickly but the Liberals took their time with it. I am very proud of the fact that we acted quickly and took definitive action when it was needed, which ensured that our small businesses and companies across the country knew that the government was standing behind them and ensuring they had the tools they needed to be successful. What is frustrating them right now is a government that is taking no action, allowing them to suffer, and would rather stand on the sidelines and let these two groups come to an agreement, which they have obviously been unable to do.

I appreciate the union's position on some of the things it is trying to address, but it is clear that they have not been able to come to an agreement. We understand the situation before us with a very busy holiday season. Therefore, I think it behooves the government to take some definitive action to ensure that our small businesses are not going to be suffering through their busiest season. This is when they make their gravy. This is when businesses make the revenue that keeps them up and running for the rest of the year. There is no question about that. As I said, a lot of them make 70% of their revenue during this time of year.

I have certainly heard over the last couple of weeks the frustration from small business owners who do not understand why the Liberal government does not have their backs. We can go back to last fall when the Liberals brought forward these small business tax changes. These were going to be imposed on small businesses across the country that would have been devastated by these tax changes. If not for this tax revolt from our farmers, ranchers and small business owners, there is no question the Liberal government would have gone ahead with these changes. We heard from our farmers that it would be the end of the family farm, because they would not be able to pass their farms on to the next generation. This was shocking, but it was fact. The Liberals do not dispute that fact, because it was true. Even though we were able to get the Liberals to walk back on some of these changes, the changes to passive income are still there.

• (1120)

There are still some challenges for our small business owners. The Liberals hiked CPP and EI taxes on paycheques, which again impacts business owners as well as their employees. The government is going to impose a federal carbon tax and add a tax on the GST and the HST. For whatever reason, the Liberals do not understand that all of these things are devastating our Canadian small businesses.

These small businesses are the ones that create jobs, as much as the Liberal government would like to take credit for that. Governments do not create jobs. Let us get that on the table. Governments can put policies in place that encourage businesses to grow and create jobs, but governments do not create jobs, unless they hire a lot of public sector workers, which is a subject we can save for another day. That is one way the Liberals are creating jobs.

More than 90% of jobs in Canada are created by our small and medium-sized enterprises, SMEs. They are successful because they are entrepreneurs, willing to take the risks. We have to ensure that they have the tools to take those risks, to be comfortable to hire new employees, to expand their business and invest in new equipment, new technology and new innovation. One of those tools is a reliable postal service.

As we go through the past three years of the Liberal government's mandate, it seems that one by one, it is removing every single tool that our small and medium-sized enterprises need to be successful, whether it is by increasing taxes or creating additional carbon taxes or additional regulatory and red tape regimes.

I would like to touch briefly on yesterday's fall economic statement. From my perspective, there was nothing in that presentation that addressed the crisis that we are facing in Alberta. We have a massive differential in oil prices. The Liberals think we are talking about big international businesses, and we are, because they are being impacted also, but all the junior and middle companies that rely on those big businesses are being impacted and rural communities in Alberta are being devastated. They feel everywhere they turn they are being punched.

*Government Orders*

Three of the biggest companies in the world, Trans Canada, Enbridge and Kinder Morgan, were ready to put private dollars into three major energy infrastructure projects at the start of the Liberals' mandate, and all three have now gone. Unless they hit the ground in Alberta, people cannot understand the impact that has had. Investment has gone. Companies are leaving and jobs are going with them. The impact has been devastating.

My Alberta colleagues and I talk about this a great deal. We cannot understand why the Liberals refuse to see it, why they refuse to understand the impact this is having on Alberta's economy and its small rural communities.

Christmas is coming, and more than 100,000 energy workers are out of work. Some of them have been out of work for more than two years now. They were looking at Christmas as an opportunity to have a small celebration with friends and family but they will not be able to have that either, because small businesses in these rural communities are suffering because of their inability to access their customers and get their receivables.

This is just another hit by a Liberal government that does not seem to understand the importance of small business and how much our rural communities depend on these small businesses and our postal service. These communities are sometimes very secluded.

I understand that email and the Internet are an easy way to do these things, but that cannot be done if there is no postal service, and that is very frustrating. We want to see the Liberals take definitive action on this. We do not want them to just talk about it, but to do something about it.

I have talked a lot about our rural communities and our small towns, but this also has international implications. We have heard now from the United Kingdom, the United States and several of our large partners and allies, many of which are countries our new Canadians and immigrants have come from, that Canada Post has now told them not to send parcels or mail as we are not going to be able to handle it.

●(1125)

That is pretty tough for a trading partner that these businesses, which have operations in other parts of the world, now cannot do business with one another because they are unable to access reliable mail service. This will impact the more than 100 countries who are members of the Universal Postal Union, and the other United Nations agencies this is going to impact. Again, it shows that the Liberal government is not protecting our export markets, our global economy, and the ability of Canadian companies to expand and operate outside our own borders. This has far-reaching impacts on our economy, not just here at home but certainly around the world.

The Liberals, I hope, over the course of the next couple of days will understand that Canada Post is an essential service for rural Canadians in our small towns, who rely on it to do their business and pay their bills. I hope they will hear that message today. I am sure they are going to hear the message loud and clear from my NDP colleagues that they take the situation seriously. They should not just talk about it, but take definitive action. They should not think small businesses are not suffering and can wait. They cannot wait. They need action today.

●(1130)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the Conservatives.

We as the government are very hopeful that there will still be an opportunity for a negotiated agreement. I think there is some contrast between our government and the former Stephen Harper government, one example being when the Harper government imposed back-to-work legislation with a rollback of salaries of staff.

We are really and truly hoping that the union and management will be able to achieve an agreement. In contrast to the Conservatives who say that we are not moving quickly fast enough and that we need to come down on the parties, the NDP is the absolute opposite.

Would my friend across the way not agree that the first priority is to look at the impact on the national interest of Canadians as a whole? Should we not still hold out an opportunity for hope that there will be a negotiated agreement?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague just highlighted the reason we are in this situation. It all comes down to hope. We really hope that the best of this will come forward. We are just going to stand back and hope that these two groups resolve this problem.

The Liberals have failed to take responsibility for a situation that has arisen under their government. Whether it is fighter jets, deficits or the Canada Post labour dispute, it is never their fault. It is always somebody else's fault. They are now three and a half years into their mandate. They need to start taking responsibility for some of the things that have happened because of the decisions they have made.

This is not about hoping that this situation will be resolved. We have known since January of 2018 that this was the situation. The Liberals have had months to hope that these two groups would come to an agreement. It has not happened. Hope is not enough. They need to take action.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, fundamentally what we are doing today is looking at whether it is fair in the collective bargaining process to threaten and then bring in back-to-work legislation, this time with our postal workers. Whether it is a Conservative government or a Liberal government, through rain, snow, sleet or hail, and today in Ottawa through minus 25° temperatures, our postal workers are out there delivering mail on our behalf.

When we look at these processes today we must ask this question. Is it fair to our postal workers in a collective bargaining process to threaten legislation and then bring it in? How does that lead to a balanced outcome during a collective bargaining process? It is just not right.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. No one questions the dedication and commitment of our postal workers. Walking around yesterday was proof enough of what they have to endure. There is also the greater good.

*Government Orders*

When we have small businesses across the country losing thousands of dollars a month because of a work stoppage or a rotating work stoppage, that is something that needs to be addressed. I understand the situation of the postal workers across the country, but they also have to understand the impact these rotating strikes, and potentially a full strike, would have on Canada's economy.

Let us not fool ourselves: They know what the current situation is, what time of year it is, and how much our small businesses rely on them. It is a tool in the bargaining tool chest, and I completely understand that. As part of that, they also have to understand the impact their decisions are having on Canada's economy and the crisis our small businesses are facing.

**Mr. John Oliver (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that our government has made huge strides for organized labour and Canadian workers.

We repealed Bill C-525 and Bill C-377 to restore fair and balanced labour relations. We have amended the Canada Labour Code. We are modernizing labour standards. Now we are forced to look at this Canada Post situation.

It has been interesting to hear the conversations in the House. I have heard from my NDP colleagues that we should be doing nothing and let the collective process drag out through a very critical business cycle. I have heard from the member across who said that we should have acted earlier.

Does the member not see the value of collective bargaining? Does he not see the value of allowing a mutually agreeable process to unfold so that these two parties can come together one last time in a mutually satisfactory way?

• (1135)

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I am not questioning, and nowhere in my intervention did I question, the importance of collective bargaining.

I am not saying that the process should not be going on, but it has been going on since January. There is no question that the Liberals could have taken action much sooner. Again, let us be clear: They are not really doing anything. The Liberals have just put a motion on the floor today to maybe try to spark some discussion on this. What they are doing is really no action. The Liberals should have been acting before.

Again, we are not criticizing collective bargaining. My point on this is that under their watch, once again, the Liberals have waited until we have reached a crisis before they sort of take action.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to get my colleague's comments.

The Liberals are crying crocodile tears, as I think they are called. They are bragging about all of the things they have done, when they are actually not that interested in union members. We have seen the Liberals raise taxes. We see the minister talking this morning about how Canadians are waiting for help, but they are certainly not going to get it from the government.

The Liberals are talking about how small businesses are going out of business. I do not think the postal strike is the reason small

businesses are going out of business, after three years of this government's leadership.

We did make some moves on unions. I think they were good ones. We expected unions to report their spending and to hold secret ballots for union certification so that members could have their rights protected.

I just want to again ask the member about the Liberal government's failure to take responsibility. The minister mentioned earlier that she is worried about Black Friday and that she is going to get this done by Saturday. Why do the Liberals always leave Canadians a day late and a dollar short?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is exactly right. The Liberals are not taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

The member hit on a very important point. We are talking about the crisis that small businesses are facing, but this is yet another cut in what has been death by a thousand cuts under the Liberal government. We talked about the carbon tax, CPP, EI tax increases on employers, and now a Canada Post work stoppage that the government again refuses to take any definitive action on.

Our small businesses across Canada feel like they are being kicked in the gut over and over again by a Liberal government. Let us be clear, there is a reason for that. During the campaign in 2015, the Prime Minister was very clear that small business owners are just tax cheats looking for ways to hide from taxes.

That is not who small business owners are. They are the backbone and the foundation of just about every community in this country. It is high time the Liberals started treating them that way.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Foothills spoke about the greater good and the importance of getting parcels delivered. Nobody questions that Canadians want a reliable postal service, but the fact is that postal workers have been working under a settlement imposed by the Harper government since 2011. The injury rate in their workplace has gone up to five times the national average. There is a whole bunch of postal workers, people in our communities with families, being mandated to do overtime every day because their routes are expanding and they do not have enough time during the day to get the work done. They are going home at eight or nine o'clock at night and are not only working in the snow but also in the dark with headlamps on. That is why the injury rate is so high.

The member says this is not the time to deal with this. The time is during bargaining. Postal workers have been putting the interests of Canadians first for years under the settlement imposed by the Harper government. Now is the time to deal with it, and all they are asking for is the government to butt out instead of imposing back-to-work legislation and letting the employer know that whatever it does at the table, the government will have its back and management should not worry. That is what workers are asking for: a fair shot at the bargaining table.

That is all they are asking for and I cannot believe we are hearing that this is not the time to deal with it and that postal workers should just suck it up for another seven years. Is that what the member is telling them?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, it is great to finally hear some fire out of the New Democratic Party, which is reintroducing itself to Canadians after months of no-shows. This is great to see.

Not once did I say that we do not appreciate what postal workers do, but let us be clear. There are Canadians across the country who are working outside in this weather, whether postal workers, energy workers, oil and gas workers, farmers or ranchers. It is just not the case to say that it is only this one group that has to work under these conditions.

Canadians appreciate everything postal workers do. I talked about their being an essential service. This is exactly what we are saying: They are an essential service, but they have had almost a year to come to an agreement. They have had options that the union leadership has not even allowed its own members to vote on. Let us be clear: The leadership has taken a decision not to allow members the opportunity to even vote on the options presented.

We have opportunity to get them back to work and ensure that service is not disrupted during the Christmas season.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that today is a sad day for me, and it is not an honour to take part in the debate on Motion No. 25 moved by the government.

It is also a sad day for postal workers, who are still delivering the mail, whether it be the cheques people rely on or parcels sent by businesses directly to homes in Canada and around the world.

Much like the workers' bargaining rights are being violated, we in the opposition are being muzzled by today's government motion, which will lead to a debate on Bill C-89 tomorrow evening. Here are a few excerpts from the motion to demonstrate what I mean. First of all, only two hours are being allotted for the consideration of the second reading stage following the adoption of the motion. I have seen many bills introduced in the House of Commons since I was first elected in 2015, but this is first time I have been in such a situation, where all our rights, the rules and our freedom of expression are being violated here in the House of Commons.

I was elected in 2015 to represent my constituents and debate bills. As MPs, we are the voice of our constituents, and that means we have to present opinions here in the House. Unfortunately, once again, the government is trampling on our freedom of expression and our democracy.

Part (e) of Motion No. 25 states that not more than one hour shall be allotted for the consideration of the committee of the whole stage. The motion goes on to say that not more than one half hour shall be allotted for the consideration of the third reading stage, provided that no member shall speak for more than ten minutes at a time during this stage. Worse yet, no period for questions and comments will be permitted following each member's speech.

What is the point? We are here to debate important issues and represent our constituents. When this bill is debated tomorrow in the House of Commons, this motion will take away our right to speak, other than to ask the government questions at third reading. Is that

because the government is afraid to answer our questions? This is unacceptable.

I want to say a few words about my own experience. I was a mail carrier in 2011. I delivered mail for 15 years, on foot, carrying a bag on my shoulders. For 15 wonderful years, I walked up and down the streets of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. It was amazing, and I always loved my job. I was proud to wear the uniform. Every day, I would deliver mail and packages right to people's doors. I was proud to be a part of this organization.

However, I lived through the 2011 lockout. I lived through the imposed restrictions and negotiations. At the time, Canada Post shut down for two weeks, but this was not what the workers had wanted. We wanted to negotiate a collective agreement. The right to strike is a constitutional right. We wanted to continue to deliver the mail while we were negotiating and using pressure tactics that were, and still are, constitutional.

Even though our employer locked us out and shut down Canada Post offices, all the workers, including both mail carriers and inside workers, got together to deliver the old age pension cheques that had to go out that week in June 2011. I remember that they did this in good faith, in good spirit, and on their own time.

This shows how much postal workers care about their work. However, our rights had been violated, and we had to live with the consequences of special legislation being imposed on us by the former Conservative government in 2011.

• (1145)

I spoke about my personal experience as an employee who was locked out and about the fact that my bargaining rights were violated.

Now I want to come back to the work that Canada Post workers do every day and explain why the negotiations are still happening and why demands are still being made regarding workplace safety. These days, mail gets delivered in a number of ways. I know that some people here are less familiar with how the system works than I am.

The cancellation of home delivery means that in some municipalities, the mail carrier uses a truck to deliver the mail. Other mail carriers deliver the mail on foot, for example, those working in downtown Montreal.

*Government Orders*

There are also mail carriers who work in rural areas. Most of them are women, and they cover thousands of kilometres for their routes. When I was a mail carrier, one of my colleagues told me that she would start in Saguenay and cover four municipalities. Her route was so long that she would cover nearly 250 kilometres each day. These people use their own personal vehicles. There is a double standard because these workers do not have the same working conditions as urban mail carriers. The salaries are not the same either. The majority of rural mail carriers are women, and they sometimes work in small, isolated offices. They may work alone or with one other person because they live in remote areas. Their safety is important, but so are their working conditions. We need to restore fairness. The federal government introduced a farce of a pay equity bill, and these women have yet to derive any benefit from it. There is still a huge gap, and it is creating inequity. There is a reason why we are hearing comments about that.

Over the past few weeks, I have also received many messages from mail carriers across Canada, thanking me for being their voice and for being here. They said they felt supported. Fortunately, the NDP is there for them. They feel the government has abandoned them, in spite of its promises. We talk a lot about the middle class. These people are part of the middle class. They are all members of the middle class, and they feel completely forgotten, ignored and let down.

I want to go back to the issue of safety. When the workload is not properly assessed, some sectors may be assessed differently. I will come back to my female rural mail carriers, who deliver the mail in remote areas. That is what they experience. They often end up working for free. If their contract says they will be paid for three or four hours, but it takes them longer because of stormy, icy or windy conditions or because there is an abnormally high volume of mail, they will not be paid for the overtime they put in. They work for free every day.

Some might say that people choose to volunteer. That is true. People volunteer for many community organizations because they want to do so. When people have a job and have a mortgage and car payments to make, they expect to be paid for their service. That is why this is unfair. Those people are right to want to improve their workplace safety and to want fair treatment. I do not blame them. They have been asking for these terms to be reinstated for several years now. Just like in 2011, the government is introducing legislation that infringes on bargaining rights.

People at Canada Post are not dumb. We have been hearing on the Hill for two weeks now that special legislation would be imposed. Why would they negotiate? Yes, it is true that reappointing the mediator was the right thing for the minister to do. That is good. That is fine. Anyone would do the same thing if they were about to buy an expensive new car and they knew the dealer was willing to drop the price by \$5,000. People are not dumb. Anyone would wait for that. They would not accept the offer after the third time. That is exactly what is happening in this case.

● (1150)

I also want to talk about the false crisis that Canada Post is creating. It did the same in 2011. I know, because I lived through it. I was right there, in the trenches.

From the beginning of the strike mandate, Canada Post chose to completely stop replacing employees who were absent or to extend hours for postal clerks processing mail and packages.

Having a surplus of mail in a given month is not unheard of. Everyone is talking about Black Friday this year, but there was an increase in mail last year and there will be one again next year. Even though there have been work stoppages during the rotating strike, I say again: there is no complete work stoppage. There is no need to panic, unlike in 2011, when Canada Post itself decided to lock out its employees.

Right now, rotating strikes are going on across Canada. They last for a day or two, but never more.

Canada Post voluntarily decided to stop processing the mail on time and suspend the rules for people on disability, parental and maternity leave, for example. Canada Post itself created this crisis. The government seems to be out of touch because it is not going out there to see what is happening on the ground.

eBay sent a lovely letter about how this is catastrophic, their mail will not be delivered on time, and mail carriers will not even check ID. That is outrageous, and that is why we now have to debate Motion No. 25 to force the workers to stop negotiating. Their rights will be infringed upon, and that is unacceptable.

The government is listening only to Canada Post. Of course business is important. Small businesses do a lot of business with Canada Post, and that is a great source of pride because it proves that our public service is viable and cost-effective even though the Conservatives would have us believe the opposite. That is what they said in 2011, and I remember them wanting to privatize Canada Post. That was on the table and we kept hearing about it more and more.

I am pleased to hear the Conservatives saying that businesses use Canada Post for their exports and deliveries and that Canada Post is helping them to grow. It is wonderful to hear that. What is even more wonderful is that Canada Post is delivering packages on time. I have pictures to prove it and I even experienced it myself when I had to order something that I could not find in Ottawa. Canada Post is delivering packages on time. I even have a photo of a mail carrier with a message that says that the package he is holding was mailed on November 20 and that he was in the process of delivering it on November 21. I do not see any delays there.

Pressure tactics are part of the constitutional right to strike. All workers are entitled to exercise that right. They know that Canadians are waiting for their packages, shipments, payments or money. That is why they have not stopped working completely. They never wanted to do that.

What I am hearing in the House is that this is a catastrophe, that mail is no longer being delivered and that the workers are asking for too much. Is Canada Post trying to have it both ways?

*Government Orders*

What we are hearing from the government is that it is introducing bills, that we debated pay equity, that the middle class is important, and that it is close to unions. We also heard a lot of that in 2011. The member for Cape Breton—Canso was here then and was later re-elected. In 2011, he criticized the special legislation introduced by the Conservative government and asked questions about it. He said, and I quote:

Does the minister see the folly in her ways in that she has absolutely kicked organized labour in the teeth? With her actions in the last week, she has sucker-punched organized labour in this country. Is that what we can expect to see over the course of the next four years?

• (1155)

I would like to quote another question which was asked by the member for Malpeque:

The best way to get a solution that is going to work in the future is to allow arbitration to work in a fair and equitable way. If that were in the bill and it was arbitration that was fair and equitable, it would be quite easy for us on this side of the House to support it.

I ask the minister, why is she taking the side of management in terms of this issue and why is the government not coming forward with arbitration that is fair and equitable to both sides and let them negotiate?

The Liberal government is proposing a motion, which we are debating today, that will result in legislation. Bill C-89, which will be debated tomorrow in the House of Commons, will infringe on the right to collective bargaining.

I mentioned earlier that the right to strike is a constitutional right. Collective bargaining is important. If the people at Canada Post know right off the bat that there will be a special act, how can they negotiate in good faith?

I gave several examples earlier, but that is the reality. The workers are there today to deliver the mail. They will be there tomorrow and until Christmas and even afterwards. They want a safe place, measures tailored to their circumstances when they are working after dark.

It is not normal to use a headlamp to find an address when it is -35°C out when we just want to stay warm. We get out of our cars or get off the bus and rush into a building to seek shelter and stay warm.

Sometimes postal workers spend eight to 12 hours outside. I know from experience what that is like. One December 24 evening, at 8 p.m., I was sitting on my snowbank. As people were starting to celebrate the holidays, I was still delivering mail. That is the reality of all letter carriers.

Some routes are indeed different and are evaluated differently. Across Canada there are currently some serious safety concerns. This special legislation infringes on the negotiations. We are infringing on the right to negotiate and improve postal workers' safety.

To make the debate on Bill C-89 a bit more democratic, I move, seconded by my hon. colleague from Vancouver East:

That the motion be amended:

(a) by deleting paragraphs (a), (d), (e), (i), (j), and (k);

(b) by replacing the words "two hours" in paragraph (b) with the following "five days";

(c) by replacing the words "a Committee of the Whole" in paragraph (c) with the following "the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities";

(d) by replacing all the words after the words "not more than" in paragraph (f) with the following "five days shall be allotted for the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill"; and

(e) by replacing the words "at the expiry of the times provided for in this Order, any proceedings before the House or the Committee of the Whole" in paragraph (g) with the following "15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the last day allotted to the consideration at second reading and on the last day allotted to the consideration at third reading, any proceedings before the House"

I hope these amendments to the motion will be supported.

• (1200)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague from Jonquière, and I agree that the principle of free bargaining is important and that it is as relevant today as it was when it first came into existence in the 1930s or 1920s.

At the time, there was less concentration of power in some respects. The machinery of government was much smaller, or sometimes non-existent. If a union wanted to strike in the private sector, consumers could simply go to a competitor. With free bargaining, there was a bit of a free market. Today there is a rather intense concentration of power within Canada Post Corporation and the union, for example.

In this modern context, where the actions of certain parties that have a lot of power, whether it be Canada Post Corporation or the union, can adversely affect the interests of individual consumers or small businesses, what should we do?

**Ms. Karine Trudel:** Mr. Speaker, that is an odd thing to hear from my colleague, who was here in 2011 challenging the special legislation and work rules imposed by the Conservatives. We see that the Liberals say one thing and do another once they are in power.

As far as bargaining rights and power are concerned, it is true that the workers have chosen to exercise their right to strike, as I mentioned in my speech, but it should be noted that they opted for rotating strikes. The word "rotating" often gets dropped in the House. The mail is still getting delivered.

What I find the most shocking about all of this is that the workers are getting all the blame, as though they were the bad guys. The truth is that they are part of the middle class that the government has not stopped talking about in the House of Commons day after day for the past three years. They keep the economy going. There is power all around, but free bargaining is important.

They chose to do rotating strikes so that they could keep serving all those who need to receive their cheques and parcels. They will receive them on time. The delays people are talking about are made up, just like the crisis that Canada Post made up for all the reasons I laid out in my speech.

If the government were really interested in free bargaining, as I have heard several government members say, then it would allow the parties to negotiate. Postal workers have not stopped delivering the mail. In 2011, it was Canada Post that voluntarily stopped delivery. That is not happening this time around.

*Government Orders*

I hate that members here are painting postal workers, who go out every day to deliver the mail, as people acting in bad faith when the opposite is true.

●(1205)

[*English*]

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Jonquière and I both worked on the government operations committee study on the future of Canada Post, which clearly showed that cutbacks and concessions are not the way forward for Canada Post.

Today the government is introducing a motion that would sharply limit the amount of time to debate and consider back-to-work legislation for Canada Post employees. This is particularly concerning in light of the 2016 Ontario Superior Court ruling that the 2011 Conservative back-to-work legislation had been unconstitutional.

I would ask the member for Jonquière whether she believes that the Liberal back-to-work legislation is any more likely to be considered constitutional, or whether it would be yet another unconstitutional violation of fundamental workers' rights.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Karine Trudel:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his question. It is true that the committee did good work when we examined the future of Canada Post. There were a number of steps involved in that process. Unfortunately, the report was not taken into consideration, and the government overlooked many parts of it, no doubt deliberately. However, we did good work together.

I would like to come back to my colleague's main question. I am not a judge or an arbitrator, so I do not want to speak to what is constitutional or unconstitutional. I do not want to go down that road. However, as I mentioned, the right to strike is a constitutional right.

In 2011, the Conservative government imposed this type of legislation. Rulings handed down on this issue indicated that the proposals were unconstitutional and that Canada Post had violated many work rules, particularly in relation to unpaid leave. Some employees were not being paid while on sick leave following surgery. They finally got paid.

What is most unfortunate about this situation is that if they decide to sue, they will not get to court for two or three years. That is what happened in 2011, and I am concerned about that. Today, the major issue is the safety of workers, which is an important concern. They do not want a safe workplace in two or three years, as that is not something that can wait. We must implement the necessary measures and take concrete action. We must work together with the workers and Canada Post to find solutions. Who is better positioned than the workers to know what they need and the reality of their work?

We do not need the House of Commons to pass special legislation to force the workers to go back to work and stop the job action. This is being done on the pretext that people will not receive their mail, but that is not true. The mail is being delivered on time, day after day, and that is the important thing. Passing a special act will violate the workers' right to bargain freely, because the right to strike is a constitutional right.

●(1210)

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the rotating strikes started on October 22. In the past month, Abitibi-Témiscamingue was only affected for one day, on November 6. That is what is happening on the ground.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of the decision to impose special legislation when, in fact, the actual impact is limited to about one day a month in a region as large as Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

**Ms. Karine Trudel:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out that very important fact. It was the same for my riding. The entire Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region has experienced just one day of rotating strikes. In the past month, all the mail has been delivered and everything has gone smoothly. As I said in my speech, Canada Post itself manufactured this crisis.

The government got a letter from eBay and Amazon, and now it is siding with the corporations. It really seems to believe the mail is not being delivered. That is not true. There has been one strike day in Abitibi and one in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. The mail has been delivered. I have gotten messages on Facebook from postal workers across Canada. They told me that they are delivering the mail on time and that any delays are due solely to Canada Post. Canada Post manufactured this crisis.

It is outrageous for the government to deny people's rights and for us to be here debating this when the workers are negotiating and the mediator has been re-appointed. They want to negotiate. Now the sword of Damocles is hanging over their heads. The people running Canada Post know what is what. They know that special legislation is on the way. They are going to stop negotiating. That is what is happening now. Again, this is about safety. We cannot wait three years to fix the problem. People want to talk. As long as people are talking, there is hope. The mail is being delivered.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, it gives me no pleasure to rise in this House to debate this motion. Our government believes in free and collective bargaining, and we have worked hard to restore fairness and balance to the labour landscape in Canada. In fact, one of the very first pieces of legislation introduced in this Parliament was Bill C-4, which repealed two private members' bills passed under the Harper administration that undermined unions. We did this because we recognize the important role unions play in ensuring our workplaces are safe, equitable and just.



*Government Orders*

[Translation]

In connection with this commitment, we also took steps to close the gender wage gap and increase job opportunities for women. Furthermore, we took action to reduce workplace hazards and harassment. We proposed significant changes to the Canada Labour Code to bring it in line with today's needs. Our government is proud of its partnership with labour, which is clearly reflected in our efforts to protect employees' right to organize in order to improve workplace safety and training.

We know that harmonious labour-management relations are very important to maintaining individual economic security and Canada's economic prosperity. With this in mind, our government does not take this decision lightly.

[English]

In this case, we have done everything possible to help Canada Post and CUPW reach an agreement in their ongoing collective bargaining negotiations, but the time has come to take action. Indeed, we have allowed these rotating strikes to go on for five weeks now, with no end in sight. The two parties remain unable to find common ground on a number of outstanding issues related to wages, job security and workload.

While these are all important issues, ones that our government has worked hard to address for all Canadians since taking office, we need to find a way to move forward.

● (1215)

[Translation]

Our government is a strong supporter of the collective bargaining process, but we also have a responsibility to Canadians and to the businesses that drive our economy. They cannot do that if a significant part of our national postal system is not working. The services that Canada Post provides to Canadians and businesses are essential to our country's success. Our government realizes this, and we are committed to ensuring that these services are not compromised in the future.

This is exactly why our government implemented a new vision for Canada Post. I was proud to participate in this process. This vision is designed to keep Canada Post relevant and sustainable in the long term, while still providing good jobs and quality services to Canadians across the country. Through innovation, market trend analysis and the adoption of new technologies to meet Canadians' expectations, we intend to work with employees to make this vision a reality. This is the future of Canada Post.

[English]

These rotating strikes, however, hit our more vulnerable populations the hardest. Older Canadians, pensioners, persons with disabilities, low-income earners and particularly Canadians living in rural, remote and northern areas, including indigenous people, are feeling the effects more than anyone.

It is important to remember that while e-commerce and online communications are the norm for many, almost nine million Canadians live in rural and remote areas where access to the Internet can be limited. These people need Canada Post more than

anyone else. They need it up and running, and they need it running smoothly.

[Translation]

Clearly, businesses are feeling the negative effects too, especially small businesses, many of which do the bulk of their sales at this time of year. These are the businesses that are growing our economy and providing good, well-paid jobs to middle-class Canadian workers. In other words, we cannot wait any longer.

[English]

Since the start of the bargaining process between Canada Post and CUPW, we have been doing everything possible to help the parties reach agreements that work for everyone. Federal mediators have been assisting negotiations for nearly a year. When those negotiations were failing, we appointed a special mediator to bring a fresh perspective.

We have offered voluntary arbitration, and members of our government have reached out to both parties, urging them to continue working toward an agreement. In fact, they are continuing right now to work toward an agreement, and we hope they conclude these negotiations successfully.

Having exhausted all other possibilities, if that turns out to be the case, this legislation will be our only remaining option. First and foremost, this legislation would ensure that letter mail and parcels start moving again from coast to coast to coast without delay, protecting the public interest and avoiding further harm to Canadian businesses.

Second, under the legislation, the most recent agreements would be extended until new collective agreements are established.

Third, an impartial mediator-arbitrator would be appointed by mutual agreement of the parties to address all outstanding issues.

[Translation]

The mediator-arbitrator would have seven days to mediate negotiations between the parties, and that could be extended to 14 days if the parties agree. If the parties do not reach an agreement during the mediation period, the mediator-arbitrator would be required to arbitrate all outstanding issues within 90 days.

This legislative measure would get Canada Post back to work and lay the foundation for a speedy resolution of the outstanding issues.

[English]

That is what this is about: restoring necessary services to all Canadians in the immediate term and encouraging those involved to find common ground for the long term.

[Translation]

Let me reiterate that we do not take this decision lightly. This bill is a last resort. The government has done everything in its power to avoid this.

*Government Orders*

Jobs are at stake, the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society is at stake, and our economy is at stake. That is why I encourage every member of the House to support the speedy adoption of the motion, and also, if necessary, of the bill. We owe it to our business people, our citizens, Canada Post, postal workers and all Canadians.

• (1220)

[English]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to take issue with the idea that somehow the government has done everything it could to avoid getting to the situation we are in. I do not believe the government can say that because I think it has actually contributed to getting us to the situation we are in.

A couple of weeks ago, the government signalled a willingness to introduce back-to-work legislation. Even before that, Canada Post took a mean-spirited decision to cut off the benefits of workers on short-term disability and mothers on maternity leave, who were expecting a top-up as per their collective agreement. Canada Post took the decision to cut them off, I think as a cruel and cynical bargaining tactic, and the government was silent.

Therefore, from the beginning, the Liberals have been signalling to Canada Post that they are in its corner, and when Canada Post behaves badly or is not acting in good faith, they will have its back.

That kind of partisanship between parties at the bargaining table undermines the likelihood of being able to reach a settlement, because one side of the negotiation knows that the government is in its corner and so does not have a lot of reasons to settle. Therefore, the way the government has been dealing with this from day one has contributed to a situation where it was very unlikely they were going to get to a deal.

However, the Liberals continue to get up, with some nerve, frankly, in the House. They talk about how they are hopeful that the two parties are going to come to a deal, when everybody knows they are backing one side of the deal. I stand here to take issue with that and challenge the member to come up with any kind of credible explanation. They can appoint mediators, but if one side of the negotiations knows that the government is in its corner and is ultimately going to bring the hammer down in its favour, then no progress is going to be made at the bargaining table.

I am asking the member to explain himself in this place and let Canadians know how it is that he can say here that he has been an advocate for a fair solution, when the government has clearly been favouring one side.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. In fact, I will do a little recap.

When we came to office, we came on a commitment to bring a new vision for Canada Post. We put a stop to the Harper reforms to Canada Post. We put a stop to Harper labour relations at Canada Post. We put a stop to the cuts and ongoing carnage at Canada Post. We brought in a new vision. We brought in a new board. We brought in a new chair and interim CEO, someone who has brought incredible talent, drive, motivation and innovation to the table and who has responded proactively to the government's request that a new harmonious labour relations climate, one that respects employ-

ees, be installed at Canada Post. She in turn brought a series of proposed solutions and settlements to the negotiating table. Unfortunately, the union and the employer were unable to come to an agreement.

Meanwhile, my colleague, the Minister of Labour, has shown extreme proactivity in appointing a succession of facilitators, mediators and a special mediator. She has also shown an extreme amount of patience. However, we have come to a point, not where the government is taking sides, but where the government is saying that we must act in the national interest. We must act in the interests of my constituents and the constituents of my hon. friend, businesses and the people who work in them, and all Canadians who use our postal service.

That is the state of affairs as it now stands, and it is one we are prepared to stand by as being fair to both sides.

• (1225)

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate with some regret.

Since our election in 2015, our government has been working with organized labour and employers in finding ways Canadians can work together to address the issues facing our nation.

Let me be perfectly clear. Our government is committed to free collective bargaining and we believe that a negotiated agreement is always the best solution.

I listened very carefully to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour as she outlined the steps she had taken on behalf of the Government of Canada to help Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers reach a collective agreement. Federal mediators assisted the parties throughout the negotiations. A special mediator was appointed to help break the impasse. Voluntary arbitration was offered.

The Minister of Labour told us that she and her colleague, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, reached out directly to the parties. The special mediator was brought in once again to try to help the parties resolve their differences and reach an agreement that worked for everyone. All of these efforts could not break the impasse.

At the same time, rotating strikes have been disrupting Canada Post operations in more than 200 communities across the country. The strikes have been under way since October 22. We are well aware of the serious impacts these strikes are having on Canadians and Canadian businesses.

Let me begin with the people who are most impacted.

Canada Post is an iconic Canadian institution that has been connecting Canadians for more than 250 years. Even though more and more Canadians communicate by email and social media, we also know Canadians have a strong connection to personal letters, parcels from loved ones and holiday cards.

*Government Orders*

Canada Post has a network of over 6,200 post offices all across Canada, which serves as a vital link for many rural, remote and isolated communities, especially in the northern regions. Nearly nine million Canadians, 30% of our population, live in those areas. I think all of those families depend on Canada Post.

We simply cannot ignore the impacts that any disruption in mail and parcel services would have on our fellow Canadians, especially at this time of the year. For instance, Canadians living in the north received nearly twice as many parcels per capita as other Canadians in 2017. Any alternatives, such as courier companies, are simply too expensive. In some remote northern areas, there are no alternatives.

I am also thinking of Canadians with disabilities and those mobility challenges. We are talking about close to two million Canadians, nearly 50% of whom are seniors. Our government heard their concerns clearly and loudly when we put an end to the conversion of home delivery to community mailboxes. It seems to me that our most vulnerable citizens bear a disproportionate impact when access to important services are interrupted. For me, it is a matter of fairness and equity.

I will now turn the negative impact on Canadian businesses, of all sizes, that rely on Canada Post to deliver their invoices and payments. The rotating strikes have already caused significant delivery delays. Orders have been cancelled. Small and medium-sized businesses have far fewer resources to weather the impact of any disruption in their cash flow. This translates directly to less business, lost sales and fewer jobs.

There are reports of declines in e-commerce demand, reduced seasonal employment and indications that making alternative arrangements for shipping has been costly, especially damaging when businesses are normally getting ready for their busiest season and hiring more staff, including students, to handle the influx.

I want to speak briefly about parcel services.

The growth in e-commerce has been one of the greatest trends over the past decade or so. According to Statistics Canada, Internet-based sales from all retailers rose 31%, \$15.7 billion, in 2017. It has generated significant business for Canada Post. This was confirmed by the independent task force that completed an in-depth review of Canada Post. I would encourage members to read the analysis entitled, "Canada Post in the digital age".

● (1230)

The analysis states:

Canada Post segment parcels revenue increased by over \$400 million between 2011 and 2015, representing an average annual growth of 7.8%. Volume growth has been driven by e-commerce, and has such been growing consistently over the last five years.

This trend is continuing to go upward.

We also know that up to 40% of Internet sales take place in the fourth quarter, which is bearing the impact of the rotating strikes.

Not to be overlooked is the disproportionate impact on the smaller companies who operate as e-sellers. They operate on very thin margins, which means many of them cannot afford the higher costs of shipping through courier companies.

We also cannot ignore the impacts beyond our border. As we heard, Canada Post has asked its international partners to halt mail and parcel shipments to Canada as it continues to deal with a major delivery backlog that has grown as a result of the rotating strikes.

As a trading nation, our reputation as a reliable market for commerce and trade is of paramount importance. That is why the government is taking action, with legislation, that will require the parties to continue postal services and return to work. As parliamentarians, we have an obligation to do what we can to help protect the public interest, the well-being of our fellow Canadians and the future of Canadian businesses.

Our government has shown tremendous faith in the collective bargaining process. We have allowed both parties to carry on their negotiations with the hope that they would find common ground and reach an agreement. Regrettably, that outcome was not achieved. We did not see a satisfactory conclusion to the impasse, and the strikes are having a serious impact on Canadians and Canadian business that depend on the services provided by Canada Post.

We must take action now. Otherwise, the impacts of the rotating strike will only continue to escalate and compound over the coming weeks. This legislation is our last resort and, as the Minister of Labour had indicated, it is not something the government takes lightly. However, having exhausted all other possibilities, we believe it is the only option.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member across the way talked about what was paramount, what was really important. When we see a workplace where last year 25% of that workforce was injured, that is a crisis. The government should be doing something about that. We did not just find out about this during the rotating strike. We have had these numbers for a long time now. We have known that these problems have existed at Canada Post for a long time. The government has had ample opportunity to require management at Canada Post to address these ongoing workplace problems, including the mandatory overtime, which is, in part, responsible for that high rate of injury.

Therefore, I am having a hard time buying the idea that we are in a sudden, unforeseen crisis, when workers at Canada Post are tolerating an injury rate five times the average for the federally regulated sector, that we did not see it coming and that they just need to suck it up and too bad. This round of bargaining is the workers' opportunity to ensure they are safe at work and get home safely.

We have a lot of sympathy for Canadian businesses and Canadians who want to receive their packages. That is why it is important for management to actually change the way it runs the business, to stop using mandatory overtime and to stop making money off the backs of injured workers. This round of bargaining is about that.

*Government Orders*

The government ought to have been doing something about this since it got in, because these are not new problems. It is the government's inaction and its willingness to get behind the company, signalling back-to-work legislation and everything else that has brought us to this point of crisis. Shame on the Liberals for using a crisis, which they manufactured, to now ruin the opportunity that postal workers have been waiting for to get justice in the workplace.

• (1235)

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague on the other side that since forming government, we have been pretty busy. I am proud to have worked personally on repealing Bill C-525 and Bill C-377 to restore fair and balanced labour relations. We passed Bill C-65 to protect federally regulated employees from harassment and workplace violence. In Bill C-86, we are modernizing labour standards to reflect today's workplace. We are introducing pay equity legislation to ensure fairness.

It is quite clear that the Liberals cherish the relationship that we have with our labour organizations. It is important we continue to work with them to find better ways to execute what needs to happen.

In this case, as a government, there has to be a time where action has to happen. We are still hopeful that before this legislation is passed, they can come to a conclusion.

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF):** Mr. Speaker, government members have been trying to justify back-to-work legislation by noting that management and the union did not avail themselves of arbitration.

I am wondering if the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge could clarify whether the government is contemplating back-to-work legislation that would require binding arbitration or whether the government is contemplating back-to-work legislation that would impose a settlement designed by the government itself.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have shown that we are not taking heavy-handed approaches to solving problems. We have given latitude to both organizations to help them find a way. We stepped in. We have given them arbitration. We have given them special mediators. At every step of the way, we have tried to help them get past the impasse they are at right now.

What we are doing today is preparing for it if they cannot do it. We have to find a way to move forward. As for what that will look like, we will have to see what happens after this.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to stand in the House today to discuss the very important subject of Canada Post and the effect the Canada Post strike is having on our country and the effect the back-to-work legislation will have on our country as well.

I cannot help but pause to think back to the last election, but before I talk about the last election and perhaps the philosophy that was communicated to Canadians and to unions by the Liberal Party, I would just like to say that this is a déjà vu Prime Minister Trudeau putting back-to-work legislation in place on Canada Post. I am not talking about the current Mr. Trudeau. I am referring to the previous prime minister Trudeau, who also had back-to-work legislation in place on Canada Post in the late seventies or early eighties.

Let us go back to the last election. It was incredible to witness the amount of union support out door knocking for the Liberals locally, in my riding, specifically related to, and I heard it all the time, back-to-work legislation and the relationship between legislation that had been put forward in the House by the previous Conservative government and what was being promised by the Liberals. The Liberals promised not to use back-to-work legislation. They said that they would respect the collective bargaining process, that they would respect unions and that they would not interfere with that process going forward.

I do not think it is any surprise that the Liberals would perhaps say one thing in an election and do something completely different once in government. Let us look at yesterday's economic update. I think everyone in the House thought that the Liberal government would bring forth a fall economic update that outlined a \$10-billion deficit, not a \$19-billion-plus deficit, because that is what they promised during the election. Unfortunately, what we heard was crass campaigning. They had no intention of following through and no intention of telling the truth to Canadians about the deficit. The Liberals also had no intention of telling the truth to Canadians about what their working philosophy in government would be when it came to working with unions.

The reality is that there are cases when the government needs to intercede. Unfortunately, the union workers who pounded on doors for the Liberal Party in the last election believed the mistruths communicated to them by the leadership of the Liberal Party at that point. The result was that they left it all on the line. In fact, the result was that a certain union was brought before the House and before Elections Canada for improperly making contributions during the election. It was paying people to campaign for the Liberal Party.

Now fast-forward to today, when we are going to end up closing debate. A vote will likely come in the next 48 hours to force Canada Post employees back to work. It really makes one wonder why the Liberal Party of Canada would communicate to unions across this country that it would not use this kind of legislation in the future and that it would respect the process. We heard day in and day out that the Liberals would respect the collective bargaining process and would not interfere. I am using their language, because I did not hold the same thought as they did during the 2015 election.

It has to be frustrating for Canadians who believed the words of the Prime Minister, back then the leader of the Liberal Party, and took what he and his party were saying at face value, and to have faith, not only in the person but in the entire political system, when someone makes a promise, looks one in the eye and says that this is what we will do, this will be the approach, then goes the opposite way. One can understand why there is a cynical attitude towards politics as a whole.

• (1240)

I will hopefully leave the cynicism about the hypocrisy of the Liberal Party behind as I move on to what I believe is the meat of this debate, certainly from where I stand.

*Government Orders*

There was legislation brought forward that we debated yesterday and will be debating today with regard to persons with disabilities. The legislation was supposed to be groundbreaking. It was supposed to be the start of a new era, where regulations would come into place to eliminate barriers across the country for persons with disabilities. The legislation was supposed to be brought forward roughly three years ago. It was not. The Liberals promised that within six months of the election date, it would be provided to the House to debate and vote on. It was not. They went around the country and consulted, or so they say over and over again. Two and a half years later, they brought forward that legislation.

One may wonder what this has to do with the Canada Post legislation. When Canada Post goes on strike, some of the people who are hit the hardest are those with disabilities. There are parcels they need to receive. Sometimes it is products. Sometimes it is medicine. Sometimes it is as simple as a braille book or a talking book. There are literally thousands upon thousands of products we rely on our postal system to deliver to people with disabilities across the country.

When a strike occurs, we know that those who are disadvantaged certainly feel the effects more than just about anyone else. Whereas businesses have the money to turn to private services, there might not be the money there in many situations for people with disabilities. Quite frankly, it becomes a very sad state of affairs. The cost to the government goes up. The cost to those individuals goes up. We are left with a scenario where we are once again leaving those who are most vulnerable in our society behind.

With Christmas and Hanukkah and so many different holidays coming up at this time of year, we all want to make sure that our brothers and sisters receive their presents and their cards. My mom wants to get her Christmas letter out that tells all about her family. However, none of that matters in the least compared to people living with disabilities not being able to access the products they need in their day-to-day lives. That to me is incredibly important.

I do not want to be too partisan and too over the top on this, but if we look at the spending on persons with disabilities in our country, it is roughly \$2.2 billion. That is when we remove the CPP disability, which is not government spending but is peoples' money being used outside of government coffers. When we look at that \$2.2 billion and the constraints in the country in actually delivering services that are so badly needed, and we look at the cost of increasing the movement of goods for people who cannot leave their homes due to major accessibility issues, the effects are very large. It is not just about the time of year. It is not just about the individuals who are on strike. It is not just about the collective bargaining agreement. It is about the people who without this service are put in a very difficult position.

I know we all have postal workers living in our ridings. We all know individuals who work for Canada Post. We all want a fair wage and a fair process.

● (1245)

I know that we all want to ensure that persons with disabilities have everything they need. I know that we all want to make sure that the \$2.2 billion the government sets aside for persons with disabilities each and every year is going to the max in the most effective and efficient manner possible. When the cost of moving

goods around goes up significantly because of things like this, that has a huge effect on the cost to the CNIB to move products to people who subscribe to their services. It has an effect on the cost of being able to access medicine and drugs and on the cost of different things that have such a profound effect on the lives of people living with disabilities.

I know this debate is not an easy one. I know there are ideological and philosophical differences. I know that the parties hold deeply held convictions on this issue. However, I would ask, as we move forward, that we think of those who do not have access to other services to replace Canada Post, that we understand the effect the Canada Post strike is having on their lives, and that we do everything we can to ensure that those people are not left behind any further.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been supporting the collective bargaining process for over a year. We have utilized every measure available in terms of appointing mediators and conciliators and in other ways encouraging an agreement between the two parties. We are still confident and hopeful that CUPW and Canada Post can come together and find common ground and enter into an agreement.

However, it is important to recognize that the next two to three weeks are critical for many Canadians. My friend spoke about a number of different issues. I am still not quite sure if he is in support of or against the motion. It is important to understand that as a government, we are taking the prudent approach to make sure that we support the collective bargaining process, because ultimately, that is the desired outcome. In the event that it is not possible, we want to make sure that Canadians from coast to coast to coast are not left stranded.

There are many considerations at play with respect to the need for a very important service in Canada. The work of CUPW members, what they do day in and day out, is critical to this country. It helps our economy and supports many vulnerable people in our society.

I want to ask my friend what other options he suggests our government undertake, given where we are and the work we have already done to support the collective bargaining process.

● (1250)

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, to clear things up on what I am against, I am against a hypocritical attitude during an election and a completely opposite attitude when they are in government. I am against trying to prey on the issues during an election, and at the very least, telling white lies, and then when getting into government, doing the complete opposite. That is what I am against. If the Liberal Party had told the truth about their perspective in terms of labour relations from the beginning, we would not have people so irate and upset and saying that the Liberal Party was again flip-flopping on something it committed to. That is what I am against.

*Government Orders*

What I am for is getting services back to people who need access to this very important service. That is the way I will be voting on this subject. When the Liberals talk about everything they have done, that does not make anyone in the union feel any better or anyone who is not getting what they need at home any better. Saying they tried and it did not work is not good enough. It is all about results and delivery, and that is where the government should be focusing from now on.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, hopefully all of the MPs in this place know the stories of Canada Post workers who go above and beyond simply delivering the mail, who go above and beyond what their duty calls upon them to do to make sure that people, such as those Canadians living with disabilities whom my friend talked about, get access to all sorts of extra help that is not required in the collecting bargaining unit or agreement.

Our frustration as New Democrats is very similar to what my friend just said. The Liberals came in, riding on a promise to change the perspective on labour relations. I have heard Liberal after Liberal get up in this place and say they believe in good-faith negotiations, yet two weeks ago before negotiations had come to a head, the Liberals indicated that this day was coming and they were going to impose a contract upon the union. What does that tell the employer? It says that they do not have to negotiate anymore because the government is waiting with this piece of legislation.

I do not know if members have all read this. This legislation is under the most prescriptive terms I have ever seen. There is no ability to move the needle at all, in terms of pushing back against what the government is trying to do. All of it is prescribed, time ordered and forced through on the government's own agenda, despite the notion from the Liberals that they are going to treat labour with respect.

In the past, the Conservatives came in without a lot of promises to look favourably upon organized labour in this country. It certainly was not their voter base, but the Liberals are different. That is how the Conservatives operated. One of the first things the Harper government did was to support a Canada Post lockout and then impose a contract.

Union members were waiting for this opportunity to negotiate, maybe with a government that believed in negotiation. However, it does not.

Here is what I say to my friend who is focusing on services to Canadians, which we are all focused on. If we want that service to be of the highest and best quality, workers need to be able to go to work. What we have been told is that the conditions under which Canada Post workers have been working under the last five years have led to an injury rate that is five times higher than other federally regulated businesses. The nature of the business has changed. There are far fewer letters and far more parcels. The packages have gotten heavier and bigger, and in a rural constituency like mine, it is predominately women who are the carriers and they are working mandatory hours way beyond what their contract requires. That is where the injuries come from.

If the Liberals are actually interested in solving these things to bring us to the best level of service, then would the negotiating table

not be the best place to figure these things out, so that workers can go to work safely, come home safely and we can all get the services that we are looking for?

• (1255)

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to say this jokingly through yourself to the member. I certainly was a little confused which side of the House to sit on today because I thought that we had written that legislation. It turns out it actually is very similar to the legislation that the Liberal Party at that point voted against, then committed to not present when running in the last election, and then when they got into government they brought it forward.

I guess that is the luxury of being a Liberal. You can jump on each side of the issue at least once. In terms of individuals working in this service, you are right. These are individuals who work incredibly hard. There are times when a person may only have one individual a week coming to their home and it could be that postal worker. That is the reality that we are living in.

I hear you. I understand. I certainly am empathetic with your position. I am also empathetic with the position that we need to ensure that these goods are actually moved and getting to the people who need them. That is why I am going to be voting the way I will on this subject.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I just want to remind hon. members that the Speaker has no position. When you are speaking, you are actually speaking through the Speaker. I just want to remind you all to speak through the Speaker.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my friend and colleague across the way that he is on the right side of the House in regard to that whole anti-labour side of things. There is a significant difference. On this side of the House we are still very hopeful. We would like to see a negotiated agreement between management and the union. That is very genuine.

When I reflect back on some of the speeches that I have heard from across the way, I have had the opportunity to work alongside many postal workers. I appreciate and value the contributions our postal workers provide us. That is not what this debate is about. I like to think that Canadians can still have hope in those who are negotiating and we will be able to see a difference.

Would my friend across the way at least acknowledge that when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, it was a totally different approach? For example, the Conservatives had made the suggestion to roll back the wages of Canada Post workers. That is very different than our approach of wanting to see a negotiated agreement, first and foremost.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the difference between the legislation proposed by the Liberal Party and the legislation that was proposed by the Conservative Party is about 10 days, because we did it in 20 days and you are doing it in 30 days. If that makes you feel a whole lot better, I hope you take that to the bank. I am not sure that the unions really care.

*Government Orders*

I would like to quote the member for Winnipeg North. He said, “The crisis we are in today is a crisis that has been created by the government of the day. I believe that to be the case.” I could not believe that you were prophetic in nature. Finally, “We in the Liberal Party do not support the legislation that is being proposed by the government” until they are in government, and they will do it then.

• (1300)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Once again, I will remind the hon. members to make their statements through the Speaker, not directly to each other across the floor.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development.

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Brampton Centre.

I rise to participate in this debate with regret. Since our election in 2015, our government has been working with organized labour and employers in finding ways Canadians can work together to address the issues facing our nation. Let me be absolutely clear. Our government is committed to free collective bargaining, and believes a negotiated agreement is always the best solution.

I listened very carefully to the Minister of Labour as she outlined the steps she has taken on behalf of our government to help Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers reach a collective agreement. Federal mediators assisted the parties throughout the negotiations, a special mediator was appointed to help break the impasse and voluntary arbitration was also offered. The Minister of Labour told us that she and her colleague, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Minister of Accessibility, reached out directly to both parties. The special mediator was brought in once again to try to help the parties resolve their differences and reach agreements that work for everyone. All these efforts have not yet broken the impasse.

At the same time, rotating strikes have been disrupting Canada Post operations in more than 200 communities across the country. That is certainly true in my riding of Brampton West, where Canada Post has an office on the same street as my constituency office. Those strikes have been under way since October 22. We are all aware of the serious impacts these strikes are having on Canadians and Canadian businesses.

Let me begin with the people who are most impacted. Canada Post is an iconic Canadian institution which has been connecting Canadians for more than 250 years. Even though more and more Canadians communicate by email and social media, we know Canadians have a strong connection to personal letters, parcels from loved ones and holiday cards, especially during this time of the year.

Canada Post has a network of over 6,200 post offices across Canada, which serve as a vital link for many rural, remote and isolated communities, especially in our northern regions. Nearly nine million Canadians, 30% of our population, live in those areas. I think of all those families who depend on Canada Post. I have received many calls, emails and visits from constituents who have been tremendously impacted by the strike.

We simply cannot ignore the impacts any disruption in mail and parcel services would have on our fellow Canadians, especially during this time of the year. For instance, Canadians living in the north received nearly twice as many parcels per capita as other Canadians in 2017. Any alternatives, such as courier companies, are simply too expensive. In some remote northern areas, there are no alternatives. I am also thinking of Canadians with disabilities and all those with mobility challenges who rely heavily on Canada Post. We are talking of approximately two million Canadians, nearly 50% of seniors.

Our government heard their concerns clearly and loudly when we put an end to the conversion of home delivery to community mailboxes. It seems to me our most vulnerable citizens bear a disproportionate impact when access to important services is interrupted. For me, it is a matter of fairness and equity.

• (1305)

I will now turn to the negative impact on Canadian businesses of all sizes that rely on Canada Post to deliver their invoices and payments. I have heard from the business community in my riding of Brampton West as well.

The rotating strikes have already caused significant delivery delays. Orders have been cancelled. Small and medium-sized businesses have far fewer resources to weather the impact of any disruption in their cash flow. This translates directly into less business, lost sales and fewer jobs. There are also reports of declines in e-commerce demand, reduced seasonal employment and indications that making alternative arrangements for shipping has been costly, especially damaging when businesses are normally getting ready for their busiest season and hiring more staff, including students, to handle the influx.

I want to speak briefly about parcel services. The growth in e-commerce has been one of the greatest trends over the past decade or so. According to Statistics Canada, Internet-based sales from all retailers rose 31% to \$15.7 billion in 2017. It has generated significant business for Canada Post. This was confirmed by the independent task force that completed an in-depth review of Canada Post. I would encourage members to read the analysis entitled, “Canada Post in the digital age”. It states, “Canada Post segment parcels revenue increased by over \$400 million between 2011 and 2015, representing an average annual growth of 7.8%. Volume growth has been driven by e-commerce, and has such been growing consistently over the last five years.” This upward trend is going to continue.

We also know that up to 40% of Internet sales take place in the fourth quarter, which is bearing the brunt of the rotating strikes. Not to be overlooked is the disproportionate impact on the smaller companies that operate as e-sellers. They operate on very thin margins, which means that many of them cannot afford the higher cost of shipping through courier companies.

*Government Orders*

We also cannot ignore the impacts beyond our border. As we heard, Canada Post has asked its international partners to halt mail and parcel shipments to Canada as it continues to deal with a major delivery backlog that has grown as a result of the rotating strikes. As a trading nation, our reputation as a reliable market for commerce and trade is of paramount importance. That is why our government is taking action and is prepared to move forward with legislation that would require the parties to continue postal services and return to work.

As Parliamentarians, we have an obligation to do our best to help protect the public interest, the well-being of our fellow Canadians and the future of our Canadian businesses. Our government has shown tremendous faith in our collective bargaining process. We have allowed both parties to carry on their negotiations in the hope that they would find common ground and reach an agreement, and we continue to hope that will happen.

The strikes are having a very serious impact on Canadians and Canadian businesses that depend on the services provided by Canada Post. We must be ready to act and take action now, otherwise the impacts of the rotating strikes will only continue to escalate and compound over the coming weeks.

This legislation is a last resort and, as the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour has indicated, it is not something our government takes lightly. However, having exhausted all other possibilities, we believe it is the only option.

• (1310)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to please tell us how postal workers in her riding feel about having mandatory overtime, one of the biggest reasons they are at the table today, and the impacts that has had on their lives and families.

**Ms. Kamal Khera:** Mr. Speaker, I have heard from postal workers in my riding and, of course, from other Canadians and my constituents. I have also heard from people who are waiting to receive a parcel. I have heard from businesses that have been tremendously impacted by this strike.

Our government has faith in the collective bargaining process. We still believe that the best deals are reached at the table. For nearly a year, we have been supporting and encouraging both parties to reach a negotiated agreement. We have provided conciliation officers. We have appointed mediators. We have offered voluntary arbitration.

We have now exhausted all options. As the minister has said, tabling legislation is a step that we do not take lightly. We re-appointed the special mediator to work with both parties for the next two days to reach an agreement. We strongly encourage them. We are still optimistic that both sides will reach a deal.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the member a question.

Is she aware of the fact that one of the issues on the table for postal workers is they cannot go on vacation and cannot phone in if they are sick or injured and not able to go to work unless they can find a replacement to take their route?

Is the member aware of that? Does she agree with their position? If she does not agree with their position on that, why is she supporting this motion before us?

**Ms. Kamal Khera:** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, I have received many calls, including during our constituency week. I have met with many postal workers. I have also met with businesses, individuals and constituents who have been impacted by the strike. As members know, our government has always supported union workers. There is no question that our government has made huge strides with organized labour and Canadian workers.

Since forming government, we have repealed Bill C-525 and Bill C-377 to restore fair and balanced labour relations. We amended the Canada Labour Code to give federally regulated employees the right to flexible work arrangements, and have implemented different leaves. We strengthened occupational health and safety standards. We passed Bill C-65 to protect federally regulated employees from workplace harassment and violence. In Bill C-86, we are modernizing labour standards to reflect today's workplaces. We are introducing pay equity legislation to ensure fairness. We are almost doubling the benefits of the wage earner protection program.

We have always had the back of labour unions. We have always stood with them. We will continue to stand beside them and support them.

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear that list of all the things the government has provided with regard to workers, and I wondered why they have also provided the employer with a cudgel to brutalize the workers. Back-to-work legislation only benefits the employer.

I would also like to know if the member understands that the rate of injury of postal workers is five times that of their federal counterparts, and that Canada Post still refuses to acknowledge the pay equity settlement it agreed to and is refusing to pay rural and suburban mail carriers for all the hours they have worked.

**Ms. Kamal Khera:** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, we have heard from both parties. We have shown tremendous faith in our collective bargaining process for years. We have allowed both parties to carry on their negotiations in the hope that they would find common ground and reach an agreement. We will continue to hope for that. I am very optimistic that that will happen.

However, the strike is having a serious impact on Canadians, on my constituents in Brampton West and, of course, on postal workers and small businesses that rely tremendously on the services provided by Canada Post. We must take this action now to be ready to act, otherwise the rotating strike will only continue to escalate and compound over the coming weeks.



*Government Orders*

• (1315)

**Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, small and medium-sized enterprises, SMEs, are the backbone of Canada's economy. These enterprises represent over 99% of business activities in the country. Moreover, they provide nine out of 10 private sector jobs that Canadians depend on. Their annual merchandise exports are valued in the billions of dollars, and if these firms can fully access e-commerce opportunities, they will be well positioned to make even greater contributions to the Canadian economy.

Trade has the potential to provide SMEs increasing returns to scale, enhance their competitive and innovative edge, and spur productivity. Increased trade by SMEs can play a role in boosting Canada's overall economic growth and prosperity. However, we also need to support the growth and development of SMEs here in Canada by ensuring that they have the tools they require to thrive.

When the mail does not flow, then trade slows. A disruption to traditional delivery services is either bringing our domestic and international trade to a halt or forcing businesses to use costly substitute services.

We know that the ongoing disruption has been keenly felt by Canadian businesses. Over two-thirds of small businesses report a negative impact on their business. Over half have reported having to switch to higher-cost delivery services. Many note delayed shipments to customers. In a highly interconnected and competitive global economy, this disruption could lead to lost customers, lost market share and, ultimately, lost jobs. If SMEs cannot engage in international trade, they will miss out on real opportunities to scale-up and create jobs.

One of the most important vehicles for getting more SMEs into international trade is e-commerce. E-commerce has emerged as a leading platform for doing business across all sectors of the economy and, by extension, for international trade. Facilitating the use of e-commerce by consumers and businesses is a key trade policy objective for Canada.

Canada is seeking to encourage the use of e-commerce through a combination of removing, reducing and minimizing impediments to e-commerce while creating an environment of trust, certainty and choice for consumers and businesses. E-commerce is changing the ways firms do business, and it can increase their sales and market share while reducing the time and effort required to complete transactions.

For Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises, e-commerce platforms or information technology systems that enable Internet-based business transactions provide access to trillions of dollars annually from the global online marketplace. However, as more sales occur online, firms that do not engage in e-commerce might lose market share to competitors that do. SMEs that may lack access to the same financial and human resources as large firms have may be particularly vulnerable if they are less able to use new technologies, such as e-commerce platforms, to do business.

• (1320)

The disruption in these services creates many knock-on effects for businesses, especially with the increase in parcel mail and e-

commerce. When Canada Post stops accepting freight, mail order and e-commerce companies stop shipping. When these companies stop shipping, they stop ordering too, because they have a surplus of inventory. This results in increased capacity in transportation firms, including ports, rail and trucking. These firms have to reduce the hours of their employees.

We have heard from e-commerce businesses that their operations have been impacted, since consumers are placing fewer orders by as much as 20% to 30%.

Smaller e-commerce companies may be disproportionately affected, given their razor-thin margins. These companies cannot afford the higher costs of shipping through courier companies. Rather than risk damaging their reputations with late deliveries, we have learned that many Canadian companies have cut back on selling and shipping.

This is about serving Canadians. While there are private delivery companies that compete with Canada Post for business, there is an ongoing concern that these cannot replace Canada Post's e-commerce customer base during this critical time for Canadian business. This constraint is especially prevalent in rural areas which are only serviced by Canada Post. This strike is having a disproportionate impact on rural SMEs and Canadians.

This legislation is a last resort, not something the government and the parties are taking lightly. The government has done everything it can to support and encourage the parties to reach a negotiated settlement. The government has a responsibility to Canadians and businesses with respect to this work stoppage, which has had a very harmful impact. The government must move now. That is why this legislation is a last resort.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member. We serve on the HUMA committee together, and he is quite engaged when we have discussions at committee. I hope his intervention today shows a change in the attitude of the Liberal government when it comes to its approach to small businesses. We have heard the Prime Minister call them tax cheats. The Liberals have increased CPP and EI taxes. They have imposed a carbon tax.

Today, the member is talking about the crisis our small businesses across Canada are now facing as a result of this work stoppage. I found that interesting, because I was looking back to 2011, when we faced a similar issue. The hon. Liberal member for Sydney—Victoria talked about how the Conservatives could have done a better job with the legislation and could have limited debate. The member for Ottawa South said, "Canadians now...know that the government could have solved this problem as of last Thursday." Obviously, in 2011, the Liberals wanted the Conservative government to act quickly, which we did.

*Government Orders*

If this is such a crisis to small businesses across Canada, which are losing as much as \$3,000 a month at the busiest time of the year, would my colleague not agree that it would behoove the Liberal government to actually enact back-to-work legislation rather than just table a motion and talk about it?

● (1325)

**Mr. Ramesh Sangha:** Mr. Speaker, our government has tried everything available. The Minister of Labour and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement have both been reaching out regularly to all the parties who are directly involved in the bargaining system. The labour minister appointed a conciliation officer. Then she appointed a special mediator and suggested voluntary arbitration. She appointed a mediator on November 21 and tried to resolve it through mediation by having the parties sit down at the negotiating table to reach some sort of agreement.

However, everything failed. Nothing has worked so far. That is why this legislation is the last resort.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in my past life I was both a union member and then in management. Regardless of which position I was in, I always respected fair collective bargaining as being fundamental to good labour relations. When legislation is threatened a couple of weeks ahead of time and then potentially brought in, it puts the balance very much on the side of management and takes it away from union workers. How is that fair, and how does it lead to positive labour relations going forward?

**Mr. Ramesh Sangha:** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the legislation is to support both parties in reaching an amicable decision, which is better for them both. That is why we made amendments to the law, so it enables both sides to reach an agreement.

We want to use the legislation in the best way, which we have already framed. With our repeal of Bills C-525 and C-377, we amended the Canada Labour Code to make better changes, to give federally regulated employees the right to flexible work arrangements and the implementation of different leaves. We strengthened the occupational health and safety standards and passed Bill C-65 to protect federally regulated employees from workplace harassment.

These changes to the regulations were considered at the time the parties were brought to the negotiating table. They were given all the opportunities.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thought it would be appropriate to start off my comments by referring to the Conservative labour critic's question. He said "table a motion to talk about it", as if that is a bad thing. That encapsulates the Stephen Harper Conservative government's approach when dealing with labour issues. When I sat in opposition I listened to the government of the day bring in legislation through the back door by way of private members' hour, taking shots at the union movement across Canada.

I can recall the legislation the Conservative government brought in with respect to Canada Post. The Conservatives are trying to give the impression that what we are doing now is similar to what they did at the time. That is truly amazing. What we are doing is nothing remotely close to what they did with respect to the labour front.

I find it interesting that even my New Democrat friends appear to be trying to score some political points on this issue. They are putting aside the concerns of the average Canadian and business and those who have a vested interest in this debate. Both opposition parties are drawing conclusions. Instead of drawing conclusions, why do they not have some faith and some hope in the process that is still in place today?

This government is behaving in a very responsible manner. We understand the importance of the issue. That is why we are discussing this motion that has been tabled by the government.

We really want to see a negotiated agreement. The Prime Minister, the labour minister and all members of this caucus have been very clear on the issue. We do not want to bring in any form of back-to-work legislation. Our first choice is a negotiated agreement. I appeal to individuals around the table, whether it is the union or Canada Post management, to get the job done and get something signed as soon as possible. That is what I am hoping for.

I have listened to New Democrats talk about the plight of postal workers. I do not need to be reminded of that. I was sitting in opposition when Stephen Harper and the Conservatives made profound changes to the services provided to Canadians by Canada Post. I remember the legislation they introduced. It was shameful.

Let me remind the members that back in the days of Stephen Harper, his government brought in reforms that dealt with things such as door-to-door delivery and jacking up the cost of postage stamps. Many individuals believed, myself included, that the Conservatives really wanted to privatize Canada Post. That was the real objective of the Conservative Party. Stephen Harper had a hidden agenda with respect to Canada Post. There was a general lack of respect for postal workers and the whole system.

We believe Canadians respect the system. They want to see a Crown corporation in place that continues to deliver the type of services it has delivered for decades.

When we became government after the last election, it did not take long for the Prime Minister and the minister responsible to strike up a group of individuals that represented Canadians as a whole. That group would sit on a special standing committee of the House or on the committee that was established by the minister to canvass the opinions and thoughts of Canadians in moving forward with Canada Post.

● (1330)

I believe a general consensus was achieved. There might have been a few dissenting individuals within the Conservative ranks, but generally speaking we saw a fairly consistent message that there was a positive future for Canada Post. We recognize the valuable work of our letter carriers, our mail organizers and those who fill the infrastructure do. The backbone, the workers, make Canada Post what it is today. It is recognized even outside of Canada with respect to the valuable contributions they make to our society. We have a changing society, and I will to pick up a bit on that shortly.

*Government Orders*

I use Canada Post on a regular basis, whether it be for my householders, my ten percenters, my mail or the feedback from my constituents. This is all done through Canada Post. I can assure those people who are following the debate that every member of the Liberal caucus values and appreciates the fine work our postal workers put in day in and day out in order to deliver our mail and ensure that communication is there. It is not only for us as members of Parliament, but those workers provide a service that even goes beyond that.

I have talked to letter carriers who have met with individuals in the community. They grow concerned when mail is not taken out of their postal boxes, whether it is the community box or the mail box on their home. They are concerned that maybe there is a health issue, which, at least in part at times, is dealt with because of a caring people. It even goes over and beyond.

Let us get this upfront. Unlike what the New Democrats are trying to communicate in their spin, we do care, value and appreciate the work those front-line service people provide.

However, as we continue to go through this rotating strike, a vast majority of Canadians will recognize that in the changing times, there is a responsibility. The union group and the management have a responsibility. We are still hopeful. That is one of the reasons we have a federal mediator in the situation today.

When we look at the federal mediation individuals in the conciliatory branch of government, the success rate is well over 90%. Therefore, Ottawa has been indirectly at the table, supporting positive negotiations and encouraging good and healthy negotiations between unions and management.

However, it would be highly irresponsible for the government to sit back and not respond to the needs of the Canadian economy and society as a whole. When I hear in particular my New Democratic friends try to say that we should never legislate back-to-work legislation, I remind them that it is only the New Democrats who ever say that conclusively. To try to give the impression that the NDP has never brought in back-to-work legislation is just wrong. The New Democrats have done this. They have not done so at the national level, because they have never been in government, but they have been in government in provinces where they have brought in back-to-work legislation.

●(1335)

However, in Ottawa, the New Democrats like to take the moral stand of never ever. Part of being in government means we have to make decisions that are in the best interests of all Canadians, the Canadian economy and the national interest. That is why my New Democrat colleagues need to realize that times have changed. Thirty years ago, there was not the same sort of Internet activity that we have today. They should compare the Yellow Pages from 30 years ago to what they is today. They will see there is a significant difference. There are no Yellow Pages in many homes today.

As an example, with the Internet, we have seen a profound change in the purchase of products. Everything from health to consumables to TVs, just name a few, can now be purchased online. For a vast majority of those purchases, consumers do not pick up the items. Rather, organizations and corporations like Canada Post are relied on

to deliver those products. The delivering of those products provides the ongoing growth of our economy and opportunity for seniors to receive, for example, their contact lenses, or other medical requirements or Christmas cards from a grandsons or granddaughters, whatever it may be, all of which is really important.

I cannot provide the percentage breakdown offhand for the amount of merchandise purchased over the Internet and delivered through corporations like Canada Post, but it would definitely be well into the double digits. I like to believe, which may be due to my sense of pride for Canada Post, that Canada Post is leading the way on the delivery of these products. That is why the future for Canada Post, in good part, is so solid going forward.

We are in a very interesting time of the year. We know many companies rely on this busy season to generate the necessary profits to carry them through months like January and February. To believe that is not the case is somewhat insensitive to the needs of small businesses.

The labour critic said that we had this new-found love for small businesses by the Government of Canada. The labour critic is wrong. We understand how important small businesses are to Canada. Quite frankly, they are the backbone of the economy. Helping to feed Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it is going to be driven by businesses of all sizes in every region of our country. We have recognized that from day one.

Members on this side of the House, for example, often talk about the middle-class tax cut, which put hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of Canadians. Those individuals are spending money in small businesses. That might mean, for example, buying an item on eBay and having it shipped via Canada Post. Whether it is the middle-class tax breaks, or the reduction of the small business tax or the amazing announcements by the Minister of Finance yesterday, this government has the pulse of Canada's small businesses in every region of the country. All our policy directions support small businesses and encourage the growth of Canada's middle class.

●(1340)

If we are to listen to the New Democrats, they are prepared to gamble it away. We know, from provincial experience, they would not do that. At the federal level, they are prepared to make those sorts of statements. It is highly irresponsible because many companies are having a difficult time getting their merchandise to consumers. It is very important. If we start to see job losses as a direct result of a prolonged strike, that could hurt our economy. If we start to see an individual who requires some sort of health care benefit, such as contact lenses, not being delivered in a timely fashion, that also has a negative impact. As much as a good portion of this is about the economy, it is much more than that.

We hear a lot with respect to the politics. I have listened to the debate over the last couple of hours. The Conservative are saying that we are not going far enough. Why would we table a motion today and not debate the legislation? They are anxious. They want the legislation. If it were up to them, not only would we be bringing in legislation, but we would maybe be doing what Stephen Harper did and roll back the wages of the letter carriers. It is truly amazing. We could not believe it when the government of Stephen Harper did that within its legislation.

*Government Orders*

Further to the right, we have the New Democrats who are left of centre to the right of the Conservatives. Sometimes it gets confusing because they like to work together on certain things. The New Democrats are saying that we should not be doing this, that we should be putting the interests of Canadian small businesses, consumers and those who rely on the services provided to the side. Those really do not matter.

As one of my caucus colleagues said, that is not going to work. At the end of the day, we want to see a negotiated agreement. We are hoping for this. That is what my personal request is for both labour and management. Let us get this issue resolved. However, it would be highly irresponsible for the government not to have something in place if we have to get the mail going. This is of the utmost importance.

I commented on the importance of collective agreements. I have had many opportunities to stand in the chamber. There is a wonderful list of things which we have done as a government to reinforce the importance of labour. Whether it has been in the Manitoba legislature on a debate of final offer selection or the debate we had in Ottawa on getting rid of the old Harper bills, Bill C-525 and Bill C-377, I have argued consistently for the importance of collective bargaining and the important role unions play in society.

•(1345)

In 2019, we are going to be recognizing the 1919 general strike in Winnipeg. Maybe in response to questions, I will be able to provide further comment on that.

I thank the House for the opportunity to share a few thoughts.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is some confusion as to where the member stands. Is he with the NDP or against the NDP?

The question is very straightforward. Does the member support strikes or does he not?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear: I do not support the Conservative Stephen Harper-Doug Ford approach to labour negotiations, nor do I support the NDP approach.

I see the approach that we are taking as government as the responsible approach. What is very clear is that our approach, first and foremost, still hopes to see a negotiated agreement. However, if that does not happen, as government, we have a responsibility to ensure that we continue to move forward with our economy and many other aspects of social policy, which Canada Post and its fine workers have a fairly significant impact on.

•(1350)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions for the member opposite.

The first has to do with a notice that was received in mail-sorting plants across the country from, good heavens, the post office. This was directed toward CUPW members. They were told to hold off on the delivery of child tax benefits and social assistance cheques, and any government cheques, and to keep them until further notice.

This seems to me to be a direct attack on the delivery of mail and an effort to set up CUPW members as scapegoats as part of a plan by the government and the post office to undermine union members.

Second, if the bill is so wonderful, if it is so great, if we should be so excited and wanting to embrace it, why on earth are the Liberals ramming it through with this super-motion?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I am not excited about the legislation. I do not think there is anyone on the Liberal side who is excited about the legislation. To try to give the impression that this is a government that wants to do this is just wrong. We would like to see a negotiated agreement.

For those who want to try to understand why we are doing this, it is because part of being a government is having to make difficult decisions. Governments have to recognize that times have changed, that at the end of the day it is important for us to realize that there is an economic consequence. There is a social consequence. Government, at times, has to do something, but none of us on this side of the House are excited about this legislation. It might excite a few New Democrats or Conservatives, but we are still hoping for a negotiated agreement.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Questions and comments.

Questions get asked and answers are given, and the hon. parliamentary secretary is quite capable in that regard. I know that everybody is trying to help him and give him some direction, but I am sure he is very capable and does not need the extra direction. I just want to remind everyone to please listen to the answers, as well as the questions.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I recall that during the 2015 campaign, the party that is currently in government made a big deal about the fact that individual members of Parliament would have a much greater degree of freedom, that their voices would be heard, and they would have more responsibility.

Here, just a few minutes ago, this member said that using private members' legislation was using the back door. I have had an opportunity to table private members' legislation, as have many of my colleagues on this side, and indeed members on the government side.

Does my colleague actually believe that private members' legislation is somehow less important than government legislation, especially in light of the big deal Liberals made about giving individual MPs more autonomy, more power and more say in what happens in this chamber?

My colleague had the audacity to say that private members' legislation is using the back door. Could he clarify what he was trying to imply?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to do so.

*Statements by Members*

Generally speaking the member is right, but on occasion, Stephen Harper, through the back door of private members' bills, such as Bill C-525 and Bill C-377, attempted to make profoundly negative changes to Canada's unions. It changed a lot of attitudes towards the union movement, which felt they had a very anti-union government under Stephen Harper, and the Conservatives did use the back door. One of the first actions of our government was to take those two pieces of legislation and right a wrong, which was a good thing.

This government has been very forward-thinking in working with labour, whether on this piece of legislation or other legislation we brought forward, because we understand the importance of having harmony between labour and management. This is something we will continue to strive for in the years ahead.

• (1355)

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member two things. First, the member alluded to the Winnipeg strike in 1919. As this is an area he represents, I would like to get a sense from him of its impact on his city. Second, I would like him to tell us the difference between a Liberal approach and a Conservative approach with respect to labour negotiations.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, in 2019, the City of Winnipeg, in fact, all of Canada, will be recognizing and celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1919 general strike in my beloved city. Much of the organizing for that strike took place in Winnipeg North at the Labour Temple on McGregor Street.

Our union movement, for many years, has contributed so much to who we are as a society. Indeed, I would attribute some of our strongest social programming to it, such as health care, many other worker-related laws that we now have in place, employment insurance and many of the social programs that we now have. That these programs are as healthy as they are today, I would attribute to fine work our union movement has performed for all Canadians.

I am immensely proud to say that in the 1919 general strike, Winnipeg North had a very special role to play. I would encourage all members, no matter their political affiliation, to recognize the 1919 general strike in 2019, because we are going to be celebrating and making note at its 100th anniversary of the importance of unions here in Canada.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about hard decisions. The hard decision to make is to say no to a player like eBay when that company comes to the government and tells it what it wants. The hard decision is to say no to a big player like Netflix when it comes to the government and says that it does not want to pay its fair share. The hard thing to do is to say to their Bay Street buddies who want tax havens that they are not allowed to have their money leave the country anymore. The hard thing to do is to tell Canadian companies that want to declare bankruptcy and rob workers' pensions that they are not going to be allowed to do it.

Why is it that whenever Liberal governments have to make hard decisions, Canadian workers end up on the wrong side of the decision?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is just not true. It was this government that got the agreement with all provinces and territories on the CPP. It was this government that increased the guaranteed income supplement. It was this government that increased the Canada child benefit program. It was this government that brought in the tax reduction for Canada's middle class. It was this government that put a special tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%. It was this government that invested hundreds of millions of dollars to go after tax evaders.

This is a government that is more progressive than the NDP and that knows how to get the job done.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in Quebec we support our farmers. That is why this fall, on the initiative of the Bloc Québécois, the parties in the House unanimously called for full compensation for our producers subject to supply management for three free trade agreements: the agreement with Europe, the agreement with the U.S. and the TPP. That is what Quebecers want, that is what farmers need and that is what the Bloc Québécois is asking for.

It is an insult to see that this commitment was nowhere to be found in yesterday's economic update. The government could not care less about Parliament's unanimous motions, the promises it makes in the House, our dairy producers and Quebecers.

This economic update was clearly not intended for us. Once again, Ottawa is spending our tax dollars left and right, against our values and interests, and never to advance our priorities.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

[English]

### GURU NANAK

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow Sikhs across Canada and around the world will begin celebrating a very special year, the 550th year since the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Guru Nanak was a founder of Sikhism in the 15th century. He articulated the principles of equality, goodness and the unity of humankind.

As we celebrate leading up to next year's birthday, referred to as Gurpurab, I encourage all Sikhs to continue to embody the principles of Sikhism and continue giving back to the communities around them.

In particular, I want to recognize the Ontario Sikhs & Gurudwara Council for its langar service at the meeting of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Toronto this year. Langar is an opportunity for people of all backgrounds to sit together as equals and share a free meal. Langar in gurdwaras across the world provide food security to so many. Where there are Sikhs there is langar. This was at the core of Guru Nanak's work.

*Statements by Members*

Happy Gurpurab.

\* \* \*

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, upon her release after eight years on death row in Pakistan for blasphemy, Asia Bibi and her life and those of her family are still at risk. In Turkey, atheists are jailed for questioning on God's existence on Twitter. In Germany, Baptists are jailed for home-schooling their children according to their faith. Here in Canada, the Supreme Court has ruled that if a Christian law school wants accreditation, it must discard its biblical values.

Religious freedom is a fundamental freedom. It is too often casually ignored by governments and courts around the world, both democratic and totalitarian. Religious minorities are especially vulnerable. If we cherish our right to freedom of speech and belief, we must stand up for religious views we disagree with both at home and abroad. Canada was not founded as a secular state and it is not a religious state. Canada is a country that has learned that religious tolerance works best for all Canadians, both believers and non-believers alike. We in Parliament must do our job not to forget that lesson from our history.

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[Translation]

**NICKEL BELT SENIORS CENTRES**

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Club 50 de Rayside Balfour, which celebrated its 50th anniversary. Its mission is to improve the quality of life of our seniors while promoting French culture and language.

I also want to thank the Club accueil âge d'or Azilda, the Club de l'amitié in Verner, the Club d'âge d'or in Sturgeon Falls as well as the Field, River Valley, St. Charles, Noelville and Valley East clubs for their excellent work with seniors.

Thanks to club members, our parents and grandparents, my children and our children can live in French in Ontario. The Official Languages Act adopted by the Liberal Party 50 years ago has allowed the Franco-Ontarian community to flourish.

Our Franco-Ontarian anthem, *Notre place*, by Paul Demers, says it so well:

We must stand up, we must celebrate  
Our place  
Today for tomorrow

\* \* \*

[English]

**FOOD SECURITY INSTITUTE**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to visit the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute, a vibrant organization operating in Collingwood Neighbourhood House in Vancouver Kingsway. Led by Mik Turje, Kaitlyn Fung and Najia Elacal, this impressive program champions the importance of healthy and culturally appropriate food for everyone. It fosters understanding of urban agriculture, sustainable

growing, native plants and indigenous knowledge. It utilizes local resources for greater independence and social health. It brings local concerns to the decision-makers who make food policy.

Folks at the RC Food Security Institute believe that food is a human right, and that this means much more than meeting basic nutritional requirements. They understand that bringing people together to address hunger reduces isolation, builds community and strengthens our nation. I saw this in action first-hand. I would like to recognize their outstanding work, and urge Parliament to provide federal resources for them and every organization working to ensure that every Canadian has access to affordable, healthy and abundant food.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**UMBERTO BRUNI**

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, creativity, imagination and vision are the brush strokes with which artists add a touch of colour here and there, and all around us. I am proud to represent the riding of Alfred-Pellan, which is named after a renowned Quebec painter.

Today I rise to pay tribute to *un grande uomo, signore* Umberto Bruni, who will be celebrating his 104th birthday on November 24.

•(1405)

[English]

Born in 1914, Mr. Bruni, a teacher, painter and mural, stained-glass and window artist, has received numerous prestigious mentions, including the honourable mention of the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, and Queen Elizabeth II's Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals. I am honoured to have such an artist in my riding. He continues to be an inspiration to many young artists.

[Member spoke in Italian as follows:]

Buon compleanno Sig. Bruni, vi auguro tanta felicità e salute ai prossimi cent'anni.

[English]

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**BANFF—AIRDRIE**

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, “’tis the season of giving” in Banff-Airdrie. Each year, our communities show the real spirit of the season, with many great events held across the riding, with thousands of volunteer hours spent preparing for Christmas campaigns and events, all to help those in need.

From Santa Claus parades in Banff, Airdrie and Cochrane, to Christmas markets, to Exshaw's Spirit in the Mountain and a Stoney Christmas, Canmore Rotary has various events throughout their annual Festival of Trees.

Crossfield's Winter Wonderland gives families an opportunity to make crafts together and take photos with Santa.

*Statements by Members*

In Airdrie, the Festival of Lights is collecting donations for non-profits and the Lionesses have their Christmas hamper program, while in Cochrane, the Activettes and Cochrane Events Society have come together once again for Stuff a Bus.

Finally, on Christmas Day, Newcomers Cochrane is holding a Jingle and Mingle at Cochrane Alliance Church, to ensure that no one eats alone on Christmas.

Whether volunteering or attending local events, I encourage everyone to get involved in your community this Christmas.

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**NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR VANNI AID**

**Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the association called New Opportunities for Vanni Aid of Montreal. NOVA, as they are known, does incredible work supporting single mothers of the Vanni region in Sri Lanka. It's an area that was devastated in the civil war. The organization helps these single mothers, whether they be widows or rape victims, by affording them an education and then bringing them into the workforce. I congratulate NOVA on the excellent work they are doing.

The Tamil community thrives in my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard, where they have built the beautiful Murugan Temple. I am not exaggerating or bragging. It really is a beautiful temple.

I congratulate Tamils and the greater Tamil community of Canada for their work in promoting our Canadian values of opportunity and equality overseas while at the same time contributing to the beautiful mosaic that is the culture of Canada

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**GUELPH HUMANE SOCIETY**

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recently, I was proud to celebrate the Guelph Humane Society's 125th anniversary. For 125 years, the society has provided compassionate care to animals and connected them to people. As one of the oldest humane societies in Canada, the Guelph Humane Society continues to innovate, including through the pets in transition program, a collaboration between the community veterinary outreach and the Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis that supports women who have animals and are experiencing violence. They offer pet safety planning, and temporary emergency foster placement for the pets of women seeking shelter from domestic violence.

I want to thank executive director, Adrienne McBride, and the incredible team of staff and volunteers that help make Guelph an even greater place to live for all of us, including our companions with whom we share our community and our lives.

\* \* \*

**RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS**

**Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, hon. members from Ontario will know that the people of our province are served by one of North America's largest deployed police services, the Ontario Provincial Police, headquartered in the city of Orillia, in my riding. The OPP has a history of superb leadership dating to its founding in 1909. Today I want to pay tribute to one of its ranks who

retired earlier this month, following more than 34 years of service to the OPP, the last four of those as commissioner.

Vince Hawkes brought his accomplished academic standing and decades of experience in policing, from detachment commander to forensic specialist, to deputy commissioner responsible for investigations and organized crime, to his role as commissioner, modernizing policing and crime prevention, championing new technologies, and ensuring a safe and healthy workplace across the police service.

We salute Commissioner Hawkes for his service to our province and send him our best wishes in the years ahead.

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● (1410)

**BEDDIE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks 50 years since the inception of the executive MBA program at my alma mater, the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University. When opened in 1968, SFU's EMBA Beedie was the first of its kind in Canada. This program has built many careers, including my own, and I am proud to say my son Erik is experiencing this adventure as well. EMBA grads from Simon Fraser have helped drive innovation in senior management roles across Canada.

Over the past 50 years, SFU Beedie has continued to be a school of firsts. Whether it be starting Canada's first executive MBA in indigenous business and leadership or creating British Columbia's first urban university campus at the iconic Harbour Centre in Vancouver's financial district, SFU Beedie has been at the forefront of business leadership education.

I want to congratulate SFU Beedie, the dean, SFU President Andrew Petter and their teams. We are looking forward to many more—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Richmond Hill.

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**RICHMOND HILL**

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of visiting businesses across Richmond Hill, organizations like the Accolade Group, Laipac Technology, Link-Pipe Incorporated and Opus One Solutions. These are international players that are excited about the new opportunities to expand, thanks to our government's ratification of trade agreements with European and Pacific countries, and the USMCA.

Small businesses make up 40% of Canadian exports. On average, firms that export pay higher wages and create more jobs. They also play a critical role in our economy.

*Statements by Members*

Following the fall economic statement, I will be focusing on connecting small businesses in my riding of Richmond Hill with the new opportunities our government has enacted and working with small business representatives, the board of trade and all levels of government to ensure it is well understood and well rolled out.

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**CALGARY STAMPEDEERS**

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a poem:

It's my favourite time of year, when Stamps fans get to loudly cheer.  
Because we always pass the test, Calgary is the best team in the west.  
Jerome will rush. Marquay will score. Marken will have us screaming more.  
Down the QE2 we'll soar, to go to victory once more.  
I'll be wearing my red and black. Not that team, give our cup back, and get that horse out on the track.  
'Cuz Ottawa you're going down. Stamps are the best team all around.  
We do whatever it takes. Sorry, Redblacks, them's the breaks.  
We've got the heart, we've got the drive, and Ralph the Dog is on our side.  
Dave Dickenson is good to go. The persons of Calgary will steal the show.  
A question after victory: Bo Levi, will you marry me?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE**

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am both pleased and proud to draw the attention of the House to the fact that today is the 75th anniversary of Lebanese independence, which marks the day when Lebanon threw off the colonial yoke.

Together with people from other countries, on this day the people of Lebanon and the Lebanese diaspora all over the world pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the sovereignty and independence of their nation.

We celebrate a future that we are free to imagine. This day symbolizes resilience and reminds us that we can make this world a better place.

As a proud Lebanese Canadian myself, I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in wishing everyone of Lebanese origin in Canada and around the world a happy Lebanese Independence Day.

[Member spoke in Arabic]

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[English]

**NATIONAL HOUSING DAY**

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Housing Day and I want to give a big shout-out to the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service and Alberta, the only province with a plan to end homelessness. Housing first, community-based leadership and ongoing provincial government support for local expertise and efforts means Alberta cities are leading the way in this country toward ending homelessness.

In my city, the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service is the home of the housing first program "journey home". Journey home provides housing and support to Saskatoon residents, the majority of whom have been homeless for two to five years. Housing first

works. In just one year, journey home participants had a reduction in the use of emergency services, like police, by 58%, a savings of over half a million dollars.

We can end homelessness. The solutions are already taking place on the ground. The government needs to step up sooner rather than later and treat the homelessness crisis with the urgency it deserves.

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● (1415)

**DARRELL JAMES MORRISON**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, volunteer fire departments are the cornerstone of emergency and first responder services in many small communities across Canada. Every time they answer a call for help, the men and women who volunteer their time selflessly put themselves on the line.

Yesterday in my riding, volunteer firefighter Darrell James Morrison with the Rosetown Fire Department was killed after being struck by a semi-truck while responding to another vehicle collision. I would like to express my deepest sympathies to Mr. Morrison's family, his colleagues at the Rosetown Fire Department and the entire community. We are heartbroken by this terrible tragedy.

May we never forget the selfless service of Mr. Morrison and all the first responders to whom our communities owe so much.

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**VIOLA DESMOND**

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the Bank of Canada rolled out the new \$10 banknote featuring Canadian civil rights icon Viola Desmond. Ms. Desmond was arrested and jailed in 1946 for refusing to move to a black-only area of a racially segregated theatre in Nova Scotia.

This act of defiance predates Rosa Parks' refusal to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, by nine years. Despite community support and a tough legal challenge, Ms. Desmond was ultimately found guilty of tax evasion for one cent and ordered to pay a fine of \$26.

The new \$10 note will serve as a constant reminder of the work we need to do to advance gender and racial equality in this country. While we have travelled far to achieve equality in all its forms in Canada, we have a collective responsibility to do more.

I look forward to celebrating the first Canadian woman, the first black woman, to be on any currency note in Canada at the TAIBU Community Health Centre in Scarborough this Saturday. This will be an opportunity for us to recommit to achieving equality in Canada and around the world.



*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***FINANCE**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a first. It was the first time we saw a Prime Minister so proud to put Canadians in debt and a Liberal government that keeps posting record deficits year after year on the backs of our children and grandchildren.

The fact of the matter is that we have an \$80-billion deficit and there is still a year left in the current term.

My question is simple. When will the Prime Minister present a plan to return to a balanced budget?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. Our plan is to invest in our country and our plan is working.

Yesterday was a very important day for our country. We explained our current economic situation, which is excellent. The economy is growing, unemployment is at its lowest level in 40 years and salaries are going up. Things are looking good for the middle class and Canadian families. We will stay the course.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we did not make any of this up. The Liberal government kept saying throughout the entire election campaign and on page 12 of its platform that by the end of its term in 2019 we would return to a balanced budget.

The problem is that the Prime Minister seems to think that deficits magically disappear. That is not how things work in real life.

We keep asking the Prime Minister the same question: can he simply give us a date? When will we have—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister of Finance.

• (1420)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Finance, I can say that our plan is working. It is a well-thought-out plan, and it is clearly the right plan to improve our economy over the long term.

What is more, our debt-to-GDP ratio is very good. It is better than that of any of the other G7 countries. That is good for the future. We will also have the opportunity to continue with our plan to improve the lives of Canadians.

*[English]*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today, the finance minister told a journalist that running the \$20-billion deficit this year was “consistent with what we said we would do”. Now the Liberals have gone from breaking their promise to denying that they ever made it.

This year the deficit will be three times the size the Liberal platform promised. Next year it will be even bigger, and that was the year when the budget was supposed to balance itself.

Is it not true that we have gone from the budget will balance itself to the budget will never balance itself at all?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I continue to hear from the member for Carleton are buzzwords from first-year economic textbooks. What I do know, the important thing, is think about how we are going to listen to actual Canadians and what really matters to them.

We know what matters to Canadians. They want to make sure that there are jobs for their families for today and for their children for tomorrow. They want to see their incomes go up, wages growing. They want to see an economy that continues to produce opportunities for the future. The good news is that our approach is delivering on all those messages for Canadians. That is important.

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**NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Well, now we know that the next time the Liberals put forward a platform and they make commitments in it, those actually will be buzzwords and not commitments, Mr. Speaker.

On November 14, the head of Unifor, one of the largest media unions in the country, said that it would pull out all the stops to help re-elect the Liberal government. One week later, the government decided to create a \$600-million slush fund in order to entice journalists to favour the government in the next election.

What guarantee do we have that the Liberals will not use this slush fund as a gigantic propaganda machine for the Liberal Party?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe in a strong and independent free press. We know that our democracy relies on getting information to Canadians.

We have been very clear. We want to continue to ensure a strong and free press and we will do it in a way that is completely and totally independent from government. That is critically important. That Canadians need the information they need to make decisions in our democracy is critically important.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals are actually proposing is that there will be a government sanctioned panel that will decide which journalists get how much and that panel will decide standards and eligibility for this big half billion dollar slush fund for the media.

Is it not true that the government just believes the job of the media is to shower praise on the Prime Minister and the job of taxpayers is to pay for it all?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is insulting to think that journalists can be bought off. What is clearly the case is that we are going to make sure that we have an independent free press in the country, because we understand how critical that is to our democracy. We are going to continue down this path, the path to which we have clearly committed. It is important for our country.

*Oral Questions***FINANCE**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week the Liberals outdid themselves in sucking up to big business. First there is this back-to-work legislation, which was drafted as a big gift to Canada Post executives and to please the eBays and Amazons of this world, while throwing workers under the bus.

Then we have an economic update, with \$14 billion for the private sector and crumbs for Canadians. No wonder former parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page, said that the Liberal fiscal update was “deficit-financing the corporate sector”.

What is the next step for the Liberals? Coming to the rescue of poor little Walmart?

• (1425)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that members of the NDP should start talking to each other. What I heard from the NDP was that it was critically important that we invest in order to create jobs for the future and that we think about investing in a way that we could get clean technology outcomes. What we did yesterday was exactly those two things.

We have made it so that businesses can invest in the future and create jobs for Canadians. We have made it so that we can have clean technology firms invest in a way that will allow us to accelerate our approach toward a cleaner environment over the long term. These are important initiatives, and I am glad to think that at least some members of the NDP will come along and support us, when they get elected.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, special legislation that forces Canada Post employees back to work is a great gift for Canada Post, which never felt the need to negotiate in good faith.

It is also a great gift for eBay and Amazon, which never stopped lobbying the government to put an end to the strike. The government slavishly listened.

Now, we have a mini budget of \$14 billion in gifts for the private sector and nothing but crumbs for Canadians. The former parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page, said that this economic update is ratcheting up the deficit to fund the private sector.

What will the government do now? Is it going to help Bell, Telus and Rogers?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's fall economic update was very important for the middle class and for people who need a job. We decided that it was very important to invest in job creation. That is why we decided to do important things for the future. Job creation is very important. We will continue with our approach, which seeks to improve our economy and help Canadians across the country succeed.

\* \* \*

**CANADA POST**

**Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, by passing special legislation to force postal workers back to work, the Liberals

are proving that they are just like the Conservatives. A government that claims to stand up for the middle class should also stand up for middle-class working conditions.

Canada Post invested a false crisis, and the government is prepared to respond with special legislation. Canada Post is just sitting and waiting and will never change its position.

Will the government allow free negotiation and choose not to introduce this bill?

[English]

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is in fact what we have been doing in supporting free and fair bargaining for well over a year. We have been encouraging the parties to reach a deal. We have given them federal conciliation officers, mediators, a special mediator, whom we reappointed twice to get that deal. Canadians are suffering. Canadian businesses are suffering. Community members in rural and remote communities are suffering. Workers are suffering.

If required, the legislation would set out a process where employers would return to work while continuing their negotiations with an independent mediator arbitrator. We still believe a deal is possible, and I continue to encourage the parties to get that deal.

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Prime Minister intends to continue the charade of supporting the collective bargaining process guaranteed under the charter, while trampling on CUPW's rights by forcing the workers back to work. I believe that is called sucking and blowing at the same time, and Canadians are not buying it.

The Prime Minister has no interest in resolving CUPW's concerns around workload, pay equity, health and safety and harassment. Could the minister tell us, please, how exactly is the current Prime Minister an improvement over Stephen Harper?

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would urge hon. members to be careful in their choice of language and to try to elevate it in keeping with this institution.

The hon. Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we have been working with the two parties for well over a year. We have given them all the supports necessary to reach a deal. We have given them supports through federal mediation service. I have appointed a special mediator multiple times. The parties continue to negotiate.

We are taking actions that will prepare the government to act if necessary. I still will say that the best agreement is in a collective agreement bargained between the two parties. However, saying that, Canadians expect us to take their concerns seriously, and that means rural and remote Canadians and small and medium-sized enterprises.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again yesterday, the Minister of Finance undermined his Prime Minister by tabling a deficit budget. That is the truth. The Prime Minister went on and on about how budgets will balance themselves. The Minister of Finance contradicted him yesterday. We were supposed to have a zero-deficit year in 2019. The deficit will be \$20 billion.

Can the Minister of Finance at least assure Canadians that he knows when Canada's budget will be balanced?

● (1430)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure Canadians that we will maintain our balanced approach. Our approach involves investing in Canada so that our economy can keep working, unemployment rates can stay very low, and Canadians across the country can have access to a future filled with opportunity. We can do this and still be fiscally responsible. This is our approach, and it is a good one.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal economic statement was a slap in the face to Alberta families. Albertans today are protesting in the streets against the Prime Minister and his failure to get pipelines built. Nothing in the fall economic statement gave anything to Alberta energy families. Instead, he prioritized \$600 million in corporate welfare for the media.

Why is the Prime Minister trying to buy off the media in an election year instead of supporting Canada's energy workers?

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, independent journalism is a pillar of our Canadian democracy, even though the Conservatives disagree with that. Newspapers are going through a crisis right now. They currently employ tens of thousands of Canadians, and that is only half of those who were employed in 2010.

This week we are taking action. We have created a tax credit for newsrooms, for donations to not-for-profit media and for Canadians who subscribe to an online media. Those investments will be administered by an independent board of experts in order to protect journalistic independence.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, veteran Sean Bruyey had the courage to call out the Liberals' broken promises to veterans. When he did, the minister smeared him in the press and sent in high-price lawyers to shut him up.

There was nothing for veterans in the economic statement, but there were \$600 million for the media, whose union has launched a campaign in support of the Liberals.

Why is the Prime Minister trying to buy off the media in an election year instead of supporting veterans?

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this conspiracy theory is insulting to the intelligence of Canadians and to the professionalism of journalists. The Conservatives think that journalists can be bought and we do not. We think their work is absolutely fundamental to our democracy.

France, Sweden, Germany, the U.K. and many others have taken action to support journalism, without compromising independence. However, newspapers are going through a crisis and that is why we are taking action. We will do it while protecting journalistic independence.

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister tried to bribe the media with a \$600 million bailout, but nothing for small businesses struggling with steel and aluminum tariffs. Each day these tariffs remain in place workers and businesses face uncertainty and layoffs, and the government has no plan to fix the problem.

Why is the Prime Minister trying to buy off the media in an election year instead of supporting the workers in the steel and aluminum industry?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have committed to supporting our steel and aluminum industry. We have committed up to \$2 billion, including money through the strategic innovation fund and other funding so they can not only ride out this difficult period, but also invest in the kinds of technologies that will propel them into the future.

We are investing in our industries. We have the backs of our steel and aluminum workers.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's economic statement shows without a doubt that the Liberals could not care less about keeping their election promises.

Not only did the Prime Minister give up on balancing the budget, but he also put \$600 million on the credit card for the media, a Band-Aid solution that will do nothing to fix the crisis in this sector.

Meanwhile, dairy, egg and poultry farmers were not even worthy of a mention by the Minister of Finance.

We understand why the Prime Minister is so eager to pay off the media, this being a pre-election year, but why is he so reluctant to help farmers?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives appear to have a real problem with journalists and the truth. The Conservative leader's office has promised to “go for the jugular” with the media. It also thinks journalists can be bought. This is an insult to the intelligence of Canadians and to the professionalism of journalists. The Conservative opposition should consult with other conservatives around the world who have made decisions to support local journalism.

Journalistic independence is a pillar of our democracy and we will always protect it.

• (1435)

**The Speaker:** Order. I know the hon. member for Durham is enjoying question period. Of course, I always enjoy hearing his voice, but preferably only when he has the floor.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on November 14, Jerry Dias of Unifor, which represents thousands of journalists, called the \$50 million media bailout in budget 2018 “nickels and dimes”. On the same day, he announced Unifor's formal campaign against the Conservatives. On November 16, the media reported that an increased media bailout would be announced, and on November 21, \$600 million was announced.

The finance minister just said it was insulting to think that journalists could be bought. What about Jerry Dias?

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives think that Canadian journalists can be bought and we certainly do not believe that. Their work is fundamental to this democracy.

Conservatives around the world have understood the need to support journalism and local journalism, as have governments in France, Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom. I might remind the member for Calgary Nose Hill that her government too supported media. Under its tenure it increased funding for the Canada periodical fund.

Independent Canadian journalism is core to our democracy.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis in the media industry, and the Liberals finally decided to take notice yesterday, after tens of thousands of jobs had already been cut. This was a good decision, and I thank them for it, but it is a little late. Our media industry has been gutted, and 92% of the money will not be spent until after the next election.

The Liberals chose to make Canadians foot the bill, yet Google and Facebook, which dominate the online advertising world, are the ones that swallowed up our media's advertising revenue. They are the ones that caused this crisis. The Liberals are not making them pay taxes. What is worse, the Liberals make these companies' services tax deductible, as if they were Canadian companies.

Why does the Liberal Party not demand anything from Facebook, Google and the rest? Are they like firefighters who start fires?

*[English]*

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government takes very seriously Canadian content creators, including news media.

I want to stress in answering the hon. member's question today that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism has done exactly what the Prime Minister asked him to do in his mandate letter. He has consulted with Canadian media and stakeholders to develop business models to support local journalism. This week he has delivered. This is good government. This is real change in action.

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**FINANCE**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, instead of standing up to the web giants, why do the Liberals not stand up for Canadians for a change?

There is nothing in the mini budget for badly needed pharmacare. There is nothing to address the housing crisis. There is nothing to correct the profound inequality that indigenous children face in their badly underfunded schools, but there are Christmas gifts from the Liberal government for corporate CEOs. They now get to write off more quickly plush corporate jets and stretch limousines.

Why is the finance minister acting like Santa Claus to Canada's wealthiest CEOs and like Scrooge to everyone else?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the record is pretty clear. What has happened over the last three years is that the economic approach we have taken has made an enormous difference for Canadians. Not only have we made a huge difference in unemployment and brought in processes that led to wage increases, but importantly we have also found a way to lift 650,000 Canadians out of poverty through the Canada child benefit, the Canada workers benefit, and the increase in the guaranteed income supplement.

This is important work that will continue with the investments that will be made to create future jobs because of what we announced yesterday.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is clearly determined to rig Canada's next federal election. He amended the legislation so people could vote without identification, and he is doing nothing to address the problem of foreign influence in our elections. Also, the way he is setting the rules for televised debates is completely arbitrary.

Can the Prime Minister try to explain how he will ensure that the election is for Canadians and not for the Liberal Party?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have put forward Bill C-76, which will enable more Canadians to vote.

We are ensuring that Canadians who need help voting will have that access to voting. With Bill C-76 we are putting in place safeguards to protect our elections from foreign interference. We are putting forward the independent debates commissioner to make sure that all Canadians have access to watching their federal leaders debate, something that did not happen under the previous government because one political party decided not to participate.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that all Canadians are taking part in our elections, and—

• (1440)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, so far, Canadians have been saddled with an electoral bill that favours the Liberal government, a debate commissioner to rig the leaders debate in favour of the Liberal government, and now an attempt to bribe the media with \$600 million in an election year.

When will the Prime Minister realize that he does not get to dictate the rules in our democracy?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is ironic coming from the other side when it comes to our democracy.

What we are doing on this side is ensuring that every single Canadian who has the right to vote can cast their ballot. We are not afraid of Canadians voting. We are also not afraid of independent media doing their job. We believe that the media play an essential role in our democracy. Canadians need to be informed, and it is important that the media will continue to exercise their good work throughout the upcoming year and into the next election.

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**PRIVACY**

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Liberals to come clean on the Statistics Canada file.

The minister himself this week admitted that StatsCan kept him and the cabinet in the dark about the demand to Canada's banks to hand over more than a million Canadians' most personal financial information without consent.

When will the Liberals get their heads around new realities in the digital world, accept that Canadians should own their own data, and should have a right to decide with whom they share it, or not?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government takes the privacy of Canadians very seriously, and we understand the concerns that have been raised.

The chief Statistician has been very clear. The project will not move forward until privacy concerns are addressed. No data has been shared or obtained by Statistics Canada. StatsCan does not share or sell any personal information.

Canadians' right to privacy and data protection will not be compromised.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has begun prying into the financial information of Canadians. The minister has a responsibility to take the fall for any data leaks related to Canadians' privacy. The minister's guarantee seems pretty weak considering all the cyber attacks we have seen recently in Canada.

The best guarantee for Canadians is to cancel this program to collect financial data.

When will the Liberal government scrap this intrusive program?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let's talk about real facts.

Statistics Canada does not share or sell any personal information. Statistics Canada absolutely cannot share that information. No individual, organization or government, not even the Prime Minister, can ask for the information collected by Statistics Canada.

The privacy of Canadians will be protected.

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**HOUSING**

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis in indigenous communities is only getting worse. It would be nice if the government would at least show that it was making an effort, but it does not even seem to be trying.

Yesterday, in his economic statement, the Minister of Finance could have announced immediate funding to end this crisis. Instead, he chose to play Santa Claus to rich corporations.

When will the government sit down with indigenous peoples to create a targeted strategy and put an end to this crisis?

*[English]*

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government started investing in new housing programs the day we took office, and today I am proud to announce that close to one million homes have been impacted by the investments we have made. Fourteen thousand new affordable homes have been built or are under construction; 26,000 people who are at risk of homelessness are now in housing; 156,000 homes are being repaired with funds provided by this government. For the next 10 years, it is a \$40 billion investment in the country's first ever national housing strategy.

We did not wait for yesterday to take action. We took action on day one and we will take action for the next decade. We will not take lessons from the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the national housing strategy was announced, but the housing crisis in Canada deepens every day. There is still no sign of an indigenous housing strategy.

As we approach another brutal Canadian winter, shelters will be overflowing and more people will be left out in the cold. The most vulnerable are being asked to wait until after the next election.

On National Housing Day will the government enshrine the right to housing in legislation so that everyone can have a safe, affordable place to call home?

• (1445)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my mother used to say that “If you want to make a point, vote NDP. If you want to make a difference, vote Liberal.” On housing, my mom could not have been more correct. Our \$40 billion housing program over the next 10 years is real money, building real housing right now.

However, on the issue of indigenous housing, not only have we made substantial new investments, there are also new programs on their way as we speak. When it comes to the right to housing, as it says in the national housing strategy, we will be legislating a rights-based framework to make sure that Canadians get the housing they need when they need it.

As I said, we are making a difference, regardless of what point the members opposite are not making.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, Franco-Ontarians are rallying in response to the Ontario Conservative government's decision to abolish the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner and cancel the project to build a French-language university in Toronto. In the meantime, here in Parliament, the leader of the official opposition still has not condemned this attack.

How will the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie support our Franco-Ontarian friends and francophones and francophiles across the country?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche, who does excellent work on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

It has been seven days since Ontario's Conservative government cut services for Franco-Ontarians, but so far, no one in the Conservative Party has condemned what is happening in Ontario. That is unacceptable.

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all week I have been hearing the Liberals say how they decided to invest and how that justifies running enormous deficits.

The purchase of the Australian F-18s does not constitute an investment. Instead, those aircraft will be a burden on the Royal Canadian Air Force and on taxpayers. This expenditure will have no impact on operations because there are not enough pilots and technicians to get them in the air.

Will the government immediately cancel this completely useless purchase?

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to providing the Royal Canadian Air Force with the equipment it needs to be fully operational now and into the future. Unlike the previous government, we will not neglect our NORAD and NATO commitments.

Today, I can announce that we have signed the agreement with Australia and I look forward to receiving these planes in the spring of 2019. I have also directed my department to prepare options to improve the combat capabilities of the CF-18s until the full competition is complete.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is throwing good money after bad buying a bunch of old, obsolete fighter jets. The Auditor General trashed that plan, and the Liberals' fighter jet plan has completely crashed and burned. By purchasing these old jets, the Liberals are actually endangering the lives of the brave men and women in uniform who serve this country.

When will the Liberals follow the Auditor General's advice, cancel this crazy deal to buy these used Aussie jets and immediately buy the right jets for our pilots?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the previous government was serious about this, it would have replaced the jets 10 years ago. Our government has been clear. A modern fleet is essential to defending Canada and Canadian sovereignty. The Auditor General's report confirms something we have always known, that the Conservatives mismanaged this file and misled Canadians for a decade, with no fighters to show for it. That is why we are acquiring 88 fighter jets, not like the 65 the previous government wanted, to replace the CF-18s through an open and transparent competition that will make sure that we can live up to our commitments now and into the future.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Prime Minister if any current or former cabinet ministers had unlawfully released cabinet confidence information. He answered that he could not discuss an ongoing court case, confirming that a minister of his cabinet was implicated in an ongoing court case.

*Oral Questions*

What is the name of the current or former cabinet minister who is implicated in an ongoing court case?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the nefarious implications in the tone of that question are exactly the reason why this House has a rule about not discussing matters that are *sub judice*. The hon. member may wish to engage in absolutely unsubstantiated drive-by smears, but that is not the role of the House of Commons.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the minister is not answering the question. The Prime Minister has appointed three of his former cabinet ministers to high-level positions. All others are either still in cabinet or in this House. If one of those individuals has unlawfully released cabinet confidence information and is implicated in a court case, Canadians deserve to know. What is the name of the current or former cabinet minister who is implicated in an ongoing court case?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, I refer the hon. member to a colleague in this House who used to sit on that side, Peter Van Loan, who made it very clear why the *sub judice* rule is in place. It is in place to prevent debate or conversations in this House of Commons from interfering unduly in a court proceeding. A court proceeding is there to determine the rights of Canadians according to law and according to evidence, and the courts will do their job.

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**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the early 1970s, the NDP asked the Liberal government how it was possible that in Canada, indigenous women were being sterilized. There was no answer. In 1976, same question, same answer. In 2015, indigenous women came forward in Saskatchewan saying they felt pressured to be sterilized. We have been asking for action for 40-plus years, yet in 2017, it happened again. This is wrong. When will the government finally address this issue?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we can safely assume that everyone in this House knows it is absolutely incomprehensible and unacceptable that the human rights, the reproductive rights, of indigenous women should be violated in this way. I am happy to report to the member opposite that we are actively working across the country, including with our provincial and territorial partners, with agencies that work in medical education, with doctors' associations, to make sure this is very clear.

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**HOUSING**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw disturbing images of Iglulik children suffering open sores and respiratory disease from black mould rampant in their overcrowded public housing. This is a shameful and completely unacceptable situation for Canada's most vulnerable citizens. As a G7 nation, Liberals continually claim that we are leading the world in economic growth, yet we have Canadian children, babies, living in third world conditions.

Why is the government delaying housing funding and prioritizing corporate tax cuts over indigenous children suffering health problems?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say, and will make this point very clear, that the minister in charge has asked CMHC to immediately get in touch with the Nunavut housing authority. Substantial dollars have been invested, and bilateral accords have been signed with that government, and we want this problem addressed immediately.

The funds we have put in place to support indigenous housing and territorial housing, as we signed the bilateral with the Northwest Territories last week, are substantial. By comparison, I would ask them to look at their campaign platform, which offered \$25 million to the entire country, and that was it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has given environmentalist Steven Guilbeault a job before he runs in the 2019 election—

• (1455)

[English]

**The Speaker:** Order. I would ask the member for Vancouver Kingsway and others to come to order, and the other side as well. Order.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has given environmentalist Steven Guilbeault a job before he runs as a Liberal candidate in the 2019 election.

The Prime Minister's new special adviser on the environment is strongly opposed to the third link in Quebec City. He even said the following in an interview, and I quote: "Honestly, the third link will not work. It is a political pitch to pander to voters in Quebec City's southern suburbs".

Will the Prime Minister take Mr. Guilbeault's advice and block the construction of a third link in Quebec City?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that our government realizes that we need to take action on climate change. We have a plan, and it is working. We are reducing our greenhouse gas emissions while also growing our economy.

*Oral Questions*

I am also very proud of Steven Guilbeault, an environmentalist from Quebec who is supported by the Quebec parties. He is going to help us do more. We need to address climate change. However, for over 200 days now, I have been wondering what the Conservative Party plans to do about climate change.

**Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the past year, the members for Québec and Louis-Hébert have been parading around Quebec City talking about how they are going to help create a third link.

Yesterday, the Liberals hired an adviser, Steven Guilbeault, who has said he is officially against the third link. A third link is important to Beauport—Limoilou, Quebec City, and the economic development of the whole region.

Are the Liberals for or against a third link in Quebec City?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians would like to know is whether the Conservatives are for or against fighting climate change. For over 200 days now, there has been no sign of their climate change plan.

I am very proud that we are going to have a council that will include Steven Guilbeault from Quebec and Tamara Vrooman from British Columbia. We have a plan to tackle climate change.

What is the Conservative Party's plan?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about Mr. Guilbeault. Everyone in the Quebec City area, including the premier, is in favour of the third link.

Is the party opposite afraid to stand up and tell the Premier of Quebec that it is against the third link?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to stand up and talk about our climate change plan. We have a plan that is working.

We are eliminating coal, putting a price on carbon, making unprecedented investments in public transit, hiring environmentalists and getting advice from businesses, mayors and the provinces on how to tackle climate change.

The Conservatives, in contrast, have no plan to tackle climate change and no plan to grow our economy.

**Ms. Sylvie Boucher:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. I would appreciate it if the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix would stop heckling.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

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[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that every first nation child deserves the best start in life. We know that decades of

neglect have led to immense gaps in education on reserve. We can and must do better. As the Minister of Indigenous Services has said previously, the path forward includes first nations control of first nations education.

Can the hon. minister please update this House on the ongoing work in my home province of Manitoba to ensure that first nations children have welcoming and culturally relevant educational space in their communities?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday in Winnipeg, I was thrilled to announce, along with four Manitoba first nations, that we are investing nearly \$250 million to build schools in those four communities. This investment means that those students will not have to leave home and can finish high school right in their communities. We are working with first nations partners. We are ensuring that all first nation students receive high-quality education.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first it was the EpiPen injector shortage that threatened the lives of our children in August. Now there is a shortage of the antidepressant drug Wellbutrin that patients, many of whom are suicidal, desperately need. The Canadian Pharmacists Association says it is concerned about the growing number of drug shortages in Canada. Continued drug shortages are unacceptable, and the minister has failed to act.

Why have the Liberals failed to secure these vital medications for Canadians?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, protecting the health and safety of Canadians is my top priority. One of my most important responsibilities as health minister is ensuring that Canadians are well informed about medicines they rely on. We are taking important steps to address the complex issue of drug shortages. As part of our mandatory drug shortage reporting regulations, we launched a third-party website, and that is [drugshortagescanada.ca](http://drugshortagescanada.ca). Drug shortages are a complex global problem, and we are working with partners on the ground to find a solution.



*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a duty to defend francophone language rights across Canada. However, for the past week, he has refused to call Doug Ford directly to discuss the attack on the Franco-Ontarian community. Why?

This reluctance sends Doug Ford a clear message that this attack is acceptable.

It is the role of the Prime Minister to stand up for Canada's francophones. Why is the Prime Minister refusing to fight for Franco-Ontarians?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister, our entire government and I are proud to stand with Franco-Ontarians, whose right to live in French in Ontario is currently under attack.

The Prime Minister has been clear in denouncing the cuts. In fact, we call on the leader of the Conservative Party to denounce these cuts. Beyond that, we stand in solidarity with Franco-Ontarians. Today, I had the opportunity to meet with them, and we are—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in New Brunswick Southwest, there are incredible entrepreneurs with innovative ideas who want to start up and scale up their companies, but often, due to a lack of access to valuable capital, are unable to. Could the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion update the House on what the government is doing to support the scale-up of Canadian companies?

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is working hard to help Canadian small and medium-sized companies start up, scale up and access new markets. A strong venture capital ecosystem that invests in innovative Canadians and young companies is essential to achieving this goal. That is why yesterday, our government announced an additional \$50 million to increase venture capital available to Canadian clean-tech companies. These investments will help support Canadian SMEs and entrepreneurs to scale up and create great new Canadian jobs.

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**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General said regular Canadians will automatically lose their credits or benefits if they cannot give the Canada Revenue Agency a document within 90 days, but for offshore tax dodgers, the agency will give them months or maybe even years to comply, or they will simply close the file without collecting any taxes.

The minister promised a client-focused CRA and action on offshore evasion, so why is she protecting offshore tax dodgers and failing to provide basic service to regular Canadians?

[Translation]

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has chosen to invest in a fair and equitable tax system that meets the needs of all Canadians. I have no lessons to learn from the Conservatives. The Harper government cut jobs and training and never invested in services. We have appointed a chief service officer in order to provide the best service to the public. She will use a client-centred approach.

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**FINANCE**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I see why the Liberals are known as “red” party. It does not get much redder than this economic update. We will be in the red for years, a lovely Liberal shade of red. Nobody can blame Quebec for any of this. There is nothing for us in the update, nothing for Davie, nothing for our farmers, nothing for health and nothing for education.

When will the Minister of Finance start showing Quebecers some respect and pay attention to their priorities, such as health?

● (1505)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our fall economic update is clearly meant for the whole country. We decided to advance Canadians' interests through investment opportunities that will have an impact on job creation across Canada, including in Quebec.

Our measures are benefiting every sector and every part of the country. This is very important for our future.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a good tip. If anyone feels the need to waste four hours of their life, they should read the summary of the in camera meeting and try to find anything good for Quebecers in yesterday's economic update. That is what I call a real waste of time.

The government found a way to increase its outrageous deficit without investing a penny more in health care. Imagine that!

Why did the government choose to refuse to respond to the real needs of Quebecers and restore health transfer increases?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what our country needs is economic growth, enough jobs across the country and higher wages. That is always important in Canada and Quebec. Our investments are important for Canada and Quebec. This approach will work for the future.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, as all members in this place know, the IPCC report was a very stern warning that the planet is on a course to disaster.

However, a more recent report published in Nature Communications says that Canada's status is about the worst in the world. We rank with China and Russia, and if all countries followed our lead, we would go to a 5.1° global average temperature increase.

When will the government commit to a path that leads to 1.5 degrees, the Paris target?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her advocacy on the environment and climate change. I look forward to heading to COP24 with her in Poland this year to ensure that we get a robust rule book and action on climate change.

We have a serious plan to tackle climate change after a decade of inaction under the previous government, which did nothing to tackle it. I am also proud that yesterday we added to our plan through the fall economic statement. We introduced incentives for solar and wind power. We also announced a new climate action advisory committee, co-chaired by Steven Guilbeault and Tamara Vrooman, which is going to help us advance ambition into action.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou on a point of order.

**Mr. Alupa Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I have an obligation to tell you that the Minister of Official Languages misled the House today in question period when she claimed that no Conservative members of the House have publicly criticized the Ford government's actions in front of the cameras.

I did so, as did several members—

**The Speaker:** Order.

I thank the hon. member, but I believe that is a matter of debate.

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix on a point of order.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister of La Francophonie to apologize to the House.

Many people in the House have spoken out: our leader, Andrew Scheer, the leader—

**The Speaker:** Order.

I believe that is a matter of debate. Also, members are not to name other members.

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[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government House leader to tell us what the business of the House is for the remainder of this week and next

week. I think we have a bit of an idea. However, we would like to have it confirmed.

• (1510)

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, we will resume third reading debate of Bill C-81, the accessibility legislation.

Our intention for tomorrow is to call Bill C-75, justice modernization, at third reading. We sincerely hope that Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers reach an agreement. However, if they do not, we will call government Motion. No. 25, concerning the resumption of postal services, for debate tomorrow.

On Monday, we will consider report stage and third reading of Bill C-86, Budget Implementation Act, 2018, No. 2. This will also be the business for Tuesday and Wednesday.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[Translation]

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all parties, and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on the motion to concur in the Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, presented on Wednesday, May 10, 2017, be deemed to have taken place and the motion be deemed concurred in on division.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders*

(Motion agreed to)

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT**

The House resumed from November 21, 2018 consideration of the motion that Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte has 11 minutes left in his remarks.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to continue talking about a bill that has a lot of hope in it from Canadians across the country who are living with disabilities. I started yesterday into my speech regarding Bill C-81, which is essentially an accessibility act for all Canadians.

The minister said we would be co-operating and working together, and that her department would provide us with the information that was needed in order to ensure the bill actually delivers for Canadians living with disabilities. Stakeholders from across the country, from all sides of this debate, whether they have hearing or sight disabilities or physical or cognitive disabilities, are all saying the same thing, that the bill is not actually doing anything.

There are no teeth in the bill, and there are no dates to deliver teeth or policies or regulations so that we know what is going to be done to actually help people living with disabilities.

One of the things I said at the first debate we had on this subject and repeated at committee was that my hope for the bill was that at the end of it I would be able to call my mother and tell her how her life is going to change after it is passed.

Unfortunately, all I can do today is call her and tell her that within two years a single regulation will be adopted. That single regulation will trigger a five-year time period, and within that five-year time period the government will then have to report back and essentially do an audit of the regulations it has in place. However, we are not going to see any tangible benefits out of this bill on day one.

We have asked why, and the Liberals have said regulations do not need to be in the bill. The staff in the department and the minister have said we need to consult more. That is not good enough. We have had three years of consultation on this subject. Surely at least one regulation could have come into effect with this accessibility legislation.

The minister said yesterday the good news is there are benchmarks. She said that Ontario, Nova Scotia and British Columbia had put very forward-thinking legislation into place, and she commended their legislation. Their legislation had timelines.

She commends it, and she tells us there is a benchmark and we know what we need to do, but then does not include any of it in the bill, saying we might have one regulation within two years. It is just not good enough for Canadians living with disabilities. It is not good

enough for Canadians who are living with either cognitive or physical disabilities.

It is incredible when we start thinking about all the things the most vulnerable in our society have to live and cope with. When we look at the issues of the day, such as Canada Post, we see another barrier put up. With Canada Post union employees going on strike, it creates a barrier for people living with disabilities, who perhaps cannot even get outside of their home to go and collect items they may need.

However, the minister does not put anything in place that will change things as of day one. It is not good enough, and stakeholders know it is not good enough.

Stakeholders were telling us they wanted change. That is why roughly 240 amendments were drafted and submitted. That is why so many amendments were adopted. Unfortunately, they were only from the Liberal side.

However, what the minister, the department and the Liberals on the committee could not understand is that stakeholders want to know when things are going to change. They want measurables in place.

● (1515)

Stakeholders do not just want to see a bunch of employees hired, a building gone, rented or bought, and perhaps a promise of “one day”. They are not looking for a promissory note. The stakeholders are looking for real defined benefits, defined regulations, defined policies that will help them in their day-to-day lives, and that is what the Conservative Party, the New Democrats and the Green Party all tried to do at committee to no avail, because, unfortunately, they were not part of the right party. It is disgusting when we think about the throne speech that we had in this House of Commons by the Prime Minister, which said that all members would be respected no matter where they are from, no matter what party they represent. Unfortunately, that is just not the case. The co-operation that the minister has consistently said would be in place was not.

The answers that the minister said she would be getting for members of the opposition never came. The costs related to these changes were never brought forward. However, if all of the benchmarks are in place in Ontario, Nova Scotia and British Columbia, surely we know what the costs are to make the changes necessary to make lives better for people in Canada who are living with disabilities.

We either have the information or we do not. Yesterday, we were told we had the information. A few weeks ago, we were told we did not. At committee, we were told that we did not. Even when the Liberals do have the information, they say that it is privileged between the cabinet minister and the staff. These are things as simple as whether any timelines were recommended. We could not even get that. The stakeholders are asking these questions one after another. They want to know and need to understand how and when these actions are going to be taken.

*Government Orders*

I brought something up at committee that the minister was not actually present for, which is normal, and I did not bring it up in a previous speech, but I would like to make sure that this is brought before the House. What happens if a different government is elected? What happens if there is no minister who is like-minded on this issue?

One of the things the Conservative Party was asking for was to put measurables in place to ensure that there would be follow-through from successive governments. The current government's mandate ends in less than one year. Unfortunately, by not putting measurables in place, by not having a time by which all of these things need to be completed, by not putting a target in place for a barrier-free Canada, we do not know when or how this proposed legislation could fall off the road. This means there is a lack of accountability contained within legislation, because the government wants to avoid being accountable for real results. However, it would not just affect the current government but all governments going forward. If there is not a like-minded government going forward, that means there is a potential for it to completely collapse, and we do not want this to collapse.

We like the fact that there is an accessibility act coming forward. We supported the fact that there was an accessibility act coming forward. We championed an accessibility act coming forward. We requested that it be brought forward as soon as possible when it became very clear that the six-month timeline that the government put in order to provide the legislation to the House for persons in Canada with disabilities was not coming forward. We asked where it was. Why was it not here yet? We knew the work had been done. The Liberals told us they had been consulting for over a year. They told us they were consulting for over two years, and yet still we did not have legislation in front of us.

What happens if it is not the mindset that is provided by the government today, the mindset that is provided in the Conservative benches opposite? There is a real possibility that the intent of this legislation would fall off the road just so the government could avoid the accountability of providing real results for real Canadians living with real disabilities. It is just shameful that a government would walk away from its responsibility to be accountable to Canadians who are taking care of the most vulnerable and accountable to the most vulnerable themselves. It is absolutely shameful.

●(1520)

Going forward, we know that there need to be changes. Therefore, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for the purpose of reconsidering:

- a. clauses 5, 11, 18, 23, 111 and 148 with the view to include dates and timelines to ensure that the Bill will advance accessibility in Canada;
- b. clauses 15, 75, 93 and 95 with the view to remove permissive language to ensure that accessibility requirements are made and enforced;
- c. clauses 46, 55, 59, 64, and 68 with the view to not allow organizations to be exempted from complying with accessibility requirements; and
- d. clause 207 with the view to require the government to act.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport.

●(1525)

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comments on this very important bill. However, I have to take exception to what the hon. member was saying, because he is in fact misleading Canadians. He is saying that this bill has no teeth. It definitely has teeth. He is saying this bill has no timelines. It definitely has timelines. I think we need to underscore how important the amount of input from Canadians with disabilities has been, in order to get where we are today.

I want to say specifically that our government wants to hit the ground running when this bill passes. New regulations will be in place very quickly, within two years after the act comes into force. That means that we are going to start moving right away and that the regulations will be enacted. Once Bill C-81 receives royal assent, the Canadian accessibility standards organization would be up and running within one year.

Therefore, there are timelines and to say anything different is wrong. You cannot mislead Canadians to think that this does not have teeth. This is a step in the right direction. We know that people with disabilities are very happy with this bill, and we are very committed to making sure we follow through on this bill.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if it was you that the member was actually referring to, as I get called out on that all the time. I just wanted to be able to do that with somebody else for once.

In terms of misleading Canadians, I would question who it is who is misleading Canadians.

First, I take exception to that, because it is basically trying to imply that I was lying.

Second, when we look to Patrick Faulkner from Barrier Free Manitoba, Patrick said, "While representing a commendable effort with honourable intentions, we are concerned the bill is deeply flawed. Based on our decade of experience and our careful review, BFM strongly supports the recommendations for significant amendments". What were those significant amendments? They were for timelines and more teeth in the bill.

We still do not know why the Liberal Party shot down every single attempt to listen to the Canadian stakeholders who asked for more teeth in this bill.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Mr. Speaker, following through on that, I want to talk about common themes. We heard a number of stakeholders at the committee. There were common themes and we did listen. Many of the amendments that came from the NDP and Conservatives were very similar to amendments we put forward. I hope the member will agree we came to an understanding in a number of areas and put forward amendments that had teeth and really moved this legislation forward.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the question was, but certainly I can comment on the statement. No, we do not agree that there were teeth in this bill. That was the whole point of the last 20 minutes I spoke in the House of Commons. There are no teeth and stakeholders are saying there are no teeth. Stakeholders are concerned there are no timelines. The member can stand and say it over and over again, perhaps until blue in the face, but it does not change the fact the legislation does not have any teeth, except maybe a regulation within two years.

I have seen ministers and parliamentary secretaries walk through organizations many times during question period, so let me talk about some of them that are asking for more teeth. They include Ability New Brunswick, Ability Online, Active Aging Canada, Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians Toronto Chapter and AODA Alliance. I have about another 250 of them to go through, when ready.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned by the comments from the Liberal parliamentary secretary suggesting my colleague and friend is misleading people. I spoke to my friend just yesterday about the conversation I had last week with David Lepofsky, probably the most prominent Canadian in terms of disability advocacy. He has the Order of Ontario and Order of Canada, as a constitutional lawyer and disability advocate.

What my friend is saying to the House today is exactly what is being said by people like David Lepofsky. One of the things I heard from him was the fact that there is no end date for accessibility within Bill C-81, no timeline. Ontario has set a 20-year goal of making sure accessibility is paramount. The other thing I heard from him was that there is no clear commitment in Bill C-81 to ensure no infrastructure dollars would go to new projects unless accessibility is at the centre of the project. There are no timelines and no teeth.

The Liberal member is suggesting that my friend is misleading Canadians. This is what disability advocates are asking for. Will my friend comment on the fact that we have an opportunity with Bill C-81 to get it right, if only the Liberals will listen?

● (1530)

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to commit to the member that we will get it right, right after the next election. This will be among the first things we ensure we put right, because it is concerning the most vulnerable Canadians. It is interesting the member brought up Mr. Lepofsky, because he said the following:

...the bill that is now before you is very strong on good intentions but very weak on implementation and enforcement...When you come to vote on amendments before this committee and when you go back to your caucuses to decide what position you're going to take, we urge you not simply to think of the immediate political expediency of today; we do urge you to think about the imminent election a year from now and the needs of the minority of everyone, for whom no party or politician can go soft.

Those are the words of Mr. Lepofsky. It is unfortunate that the Liberal Party did not listen to them.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to sit on the HUMA committee and listen to testimony for Bill C-81. It was very disappointing to see how the government was rushing through testimony of witnesses and clause by clause. We heard alarming things in testimony. For

example, we heard that 40% of indigenous people have or will have a disability within their lifetime. Indigenous people are not mentioned whatsoever in the bill. Consultations were done for three years and they failed to recognize indigenous people and failed to recognize timelines. I do not think making departments have one standard within two years is an acceptable “teethy” timeline. There is failed accountability, exemptions and the list goes on.

On this side of the House, we had brought forward an amendment for the government to have a barrier-free Canada. I know my colleague had mentioned a little about this, but how is this going to be measured? How are we going to measure the progress or lack of progress, and how are we going to keep future governments accountable?

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the member for her incredibly hard work on this subject and on the committee. She brought a lot of amendments to the table. Unfortunately there was not a co-operative attitude to put those amendments into place. The member's question actually speaks directly to those amendments.

There are two questions that need to be answered there. I believe when the member says “we”, that she is referring to the government of today. The government of today is going to measure its success by how much money it spends and how many staff members it hires. Those are the only measurables we have seen in the bill.

We cannot measure the results for Canadians living with disabilities by the amount of money the government spends on hiring new staff or finding new offices. We have heard that story before and it does not work.

The second part to that is how are we, as a Conservative government in 2019, going to measure it? We will measure it by the number of lives changed and the number of people who have accessibility to hope and opportunity that they do not have today.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that we move forward with a plan to ensure everyone has the right to access the services they need if they have disabilities.

In the communities I represent in the far north, children are continually being denied basic services, like special education and health services. Unless we start with a rights-based focus, and indigenous children have a right to this, they are always going to be nickel-and-dimed by government. The government is always going to say, “Well, this is what we have available.” No other kid puts up with it. Why should we have two standards in the country for indigenous children and other children?

● (1535)

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, the subject matter is incredibly important.

*Government Orders*

I have the honour to serve in the capacity of the shadow minister for youth. Seeing the disparity between different geographical locations or demographics based on where or how individuals live is incredibly difficult.

Even more than that, we have seen it play out where we have young aboriginal youth denied basic dental surgery. How? Why? This should not be happening in our country. We pay a lot of taxes. We have an incredible country. We believe in taking care of our own, yet it just does not seem to happen. The worst part of it is that this bill does not get us any closer. Well, maybe in two years.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of historic opportunities lost. An important component of our Canadian population is being sold short.

Canadians and other persons living with disabilities understandably were excited by the government's plan to bring forward Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. After years of neglect by previous governments, they were cautiously optimistic. Alas, once the media has moved on to other issues and Canadians begun to look at the fine print in the bill, they will unfortunately find a lot less to celebrate than the government would have them believe.

As I have stated before on Bill C-81, the bill requires substantial amendments. While we commend the government for tabling it, the bill will need to be altered dramatically in order to become good legislation. I committed to working with the government to provide good faith amendments so the bill could become a historic accessibility legislation that Canada's people living with disabilities deserved.

When the Minister of Accessibility was asked during committee if she would be open to amendment, this was her response:

I definitely want to see this law being the best it possibly can. I don't want to prejudice the outcomes or recommendations of the committee, but I am certainly open to hearing what you all have to say and what stakeholders have to say.

Over the course of eight meetings, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities heard from leading experts and civil society groups on the things that needed to be changed if Bill C-81 were to become good legislation.

In one presentation after another, the committee heard that the bill needed implementation timelines. One such expert was none other than the former Ontario Liberal government minister responsible for shepherding Ontario's Accessibility Act into law. We heard again and again that all of the exemptions for obligated organizations, and the bill was shot through with those, by the way, should be eliminated.

We heard repeatedly that enforcement should be solely in the hands of the accessibility commissioner and not splintered across various organizations, such as the CRTC and CTA, groups that, as was pointed out numerous times, had a storied record of implementing the few accessibility obligations they already had, never mind new ones. However, as the testimony concluded, it was as if no one had uttered a single word. Not one of these recommendations was taken up by the government.

Despite what the minister clearly said, the Liberals had already decided what they were going to do. Despite this, they nevertheless

expended the treasury and witness efforts to bring experts to Ottawa to provide testimony that the government had already chosen to ignore. The Liberals ignored the excellent testimony from a former provincial Liberal minister, the highly respected Marie Bountrogianni, a person with actual experience implementing expansive accessibility legislation.

Let us hear some of this. Ms. Bountrogianni said:

During the consultation phase, we studied Great Britain's Disability Discrimination Act and were taught three critical lessons. We would need a clear deadline for an enforceable Ontario. There would need to be regulations established through which to enforce the law, and public education would be key for creating awareness about the bill.

When I was studying them, it was from their challenges. I don't want to use the word "mistakes" because they were pioneers. They were Great Britain, Australia and the United States. They told me, "Have a timeline, definitely have timelines."

● (1540)

How can this testimony be ignored? It is a shame. I get frustrated just thinking about it. All of the expertise and people so succinctly explaining to us what needed to be done to bolster the legislation was ignored.

I cannot stress enough that another critical issue is the way in which Bill C-81 splinters the power to enforce the legislation among four federal organizations: the accessibility commissioner, the Canadian Transportation Agency, also known as the CTA; the CRTC, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission; and the tribunal that regulates federal employment. This snarl of enforcement in administration would result in very similar regulations being enacted by the different agencies involved, rather than by one single agency.

The duplication would not just risk inconsistencies, it would create them, causing even further delays. The predictable result is the real possibility that some sectors of the economy will have these regulations ready before other sectors. This bill should be looking to eliminate the interdepartmental patchwork system that is already in place, rather than making it more complex. After all, that is the purpose of national strategies, of national legislation, which this is supposed to be fulfilling.

Again, this splintered formula is a confusion. The government's response was to say this, and it boggles the mind. This is from the testimony of a government representative:

"We'll have a policy that there will be no wrong door. Whichever agency you go to, no matter how confusing it is to figure it out—and believe me, it is confusing—if you go in the wrong door, we'll send [the complaint] to the right door. Problem solved."

Once again, there is not really a clear understanding by the government of the lived reality of people living with disabilities having to advocate for themselves and access these so-called doors. The purpose of the accessibility commissioner is laid out for us. This should be perfect synergy, and the government has chosen to ignore that, unfortunately.

The esteemed David Lepofsky, who has been mentioned in the chamber already by my hon. colleagues, is the chair of the Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act Alliance. He points out that the problem is not solved at all:

*Government Orders*

...because all that does is fix the problem of which door you go in. It does not solve the substantial problem that happens once you're inside that door. It means we have to lobby four agencies to get them up to the necessary level of expertise. It means we have to learn four different sets of procedures...It means we have to go to agencies that [have little to no] expertise in disability and accessibility.

This would be the expertise we would envision an accessibility commissioner would be fulfilling. This is what all of these organizations, advocacy groups and experts, with lived experience in the community as a person living with a different ability, understood. They understood that an accessibility commissioner would achieve this very basic sentiment they had, because they were worn out from having to advocate. It would have been the one-stop shop. It would have been cleaner.

● (1545)

From a bureaucratic perspective, it would have been a lot cleaner to give one concise responsibility to the new accessibility commissioner, but rather, we are going to hold them back and it is going to be approached in four different ways. For example, it will be said that this is not someone's territory, but someone else's. It is just going to invite more chaos. I want to go back to the fact that it would make far more sense to simply mandate the new accessibility commissioner with all of the accessibility enforcement under this act.

The design of this legislation, which splinters responsibility among agencies, only serve two interests: first, protecting bureaucratic turf; and second, easing back on the expectations on obligated organizations so that they can have weaker standards, slower implementation and flimsy enforcement. That is not consistent with the federal government's commendable motivations and intentions under this legislation. It does not make sense. It is not consistent.

Before I heard my hon. colleague across the way table his amendment, I anticipated tabling an amendment of my own at the end of my speech today. For the record, I will explain what it is in the time I have remaining, so that all Canadians who are listening and following this debate understand that a last ditch effort was made by both opposition parties to revisit Bill C-81 to give it some teeth.

Today, in a last ditch effort to try to help Bill C-81 become the kind of bill the government professes it to be, but which it clearly is not, I offered a good faith amendment about implementing timelines and having enforcement so that we could go back to committee and look at implementing those timelines. Eliminating exemptions would be another one that we would need to do. I expect the government to reject any such amendment, just as it rejected the nearly 120 other ones that were brought forward at committee in complete good faith by opposition parties. I want to take this last chance to do the right thing and be on the record as having done so.

The NDP has long been committed to the rights of persons with disabilities. It has been our long-standing position that all of government, every budget, every policy, every regulation and every grant should be viewed through a disability lens. Our ultimate goal has always been to help foster a society in which all of our citizens are able to participate fully and equally. This cannot even begin to happen until all of our institutions are open and completely accessible to everyone.

The NDP has supported the establishment of a Canadians with disabilities act for many years. The call for a CDA can be found in

our 2015 platform. The language is important: it is the Canadians with disabilities act.

Any accessibility bill tabled by the government should essentially be enabling legislation for Canada's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Canada ratified this convention in 2010 and a Canadians with disabilities act would include language consistent with implementing this convention.

Until now, Canada has done nothing to bring our laws into conformity with the convention. I tabled Motion No. 56 in this very chamber, calling on the government to implement these obligations.

The convention sets out the legal obligations on states to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities. It does not create new rights. There are a number of principles and articles within the CRPD that are extremely important to people with disabilities. These principles address rights such as the ability to live independently, freedom from exploitation and violence, the right to an adequate standard of living, social protections and more.

● (1550)

Rather than considering disability an issue of medicine, charity or dependency, the convention challenges people worldwide to understand disability as a human rights issue. It establishes that discrimination against any person on the basis of disability is a violation of the rights, inherent dignity and worth of the human person.

The convention covers many areas where obstacles can arise, such as physical access to buildings, roads and transportation and access to information through written and electronic communications. The convention also aims to reduce stigma and discrimination, which are often why people with disabilities are excluded from education, employment and health and other services.

It is important here to note that the convention is our ideal. It is up to governments to bridge the distance between these ideals and the lived reality of people with disabilities. One such bridge is supposed to be Bill C-81. That is the bridge we are debating here today.

A major lapse on the part of the government is that it did not include language in Bill C-81 requiring all federal government laws, policies and programs to be studied through a disability lens. In other words, the language of the bill is not in keeping with our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, so we would still need more legislation to bridge that gap, which we anticipated we were closing. Now, we are taking a step that is basically a false gesture toward doing that.

One of the things I wanted to really get into is that this disability law lens is a strange omission. I say this because we find it is hard to create a lived reality on the ground if all of us who are developing policy and legislation are not using that disability lens.

*Government Orders*

One way the disability lens can be used is to analyze public policy. One way to make sure of that is to ask the following. Does the policy view disabled people as members of a minority group with special needs, or does it view disability as one of many variables in the population, and thus aim to structure society to ensure universal access and coverage? This is such a profound aspect of what our accessibility legislation needs to be able to do.

In seeing my time left, I am improvising a bit here. My understanding of our procedure is that once an amendment has been tabled, I cannot table another one. However, I would just like people to have a general idea of the text of what my amendment would have been if tabled, even though it is very similar to my hon. colleague's. This amendment is my last plea on behalf of people with disabilities and those of us who care about them, for us to go back and get Bill C-81 right.

I would have moved that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, be not now read the third time but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for the purpose of eliminating exemptions for obligated organizations and including implementation timelines."

•(1555)

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I look at Bill C-81 as a missed opportunity. It was a chance for us to all work together at committee, which I think was what the minister wanted to see. She wanted to see good amendments brought forward by all parties.

I think it is no surprise that the bulk of the more than 200 amendments to Bill C-81 that were brought forward were almost word for word from the NDP, the Green Party, and the Conservative Party. That highlights some of the issues with this bill.

There is one area that I would like my colleague to talk about, and we heard this from a lot of stakeholders. It was really disappointing that she did not have a chance to talk about this in her presentation. Here I refer to the concerns we heard from stakeholders that Bill C-81 is a two-tiered system with the number of exemptions that are in it.

What it does is to ask federally regulated private sector businesses to adhere to the very minimal standards and accountability in Bill C-81, but every federal department can ask for an exemption. That means that some areas will have to abide by Bill C-81 and that the federal government will not have to.

Every stakeholder we heard from wanted consistency and wanted to eliminate those exemptions. I would like to hear the member's comments and thoughts on the exemptions included in Bill C-81.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his diligence in chairing those meetings.

As a product of circumstance, we were all there in the best interests of a vulnerable community that has long anticipated that the experts on this would be heard. Maybe indulgently, maybe naively, I thought that the very candid witness testimony by a former minister in a provincial Liberal government, who said that we have to have timelines, would work.

It is true that some of our amendments were very similar to ones put forward by the government. Let me give an example. We changed "Canadians with disabilities" to "all persons with disabilities". Some of it these were just wording changes.

The substantive amendments that we as legislators recognized needed to be made would have given these powers to the accessibility commissioner, to the chief officer, and to the new standards regulator. That was not done. There is no accountability to Parliament. It is done by government. It is actually very indulgent, and will create and manifest this two-tiered system that my hon. colleague does indeed describe.

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility), Lib.:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her intervention today and for speaking about this very important bill.

I wanted to ask her about the fact that as far as the Canadian accessibility standards development organization, CASDO, is concerned, it will establish Canada as a national and global accessibility leader by putting Canadians with disabilities in control of setting the accessibility standards that affect their lives. Does the member agree with that?

I know that our minister has always felt that people with disabilities have not had a say, but that now this bill gives them a say. They have a majority stand on this committee. Does the member not agree that this bill gives people with disabilities a stake in this bill and will have them at the table making decisions about them?

•(1600)

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise framing that question.

First of all, when is this organization going to be established? There is nothing in the legislation that says it has to happen. When this bill is passed, nothing has to happen. There is no timeline.

There is no legacy or resiliency language. Let us just say that the minister decided, of her own good will and gumption, that this would be established in 12 weeks. Where is the legacy that would guarantee that governments down the road have to achieve certain benchmarks? There is nothing. There is no language that requires anybody to do anything. As a matter of fact, organizations under federal jurisdiction must have an accessibility plan. It does not have to be a good plan, and it does not have to be implemented.

There we go. That is the language we are dealing with in Bill C-81. This is why people like me get worked up.



*Government Orders*

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really want to commend my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh for her passionate work on this. I can say that throughout this process, she really did have hope that the government would take seriously its obligation to people in our country who are living with disabilities. She was crestfallen to find that after many amendments, which she described in her great speech here today, to try to improve this legislation, what the minister had been stating in committee and outside committee was completely false. The Liberals had no intention of improving the lives of Canadians with this bill.

The NDP and the member for Windsor—Tecumseh stand strongly in having the ultimate goal of fostering a society in which all citizens are able to participate fully and equally.

This bill would give several public agencies and officials sweeping power to grant partial or blanket exemptions from important parts of this bill to specific organizations. This is one of the more questionable things in this legislation. I would ask for the member's thoughts on why that is in the bill.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Mr. Speaker, why is it in there? It is gesture politics once again, because this legislation is not really trying to achieve our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There may be bona fide reasons for exemptions, but here is the kicker. There is no appeal process and there is no requirement that a rationale be given for it. If a reason is given, it can go to a minister. Nobody is accountable to Parliament in the federal jurisdictions that can get exemptions.

I hate to be cynical, but if any of us have done our homework for people living with disabilities, we already know the track record of these organizations. Why not use the new accessibility commissioner? It is so confounding.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I worked very well and very hard together on this bill, and I share her frustration. As I said, I think the minister wanted to do the right thing with this bill, but for whatever reason, got cold feet in the end and was not able to follow through.

I have a list of dozens of stakeholders who have written me since the committee finished its work. They are extremely upset with the inability to pass any of the amendments. One really stuck out for me, and I would like the member's comments on it. It was from representatives of a first nation community. They said that over the last three years, the Liberal government had consulted them on Bill C-81 and talked to them about some of their needs and the issues they face with accessibility in first nations communities, but they were extremely shocked when Bill C-81 was tabled and first nations were not mentioned even once in the legislation, not once. It was a false hope for first nation communities that participated in good faith in the negotiations, but then the bill was tabled, and they were not mentioned once.

I would like the member's comments on the frustration she is hearing from her constituents in first nation communities.

•(1605)

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. The bill is missing certain language. That was our fair warning when it was left out in the first place, then we had to go back to revisit it and

put all these amendments in. It was problematic to bring together from stakeholders so many of what we thought were comprehensive amendments. We were confounded that they had to be there in the first place. For a government that is trying to establish a new and healthy relationship with indigenous communities, and that makes that declaration on a regular basis, I was really let down to see that omission.

Members may never have thought they would hear someone from the NDP caucus say this, but we should write letters to the Senate. This is our only chance to use the Senate. Let us think about what that is worth. Send cards and letters, people, because the Senate is our last chance now.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-81. Those of us who are members of the HUMA committee worked extremely hard to come up with a bill that we thought would address the needs of disabled Canadians across the country.

As I said at the outset, I look at this bill as a missed opportunity. I think the minister had the best intentions. This is something she was passionate about and something she wanted to achieve. I assume that the minister is also extremely disappointed with what is missing from Bill C-81.

Earlier in the debate, she talked about all the consultations the government had with stakeholders over the last couple of years. What was the point of having consultations if the Liberals did not follow through on what the stakeholders were telling them? That is extremely clear from the amendments that were put forward by members of the committee. As has been said several times today, there were more than 250 amendments put forward, almost an equal number from every party, which I think highlights some of the glaring holes in this legislation. The government can do all the consultation in the world, but if it is not going to follow through in good faith with its stakeholders, then really, what is the point?

I have letters from dozens of stakeholders who participated at committee as witnesses or who provided submissions to the study. If the government is going to consult, why would it not accept a single one of the amendments that were so important to those stakeholders? When we have what is very rare, and my colleague joked about it, the Conservatives, the NDP and the Green Party all in agreement on where a piece of legislation should go, I think the government should embrace that moment. Absolutely, this piece of legislation is historic, because we had this entire side of the House all on the same page. However, where it is not historic is in what it would achieve, because it simply would not achieve anything. That is the frustrating part.

When we go back to our constituents and tell them that we appreciate the Liberal government bringing forward Bill C-81, they will ask what it will do for them as disabled Canadians. Unfortunately, my answer is going to be that it will get royal assent and the changes will be actually nothing. There is no accountability in this legislation whatsoever that would hold the government to do anything.

*Government Orders*

Today some of my Liberal colleagues, and the minister herself, said that all of the federally regulated businesses and federal departments would have to come up with one standard in the first two years. A building could put in an accessibility ramp, and it would have met its obligation under Bill C-81. As the minister said, one bank branch could put in a new ATM that was accessible for people with vision disabilities or hearing problems, and it would have done its part under Bill C-81. That is not what our stakeholders and disabled Canadians were expecting from this legislation. It falls well short of the promises that were made by the current government.

I want to talk about four or five glaring problems that came up with respect to Bill C-81 through our committee study. I am going to talk about the two-tiered system and the exemptions found throughout this legislation. We heard almost unanimously from our stakeholders that this is not something they want to see in this legislation.

What I mean by a two-tiered system is that government departments could apply for an exemption. Therefore, government departments would not be obliged to meet the standards in Bill C-81. Of course, there are none. There are no standards. There are no regulations. There are no benchmarks. Private sector businesses that are regulated by the federal government would have to abide by whatever standards were developed, whenever they were developed, but federal government departments could ask for an exemption. They would not have to meet those standards.

If we are supposed to have this historic legislation that would change the lives of disabled Canadians, then everyone should have to live by those standards. If anyone should, it should be the Government of Canada and the departments of the federal government. If anyone should not be given an exemption, it is the federal Government of Canada. If anything, this legislation goes in the wrong direction.

• (1610)

The second thing I am going to touch on today is standards, or the lack thereof. Again, it was unanimous from those who appeared at committee that the lack of any kind of standards in this legislation was disheartening. The minister said that they did not want to put standards in there because things change, and they wanted this to be fluid. Absolutely, technology changes. Accessibility innovations change, and that is outstanding. However, how are we supposed to measure the success of any legislation if we do not have a baseline, somewhere to start? If the starting point is to meet just one standard, any standard, a standard we make up ourselves in the first two years, how is that supposed to give any credibility to this legislation? Why did the stakeholders who came to Ottawa to appear at committee or who sent in their submissions bother? That is not what this is about.

Obviously, we are going to have different points of view and we are going to have disagreements, but coming up with standards that are going to improve the lives of disabled Canadians is something we all should be able to agree on. It was frustrating to see at committee, when our amendments were brought up one after another, the Liberal members vote against them each and every time. During several moments at the committee meetings, when they turned down or voted against amendments, I could not understand

why. I did not see any political gain. I did not see any reason they would not want to include some of the amendments or even the vocabulary in the legislation.

Another issue that came up time and again was timelines to implement any standards or even any of the organizations that would be overseeing this legislation. The one thing the legislation would do is start four new levels of bureaucracy: CASDO, an officer of accountability, a commissioner and people in all these different levels of government who really would not have any jobs or anything they were supposed to do.

The bill would not even put in a timeline, which is another amendment we asked for, to at least ensure that the CASDO board was in place within six months of this legislation receiving royal assent. The Liberals could not even agree to that. They did not even want to have a timeline for when the organization that would be overseeing this legislation would be in place. I do not understand the lack of wanting to have some accountability as part of this legislation.

What concerns me is the coming into force clause in the bill. After 10 years, if nothing was done, the bill would become moot. We would announce that this legislation had royal assent. We would have an amazing photo op with Canadians with disabilities and members of the Liberal government, and then that would be the end of it. I truly hope that this will not be the case, that the Liberal members of the committee and the minister genuinely want to make change.

I want to give the minister the benefit of the doubt. She is someone I have a great deal of respect for, but I feel that, unfortunately, knowing the integrity and character she possesses, that her hands were severely tied when it came to implementing some of the thing she wanted from the bill. Unfortunately, she was unable to get them.

We have heard from Liberals that the bill would have teeth and that they listened to stakeholders. I want to take a few minutes to talk about some of the stakeholders we heard from at committee who communicated with us afterward. They talked about their concerns about the inability to pass any of the amendments to add structure or accountability to the bill. We heard from countless witnesses. Almost every single witness we heard from raised issues with the bill.

• (1615)

I have to admit I was actually quite surprised with the comments from some of the witnesses. They were not holding back. They were quite clear and quite aggressive in their criticism of Bill C-81. They put a lot of work into providing feedback to the Liberal government and to the minister on what they wanted to see and what would work for disabled Canadians, and to see very little, if anything, of their feedback in the bill obviously frustrated them as much as it did members of the committee.

For example, Patrick Falconer from Barrier Free Manitoba, who has done a lot of this work in Manitoba previously, commented:

While representing a commendable effort with honourable intentions, we are concerned the bill is deeply flawed. Based on our decade of experience and our careful review, BFM strongly supports the recommendations for significant amendments...[to this bill].

*Government Orders*

Mr. Falconer was talking about the fact the bill fails to outline any timelines for the implementation of new accessibility measures. There is use of permissive language, which does not require the government to actually act on any of the regulations put in place, and it does not hold the government to account to do anything that improves the lives of Canadians with disabilities. That is not right. It is not what this was intended to be, and it is certainly not the impression the Liberal government was giving to Canadians who participated in this process.

I would also like to speak about Professor Michael Prince, who is a professor of social policy in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria, who said:

There are also areas of concern with this bill...these include the absence of [any] measurable targets with specific deadlines; the permissive language in the bill in many sections; the extent of exemptions; the lack of a disability lens; the absence of duties on the Government of Canada for promoting accessibility on the 600-plus first nation communities across the country; the status of ASL and LSQ and rights to communication; the complex model of federal bodies involved in enforcement and adjudication; and, the status of the proposed chief accessibility officer as a Governor in Council appointee rather than an officer of Parliament.

He goes on to say:

This bill, to me, with respect, reflects that it was written in the bubble of Ottawa. This is written from the point of view of traditional management focus, organizational focus. This is not people-centred. This is about departments making sure that in the negotiations and drafting of this bill, exemptions and deals were cut.

This is basically a machinery-of-government bill. There's not much social policy or public policy in this bill. This should be about people front and centre. I get that we have to have administrative enforcement and compliance, and on that note I'd like to see a lot more about incentives and education.

That is a very harsh assessment of Bill C-81, and it comes from a professor at the University of Victoria who is an expert on this issue and has participated in the stakeholder communications and alleged consultation that happened as part of developing Bill C-81.

Mr. Speaker, you may be wondering what some of these egregious amendments were that we asked for, that the Liberal Party rejected. I want to go through a couple, just to give Canadians who are listening today perspective. We were not asking for the moon, we were asking for very common-sense amendments brought forward specifically by our stakeholders.

One of those amendments was to ensure the head office of the new Canadian accessibility standards development organization, CASDO, was accessible and without barriers. That would make sense. If anywhere in Canada should be accessible and barrier free, it would be the head office of CASDO, the organization that would be overseeing this legislation, that would develop and enforce the standards of accessible buildings and offices of the federal government and private sector businesses regulated by the federal government. Shockingly, the Liberals voted against it, so we cannot even have standards on the office of CASDO.

• (1620)

We also tried to remove permissive language from the bill that would require the power granted to the government and other bodies to make and enforce accessible requirements to be used. The Liberals also voted against those amendments.

Jewelles Smith from the Council of Canadians with Disabilities commented that:

What we would like to see is that CASDO be responsible for developing the regulations and that the reporting of any complaints go through one organization.

Frank Folino and James Roots from the Canadian Association of the Deaf added that:

Bill C-81 is currently a bit confusing in terms of where these complaints go. Some complaints may go directly to CRTC, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, CTA or then, fourth, to the accessibility commissioner officer.

Nearly every witness echoed those comments.

We put forward amendments to try and fix this, because we heard from some of the bureaucrats that the complaint or concern may come to one of these various other departments. They said that it may come in this door or that door, but not to worry, they knew it was confusing, and would make sure that concern or complaint got to the right person. Problem solved.

However, to a person with disabilities, whatever that disability may be, we need to make that as easy as possible. I would argue that it should be as easy as possible for every single Canadian to access a federal government department but certainly one that is specifically developed for one's needs, but that was also voted against. When we are trying to make navigating the proposed accessibility act and Bill C-81 as easy as possible, the Liberal members on the committee could not even find their way to accept that.

We mentioned David Lepofsky today who is with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance. I really want to put in his comment here today. He said:

The bill that is now before you is very strong on good intentions but very weak on implementation and enforcement...When you come to vote on amendments before this committee and when you go back to your caucuses to decide what position you're going to take, we urge you not simply to think of the immediate political expediency of today; we do urge you to think about the imminent election a year from now and the needs of the minority of everyone, for whom no party or politician can go soft.

Mr. Lepofsky was speaking for Canadians across the country asking us as parliamentarians to not get cold feet. This is an opportunity to make some substantial, historic change for Canadians with disabilities, and we failed.

I have to share a little of the frustration on this, as we will be voting in support of Bill C-81. For those organizations, those stakeholders listening today, the reason we are voting in support of Bill C-81 is certainly not because we agree with it. In fact, I have outlined today in my speech the many reasons why we are not. We heard from the stakeholders time and time again of their disappointment. but their comments were always that, although it fell well short of what they wanted, it was a start, and I will grant them that, it is a start.

*Government Orders*

I know they were expecting much more from the minister, the Liberal government and from us as members of that committee. Therefore, my promise to those Canadians in the disabilities community across the country is that when a Conservative government comes into power, we will do everything we can to address the shortcomings of Bill C-81. I know how much work they have put into this proposed legislation. I know how much time and effort they put in working with us on the committee. I know what their vision was for Bill C-81. Unfortunately, this falls short. We will not make that same mistake in 2019.

•(1625)

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. member for his speech on this very important issue. I also want to thank him for chairing the last meeting of the committee on Bill C-81. It really showed that we were working together as a team. However, I disagree with him when he said that we have failed.

We have not failed. We have done exactly what we needed to do. I think it is rather unfortunate that when the former government was in place, for 10 years the Conservatives did nothing. Now we are finally doing something, and the people with disabilities can finally say that their government has their back.

I also want to mention something that Jane Arkell from the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance said. She said, “Canada is taking a bold step forward with this proposed legislation. We’ve waited for legislation like this for a very long time. Truthfully, this gives our community hope. We are finally able to say, my Canada includes me.”

Can the hon. member not agree that this is a move in the right direction?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has always been very good to work with. I do agree that we work well on the committee. However, unfortunately, she does have to take some responsibility for what this bill is. To go back to what the Conservative government did in the past, the minister herself said that the disability tax credit that was brought forward by the previous Conservative government, as well as a disability savings plan, were game-changers. Those were the minister’s words, exactly. She said they were game-changers.

Bill C-81 could have been that type of legislation that would have had an impact on Canadians’ lives, but unfortunately it falls well short. That is not just coming from me. That is coming from dozens of letters I have had from stakeholders who are echoing that same sentiment.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague, particularly about the issues of accountability and the failure of the Ottawa bubble to help people with special needs.

I was in Grassy Narrows in September and I saw the horrifying effects of Minamata disease, mercury poisoning, on children. We can see it in the motor damage to their bodies. We can see it in eye problems, hearing problems, and major issues of cognitive impairments of perhaps 80%. The most heartbreaking was being

told that a child might learn “2+2=4” one day and not be able to remember it the next day.

When we were in Grassy Narrows, we were told that the government had not approved the high-needs special education funding because the community was not able to fill out all the forms. The minister said she would look into it. I approached her in late October and she said all the money had flown. In late November, it took us taking this issue to the media to get this funding flowing.

As long as indigenous children with horrific needs like we see in Grassy Narrows have to meet the needs of bureaucrats rather than bureaucrats serving children, this country will continue to fail. Until we start establishing the basic right of children to have the rights of education and special needs dealt with without having to go through processes that are protecting the minister and protecting the department, children will fail. What does my hon. colleague feel on this issue?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I did not have an opportunity to address that in my speech and I appreciate my hon. colleague’s bringing that up.

One of the biggest frustrations with Bill C-81 is that we had representatives from first nations communities come to committee and it is almost like they did not want to provide feedback and input. Their comments were that they consulted with the government on the needs of first nations communities, especially when it came to people with disabilities. There is no question they have unique needs. Many of them are in remote areas of the country. It is very difficult to access the communities, let alone for some of their buildings to be accessible.

What was shocking to them when Bill C-81 was tabled was that the accessibility requirements for first nations were not mentioned in Bill C-81, even once. In fact, first nations were not mentioned in Bill C-81, even once. When we asked for amendments to include first nations and the special requirements to address first nations’ accessibility needs, they were also voted down. It was very disappointing.

•(1630)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged that we have the legislation here to debate. We have waited for decades. Many stakeholders would recognize that at least we have a good starting point. No doubt, into the future there will be some potential for changes.

I would ask my colleague across the way to recognize that, for many of the stakeholders, just having legislation of this nature is somewhat historic. Is it perfect? I will be one of the first to admit that it is not perfect. I suspect even our minister, who has done a phenomenal job in bringing it before us, would recognize that. However, it does move the issue forward. Would he not agree at least on that point?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary brings up a good point. On his direction, he is right. This could have been a great starting point. However, if it was a great starting point, why do we have letters from dozens of stakeholders who are upset with the bill and questioning why the Liberal government would not approve any of those amendments? If we had been able to add some of those amendments, I agree that this could have been an excellent starting point. However, to have a starting point we need a point to start at, and the problem with Bill C-81 is there are no benchmarks. There is nothing to measure any success or failure by. There are no standards, no timelines, no regulations. That is what our stakeholders were asking for.

Absolutely, Bill C-81 could have been a fantastic piece of legislation, but it falls short of what our stakeholders wanted. We could have done better, and I am disappointed that we were not able to achieve what our stakeholders were looking for.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the presentation by my neighbour and colleague from Alberta. The amount of information he provided and the way he presented it went right to the issues.

The member started out by talking about consultation. One of the things I learned throughout my career both professionally and as a politician was to always be careful. If we are going to ask people for their opinion, we need to be prepared to deal with what they will say. If they do not see any positive thing coming out of that exercise, they become jaded and cynical about what we really want to do.

My colleague has described this process and I would like him to revisit the importance of consultation and that people to see the results of it and what they were willing to come forward to give to him.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, that is something we all have to take to heart. When we ask Canadians to come to Ottawa or to participate in a study because we want to consult with them and get their opinion and their input to help build legislation, and they come up with something that we then ignore, we lose their confidence. We start to lose the confidence of Canadians if we do not listen to what they tell us.

As I said in my presentation, this was not something that was divided along party lines. Conservatives, New Democrats and members of the Green Party put forward recommendations that were almost identical. Most of us agreed on the direction this bill had to take.

It was just extremely disappointing to us and our stakeholders to see the government's inability to take those extra couple of steps to really take Bill C-81, the accessibility act, to where it could have really made a definitive difference in the lives of Canadians with disabilities.

• (1635)

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today to Bill C-81.

Before I do so, I have to share with the House that my wife and I last Friday became grandparents for the third time since I was elected to the House of Commons. I know that my kids are working hard in Nova Scotia to populate the country. That is very important.

I want to thank my daughter, Janelle, and her husband, Trevor, for having their first baby girl, named Emma Ruth. It was a quick delivery, only two hours and 15 minutes, which is not necessarily normal for a first child but a great experience. I am proud to again be made a grandparent.

This bill is extremely important to Canadians, as an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. It is important to know that this is the first piece of legislation aimed at improving access for people with disabilities. When I hear the Conservatives speak about how it could have been better, I ask a simple question. Why did they not do anything about it during the 10 years they were in government? They had 10 years to do something. We are bringing something extremely important to support all Canadians and those, of course, with disabilities. Our government has their backs.

This is an inclusive bill that brings fairness, which is extremely important for all Canadians. All Canadians will be in a much better position to contribute and succeed as a result. That is what our job is as a government. Many Canadians, at times in their lives, will have disabilities. Even today if someone breaks a leg or arm it can be challenging. Sometimes one has to experience that to really understand.

In my speech today I will talk about some individuals and organizations in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook in a personal but concrete way.

People probably do not know this, but one in seven Canadians has some type of disability. That is almost 15% of Canadians. Thus, we are not talking about a few people; we are talking about many Canadians. We also have to recognize that in Canada, especially in Atlantic Canada with our demographic there, we have more seniors every day. I say that because by 2031, one-quarter of all Canadians will be over 65 years old. That is a large number. Of course, they will have challenges as well. We need to be there for them.

Individuals with disabilities have a lot to offer to all Canadians. They have a lot to offer to the economy. Only 50% of people with disabilities are working today and many of the rest would like to work. Indeed, the large majority of them would like to work, pay taxes, and contribute directly to our economy and our great country. That is extremely important. With some disabilities, such as with people on the autism spectrum, the margin is even worse, as 80% of those individuals are not working.

We need to do something and this legislation will help to ensure that more individuals will be able to contribute. The business community needs more people working in this country and we can tap into this market, which is extremely important.

*Government Orders*

● (1640)

I want to share a story about a friend of mine. He happens to be the Speaker of the Nova Scotia Legislature. His name, of course, is Kevin Murphy. He is in a wheelchair, because at a young age, in high school, he had a hockey accident. He is now in a wheelchair for life. When that happened, the school had to make some preparations. It was extremely difficult, as members can understand. This was about 30 years ago. There was no elevator, and that was problem. Everything had to be brought down to him because we could not get him upstairs. That is not having equal rights. Going to the washroom was very difficult, as well. Having a desk. Those were situations we were faced with.

We will need to make sure that the federal institutions have those in place. He was lucky that when he became Speaker of the Nova Scotia House, there had been a Speaker before him who had a wheelchair, so all the preparations had been made. He said to me that it was unbelievable. He thought he was going to have many challenges, but he was able to roll his wheelchair up.

Mr. Murphy is also a Canadian lead on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that has a mandate to encourage people with disabilities to offer to become public servants or politicians. Of course, they also encourage people to be engaged in democracy. That is extremely important.

I also want to touch on the program set up by the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance and the Canadian Association for Community Living. They have a program, Ready, Willing and Able. They have been working with the private sector to look at ways they can hire and support more people with disabilities, ensuring that they get some skills programming. Since 2014, over 2,000 people with disabilities who were previously not working are now working, and about 265 of them are from Nova Scotia. That is about 12%. I want to thank them for their good work in their phase one project. I know they have applied for a phase two.

I want to talk about the Building Futures Employment Society, right in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. This organization is four social enterprises that work with people with cognitive challenges. I had an opportunity last month to visit them. Impressed is not the word; I was mesmerized by the work these individuals are doing and the support they have through this society.

There are four social enterprises. One, Assembly Plus, has been in place for over 30 years. It has been pretty impressive that for more than 30 years, these individuals have built and assembled equipment and materials for companies. They are contributing directly. They get all kinds of contracts and do excellent work.

There is also the Futures Copy Shop. They have been doing printing and copying for individuals and for companies for over 30 years. That is impressive, again.

The two other companies, one that was started in 2013, Future Birds, is where individuals with disabilities create custom artwork. These are being sold, and again that is contributing directly to society. The final, the Futures Cafe, has all kinds of different baking and cooked options, as well as coffee, tea and whatnot being served.

● (1645)

These four enterprises make major contributions to the Sackville region and to the riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. Last week they had an auction. Over 200 people attended in support of these organizations. These are the types of organizations the bill would help in ensuring support for Canadians with disabilities and other challenges.

The bill was also structured to ensure that people with disabilities were involved. They were consulted and involved with it from day one. They will continue to contribute in various ways, for example, in the Canadian accessibility standards development organizations. This bill answers “Nothing About Us Without Us”, which is extremely important.

Our government is putting money forward, over \$290 million over the next six years, to ensure we move forward with the plan in the bill, which is extremely important to all Canadians. Also, every five years there will be a review to ensure we can fine tune it and make the adjustments that are necessary and important. Also, to support the minister, an independent chief accessibility officer will be appointed who would help review and do the assessment.

The creation of a Canadian accessibility standards development organization is crucial. These individuals have the majority and will be ensuring these standards are set and that we continue to meet them, which is extremely important.

Also important are the duties of the bodies regulated under the act, the federal authorities. They would have the responsibility to create their own plans, which would ensure greater success. They would be engaged from day one in the consultations and in giving feedback, which is crucial. Also, they would be engaged in ensuring they share the successes, what is working, what is not working and how we can make it better.

I want to share a quote from Raymond Chang, the dean of the School of Continuing Education at Ryerson University. He said:

Without a doubt, I believe that the Accessible Canada Act presents excellent potential for economic growth. All Canadians will benefit when the accessibility legislation is properly implemented and enforced. Furthermore, it is a great opportunity for us to emphasize the best attributes of this great country.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, Indigenous Affairs.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if my wife had called during the middle of my speech, I definitely would pick up the phone. That is advice for the hon. member for next time.

*Government Orders*

Also, I am quite saddened to see that the hon. member for Brampton East has resigned his seat in Parliament. He has been a fine colleague. I wish him well as he pursues some health issues. This news is breaking now.

Regarding the legislation, I would also like to ask the hon. member about accountability, because there is no accountability. There are no mechanisms of accountability in the bill. I would like him to comment on that. It is quite disturbing that for everything the Liberals have been talking about today, there is zero in the way of accountability and zero in the way of any mechanism to measure that accountability.

• (1650)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Speaker, when everybody is consulted and everyone works together to ensure success, then the chance of success is much greater.

The government will quickly build standards, those standards will set the bar and all involved will work toward that. As I said, people with disabilities will play a great role in the development of the Canadian accessibility standards and in supporting this process.

I am confident, but I have to ask this question. Why did the Conservatives do nothing for 10 years in this area?

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that members of the House have a full appreciation for what is at stake and how much Canadians were counting on the Liberal government to get this accessibility bill right. It is long overdue. It is true that the Conservatives should have done it in the 10 years they were in power, but Bill C-81 is so far from what our constituents and fellow Canadians need.

Terry Wiens, a man in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, was a victim of polio. He wrote to me, saying, “Remember that Paul Martin Sr. made a promise to polio victims in 1955 that they would never have to pay for the cost of health care that resulted from the federal government’s failure for two years to introduce the polio vaccine.” That was a solemn commitment. He says, “Now that polio has been so successfully eradicated, the federal government has forgotten that polio should be part of health care.” This man who has worked all of his life. Now he finds that from the effects of polio, he has increasing disabilities. He has not been able to get the support he needs to get a specialized mattress and wheelchair. He pulled \$10,000 out of his RRIF, his registered retirement income fund, to pay for these things.

He further described the cascade of impacts that happened from that. He said, “I didn’t realize the ripple effects of that decision. It raised my annual income enough to eliminate me from the guaranteed income security, all \$18 a month worth. I have no doubt that next year I’ll qualify again, but in the meantime, we are penalized for our independence. To add insult to injury, losing that GIS also cost me my premium medical services subsidy, another \$420 a year cost. My opportunity for subsidized assisted living, the GIS qualification is required for the payment and on it goes.”

Therefore, what in this legislation will fix things for Terry and the many other Canadians who were counting on the government to take their advice and get this bill right?

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Speaker, as I said throughout my speech, we have committed \$290 million over the next six years to achieve many of these objectives. Also, as we move forward, there will be more initiatives in the budget to support seniors and people with disabilities. I am confident we will be able to achieve some success in those areas.

I want to quote Rick Hansen. He has a standard program and Nova Scotia uses it. It has been successful. About this bill, he said that it was wonderful news announced by the minister on the accessibility Canada act that would provide funding for accessibility initiatives so all Canadians could benefit. I believe that answers the question.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, could the member tell us what will come into effect the day the bill receives royal assent and how soon the CASDO board will be established?

• (1655)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Speaker, we are confident that the standards will be in place within one year, so things will get moving as soon as the bill passes. We expect regulations to be in place no later than two years.

I think back to the discussions with the Conservatives in committee. They seem to have shifted. When they first started to talk about the bill, they were concerned about how much it would cost to implement it. Now, all of a sudden, they have joined the NDP and the Green Party. Therefore, I am not sure where they stand today.

People with disabilities are extremely proud of the bill. It will improve as we move forward. There are reviews set up every five years. This is what is needed to move forward as quickly as possible.

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague on becoming a grandparent, I believe, for the third time. That is wonderful and it is always a happy day when that happens.

I also want to thank him for the personal stories. He mentioned his friend who had been disabled for over 30 years. It reminded me of my mother who was also disabled. She had a massive stroke in her late sixties and was in a wheelchair for over 10 years. She struggled and my dad struggled with that. It would be 20 years ago and not much has changed. We are really happy, and I know my mother would be very proud and very happy, with this legislation.

I wanted my hon. colleague to talk about his friend, Mr. Murphy, and how he would feel, knowing this legislation is forthcoming.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her personal comments. I spoke with Mr. Murphy a month ago about this legislation and again yesterday. I wanted to get his feedback. He said that this was a major step forward to ensure we would support people with challenges. He was anxious. He said that he would either listen to the debate today or at least watch it over the weekend with his family, because this was a strong step forward.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of things stood out to me in what my colleague said in his responses. The first one was that the Conservative government apparently did nothing over the last 10 years, but that is just not the case. In fact, members of the governing party were actually hailing the changes that were put in place by the late Hon. Jim Flaherty in regard to the disability savings plan and the disability tax credit. These things were literally life changing for persons living with disabilities. We look to the Abilities Centre as well.

The member talked about working together. The NDP, the Conservatives and the Green Party all worked together. It was the Liberals who failed to show up and work with the opposition in a non-partisan manner to make the bill better and to finally put measurements in place.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between small initiatives and a bill. This bill now would cement the process. It would put in place standards. My colleague said that he was supporting the bill because it was a strong step forward. I appreciate his comments and I know the Conservatives will support the bill. It is a very good bill for people with disabilities. I thank him for that.

• (1700)

## BILL C-81—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret that I inform the House that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours to the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**POSTAL SERVICES RESUMPTION AND CONTINUATION ACT**

## NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to Government Business No. 25, I wish to give notice that at the next sitting of the House a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the amendment. Shall I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the vote be deferred until Monday, November 26, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, November 26, 2018, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous support to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. at this time so we could begin Private Members' Business.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

• (1705)

[English]

**PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.)** moved:

That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities be instructed to undertake a study of precarious employment in Canada and be mandated to (i) develop a definition of precarious employment, including specific indicators, as well as examine current data and options to expand available data, (ii) identify the role that precarious employment plays in the economy and in the federally-regulated private sector and the impact it has on the lives of individual Canadians.



*Private Members' Business*

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak today to my private member's Motion No. 194, regarding precarious employment in Canada.

My motion proposes that the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, HUMA, be instructed to undertake a study of precarious employment in Canada and be mandated to: first, develop a definition of precarious employment, including specific indicators, as well as examine current data and options to expand available data; and second, identify the role that precarious employment plays in the economy and in the federally regulated private sector and the impact it has on the lives of individual Canadians.

I firmly believe that this motion is of critical importance. In order to develop effective public policy, we must first have a clear and consistent definition of precarious employment in Canada.

It is a priority of our government to make evidence-based policies that reflect the needs of Canadians. We must study and consult and build a strong foundation of knowledge to truly understand and define precarious employment in Canada.

No matter the province or the territory one lives in, whether one lives in a rural or an urban area, whether one is a lawyer or a labourer, a man or a woman, each and every Canadian deserves the same standards and opportunities from the government's policies.

In order to have a fair chance to succeed, we must level the playing field and provide support for those who need it the most. To do this, we need to know things such as who is affected by the precarious employment, what are the indicators, and what are the social and economic symptoms of precarious work.

The ultimate purpose of my motion is to enable families in Canada to thrive and to support themselves with dignity and respect. We need a national definition that applies specific indicators to identify precarious employment in order to accomplish this objective.

Motion No. 194 has been well received by my constituents in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. It is a riding that has experienced the many challenges of employment insecurity, but it is also a riding where hard-working, employed folks tell me that they are not able to afford to go to the dentist, that they cannot take any time off work when they are sick because they cannot afford to lose a day's pay, or that they fear losing their job. As a result, they go to work sick instead of taking care of themselves, and they may also end up making other co-workers and their clients sick.

One constituent told me about the panic she goes through when her child is unwell, knowing her family will lose a day's pay or more. Imagine the anxiety and the stress created for families in these situations. Too many Canadians are facing these types of difficult circumstances and have too few options.

My constituents work very hard. Canadians work very hard, and they deserve some stability for themselves and their families.

There is a vast amount of research available on different aspects of precarious employment, both internationally and nationally. What all this research shows us is that no one is immune to the effects of precarious work.

A recent report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, entitled "No Safe Harbour", found that more than one-fifth of Canadian professionals, 22%, are in some form of precarious work, including part-time work, contract work or freelance work.

This study reports that precarious work cuts across all employment sectors, professional occupations, wage levels, ages and career stages. Unfortunately, one cannot count on age and experience to help out. Data indicates a spike in the share of precarious work among the 55-plus age group and, interestingly, among those with 10 or more years of experience in their profession. These are folks who are only 10 or 15 years away from retirement, and if they are not able to put away money for a good retirement, how is it going to be for them in the future?

Another element in trying to avoid precarious employment is that education alone will not shield people from the problem.

The survey found that precarious professionals are actually more likely to have a post-secondary degree. This number is at 30%, versus non-precarious professionals at 23%.

• (1710)

Additionally, having a full-time job might not be enough to avoid precarious work. Twenty-six per cent of precarious workers report having full-time jobs. Typically, these jobs lack security, where the workers are uncertain that they will have a job a year from now, or there is a lack of benefits, such as sick days or pensions.

Further, several studies clearly demonstrate that the labour market is tilted against women. In other words, women are disproportionately affected by precarious employment. Professional women are far more likely than their male counterparts to be in precarious work, with women accounting for 60% of all precarious professionals. This has little to do with women gravitating toward less secure jobs; rather, it is more a reflection of the labour market. This needs to change.

A constituent in my riding shared with me her experiences with precarious employment. For her privacy, I will refer to her as Ms. Jones. Ms. Jones is a single mother of two boys. One of her sons is on the autism spectrum and thus requires increased care. Her older son is a foster child with his own unique challenges.

Ms. Jones escaped an abusive marriage with only her young son and one bag of personal items. She has worked incredibly hard to support herself and her sons. Ms. Jones currently works full time but has an end date to her contract in three years' time. At her previous job, Ms. Jones worked six days a week as a personal service worker, a difficult and physically demanding job. Despite the number of hours she worked and sacrificing so much time with her boys, Ms. Jones was struggling financially. Distressingly, she was also without any benefits, which is very unnerving for a single parent.

*Private Members' Business*

In an attempt to better her family's future, Ms. Jones decided to pursue a master's degree. Unfortunately, student loan debt is now one of the barriers to financial security Ms. Jones is facing. She is paying the monthly payments but is seeing little progress in her loan decreasing. She is unable to save for a down payment on a home and is frustrated paying rent and not paying a mortgage, where she would at least have an asset.

We must be able to assist hard-working Canadians like Ms. Jones to ensure fairness and to prevent personal catastrophe. Ms. Jones says she is one paycheck away from such a fate.

There is no doubt that there are many legitimate social and economic concerns regarding vulnerable employees in precarious employment. The combination of low income, lack of control over scheduling, and lack of benefits, such as pensions, health care, personal emergency leave or sick days, altogether or in various combinations, creates a great deal of uncertainty, anxiety and stress, which undermine the quality of life and physical well-being of a wide swath of workers in our society.

Indicators of precarity, including workers holding multiple jobs, more temporary work and unpaid overtime, are on the rise, though not uniformly and not for everyone. It is evident that the current mechanisms for measuring precarity, its growth and its implications for quality of life on a large scale are inconsistent and inadequate.

How can those who are disproportionately or negatively affected by the changes in the labour market find support? We know that precarious employment is seen mostly among women, youth, and increasingly, older workers and visible minorities.

We must study precarious employment to understand and address the barriers that people, especially people from these groups, face in their pursuit of stable employment. Precarious employment negatively impacts vulnerable workers, as part-time workers are often low-wage earners and are highly concentrated in the retail, accommodation and food service industries.

Clearly, precarious employment transcends the standard versus non-standard work distinction such that forms of employment that are full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary may be characterized by precariousness. In other words, some non-standard work is highly paid, secure and not precarious, while some standard or full-time permanent work is poorly paid and is precarious.

● (1715)

As we see the landscape of the traditional workplace changing due to innovation and technology, we are now seeing fundamental transformation in Canada's workforce. To be clear, some individuals who are choosing alternative forms of work arrangements for flexibility and personal job satisfaction may find that this is suitable to their way of life.

However, this does not reflect all precarious workers. Many are finding themselves as involuntary participants in the gig economy.

In July 2018, BMO released a report on the gig economy. The report states that 85% of companies surveyed in the study foresee an increased move to an agile workplace. In the next few years, employers estimate almost a quarter of their workforce is already working virtually or remotely as part of the agile workforce. For

some workers, the flexibility afforded to them by technology in the gig economy is great. There is no doubt that innovation is a positive element of the changing workplace. With innovation changing how we live and work, we see new opportunities but also some new challenges for Canadians.

In 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Labour was mandated to consider the need for labour code reform through the lenses of changes that have been occurring in the workplace and in the economy. After two years of consultation and study, the Government of Ontario released a report in May 2017, "The Changing Workplaces Review", 2015-16. This report found that the changing nature of the workforce, the workplace and the economy itself, particularly in light of relevant trends and factors operating in our society, including globalization, trade liberalization, technology change, growth of the service sector and change in the prevalence and characteristics of standard employment relationships, clearly demonstrated that changes needed to be made to the provincial labour code.

Undoubtedly, the rise of new technologies and the emergence of the platform economy, such as Uber or Airbnb, are contributing to the transformation of the labour market and will continue to do so. While technology and globalization open up new opportunities and create new occupations, they also contribute to other issues for other occupations.

In recognition of this developing shift, the Government of Canada is focusing on investing directly in Canada's greatest asset, its people. A fluctuating employment landscape requires a responsive and contemporary plan for both employers and the workforce. The nature of work is changing, and we need to understand how it impacts our workers so that we can better protect Canadians and help employers recruit and retain employees.

Members of this House are certainly aware of the measures to modernize the Canada Labour Code in the budget implementation act that was tabled on October 29. I believe that these updates to the labour code would benefit Canadians. These labour code changes were created after extensive consultations to gain a real-world perspective on developing effective policy. Between May 2017 and March 2018, the government consulted with Canadians, stakeholders and experts on the changing nature of work and how federal labour standards could be updated in order to better reflect current workplace realities. One strong message was repeated throughout the consultations: Canadian work has changed but the federal labour standards have not. These consultations also made it clear that there are a number of complex issues related to federal labour standards and the changing nature of work, which required more in-depth review and discussion.

*Private Members' Business*

This is the reason precarious employment requires its own study and consultative process. To remedy an issue, we must first define it clearly and then apply standards consistently across this country. While there is a large amount of literature on the topic, significant data limitations for measuring and understanding the impacts of precarious work still exist. For example, specific data on the prevalence of precarious work among the vulnerable populations such as people with disability, newcomers and indigenous people is very limited. Canada must be able to define precarious employment in a structured, cohesive manner so that we can recognize potential indicators of vulnerabilities that are uniformly identified across this great country.

• (1720)

In conclusion, with precarious work federally defined, it would enable us to look to prevention, support and the opportunities for innovation in both the public and private sectors. By having the committee undertake a study, the necessary consultations, witness testimonies and research would be considered, providing the government with a comprehensive and informed definition of precarious employment in Canada.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the member's efforts, many of us here in the NDP know that precarious workers themselves know all too well what precarious work looks like. There are no benefits, no pensions and no security. This is the kind of work that so many people of all ages, particularly young people, in our country are seeing as the norm. They do not feel they need a study. What they need is federal leadership when it comes to putting a stop to precarious work.

Will this study, in the member's view, look at the role of the federal government in using precarious workers, particularly the use of temp agencies and the hiring of temporary workers in the federal public service?

We know this is a common practice. We know that despite the rhetoric, the government continues to lean on temporary workers and temporary work agencies, which, of course, is unacceptable. Therefore, will he and his government not just take a look at but put an end to the exploitation of these workers?

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member very much for the question and for the passion for this issue that we both share. However, as I noted in my speech, we definitely would be looking at the federal government, and federally regulated and private industries as well.

The study is important. I have sat on the industry and trade committees with Liberal, NDP and Conservative members, where we put forward questions to witnesses to get at very important matters. As I said in my speech, there are so many views, both in studies and papers, from the private and public sectors that we can really create a good blueprint to tackle this very national issue.

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member about women in the labour market. Of course, many women are in precarious employment. I am just trying to get a sense of how a definition of precarious employment in

Canada would help women in the labour market, and how this would move forward some of the problems we have in the workforce today.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** Mr. Speaker, I have also had the privilege of sitting on the pay equity committee working on that issue with all of the other parties. There are several factors that contributed to the pay equity issue. It is not just an issue facing women but other subsets too, such as first nations, minorities and newcomers who are susceptible to it.

However, we can first tackle the issue head on and bring some people in from coast to coast to coast to have a broad conversation nationally about this issue. The first thing we need to do is to start addressing it and recognize that it is indeed an issue, because some people do not think it is. That is one of the keys.

In talking with Ms. Jones, the Canada child benefit certainly is helping her a lot more than what she had three years ago, but we can still do more, because we know better is possible.

• (1725)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it sounded to me from the question by the hon. NDP member that temp agencies should be banned. I am thinking that small businesses use temp agencies as a way of pre-qualifying people and transferring skills between the workforce and small and medium-sized businesses. Some of those nuances might be interesting for the study to take up.

Maybe the hon. colleague down the way could mention what he thinks about the study of temp agencies and the role they play in the marketplace.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** Mr. Speaker, in my speech I addressed a number of potential things to take a look at. The member will note that full-time work is not necessarily totally secure. Some people who are in full-time work consider it as being precarious. Some people who are working part-time, freelance or temporarily, whatever term one wants to use, are satisfied where they are working. The issue is when someone is not satisfied because they cannot look after themselves or their family. All that needs to be addressed and looked at, as my hon. colleague has mentioned. It is a big undertaking, but I think the people in this House are up to the task.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be delivering my first speech in English in the House, so I hope my colleagues will be understanding. If they do not understand something, they can just refer to Hansard afterward and will understand everything.

*Private Members' Business*

I rise in the House today to speak to Motion No. 194. The purpose of the private member's motion requests that the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities undertake a study of precarious employment in Canada and be mandated to, one, develop a definition of precarious employment, including specific indicators, as well as examine current data and options to expand available data, and two, identify the role that precarious employment plays in the economy and in the federally regulated private sector and the impact it has on the lives of individual Canadians.

In preparation for the introduction of legislation this fall to modernize federal labour standards, ESDC officials from the labour program conducted consultations between May 2017 and March 2018. The resulting report, released on August 30, 2018, touches on many aspects of this motion and more. The report also defines non-standard employment.

Let us talk about employment opportunities in Canada under the Liberal government. Three years into the Liberals' mandate, they have failed to make progress on many of their promises, one of which is their failure to create well-paying jobs for youth and middle-class Canadians.

As the Minister of Finance said himself, Canadians just have to get used to precarious employment because that will be the norm. This is not the lackadaisical approach the Liberals should be taking, or telling Canadians to get used to the job churn of short-term employment. The government needs to start listening to taxpayers, who are the people burdened by the government's debt. The lack of income security associated with uncertain or temporary work reduces consumer confidence, leading them to spend less, which in turn reduces business profits and investments, thereby depriving the government of revenue. It is simple.

A 2014 study conducted by Statistics Canada found that nearly one-third of the Canadian working population was in unstable employment situations. While our biggest competitor, the United States, is cutting red tape and taxes and making its economy more attractive to investors and job creators, the Liberals are jacking up taxes and punishing Canadian enterprises. If the Liberal government put the effort into making Canada more inviting for investment and business opportunities, we would see the benefits first-hand in full-time, stable job opportunities for Canadians.

Non-standard employment is certainly not a new phenomenon. However, we do see it in different forms as job types, social demands and technology change. With well-paying skilled labour jobs in our natural resource sector disappearing because of poor Liberal policies, Canadians are forced to turn to employment alternatives just to make ends meet.

Technology is one force that has begun to significantly alter the future of work. Canadians are turning to ride-sharing and short-term home rental work models for extra cash, a shift that reflects the growth of non-standard labour in Canada. Work in the sharing economy could be becoming more precarious than other forms of work the economy has experienced simply because people feel forced to, or that there are no other employment opportunities in their area. Nearly 50% of all new Canadian jobs are non-standard work arrangements, which includes the number of workers providing

their services on one or more intermediary platforms in the sharing economy.

• (1730)

People are piecing together a few hours a week driving a car and a few hours a week renting out a space in their homes as a means to earn money. That is not going to afford them a stable, secure income.

Canadians rely on the government to put job creation first, ahead of Liberal political interests. Canadians want to see action from the Liberal government. They want to get back to work in full-time positions in sectors they are trained and educated for. We know that job creation is a cornerstone of a strong economy.

Under the previous Conservative government, during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression—I repeat, during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression—Canada had the best job creation and economic growth record among G7 countries. That is the truth. The Conservative government's policies resulted in the creation of more than one million net new jobs. We created almost 20% more jobs than our closest competitor since taking office in 2006.

Private sector investment creates jobs and drives economic growth. Canadian firms will not invest in the Canadian economy if they do not know the overall cost of doing business. Whether it is failing to find a solution to the softwood lumber dispute or on other matters, Liberal policies are stifling private sector investment that creates jobs for hard-working families.

Failed policies have made it more difficult to do business and create jobs in Canada. As a result, a large “closed” sign now hangs on a country that was once one of the very best places in the world to do business. Canadians are turning to the work they can get, including non-standard work, because of the inaction and failed policies of the Liberal government to provide them with full-time employment opportunities. We must also take care of the mental health issues of all people who have to work at precarious employment.

I will cite an article that I read. It is in French and I hope all of my colleagues will understand:

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Taking on a precarious employment would create more conflicts between work and personal life. [The author] pointed out that “non-standard schedules and potentially long commutes make it more difficult for workers to create and maintain social and professional relationships.”

Financial insecurity then triggers a vicious cycle of lowered self-esteem and sense of accomplishment, and low acknowledgement of work completed...factors that significantly contribute to increased isolation....

The risk of having precarious conditions become more entrenched and expand to other areas of life then become both cause and consequence of this psychological suffering.

[English]

I hope this will be addressed at committee. It is important. We have to oversee all of the different circumstances of precarious employment in Canada.

While I appreciate the Liberal member's intentions behind requesting yet another study, I believe that Canadians would prefer the Liberals to get to work on job creation so that they can get back to work, too.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a disturbingly growing trend, that of precarious work. I am guessing my colleague, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, is attempting to bring the issue forward to indicate to his constituents and perhaps to Canadians that he is focused on finding a solution to the problem of precarious work.

Unfortunately, he has chosen a means to achieve this goal that will ultimately lead to no concrete advances for precarious workers. Gathering more information and data is usually relevant in many ways, but what we are dealing with is a growing crisis. What we actually need is stronger legislation, and most importantly, political will, to put an end to precarious work in our country.

I intend to vote in favour of the motion before us, but I want to underscore my disappointment. I am disappointed that the government is calling for yet another study to talk about a growing crisis, instead of taking action to tackle what is a growing problem for so many of us across the country.

The rise of precarious work is not something that is started by accident. It is the result of neo-liberal policies put forward by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. The phenomenon of precarious work is not new, but it is becoming more and more common. Women, racialized people, people living with disabilities and LGBTQ folks are disproportionately affected.

Increasingly, precarious work is a phenomenon we see among young people, the millennial generation. It is becoming increasingly difficult for workers entering the labour market to skip ahead of what are new entry-level jobs. They are stuck in a cycle of temporary, part-time and contract work with no benefits, no pension and no security. Furthermore, many workers have been forced to launch their careers with unpaid labour, namely, unpaid internships.

[Translation]

The resistance is mobilizing in civil society. More than 60,000 students in Quebec are currently on strike and took to the streets of Montreal, Gatineau and Sherbrooke yesterday to demand what should be expected: being paid for work. This is something so basic.

The labour movement continues to fight against precarious employment. Steelworkers in Alma made headlines in 2012 when they refused to let good jobs in the region be contracted out.

To this day, Quebec unions are fighting to protect workers, while the Syndicat des employés de magasins et de bureaux de la SAQ, affiliated with the CSN, is fighting with its employer, which is trying to create more precarious situations for employees.

The labour movement is paving the way, and when workers stick together, they can stand up to big corporations that are threatening

### *Private Members' Business*

their way of life. Unfortunately, not all workers are unionized. A number of workplaces have been shut down and the jobs contracted out to places where employees are paid less.

This is a familiar issue for workers in workplaces from schools to call centres.

[English]

Neo-liberalism tries to set the bar as low as it can for working people. People feel as if their work is not valued. According to those who follow this ideology, workers in some fields should not be deemed to be able to make a living wage. These are people who work as cashiers, call centre operators, and the list goes on.

What is more, we are selling post-secondary education as a way to make things better. This comes at a high cost, luring students into what is becoming a debt trap with the promise, one hopes, of quality employment. However, more often than not, we do not have anything to offer other than part-time, temporary or contract work, with few or no benefits.

It is millennials and the upcoming generation who are facing the brunt of this new reality. It has them postponing important life milestones, like starting a family and buying a home.

We heard heartbreaking stories when we hosted a national tour on precarious work, which culminated in the national forum here in Ottawa, a forum we called "The Precarious Generation: Millennials Fight Back". I will never forget hearing from a young woman in Edmonton. In response to her stress working in precarious work, she was told by one of her employers that if she wanted security, what she needed to do was find a husband.

• (1740)

I remember a young woman in Windsor who talked about how she was working already on her second degree. She was living in her parents' basement. She hoped to find work as a result of her second degree. However, one thing she knew she was not able to do was to have children because she could never offer them what her parents had offered her.

We heard from workers across the country who were fed up with their jobs that did not provide any benefits, job security and the ability to build a future for them and potentially their families.

Let us be clear. Today's economic system paves the way for low wage jobs or stagnating incomes for the working class. This is at a time where the fortunes of the country are increasingly concentrated in the hands of a handful of people, namely big CEOs.

I am reminded of the way in which it is a systemic issue. Black Lives Matter activist, Hashim Yussuf, who spoke at our national forum, made it very clear by saying, "The system isn't broken, it was built this way".

*Private Members' Business*

The stories we heard are a reflection of what is happening across Canada. Precarious work causes mental health issues, anguish, physical health issues and it prevents our society from moving forward. That is why I find it difficult today to stand here and talk about a motion to study it, rather than fix the problem. This is a testament of the government's preference to disguise its inaction as action or "caring". The Liberals love to use that word.

We have seen this play out before. I am even reminded of what the Liberals have done on pharmacare. They know what the problem is, but they cannot seem to muster the political will to actually fix it.

[*Translation*]

There are solutions to the precarious work crisis. We toured the country to get a better sense of the problem and to come up with solutions. We consulted workers, students, teachers, experts in academia, trade unionists and community advocates. People are aware of the problem. We are not even close to finding a solution. The harsh reality is that the government has to invest in Canadians. It has to modernize the Canada Labour Code, but also change its hiring practices and trust workers. That means setting aside the interests of their cronies in big business.

What the government should have done is take action. I want to share with the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie and with all hon. members of the House the call to action launched by the people who took part in our tour and the forum, "The Precarious Generation: Millennials Fight Back". It was a call for action that was heard by the NDP, but clearly not by the Liberal government.

The time has come for Canada to implement a decent employment policy. The emergence of precarious work is a clear indicator that the status quo is not working. Too many Canadians with full-time jobs are unable to escape the cycle of poverty. Most of the new jobs being created are part-time, low-paying jobs with few or no benefits. We can and must do better. We can start by introducing a \$15 minimum wage, regulating temporary placement agencies, combatting subcontracting, including in the public service, and putting an end to the exploitation of migrant workers by giving them a path to citizenship.

• (1745)

[*English*]

We must also do more to improve the social safety net, something the government is well aware needs to happen. As Canadians, we say that we are proud of our social safety net, but thanks to precarious work, young Canadians are experiencing first-hand why we need to expand it. Many millennials have no private benefit plans. With only 38% of Canadians able to access employment insurance benefits, many also face precarious unemployment. We must therefore change EI and bring in a universal 360 hours of work measurement so people can access it.

We must implement public insurances where the private sector is increasingly failing, like pharmacare and dental care. We must also put an end to the housing crisis and implement a national housing strategy that leaves no one behind.

As I stand in the House, I think of the hundreds of young people who were part of our national tour on precarious work and part of our forum. I think of with what sincerity they shared the anguish and stress they were going through.

I remember hearing from parents and families who are worried about the future of their kids because of the rise of precarious work.

To act or not to act on this matter is not a matter of choice. The government has clearly chosen to postpone action on this front and make it look as though it cares. This crisis is happening now and it deserves immediate action. Canadians, particularly young Canadians, can no longer wait.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Sault Ste. Marie on precarious employment. I certainly enjoy working with him on industry committee. He brings a depth of experience to everything he does. I really thank him for bringing this forward for us to talk about in the House and hopefully take forward to committee.

The committee work that is done for the House of Commons by members of all parties and by the witnesses who come from across Canada to share their expertise is critical to us developing good policy in Canada. I really do not want to undersell the advantage that we have as members of Parliament to put our committees to good use, to give us the input we need to come up with good regulations and good laws.

As I begin, I would like to share the story of one of my constituents. Karen is a personal support worker in Guelph. Personal support workers care for the elderly, the disabled and sick persons in their homes by providing services such as bathing and dressing and even just being there for conversation. Karen can work up to 70 or 80 hours in a week. She works full-time hours but she is classified as part time. In her own words she, "takes care of sick people but doesn't have a sick day." Karen has no pension and her benefits are not guaranteed. She says, "Because my employer says I'm part time, I have to requalify for benefits every year, by working at least 1,500 hours."

She told me that last year her friend, another precarious worker, found out she had cancer. She missed a lot of work because she was so sick, and then she lost her benefits.

Karen's story is not unusual. She is paid \$15 an hour during her time with clients, but she is not paid for her travel time. She cannot afford a car so she often rides the bus 30 to 45 minutes between appointments. She has no guaranteed hours in a week and she has no job security. Karen is a precarious worker.

Precarious employment is non-standard work that lacks stability, security and control. It can be part-time or temporary and it is under-protected by regulation.

This emerging trend is the reason this motion has found its way to the floor of the House of Commons. This motion would direct the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to undertake a study on precarious employment.

The emergence of precarious workers is a result of a rapidly changing marketplace. The standard employment relationship, the term for permanent, full-time, secure employment with a single employer, is still the most common form of job. The proportions of standard employment relationships, though, are dropping. However, as Karen's story tells us, norms do not reflect everyone's reality.

The rise of precarious employment is concerning for a number of economic and political reasons. It reflects a growing inequality in Canada and it contributes to racial and gender divisions in our society. Most worker advocates talk about the economic unfairness of precarious employment and the problems it creates in the labour market and in communities.

Precarious employment is also a health and safety issue, as has been discussed in other speeches in the House today. The status of being a precarious worker leads to worsened health and safety outcomes.

Precarious workers earn less and are less likely to have benefits or may have fewer benefits than other workers. Women, immigrants and young workers are more likely to hold precarious jobs than other Canadians. This leads to unequal access to some of our health care services, such as medication or counselling services that are available to other Canadians.

The status of being a precarious worker leads to worsened health and safety outcomes overall. Repeated studies with different types of precarious workers have shown that they are also more likely to be injured, for example, hotel cleaners who work for a temp agency. Most will be women who are paid low wages and have little job security or control over their schedules. Their work will be physically demanding and if they are unwell they are reluctant to call in sick for fear of not being hired again.

• (1750)

That is not to disparage temp agencies. As a small business employer myself, I did not have an HR department to help screen candidates. I did not have an HR department to help do the pre-training required to meet the conditions of my employment. Using temp agencies gave me access to labour that I would not have had on my own, apart from calling friends and neighbours about who they knew might be available for work. Temp agencies do have their place.

We have to look at the impact on workers chronically going through short-term contracts, never getting to full employment, never getting benefits or the security they need, mentally and physically, to be able to fulfill their lives in Canada.

Some studies suggest that jobs that demand a lot of effort but provide workers with little control over their work and little support can damage workers' health via stress. Currently, little to no work has been done to determine how to reduce the ill effects of precarious work, in large part because precarious work is just becoming recognized as a health and safety hazard.

### *Private Members' Business*

To confront a problem like precarious employment, we first need to know more details. This is where the motion by the member for Sault Ste. Marie can play a very meaningful role. By attaching a definition and identifying the indicators of precarious employment, we can understand the cause and effect, so that we can provide recommendations to reverse this trend in the labour market. We can also hear from Canadians with lived experience, who might otherwise not have a voice to come forward.

However, the motion goes further in part two. It stresses the need to identify the role that precarious employment plays in the economy, particularly within the federally regulated private sector, to understand the impact it has on the lives of individual Canadians, like our study at the industry committee on how we could get more diversity on boards so that we would have better representation of all Canadians in the governance of companies. This study would say how we could get all Canadians participating in the labour force.

That the nature of work and the employment relationship can affect workers' health is a new concept. It requires us to rethink what constitutes a hazard and how hazards can cause health consequences, including how they interact with non-work aspects of workers' lives. It also causes us to contemplate new ways of controlling these new types of hazards.

One sure-fire way to reduce the health effects of precarity is to create jobs that are more secure and to support workers more fully. This solution requires broad-scale social, political, and economic change. I would also argue that it has to be environmentally sustainable.

As my speech draws to a close, I encourage all my colleagues to support the motion before us today. The labour market is changing. We need to understand how and where gaps are forming as a result of these changes in the market.

The first step to solving a problem is recognizing there is one. Canada's labour markets are changing and government policy needs to change with them. This review would help provide insight into the current changing situation and recommendations on how to manage this emerging problem, which would allow for more detailed debate in the House.

I again thank my hon. colleague from Sault Ste. Marie for bringing this forward for debate and for all he does to serve his community and Canadians.

• (1755)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate. I will just let the hon. member for Perth—Wellington know that we are just shy of the 10 minutes available. I do not want to say much more than that, as I do not want to cut into his time. We will let him get under way.

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to participate in the debate on Motion No. 194, tabled by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie. It is a worthwhile motion and the official opposition will support it.

*Private Members' Business*

However, I have to question why we are using House time to debate the motion. Not that it is not a worthwhile topic, not that it is not something that is worthwhile to be studied, but could the motion not have been tabled at the standing committee? Could the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and Status of Persons with Disabilities not undertake the motion on its own?

Certainly, for parliamentarians, having a private member's slot come up is like winning the lottery. I know I am No. 235 on the order of precedence, so I will be significantly older than I am now by the time that number comes up. I suspect that probably will not happen within this Parliament.

However, I wonder why we are debating the motion here to undertake a study at a standing committee. Could we not use this time to do that within the committee itself?

As I said, we will be supporting the motion and we will undertake the study at committee. It is that part that I would like to focus on today, the study that will be undertaken at committee.

The motion calls for the standing committee to “develop a definition of precarious employment, including specific indicators.” I think that is worthwhile. There currently is not a coherent definition of what might constitute precarious employment.

We did receive a helpful research project from the Library of Parliament, which talked about precarious employment. I thought the first paragraph was worthwhile to read, if only for the purpose of starting a conversation. It states:

Simply put, precarious employment is a “bad job”. However, problems arise when we try to define and measure more precisely the characteristics that constitute a “bad job”. According to the International Labour Organization, precarious employment refers to an inadequacy of rights and protection at work. This can apply to informal work, but also to several types of formal work, including subcontracting, temporary contracts, interim work, certain types of self-employment and involuntary part-time work. These types of employment are more precarious because they are associated with reduced financial security stemming from lower wages, less access to benefits such as private pension plans and complementary health insurance, and greater uncertainty about future employment income.

That encompasses a lot of what most Canadians would consider precarious employment. However, at the same time, as in so much of what we debate, there is always a grey zone. What one person might constitute as precarious employment, others might constitute as innovation, as risk-taking, as starting something new. We have to be mindful of this.

I want to focus on this kind of concept of the definition of what might encompass precarious employment so we are not going against what we might want to be encouraging in the economy.

First is self-employment. Self-employment by its definition does come with risks. It is precarious. Nonetheless, it is something we should still be encouraging. We should still be encouraging those who want to set out on their own to start their own businesses, to try something new, to take that risk. We want to encourage that even if it is precarious, even if it is a risk. That is what built our country, hard-working risk-taking Canadians who were willing to go out and try something new. Innovation comes from that, when those risks are taken, when people start something new, when they start new businesses. They find new products and they go out on their own. It

is precarious, no question about it, but is that the definition we are encompassing within the motion?

I am certainly very honoured, as a member of the official opposition, to serve in the shadow cabinet as the shadow secretary for the sharing economy. Certainly, the sharing economy is something new. It is different. It is changing how we do business and it is changing how we work within the economy. While this specific example is new, disruptions within the economy are not new. We have seen disruptions in how we work for centuries.

● (1800)

We saw the printing press in the 1400s. The printing press changed how the world operated and changed how we worked. The industrial revolution changed how we worked. The invention of the telephone changed how we communicated and how we worked.

The early 20th century saw the personal automobile become mainstream. We saw electricity in homes, indoor lighting, refrigeration and electric appliances.

The mid- to late-20th century saw the advent of the ATM and the expansion of credit, including credit cards. The 1980s to the 2000s saw the microchip revolution and the invention of the Internet, although Al Gore may claim otherwise. It changed how we work and how the economy functioned. Today it is changing again. We are living in the smartphone generation, the Wi-Fi age, and it is changing as we speak.

We cannot predict what the next disruption in the economy might be. We cannot predict what changes are going to happen a week from now, let alone a year from now, but we have to be prepared to recognize that those changes are coming and that those changes are going to affect how we work and how our economy functions on a day-to-day basis. I do not think we have really recognized that. Other countries have. Other countries have gone to extensive lengths to try to adapt and prepare for the changes in the economy.

I want to focus specifically on the sharing economy, because that is my interest. It is considered precarious employment by many.

The United Kingdom has done extensive research and preparation on how it will deal with the sharing economy. Indeed, the Minister of State for Business, Enterprise and Energy commissioned an extensive study on this. He did not have a private member's motion to do the study. He just did the study on his own, which showed innovation. He commissioned a study. In his forward to the study, he said:

The U.K. is embracing new, disruptive business models and challenger businesses that increase competition and offer new products and experiences for consumers. Where other countries and cities are closing down consumer choice, and limiting people's freedom to make better use of their possessions, we are embracing it.

Canada would do well to follow that example. We should be embracing innovation, embracing the sharing economy, and finding out how we can do better for consumers and those who are participating in the sharing economy. The sharing economy and that aspect of the economy is not going away. In fact, it is becoming larger. The same U.K. study said:

the sharing economy is currently worth £9 bn—with this set to rise to a massive £230 bn by 2025.



Canada is not quite yet where the U.K. has gone in embracing the sharing economy, but the sharing economy is nonetheless present in Canada. Indeed, a recent study by Statistics Canada showed that Canadians spent approximately \$241 million in 2016-17 on peer-to-peer ride-sharing services within Canada. That is the Ubers and the Lyfts of the world. We are seeing how these types of activities are gaining ground.

Indeed, I was recently privileged to join my colleague, the member for Barrie—Innisfil, in his riding and spoke with the mayor of Innisfil. They are using new technology, the Uber platform, instead of a mass transit system. It is showing innovation and how we can use new technologies.

I have appreciated the opportunity to speak to this motion. I recognize that this will be going to committee and we will be having further study. The important thing is that we need to recognize where the study needs to go and how to embrace some of the changes and innovation in the economy.

● (1805)

[Translation]

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

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise regarding a question I asked the minister several months ago. Although a lot of time has passed, I think the issue is even more relevant today than when I asked it at that time, which I certainly did not feel I got a satisfactory response to.

It was about the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. At the time, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations had just granted the commissioners a limited six-month extension. It is important to say from the outset that when the government decided to move ahead with this inquiry, all parties in the House said they would support it, but it was not unconditional support. It was a support in the expectation that the government would create success.

What we meant by success is so important. It was peace for the families, for them to be able to share their tragedies, knowing that someone cared and was listening to them and that perhaps even some of the cases would be reflected on again. The other important thing that we wanted to see was a positive path forward with action items. Those were important, and we truly are waiting. We will see if we get that kind of response.

The inquiry's original budget was \$53 million and we wanted to know how it was spent. We wanted to know how much funding

would be associated with the extension. Of course, we did not get any answer at that time, but last week in the supplementary estimates, we noticed that \$38 million was added to the inquiry. The budget now stands at \$92 million for the two and a half years. I cannot help but compare that with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which had a six-year mandate, or perhaps three times the length of this inquiry, but did it with \$60 million. We have \$98 million for a two and a half year inquiry, and approximately \$60 million that was spent on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We are still looking for some clarity. Why was \$38 million needed for a six-month extension when the majority of the work, hopefully, was done in those first two years with the initial budget?

This is important because \$38 million represents indigenous opportunities to do things. We have grassroots organizations across this country, especially our urban indigenous groups. Whether it is in support of their plan, whether it is a friendship centre, or whether it is some of the other urban aboriginal organizations, they are making a difference on the ground. What has happened to them? Their funding is on halt while the government says it has to put the programs on hold because it needs to do some more consultations. There is \$38 million that is going to the inquiry for six months to finish this initiative, but meanwhile we have urban indigenous organizations that are actually doing the important work on prevention and yet are being told, "Sorry, we need to have some further consultations. Maybe next year we will have some funding for you."

The government members promised to continue with important action while they did the inquiry and, quite frankly, they are failing.

● (1810)

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to ending the ongoing national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has been directed to examine the broad systemic and institutional failures that have led to and perpetuated the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Our government gave the inquiry an extension in order to provide more time for the families to be heard. This extension will also provide additional time for institutional and expert hearings and to finalize the report. After listening to survivors and family members, indigenous organizations and the provinces and territories, the commission asked for more time to carry out its important work. This request for more time had to be balanced with the needs of the families, foremost, who have been waiting years for answers.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Our government is confident that this six-month extension will enable the commission to deliver on its mandate to provide recommendations on the systemic causes of violence against indigenous women and girls. However, we have not waited for the final report to act. Since the inquiry was officially launched on August 3, 2016, we have been making progress. We have taken immediate action with investments in women's shelters, housing, education, and the reform of child and family services. As well, we have responded to the inquiry's interim recommendations by providing nearly \$50 million in additional investments.

Canada is dedicating an additional \$9.6 million over five years to support the RCMP's national investigative standards and practices unit. Funding was also provided for organizations with expertise in law enforcement and policing to review police policies and practices.

Our government is increasing health supports and victim services for families and survivors. We are also expanding the family liaison units that were set up to help families navigate the system and get the information they need. We have also allocated an additional \$38 million to assist the inquiry with its operational needs during the extension and to provide aftercare to families and survivors who testify.

We remain committed to working with indigenous governments and communities, the provinces and territories and other key partners to end the unacceptable rates of violence against indigenous women and girls in this country. Our government will continue to support and empower indigenous women and girls.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I will again reiterate that we all want to see this report in the House and the change that was promised. I acknowledge that I continue to be concerned. As we watched the inquiry, we saw personnel, whether it was chief executive officers or commissioners, leave.

Most importantly, the parliamentary secretary talked about money spent here and money spent there, but across this country, urban indigenous organizations are truly making a difference. I will use the Bear Clan again as an example. In the first hour I spent with them, there was a sexual assault that they very capably and compassionately dealt with. They were told that the government would not have the \$100,000 they might need, because it is doing more consulting.

He talked about a lot of programs, but, quite frankly, the organizations I am hearing from are not seeing it on the ground.

**Mr. Marc Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her advocacy for indigenous rights. I encourage her to perpetuate that within her party.

Clearly, this is not theoretical. People are suffering and wounds are being reopened by this inquiry. Friends of mine have testified at this inquiry and, indeed, the healing has barely begun. My sympathy goes out to them and I have deep concern for their well-being.

As well, there has been an impact on commissioners. We cannot deny that people have left. This is an extremely hard job and I salute those who have pushed through this and, nevertheless, striven to turn out a report that will be insightful to the systemic violence incurred by indigenous women and girls.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:15 p.m.)

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