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(Part A)

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 26, 2018

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker,

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

[*English*]

Bill S-215 has been meandering its way through Parliament. It has now come to this place. It has come to the House of Commons, the people's place. It has moved through the Senate through first reading, second reading, committee stage, report stage and third reading. It was proposed by Senator Lillian Dyck.

Bill S-215 would amend the Criminal Code to require a court to consider the fact that when a victim of an assault or murder is an aboriginal female it constitutes an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing. In doing so, it would add new sections immediately after sections 239 and 273 of the Criminal Code.

We know indigenous women are overrepresented in violence committed against women in Canada. We only need to think of cases like that of Tina Fontaine in Winnipeg. I remember all too well four years ago how a young girl had gone missing, but at first no one seemed to care. It was only upon her discovery at the bottom of the Red River wrapped in a plastic garbage bag that people actually took note. She was only discovered because people were looking for someone else in the Red River. They discovered her body there, and it galvanized the city of Winnipeg. For the next two days, thousands upon thousands of people came to walk the streets in protest, to raise awareness of the issue of violence against indigenous women and girls and to say enough was enough.

In fact, Tina Fontaine's death eventually led to the murdered and missing indigenous women's inquiry. It was one of those defining

moments in Winnipeg, when people from all walks of life, whether indigenous, Caucasian, or from African or Asian heritage, all came together and really truly said that enough was enough.

However, this is not the only case we have of violence against indigenous women in Canada. There is the recent example of Cindy Gladue. Cindy Gladue was a 36-year-old Cree mother of three found bleeding to death in an Edmonton hotel bathtub in June of 2011. The accused in the case was a truck driver who had spent two days with Gladue. Gladue bled to death from an 11-centimetre tear to her vaginal wall, while the accused slept. The Crown later argued in court that the tear in her vagina was caused by a sharp object, and the defence argued that the tear was caused by consensual rough sex because she was a sex worker at the time. The jury found the accused was not guilty. This was last spring. The accused was found not guilty of murder, not even guilty of manslaughter.

Fortunately, the Attorney General of Alberta had common sense and appealed the decision, and it was just heard in the Supreme Court. In the last 20 years, there have only been three reported cases in Canada where the victim died as a result of rough sex. In all three of those cases, the defendant was convicted of at least manslaughter. As I said, the jury in the case did not even do that. There was no indigenous person on the jury. In an unprecedented move, the Crown actually entered into evidence the torn vagina of Cindy Gladue in the courtroom, and Gladue was reduced to a mutilated body part. This was not only highly offensive and extremely disrespectful to the victim and her family, it did not even result in a guilty verdict.

The second example is the case of Helen Betty Osborne. Osborne was 19 years old when she was abducted and brutally murdered near The Pas, Manitoba, on November 13, 1971. The RCMP eventually thought four men were responsible for the murder. However, charges against three of the men were not brought until 1986, 15 years after the murder. In the end, only one man was convicted to life in prison for the murder of Osborne, one man was acquitted and the third was given immunity and set free in exchange for testifying against the others.

It should be noted that Helen Betty's murder was extremely violent. She was badly beaten, assaulted and stabbed more than 50 times, apparently with a screwdriver. I remember this case, having read about it at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, where it was taught to us in class. Imagine reading about something like this. Thankfully, there is a building named in her honour at the University of Winnipeg.

Private Members' Business

Helen Betty's case sparked the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission to conduct an investigation into the length of time it took to resolve the case. The commission concluded that the most significant factors that delayed and deterred the case were racism, sexism and indifference from the community right through to the criminal justice system. The report stated:

It is clear that Betty Osborne would not have been killed if she had not been Aboriginal. The four men who took her to her death from the streets of The Pas that night had gone looking for an Aboriginal girl with whom to "party". They found Betty Osborne. When she refused to party she was driven out of town and murdered. Those who abducted her showed a total lack of regard for her person or her rights as an individual. Those who stood by while the physical assault took place, while sexual advances were made and while she was being beaten to death showed their own racism, sexism and indifference. Those who knew the story and remained silent must share their guilt.

The whole community protected these men, so for 15 years the family suffered.

There are numerous cases in Canada. I could continue to enumerate all of them, but we must also think about other cases, which go on continuously here in Canada, about why indigenous women need greater protection, why we need to rebalance the scales of justice. Let us think of the Highway of Tears; between 18 and 40 women have gone missing on the Highway of Tears in British Columbia near Prince George.

I was speaking with Paul Lacerte and his daughter Raven, who started the Moose Hide Campaign, a patch that many of us wear in the House of Commons and that many of my colleagues care about. The campaign tries to raise awareness of this issue of violence against indigenous women and girls, and it is for men to have this issue raised among ourselves because it is not an issue of women who conduct the violence, it is an issue of men.

The father and daughter were out shooting a moose over a decade ago and they managed to shoot one. The father at first did not want to keep the hide, but his young daughter Raven, who was only around 10 at the time, said, "Dad, we can't throw it away. We need to use the entire animal." He said, "What do we need a hide for?" She said, "Let's raise awareness, because we are not far from the Highway of Tears, and do something about the missing indigenous women and girls."

This is an extremely important bill because it would rebalance the scales of justice. It is fair to say that being an aboriginal female is a unique circumstance. The combination of being aboriginal female and living in a colonial society has devalued and dehumanized our women, and they are seen as inherently less worthy than other women. Worse yet, the stereotype of aboriginal women as loose and sexually available still persists and makes them more vulnerable to unwanted and, unfortunately, more violent sexual assaults and more gruesome murders.

I heard from an elder in Quebec. He described where the word, the derogatory term, "*kawish*" comes from, which is used sometimes in Quebec to describe indigenous people. In fact its base is "*awas*", "away" in Cree. According to the elder, it means to push someone away and it is from the sexual advances often made against indigenous women by non-indigenous men.

In addition, the so-called subtle discrimination against aboriginal women and girls in the justice system minimizes the grievous harm

done to them, which can result in leniency in sentencing of the offenders. Bill S-215 would increase the likelihood that the consequences of assaulting or murdering an aboriginal woman or girl are appropriate and meaningful.

Bill S-215 obviously would not fix all of the complex issues of the criminal justice system, and that is not the goal, but this justice system has failed Cindy Gladue, Helen Betty Osborne and many other indigenous women and the bill is a step in the right direction toward reconciliation. By including aboriginal females as a specific aggravating circumstance—that is, a protected category of persons—we would acknowledge the historic roots that have led to their over-victimization and the systemic discrimination against them in the justice system.

Bill S-215 would amend the Criminal Code in two places. First, the bill inserts a new clause at the end of sections of the Criminal Code that outline the murder provisions. The new clause reads:

239.1 When a court imposes a sentence for an offence referred to in section 235, 236 or 239, it shall consider as an aggravating circumstance the fact that the victim of the offence is a female person who is Indian, Inuit or Métis.

Second, the bill inserts a new clause at the end of the sections of the Criminal Code that outline the assault and sexual assault provisions. This new clause reads:

273.01 When a court imposes a sentence for an offence referred to in paragraph 264.1(1)(a) or any of sections 265 to 269 or 271 to 273, it shall consider as an aggravating circumstance the fact that the victim of the offence is a female person who is Indian, Inuit or Métis.

● (1110)

The tragic phenomenon of the high numbers of missing aboriginal women and girls is undeniable. The homicide rate of aboriginal women is 4.8 times higher, or 4.8 per 100,000 people. The corresponding homicide rate is 3.2 for taxi drivers, 2.6 for police officers, and 0.8 for non-aboriginal women. Aboriginal women and girls are victims of more violent offences and go missing at far higher rates than other Canadian women. Bill C-215 would address this inequity by specific considerations of their greater vulnerabilities as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Thus, if an aboriginal female is a victim of sexual assault or murder, her identity is an aggravating factor. Such a move would send a clear and strong message to the court system, to justices, judges, and the public at large, denouncing the violent targeting of aboriginal women and girls. Proclaiming the bill into law would demonstrate that we value indigenous women just as much as we value other women, taxi drivers, public transit operators, police officers, police dogs and other service animals.

The laws of our nation must reflect our values and the values of all our citizens. Terry Audla from the ITK stated, "we will be judged as a society on how we treat our most vulnerable." We have an opportunity to truly make a great difference in the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Private Members' Business

An eagle feather weighs not very much, but on the scales of inequality in Canada, it can help to readjust the scales of justice so that lady justice is not blind to the suffering of her fellow citizens. We all deserve justice in our country. We deserve justice because this is what we aspire to as a nation. We desire and deserve basic respect and indigenous women need our protection at this time. They need our protection at this time because no one else is giving it to them. Many in our society still consider them less than valuable, less than human. If we cannot protect our most vulnerable citizens, then how can we send a message around the world? How can we stand tall as a beacon of hope and democracy and proclaim our charter as protecting all of us?

It may be difficult to single out one group, but we have done this for taxi drivers, police service dogs and police officers. For a short time, until our society has caught up to what it truly means to have a charter of hope and true equality, it is time to protect our most vulnerable, indigenous women and girls and to take a stand in Parliament to complete the work that was done on behalf of all Canadians in the Senate, which has already looked at the bill and sees it of value. Now it is time for the House of Commons to consider it, weigh it and hopefully tip the scales of justice to a greater level of equality and justice.

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

• (1115)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague from Winnipeg Centre about an issue that was raised when the bill was studied before the Senate legal and constitution affairs committee, and that was that there was a real risk that it would contravene section 15 of the charter.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, there was some discussion, obviously, about the constitutionality of the bill. At the same time, it still passed through the Senate.

I am not an expert in the justice system per se. I am not a lawyer; I am simply a gentleman with a PhD. I am sure there are people, who were at the justice committee, who are more qualified to answer that question. They would be able to look at the constitutionality. I am sure the Government of Canada will put out an advisory on the constitutionality of the bill.

At this time, I cannot answer that question. All I can simply say is that I hope my colleagues will take the time to study it in second reading, at committee stage and come up with whether it is a worthwhile bill and whether it meets the requirements of the charter.

• (1120)

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as an indigenous woman, I am thankful for this discussion in the House of Commons, working every day. On behalf of all indigenous women across Canada, this is a very significant point for all of us.

I want to ask my friend across the way a question. I understand he is supporting this discussion personally. I would like to seek clarification on the position of the federal government. Where does it stand on this very important discussion?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I do not know about the government position. I do know there has been great discussion among members of the caucus here.

If members of the opposition, the loyal opposition, as well as the third party, decided to support the bill, I suspect there might be enough members on this side of the House, whether the government supports it or not, to move it forward. That is something for each member to determine. It is a private member's bill, and it should be a free vote.

I would like to respond to the previous member who asked a question. In 1999, in *R. v. Gladue*, the Supreme Court stated that a section of the Criminal Code was enacted to respond to the disproportionate incarceration of aboriginals compared to non-aboriginal Canadians. It stressed that the section of the Criminal Code was a remedial response. It was referring to the Gladue decisions in the sense that there already were provisions for specific remedial measures concerning aboriginal offenders within the Criminal Code, which also meet the charter requirements.

In this case, we are also talking about the victims. Instead of always discussing offenders, we are trying to protect more victims in Canadian society, ensuring they have adequate protection in the court. Often no one is specifically out there fighting for them. This would ensure that judges take into consideration the victims in sentencing.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, because of his great experience, I am sure the member has a lot more to say, so I will let him say it.

I will not ask a question, but I do want to make a comment on the constitutionality aspect that came up twice now. Just so members and the public know, when a government bill comes before Parliament, there are constitutional experts who have reviewed it and determined, in their opinion, whether they believe it is constitutional. It is not a shot in the dark, whether things that come before Parliament are constitutional.

With private members' bills, hopefully private members will take their bills to a constitutional expert before they present their it to Parliament, so we do not have this discussion on motions and bills so often because they have already been reviewed for constitutionality.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention that the bill also has the support of the Assembly of First Nations, as well as the FSIN from Saskatchewan, in resolutions that were passed in 2016 on the Niagara Falls Annual General Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations. Perry Bellegarde signed resolution, 26/2016, concerning his support for Bill S-215.

Also, when we talk about how we protect individuals, it is extremely important that we not only take into consideration the idea of offenders. We also need to take into consideration the whole idea surrounding victims in our justice system. I know the members from the Conservative Party moved quite extensively to try to put more victims rights into our justice system, and that is to be applauded.

Private Members' Business

This goes a little further in trying to ensure that one specific group, or a specific period of time, at least receives additional protection to ensure that we hold them in high esteem, that we hold them up and do not continue to debase them in popular culture, as well as in how we view them in general Canadian society.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill S-215, introduced by Senator Dyck and sponsored in this place by the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

The bill seeks to amend section 718.2 of the Criminal Code, whereby it would provide that where a judge would impose a sentence for certain violent offences, including murder and sexual assault, that the judge would be required to consider as an aggravating factor the fact that the victim was a Indian, Inuit or Métis woman.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre is a strong advocate in this place for indigenous peoples. There is no question that the rate of victimization among indigenous Canadians is disproportionate. That is particularly so with respect to indigenous women. Indeed, indigenous women are three times more like to be victimized than non-indigenous women.

There is no question that the intentions relating to the bill are good. However, good intentions do not always make good laws. It is on that basis that I regretfully will be unable to support Bill S-215.

There are three reasons why I believe the bill unfortunately falls short. First, it is partially redundant. Second, there are serious constitutional questions about whether it would run afoul of section 15 of the charter, which guarantees equality before the law without discrimination. Third, there are questions about whether it is inconsistent with the Gladue principle in sentencing, which is enshrined in section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code.

With respect to the issue of partial redundancy, in the Criminal Code the fact that a victim is a woman who is indigenous is already considered to be an aggravating factor to the degree that the offence was committed on the basis that the individual victim was a female indigenous person. The key, though, is motive, the fact that it was motivated by prejudice or hate toward an individual on the basis of his or her gender or race.

That brings me to the second point, which is the question of whether the bill would violate section 15 of the charter, which guarantees that all Canadians are entitled to equal protection and equal benefit under the law without discrimination. What the bill would do with respect to the Criminal Code is quite novel from the standpoint of aggravating circumstances. It is novel because it would create a special class of victim, namely indigenous women.

As I mentioned, race and gender can be considered aggravating factors, but the basis upon which that would occur is if the offence were motivated because the victim was of a certain race or gender. Similarly, there are other aggravating circumstances that relate to the connection between the offender and the victim. For example, if the victim were vulnerable, and many indigenous women are vulnerable and in vulnerable circumstances, then that could be considered an aggravating factor.

●(1130)

In his speech, my friend from Winnipeg Centre alluded to the fact that there are aggravating circumstances in the Criminal Code with respect to service dogs and transit workers. Again, those aggravating factors arise from the fact that the individuals are performing certain duties, such as a transit worker who is attacked. Again, there is a connection between the offender and the victim based on the offence at hand.

By contrast, the bill would say that it would not matter whether the offence was motivated by the fact that the victim was an indigenous woman. Indeed, it would not even matter if the offender knew that the victim was an indigenous woman. Simply because the victim was an indigenous woman, it would constitute an aggravating factor. This is unique, it is novel and it does not exist in the Criminal Code. Many lawyers who appeared before the Senate legal and constitutional affairs committee flagged the constitutionality of the bill in respect of it running afoul of section 15 of the charter.

Finally, there is the issue of the Gladue sentencing principles, which provide that when imposing a sentence on an indigenous offender, the judge is to consider all reasonable alternatives to incarceration. We know that a disproportionate number of victims are indigenous women, but at the same time, there is, regrettably, an overrepresentation of primarily indigenous male offenders. In these cases, we have subsection 718.2(e) that says that a judge is to look at all reasonable alternatives to incarceration. At the same time, it would be treated as an aggravating factor that the victim was an indigenous woman. There would certainly be some litigation and some degree of uncertainty around sentencing. From the standpoint of backlogs and delays in our courts, which is a very real issue today, it would be problematic.

Therefore, while this bill is well intentioned, and while there is no question that indigenous women are disproportionately victimized in this country, and while there is no question that we as members of Parliament in this place have a duty to do what is necessary to bring about necessary changes to protect vulnerable persons, including indigenous women, this bill misses the mark for the aforementioned three reasons I enunciated.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of, and in solidarity with, the generations of first nations, Métis and Inuit women who have come before me and will come after me. Today I would like to add my voice to the apparent silence that exists for indigenous women in Canada's justice system and speak in support of Bill S-215.

Within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, all individuals are guaranteed equality before and under the law. All individuals have the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. However, it is clear that this is not the case for first nation, Métis or Inuit women.

If indigenous women had equal protection under the law, we would not have an ongoing inquiry into the 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. All those women and girls had names, are loved and have families and communities that continue to search for justice in a system that does not view them as equals.

Private Members' Business

If indigenous women were viewed as equals in Canadian society, we would not mourn with the families of young indigenous women lost in child and family care. We would not have to continue to fight for an inquiry into the systemic oppression indigenous women face. We would not have a Highway of Tears, and in 2018, we would not have to call for justice for the indigenous women forced into sterilization.

When first nation, Métis and Inuit women and the organizations that support them call for justice and propose changes to the justice system, we should be listening. Not only should we be listening, we should do everything in our power to bring those changes and reforms into effect.

Canada has a long history of oppressing and excluding indigenous women from systems of justice, but surely Canada's future is one that includes the voices of indigenous women. For this reason, I am proud to support this bill my friend in Saskatchewan, who serves our province in the other place, has brought forward, which is now being considered here. Bill S-215 would amend the Criminal Code to require a court to consider that when a victim of assault or murder was a first nation, Métis or Inuit female person, this fact would constitute an aggravating circumstance for the purpose of sentencing.

It is not without precedent that consideration of aggravating circumstances has been given to other groups in society. Among others, police officers, transit workers and animals have been identified as vulnerable within the Canadian justice system by virtue of the line of work and social position they are in when they are the victims of a crime.

The evidence exists for indigenous women to be given similar status. A 2014 RCMP report, reports from the Native Women's Association of Canada and reports from Amnesty International all affirm that indigenous women are three to four times more likely than other Canadian women to be murdered, sexually assaulted or made missing. Aboriginal women are seven times more likely to be targeted by serial killers. Statistics Canada has reported that being indigenous is a significant risk factor for women to experience violence, but that is not the case for indigenous men.

I myself am an indigenous woman from northern Saskatchewan, and I repeat these statistics here not for my benefit but for the benefit of my colleagues present in the House today. My family and community are Dene. Most of the constituents in my riding are first nation or Métis. My constituents know how difficult life is for indigenous people in Canada, because they see and experience Canada as indigenous people.

Our families suffered and survived residential schools. We feel the pain of colonialism every time young indigenous persons lose their lives, either from suicide or the violent actions of others. We feel the isolation of the north when we have to hitchhike for medical care. We know the danger of what it is like to be indigenous, because in virtually every way, our lives are governed by a colonial system that puts our communities at a lower status than those of non-indigenous Canadians.

Like many indigenous women, I am personally affected by the injustice of violence against women. My auntie Janet Sylvestre and

my friend Myrna Montgrand are among the 1,200 women and girls who were murdered and made missing. To this day, their killers are not known. Happy Charles, from La Ronge, has been missing for a year and a half, and her family remains determined, despite a lack of answers.

I understand that we do not make policies or decisions as a government from the stories of individuals or from the anecdotes of history. However, at certain points in history, the stories of individuals become the narratives of a country if those stories are told again and again. This story of violence against indigenous women has been repeated far too often for us to think of it as a footnote.

● (1135)

Our stories exist to teach us lessons and guide our future. If we learn nothing from the continued story of violence against indigenous women from the stories of Happy, Janet and Myrna, among so many others, we do nothing but silence those who bravely step forward to speak. This narrative of violence must be accounted for in Canada's laws so that indigenous women are no longer targeted and overwhelming the victims of violence in Canada.

Of course, the bill is not without concerns. I have heard and read the debates about how Bill S-215 would be unfair to aboriginal offenders who could be sentenced to more time in prison, and as a result, would be more likely to reoffend in the future. In particular, the bill, if implemented, could potentially negatively interfere with the section of the Criminal Code known as the Gladue provisions. To this I have two responses.

First, as my colleague from Manitoba has said, the Gladue provisions of the Criminal Code are not meant to reduce prison time. The Gladue provisions are intended to ask the court to consider alternatives to prison, such as restorative justice and rehabilitation programs. Programs like these retrain and heal offenders and thereby decrease the likelihood that they will reoffend.

Furthermore, the Gladue principles do not call for sentences outside the range of legally available penalties. A court cannot substitute a sentence just because someone is indigenous. The practitioners of violence would still get the punishment the law calls for, even with the aggravating circumstances the bill would put in place. It is even questionable whether the Gladue principles could be applied to violent crimes, with the Supreme Court ruling that for serious offences, there may not be any reduction in imprisonment for aboriginal offenders.

Private Members' Business

Second, I want to speak about the balance of rights for indigenous women in the justice system. It says a lot in a debate about how we can help indigenous women and their families get the justice they are owed when we put the concerns of the offender over the concerns of the victim. Do not get me wrong. I am not trying to say that perpetrators of violence do not have rights, because those rights are important, but where we have protections for aboriginal offenders in Gladue reports, our courts must not fail to consider the situations and circumstances of the victims.

Indigenous women who are the victims of violent crime are affected by the same historical factors and upheaval of economic development experienced by their communities. Not only are indigenous women victimized by the accused, they are victims of systemic discrimination and are economically and socially disadvantaged to a greater degree than the accused.

Bill S-215 is not a catch-all solution for the problems indigenous women face in the justice system. The justice system is not destined to stay the same forever. It changes just as society does. It is a living, breathing system full of individuals who are constantly challenging it. Bill S-215 is an opportunity for us to examine and question the belief systems judges, lawyers, police officers and court workers have and calls on them to see indigenous women from a new perspective.

For these reasons, I am proud to support this bill that works to create a safer world and a more equitable justice system for first nation, Métis and Inuit women.

● (1140)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill S-215, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for violent crimes against aboriginal women), introduced in the Senate on December 11, 2015, by the Honourable Senator Lillian Dyck.

First of all, I would like to commend Senator Dyck for her advocacy on the critical issue of violence against indigenous women and girls. Our government shares the view that the unacceptable rates of violence against indigenous women and girls is a matter of urgency and national concern.

Bill S-215's objective is outlined in its preamble, which states the importance of denouncing and deterring violent crimes against indigenous women, given that indigenous women have been, for many decades, and still are, far more likely than non-indigenous women to be victims of violence.

Bill S-215 proposes to create two new Criminal Code provisions, sections 239.1 and 273.01, which would require the fact that a victim is an indigenous woman to be considered an aggravating factor when sentencing an offender for certain violent offences. These offences are murder, manslaughter and attempted murder; uttering threats to cause death or bodily harm; assault, assault with a weapon, or causing bodily harm and aggravated assault; unlawfully causing bodily harm and sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and aggravated sexual assault.

While I know that all of us support this bill's objective, these proposed reforms may have unintended consequences in the application of sentencing. The purpose of aggravating factors is to

signal to sentencing judges that lengthier sentences are warranted in cases where the aggravating factor is present. I will note that the Criminal Code already establishes that it is an aggravating factor for the purpose of sentencing where an offence is motivated by hate, for instance, because of the victim's gender or race. It is also already an aggravating factor where the victim of a crime is a spouse, common law partner or child. In that regard, the proposed aggravating factor in Bill S-215 duplicates these provisions. Furthermore, Bill S-215 might have the unintended consequence of contradicting the application of the Gladue principle.

Section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code requires sentencing judges to consider "all available sanctions, other than imprisonment, that are reasonable in the circumstances", and mandates judges to pay "particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders" in conducting this analysis. This provision requires sentencing judges to consider the background and unique circumstances of an indigenous offender, usually with the assistance of a Gladue report, and to consider alternatives to incarceration wherever possible. Where the offender is indigenous, combined with Bill S-215, a judge could be under contradictory obligations both to lengthen the sentence for an indigenous offender's criminal conduct against an indigenous woman and, at the same time, to consider alternatives to incarceration and reduce the sentence because the offender himself has an indigenous background.

Beyond these concerns, it is imperative to also consider the societal context in which this bill's proposed reforms are situated. This includes the lived realities of indigenous persons in Canada. This broader context highlights the importance not only of Bill S-215's objectives, but also the need for multifaceted responses outside the criminal justice system to meaningfully address this complex issue. Statistics indicate that indigenous persons are overrepresented among both victims and offenders of violent crimes.

Indigenous women experience dramatically higher rates of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and homicide than their non-indigenous counterparts. Specifically, indigenous females recorded a sexual assault rate of 113 incidents per 1,000 people, which is significantly higher than the rate of 35 per 1,000 recorded for their non-indigenous counterparts. Also, according to the 2014 general social survey on victimization, indigenous women had an overall rate of violent victimization double that of indigenous males, with 220 violent incidents per 1,000 people compared with 110 per 1,000; close to triple that of non-indigenous females, with 81 violent incidents per 1,000 people; and more than triple that of non-indigenous males, with 66 violent incidents per 1,000 people.

Private Members' Business

At the same time, indigenous persons are also overrepresented in Canada's correctional institutions. In 2016-17, indigenous adults represented 28% of the total provincial-territorial offender population and 27% of the federal offender population, but only 4.1% of the Canadian adult population. In particular, indigenous women accounted for 43% of admissions to provincial or territorial custody and 31% to federal custody, while indigenous men accounted for 28% of admissions to provincial or territorial custody and 23% of admissions to federal custody, according to the Statistics Canada's adult and youth correctional statistics for 2016-17.

As we can all agree, these findings paint a stark reality. In thinking about both the overrepresentation of indigenous persons in prison, as well as women and girls' unacceptably high vulnerability to violence, we must acknowledge and act on the understanding that these realities are inseparable from the historic and contemporary impacts of colonialism.

● (1145)

As explained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report entitled "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future", violence and criminal offending are not inherent to aboriginal people, but rather emanate from very specific experiences that indigenous people have endured, including but not limited to, first-hand victimization and experience with physical and sexual violence in residential schools, poverty, and substance abuse. These factors have contributed to the overrepresentation of indigenous persons in all stages of the Canadian criminal justice process, both as offenders and as victims.

While we are all committed to addressing the pressing issue of violence against indigenous women and girls, Bill S-215 cannot respond to these lived realities to which the bill's proposed reforms would apply. These concerns lead me to the conclusion that the proposed reforms are unlikely to achieve their important objective.

Such a complex issue requires comprehensive approaches to ensure that the proposed solutions have their desired effect. I note that the results of the ongoing National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will be instructive in this regard. The inquiry is studying relevant issues, such as identifying the root causes of violence and abuse and finding ways to them, and addressing the impacts of poverty, marginalization, cycles of violence and disempowerment. Our government looks forward to receiving the recommendations of the national inquiry.

While the commissioners complete their important work, we are taking immediate action by investing in a commemoration fund that will support local and national commemoration activities; in organizations with expertise in law enforcement and policing to lead a review of police practices; in housing and shelters; in education and reform of child and family services; in programs to prevent and address violence against indigenous women and girls; and in increasing health support and victim services for families and survivors.

A broad-based, holistic approach is the best way to ensure better protection for indigenous women and girls from violence. Our government is committed to ensuring tangible and systemic changes that will ensure improved outcomes for indigenous people, including indigenous women and girls.

● (1150)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too am happy to lend my voice to the debate. The purpose of the bill is to require a court, when imposing sentences for very serious crimes, to consider it to be an aggravating circumstance when the victim is an aboriginal woman.

Like many of the speakers before me, I agree that we all must acknowledge the unacceptable and tragic reality that aboriginal women are more likely than non-aboriginal women to be victims of violent crime. There are many actions the government must and should take as part of the solution. Part of the solution lies within all of us, whether it be as communities, municipalities, provinces, or the federal government and first nations alike. We have to tackle this issue seriously. However I do have some concerns, like the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, that this legislation would not move us in the direction we need to go.

I also want to note the very difficult stories, the poignant examples, that the member for Winnipeg Centre shared with us.

It is important to ask certain questions. Would this legislation have made a difference in those particular circumstances the member talked about? Would it act as a deterrent? Is it constitutional? Would it result in fairer treatment of victims?

Our justice system is about protecting rights and punishing wrongs. Our laws are intended to provide order in society and a peaceful way to settle disputes and to express the values and beliefs of Canadians.

The preamble of the bill talks about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees to all individuals equality before and under the law and the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. That is part of the essence of the issue when people wonder whether the bill is charter compliant. It talks about equality for individuals under the law and equal protection.

The bill has also been discussed in terms of the Criminal Code and its sentencing provisions. A court that imposes sentences must take into account evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or any other similar factor. Those are aggravating circumstances that are already in the Criminal Code.

We heard about the horrific murder of Betty Osborne. From what I gathered, it was racially motivated and therefore the aggravating circumstances should have applied in that case.

Government Orders

Another important fact is that the bill states that sentences should be similar to sentences imposed on similar offenders in similar circumstances. Would this change be perceived as fair by all women who are impacted by violent offences? This is one of the areas in the bill that I do have a concerns about. When an individual who has suffered a horrific assault such as sexual assault goes to court, she expects the justice system to treat her fairly, whether she is non-indigenous or indigenous. This is going to be at the root of the issue here.

Both an offender and the family of a murder victim have the right to expect the full force of the law to be applied when someone is found guilty. They should not feel that the offence against their loved ones, against themselves, meant less if they were either indigenous or non-indigenous. Every victim must matter.

The government talked about transit drivers and policemen. As I said, I am not a lawyer, but as I understand it, the difference is that a transit driver or member of the police, or health care workers for that matter, is providing a service for the public. That should be considered when an offence is perpetrated against them. That is perhaps a different circumstance than saying that the sexual assault an individual experienced is less or more of an offence depending on their ethnicity. That is where the principles of sentencing will be a challenge. That is an issue on which I think we might end up with some charter challenges.

I will go back to my original comments. Would this legislation act as a deterrent? No person who perpetrates these offences is going to say it was an aggravating offence and therefore choose his or her victims differently.

• (1155)

I do not believe that is going to happen, so I do not think there will be any deterrence as a result of this legislation. Of course, we all want prevention, so hopefully, out of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we will get some solid suggestions and an action plan for going forward.

Will the legislation act as a deterrent? I do not believe so. I do not think it will help us on the path to solving this problem. We talked about whether it is constitutional. We need to check the constitutionality of this piece of legislation. Would it result in increased fairness in the treatment of victims of these horrific crimes? I suggest that perhaps it would not add to increased fairness and treatment.

Everyone in the House is committed to dealing with the overrepresentation of indigenous women and girls in these murders, assaults and sexual violence, but we also need to make sure the actions we take will have an impact with respect to the intended outcome.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate, I will let the hon. parliamentary secretary know there are only three minutes remaining in the time for debate on the motion that is before the House, and I will interrupt him at about the three-minute mark.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for bringing forward a very important issue that merits more debate in the chamber.

For many years, particularly when I was on the opposition benches, I had the opportunity to hear about the 1,200-plus murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls. The numbers I have heard over the years have ranged from 1,000 to 1,600 murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. It is a really important issue for a number of reasons and strikes the hearts of many of the constituents I represent.

My friend referred to the very sad story of Tina Fontaine. Her body was discovered on the boundary of my riding, along the Red River constituency. It opened a great deal of dialogue not just among indigenous community members but the community as a whole. It is one of the reasons this government acted on many of the things we talked about when we were in opposition, one being how important it was to get into the issue. Members of the House will appreciate that one of the first actions the Prime Minister and the government took was to call for the inquiry into the 1,200-plus murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. We are still waiting for the report and recommendations.

A few weeks back, I had the opportunity to walk with a fantastic group of volunteers in Winnipeg North, known as the Bear Clan. I was inspired by a couple of individuals in particular. One was Vanessa. I saw her again over the weekend. She attended a Christmas open house hosted by my daughter, who is a local MLA. Vanessa has a wonderful story that would encapsulate not only the tragedy of what we are talking about but gives us a sense of hope for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time has already expired. I hope to provide more comments when the debate comes forward again.

• (1200)

The Deputy Speaker: The time does go by very quickly, especially when members are on their feet.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 2

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-86, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are 23 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-86.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 5 will not be selected by the Chair as it was defeated in committee.

Government Orders

With respect to Motion No. 9, the Chair has received a letter from the member for Banff—Airdrie about why his motion should be selected even though it was rejected in committee. However, I am not convinced that the circumstances surrounding his motion are so exceptional that it deserves to be considered again at report stage as provided for in Standing Order 76.1(5). Motion No. 9 will therefore not be selected.

[*English*]

All remaining motions have been examined, and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at report stage.

Motions Nos. 1 to 4, 6 to 8, and 10 to 23 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions No. 1 to 4, 6 to 8, and 10 to 23 to the House.

[*English*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North has informed the Chair that he does not wish to proceed with Motion No. 1. The other members who have also given notice of the same motion are not present to move this motion at report stage. Therefore, Motion No. 1 will not be proceeded with.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 247.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 352.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 444.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 445.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 454.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 514.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 591.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 675.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 676.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 677.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 678.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 679.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 680.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 681.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 682.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 683.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 684.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 685.

● (1205)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-86 be amended by deleting Clause 692.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, often we say we are honoured to stand up in this House. However, today I am actually very disappointed to have to stand up in the House and talk to the amendments I have proposed, why I proposed these amendments, and how the current government has failed to live up to both its promises with respect to the 2015 election and its commitments regarding engagement with indigenous people before it puts proposed legislation on the table.

Members will recall that back in 2015 the government said there would be no omnibus legislation and that it would never table omnibus bills. It also said that if something was not in the budget it would not be in any budget implementation act. Those were commitments it made to Canadians across this country and it has repeated. However, what we have learned, like with its promises for a balanced budget and democratic reform, is that it is simply not following through on its promises. For some reason, it has managed to get away with people not calling it on that. However, I think it is time that Canadians realize that many of the things the government has said it is not following through on.

What has happened? We had the budget implementation act, Bill C-86, land on our tables and it was 802 pages. That is a significant size for a bill. I guess I should not have said, “land on our tables”, because the bills are not printed anymore and there are very few copies. However, it is really quite a massive implementation act.

● (1210)

We do not get a paper copy anymore. Therefore, as we try to look through and understand what is in this massive bill with the tools we are given, like we often do in this House, the government did not even bother to use a format in the budget implementation act that would link us to the sections we wanted to read. In the case that I am talking about, there were three particular areas that related to indigenous legislation, and I could not even get to read what was in the act in a reasonable manner. I had to scroll for minutes and minutes to get to where I needed to be. Therefore, not only do we not have a hard copy, but the government has made it virtually impossible to try and get to the sections of the bill that we need to get to without going through a very onerous process. Quite simply, it should be ashamed of itself because that is not acceptable.

Government Orders

What do we have in this particular bill? As I indicated, there were three sections, division 11, division 12 and division 19, that were specifically related to the indigenous changes.

I am going to focus on division 19, which enacts the addition of lands to reserves and reserve creation act. That was not in the budget of 2017. It was not in the budget of 2018. It was almost impossible to find, but is a significant change the government is proposing, and should be a stand-alone piece of legislation. I hope when people vote for the report stage amendments that the government will reintroduce it in the way it should have introduced it in the first place, as a stand-alone piece of legislation that will go to the indigenous affairs committee to review further.

The next thing that we spot is that it is in the budget implementation act, but it was not referred to the indigenous affairs committee. A motion was brought forward at the indigenous affairs committee saying that we should at least look at this so that we understand what the intentions are, what the government is trying to do, so that we could determine if there were any suggestions we needed to make through amendments. The Liberal majority on the committee voted that down. Therefore, division 19 has had virtually no scrutiny in Parliament. The second reading debate was cut so short that there was no time to even have a conversation about division 19.

One of the interesting things is this. The government has said there is no relationship more important to it than that with indigenous peoples in Canada. It has also committed to a consultation process before it introduces legislation. It committed to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which ensures that, when laws are going to impact indigenous peoples in this country, the government will have a robust consultation process before it introduces any legislation.

•(1215)

I will talk about what happened as the Senate was doing a pre-study on this particular division.

Susan Waters, the director general, lands and environmental management branch in INAC said, “The Treaty Land Entitlement Committee was part of our outreach and engagement. We work closely with them. We are working with them to address the issues that were identified in the arbitration.... The Treaty Land Entitlement Committee are very much aware; we have spoken with them personally, and we continue to speak with them about this proposal.”

Chris Henderson, the executive director of Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba, said:

We are concerned about this proposed legislation simply by the fact that nobody from the government ever asked us if we want the act, and also in terms of how will this act improve the land conversion process under the 1997 TLE framework agreement.... Now, with this proposed new ATR legislation, nobody from the Government of Canada ever came to us or our member First Nations to ask us, first, do you want this ATR legislation; and, second, what impacts will there be if we do propose legislation? We were never asked those questions. So out of nowhere, we have this new proposed ATR legislation before the House of Commons. At this point, it's somewhat premature to ask us if we want it because, again, we were never asked to begin with if it's something we asked for.

What we have in division 19 is a change, and it could be a significant change. However, we do not know how significant it is, because we have not had the opportunity to have it referred to

committee to do our due diligence in terms of bringing witnesses forward. There is no question that the government has absolutely failed. I bet if I went across this country and asked chiefs if they knew about the new addition to reserve legislation that was hidden in the budget implementation act, they would be very puzzled and very concerned.

Really, how does that meet the government's commitment? It is another case of the government continuing to stand up and say the nice words but when it comes to doing the work, it just does not get it done. This is why it was such a mistake to put this into the budget implementation act.

We looked at Bill S-3, which was a stand-alone piece of proposed legislation. The government said not to worry, it had it all right, it was a response to a court case, we heard from the officials and it looked like it might be a reasonable path forward. What we found when it got to committee was that it was actually a mess. People who came to us in committee said that it was a problem and that it was a mess.

I hope the other two divisions are fine, but they have not had the scrutiny of divisions 11 and 12. There is the First Nations Land Management Act, which is very significant, the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, which is again pretty significant, on organizations and operations. However, nothing has been done.

I think it would be important for the Liberals especially and all members of the House to say that we promised we would not do this, but we did it. We have some testimony over in the Senate, and it should lead us to be a little concerned about what we have done. We need to actually support the amendments proposed by the Conservatives and do some proper process in terms of making sure that we are going to move forward with a piece of legislation that is going to get the job done. Otherwise, again, it is another broken promise and another failure of the Liberals.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

This bill will implement key measures from our 2018 budget, including measures aimed at reducing poverty, improving equality and fighting tax evasion.

Can my colleague tell us how much money pollution pricing will put back in Canadians' pockets?

I would be very happy if she could answer that simple question.

•(1220)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I will quickly answer that question. Only Liberals could talk about imposing a tax that takes money out of people's pockets and about how much it is going to raise. It is going to be taking money out of people's pockets.

Government Orders

What I really want to focus on, and it was the focus of my speech, is the report stage amendment that talked about the government's commitment to first nations and its commitment to Canadians to not introduce omnibus legislation, not put into budget implementation bills anything that was not in the budget, and its commitment, again, to have full consultation with first nations before it introduced a piece of legislation that impacted first nations.

The government has allowed for none of that, and it should be ashamed of itself.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave an excellent speech that really highlights the profound dissonance between the things we see happening in this House every day and the kinds of rhetoric we heard from the government on the campaign trail, the things Liberals say when they are out and about that are totally different from the actions taken here.

We have important changes that affect first nations, and yet very little discussion is happening on those issues in this House. I think my colleague's speech was the first one we heard that really focuses and drills into those issues. Even the questions from the government side do not reflect those issues.

I wonder if the member could speak further about the implications for indigenous Canadians when big changes are made, not only without consultation but without anything resembling a proper debate here in this House.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, with the time allocation on second reading, there was no opportunity to look at this issue at all. The finance committee had very minimal opportunity.

More importantly, we learned from the Senate pre-hearings that the communities that are impacted had no idea that this was coming down and that this was going to be tabled. That was absolutely in direct opposition to what the Liberals committed to doing, which is proper consultation. To be quite frank, I could see us ending up in court again, because the Liberals did not do their job and they did not talk to the people who are going to be impacted by this particular piece of legislation.

The Liberals are now trying to sneak it through in an 802-page bill without anyone paying attention, and this is completely contradictory to anything the Liberals ever promised Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not support the member across the way giving misinformation.

When we look at the government's approach to budgets, the budget implementation bills and so forth, what we see is the Minister of Finance, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and many if not all members of the Liberal caucus working with constituents and stakeholders. I believe they have ultimately come together with a budget that is very sound and that Canadians support.

The budget implementation bill that we are talking about is a reflection on the budget itself. I am wondering if the member across the way would, at the very least, acknowledge that the consultation has been thorough throughout all regions of our country.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely ludicrous.

I have already said that this was not in the budget bill of 2018. As I understand, it was not in the budget bill of 2017.

In terms of talking with the first nations, with respect to the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee, public servants are saying, "we have spoken with them personally and we continue to speak with them about the proposal."

The Treaty Land Entitlement Committee executive is saying, "So out of nowhere, we have this new proposed ATR legislation before the House of Commons." "Out of nowhere" is what they said.

Again, to suggest that people are being engaged across this country and that this 802-page bill does not have some serious issues that should have had proper process is absolutely wrong.

● (1225)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this discussion during the report stage of Bill C-86.

In essence, Bill C-86 would implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27 and other measures. The bill builds on the commitments made during the last election and speaks to the government's plan to invest in the Canadian people to build an economy that works for everyone.

Although not the topic for discussion today, the fall economic statement tabled last week, which among other things addressed a lot of the immediate business concerns regarding competition with the United States, should be added in. In doing so, one can really see that all of the actions put together, including in Bill C-86, really show Canada as the place to be. It is the country with which one can invest and invest with some security. It is a place to raise a family, It is a country with a bright future for its citizens, building on a progressive social and economic agenda that began with our policy thrust that followed the last election.

Bill C-86 starts with improving tax measures for businesses and individuals to ensure every Canada has a real and fair chance of success. Through this bill, our government would improve access to the Canada workers benefit, modernize the federal labour standards and improve protection of bank consumers.

The member opposite talked about the size of the bill, but to do all the things we needed to do and carry forward from the previous budget, it had to be a substantively sized bill.

Through the bill, we would correct the damage done by the previous government against charities. The bill would now allow charities to pursue their charitable purpose, but also would allow them to be involved in the development of public policy. That will give citizens back their rights to participate fully in our democracy, even though they are part of a charity.

Government Orders

The bill addresses pollution pricing. It further legislates gender budgeting and strengthens our capacity to advance gender equality with the creation of status of women as a department.

The bill also addresses pay equity. The idea of equal pay for work of equal value is a very progressive step in this legislation. I want to highlight the bill's proposed measures to introduce this proactive pay equity legislation.

Our government committed to tabling such legislation by the end of this year. Today we are living up that commitment as we have lived up to so many of our commitments we outlined in the last election. We are going above and beyond the current approach. We are moving from a complaints-based system to a proactive system, which will require employers to regularly review their compensation systems, identify inequalities between jobs mostly held by men and jobs mostly held by women and take action to eliminate them. In this way, we are presenting Canadians with balanced, meaningful and effective pay equity reform.

In fact, the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that by taking steps to advance equality for women, such as employing more women in technology and boosting women's participation in the workforce, Canada would add \$150 billion to its economy by 2026. The reality is that better equality for women means a strong economy for all Canadians.

We are delivering a proactive pay equity regime that works for the diverse types of workplaces found in the federal jurisdiction, ranging from the public service to small businesses. As stated earlier, although it is very progressive legislation, it is also good for the economy.

● (1230)

I want to take a moment and turn to a couple of areas that Bill C-86 builds on and adds to that are of special interest to the people in my province. I will start with the Canada child benefit, or CCB.

Compared to the previous system of child benefits, the CCB is simpler, more generous, entirely tax free and better targeted to those families that need it the most. With the CCB, nine out of 10 families with children are now receiving more money each month than under the previous system. To ensure the CCB keeps up with the rising cost of living, we indexed it last summer, two years ahead of schedule. This means the Canada child benefit will provide even more financial assistance to the low and middle-income families that need it most, such as single parent families. The extra support it gives makes a big difference for those working hard to make ends meet, like single working parents. The additional support from the CCB helps pay for things that can make a real difference in a child's future, like nutritious food, sports activities or music lessons.

The government also cut taxes for the middle class, and those cuts are now helping more than nine million Canadians.

By this time next year, as a result of these two measures, a typical family of four will receive about \$2,000 more each year in benefits than it received in 2015.

However, there is another factor with respect to the Canada child benefit that is not often talked about, and that is the stress it takes away from the enjoyment of life for low-income families, the

working poor that have children, and their ability to do the job and participate in the general community. The Canada child benefit lessens that stress. It gives them the opportunity to fully participate in the social and economic affairs of the nation.

The bottom line is that this means more money in the pockets and bank accounts of hard-working Canadians, more money to help with the high cost of raising their children and more money for them to save, invest or spend in their own communities. We are seeing the benefits of that across the economy. Canada's economy is strong and growing, and our plan is working.

The budget implementation act also includes an important measure that would directly invest in those Canadians who want to work. I am talking about the Canada workers benefit, or CWB, which would allow low-income workers to take home more money while they work. The new Canada workers benefit is a more generous benefit that will replace the current working income tax benefit as of next year. The CWB is designed to encourage more people to enter and stay in the workforce and to help more than two million Canadians who are working hard to join the middle class.

Under the new CWB, low-income workers earning \$15,000 annually could get almost \$500 more in benefits in 2019 than they are getting this year. In addition, the CWB's expanded eligible income range will ensure that more workers are entitled to receive it. This will be a big improvement for those Canadians overall. Improvements in the new Canada workers benefit will lift approximately 70,000 Canadians out of poverty.

Bill C-86, which we are dealing with at report stage, really builds on our commitments made in the last election. It is another step along in the process to ensure that all Canadians have the best chance to participate in our social and economic affairs as a nation, as well as to ensure families are more prosperous and have more tools at their disposal to participate in our great country called Canada.

● (1235)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they say that people always sing the tune that pleases their benefactor. It is a good Yiddish proverb that applies here. The member for Malpeque happens to have the highest benefactor in the land, the Prime Minister, and he sits as the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance, a committee I happen to sit on too.

I want to grab onto a couple of words he said at the very beginning of his speech, a speech I do not think aged very well since it was written. With the Oshawa plant announcement and the closing of it, we cannot be saying that the economy is growing all that fast. However, he talked about the fall economic statement. He knows full well that last Tuesday at committee I moved a motion to invite the Minister of Finance to come and defend the fall economic statement and present to the committee.

Government Orders

Now, that member was not able to vote. However, I want to hear from him why the members on that side of the House, his side, vote against asking the Minister of Finance to appear before the committee.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, we have been very fortunate at the finance committee to have the Minister of Finance come before it many times. He was just there a short while ago for an hour, as were officials after that. I believe it was on the estimates and Bill C-86. As well, as a country, Canadians would want the minister to be out there talking about the programs the government is implementing.

I want to come back to the first part of the member's question. Yes, we are certainly saddened about what happened in Oshawa with respect to General Motors. Things happen in an economy. Sometimes there is a shock to the economy. What this government is doing is investing in the economy so we can be assured, as a country, that we are not tied to one industry or one town. There is no doubt that the government will deal with that problem. We have always tried to be there for the workers in these kinds of situations and have made the necessary investments to ensure business can continue. The fall economic statement addresses that fact as well with respect to ensuring our industries are able to compete with those tax reforms south of the border.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague's comments with respect to charities. He knows, or should know, that the aspects recently litigated with respect to charities law and the allowance for political involvement of charities were not things introduced into law by the previous government. These were long-standing measures. I know many Conservatives support greater flexibility for charities to be involved in the public policy debate, but this was a question of the previous government involved in litigation related to long-standing principles, which was litigation continued under his government. It is something he maybe conveniently wishes to forget.

On this side of the House, we are very consistent in supporting the right of civil society organizations to be involved in conversations about public policy issues. Why did his government seek to limit that right through its values test attestation as part of the Canada summer jobs program? If it is so committed to allowing charities, not-for-profit organizations, to be involved in public policy conversations even where they may disagree with the government, why did it bring in a values test associated with that program?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, what happened with respect to charities in the last term of Stephen Harper should be a subject the Conservatives want to avoid. The Conservative government, under Stephen Harper, clearly attacked the political rights of those who happened to belong to a charity. Was there a witch hunt against those charities by the previous government? I am not sure. However, the fact is that we are trying to allow those charities to do their charity work and also allow them to be involved in the political policy process, which is the essence of democracy. That is what the previous Conservative government tried to take away from those Canadians who belonged to charities.

We are doing the right thing. I am absolutely proud of what we are doing to give charities the right to collect and do good work, but also to participate in the policy discussions of this nation.

● (1240)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the second budget implementation act of 2018. Of course, this one, like its predecessor, is quite large and has a lot of different things to talk about. I am going to try to spend more time on one aspect of the bill, as opposed to trying to cover the many other aspects of the bill in 10 minutes. If one takes the latter approach, there really is not enough time to say anything of substance at all, which is part of the problem with having budget implementation acts of this size.

The member who spoke previously offered what I think is a pretty timid defence of these kinds of massive budget implementation acts, namely, that there is a lot in the budget and that if we want to get all of these things done, we have to put them all in one omnibus bill. Of course, that was not a justification his party subscribed to when the previous government engaged in this kind of activity. If one is trying to be charitable, it is passing strange that, suddenly, that is an acceptable justification. It is also not a very good one.

It is quite obvious, for anyone who has looked at the budget document, to see that it is hundreds of pages long and signals many different policy intentions of the government, some of them quite vague because they were not necessarily very well developed in time for the budget. For the government to later say it can do this because the item in question was mentioned in passing in the budget, I do not think is quite fair.

The budget includes vacuous phrases about helping the middle class, and then we see clauses in this 800-and-some-page budget implementation act that have nothing to do with anything discussed in the election campaign or even in the budget document. The Liberals say that in their opinion this helps the middle class, so it was foreseen in the budget and makes perfect sense to include it in the budget implementation act. Arguments like that do not pass muster, as far as we are concerned on this side of the House. That is why I felt it was important to begin by acknowledging the problem with this kind of massive bill.

Getting into the details of some of what is in the bill and using pay equity as an example—although I think the arguments I am going to make can be applied to various other types of measures in the budget implementation act—one of the problems is the fact that some acts under the government have been heavily time allocated.

At committee, when we are talking about a massive and important change that needs to happen when it comes to paying women fairly in this country, we want time to be able to make sure that we get the legislation right. Why do we want that? It is not so that opposition politicians can spend a whole bunch of time talking in the House. Just because the government drafted legislation does not mean it is perfect. It does not mean that it would do what was intended even with the best of intentions.

Government Orders

We know from the committee process for this bill that a lot of flags have been raised by people who are strong advocates of pay equity, who have been waiting a long time for this legislation and, I think to their credit, who also have been working collaboratively as best they can with the government in the hope that it would get it right, and who are taking the government at its word that it wants to see pay equity implemented in this country.

It was a long wait. For Canadian women it has been a decades-long wait. However, it has been a long wait even within the life of this parliament, because we are over three years into this parliament and are only now getting legislation. There is no good excuse for that. In 2004, the pay equity task force of the day did this work and came up with good model legislation, in fact, legislation that is seen internationally as the gold standard and that has inspired and been the resource used by many other countries to implement pay equity, long ahead of Canada who commissioned the work. That is one of the ironies.

The legislation presented in this massive bill got only a limited amount of time at committee, which meant that tough decisions had to be made about prioritizing what would and would not be discussed, and where the effort to make amendments would go and where it would not.

• (1245)

That means that what was presented in this budget implementation act did not get the attention it needs, particularly when people like the president of the Canadian Labour Congress are saying they have worked on pay equity for a long time and that this bill does not do it. That means that Canadian women are going to have to try to straighten this legislation out in the court system, as opposed to having it done here, where it should be done in good faith, a lot more quickly and cost effectively. Who is going to pay for the legal challenges? If the government decides to defend its own inadequate legislation, then taxpayers will be asked to pay for the bad work of the government that could have been improved.

When amendment after amendment was presented in committee by the NDP, working with the same people who worked with the government in good faith over the last three years trying to get them to present decent legislation, those amendments were voted down. For instance, there is qualifying language in the purpose of the act to establish pay equity, such as “while taking into account the diverse needs of employers”. That is nice to put in the bill. We can understand why it seems like a common sense phrase and it would be fine if we were not talking about a fundamental right of Canadian women to be paid fair value for their work.

We do not need that kind of language, which allows for so-called solutions that do not actually meet the bar of paying women fairly, to be implemented under the auspices of this kind of caveat, until it is challenged in court and found not to be consistent with the right of women in Canada to receive equal pay for work of equal value. That is another years-long court battle that will not be free. We are going to pay for that battle when we could have fixed it here. In the meantime, Canadian women are not going to be paid what they deserve to be paid for the work they do. There is a lot of frustration and a lot of ways in that we could have done better.

Similarly, in this legislation, there is language similar to that in Quebec legislation to the effect that when decisions were made about compensating women in the past for their work and they were not paid properly, it would be done between the first pay equity review and the five-year review, limiting the period of compensation to five years. We can see why some people would want that to be the case. It is not fair to Canadian women. We have known for decades that there is a problem. This should have been addressed a long time ago, and if it had, we would not have to make huge retroactive payments, but it was not done then. People ought to have acted sooner. In the case of Quebec, the courts found that that kind of provision was not constitutional and did not respect women's right to be paid properly for the work they do.

We already know that this kind of clause does not pass muster. We do not need to include it. We do not need to incite another long legal battle just to get to where we already should be. Above all, it is frustrating to see this from a government that is led by a feminist Prime Minister who believes in pay equity. The government made Canadian women wait three years for this legislation and we already know that this legislation is not good enough.

We see similar frustrating hypocrisies, frankly, when it comes to the Canada Post strike. One of the major issues is a pay equity issue. The government passed back-to-work legislation in the House on Friday above the objections of the union and certainly above the objections of the NDP. There is some terms of reference language around pay equity, but nothing that actually mandates pay equity that the women working at Canada Post deserve, as the court has said as recently as September.

We keep hearing time and time again from Canadian women, Canadian workers and Canadian courts that this needs to be dealt with now. It is a question of justice for Canadian women, who, for too long, have been asked to do work of equal value without getting equal pay. We have a government that says this is what it wants to do and that it wants to honour it, and yet when the time comes to actually getting it done, we are left wanting, knowing that we will have to go back to the same courts that have already said Canadian women deserve fair pay. That is just one example of what is wrong with this bill.

• (1250)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spent a considerable amount of time talking about pay equity. One of the most important things we can do to achieve pay equity is to make sure that we do not put a burden on women who are raising children. We need to make sure that the right supports are there for child care in particular, as we have heard time and time again.

Early in its mandate, this government brought in the Canada child benefit, which was a great change from the previous government, in that this benefit went to support families that needed it more than families that did not.

How does the member see the role of child care in this discussion around equity in the workforce, and pay equity as it relates to women specifically?

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, early in its mandate the government introduced a bill to repeal Bill C-377, but did not repeal it right away. Then, what we heard on Friday was that every assault by the government since then on collective bargaining, whether the tight restrictions it wanted to put on collective bargaining in Bill C-7 for RCMP members or the back-to-work legislation it rammed through on Friday, should somehow be forgiven because it repealed Bill C-377.

Early in its mandate the government brought in the child benefit, which did something for low-income families. The funny thing is that that is not in keeping with the government's theme either. Looking at the changes to parental leave under EI, how are low-income families going to be able to access that? They already have low incomes and cannot afford to live on 33% of their income. The extended parental leave time is for who? Is it for low-income families that want to spend more time at home with each other, or is it for the high-income families the government said it was taking on when it eliminated the original UCB?

This is the thing. Early on, the Liberals implemented a couple of their election commitments to workers and low-income families, and that is now supposed to forgive everything else they do for their Bay Street buddies and big multinational companies. The evidence does not bear out that they are serious about helping real Canadians who are struggling every day.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy hearing from the member. He has very good things to say.

With the Liberal government, we are facing a scenario of rising debt and annual deficits way beyond what were promised. We have rising inflation and rising interest rates. Billions of dollars of investment are being lost in Canada. There is a crisis in our Canadian energy sector, and today we learned what is happening in Oshawa.

Does the member have anything he would like to say in regard to the fact that the Liberal government insists on continuing to borrow against the future of our children and grandchildren?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, it is a concern. Where the member and I would probably disagree is that the NDP believe there are ways we can mobilize the wealth of Canada to help Canadians without incurring massive debt. That could be done by ensuring that corporations pay their fair share.

That is why in the last campaign we talked about raising the corporate tax rate. We talked about closing the CEO stock option loophole, something the Liberals promised to do and then changed direction on after being elected to government.

That is why we talk often in this place about closing the option that wealthy Canadians have to use tax havens. That is why we speak against the kind of sweetheart tax treaties that Liberal and Conservative governments have signed with countries like Barbados, the Cayman Islands and others. That is definitely a concern.

No great interest is served by ordering Canadian workers to pay a lot of interest to banks of all people, rather than our being honest about raising revenue to pay for things that would help them.

It also means having rules and expectations in place and enforced by contract when the government provides bailouts to companies like GM, rather than letting corporate Canada walk all over us. That was not done. There was no guarantee that in exchange for taxpayer money, GM would keep jobs in the country, and we see the consequences of that today when we hear that thousands of jobs will be leaving.

The government is certainly not a piggy bank for corporate Canada, but unless we have governments that have the courage to stand up to big corporations and impose some limits on them, we are going to continue to see these kinds of problems arise.

• (1255)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here this morning to speak at the report stage of Bill C-86.

We heard the news this morning with respect to General Motors, and the workers and their families are in our thoughts. Our government will do everything we can to support them during this period.

Canadians are an ambitious lot and they expect the same from their government. They expect us to be ambitious. They expect us to be bold. They expect us to be trailblazers. In this globally competitive world in which we work, operate and compete, we know that Canadians can compete and succeed globally, which is what they are doing. We also know that our strong economic performance is not only about a strong economic record of performance; it is also about ensuring that all Canadians benefit from strong economic growth. Yes, our government has been bold on pursuing policies that will ensure a robust and strong future for our economy and our workers and help those middle-class Canadians working hard and those who wish to join the middle class and are working hard, but also to ensure that all Canadians benefit. That is what our government has been about since we were elected in October 2015.

In Bill C-86, our poverty reduction targets are one of the things that defines this government. First, we are aiming to reduce poverty levels to 20% below the 2015 level by 2020 and to 50% below the 2015 level by 2030. That is ambitious. We put out a policy paper on that, "Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy: Opportunity For All", which I looked at over the weekend. That paper is telling of what our government's values are and the values for Canadians and how we are going to lift up Canadians, but we are also going to ensure that those people who take risks are rewarded.

Corporations are enjoying after-tax profit levels that can be measured by margins at a very high level. They are doing well. Wage growth has rebounded from the previous government's era of policies that basically led to stagnation. Employees are doing well. Workers are doing well. That is what our government is about.

Government Orders

Since 2016, the Canada child benefit has provided an extra \$25 billion to families in Canada over five years. The guaranteed income supplement provides \$647 million or roughly \$3 billion or \$4 billion over a couple of years, helping 900,000 single seniors across Canada, our most vulnerable, and lifting hundreds of thousands of them out of poverty. The Canada workers benefit provides \$3 billion over five years, lifting 70,000 Canadians out of poverty and helping two million Canadians from coast to coast who are working hard. For someone earning approximately \$15,000, that is an extra \$500 a year. Those are our policies. That is our values statement on where our government is taking this country.

In 2017, we had 3% economic growth and this year it is around 2% and change. We are going the right way. Recently, the Governor of the Bank of Canada was at the finance committee, a committee which I have the pleasure of sitting on. He stated that our economy is chugging along nicely, benefiting from strong export growth and good business investment levels. We have seen that, and we should be proud of that.

Bill C-86 also introduces a number of measures that will benefit my kids in the future. There is pay equity legislation to ensure equal value for equal work. That would benefit women. My two daughters at home will know that the work they do will be rewarded the same as other work. That is very important and should be applauded. We have said that the ministry for women is a full ministry getting full resources. Again, we must reduce and remove structural barriers that women face in this country. We must also help other countries pursue those endeavours, because we know that for Canada and Canada's economy to truly succeed, all Canadians must be full participants. That includes under-represented groups and all Canadians.

I am proud of Bill C-86. There is a lot in it. There is a lot we went through during committee. There is a lot that will strengthen our foundational economy and move us forward. We will do it in a very measured, prudent way.

● (1300)

As many members know, and many of my colleagues have repeated a few times, I spent approximately 22 years in the global financial markets in New York City and Toronto. I was a credit rating analyst which basically means I looked up the ratings of corporations and sovereigns. Canada's AAA rating is thanks to former finance minister Paul Martin. It has been that since our government many years ago. We will maintain our fiscal anchor, our fiscal target and the targeted debt-to-GDP ratio is going to decline. It is going to hit about 28.5% in the 2023-24 period. Again, we are undertaking measures that will strengthen our economy, help the middle class, help those Canadians wishing to join the middle class. We will do it in a measured, prudent manner. That is what we see in many of the measures in Bill C-86.

One of the things that is emphasized by economists is this thing called the labour force participation rate. We see now in Canada looking at working age Canadians, 15-year-olds to 64-year-olds, we are at the highest rate of labour force participation in our history. Why is that? Yes, we have created 550,000 jobs in Canada, a majority of them full time and a majority of them in the private sector. I say "we" very humbly because it is risk-takers across the

country, entrepreneurs, small business owners like the ones in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, very successful people who invest their time and resources, who take risks and yes, hire and employ folks.

What has happened is the labour force participation rates have risen for all groups, including women and under-represented groups. That is what we need to succeed. That is what we are seeing. Bill C-86 contains those types of measures: pay equity legislation which is groundbreaking; a ministry for women; child-rearing drop-in positions; a new parental sharing benefit. It is said that the sincerest form of flattery is imitation, and those provisions are similar to the ones that are used in the province of Quebec. When two parents can share benefits, they get an extra couple of weeks. In Quebec, the labour force participation rate for women is much higher than in other parts of the country. With this, we will improve that. We have learned a measure from la belle province.

On the poverty reduction targets, I cannot emphasize this more than to say that we will be going from one in eight in poverty, about 12% of the population today, to about one in 10 in 2020, which is 10% and we have targeted one in 17, which is roughly 6%. Currently, we have lifted 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by the measures we have introduced in the last three years. That is something worth recognizing, but we need to recognize there is more work to be done.

I often like to say that we have done a lot for our economy. There are a lot of good things. We have created 550,000 jobs. We have attracted a lot of investment. LNG was approved in my home province of British Columbia. I say it is my home province because that is where I was born and raised. However, our work is not done until all Canadians can succeed, have a good job with benefits, good pay and provide for a brighter future for themselves, and most importantly, their families as many of us do here. That is what is important. That is the material in Bill C-86. It was those measures that I had the pleasure of debating at committee.

We have also done some other things that Canadians will benefit from. We have improved their protection when they visit a bank or financial institution. We have introduced measures to make sure that all organizations, all high net worth individuals, pay their fair share of taxes. We continue to do that. We have invested \$1 billion into the CRA in the last two or three years to ensure that it has the resources and tools to go after those who are not paying their fair share.

In my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, I am blessed to have a number of entrepreneurs. They are going to benefit in January 2019. We have moved our small business tax rate from 11% down to 10% and now we are moving it down to 9%, a savings of \$7,500 annually for small business owners that work tirelessly day in and day out.

Those are my humble thoughts today on Bill C-86 and I look forward to questions and comments.

Government Orders

•(1305)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague knows that both of us share the concern about the issue of poverty. I have asked him about it in the past.

This budget legislates some targets. Of course the government totally bypassed those making less than \$45,000 a year. The previous government cut taxes for the lowest marginal rate and we raised the base exemption. These were things that were not done by the Liberal government, and were much more targeted at those who are struggling and who need the tax relief the most.

We hear a lot of talk from the government about legislating goals in terms of poverty. I found this article in the *Globe and Mail* which I think he might find interesting. It states:

The Liberal government spent \$500,000 on outside advisers to come up with a logo, name and branding for a new agency that promises to alleviate poverty... internal documents revealed.

The government spent \$500,000 for a logo. I honestly do not even think it is that good a logo. My five-year-old daughter is available to do some drawings next time the government wants to save a little money.

How many people were lifted out of poverty by legislating aspirations and by a \$500,000 logo?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his thoughts. He and I actually co-chair the Canada-Holy See Parliamentary Friendship Group. The big message from Pope Francis in a number of his speeches and homilies is for social justice. With that, social justice is helping the poor and helping refugees, helping those less fortunate. That is what is contained in our poverty reduction targets. That is what I would answer to my colleague.

The things we are doing with the national housing strategy, cutting taxes for nine million Canadians and setting targets are things that we need to do as a government. Again, Canadians expect an ambitious government. They are ambitious. We need to act in the same way. Our targets for poverty reduction are bold.

I am glad the member's daughter is a great drawer. I have two daughters and they draw a lot as well.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for referring in his speech to the important piece of legislation around pay equity. I served on the Special Committee on Pay Equity, which tabled its report in June 2016. It is getting close to two and a half years later and we are finally seeing the legislation.

I want to call to the attention of my hon. colleague how long women have been waiting for their basic human right, and that is to receive equal pay for work of equal value. It is their constitutional right. It has been over 42 years.

Now, with this legislation, much of which did not take into account amendments proposed by our expert witnesses, it has actually watered things down. I do want to call to everyone's attention that Canada did have the gold standard of a pay equity report done in 2004, the Bilson report. Most people who came

forward and spoke to the Special Committee on Pay Equity said that the government should implement that report, not redo everything, and actually move forward and start to look at the intersectional issues of pay equity between gender and race.

I just wanted to bring that forward. Could the hon. member comment on the fact that it will be four more years before any pay equity impact lands in the lives of working women?

•(1310)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for that very important question, because ensuring equal pay for equal work is a human rights issue, and our government is addressing it. We are not only addressing it with pay equity legislation contained in the BIA, but we are also addressing it using gender-based analysis when we do our budget. We are also addressing it when we improve EI benefits on parental sharing.

It is not just one measure; it is a number of measures. Currently the ratio is about 88.5¢ for every dollar. We need to close that gap and make sure that women in this country are paid the same, equal value for equal work. We are moving that way.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joining the debate. I have been listening to different members provide their views on the contents of the BIA. Some members have elected to go with a more generalist approach and have talked about the economy. Others have focused on specific clauses, and I will do the same. I am going to focus in the latter half of my comments on clause 470, which was debated at the Standing Committee on Finance, and the very specific amendments proposed.

For a lot of BIAs I have seen before the House of Commons proposed by the Government of Canada, one could say lose an hour in the morning and then chase it all day, which is a Yiddish proverb. It means that if one wastes a lot of time at the beginning of the day, one is going to wind up always trying to catch up, which is what the government has done over the past three years. It is always playing catch-up and using its BIAs to play catch-up.

We seem to waste an inordinate amount of time in the House speaking to different pieces of proposed legislation, and the government never seems to have all its ducks in a row. We saw it with Canada Post over the weekend. It just does not seem to be able to schedule important pieces of legislation and actually consult with this side of the House on matters that interest us.

Government Orders

I would call the BIA an epic failure of leadership. It was time allocated speedily into committee. Once it reached committee, there was what I would call a guillotine motion imposed on members of the opposition, which quite a few New Democrats complained about. It was very stringent in how we could look at it. If we took any time to translate briefs, translate recommendations and amend proposals for amendments, it left very little time for opposition members to propose thoughtful amendments. We tried. We proposed many, but all of them were voted down by the government. I will focus on clause 470 and a specific amendment proposed by the member for Foothills, which received broad support from opposition parties who were members of the committee.

This particular BIA, again, is coddling and compounding the problem of the deficit we have. There was a promise made by the Prime Minister that the government would run itsy-bitsy, tiny little deficits, and in 2019, in just 30 or so days, it would be running a balanced budget, which it has failed to do. Not only did the Liberals fail to do anything about it, but as far as the eye can see, we will have further and further deficits. The contents of the BIA will compound that problem.

In 2017, the net debt hit an all-time high of \$670 billion. If we include Crown corporation debt, we are actually over \$1 trillion in debt already. Per Canadian family, that is \$47,612. If we look at what an average single family is earning with a single earner, they are very comparable.

I heard members mention that the CRA was getting extra tools and extra funding. However, the CRA was lambasted and heavily criticized last Tuesday in the Auditor General's report, which said that with the billion dollars spent on salaries for extra auditors, there were two systems: one for regular Canadians, and one for the monied elite and lobbyists. If people have a problem with the CRA, like some of my constituents, it will chase them down for every single penny owed and make sure that they pay. It will garnish their wages if it has to and take it straight out of their bank accounts. However, if one happens to have an offshore bank account, perhaps in the Caribbean, and has difficulty completing filing or is not on time, the CRA will give one month or years or maybe just close the file and not bother to follow up. Every single year, for the past three years, the CRA has been ticking upwards in its inability to collect taxes, so it is simply writing off billions of dollars it finds it is incapable of collecting.

Back in my home province of Alberta, "build that pipe" is fast becoming the motto or slogan of our province. The Prime Minister experienced it last week when, for the first time I think in a very long time, we saw thousands of Calgarians take to the streets to protest his speech at the Chamber of Commerce. I can say that he did not do well at all. It was quite a frosty reception he received from the business community. Among the protesters, we saw a lot of people in business suits who had come out at lunch time just so they could protest the Prime Minister. Again, in this BIA, there is nothing for them.

To the clause I want to talk about, I think a lot of Canadians will be quite surprised to learn that there are two different sets of systems for bereaved parents. The first system, we are told by officials, is 17 weeks of maternity benefits if one happens to lose a child through a death. That does not apply to fathers, who get five days. They get

three paid days and two unpaid days. That seems patently unfair when the member for Foothills offered up an amendment to provide 12 weeks of bereavement leave, regardless of whether it was a mother or father.

• (1315)

We actually suspended the meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance for it to be dealt with, clause by clause, at the end of the day, which we did. Eventually, the members of the government caucus voted against providing equality for bereaved fathers in a situation where they have lost a child, for whatever reason that is. It was a very reasonable amendment proposed by the member for Foothills.

Certain members of the government caucus questioned how they could make a decision to provide 12 weeks of bereavement leave if they did not have all the information, when there was so much in the BIA they were already doing. There is leave provided, 104 weeks, for instance, that would be adjusted, in cases where a child has been killed as the result of a crime. In those cases, 104 weeks is provided to either parent.

In a case where a mother loses a perinatal child, a baby, she is eligible for up to 17 weeks, under the maternity benefits. However, after 17 weeks and a day, she is not eligible for more. The Conservative amendment that was proposed would have fixed that. It would have provided either parent with an opportunity to grieve for the child they lost, bury him or her, and take care of the other children, if they had any.

Members will know that my youngest daughter passed away in August. Therefore, this was of particular interest to me, because a lot of dads and moms have contacted me over the past few months, both to share their sadness and to explain their experience with the Government of Canada system and the different workplaces they have been in.

I wonder why members on the opposite side would continue to insist that we vote against this particular amendment on clause 470. It was very reasonable. Again, they said that they simply did not have enough information. I would point out to them that the BIA is almost 900 pages long, and because of the guillotine motion, a programming motion that only provided a few weeks to consider the vast contents of this piece of legislation, it is impossible for any member to honestly say that he or she has read every single line and understood every single component. I will admit to not understanding all the components, and I am focusing on those of the greatest interest to me. When I suggested that we delay clause-by-clause consideration just an extra day to get a Department of Justice opinion on whether the 17 weeks and the 12 weeks conflicted, which was one of the arguments for voting against the motion, I was told that it was unnecessary, and we proceeded to a vote, and it was voted down.

Government Orders

The reason I bring it up here is that I will quite gladly vote against this BIA because of procedural tricks like this, procedural tricks the Government of Canada and the Liberal Party expressly said they would not use. I would remind the Liberal members that I have probably read their platform much more closely than they have. On page 30, it states, “We will not resort to legislative tricks to avoid scrutiny.” It goes on to say, “We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice.” It speaks specifically about omnibus legislation, which they have here again.

The Speaker elected, for the second time now, to split out portions of the omnibus bill because they did not match the budget. In my office, whenever a BIA is presented to us, we go through it to compare it to the budget document to see what is actually in the budget and what is in the BIA to make sure that the Liberals live up to the promise of not engaging in procedural tricks.

I will gladly vote against this piece of legislation, because it is unfair to dads and unfair to those who are grieving for a child they have lost and because the Liberals are again engaging in procedural tricks, which they expressly said they would not do.

• (1320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the government has been very faithful in the commitments it made to Canadians last year, especially relating to all budget matters, such as the commitment to Canada's middle class with respect to tax breaks. Today we heard other Conservative members ask about those who are making less than \$45,000. All I need to do is remind my Conservatives friends of the Canada child benefit program or the guaranteed income supplement, which have been profoundly positive for them.

The member talked specifically about the size of the budget implementation bill. We passed Standing Orders that in essence allowed the Speaker to take into consideration, in a very real way, the need to break it up where it was deemed necessary, for the first time in years. Stephen Harper, as prime minister, never ever supported amendments coming from the opposition benches. That is quite the opposite of what has happened under this administration.

Would the member not agree that the reason he is voting against this budget implementation bill is because of Stephen Harper and his leadership? The Conservatives were going to vote against it no matter what the contents were.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member brings up the changes to the Standing Orders. He knows it is basically an indictment of the Liberals' own process, because it means that they do not trust the Minister of Finance and his department to get the job done properly in the first place and go through the budget bill and make sure that the BIA is consistent with it. It is an admission of failure once again.

The member mentioned those earning \$45,000 and less and then brought up the child benefit, which only applies if one has children, and the GIS, which only applies if one is retired, 65 and over. Anyone else who is a working stiff, who is just trying to get by, does not get anything. Actually, that person gets slammed with a higher cost of living. Study after study has proven that the Liberal government is layering extra costs onto low-income Canadians.

To his point about amendments, maybe he should talk to the members of the Standing Committee on Finance about clause 470 and the amendment proposed by the member for Foothills that was refused on spurious grounds that did not provide equality for fathers who are grieving the loss of a child. That is the type of amendment that should be passed by the House, because it is not a partisan issue.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member makes a great point about poverty. The way the Liberals approached the child benefit, and it is a good thing they finally came on board in supporting something we did, which was bring in the universal child care benefit, was to change it in certain ways and repackage it. However, at the very least, it was one area where they saw the light, to some extent, which was that giving support directly to parents was better than giving it to bureaucracies.

I am very struck by what the member had to say about equality for fathers. I am a father. I have young children. He is a father as well and has been through a situation that relates very particularly to the provisions he talked about. It is so frustrating when we hear in certain quarters, perhaps socially or in government policy, the presumption that somehow the role of fathers is not important or that fathers would feel less bereaved in a situation of losing a child or that, in general, the engagement of fathers with their children is somehow less important than it is for mothers. I think the member feels the same way I do about that. We hear it come up in certain social conversations and situations. It is something that is wrong. It undermines the role of fathers, and it needs to be pushed back on.

Given the discussion of gender equality and so many other things we discuss in the House, could the member speak to how Liberal members could vote down an amendment that recognizes the role of fathers in their children's live and recognizes that equality?

• (1325)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member asks an important question. I even asked officials at committee whether there was a gender-based analysis done. They could not answer the question, because they simply did not know.

The member for Vaughan—Woodbridge talked about his daughter being quite the artist and how she could have provided a much cheaper option for the government on the FinDev logo than was provided. It is just another case in point. I think we could go to kindergarten and grade 1 classes in our ridings and offer up a MP competition to save the government a little money. It is an example. He knows his daughter quite well. He knows her likes and dislikes. We are heavily involved in the raising of our kids, and we take great pride in it. I think all members in the House take great pride in it.

Government Orders

When we are given an opportunity at a committee to come together in a bipartisan way to vote for providing grieving parents with greater benefits, we should do so.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise today to speak to the fall economic statement, and to bring some facts to the discussion.

The 2018 fall economic statement is proof our government is creating real change for Canadians. Our government's plan to strengthen the middle class and grow the economy is working, and the results speak for themselves. Across Canada, more Canadians are working than ever before, wages are growing and middle-class Canadians have more money to save, invest and grow the economy.

In 2017, Canada had the strongest growth of all G7 countries. At 3% annually, we are projected to remain among the fastest-growing economies in the coming years.

In the past three years, our government has created more than half a million new full-time jobs. As a result, the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.8%, the lowest in 40 years. Not only that, employment gains by women have been especially strong and the level of employed Canadian women is at its highest in history.

Our government is also ensuring current wage growth is outpacing inflation, which improves the quality of life for all Canadians. These results speak for themselves. Since 2015, we have seen a strong and steady growth in both the economy and in job creation. Our government is committed to continuing this progress.

The fall economic statement is also proof our government provides tangible and valuable support for Canadian businesses and international investments. Since 2015, we have committed to funding Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises to help them explore new export opportunities.

In July 2017, we implemented the Canadian free trade agreement, which reduces barriers to internal trade in goods and services, investments and worker mobility from all provinces. This is important because if we cannot trade internally and we do not have internal mobility, how will we survive externally?

Through the federal development business innovation initiative, our government has provided mentorship, entrepreneurship, support and financing to help new businesses grow and succeed. In November last year, I had the pleasure of announcing a \$400,000-investment in Clear Blue Technologies in my riding of Don Valley East. This small and medium-sized enterprise is leading the way on climate adaptability, by making effective use of sustainable and renewable sources of energy. This is the new economic way, and it will play an important part in shaping Canada's future economy.

Through our government's contribution, this company has been able to expand its marketing activities and sell its technologies to a broader range of international clients, including Côte d'Ivoire. The project alone is expected to create up to 33 full-time jobs. It reinforces our government's commitment to supporting innovative businesses, while advancing our support for the clean technology sector.

As a government, we work hard to ensure the economic well-being of Canadians, as well as that of the businesses, remains our priority.

Also, one of the government's top priorities is to ensure Canada is the top destination for businesses to invest, grow and create jobs and prosperity. We have created the strategic innovation fund, which has since proven successful in attracting and supporting business investment in Canada. Over the past years, several international corporations have invested in Canada, including Amazon, Thomson Reuters, Google, Toyota, UPS and Microsoft, increasing the number of full-time jobs.

● (1330)

On international trade, we have successfully negotiated the CETA, the CPTPP and the USMCA. Statistics indicate that one in every eight Canadian jobs is tied directly to international trade. This amounts to approximately two million jobs in the economy. In Don Valley East, I had the pleasure to announce the grants given to six SMEs that were export ready. They have taken advantage of the trade agreements and have been utilizing markets within the CETA, the CPTPP and the USMCA.

As well, we have reduced small and medium-sized enterprise taxes from 11% to 9%. This has given the impetus for small and medium-sized enterprises to hire more employees. Our government is committed to improving the lives of Canadians on a day-to-day basis.

In 2016, we introduced the Canada child benefit, which is a monthly tax-free benefit designed to help families with the high cost of raising children. To date, the CCB, as it is called, has helped lift more than 500,000 people, including 300,000 children, out of poverty. We have also indexed it to inflation. In my riding of Don Valley East alone, the results have alleviated 17,000 children out of poverty and 9,000 families.

Our government has launched Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, a commitment to \$40 billion over 10 years to provide affordable housing to needy Canadians. As well, in May of this year, we launched the new 10-year, \$13.2-billion national housing co-investment fund, which will provide low-cost loans and financial contributions to support and develop mixed income, mixed tenure and mixed use affordable housing. This initiative alone is expected to create up to 60,000 new housing units and repair up to 240,000 units of existing affordable housing.

In my riding of Don Valley East, the impact has been the repair of 68 townhouses and buildings managed by the Toronto Community Housing, as well as repairs to seniors' buildings. I was at 16 Concorde and the residents were proud to let me know how our investment in infrastructure had helped them make improvements to the buildings. I heard similar stories of gratitude from residents of 2020 and 2040 Don Mills Road.

Seniors are an integral part of our economy and it is therefore important for us to treat them with dignity. That is why our government increased the guaranteed income supplement top-up payment by up to \$947, which has benefited nearly 900,000 low-income seniors. We have also appointed a Minister of Seniors to ensure they get the attention they deserve.

Government Orders

The fall economic statement marks the next steps in our plans. With our 2018 fall economic statement, our government is committed to enhancing confidence in Canada by supporting Canadian businesses as they grow and expand into new markets.

We have come a long way from 2015 when the Harper government, which had inherited a \$13-billion surplus from its predecessor, whittled it down and left us in deficit, increasing the debt by \$156.5 billion. We are ensuring that our investments give us a return on investment.

• (1335)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to challenge the last claim the member made with respect to comparing the fiscal record of the previous government to the current government. It is as if the Liberal government forgot about the global financial crisis. It is as if it forgot that happened and that what happened in late 2008, early 2009 was a government suddenly deciding to spend more money for some reason.

I wonder if the member thinks the deficits run in the immediate aftermath of the global financial crisis had anything to do with global financial events. Does she remember how the Liberals and the New Democrats at the time were pushing the government to spend not less but far more? Does she remember how, in the context of a minority government, the previous government included a timely, temporary and targeted stimulus package that brought us back to a balanced budget? Maybe she will recall how it was her party that thought we should spend far more during those years.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, it is a revisionist's history to which my hon. colleague is referring. The bottom line is that one cannot whittle away \$13 billion in surplus. In fact, the Harper government did not even recognize there was a financial crisis in 2008. The Conservatives were the worst economic managers, and any economist will say that, and Harper had the second worst record after former Prime Minister Mulroney.

We were a basket case in the Mulroney era and then the Chrétien-Martin government rebuilt the economy, leaving a surplus. However, the type of revisionist and la la land economics the member is indulging in is not even plausible.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I talk to people in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, the things they would actually like to see in the budgets coming from the government, from any government, are universal affordable day care and getting to universal pharmacare.

When is the Liberal government going to get to the things that are really important to every Canadian?

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that the Liberal government, under Paul Martin, did introduce universal child care. In fact, in my riding, we had 125,000 child care spaces. Unfortunately, at that time, the NDP voted with the Conservatives and defeated that budget. As well, during 10 years of the former Harper government, the Conservatives did not care about anybody but 1% of the population.

Therefore, we must remember that if we break a system, it must be built back. We hope we have support as we move along toward a progressive agenda.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would note that the member has a great deal of credibility on business matters. I think it was in 2009 when she was given the John Leslie award by CGA Canada for her work in the area of accounting and business.

However, there was one word in the member's speech that really struck me, and it was the word "ambitious". Canada has a 3% growth rate. It is the best in the G7, yet we continue to pursue policies to get things going even more. In other words, we are cutting the tax rate for small business. Investments continue in infrastructure. Of course, we recognize that closing the gender gap, especially in the entrepreneurial area, is not only right and good social policy, but it is a good way to increase the GDP.

I would like the hon. member to comment on that.

• (1340)

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, in the area of economic growth and the number of things we are doing simultaneously, it is important to note that we cut the income tax for the middle class by 7%. Despite that, we have invested in infrastructure.

The Conservatives talk about our deficit, but they left us with the deficit. There was nothing left but crumbling infrastructure. The best thing they did was to announce the economic statement, spending \$172 million on advertising with \$72 million going to real things.

I appreciate the fact that we have been doing so much, but women entrepreneurship is critical. The majority of small and medium-sized enterprises are owned by women. Our government has worked hard to ensure there is a woman entrepreneurship fund to help them move along.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right now in Alberta, over 180,000 people are out of work, and a majority of those people have seen their jobs lost in the last couple of years.

This morning, when I woke up and heard the news that the auto plant was being closed by General Motors, I tweeted the following, "From the tens of thousands of people who have seen their jobs disappear in Alberta, our hearts go out to the people of Oshawa today." That is a legitimate sentiment. If we are going to be a federation, people in different provinces have to stand up for each other.

From the people of Alberta, I want to send a message to those in Oshawa who are affected: We get it. We are going through this right now. It should not happen. Canada should be a place where we have jobs and prosperity.

The interesting thing is that I had several responses to this comment of sympathy. One of them really stuck out for me, and it was this: "Both [job losses] are tied to outdated fuel sources/transportation modes. Economic hardship is always sad, but it was inevitable we would have to pivot."

Government Orders

I want to spend the bulk of my time today refuting the government's budgetary plan, because it is based on this principle of economic management. I have watched the government travel internationally to attend wonderful meetings in Davos, and have heard the speeches the Prime Minister has given in Paris in which he talks about exactly what this Twitter response said. It is a leftist, elitist, academic understanding of the Canadian economy. It is a "let them eat cake" understanding from somebody who has never really had to work a day in his life, told to a bunch of people who only want to work.

They are being told their jobs are dirty and outdated. Do we have outdated modes of transportation? The last time I checked, it was cold in Canada, we did not have magical public transit from every place to every different place, and we drove cars. The last time I checked, the auto sector was one of the most important industries to the Canadian economy. The last time I checked, the energy sector in Alberta created so much revenue for all different levels of government in this country such that at the end of last week, we actually had major financial analysts asking the finance minister how he was going to deal with the significant price differential we are receiving for our energy products, compared to if we had market access for these things, in his budgetary forecast.

That is why the government's approach to budgeting is so fundamentally flawed. Liberals do not understand the fact that Canadians want to work and want to be competitive in some of the world's most important industries, such as energy production or manufacturing. They do not understand what their high-level, bourgeois thinking of what "appropriate" industries or "clean" jobs means to somebody who is just trying to make ends meet. They have not taken any sort of understanding of these concepts into a framework that would make us more competitive, not less competitive, with the United States. They do not understand how fundamentally damaging this is to the fabric of the Canadian federation.

If members were to go door-knocking from house to house in my province right now, as I frequently do in my riding, they would automatically hear a tale of somebody being out of work for a very long period of time. They would hear about how people have had to shutter businesses and how we are losing labour to the United States and to other parts of the world. They would hear about the fact that city council is increasing small business taxes by 25%, because the downtown core is now looking at about a 50% plus vacancy rate, even though we had, I think, a zero vacancy rate in downtown Calgary just a few short years ago.

• (1345)

We will hear one other sentiment and that is, why are we sending money to other parts of the country in equalization payments when the rest of the country will not stand up for us? The reality is that the context has changed since 2015. I used to think the Prime Minister's father, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, was the worst possible Trudeau to Alberta, while he looks absolutely great compared to his son. Bill C-69 finishes the job. It shoots the energy sector in the head. Oil is over under Bill C-69 and maybe that is what the Prime Minister wants. Maybe he is celebrating that, but my community sure is not. The tanker ban, the carbon tax, the political veto of the northern gateway pipeline, not saying anything to President Obama when he

vetoed the Keystone XL pipeline. The Prime Minister and the government have done every single thing possible to kill the energy sector.

In the last budget implementation bill, the Liberals said they were not going to look at the equalization formula. If the Prime Minister will not stand up for the jobs in every part of the country, including Alberta, then we have to look at that formula because it is not fair. I would not be doing my job as a member of Parliament from that province if I did not stand and say he has a responsibility to make policy that is in the best interests of the entire country, not penalize regions because of his or his father's ideological opposition to having power and economic growth in Alberta. That is where we are at.

We cannot look at 180,000 people out of work and at the response that other industries get and the lip service. I look at his response in Calgary on Thursday. I am so proud of my city for getting out and protesting him. I saw that and thought it was great, give him a message. I am so proud of my city for doing that, but at the end of the day, the people of Calgary and of Alberta have always been happy to contribute to the entirety of Canada. They do not want to be out protesting, they just want to work. However, the Prime Minister comes with nothing for my city. He is still pushing through Bill C-69 full steam ahead, full steam to kill the energy sector. He is not even acknowledging the depth of crisis that his ideological opposition to the development of the energy sector has done to the Canadian economy.

The Liberals will stand with their talking points and will say the economy and the environment go hand in hand. There is only one reason that we will see a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, if we do, in Canada, and that is because he has killed the energy sector. His carbon tax will do nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That is because carbon, for the most part in Canada, is inelastic and we cannot set whatever the United Nations report called for, a \$5,500 per megatonne price on carbon, and expect the economy to continue to grow. I cannot stand here on behalf of my constituents and support anything that the government is doing in terms of taxation, in terms of budgeting because it is a lot of spending on nothing. In this entire budget implementation act, there is no spending on any sort of infrastructure that is going to make my city more productive. There is nothing in it for the workers.

Frankly, to add insult to injury, he is not talking about the fact that the Liberals have underwritten and underpinned a continuous welfare system for this country based on the backs of the people in my province. Enough is enough. Either the Prime Minister writes some policy that is in the best interests of the entire country or he starts dealing with the voices of the people in my city and in my province. They are tired of it and they will not go gently into that good night.

Shame on the member for Calgary Centre. Shame on the member for Calgary Skyview. Shame on the members from Edmonton who have had the opportunity to speak up in their caucus for the rights of the people in this country and still see Bill C-69 going forward, still see the budget implementation act going forward, spending and taxing, with nothing happening for them. Enough is enough. There will be more protests like we see in Calgary. We will not go gently into that good night and the bill needs to die.

Statements by Members

•(1350)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to listen to this debate go on and on about the Liberals' capacity to properly run the economy.

However, when we actually look at the stats, there is nothing that could be argued away through circumstance. The reality of the situation is over the last 151 years, the Conservatives have been in power for 38% of the time and have racked up 73% of the national debt. Out of the last 16 budgets introduced by the Conservative Party, 13 of them ran deficits, and two of them that ran surpluses were on the heel of Paul Martin's \$13 billion surplus, and the last was in 2015. We know what they had to do to get there, including selling off shares of GM.

I have a question for the member. She spent a lot of time talking about Alberta specifically. Is the member proud of the fact that in Alberta, currently, the renewable energy sector is doubling every year in size? That is doubling in terms of employment, investment and outcome. Is she proud of that fact, or would she rather see us go back to continuing to use more oil?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, in 2008, Canada saw one of the worst economic downturns since the Great Depression. A Conservative government put in place targeted, short-term infrastructure spending projects, and returned the country back to balanced budgets a few short years later.

The Liberal government, by contrast, in peacetime, has racked up the biggest deficits. Remember the itty-bitty little deficits that the Liberals were supposed to have in 2015? They are massive. Here is the thing, any Canadian who is watching this is going to say, "My taxes have gone up. I have lost my job. What did I get?"

For all the money the Liberals have spent, we should have a gold-plated rocket ship to the moon. We have nothing. Nothing. That is irresponsible spending.

With regard to the clean tech sector, would it not be great if we had the receptor capacity of the big energy sector to adopt some of this technology here in Canada instead of licensing it out? This is a member from Ontario who has fundamentally not educated himself on any aspect of the Canadian economy, including Alberta. I resent being told by him, on behalf of my constituents, what they need. He should have the honour and the responsibility to vote this budget down.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments from the member at the beginning of her speech, because I think all members of this House should acknowledge the economic and social impact that is taking place today in Oshawa, and express our support to the residents of Oshawa. That bridges all political parties.

Having said that, then the member chose to go into more of that attack-style personal western alienation, littered with all sorts of falsehoods. That is what I take exception to. I would ask the member across the way to reflect on how poorly Stephen Harper did for western Canada, whether it was western diversification or the fact that not one pipeline was built that would give us an alternative to the U.S. market. Stephen Harper was a disaster for the Prairies.

Could the member name something of significance that Stephen Harper did for western Canada?

•(1355)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, the lowest federal tax burden over 50 years; four pipelines built; standing up for the energy sector. We had negotiations with the U.S. that saw our economy grow.

Let us talk about western alienation. It is the current Prime Minister who is putting forward job-killing policies that are undermining the fabric of our Confederation. Stephen Harper always told his cabinet to look at policy that built the country. To anybody who is standing up in Calgary right now and asking, "Where is my job? Why are we paying equalization?", it is because the Prime Minister is doing what his father almost did but failed to do, and that is to put Alberta down, to shoot Alberta in the head.

I have had enough of this, and I will stand up here every single time, and for a member of Parliament from Winnipeg, my hometown, to somehow try to whitewash or gloss over the fact that this Prime Minister has done sweet fudge all for western Canada, he should be ashamed. He should be ashamed, and his constituents should vote him out. He should be standing up for western Canada, all of Canada, and he has failed to do it.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions and comments in the last intervention. We will get on with members' statements at this point as we are close enough to 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, there is great concern about the economy not only in my riding of Calgary Skyview but right across the country. Just look at the bad news from Oshawa this morning. I wonder who is next.

My constituents, from business owners to electricians to cab drivers, voice the same fears for the future of Alberta. With no access to world markets for our oil and dropping oil prices, Alberta's economy is in dire straits. We are losing a shocking \$80 million a day in revenue. This money could be used to build hospitals and schools. It could be used to improve infrastructure and social programs.

Bill C-69 in its current form is a huge concern in Alberta.

We understand that the economy and the environment have to go hand-in-hand, but not at the risk of hindering the future development of our natural resources.

Statements by Members

I would urge the government to address all of the concerns raised by the industry regarding Bill C-69, and make the necessary amendments to the bill to ensure that it is both environmentally and economically friendly.

* * *

GREY CUP

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members may have noticed that the hon. member for Ottawa Centre is wearing a Calgary Stampeders jersey. Last Friday, we made a bet on whether Calgary or Ottawa would win this year's Grey Cup.

Well last night, the mighty Stampeders routed the Redblacks to achieve their eighth Grey Cup victory. It was a match well-fought on the frozen tundra of Edmonton's Commonwealth Stadium, but the Stamps pulled through.

Not only this, the Stamps are also making Calgarians proud on and off the field. They support one of my favourite non-profits, CUPS. Through integrated health care, education and housing, CUPS assists Calgarians living with the adversity of poverty and traumatic events to become self-sufficient. It is a worthy cause supported by our Grey Cup champions.

* * *

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago one of my constituents, the father of a young man who died in the Humboldt Broncos bus crash, asked to meet with me to discuss driver training for truckers, and other safety-related issues.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure the families of the crash victims that members of this place, members of the provincial legislatures in Saskatchewan and Alberta and various industry organizations are all working together to improve training and safety standards in a variety of ways. For example, this summer Transport Canada announced that by September 1, 2020, all newly built medium and large highway buses must have seatbelts.

Other steps involving driver training and other safety measures need to be looked at to prevent a tragedy like the Humboldt Broncos crash from ever happening again.

I thank all members of the House and other levels of government for their work on policies to increase safety on large buses, and I look forward to seeing what improved safety and training requirements are implemented to prevent another tragedy like the one that happened to the Broncos from ever happening again.

* * *

●(1400)

[*Translation*]

TOYS FOR JOY

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a committee in my riding that has been around for 29 years now.

Toys for Joy works tirelessly to bring the magic of Christmas to families in need in the northern part of my riding, namely in Grand-Sault, Saint-André, Drummond and New Denmark.

This year's gift drive will take place on Saturday, December 1, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Toner Home Hardware. The committee will be accepting donations of new toys, money and empty bottles and cans.

[*English*]

Each year, the Toys for Joy committee provides for over 250 families with more than 500 children.

The committee relies on donations only, and each year its success is made possible by the help of countless volunteers, the committee itself and generous donations from individuals and businesses.

My thanks for the generous giving of all, whose contributions impact so many families in need.

Help us bring a smile to a child this holiday season.

Last but not least, I wish my son Jack a happy birthday.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PHILANTHROPIC CLOWN GUILLAUME VERMETTE

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Guillaume Vermette is a full-time volunteer who lives out of a backpack and survives on an income of only a few thousand dollars, but he has a heart of pure gold. Everyone's worries fade away when he puts on one of his shows. Just watching this philanthropic clown makes everyone feel happier.

He received an honorary degree on Saturday from the CEGEP in Trois-Rivières and was recognized by young people at the first Marmouth awards gala broadcast on Télé-Québec last year. Beloved by thousands of strangers in the 40 or so countries he has toured, spreading smiles everywhere he goes, Guillaume Vermette is admired by those who love him, and he deserves our respect, recognition and support.

I am still not sure I believe him when he says that everyone could follow in his footsteps and do the same thing he does in order to bring happiness to places where such a thing seems impossible. However, there is absolutely no doubt that he is succeeding.

A minute is not long enough to tell my colleagues all about this philanthropic clown, but I wanted to get this plug in, as they say in communications, and invite them to visit his website in order to learn about what he does and support his work.

Statements by Members

[English]

CANADIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 2018 Canadian Football Hall of Fame induction class was honoured at the Grey Cup festivities in Edmonton. The class included Scott Flory, who had a storied career with the University of Saskatchewan Huskies and Montreal Alouettes.

In college, Flory enjoyed a five-year career, winning two Vanier Cup championships. He, of course, was drafted by Montreal and was a mainstay along its offensive line for 15 years. The 6' 4", 300 pound guard was a nine-time CFL all star. Twice he was named the league's outstanding lineman.

Flory was also part of the Alouettes that played in eight Grey Cups in an 11-year span, capturing three championships. Flory has just finished his second year as head coach of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies. Under his guidance, he led the team to its first Canada West football championship.

I congratulate Scott Flory for his well-deserved induction to the Football Hall of Fame.

* * *

LACROSSE

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Oakville and Burlington have a rich lacrosse culture, one that is flourishing with tremendous home-grown talent.

Oakville is home to the head office and practice facility of the six-time National Lacrosse League champion Toronto Rock. The Oakville and Burlington Minor Lacrosse Leagues are nurturing youth to play Canada's national summer sport, also known as the Creator's game in indigenous culture. I was extremely proud of the Oakville Titans, who not only won the Ontario Senior Men's B Championship but also went on to the finish fourth in all of Canada.

Lacrosse legends Dan and Paul Dawson grew up in our local lacrosse system, and this year Dan won another NLL championship with the Saskatchewan Rush. The Toronto Maple Leafs hockey hero, John Tavares, was also an Oakville lacrosse all star.

As local boys and girls prepare for another season, they are the stars of the future in a game with a fanatically loyal fan base.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

ERIK GUAY

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, world champion skier Erik Guay announced last week that he is retiring. A true class act, he made his farewell run yesterday at a World Cup downhill ski event in Lake Louise.

Throughout his two decades of dedication to the sport, he showed what it takes to become the most medalled skier in Canadian history while remaining a gentleman and inspiring an entire generation of young skiers.

[English]

Last year, at an event at Mont Tremblant to recognize his most recent world championship, he spent hours signing autographs and being photographed with fans without ever saying no, losing his smile, or doing anything but being there for everyone else. This is but one small example of who Erik is: accomplished yet humble, competitive but selfless.

[Translation]

Erik, on behalf of everyone in Laurentides—Labelle and across Canada, I want to congratulate you on your career. Thank you for being the athlete you are.

Safe travels home, my friend. Enjoy this time with your family. I have no doubt that we will be hearing about you again in the very near future.

* * *

[English]

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 25 marks the anniversary of the modern statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Hamilton, we have over one hundred ethno-cultural groups and languages, making it one of our nation's most diverse cities. Among these are families who originated in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I had the pleasure of travelling through much of that country on two occasions, and I have no hesitation in recommending it for those who seek something truly unique but absolutely welcoming in the way of a travel destination. The names of the cities may not be familiar, but I can assure you that places like Mostar, Zenica, Jajce and, of course, the great and well known capital of Sarajevo will stay in one's memory should one ever pay them a visit. Their history goes back centuries as a meeting place for different civilizations and cultures, which account in part for the amazing breadth of its art, music, literature and, of course, cuisine.

Ziveo Bosnia Herzeogovina.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem of unauthorized Canada Revenue Agency personnel accessing confidential tax files is "on the rise" according to a CBC news report and the Privacy Commissioner. This comes a week before the sentencing hearing of a biker gang member who used his job at the CRA to illegally collect private information.

Statements by Members

This is from the same government that cannot seem to understand why Canadians are squeamish about being forced to hand over their bank statements to Statistics Canada. Under the current minister, the CRA has been called out for its call centre, for incorrect information, for picking on disabled Canadians, for targeting single parents, for giving breaks to offshore evaders, and now for breaching Canadians' privacy.

The minister has been in charge for three years, and the agency's problems are getting worse despite a massive budget increase. It is time for her to act like a minister, take responsibility for her department and deliver an agency focused on service.

* * *

SYDNEY—VICTORIA

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the Christmas holiday season and the time for giving quickly approaching, I would like to encourage everyone to give to their local food bank. Whether it be food, personal items or money, or by donating one's time to hand out some meals, every donation makes a difference. In Sydney, Loaves and Fishes, where I visit every Christmas Eve, has been a staple in the community since 1981 and serves more than 40,000 meals every year.

I had the pleasure of meeting with members of the North Sydney Community Food Bank over the summer, who do amazing work on the Northside, and even have a garden so that they can grow and serve fresh vegetables.

The CBC in Cape Breton will be kicking off the annual Light up a Life fundraiser in support of Feed Nova Scotia on November 30 with a performance at the Highlands Arts Theatre, and will have a live on-air program on December 3.

I encourage all Canadians to give back to the communities this holiday season by donating or volunteering at their local food bank to help those in need.

* * *

[Translation]

LA FRANCOPHONIE

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 15 was a sad day for Franco-Ontarians, as Doug Ford's Conservative government cancelled plans to build a French-language university and eliminated the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner. Once again, the community is rallying and standing up for itself.

When I was a high school student in Kapuskasing, I went to Queen's Park to demand that a French-language college be built in Sudbury. We won. When I was a law student at the University of Ottawa in 1997, I took part in the big protest to save the Montfort Hospital from being shut down by the Mike Harris Conservatives. We won. Next week, on December 1, I will once again take part in a protest to assert my rights as a francophone in this province, and we are going to win.

● (1410)

[English]

To my anglophone friends, first, I thank them for their support. We are not seeking more than anybody else. We only want our official language to be treated as equal to the other official language in our bilingual country.

[Translation]

In closing, I would like to share a quotation with my Franco-Ontarian sisters and brothers. In the words of the late Michel Gratton, author of a book on the Montfort crisis, "Have courage. Our cause is just."

* * *

[English]

HOLODOMOR

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Canadians joined Ukrainians around the world and remembered the horrors of the Holodomor genocide. On orders from Joseph Stalin's brutal Communist regime in 1932-33, millions of Ukrainians starved to death in the Holodomor.

I was honoured to gather alongside Canadians and Ukrainians and mourn the 85th commemoration of the Holodomor genocide. Two Winnipeg schoolteachers, Luba Fedorkiw and Orysa Petryshyn, are making sure the whole country remembers this tragedy. By developing bookmarks on lighting candles of promise around the world, they created a call to action that the horrors of the past would never be repeated.

However, this very weekend, as we remembered the victims of the Holodomor, the Kremlin violated international law again by attacking and seizing three Ukrainian naval ships. As we commemorate the Holodomor, let us not forget that Vladimir Putin continues to repeat history by violating Ukraine's territorial integrity, destroying Ukrainian lives and threatening their freedom.

* * *

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs visits Parliament Hill. I want to thank all of the brave men and women who continue to risk their own health and safety to protect communities across this great country. Representing over 3,500 fire departments across Canada, its mission is to connect Canada's provincial, territorial and allied associations along with external stakeholders to advance public and firefighter safety.

Firefighters and fire chiefs are both members of our communities and crucial to our safety. I urge all members of this House to meet with representatives from the association here in Ottawa to learn more about the important work they are undertaking to improve mental health support for firefighters, align building codes with response time and continue to lead the way in fire safety and innovation.

On behalf of all members, we welcome fire chiefs from across the country to Parliament Hill, and thank them again for their service.

* * *

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the White Ribbon campaign, of which Jack Layton was a founding member, began in 1991 and is recognized in November every year. A global movement dedicated to ending male violence against women and girls, it works alongside organizations such as Positive VOICE and Anova in my community of London, Ontario.

Today, women face gender-based violence, military sexual trauma, the forced sterilization of indigenous and vulnerable women, the lack of shelter space funding, affordable housing and child care. I would like to acknowledge the work of progressive men and boys in support of these causes, men who wear the white ribbon. Women matter, their safety matters and we must end violence against women and girls.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the finance minister was asked this weekend what it would take for the Liberals to finally do something to help the Alberta energy sector, he responded and said the Liberals would only help once there was a consensus from Alberta.

There is a consensus. There is a consensus that opposes the Prime Minister's plan to phase out the oil sands. There is a consensus that opposes the Liberals' unilateral decision to impose a northern tanker ban. There is a consensus that export pipelines to new markets must be built and that the Liberals are wrong to kill the northern gateway, the west to east and the Trans Mountain pipelines. There is a consensus from leaders of all political stripes who are opposed to the Liberals' "no new pipeline" law, Bill C-69, which will ensure that no new pipeline will be built in Canada.

There is a consensus. The minister is just not listening.

* * *

• (1415)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, as well as the beginning of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. From now until December 10, people can use the hashtags #MYActionsMatter or #MESGes-tesComptent to share their messages of support and solidarity.

This year, Status of Women Canada again partnered with the Canadian Football League, as well as the United Steelworkers and

Oral Questions

the Ending Violence Association of Canada on a campaign to end violence. "Call It Out", the campaign challenging us all to be more than a bystander to end gender-based violence, was featured during this year's CFL playoffs and the 106th Grey Cup.

Everyone has a role to play to in ending gender-based violence. When we work together, we can help change the attitudes that contribute to it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the news of a pending GM closure, it is a very sad day for Oshawa, for Durham and for all of Ontario. The men and women who work at GM Oshawa are some of the hardest-working and best-trained workers in the industry globally. We believe there is a future for manufacturing in Canada if we all work together and fight for it. What is the Prime Minister's plan to fight for these jobs in Oshawa?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed by GM's decision regarding its plant in Oshawa as part of its global restructuring. Our thoughts are with those people whose jobs will be affected and their families. We understand today's news will have a significant impact on the whole community as well as the network of suppliers who support all the plants impacted by GM's announcement. Our government will always stand with our auto workers and do everything we can to support them in these difficult times.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill has already commented quite a few times after only one question. I would ask him to remember the rule against interrupting. We may not like what we hear here, but we have to listen, regardless. That is required.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the families in Oshawa need to hear that the Prime Minister has not already given up on a century of the auto industry in our community. We have the best workforce supported by suppliers across Ontario, and it ensures that we remain one of the best jurisdictions ready to build cars. We cannot abandon this competitive advantage. We need to work on trade and regulatory barriers. Will the Prime Minister work with us on a plan to save these jobs in Oshawa?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night I spoke with the CEO and chair of GM, Mary Barra, to tell her how disappointed we are with this decision, and this morning spoke with Premier Ford to talk about how we are going to work together to support the workers in Oshawa and across the region who are going to be affected by this decision. We will be working together on this one in a way that is not political because we know that being there to support the workers in this region is what people expect of all of their orders of government.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is well known that steel and aluminum tariffs are impacting manufacturers across Ontario, including those in the auto industry, and now Canada's retaliatory tariffs are raising prices and leading to layoffs. Can the Prime Minister tell this House if General Motors spoke to his government about trade and tariff concerns impacting competitiveness in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I highlight that General Motors, like many auto companies and many industries across Canada and across the United States, were partners with us in negotiating the new NAFTA deal, in holding the trade between Canada and the United States as firm and as protected as we possibly could.

We also recognize that there is more work to do to eliminate the steel and aluminum tariffs that are so unjustly imposed. That is why we continue to stand with the workers in the steel and aluminum industry and indeed in other industries as we move forward to keep them safe.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when a plant closes, it hurts. It hurts even more when that plant has been the lifeblood of a region and a mainstay of the Canadian economy for over 100 years.

Today, more than 2,500 GM workers in Oshawa and their families found out that they will have one more year of work at most. These workers are the best in the industry. It is in their blood. We stand by them during this difficult time.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to join us and fight to save these jobs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed by GM's decision regarding its plant in Oshawa as part of its global restructuring. Our thoughts are with those affected by this decision and their families.

We understand today's news will have a significant impact on the whole community as well as the network of suppliers who support all the plants impacted by GM's announcement.

Our government will always stand with our auto workers and do everything we can to support them in these difficult times.

• (1420)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, GM's announcement that it will be shutting down its plant in Oshawa in 2019 is terrible for workers and their families, and it is terrible for the Canadian economy as a whole.

Today, workers want to know whether their elected officials are prepared to fight for the future of Canada's automotive sector. We cannot give up today. That would be an even worse message for the tens of thousands of Canadian automotive jobs.

How does the Prime Minister plan to keep the Oshawa plant open and save the jobs of thousands of Canadians who have worked hard for years to be the best in the business?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are obviously with the GM workers and their families.

I spoke to Premier Ford this morning, and we agreed to work together to help these workers.

Our automotive sector remains strong. This sector is uniquely positioned to design and build the cars of today and tomorrow, and our highly skilled workers are its lifeblood.

Canada and our automotive workers are at the forefront of developing innovative, interconnected, clean technologies that will be the future of this industry. We will always support workers.

[English]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, Liberals gave corporations like General Motors \$14 billion in various tax measures, supposedly because this would keep jobs in Canada, but today, while GM shareholders got a bump of 7%, more than—

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order. There seems to be a problem with the interpretation.

It is working now.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques can repeat his question.

[English]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, last week, Liberals gave corporations like General Motors \$14 billion in various tax measures, supposedly because this would keep jobs in Canada, but today, while GM shareholders got a bump of 7%, more than 2,500 Canadian workers will lose their jobs and their livelihoods. We cannot afford billions of dollars in tax giveaways to these large companies when those same companies are pulling up stakes and leaving people out of work.

The Prime Minister has expressed his disappointment, but what concrete actions is he planning to take for these workers and their families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously our hearts go out to the workers in the region affected and we are going to be working with the Government of Ontario to ensure that we are supporting those workers.

Our support for the auto sector is a key part of our plan to create opportunities for Canadians. From day one we have taken steps to make Canada's automotive manufacturing sector more globally competitive and innovative. We have announced over \$5.6 billion in automotive sector investments in Canadian operations, creating and maintaining tens of thousands of good, middle-class automotive jobs.

As we look to the future, we are developing a plan that will focus on new initiatives—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on another matter, the Prime Minister claims to be a feminist and a progressive, but does he know that in 1981, there was a general postal strike that lasted 41 days without any government intervention?

Does he know that after those 41 days, the parties reached an agreement, and that it was the first time in the history of the federal public service that a collective agreement included maternity leave provisions?

That is what can be achieved with free collective bargaining.

Does the Prime Minister really believe today, in the House, that the union could have chalked up such an historic win if the government of the day had imposed a special law like the one it is ramming down workers' throats today?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have faith in the collective bargaining process and believe that the best deals are reached at the table.

For nearly a year, we have done everything in our power to encourage the two parties to negotiate an agreement. We reappointed the special mediator to work with the parties over the next two days.

We continue to encourage both sides to reach a deal. Tabling legislation is not a decision that we have taken lightly

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2011, when the Conservatives forced Canada Post employees back to work, the Liberals were outraged.

Now they are the ones imposing special legislation. We know that postal workers are dealing with pay inequity, injuries and unpaid overtime.

How can the Liberals, in good conscience, claim to be friends of the workers while imposing legislation that forces Canada Post employees to go back to work under the same conditions?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the unions for three years to transform their relationship with the government, which was broken by the former Conservative government.

Oral Questions

We have always encouraged discussion at the negotiating table and have always worked respectfully with the unions. However, there obviously comes a time when we have to make difficult decisions.

Tabling this bill was a difficult decision but one we had to make to protect Canada's economy and people, and for the good of our country.

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-89 will force postal workers back into the toxic workplace they have been working to improve for over a year. Increased risks of workplace injury, forced overtime, stress and mental health issues, and pay inequity are the real crises people are facing that need to be addressed. Ignoring them comes at a human and financial cost to the workers.

Why are the Liberals so determined to force the workers back knowing that they will be injured on the job? How can they not be ashamed of this?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have faith in the collective bargaining process and believe that the best deals are reached at the table. For nearly a year, we have been supporting and encouraging both sides to reach a negotiated agreement. We provided conciliation officers, appointed mediators and offered voluntary arbitration. We continue to encourage both sides to reach a deal. Legislation is a step we did not take lightly.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like thousands of General Motors employees and pensioners, we stand stunned at the news of the plant closure in Oshawa. This decision will wipe out a billion dollars in GDP and will ripple throughout the supply chain, putting tens of thousands of jobs at risk.

For a century, GM workers have contributed to the economy of southern Ontario and have bettered their community as coaches, volunteer firefighters and neighbourhood volunteers. We are not ready to give up. What is the Prime Minister's plan to protect the future of the auto industry in Canada?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to echo that I share the sentiments raised by the member opposite. This is absolutely devastating news for Oshawa and the surrounding region. This has a significant impact on the workers and their families. We as a government recognize that. I started my career in an automotive company and I understand how important these jobs are to the local community.

We have taken every step possible in the short term to reach out with the union, to speak with Jerry Dias, and to reach out and speak with the province. The Prime Minister has spoken with the premier, and we will continue to work with others to make sure we continue to defend auto workers and the auto sector.

Oral Questions

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a difficult time in Oshawa today. Our thoughts are with the GM workers and their families. Oshawa is devastated.

The Prime Minister needs to put a plan in place immediately. Full effort should be made to support Canadian workers and their families at this very difficult time. When will the Prime Minister release a plan for the auto workers in Oshawa?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, this is a very difficult time for the workers and for their families as well. This is very difficult for the local community. I spoke with the local mayor, Mayor Henry, to talk about what this means to the community and to say very clearly we are there to support the community, to support the workers and to support the automotive sector.

This has been a priority for our government. Since we formed government in 2015, we have seen 5.6 billion dollars' worth of investments in the automotive sector. We will continue to work with the community in Oshawa and the surrounding regions to make sure they have a path forward.

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MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not just the GM plant in Oshawa that has closed under the Prime Minister's watch. General Electric in Peterborough closed, with 358 jobs gone. Campbell soup company in Toronto closed, with 380 jobs gone. Procter & Gamble in Brockville closed, with 500 jobs gone.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that there is a crisis and we need a plan to stop more job losses?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we understand how difficult this is for the workers not only in Oshawa, but the suppliers that are impacted in so many of the communities within the surrounding region as well. That is why in the fall economic update by the Minister of Finance we put forward measures to clearly demonstrate a plan to build on our previous budget submission around innovation and skills. We are making sure we are bringing in more investments through changes to our tax code and tax policy. These are measures that really help the Canadian economy. We have seen tremendous growth in the economy, 3% in GDP, and 500,000 jobs have been created, but we have more to do, and we endeavour to do more.

• (1430)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Grenville Castings in Perth closed, with 380 jobs gone. A Dixie cup plant in Brampton closed, with 133 jobs gone. An Oreo cookie plant in Montreal closed, with 454 jobs gone. A carpet manufacturing plant in Waterloo closed, with 256 jobs gone.

This is a crisis. Where is our Prime Minister's plan to stop more of these job losses?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a record low

unemployment rate, the lowest in the last 40 years. We have seen tremendous job growth overall take place in the economy. Clearly, there are regions and communities that are going through difficult challenges.

Today, GM announced significant job losses in Oshawa. We understand how difficult this is for the workers and their families. That is why we reached out to the local leadership there and the union. That is why we reached out to the local mayor. We also engaged the province.

We will continue to work with the community and make sure we help them going forward, and continue to defend auto workers and the auto sector.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I asked the government why it was exempting large industrial corporations from its carbon tax, the reason it gave was that if the tax applied, many of those companies would leave and the jobs would go with them. They were right about that. Now we have a crisis of layoffs in the energy sector and now the auto sector.

If the government will not agree with us to scrap the carbon tax altogether, will it at least agree to put it on hold while we figure out what to do about this terrible jobs crisis?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since we formed government in 2015, and let us talk about the automotive sector, we have used the automotive innovation fund, and ultimately we changed it to the strategic innovation fund, a \$2-billion fund that has helped bring forward many investments in Canada specifically in the automotive sector.

The 37 projects that we have put forward have leveraged \$4.1 billion of investment in the automotive sector. Overall, the sector has contributed \$5.6 billion since 2015. This has helped create and maintain thousands of jobs. We will continue to work hard to make sure we protect these jobs.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody is saying that the government is not spending enough money. It is spending money everywhere. The deficit is three times what the Liberals promised.

However, the carbon tax will make it more expensive for businesses to operate, to heat their plants, to power their machinery and to transfer their goods. These are costs that other countries do not face, because they do not have a carbon tax.

The government admits that carbon taxes drive jobs out of the country. With that admission, why does it not agree to put this tax on hold until we can figure out what to do about this crisis?

Oral Questions

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about some investments in jobs with regard to the strategic innovation fund. This is a fund that we also announced additional funding for in the fall economic update. This is a \$2-billion fund.

Advantech Wireless, 95 jobs; Blue Solutions, 246 jobs; CAE, 4,300 jobs; ENCQOR, 4,000 jobs; General Fusion, 170 jobs; Linamar, 9,500 jobs: These are clear examples of a government being a meaningful partner to help create conditions for more jobs in the Canadian economy.

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[Translation]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the closure of the GM plant in Oshawa is devastating news for workers. For every direct job at this plant, there are around seven indirect jobs essential to the local economy. More than 5,000 Canadian families could be affected by these layoffs. The NDP was right in calling for a national automotive strategy. GM is making a green shift, but our automotive sector has clearly not adapted.

Why is the government ignoring the future of the automotive sector?

Where are the real measures to modernize the industry and keep good jobs?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed in today's announcement by GM. My thoughts are with the workers, their families and their communities affected by this announcement. This decision is apparently part of GM's comprehensive plan and will affect operations and workers in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. This is terrible news, and I feel for the workers and their families.

• (1435)

[English]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Liberals gave companies like General Motors \$14 billion in tax giveaways, saying it would protect jobs here in Canada. Less than five days later, GM announced its plan to close its Oshawa plant, shattering the lives of more than 5,000 families with the ripple effect. This is devastating for these Canadians who have kids in school and mortgages. The Liberals must step in and do whatever it takes to protect these jobs.

Will the Liberal government invest in hybrid and electric car manufacturing as part of a national auto strategy? What is the government's plan to save these jobs?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we know this is a very difficult time for the workers in Oshawa and in the surrounding region as well. They have been told that these jobs are being eliminated. That is why we are going to work with the local municipal leadership, the province and the unions to put forward a plan to really assist these workers as they are going through this transition.

In the meantime, we have put measures in place that have secured additional jobs, particularly in the automotive sector. Some 5.6 billion dollars' worth of investments have been made in the automotive sector since 2015, largely due to our measures around the strategic innovation fund. We will continue to support the auto workers.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for over a week now, 10 days to be exact, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie have been playing partisan games with the official languages file solely for political gain. That, unfortunately, is not the right way to approach minority official language communities across the country, especially not Franco-Ontarians at this time, I would say. The government needs to adjust its attitude and start looking at solutions, because there are definitely solutions to be found.

My question for the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie is this: how is she planning to provide meaningful support to the Franco-Ontarian community as a whole?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives.

The fact is that we have invested \$2.7 billion in official languages, which is the largest investment in history, and \$500 million of that is new money.

Last week, I announced the court challenges program, which is crucial to defending language rights in Canada but was abolished by the Harper government. The program will be very useful to all francophones who want to defend their rights against injustices perpetrated by the Ontario Conservatives.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable to see the Minister of Official Languages playing petty partisan politics by saying that the Conservatives ended that program. The program was suspended in March 2017 and it took the government 20 months to reactivate it.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank was created two years ago and people are unable to get service in French, so perhaps she should stop trying to lecture everyone.

The question we are asking is simple. Franco-Ontarians are looking for more than just words. They want real action.

What does the minister actually intend to do to provide them with immediate support?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the question in context.

Why are Franco-Ontarians calling for the Ford government to take action? It is because the Ford government first created an injustice.

Oral Questions

The reality is that the opposition leader is the only leader in the country who has still not spoken out against what happened in Ontario. The reality is that francophones—Franco-Ontarians, Acadians and Quebeckers—living in English Canada have formed a united front. All of these people want the opposition leader to recognize the current injustice against Franco-Ontarians.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie should stop misleading the House.

The Prime Minister said that he has spoken with the Premier of Ontario about this critical situation GM employees find themselves in.

After playing partisan games on the backs of Franco-Ontarians for a week, did he at least address this language issue with the Premier of Ontario?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did indeed raise that issue. I was very clear about my support for francophone minority communities. I will continue to actively defend them, unlike the leader of the opposition.

• (1440)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see that we all want to defend Franco-Ontarians.

The partisan games on the backs of Franco-Ontarians have to stop here and now. This morning, the leader of the official opposition sent a letter to the Prime Minister requesting an urgent meeting to talk about this file.

Will the Prime Minister accept the opposition leader's help or not?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 11 days have passed since that dark Thursday and the opposition leader seems to finally be showing some interest in the issue.

I want all francophones in Canada to know, whether they are Franco-Ontarians, Quebeckers, Acadians, Fransaskois, francophiles, or official languages allies, that they can count on our government. We will be there to defend their rights.

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PHARMACARE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week's economic update clearly demonstrates this government's priorities. It offers tax credits to large corporations while, every year, nearly 1 million Canadians struggle to pay for their prescription drugs, which are costing more and more. This is unacceptable, especially given that the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report shows that a universal pharmacare program would actually save a lot of money.

When will the government take meaningful action for families, seniors and businesses and create a universal pharmacare program?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of their public health care system, which is based on people's needs and not on their ability to pay. We recognize, however, that we can do better. That is why we have created an advisory council on the implementation of national

pharmacare. I look forward to receiving the council's recommendations in the spring of 2019.

[English]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberals gave \$14 billion in tax breaks to rich corporations and left families struggling to make ends meet. Now Canadians and Canadian businesses are continuing to spend billions on medication for themselves or their employees. A universal single payer pharmacare system would save Canadians and small businesses billions of dollars, but the Liberals chose to invest in the 1% instead of helping those in need.

Will the Liberals help people by implementing a universal single-payer pharmacare system or will they keep giving handouts to the richest corporations?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of their publicly funded health care system, one that is based on need and not on their ability to pay. However, we also recognize that we can do better.

Canadians should not have to choose between paying for medication or putting food on the table. That is why, in budget 2018, I was proud that we launched the Advisory Council on the Implementation of a National Pharmacare program. The committee has been having a national dialogue with Canadians and I look forward to receiving their report in the spring of 2019.

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PENSIONS

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the many contributions that seniors have made to this country. Seniors have worked their entire lives and have added so much to our communities and economy and should be able to retire with security and dignity.

Could the Minister of Seniors please update the House on the steps our government is taking to tackle the important issue of pension security?

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pension security is important to our government and that is why I was very pleased last week to have announced with the minister of innovation that we have taken the next step on consultations and have opened up our consultations nationally.

Our government wants a balanced and evidence-based solution to this problem. We do not want a band-aid solution that has unintended consequences for our pensioners, and that is why these consultations are so important. I encourage all those who wish to offer input to do so. We know this is a decades-old problem and we are going to get this right.

ETHICS

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, documents submitted in the Vice-Admiral Norman case are revealing discrepancies of deep concern. In October, the President of the Treasury Board stood in the House and claimed he was just doing his job when he politically interfered in the supply ship contract. However, in 2016, in an interview with the RCMP, the minister said that was not his role.

Which is it? Is the President of the Treasury Board misleading the RCMP or Canadians?

• (1445)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have explained in the House many times in the past, this matter presently before the courts. The courts are adjudicating on all of the facts. They will determine those facts according to law, and make a decision in due course. That is where the case is tried, in court, not in the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is the answer we were expecting, but the fact is that the documents have been made public. We know that the President of the Treasury Board received a letter from Irving that was addressed to the Minister of National Defence and the then minister of public works. We want to know why the President of the Treasury Board told us that it was not his problem and then said that the RCMP was looking into it.

Who is he trying to mislead, the RCMP or the House?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts of the case will be determined by the judge in the trial. That is where our system works.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member of Parliament for Brampton East resigned last week citing personal reasons, but over the weekend the PMO's official story has changed several times. Every time it has changed, the details have become more concerning. It was finally revealed that the RCMP is investigating.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that his office has waived privilege and is assisting the RCMP in their investigation?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned, last week the member told us that he is undergoing certain challenges and that he is receiving treatment from a health professional. We hope he receives the support he needs.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vice-Admiral Norman's defence team say court documents ordered released Friday reveal contradictions between statements made by the President of the Treasury Board and other witnesses, including fellow ministers. Admiral Norman's lawyer points to the RCMP witness list, arguing it indicates the investigation has been politicized.

Oral Questions

We also know the RCMP has been investigating the source of gambling funds spent by the member for Brampton East, who resigned Thursday.

Could the Prime Minister tell us just how many other Liberals are being investigated by the RCMP?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Norman case, the hon. gentleman makes certain allegations. There are of course procedures in our country for handling such allegations; they are called the court system. Charges have been laid. The defence has the opportunity to make a full response. All the facts will be reviewed and exposed in court. In due course, the court will take a decision. That is how our justice system works.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the federal and provincial official languages ministers passed the buck all weekend for the protection of French in Ontario. However, they are both responsible for supporting the francophone community and Franco-Ontarians.

Francophones need more than two ministers who are not doing their job. The federal minister and the Prime Minister must protect francophones living in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

There is a simple solution. Will the Prime Minister request an urgent meeting with the Premier of Ontario and commit to contributing his fair share to a French-language university in Ontario?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that we will always work with the provinces and territories that want to invest in our official languages and Canada's Francophonie. We will always take a collaborative approach.

However, the reality is that the unjust situation in Ontario needs to be condemned. We have done that. The NDP has done that. The Bloc Québécois has done that. There is one party in the House that has not, and I hope that it will finally wake up and do so, because it is time for the Conservatives to speak up.

* * *

[*English*]

ETHICS

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for months worrisome allegations were being raised about the conduct of the Liberal MP for Brampton East. The Prime Minister issued a statement citing that were serious personal challenges, significant gambling debts, and potential and serious conflicts of interest. Now an investigation by our own Ethics Commissioner, as well as an investigation by the RCMP and FINTRAC, raises even more serious questions.

Oral Questions

Canadians want to know the answer to one very important question from the Prime Minister, and only he is fit to answer it. When did the Prime Minister first know of these serious allegations and what did he do about them?

• (1450)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has clearly been stated, it was last week that the member told us that he was undergoing certain challenges and that he is receiving treatment from a health professional. We really do hope that he receives the support and assistance he needs.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend we learned that the Liberals spent \$500,000 to develop a marketing plan for the federal government's rural poverty reduction initiative. I am not just making this up: \$500,000 would go a long way to help save lives and protect the vulnerable in the developing world. Instead, the Liberals thought a marketing plan was a better way to spend this money. The Liberals' should be ashamed of themselves.

How can the minister justify this outrageous cost?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government takes the use of taxpayers' money very seriously. The minister spoke directly to the managing director of FinDev Canada this morning to express his concern. As a brand new institution, some start-up costs are expected, but the amount funded in this case is clearly excessive. The rules and standards also apply to Crown corporations, like FinDev Canada.

We count on Crown corporation leaders to ensure responsible management of public funds.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government continues to spend, spend, spend. This morning, we learned that a federal agency created to address poverty is spending \$500,000 on a name, logo and branding.

What does this government have to say to the poor Canadians who did not even have enough money for breakfast this morning? The Liberals have both hands in the cookie jar.

When will the Liberal government keep its promises instead of spending money on its image?

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, FinDev Canada is one of our new international aid financing tools designed to raise private capital and generate investment in developing countries. Ultimately, FinDev Canada will generate investments that will have a real impact on the poorest and the most vulnerable, including women and girls, around the world. As a brand new institution, some start-up costs are expected but the amount spent in this case is clearly excessive.

We count on Crown corporation leaders to ensure responsible management of public funds.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, Russia violated international law again by attacking and seizing three Ukrainian ships. Russia continues to escalate tensions in the region by invading Ukraine, launching multiple cyber-attacks and threatening free and fair elections around the world.

The government needs to realize that Putin is provoked by weakness and we must make Ukraine stronger. Will the Liberals finally give Ukraine the lethal weapons it needs and sanction all the Russian crooks for violating our international peace, safety and security?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me very clear. Canada strongly condemns Russian aggression toward Ukraine in the Kerch Strait and we call on Russia to immediately release the captured Ukrainian crew and vessels.

I spoke on the phone late last night with Ukraine's foreign minister, Pavlo Klimkin, and assured him of Canada's strong support. I have been directly in touch with Jeremy Hunt, the foreign secretary of the U.K., and Federica Mogherini, the high representative of the European Union. We are working closely with our allies. We strongly support Operation Unifier and we are in close touch with Ukrainians.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my town of Whitby and Oshawa and the Durham Region as a whole, there are many who are feeling the effect of today's announcement by GM. The auto workers and families that live in the region are a critical part of our community and economy. They are friends and neighbours and I want to assure them that we are here for them during this very difficult time.

Could the minister please share with the House what our government will be doing to help the workers and their families impacted by GM's decision today?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague from Whitby for her advocacy and her hard work in really defending her community and defending the automotive sector. As she has highlighted, this is devastating news. This is very difficult for the community, and of course our hearts go out to the workers as well.

We have been very clear that we are going to defend the automotive sector. We have put measures in place to do so, the strategic innovation fund is one such example. We are going to work with the province and the unions on a path forward to make sure we defend the automotive sector and the automotive workers.

Oral Questions

•(1455)

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have admitted, on multiple occasions, that Russia interfered in the last federal election, but they have refused to give any details to Canadians. Canadian elections belong to Canadians and we have a right to know how our elections have been influenced by foreign entities.

However, instead of being transparent and open, the Liberals refuse to say how the Russians manipulated the last election. Why will the Prime Minister not come clean with Canadians and take foreign influence in our elections seriously?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, we absolutely do not support foreign interference in our elections at all. This is something on which all colleagues in the House should get together to ensure we are not politicizing this issue.

In fact, Bill C-76 has important measures in place to ensure that we are not enabling foreign funding in any event in advertising for our elections and that we are protecting the integrity of our elections. This is something that is above partisanship and we are working hard with all our national security agencies to ensure that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

* * *

[*Translation*]**PYRRHOTITE**

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over two months ago, I asked the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to announce a scientific study, a solution everyone has known about for ages, to help pyrrhotite victims caught in the grey area. His office later told me that a research protocol would be signed with Université Laval very soon. However, it is now two months later, and still nothing.

Can the minister give us an update today on when this agreement will be signed and how long this widely anticipated study will take?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

Our government recognizes the importance of standardizing regulations regarding the design and construction of new buildings in Canada.

The National Research Council Canada, in partnership with Université Laval, is leading a Canada-wide research project. This collaboration will help researchers determine the acceptable limits for sulphide in Canadian concrete.

We will be announcing something soon.

[*English*]**STATUS OF WOMEN**

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Sunday was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. November 25 also marked the beginning of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

[*Translation*]

Statistics show that women and girls are more likely to suffer many forms of gender-based violence than men and boys. For example, we know that every six days, one woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

[*English*]

Could the Minister of Status of Women give us ideas of ways we can all get involved in the effort to end gender-based violence once and for all?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the courage of silence breakers, we now understand more than ever that gender-based violence hurts families, individuals and it scars for life. It also costs our economy \$12 billion a year, which is what domestic violence alone costs our Canadian communities.

Our government has introduced over \$200 million in investments to address and prevent gender-based violence. We kicked off 16 days of activism in partnership with the CFL to show that men are part of the solution. Over the next few days, we will be announcing investments on addressing campus violence and also ensuring that communities are supported through—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

* * *

[*Translation*]**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's action regarding the third link project has been feeble, if not non-existent.

The member for Louis-Hébert and the member for Québec are not making any effort to stand up for regional issues and are not siding with the majority of the population. The third link will foster unprecedented economic development in the greater Quebec City area.

When will the Liberal government show some leadership and support the forward-looking project to build a third link between Lévis and Quebec City?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Lévis—Lotbinière for showing the House his talent for drama. However, the real leadership is on this side of the House.

Last week, in consultation with the member for Louis-Hébert and the member for Québec, I actually met with Mayor Labeaume, and we talked about the \$287 million we have invested in infrastructure projects in Quebec City.

Oral Questions

We will continue to invest in infrastructure and in public transit. Once a project is brought forward for Quebec City's third link, we will take a close look at it.

* * *

• (1500)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is no green shift in the government's economic update. Once again, it is subsidizing big oil instead of developing green transportation.

That is not surprising. According to Oil Change International, over the past five years, Ottawa has spent \$62 billion on fossil fuels, compared to \$5 billion on clean energy. It kind of feels like the Conservatives are still in power.

When will the federal government stop wasting Quebecers' money on businesses that are speeding up climate change?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the fall economic statement, it included specific measures to encourage manufacturers to invest in clean equipment, among other things.

I would never compare our record in shame to the Conservatives, who after 10 years only were able to achieve a reduction in emissions by shrinking the economy. We are investing in public transit. We are putting a price on pollution. We are investing in a clean economy.

I could not be more proud to be part of this government, because we are finally taking the environment seriously while we grow the economy at the same time.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we cannot base our economy on fossil fuels. The government does not seem to get that.

If the government does not go green, we will be headed for disaster and our young people will pay the price. That is why a youth environmental organization called ENvironnement JEUnesse brought a class action against Ottawa today. They say the government is breaking its climate change promises. That is what it has come to: our young people are so worried about their future that they are suing the federal government.

Do our young people really have to take the government to court to drive home the point that it has to stop subsidizing big oil?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Repentigny.

I would like to remind her about our historic infrastructure investments worth over \$180 billion over the next decade. That includes major investments of close to \$30 billion in public transit and almost \$27 billion in green infrastructure.

We on this side of the House understand that Canadians want modern, resilient, green 21st-century infrastructure, and that is what we are going to deliver for Canadians across the country.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Prime Minister is this.

On Sunday, December 2, the 24th Conference of the Parties on the climate convention will convene in Poland. The report of the IPCC on the imperative that the planet hold to 1.5°C and not above it in global average temperature is on that agenda.

Will Canada commit to improving our plan, such that we are on a pathway to 1.5°C, and help lead the world there?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her dedication and passion on the environmental file.

Let us face the facts. Climate change is real. Climate change is man made. We must act to fight it. That is why we are working hard to meet our 2030 targets, knowing there will be more work to do after that.

After a decade of international abandonment on the environmental file under the Conservatives, Canada has returned as a leader at COP. We will continue to tackle climate change both at home and abroad.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska on a point of order.

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FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES IN ONTARIO

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given what is currently happening in Ontario with the French-language university and the protection of official language minority communities, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion:

That the House call on the Prime Minister and the Minister of Official Languages to use their authority within their areas of jurisdiction to develop a plan whereby the federal government will work in partnership with the Government of Ontario on all projects that support the vitality of French-language services in Ontario, and that the plan be tabled no later than December 1, 2018.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands on a point of order.

• (1505)

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, as you have directed us on numerous occasions, it offends Standing Order 16 in several places when hon. members interrupt someone who is speaking.

Routine Proceedings

I wonder if you could direct us on the question that strikes me. Quite often you will chastise someone you have heard interrupt. Down here we do not hear members interrupt, because the noises, while rude, are isolated. It seems there is a new practice of organized, loud laughter, which is actually so loud that it interrupts my ability to hear members across the way.

I wonder if loud laughter when someone else is speaking, organized by the party whip, could be seen as a violation of our standing rules.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I appreciate her concern about this issue of decorum in the House.

I do not know if the Chair would be able to detect whether something of the nature she is describing were organized. I would simply ask members to restrain themselves and listen to other points of view, and when others have the floor, to not interrupt.

[*Translation*]

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

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, for over a week now, the Minister of La Francophonie has been playing petty politics at the expense of Ontarians by attacking us, the members on this side of the House.

I have plenty of evidence to prove that she misled the House by saying that my leader has done nothing. He wrote a letter today, and we requested a positive response, which we have not yet received.

If the minister does not want to explain herself to the House, she should join me outside. I have plenty of evidence against her.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member, but that sounds like debate. Perhaps the hon. members could continue that debate in the media or elsewhere.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled "Supplementary Estimates (A), 2018-19: Votes 1a, 5a and 10a under Department of Fisheries and Oceans".

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 78th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the items added to the order of precedence on Thursday, November 1, 2018, and recommended that the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled "Towards Open Science: Promoting Innovation in Pharmaceutical Research and Development and Access to Affordable Medications both in Canada and Abroad". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report. Basically, the report encourages funding investments in clinical research and innovation and also wants to ensure that the research results in lower costs for pharmaceuticals.

I want to thank all members of the committee, who worked hard on this, as well as the analysts and the clerk of the committee, who produced a wonderful report.

* * *

● (1510)

PETITIONS

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from several ridings, including Newmarket—Aurora, Mississauga—Lakeshore and Mississauga Centre. They call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and to reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste taxpayers' money studying a ban on guns, which are already banned.

PENSIONS

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by some 200 people from Smithers and Telkwa and Babine Lake describing their frustration and concern over Bill C-27, which is a pension bill the government introduced at one point but that we have not seen for some time.

Their concern is about moving the defined benefit plans people have been paying into for, in some cases, their entire working lives out to targeted benefit plans, which, of course, is a great reduction in their pensions. Many of these petitioners are not public servants but are supporting public servants and others who have paid into these pension plans with the clear expectation that the law would be followed. They reject Bill C-27 and hope the government continues to ignore its existence.

Routine Proceedings

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this petition to the House, which has accumulated 89 signatures. The petitioners would like to see an increase in Canada's international aid contributions and want to see more concrete action taken to support girls and women living in poverty.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition signed by many residents of Ontario on the subject of international organ harvesting without consent. The petitioners call on the government to pass both Bill C-350 and Bill S-240.

CANADA POST

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition in support of postal banking from constituents in my riding. The petitioners state that whereas nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders, whose crippling lending rates affect the poor, the marginalized and rural and indigenous communities; whereas there are 3,800 Canada Post outlets that already exist in rural areas where there are fewer banks and credit unions; and whereas Canada Post already has the infrastructure to make a rapid transition to include postal banking, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to enact the member for London—Fanshawe's Motion No. 166 to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking under the Canada Post Corporation Act.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition containing hundreds of signatures from residents of Ontario. These petitioners add their names to the thousands of Canadians calling on the Prime Minister to defend their freedom of conscience, thought and belief and withdraw the attestation values test on applications to the Canada summer jobs program. Despite receiving signatures from thousands of concerned Canadians over the past year, the government has yet to rectify this situation.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 511 members of my riding that relates to the use of public transit by youth, students and the elderly and senior citizens. It is important to underscore the need for enhanced public transit. That is what they are calling for both to address environmental climate change and to ensure that people are better at getting to their places of work and school.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy today to present a petition signed by dozens of Canadians from all across Canada regarding the scourge of forced organ harvesting.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first

one is from residents who are concerned about the effects climate change is having on the Cowichan River, and it is posing a threat to fish and fish habitat. With regard to first nations reconciliation, adapting to climate change and saving salmon, the residents call upon the Government of Canada to fund the raising of the weir in Cowichan Lake.

● (1515)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition comes from constituents who are concerned about the use of commercial freighter anchorages throughout the southern Gulf Islands, noting that the anchorages were designated without consideration of first nations rights and consultation. The use of anchorages has multiplied several-fold, and numerous vessels are anchored for extended periods. It is affecting the health and well-being of thousands of coastal residents and is damaging the coastal seabed. Therefore, the residents call upon the government to take all measures to possibly reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of commercial freighter anchorage sites throughout the southern Gulf Islands.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition by three dozen Canadians. It is specifically drawing the attention of the House to the practice of illegal organ trading. They are asking parliamentarians to support the penalties in Bill C-350 and Bill S-240.

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition in support of postal banking. Nearly two million Canadians are forced to use payday lenders. They are predators who charge crippling rates that affect poor, marginalized and indigenous communities the most. We have 3,800 Canada Post outlets across rural Canada, where there are few or no banks, and Canada Post has the ability to facilitate postal banking. The petitioners ask Parliament to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking to benefit everyone.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to table four petitions. The first petition comes primarily from my constituency and calls on the government to support the expeditious construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline to ensure its completion.

AFGHANISTAN MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the persecution of Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan. It calls on the government to create a special program to facilitate the direct application of those facing that persecution in Afghanistan to be privately sponsored to come to Canada. It also calls on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to highlight the persecution of this community with her Afghan counterpart and to strongly advocate for more to be done to protect them.

COPTIC CHRISTIANS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition deals with another human rights issue, the challenges and the persecution faced by Coptic Christians in Egypt. It highlights instances of the abduction of Coptic women and concerns about forced conversions and forced marriages that sometimes follow in those cases. It calls on the Government of Canada to prioritize the principles of universal human rights and religious freedom and to engage with the Government of Egypt and with civil society on the issue of the challenges faced by Coptic Christians.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition deals with the private member's bill I am sponsoring, Bill S-240, which seeks to criminalize the practice of going abroad to get organs for which there has not been consent. The petitioners want Parliament to support the expeditious passage of the bill. We need to move forward with Bill S-240 as quickly as possible.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I, too, am presenting a petition signed by residents of Ontario in favour of Bill S-240 and also Bill C-350, which covers much of the same terrain. This is essentially about organ harvesting from people who do not want to have their organs removed from their bodies. This amounts, in essence, to the murder of one person in order to facilitate surgery to benefit another. Canada should not participate in this. When I chaired the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, all parties agreed that this is a barbaric practice that ought to be stopped. The petitioners, of course, agree with that conclusion.

VISION CARE

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again to table a petition regarding a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care. The petitioners indicate that in the next 20 years, it is expected that Canadians will be affected by vision loss to the tune of doubling what is happening right now. They ask the federal government to not only put in place a national framework for action to promote eye and health care but to also recognize this as a growing public health issue. The petitioners are from Bainsville, Harriston, Listowel, Palmerston, Atwood, Amherstburg, Lancaster, Martintown, Alexandria, Dunvegan, Maxville, Green Valley, Apple Hill, Glen Robertson, Fordwich, Milverton and Acton.

S.O. 52

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here to bring forward a petition from Brampton. These petitioners call on the government to pass Bill S-240, a private member's bill that would basically address the issue of Canadians and people from Canada travelling abroad to receive organs from people who have not consented to those organs being removed. This is a heinous act the petitioners are drawing attention to. We look forward to seeing the bill addressed in this House soon.

VISION CARE

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, vision loss is set to double over the next 20 years, and petitioners from Nanaimo and Ladysmith draw the House's attention to the fact that vision loss hits the most vulnerable, particularly youth, seniors and indigenous people. They urge that with better early detection and better access to health care services, preventable vision loss could be addressed by this Parliament. They call for recognition that vision care is a growing health care problem, and urge a reduction of vision impairment by acting proactively on eye health.

• (1520)

POVERTY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands calling on the House to develop a national poverty strategy to ensure all Canadians have respect and dignity in their lives.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

GENERAL MOTORS PLANT CLOSURE

The Speaker: I have a notice of a request for an emergency debate on the same topic from three members, and I will hear from the three in the order I received the requests.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 52, I ask that we have an emergency debate on the situation in Oshawa, the Durham region and Ontario as a result of the announcement by GM today with respect to the planned closure of the operating facilities and assembly plant in Oshawa.

S.O. 52

Already we have heard that 2,500 jobs are at risk there. I would suggest that it is potentially even larger. A study a few years ago suggested 4,000 direct jobs would be at risk, and up 33,000 in southern Ontario from indirect impact on the supply chain network, which is tightly integrated in Ontario and the Great Lakes manufacturing region. There is a risk of a \$1.1-billion hit on annual GDP to the country. For Ontario specifically, that study showed that after two years, there could be a drop of \$5.2 billion to the GDP of Ontario as a result of closure of General Motors of Oshawa operations.

There are many questions to ask with respect to why Oshawa was not considered part of GM's global competitive future. Historically, the productivity levels of the workers in Oshawa, who live throughout the Durham region, has been unparalleled. The flexibility the line offers there allows for multiple products, from trucks, which are hot selling now, through to sedans and others.

What were the circumstances? This is going to impact thousands in Ontario. We have to explore what the tariffs on steel and aluminum, and the retaliatory tariffs, possibly had to do with this decision, as well as the economic conditions, and NAFTA, the free trade agreement, I would add.

We saw a USMCA tabled, but we would not have free trade in Canada with our U.S. partners were it not for GM Oshawa, the epicentre of the auto industry that led to free trade in the Auto Pact between Canada and the U.S. in 1965. That is how fundamental autos have been. Since that time, Canadians in Oshawa, people from General Motors in the area, including my father when I was young, have produced cars, 85% of which were sold into the U.S.

Trade, tariffs is fundamental here. We also have to look at the threat posed by President Trump with respect to 232 tariffs on the auto, and the potential imposition. Did that have anything to do with it? As well, there is the regulatory and tax environment in Ontario. It was noted that the government was planning to exempt General Motors from the carbon tax scheme, but certainly smaller and medium-sized parts suppliers in their network across southern Ontario were not going to be exempt.

I would end with this. This has been over a century, since in the late 1800s when the McLaughlin family from Enniskillen started making carriages. Sadly my community of Bowmanville would not lend the family some money years later, so they moved it to Oshawa. The McLaughlin Carriage Company and later McLaughlin Motor Car Company was not just the epicentre of the auto industry in Canada, Sam McLaughlin was a director and original investor in the General Motors Corporation itself. The auto industry and General Motors owes its success to McLaughlin, McLaughlin Buick and his partnership with Mr. Durant that led to General Motors we have today.

We can express our sympathy for the families impacted, but on this side we do not want to explore giving up on the conditions that led to this decision. From being a world-class plant with the best employers, the best position within the North American marketplace, what has changed to make us be one of the plants named today? As parliamentarians, we owe it to bring this debate to the floor. I am glad others have echoed our sentiment for this.

According to Standing Order 52, I hope you, Mr. Speaker, will allow us the opportunity to advance the interests of our constituents and this wider issue that will impact all Canadians.

● (1525)

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I submitted a letter to your office asking for an emergency debate, pursuant to Standing Order 52.2, about the news we all heard this morning that GM would be closing up its operations in Oshawa. This is devastating news for the 3,000-plus workers who will lose their jobs. It is also devastating news for their families, for the city of Oshawa and the surrounding communities, for the province of Ontario and for the entire country.

The effects of this closure will be huge. The economic and human effects will be felt far and wide, beyond just Oshawa and the GM facilities. Up to 30,000 people who work in jobs dependent on the auto sector could also be affected. That is 30,000 more families that will experience the incredible hardship of a closure like this.

I have some personal experience with a closure like this, as the president of my local union. When Stelco announced its major closure, I saw the effects on workers and their families. The stress of the closure and the financial hardship even led some of my members to take their lives.

Make no mistake, the effects of this closure will be severe and difficult. That is why we need to have a debate about what can be done immediately to help the workers, their families and the community.

Both GM and the Premier of Ontario may be saying the ship has sailed, but we do not accept this is a done deal. The Liberal government must explore options to encourage GM to reverse its decision, including targeted investment that will ensure these workers can continue to build the vehicles that Canadians need now and into the future.

Last week, the Liberal government gave corporations like General Motors a \$14 billion tax giveaway. The Prime Minister said that it would guarantee jobs remaining in Canada. However, today we are seeing how much the Liberal government does not understand what working people are going through, with thousands of our layoffs sending shockwaves to our manufacturing sector.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member seems to be getting into what would be debate in the event that I grant debate. I would like him to stay to the key point of why there should be an emergency debate. I think I understand what he is saying. I got the gist of it. Maybe he could come to the conclusion.

Mr. Scott Duvall: Mr. Speaker, those affected by this morning's announcement do not want to hear about who is to blame. They want to hear about how the jobs might be protected, about alternatives to closing the plant and how the government might step in and offer solutions. They want us as parliamentarians to address how we might protect the well-being of them and their families.

We owe it to the workers and their families to try and find a solution. That is why we must have this emergency debate as soon as possible.

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it sounds like we are all in agreement that his debate is necessary, I will be brief in my remarks.

I am rising pursuant to Standing Order 52 to request an emergency debate on GM's decision regarding the closure of the Oshawa plant. This is of course terrible news for the women and men whose jobs will be affected, along with their families and the community. I understand today's news will have a major impact on the community surrounding the plant, as well as the network of suppliers that support all the plants impacted by GM's announcement.

As co-chair of the Liberal auto caucus, with the member for Guelph, I believe an emergency debate is appropriate so the House of Commons can consider this very serious issue.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. members for Durham, Hamilton Mountain and Cambridge for their interventions in relation to this request, which I am prepared to grant, for an emergency debate to take place this evening.

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PRIVILEGE

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR SAINT-LÉONARD—SAINT-MICHEL

The Speaker: I have notice of a question of privilege by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege, which I notified your office about two and a half hours ago. It involves the quite unusual case of the member of Parliament for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

As you know, under our Standing Orders, Mr. Speaker, there are very few prescriptions on what a member of Parliament must do to perform his or her duties, but there is one at least that we try to hold each other to account, and that is Standing Order 15, which requires members of Parliament to attend to their duties on Parliament Hill in the House of Commons, representing their constituents. There are, of course, exceptions to this. Members of Parliament sometimes have parliamentary duties, delegations, travelling around the country or outside of Canada, and they may be on official business. However, that is not the case, to the best of our knowledge, with the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

If you will recall, Mr. Speaker, the last we heard was a statement by the member. I can remember him giving essentially his farewell speech last April 25, I believe. He was congratulated by members in

Privilege

the House and people from the opposition wished him good luck and best of luck in his future endeavours. To my knowledge, that was the last we heard of it. It happens from time to time that members of Parliament choose not to continue to work as members of Parliament and go on do something else.

It was much to my surprise, and perhaps to the surprise of many members of Parliament, that since that April date, while the member of Parliament has not performed his duties as a member of Parliament, he has still been a member of Parliament. He did not give notice of his resignation nor did he stop receiving the many benefits, including salary, which he is entitled to as a member of Parliament of the House of Commons. We find this quite extraordinary. I am sure there have been cases somewhere in the past, but I have not heard of them.

Typically, things come up in life. Sometimes it can be medical reasons or other things that we are all quite compassionate about and that we then reach out with much sympathy for an MP or his or her family. However, we have no knowledge of that in this case. The only thing that you, Mr. Speaker, have heard and that I have heard in terms of evidence is that last statement of April 25 from the member from Montreal, saying that he was finishing and quitting. However, that has not been true.

We have social media posts and whatnot. We have some suggestion of a special assignment that he was sent on by the Prime Minister, which the Prime Minister's Office has rejected, or at the very least not acknowledged. That is certainly not sufficient to qualify him under any of the rules that we have. The privilege is quite straightforward. The rules that guide us in terms of attendance are quite straightforward.

My concern is that allowing this type of behaviour to not be considered, we as members of Parliament are simply saying that it is fine that an MP can take his or her seat, duly elected from his or her constituency, and then just not show up for work but still receive pay, the ability to travel and all of those other things that are meant to allow us to do our jobs on behalf of the people we represent. If someone can simply not show up yet receive all of those benefits and we as members of Parliament and you as Speaker simply say that it is fine, then essentially we are condoning that behaviour.

While Canadians' opinion of politicians and members of Parliament go up and down over the years, as I am sure you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, and too often more down, then we must be invested with the effort to try to raise expectations, at the very least the expectation of showing up to work. Other Canadians in any other jobs, if they had gone into work in April and said that they were quitting and then for the next seven months did not show up for work but still received their pay, most Canadians would expect some sort of consequence to that. We have rules that do govern us, and we believe those rules should apply.

Government Orders

Therefore, I rise on the tool that I am able to use here today, on a question of privilege, which I then defer to you, Mr. Speaker, for your consideration. If that is accepted, we would then send the matter, with some urgency, to the procedure and House affairs committee so it could hear proper testimony, evidence, from the member of Parliament and from whomever has any information about this. We would simply shine a light on this behaviour. Is there a viable reason for the member's absence for the last seven months, and two months more, and as best as we know, when he plans to resign? However, neither your office nor the Clerk's office has any notice of an actual resignation.

If the member is saying that for nine months he just does not have to come to work, but there is a reason for it, then we can hear that testimony. The procedure and House affairs committee, in my opinion, would be the best committee to judge what has to happen next, whether that be suspension or any of the other methods it has.

• (1530)

To me, this seems like a pretty clear-cut case of someone breaching one of the relatively few rules we have as members of Parliament, because we do have some latitude in how we perform our duties. Not every MP does it the same. My goodness, one of the basic standards should be showing up. If the MPs simply do not show up, then the 100,000 or 130,000 people they represent do not have a voice. That is the way this works. No one else can represent them. No one else can vote on their behalf. When somebody simply says, "Well, I am entitled to this position and I don't have to show up to it" then that sends the worst of all possible messages to Canadians and Canadian voters.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will take our letter under consideration, that you will look at this as a clear-cut case of privilege, that we can expeditiously move this toward the procedure and House affairs committee, which I think is the most appropriate committee of the House, and that we can say to not just all the MPs but to all Canadians that we take this work seriously. MPs come here with the best of intentions and, ideally, with the best work ethic possible. To simply condone or ignore behaviour that falls far short of that standard would be an indication that we as a collective House simply do not feel this is important. I do not believe that is true.

• (1535)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the same question of privilege, I would associate myself with much of the remarks of the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, recognizing as well that members of Parliament have the privilege to do this job as they see fit, for the most part. The question here is that the member in question has made it explicitly clear that he will not attend the House of Commons. That is what is so different here. We have seen many cases, tragic cases even, where members have suffered from cancer and setbacks.

We had Keith Ashfield, a good friend of ours in the last Parliament, who had to spend much time seeking medical treatment and no one on any side of the House begrudged him for being away to take care of his health during that difficult time. That is not the same as having a member declare to Canadians that he will not attend the House of Commons to perform his duties as a member of Parliament. That is what is so shocking about this case and what makes it so different from all of those other circumstances that may

keep a member, through no fault of his or her own and for reasons which may be out of his or her control from attending here.

However, to say that the member is pursuing another line of work that will prevent him from doing his duties, that is what makes this case so exceptional and that is why it should be a matter that seizes the office of the Speaker. This truly is an exceptional circumstance and we need to deal with it in that manner.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know anything about this case and I am not saying it is not a problem. However, when you rule on privilege, just to remind the Speaker, you have to explain how a member's ability to do is his or her job is deterred by the question brought forward.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope and the hon. member for Yukon for their interventions. I will consider the matter and come back to the House in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-86, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada presently has the lowest unemployment in 40 years. What is also amazing is that Yukon has recently had the lowest level of unemployment in the country. The north normally has higher levels of unemployment. Therefore, this is fantastic for my riding. It is amazing and exciting for Yukoners that we are virtually at full economic employment.

What has caused this great level of work in Canada and particularly in Yukon? There are two items that have made a major contribution to this.

The first is the record level of infrastructure spending, double what has ever been spent before by any government in any part of Canada. In my riding, as an example, over 60 projects have already been announced for over \$400 million for virtually every community in Yukon. There is probably nothing more gut-wrenching for people than to not be able to feed their family, to not have a job, to not be able to pay the bills. It must be hard for people to have to tell their family they have to move because they cannot afford to live where they are, or they cannot send their kids on school trips or buy them clothes similar to the other kids' or to not have good food.

The fact that there are so many infrastructure projects putting so many people to work is so edifying. However, that is not the end of it. Last May we signed an infrastructure agreement for \$445 million more over the next 10 years for our riding.

Government Orders

The second area that I think is a big contribution to the low unemployment rates is the contributions we have made to all different categories of needy people in my riding all of Canada. By increasing the GIS, thousands of seniors have been lifted out of poverty. We have increased support for students in general and have more support for low-income students. We have also doubled the number of summer jobs for students, and there are still more waiting. There were more applications to fill even when the number of jobs were doubled.

We have supported low-income people with huge amounts of funds through the child tax credit. It is income-tested. Single mothers could get over \$6,000 a child under this plan. Some people talk about the cancelled sports credit and other credits like that where people might have received \$50 or \$100. However, I think people would rather have the \$6,000 to really help them raise their children. The other thing we did was we made it non-taxable. Parts of it in the past were taxable. A single mother, who I think was a reporter, came to me in shock when it came to the tax time of the year and found that she had to pay a huge amount of income tax on the child tax credit, which she was not prepared for at all.

The credit has been increased recently, and faster than we thought we would be able to, by indexing the child tax credit. It is going to continue to rise. In my riding alone, it will increase to \$5.6 million from 2018 to 2023 for children in very low-income families.

Another area that helps low-income families is day care. As members know, we had a national day care program under the Hon. Ken Dryden. However, the opposition parties got together and replaced Prime Minister Martin with Prime Minister Harper, who cancelled the national child care program. We have initiated a new program. For my riding, the agreement has been signed with the federal government and the minister in Yukon for \$7 million over three years.

Another group that has been helped is veterans. The one item I would especially note is that employees now make trips to Yukon three or four times a year to help veterans and veterans of the RCMP in Yukon.

Another group that is disadvantaged is those suffering from mental health and addictions. That has been a high priority for our government. There has been a big need for funding in Canada. My riding alone will get roughly \$1 million this year.

This deals with contributions to a vast majority of low-income people. However, there is one large group that I did not mention, and that is the low-income workers. In this budget we have added a low-income worker benefit so people can keep more of their hard-earned money to help them pay the bills as things are getting more expensive for everyone.

● (1540)

In my riding alone, the Canada workers benefit is going to help 1,600 workers. People can imagine across Canada how big this program is. It helps two million workers across Canada, and lifts 70,000 of them out of poverty.

People may ask why I brought up all these contributions to the needy in the context of the great boost to the economy and the full employment. The reason is, it is the right thing to do. That is the

most important reason to do it. The second reason is that people really need these funds. Of course when they spend them, they go to small businesses, whose taxes will be reduced, and other expenditures in the economy.

All this employment actually leads to another problem, one which in a way is nice to have, and that is a lack of employees. Everyone has heard in the House of Commons and other debates the number of improvements to the immigration system to deal with this, and the increased training funds. In fact, the 2016 budget was a training budget. A significant portion of those funds goes to training aboriginal people, which is important in my riding.

There is something else exciting for me in the bill. Mining is so important in my riding. In fact mining has been the biggest contributor to the GDP virtually every year since the century before last century, since 1897. Every year since 2003, for anyone who was not here at that time, I have been lobbying very hard to get the mineral exploration tax credit extended. In my riding, the vast majority of exploration projects depend on this credit. I have been fighting year after year, no matter who is in government, to get that extended. Indeed, it was extended each year. I was excited to see that again this year it was extended. I thank PDAC, perhaps the biggest mining association in the world, and MAC, and the Yukon Chamber of Mines who at the Yukon Geoscience Forum a couple of weeks ago applauded my efforts in lobbying for this every year.

Something even more exciting is what the minister announced in the fall economic statement. PDAC was asking for this too. I think it was asking not only for a one-year but a three-year extension as the first priority of a number of things it was looking for. The minister announced not a one-year extension, not a three-year extension, but a five-year extension. It is so critical to such a big industry in Canada. I am so excited about this. Finance ministers, no matter what party, are the ones who say no to all the things that come forward, so for the minister to say yes to making this expenditure is exciting for me, for my riding and for the mining industry. I thank the Minister of Finance for this great success story. The mining industry is the biggest employer of indigenous people, with 16,500 jobs in Canada.

Another problem that all this employment creates is the need for housing. As one of the first members of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, we have been lobbying for affordable housing for years as well. The new national housing plan, again, is the biggest in Canadian history, of some \$40 billion. I have already announced projects in a vast majority of the communities with a population in my riding and the communities of Whitehorse, Carcross, Haines Junction, Burwash, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Dawson, Watson Lake and Carmacks.

Government Orders

Also very exciting is the \$1 million for the women's entrepreneurship program. I congratulate the women's business network and Tammy Beese. There is another \$32 million for the Yukon government, which will spend it and help the economy.

Finally, CanNor, our economic development agency, was about to expire when this budget came in. Again, I thank the Minister of Finance. He made it permanent and provided \$20 million a year and another \$2 million for innovations and skills, and funded the huge innovation centre so that Yukon is in with a digital economy like everyone else.

For all these reasons, members can see why we are very excited in my riding about the economic interventions by the Minister of Finance.

• (1545)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a budget bill that is over 800 pages long. Despite Liberal members railing against omnibus budget bills when in opposition, this is double the length of any previous omnibus bill.

It is interesting to note what is in the bill and it is also interesting to note what is not in the bill. What is not in the bill is any information about when the government believes the budget will balance itself.

We have asked this question before and I wonder if the member has an answer to it. According to the government's plan, when will the budget balance itself? Liberals promised during the election that it would be done by this fiscal year, 2018-19. That was clearly promised by the Prime Minister. He told the media that this promise was very set in stone. Clearly, that is not the case.

When will the budget balance itself?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, there were a number of questions.

The first was about omnibus bills. What the Liberals railed against was the improper use, not in budget times, of omnibus bills. If the bill is twice as long as any other budget implementation bill, it means we are doing twice as much as any other government.

In relation to the small deficit, we are leading the G7. It is not significant, especially given all of the investments I mentioned and the 500,000 new jobs. All of these workers are paying income tax and the businesses are paying taxes, and all of that is going into revenue.

Low-income seniors, low-income students, low-income workers, people getting child care, veterans, people being helped with mental health and addictions, people in the women's entrepreneurship program, people in the innovation centre and people with the economic development agency are very happy with those investments and that small deficit.

• (1550)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have known my colleague for quite a long time and he is always the champion for the underdog and for many of the families in Yukon who struggle with the high cost of living, of food and so on.

I would like to hear the member elaborate more on the benefits of the infrastructure programs as well as on the child benefit that we now provide.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. One of the reasons I got into politics was to fight against poverty.

A number of things help low-income people. In my riding, there are a number of indigenous people and a number of rural communities where things are even more expensive. It is very important that Canadians get the child tax benefit, especially if there is no employment.

One of the important things I can tell all Canadians who are listening is to make sure they fill in their tax forms. Even for those who do not make a cent, there are a number of benefits available, such as the child tax benefit and the GST credit. Canadians cannot get them unless they fill out their tax forms.

One thing I did not mention is nutrition north. It helps people in the High Arctic with the high cost of food, which can be two, three or four times what is for the rest of us. Nutrition north has recently, through the economic statement, received more funds, and more studies have been done, helping people to collect country foods as part of the new investment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Conservative friend across the way make the assertion that this legislation before us is twice the size of Conservative bills. I will just remind members of the House that that is a far stretch from reality, to say the very least. This is not to mention that the content of the bill before us is, in fact, related to the budget itself.

There are many aspects of budget implementation. One of them is very positive and progressive in the area of pay equity. A number of pages are dedicated to the issue of pay equity. There are many other social programs within it that I think move us forward.

Could the member provide his thoughts on how important it is to pass this budget implementation bill?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, the member seems to be easier on me than he is with a lot of the question he asks others in the House. I am glad he was so tame on me.

I think everyone in the House, for the sake of the particular part of the bill on pay equity, wants the bill to pass.

I want to add my congratulations to the Liberals' women's caucus, which I have attended off and on for years, and to the all-party caucus for pushing to make sure this important provision got in. I would also like to compliment the finance minister on having recently had the first budget analyzed based on gender to make sure it was fair for everyone.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-86, the Liberal government's second mammoth budget implementation bill, related to budget 2018.

Government Orders

As I begin my remarks today, I would invite everyone to reflect on the following section from the Liberal Party's 2015 election platform. Under the heading "Prorogation and omnibus bills", there is a line that says:

Stephen Harper has also used omnibus bills to prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating his proposals. We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice.

These are stinging words, but as is so often the case with the Prime Minister, the promises he made in the Liberal platform document are not worth the paper they were written on.

The string of broken promises by the Prime Minister is long. Just last week, the finance minister reaffirmed another broken promise to Canadians. In 2015, the current Prime Minister pledged that his budgetary deficits would be small and temporary. However, with this bill and with the recent fall economic statement, the Prime Minister and his government have broken their promise. In fact, the federal deficit is three times what the Liberals pledged it would be, and we all know that more debt today means higher taxes tomorrow.

I could go on about the Prime Minister's broken promises and betrayal of Canadians, but there is a specific part of this bill that I would like to address. Buried in this bill between pages 589 and 649 are divisions 22 and 23, which make amendments to the Canada Shipping Act 2001 and the Marine Liability Act.

To begin, it must be noted that three shipping associations representing members across Canada were all taken by surprise at the inclusion of these clauses in a budget implementation bill. The pan-Canadian Shipping Federation of Canada, the B.C.-based Chamber of Shipping, and the Great Lakes St. Lawrence-based Chamber of Marine Commerce all expressed their surprise at the move, as well as their concern at the speed with which the bill was being rushed through the House of Commons and committee.

Talk about ramming a mammoth bill through Parliament, the bill was introduced on October 29. A day later divisions 22 and 23 were referred to the transport, infrastructure and communities committee, where we were invited to study and then submit any recommendations and/or amendments in less than two weeks.

Despite this ridiculously rushed timeline for reviewing the bill, the transport committee did hold two meetings where we heard from shipping stakeholders who, despite the time crunch, identified some areas of common concern. Our committee also heard from departmental officials about the proposed changes. One shocking revelation from the officials was that the changes being proposed were the most substantial changes to these acts in, in one case, 10 years and, in the other, 25 years.

These substantial legislative changes, with the potential to have a dramatic impact on the Canadian shipping industry, as well as all the way down the transportation chain, are being rammed through Parliament with hardly any time for prudent study. To me, this reflects the disregard with which the government treats the Canadian economy.

Further, I would like to highlight another way that the government is disregarding the transportation sector when it included these divisions in Bill C-86. Apparently, through the framework of the government's much lauded oceans protection plan,

it was conducting so-called consultations on potential legislative changes related to marine safety and environmental protection.

These consultations ended on Friday, October 26, and, as I mentioned, this bill was introduced with divisions 22 and 23 on the morning of Monday, October 29. Given the tight timeframe, the Minister of Transport did not appear at committee, so we questioned the assistant deputy minister on how the department managed to craft 60 pages of legislation in just one weekend. Needless to say, we were not satisfied with the answers that we received and were left with only one conclusion, that these consultations were a farce.

• (1555)

While there were some elements of divisions 22 and 23 that stakeholders found agreeable, there was unanimity in the call for specific amendments. I would like to highlight a couple of these amendments that my colleague the member for Calgary Shepard argued for at finance committee. Regrettably, these amendments failed to be passed at the committee.

An amendment was proposed to section 690. This amendment introduced some safeguards regarding the use of the interim orders by the Minister of Transport. Stakeholders suggested that the parameters around which the minister could make an interim order needed to be properly defined. Additionally, they suggested that the use of an interim order needed to be precipitated and/or necessitated by a significant risk and/or an immediate threat. Without these constraining definitions, Bill C-86 would create uncertainty and this uncertainty could become the norm in the shipping industry.

They also suggested that it was essential that the proposal to give the minister the power to adopt interim orders under the Canada Shipping Act be sufficiently restricted through the appropriate checks and balances to ensure that their use would not open the door to the practice of governing by interim order as a workaround from the normal regulatory process. The new subsection they believed was required, because of the potential major ramifications of a minister's making an interim order, was also rejected by Liberal committee members.

This rejected amendment also proposed to reduce the length of time that an interim order would be in effect. The current bill allows for an interim order to be in effect for one year, plus an extension of two years if granted by the Governor in Council. Stakeholders felt that it was quite unprecedented that a new regulation could exist for three years without going through the normal regulatory process. The proposed amendment would have limited the length of an interim order from one year to 14 days and the Governor in Council extension to one year, which is more in line with other legislation.

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Another amendment that also failed at the finance committee, but which should have been included in Bill C-86, proposed to amend clause 692. The purpose of this amendment was to introduce safeguards around the use of ministerial powers. What Bill C-86 proposes in clause 692 would go a step further than simply introducing new Governor in Council regulatory powers. In some cases, it would also enable the minister to modify the content of Governor in Council regulations relating to matters like compulsory or recommended routes, cargo loading, and navigation and anchoring by using a ministerial order for up to one year.

To curb this expanded power, the shipping stakeholders felt that their amendment was needed to ensure that the minister would consult with industry before making any order under this section.

In rejecting these reasonable proposals by the shipping industry, the government is turning a blind eye to the concerns of those workers and businesses that would be most directly impacted by these changes.

As the shadow minister for transport, I value the input of key stakeholders. This legislation and the Liberals' rejection of reasonable amendments is a reflection of their disregard for Canada's economy and future well-being.

I want to highlight a final area of concern that was given in testimony to our committee on November 6.

The witness appearing for the Chamber of Shipping noted that clause 692 of this legislation appeared to be another mechanism by which to implement a moratorium on specific commodities through regulation and interim orders, and not through legislation, as this government is doing with Bill C-48. The witness noted that this contradicted what should be the government's objective in providing a predictable supply chain. There is no question in my mind that the inclusion of this clause in Bill C-86 would have a further chilling effect on Canada's oil and gas industry.

The Liberal government has been bad for Canada's economy and this legislation would only take Canada further down this mistaken path.

• (1600)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to my colleague across the way, I cannot help but think that budget implementation bills include a significant number of needed changes to regulations or for enabling them. It is all a part of it. For example, we see that many of the proposed changes deal with tax laws, tax brackets, and so forth. These are all very important changes when a government introduces a budget and they are why, in the most part, a budget implementation bill is required.

Did the member want to expand on that aspect of the legislation? Not all of it is super attractive stuff or easily commented on, but consists of the details that enable, add to, or take away regulations.

• (1605)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, the amendments to divisions 22 and 23 were in fact buried in this omnibus bill tabled by the government. These were the most substantive changes. These are not everyday housekeeping changes

to regulations or legislation that might be put into a large omnibus bill. These are among the most substantive changes made to the Canada Shipping Act and the Marine Liability Act.

Members of that industry were completely taken by surprise that these changes were included in an omnibus bill. We suggested amendments at committee. We were very genuine in our attempt to review the clauses referred to our committee. They were genuine in their attempt to review the legislation and put forward some very thoughtful amendments, and the amendments were rejected. I would suggest that burying substantive changes to existing pieces of legislation is not the way to go when one dealing with an omnibus bill.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is so interesting hearing the speeches from different shadow ministers on our side, digging deep into aspects of the budget implementation act that deal with their areas, and to really see how much of an omnibus bill this is, how many changes we are seeing in so many different areas. We are basically getting one good speech on each of those different aspects, providing so much comment with so little debate in response. It is really quite striking.

Today we are going to have an emergency debate on the terrible impact we are seeing in the auto sector. In my province of Alberta, which the member spoke about, we are dealing with major challenges in the oil and gas sector as a result of legislation brought forward by the government, such as Bill C-69, the no-pipelines bill, as well as other steps it has taken.

It really boggles the mind. On the one hand, the government has taken every possible step to kill the transportation of vital energy resources. On the other hand, it has put massive amounts of public dollars into buying a pipeline, supposedly in the name of getting that pipeline built, and it is still not succeeding with that. It has bought the pipeline without building it. We would prefer that we build pipelines without buying them.

Could the member share with us a little more about what positive alternatives there are? The Liberals have said that it would take magic to get these things done, in some cases, and yet we have had success in the past building pipelines. What are the steps we can and should be taking to move these forward?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, my colleague put it very eloquently when he spoke about the fact that, because of this Prime Minister and the current government's failure, thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs. As well, Canadian taxpayers are now on the hook for a \$4.5-billion pipeline that may never be built. Add to that the legislation that has been introduced. In my comments, I mentioned Bill C-48, and my colleague has mentioned Bill C-69. This legislation is already having a devastating effect on investment here in Canada. Those companies have not just stopped investing, but have taken their investment to other countries. They are going ahead and building pipelines in other places around the world. It is just not happening here in Canada.

Government Orders

I know that the leader of our party, the leader of our caucus, has stood and suggested what a Conservative government would do if it were elected. The first thing Conservatives would do is repeal Bill C-48, a moratorium on tanker traffic off the northwest coast of British Columbia. In itself, that would begin to build some confidence. We would repeal Bill C-69. Again, we have placed a regulatory burden on certain sectors in this country that needs to be reversed if we are ever to see a thriving oil and gas industry in this country again.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to speak to Bill C-86, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures. I will be talking about the middle class, which is extremely important, and those working hard to join it. In my speech, I will also talk about veterans, women, families and, of course, seniors.

[*English*]

Before I get started, I will talk about what I would describe as Canada being a just society. Our government is working extremely hard to make sure that all Canadians are part of that just society. Throughout my speech, I will touch on that.

Mr. Speaker, as you can understand, we expect the wealthiest 1% of Canadians to pay more to help ensure we have the best country in the world, and that is extremely important. The second piece is ensuring that the middle class is strong and that we create opportunities and good jobs for the middle class. We have to make sure that we help those trying hard to join the middle class and that is a very important focus of our government. We want to move people from below the poverty line to the middle class as well and we want to make sure that people in the middle class do not fall below the poverty line. It is a very important approach. This is what I call a just society and that is why we are asking all Canadians to contribute to that vision.

Let us look at what our government has done, is doing or will do as we move forward. The unemployment rate has dropped to 5.7% from 7.2%. That is very impressive. That is the lowest in 40 years. That is something to talk about and is extremely important. Almost 700,000 Canadians are finding new, good-paying jobs. That is what is important in our focus on the economy.

We are seeing the effect of the Canada child benefit, which is tax free. We are seeing major investment in this area. For example, in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, people are receiving \$5.2 million a month. That is right, \$5.2 million a month or \$60 million a year. That is happening right across this country. If we play with the numbers, that is 338 times \$60 million on average. Billions of dollars have been invested and are having an effect. What is really helping the economy is that money is being spent right away by families because it is needed and it is contributing to the economy. That is what it is all about and that is why it is very important.

The fall economic statement delivered last week has very important strategies, one of which is the accelerated deduction for companies that want to purchase equipment to be more competitive. They are seeing three times the deduction. If we use computers as an

example, before the investment would have been about 27.5% and now the first year they can deduct 82%. It is quite impressive.

Now let us talk about families. They are extremely important in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. We are investing in the EI parental sharing benefit. The second parent is receiving up to five weeks more to spend more time with his or her family, which is very important. We have established an advisory council on pharmacare. We know this is extremely important to Canadians. We have been talking about it for years, but it is time to take action, and I believe we will see that in the very near future.

• (1615)

To help low-income Canadians, we have introduced the Canada workers benefit, which will help over 300,000 more people. Over two million people will benefit from that investment. The BIA will enact that process. One will not need to apply for it; it will be automatic.

Then we see changes to the labour code that would give up to five days of paid leave for individuals experiencing family violence. Those are added features that are very important.

We have invested almost \$10 billion for veterans. When I was going from town hall to town hall and from legion to legion, one of the most important things they asked for was to bring back the option of a monthly pension. Veterans can achieve that goal now. There are three phases to it: the pain and suffering compensation, additional pain and suffering compensation, and income replacement, which would be up to 90% of pre-release salary. Those are major investments for Canadian veterans who have risked their lives, and for their families.

When the Conservatives were in power, it took 10 years of service to get a veterans ID card and then they cut it. I am not sure why. It is hard to understand. We brought back the veterans card, which I heard across my riding was a very important step veterans wanted. Now, as soon as they have basic training, they have the right to a veterans card. The ID card states the name, the rank, the years of service and more information about their service. They will be able to access benefits because of the card.

The budget implementation act supports women. It would actually enable a department of women and gender equality. It is an extremely important piece of the legislation. This would help the minister to implement and move these initiatives forward. We are laying the groundwork now. More consultation is required, and with that consultation we will be able to move legislation within the next year. We have to keep in mind that we are seeing today, as I speak, a historic number of women participating in the workforce. That is because we are creating opportunities, trying to ensure we are supporting women in the workforce, because they can contribute enormously to the economy of our great country.

Government Orders

In my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, we are going to benefit from many initiatives of our government, such as broadband. Access to the Internet is extremely important so people can stay in their rural communities and be able to create a successful business, have a family and build on that prosperity.

The investment of our government in dementia and the autism spectrum disorder is a 10-year investment of \$5 million each.

Let me close with the piece that would enact the poverty reduction act. This is extremely important, and it is part of the BIA 2. It sets two targets: reducing poverty by 2020 by 20% and reducing poverty by 2030 by 50%. That is very impressive. How are we going to achieve that? We have already started. We have seen a major investment in the CCB, as I mentioned. We have seen investment in GIS for retired low-income single individuals. We are seeing investment in the national housing strategy. In my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, 155 units have been built or renovated. We are seeing investment in early learning. In Nova Scotia alone, it is over \$11 million per year.

• (1620)

Let us talk about the part that I said was important, which is poverty, those who are in need.

With respect to opportunities, last week we moved forward legislation on accessibility, which is extremely important, and on pay equity. There is also a safety net, which is the Canada workers benefit investment. That is also extremely important.

In closing, what is important to note is that this is a process. This government is moving our economy forward and making sure that every day Canada gets closer to its just society.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's interesting exposition on this particular bill. I would like to ask him this. There is only one taxpayer pocket, which is municipal-provincial-federal. However, he makes it sound like it is the government's money. It is the taxpayers' money. It comes out of my pocket and his pocket. It is not the government's money.

Specifically with respect to this new machinery type of writeoff, if we listen to the response the Prime Minister got in Calgary last week, the people in my riding are selling their equipment. It is going or is gone. They are not buying new equipment for the resource sector. This does nothing in Alberta. Nobody is buying new machinery. It is being shipped to the U.S. For the government to say it is giving this incentive to buy new machinery has no value in Alberta.

I would like a response from my colleague about what he think this does for the resource sector in Alberta.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I hate to say it, but the facts are in front of us. The Conservative government, after 10 years in power, did not build one kilometre of pipeline. It focused 99% of the investment on the United States. It did not take advantage of the opportunities in the world to move our product, which is extremely important for our economy. It did not do its job. It sat with the Americans, selling them 99%, and that is why we are seeing wholesale prices today. Albertans deserve to get much greater money for their oil. We as a government will make that happen in the very near future, because we are investing in Canadians for Canadians, and for a better country.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about a “just” society. That is an original term. I wonder if he coined it or something.

I think what we are hearing about is a “just enough” society. We have Canadians who are struggling and who are earning just enough to get by on any given day. I wonder what he thinks about that in particular.

Also, why will his government not tell Canadians when the budget will balance itself?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, the thing that seems to be missing on the Conservative side is its members do not really understand what spending and investing money is. For example, a company does not wait for a crisis to invest. It has a vision, it sets out a plan to achieve that vision and it invests.

I can tell members this. Because of all of the investments I spoke of in my speech, more and more revenues are coming in as we speak. That will help us pay the deficit and continue to invest in Canadians.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one issue that has been brought up and fought for by many people across Canada and unions is pay equity. People have been fighting for over 40 years to have this come to fruition. During my colleague's speech, he talked about the importance of having that brought forward. However, once again, with what has been put forward in this piece of legislation, women will have to wait another four years. Can he explain why, in 2018, we still have to wait to have pay equity?

• (1625)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, we are focused on pay equity. In the legislation we are proposing a department for women and gender equity, which includes pay equity. This would allow us to move forward on that agenda. Right now we are working on that piece, but we need to consult to ensure we are doing it the right way, because it is extremely important.

Our plan is to move forward in the next year with legislation to achieve that goal.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-86, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures.

The bill has made it to report stage. This is a mammoth bill that is more than 851 pages long. It is truly a massive omnibus bill.

Government Orders

If we combine this bill with the 2008 budget, that makes more than 1,400 pages of legislative changes that all members of the House have to study.

We have said many times that bills like Bill C-86 should be split so that all members of the House have enough time to debate and study them. When bills are this big, it is easy to hide things in them.

In 2015, the Liberals promised to do things differently. When the Conservatives were in power, they had a habit of introducing mammoth omnibus bills. During the election campaign, the Liberals said they would be different and everyone could trust them. However, right after they were elected, back in 2015, they started introducing omnibus bills.

When a government drafts a budget, it makes choices and sets priorities. We are really very disappointed with Bill C-86. More and more, people are hoping the government will enact measures to change their lives for the better. As the NDP sees it, the Liberals have missed that opportunity.

As everyone knows, Canada is a rich country. The gap between Canada's richest people and the rest of the population has never been wider. We believe that that is utterly unacceptable in 2018. Two Canadian billionaires own as much as 11 million Canadians.

Oxfam released a report revealing that the eight richest men own the same wealth as half of humanity.

About 4 million Canadians, including 1.15 million children, live in homes that struggle to put food on the table. Last week, following our weekly caucus meeting, I was able to go back to my riding of Berthier—Maskinongé to attend a Noël du pauvre fundraising dinner in Yamachiche. Volunteers work throughout the year to raise money so that families and children get Christmas hampers.

I would like to recognize the work of organizing committee chair Pierrette Plante and honorary chair Father Julio César Duran. A total of 550 people attended this dinner, which raised nearly \$16,000 to help local residents in need.

We are pleased to see that Bill C-86 contains poverty reduction targets. Unfortunately, those targets are not accompanied by appropriate measures or funding so that they can be met.

The Liberals have ideas and targets, but they are not making any new investments to meet those targets. There is a poverty crisis in Canada. People are living in hardship and misery. There are still people struggling to make ends meet at the end of the month.

The important thing in this bill is pay equity. Women have been waiting for pay equity for over 42 years. It is a promise that was made by the Liberals. However, once again, we are waiting. The Liberals like to consult, but what it really boils down to is that they are buying time. They are still consulting about pay equity, when we really need it today.

Another thing we were hoping to find in the bill was a federal measure to tax web giants, but the bill contains no such measure. We are also calling on the government to put an end to pension theft and to give Canada a national child care strategy.

● (1630)

I had my son when I was a teenager, and at the time, it cost me \$55 a day to send him to daycare. I had to take out additional loans so I could continue my studies and send my son to daycare. We need a Canada-wide child care system to help families, especially single parents.

Furthermore, we want stronger action to address tax havens, and we also want EI sickness benefits to be extended from 15 weeks to 50. There is a good public awareness campaign on that topic. I will come back to that. We also want a universal pharmacare system.

In addition, we want the needs of indigenous communities to be met, particularly with regard to access to safe drinking water and funding for educational institutions in their communities, which receive less funding than other institutions in the country. Lastly, we want assistance for rural regions.

Regarding the duration of EI sickness benefits, which we want to be extended from 15 weeks to 50, it is important to highlight the work of Marie-Hélène Dubé, who launched a petition called "15 weeks to heal is not enough!". Half a million Canadians signed that petition calling on the federal government to take action, but we have heard nothing but radio silence so far in response. It is very frustrating.

In 2016, the Prime Minister himself and the Minister of Social Development promised to take action and extend the benefit period. In 2014, the Prime Minister even voted in favour of Bill C-291, which would have extended EI sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 50.

The government needs to walk the talk. Sick people need time to take care of themselves. They do not have time to fight. That is why we continue to pressure the federal government to extend EI sickness benefits.

I represent the riding of Berthier—Maskinongé, which includes the RCMs of Maskinongé and Berthier, as well as three municipalities in the RCM of Matawinie. I travel quite a bit across my riding, and people stop me to talk about the importance of having a national connectivity strategy, which is something we do not currently have at the federal level.

Access to high-speed broadband Internet is vital to strengthening Canada's social and economic fabric. Some businesses really struggle with connectivity issues. I know a business owner in Maskinongé who pays two ISPs and never knows which of the two will work when he needs it. When one does not work, he tries the other.

We have long called for a national connectivity strategy. Although the government offers programs and money from time to time, this is not enough. We need a Canada-wide strategy to connect Canada and Quebec to the Internet.

Government Orders

I should point out that a cell network strategy is needed as well. In my riding of Berthier—Maskinongé, people from Saint-Mathieu-du-Parc to Saint-Édouard-de-Maskinongé tell me how important cell coverage is. The mayor of Saint-Édouard-de-Maskinongé, Réal Normandin, has spoken to me about this, because people in his village have a hard time getting cell reception. The community of Saint-Élie-de-Caxton, the hometown of Fred Pellerin, is in the same boat.

At a coffee meeting last week in Lavaltrie, Sylvie Legault and Gilles Auclair collected signatures for a petition about the 34 homes on the Point-du-Jour concession that have no Internet access and limited cell network access. Lavaltrie is not far from Montreal. These people are calling for a national Internet access and cell network strategy.

We had hoped to find all kinds of good things in Bill C-89, but the NDP will have to oppose this bill, since it does not do enough to address pay equality. Women have been fighting for far too long for the right to equal pay for equal work.

This bill also does not do enough to help rural areas get access to the Internet and the cell network. We also need to improve the pharmacare system. In short, there are many reasons why we will be voting against Bill C-86.

• (1635)

[English]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, basically, it looks like we are in agreement in a lot of areas.

The member mentioned that there were a lot of poor people in the country. As I mentioned in my speech in detail, we have contributed to virtually all of those groups. First, for the working poor, we have helped over two million people. We have increased the amount of money for low-income students. We have increased the GIS for low-income seniors, bringing thousands of them out of poverty. There is the new Canada child benefit, which brings thousands of children out of poverty.

I am delighted the member raised the boiled water advisories. I do not have the exact figures, but a record number have been dealt with, I think 60 out of 120. We are well on schedule to eliminate them all. It is very important, and I am glad it is important for the NDP.

Finally, on Internet for rural areas, there is a special program. As an example, in my area, the federal government is investing millions to put a line up the Dempster Highway to Inuvik. Therefore, we will have redundancy with our line from the south from Alberta as it goes down whenever someone breaks a line from Alberta. I am very appreciative of that. I appreciate the fact that the member supports those types of initiatives.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Speaker, I could have talked more than 10 minutes, because there are a lot of issues I would have liked to have brought forward on the floor of the House.

I mentioned the importance to act on ensuring we equalized and had better transfer payments to first nations schools. We hear stories, quite often brought up in caucus and in question period, of devastating circumstances, such as how the schools are filled with mould and people are getting sick. The government is not investing

enough in building schools so kids feel safe and comfortable. It is completely ridiculous to think that in the 2018 there is such as injustice in the way kids are treated across Canada.

For the boiled water advisories, some people do not have running water. Parents are afraid to wash their kids because they might get sick. We have not seen a concrete plan and obviously the government has not invested enough.

These are human rights violations. These are important issues that the government talks a lot about, but when it comes to concrete action and money to back it up, it is far too little.

[Translation]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé, which is a magnificent riding.

Earlier, she spoke briefly about pay equity. I have been hearing about pay equity and its importance for years. I even heard about it before I was elected in 2011. It was one of the government's key campaign promises. The Liberals promised to do things differently, and they promised real change. However, we have yet to see any real change on the indigenous file or other key files, including pay equity for women in Canada.

If the campaign promise was sincere, work should have begun on this file the day after the election. Clearly, that did not happen. We are less than a year away from the next election, and the Liberals are promising to hold further consultations. We might see action on this file in another four years.

As I see it, if the Liberals were unable to keep their promise right after the election, it is a sham.

• (1640)

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his comments on pay equity.

This situation is inconceivable in 2018, especially since our Prime Minister professes to be such a champion of women and equality. As my colleague aptly pointed out, this was a Liberal campaign promise. They are holding yet more consultations. They are going to create a department.

During the committee's study of Bill C-86, we heard from experts. The committee held three meetings on this bill and heard testimony from experts. The Liberals rejected all of the NDP's amendments, which had been drafted with the help of experts. That is really frustrating because we had something like 30 amendments on pay equity. The Liberals said they knew more than people in the field who have taken cases to court.

Government Orders

What the Liberals are proposing means that groups will have to go back to court to achieve pay equity. That is sad, disappointing and frustrating. The Liberal government needs to take action right now, not hold more consultations. The time to take action is now.

[English]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I start my discussion on the fall economic update, I would like to acknowledge that today is the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attack on Mumbai, where two Canadians lost their lives.

During a state visit with the former governor general, the Right Hon. David Johnston, whom I accompanied to India, we visited the Taj hotel, which was one of the places that came under severe attack. We paid our respects at the memorial that was set up in the hotel. We talked to the survivors of that terrible tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who were killed and to the people of India. Just a note to my colleagues, the masterminds of that terrorist attack are still free.

On another note, as everyone knows, I am from Calgary. Yesterday evening, I was sitting in a pub with fans in Ottawa for the Grey Cup. I had a great evening when Calgary beat Ottawa. The pub was pretty quiet, but they could not keep me quiet. I was out there rooting for Calgary. I am very grateful that we won the Grey Cup. Go, Stamps, go.

Now I am going to talk about the fall economic update and the management by the Liberal government of the economy. The government gave a fall economic update, and today we heard an announcement that over 2,000 Canadians are going to lose their jobs because of GM's closure of their plant in Oshawa. This has sent shock waves across the country. It will have a serious impact on Ontario's economy, and by extension, the Canadian economy. We will see not only jobs being lost but a subsequent chain of events associated with the plant and the production of vehicles in the auto sector. The impact is going to be huge. Therefore, the fall economic update, as far as I am concerned, is not very valid.

Tonight an emergency debate has been agreed to, which was put forward by the Conservative members. Members of the House will discuss this issue that impacts everyone. Hopefully, everyone will agree unanimously that we should all work together to ensure that Canadians will not be heavily impacted by this loss.

I also want to say that last Thursday, the Prime Minister visited Calgary to talk about the other sector that is crucially important to the economy, and that is the oil energy sector. He had come there to give assurances. He spoke to the Chamber of Commerce, and he met with business leaders. Close to 2,000 people were in the streets asking for action by the Liberal government with regard to the energy sector. Ultimately, his visit provided absolutely nothing of the kind to the oil sector and the workers in Calgary who are suffering. It will subsequently lead to more job losses. The oil sector impacts everyone in this country, yet the government was unable to give assurances to Calgary and Alberta about what it plans to do.

The government's inaction has become so bad, despite having the NDP as its closest ally in Alberta, that the finance minister in Alberta, the Hon. Joe Ceci, who I worked with for many years, because he was a councillor in the same riding I represent today, commented in frustration that if it was something like Bombardier,

we would have seen massive action by the Liberal government. However, because it is Alberta, it kind of got the brush-off. This is what the NDP finance minister in Alberta is saying.

• (1645)

This is a warning sign to the federal government that if it does not pick up the ball in the energy sector, it will once more inflame the western alienation that occurred under the Pierre Trudeau Liberal government. It is a good point for the Liberals to know. It is not the Conservatives speaking about it. It is the NDP finance minister in Alberta talking about this issue.

The point of the fall economic statement is how the Liberals have managed our economy, and it is looking really bad. Canadians are concerned. The deficit is going on and on. It is now three times higher than what the Liberals promised during the election campaign. They like to say that what they promised they are delivering, but unfortunately, they are absolutely not.

The government has raised taxes on the middle class. It has raised taxes. The deficit is going up. What does the future of Canada look like under the current government? It does not look very good. Today's announcement is just one of the symptoms of not looking forward. The government should have known this might happen, and if it did, what actions it would take. It was totally caught off guard. We will hear in tonight's debate what it intends to do, as it is in power.

The main issue in the economic update is simple and straightforward. What assurances do Canadians have that there will be sound management? They are worried about jobs, their children and their families, and now there will be a carbon tax.

This weekend, Rex Murphy, a great commentator, said very simply that we cannot have extra burdens when the economy is under stress and that the government should revisit the carbon tax. We are calling on the government to revisit the carbon tax. It should not sit with its head in the sand and say no. There are other options to address climate change as we move forward, but the carbon tax is not the way to go. Liberals say the carbon tax is revenue neutral and they will return the money to Canadians, but what incentive do they have to do this except to create a bureaucracy for the carbon tax.

The main issue is that we need to create an economic environment that will create economic development. The Prime Minister's actions at the first TPP meeting in Vietnam were disastrous. He did not bother giving any attention to the trade file, which is crucial for Canada.

Government Orders

The finance minister was on TV over the weekend saying that the media was not giving him fair coverage. My colleagues and everyone else are wondering if that is why he gave the media \$560 million, to make sure that the Liberals get favourable coverage from the media. There is a question being raised about that money, and a lot of the media are attacking that. I know it is about job security for them as well, but it brings into question why the government is favouring one sector. The minister says we need a free press. Indeed, we need a free press. Canadians want a free press, but they can make up their own minds as to what kind of free press they want. They do not need what the government is doing, forcing on them what they do not want. Liberals are not listening to what the media is talking about.

• (1650)

Nevertheless, over the course of the month, we will talk about how the Liberal government failed. In 2019, we hope Canadians will send them packing.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has been consistent from many of the prairie members of Parliament in the Conservative Party is that something does not have to be true, but they just say it.

They are trying to imply that this government is not proactive in our western provinces. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have no problem comparing what the Liberal government has done with what Stephen Harper did in his 10 years in office, on things such as the infrastructure program, the western diversification fund, and the pipelines. On the pipeline issue, over 99% of oil, the commodity, went to the United States when Stephen Harper first became prime minister, and when he left office, it was still over 99%. The Liberal government is investing hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars in Alberta to ensure that there is a healthier, more robust future for the province of Alberta.

Could the member tell us when we can anticipate that the Conservatives will be more straightforward and truthful with regard to what this government is doing, and that this government has been far more proactive in western Canada than Stephen Harper ever was?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy hearing the member talk. He should look in the mirror and think about what he is talking about. I do not know what planet he is living on. Is he living in Alberta? He says he represents Winnipeg. Does he know that all three prairie governments do not share his vision? There is no prairie Liberal government. None of them agree with the nonsense he is talking about. He should go and talk to the provincial governments to find out what is happening in the provinces before he stands up talks about the Harper government.

We are talking about the fall economic statement by his government, and what he is saying it is going to do. He should not forget—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Bow River.

• (1655)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my esteemed colleague.

One of the things we heard from the government when we talked about Alberta was that it had extended EI. That is not what people are looking for. They are looking for jobs, not handouts or bailouts. They need regulations changed. That was not in the economic update.

How would the member respond to constituents in the resource sector? Are they looking for more EI or are they looking for jobs?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question from my colleague, who happens to also be an Alberta member of Parliament. That is a great question. It is simple and straightforward.

EI is a temporary solution. EI is not and has never been a permanent solution. We want permanent solutions. The permanent solution is straight and simple: jobs, jobs, jobs.

The government is talking about the economy doing well. The Liberals had a surplus, and what they did is they spent everything. The government has now created a situation where we are losing jobs across the country. Today we lost jobs in Ontario. Yesterday we lost jobs in Alberta. The Minister of Innovation got up during question period and tried to say how many jobs were created. That is a normal situation in a country. Nitpicking areas is not.

It is what has happened in Oshawa and what is happening in Alberta that is concerning. It is sending a message that the economic management by the government is a disaster for the country.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and debate Bill C-86 and the economic update. This is another omnibus bill that brings into force new spending increases, adding even more to the national debt and reaffirms that the government will continue to borrow, borrow, borrow, with no plan to balance the budget. Canadians are frustrated by the overspending and inept spending of the Liberal government, while growing new boards, commissions and bureaucracy that tie up the true job creators in Canada.

Canadians see our economy as being attacked by the federal government with untenable regulations, tariffs, poor international negotiating, and thank goodness it was a whole-of-government and friends approach, interference, indecision and fake consultation. This creates an environment that no international company wants to waste its time on. Canadian small businesses are running out of resources and laying off workers.

Government Orders

Today we heard from GM that the plant in Oshawa is going to be closed. Under the Prime Minister's watch, over 2,500 direct plus 5,000 other jobs across the province of Ontario are being affected. From the way the Liberals spoke today in QP, one would think this was the first time this was happening. My word, this is only one of many situations, like General Electric in Peterborough which has closed with 358 jobs gone. Campbell soup company in Toronto closed and 380 jobs have been lost. Proctor & Gamble in Brockville closed and 500 jobs are gone. Grenville Castings in Perth closed and 380 jobs gone. A Dixie cup plant in Brampton closed and 133 jobs are gone. A carpet manufacturing plant in Waterloo closed and 256 jobs are gone. An Oreo cookie plant in Montreal closed and 454 jobs are gone.

This is a crisis we are facing in Canada and the government is destroying our economy. Manufacturers in my riding of Yorkton—Melville are desperate for the steel and aluminum import and export tariffs to be removed. They are running out of capital and laying off workers. That passive income the government claimed belonged to them is turning into fumes. There is nothing left for investment in their businesses or preparing for their own retirements. They are just trying to save people's jobs.

To add insult to injury, while the Liberals targeted small businesses with new tax penalties for saving within their company or sharing their business earnings within their family, the Prime Minister protected his trust fund inheritance and his finance minister's billion dollar family business from these tax hikes.

In the first three years of the Liberal government being in power, it will have added \$60 billion to the national debt. Last year, Canada's national debt reached an all-time high of \$670 billion, or \$47,612 per Canadian family. As a result of the Prime Minister's reckless borrowing, last year the Liberals spent \$23 billion just to service the national debt. That is \$23 billion just on interest last year. By 2023, the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that amount will rise to \$37 billion, a 60% increase. The Liberals will be spending more on debt interest than we currently spend on health transfers across this country.

I know these numbers are hard to comprehend for all of us to truly fathom the extent to which the government is willing to go to announce and mislead. Its intention is to delay, deny and wait until people die. Oh, no, that is the approach the government has to meeting the needs of our veterans as the number who deserve care are in a fishbowl with 29,000 of their comrades. When it comes to our job creators like the resource and manufacturing industries, its approach is to actually compromise, control and then wave goodbye.

The government was blessed with an influx of \$20 billion. A responsible government would have paid down the debt so that we would have more fiscal room in case there was a downturn, but instead, the Liberals blew through it and added another \$18 billion to the national debt this year.

Here we are facing a downturn in manufacturing and resource development with less and less need for our products as the U.S. becomes more and more self-sufficient and is a growing provider of the resources we once provided it. There is no means to get our oil to customers offshore because the government has so desperately underperformed on empowering and growing our economy. The

government needs to stop the reckless spending and balance the budget so that future generations are not stuck with the burden of trying to consolidate the national debt.

• (1700)

The average income tax bill for middle-class families has increased by \$840, not including the new carbon taxes and payroll tax hikes. It does not matter how many times the Liberals say out loud that somehow Canadians have more money in their pockets, the Parliamentary Budget Officer does not agree. Since the Liberals came to power, 81% of middle-income Canadians are seeing higher taxes.

It is important to mention that a media tax credit will do nothing to help Canadian families struggling to make ends meet, and buying up media outlets prior to a general election is not a reasonable budget expense.

The many small newspaper outlets in my riding that provide such a crucial service to their communities are struggling, but I have to say that I have absolutely zero confidence that any of the now \$595 million plus that the government is allowing the media to self-regulate will make it to where their needs are. Why? The money is not going to rural Canada where the Liberals do not care about the towns, villages and smaller cities that house the families and employees of the economic drivers of our nation in resource development, agriculture and manufacturing.

The government's overwhelming tax hikes and new regulations are making it harder and harder to grow and operate local businesses in Canada. This includes the Liberals' job-killing carbon tax that will not reduce emissions and will only punish families and small businesses. The government is increasing CPP and EI, which impacts small businesses. The government is increasing personal income tax rates for entrepreneurs, and changes to the small business tax rate will disqualify thousands of local businesses.

Businesses in Canada expected to some degree the challenge that was going to come from the south with tariffs, but at a time when they are facing these international barriers and these increased taxes from the government, they never could have imagined that it would be their own government trying to shut them down. It is as if the Prime Minister wants to ship Canadian jobs and investment to the United States.

The finance minister's omnibus budget bill only reinforces his out-of-control spending and major tax increases. It is clear that the Liberals are incapable of managing the federal budget.

Business of the House

The Conservative government dealt with the worst global depression since the 1930s, and yes, ran deficits, increased the debt and even tightened spending across government. As a result, former prime minister Harper, the late Mr. Flaherty and Canada were recognized internationally as the most fiscally responsible prime minister, finance minister and country in the world, the last in and the first out of the depression.

The current Prime Minister and finance minister are breaking their promises, increasing taxes, destroying and inhibiting investment and putting Canada into a tailspin that will take years of good government to correct. The Liberal government under the current Prime Minister is following in the footsteps of the Prime Minister's father, and believe me, I am old enough, unfortunately, to remember both of these points in history. I remember personally the damage done. I remember personally how it impacted our small business, our family and our savings. It was devastating.

However, not to fear, the Conservatives are here. Soon Canadians will have a government that will end the raid on future generations, eliminate deficits, manage the national debt, and grow our economy while taking care of our environment. I am part of what will be a government that is truly fiscally responsible.

• (1705)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found the hon. member's statement interesting although largely a piece of fiction, particularly when it came to our government's record of job creation. Over half a million more Canadians are working today than when we took office in 2015.

My question pertains to one comment that the hon. member made during her remarks. She suggested that our plan to put a price on pollution will not reduce emissions. I note in particular that Stephen Harper's former director of policy recommends the approach taken by the federal government. I note in particular Doug Ford's chief budget adviser has suggested that putting a price on pollution is the single most important thing we can do to transition to a low-carbon economy. I note in particular that this year's Nobel Prize in economics was awarded to a gentleman who has come up with a plan that we are now implementing.

I am curious. If the member wants to base her argument on fact, can she point to one leading expert who has suggested that putting a price on pollution would not lead to an emissions reduction?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Liberals are desperate to make this work for them because they have committed to it to a point where they have no choice but to carry forward. My only concern is that we might, heaven forbid, give them the opportunity to do that. I am certainly hoping that Canadians will not allow that to happen, because we know that provinces across this country have said no, that they are not prepared to do that. They have not said it because they are provincial leaders; they have said it because Canadians across this country have said very clearly that they cannot have and do not want a carbon tax.

I am more than aware of multiple ways that we are continuing, in my province, to deal with our environment in a very responsible and capable way to improve production, to improve growth and to protect our environment without having to be penalized by this

carbon tax. This is a tax grab. That is all it is, and it is not needed for Canada to continue to grow even more responsibly with our environment.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have to ask my hon. colleague from the Conservative ranks to challenge this claim that Canadians from coast to coast do not want a carbon tax. It is very clear that Gordon Campbell's government in British Columbia would never have been re-elected had he not brought in the carbon tax. In fact, the NDP at the time ran a campaign against it, called "axe the tax", which was a mistake the New Democrats now acknowledge. However, the approximate reason that the Gordon Campbell Liberals were returned to government was that he had put in place a sensible carbon tax, which led to British Columbia having some of the highest growth rates, economic performance, and employment in the country.

Looking at Ontario, does the hon. member honestly think that if Patrick Brown had remained leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario, supporting a carbon price as he did, that somehow that would have turned the election against the Progressive Conservatives? The reality is that Ontario was going Conservative no matter what the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party at the time said about a carbon tax.

This is sensible economic policy and we need much more of it, not less.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that I had the privilege of being in British Columbia on the island dealing with veterans affairs issues. Being shadow minister for veterans affairs, I have had the opportunity to talk to veterans across the country.

From the conversations I had while there, I would say that a new realization is developing there as well. The truth of the matter is that there is a good possibility, as with the other governments, that there might be a change of thinking, at least on the federal level. Again, it is not governments that are complaining about this; it is people, and the people on that island understand how valuable their environment is. At the same time, they are totally aware that this tax has not in any way impacted the amount of emissions from Canada, and it is impacting small businesses.

* * *

• (1710)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the debate tonight pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-86, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I go to my prepared remarks on the budget implementation act, I cannot resist making a few comments about the federal government's approach to poverty. There is a story I found in the *Globe and Mail* and, despite the prospect of hundreds of millions of dollars of government money going to the media, kudos to the *Globe and Mail* for writing the straight story. It talked about the government's spending \$500,000 on the name, logo and branding for a new anti-poverty association. This is quite striking, because I wonder how many Canadians and people abroad who are living in poverty could have benefited from some of that exorbitant sums spent on a logo, which, frankly, is not even very good.

I had the pleasure of having my kids in Ottawa with me last week. My daughter Gianna spent some time in the office with my son Judah and daughter Lilly. Gianna was very keen on helping with the things we were doing in the office. She spent some time shredding paper. If only I had known I could have had her drawing logos. She is very entrepreneurial. She would have been happy to draw a much better logo than it for much less than \$500,000, and maybe could have gotten a head start on her university fund.

It really is disappointing to see the government talking a good game on poverty but then frittering away dollars that could have been spent helping those who need it most. Certainly, whenever we look at the government's response to issues like poverty or international development, we will hold it accountable, not primarily on the basis of the dollars that are spent but on the results achieved, because we often see how far away its expenditures are from things that would achieve results.

[*Translation*]

I will now begin my general remarks on the budget.

The Liberal government claims that the Canadian economy is strong, that the middle class is doing well under this government, that running deficits is good policy, and that a tax on carbon will not have any adverse effect.

Every one of those claims is false. In last week's economic update, the Liberal government painted a nice image of the economy, but it is not an image that exists in real life.

Less than a week after the government's economic update, we learn that GM has decided to cease operations in Oshawa, which will result in the loss of more than 2,000 jobs. The government cannot say that the economy is as strong as it claims when companies like GM close their doors and we lose thousands of jobs in Canada.

The Prime Minister loves saying that he is helping the middle class and those working hard to join it. However, every time he adopts a new policy, it seems to have a negative impact on the middle class and those working hard to join it.

For example, the Prime Minister is still trying to bring in a carbon tax that will mostly affect the middle class and those working hard to join it.

As a result of this tax, every time someone drives to work, to their child's hockey or piano lessons, or to the grocery store, that person will have to pay more for gas. They will also have to pay more for groceries, clothing and almost everything else. That is because the Liberals want to find money to pay for their spending spree.

The Liberal government has also announced that the biggest emitters will not have to pay the carbon tax. It is therefore quite clear that the government is not putting this policy in place to protect the environment.

The carbon tax is not an environmental plan, it is a tax plan.

● (1715)

It is clear that the Liberal government is not helping the middle class and those who are working hard to join it. Taxes for a middle-class family have increased by an average of \$800. By contrast, the richest 1% of Canadians paid \$4.5 billion less the year after the government's tax changes.

Last week, we moved a motion calling on the government to tell Canadians when it would address its reckless spending and balance the budget. We moved this motion because the Prime Minister told Canadians during the 2015 election campaign that the country would have small deficits until 2019, when the budget would be balanced, as it was under the previous government. However, not all the deficits are small, as the Prime Minister suggested. In fact, the deficits are much higher, three times higher, than the \$10 billion he promised. Furthermore, the deficits will not end in 2019, but will continue for several years.

In fact, Randall Bartlett, chief economist at the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy at the University of Ottawa, believes that the deficits will be even higher. Even the Department of Finance now admits that if we continue down the same path the Liberal Party has started on, the budget will not be balanced until 2045. However, when we gave the Prime Minister the opportunity to clarify this situation and tell Canadians when he plans to balance the budget, he did not take it.

In fact, every member of his caucus voted against our motion. They voted to hide the truth from Canadians. They voted against telling Canadians when the budget will be balanced.

I would like to point out that this bill is over 800 pages long, double the size of the previous government's bill. Many Liberal members were opposed to the Conservatives' bills because they were too long, yet they are in favour of this bill. I find that very interesting.

Government Orders

It is quite obvious that the Liberal government is not serious when it says that it supports the middle class and those working hard to join it. Every time the Liberals announce a new policy, it has a negative impact on the middle class. These policies not only affect today's middle class, but tomorrow's as well, our children's generation. When the Liberals continue spending money and racking up deficits, they are creating a situation in which future generations will have to pay for today's irresponsible spending. They are stealing from future generations.

I do not think it is fair to tell my children, Gianna, Judah and Lilly, that they have to work harder to pay for things that I had in my life. Future generations will have to pay for advantages that they will not have, and that is not fair.

● (1720)

[English]

In the final time I have, I want to highlight the challenges we are facing in my province. While we are struggling economically in so many different ways, and while the government is putting in place measures to prevent the development of future pipelines, we are paying for pipelines overseas through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. We are putting hundreds of millions of Canadian taxpayers' dollars into a Chinese-controlled bank that acts as an agent of Chinese foreign policy. It is building a pipeline in Azerbaijan while we are not proceeding with vital energy infrastructure projects here in Canada. It is these kinds of approaches that make Canadians feel the government is so offside with their own situation and interests. This budget bill must be defeated.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member opposite and share his concern about the expenditures on the logo that clearly, which we heard in question period today, offended the minister and the parliamentary secretary. Hopefully, the arm's-length organization can take better stewardship of public dollars. I share his concern that the scarce dollars we can commit to fighting poverty should be spent on those who need a solution to that dilemma rather than simply on graphic arts. I am as perplexed as the member is as to why those dollars were misdirected.

The member talked about the situation confronting his home province and some of the support it had seen. Would he agree that a substantial investment in housing not only provides relief for those who have low incomes, but also creates jobs for trades people? While the energy sector goes through challenges, the largest single group of employees in the energy sector is construction workers. In other words, a national housing strategy not only solves social problems, but also provides immediate relief for workers in the construction sector who are losing work because of the slowdown in the oil patch. Would the member agree that the national housing strategy is, in fact, a very good investment and one that should have been made years ago?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is part of the discourse of the Liberals in general that they really wanted to find a discourse around a national strategy branded in such-and-such a way. I am very proud of the investments that were made in housing by the previous Conservative government, significant investments in the area of

helping the vulnerable and the homeless and addressing the housing issue.

The member talks about the logo issue. This is endemic of the government. Its focus is on the branding, what is put in the window and what one calls it, instead of the substance and the reality. We agree that there was a role for government to be engaged in the area of housing and to help the vulnerable, yet we see that in so many different areas the government puts the emphasis on logos and renaming. It is not just an isolated incident. It is a problem with the way it values style over substance. However, on this side of the House, we value substance over style, whether that is in the area of housing or poverty.

In the budget, in terms of poverty, the government is legislating goals. That is okay, but there is nothing binding about achieving those goals. The fact is that the previous government did far more to fight poverty by lowering the taxes that lower-income Canadians paid. We lowered the lowest marginal tax rate, we raised the basic personal exemption and we lowered the GST. These were elements of targeted tax relief for those who needed the tax relief the most, completely different from what the Liberal government is doing in trying to give advantages to the most well off.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate working with the member on the procedure and House affairs committee. He is very bright.

I want to ensure people know that the Conservatives asked hundreds of questions. They said that they asked hundreds of questions and said that MPs should know when budgets were going to be balanced. They already lost that argument a long time ago. When they were asked before, none of them could tell us that they would run nine deficits and one surplus.

My question is related to transit. I have heard members of the Conservative Party suggest that greenhouse gases will not be cut with programs and that infrastructure would not create jobs. I will ask the member, and I am sure I will get a more intellectual answer. I assume the member would agree that the number of major transit projects we have funded in the west will cut greenhouse gases and create jobs because someone has to build them.

● (1725)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member is frustrated because no Conservative would tell him when we would run nine deficits and one surplus. I guess the answer to that is because we did not run nine deficits and one surplus. Maybe he needs to go back and check the record on that.

Government Orders

With respect to investments in transit, I know in various areas, and, in particular, there has been some discussion in the House about the Green Line in Calgary, the Liberals are keen to talk about projects that were put in place and started under the previous Conservative government. I am very proud of the Conservative record in making substantial investments in transit and other areas. Because we did those things in the context of a balanced budget, Canadians could have confidence in those commitments.

When governments make all kinds of unbudgeted commitments in a deficit situation, like we saw in the Province of Ontario under the Kathleen Wynne Liberals, which the government is keen to salute, a situation is created where, inevitably, it is impossible to realize those promises that have been made to people. I am proud of the investments the Conservatives made, whether it was in the area of housing or transit, that were in the context of a balanced budget so Canadians could have confidence that the money was in the bank to deliver on the commitments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-86 today on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke, who elected me to represent them here in the House.

Today, I have to say that this is a big disappointment. I am also speaking in my capacity as deputy finance critic for my party, the NDP. As deputy critic, I am very disappointed in the Liberal government for picking up the Conservative government's nasty habit of introducing unprecedentedly long budget implementation bills. With every bill, it seems the government hopes to beat the record set by the previous budget implementation bill. The Liberals seem to be competing with the Conservatives to see who can draft the longest bill. This 850-page bill breaks the records for both number of pages and number of clauses in a budget implementation bill.

I feel like I am repeating myself, because last Friday, I spoke about Canada Post and the fact that I was surprised by the Liberals' actions in view of what they said when they sat in this corner of the House. I am also surprised to see the Liberals introducing omnibus bills. When they were the third party, they openly criticized the length of omnibus bills at every opportunity, both here in the House and in committee when we were called on to do an in-depth study of bills.

Today, I am surprised to see the Liberals once again doing the exact opposite of what they said when they sat in this corner of the House and introducing an 850-page omnibus bill. Liberal members who were here at that time and who are still here today seem to have completely forgotten about their displeasure with this type of government action. Today, they seem quite at ease with a process that allows a bill like Bill C-86 to be rushed through. When the bill was introduced in the House, the Standing Committee on Finance was asked to begin studying it even before it passed second reading. When the committee is asked to study the 850-page Bill C-86 in advance, the result of a vote in the House is a foregone conclusion. We were asked to complete our study in two or three weeks.

First we had to read the bill, to see what was in it. How can we do our jobs properly as parliamentarians if we do not have time to read the content of the bill? Then we had to call witnesses to also come

and give their input on the bill. They faced the same challenge. I know from experience that many witnesses are caught off guard by such massive bills, and they were called to appear with just a few days of notice, perhaps a week or a week and a half, when they were being asked to comment on a bill as huge as this one. On that note, I have to say how surprised I am to see the Liberals using the same tactics to expedite the process in the House, not giving parliamentarians enough time to study bills properly.

We have clearly seen this in some situations in the past. Some bills have contained errors that had to be corrected later on. Those errors could have been avoided if the proper process had been followed in the first place. In the case of Bill C-86, I feel compelled to point out the Liberals' inconsistency, since they used to criticize omnibus bills, but they are doing exactly the same thing today.

Fortunately, there is some good news for Canadians in this bill. We have to acknowledge that and give credit where credit is due. There are a few good measures in this bill, but sadly, they do not go far enough. That is what we heard from witnesses during the committee's study. Take pay equity, for example. That is something we have been calling for for years, and the Liberals have been promising it for years, if not decades. For once, they seem inclined to actually do something in response to many questions and plenty of pressure from the opposition. Unfortunately, the witnesses said that the implementation would be too slow and that the bill still has some shortcomings. I call it a bill because it should be a stand-alone bill on pay equity, but it was embedded in an 850-page bill.

● (1730)

The experts pointed out some flaws that needed to be fixed, but the Liberals, obviously, flat out rejected their suggestions. It is our job, as members of the committee, to propose amendments when experts come share their views and make recommendations. In this case, our amendments reflected exactly what they asked for. However, as usual, the Liberals think they are always right and will not accept any criticism. They rejected all of the amendments and did not think it was necessary to listen to experts. They left the bill as is, unfortunately.

I want to talk about some of the important measures that are missing from this bill. The government failed to meet a number of our expectations. Our party sent letters to the Minister of Finance to share our observations on the economy and on what could be done to help the majority of Canadians, not just company executives.

The government did not include a single measure related to tax fairness or pension theft, a topic I have heard a lot about in Sherbrooke. I held a town hall on this very issue. People were unanimous in their outrage for companies that run off with their workers' savings, like Sears, which stole its employees' pensions.

Government Orders

Not only are the Liberals not doing anything about pension theft in this bill, they are actually making the problem worse by listening to some of the companies' suggestions and further protecting companies that declare bankruptcy. Not only do they not want to fix this problem in this budget implementation bill, but they are going to make it worse.

The Liberal government is clearly disconnected from reality, or at least from reality in Sherbrooke. The recent budget statement, which follows on the budget implementation bill, makes that all too clear, since it reflects almost every demand that corporate lobbyists have made to the Liberal government. The government came through for them, including by offering tax breaks.

For example, it decided to give businesses \$14 billion over the next few years through an accelerated capital cost allowance. This measure was not even properly targeted, since companies will not be able to use it to create jobs or buy the equipment they need for everyday operations. For example, for a plant, purchasing a machine is a good investment. Unfortunately, the bulk of the accelerated allowance deduction will instead help buy things like planes and limousines. Companies will be able to write off that type of purchase.

The government should have seen this coming and ensured that this measure targeted things that companies really need for their daily operations, instead of luxury items that CEOs need to get from Toronto to Dubai. The government is clearly disconnected from Canadians.

What is more, the government is proposing to lower the marginal effective tax rate from 17% to 13.8%, even though corporate profit margins have increased over the past few years and individual tax rates keep going up year after year. In other words, as corporate tax rates go down, individual tax rates go up. This shows yet again that the Liberal government is disconnected from reality.

• (1735)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe I heard my colleague from Sherbrooke say a few good things about the economic update.

He said that providing an accelerated capital cost allowance for the purchase of machinery, including equipment for producing renewable energy, also affects manufacturers and exporters.

Manufacturiers et Exportateurs du Québec, or MEQ, also complimented the Government of Canada on that initiative. As the member said, new equipment creates jobs, and job creation helps the unemployed get jobs.

Does the member see this as a positive, or is he focusing solely on the things he disagrees with?

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the Minister of Transport, for his question.

In general, as an opposition member, I focus more on the negative aspects of what the government proposes. I know that the minister understands that reality because he was sitting on this side of the House just a few years ago. However, I am able to see positive aspects too, and I often point them out in committee.

Of course, there are good reasons to improve the capital cost allowance for the purchase of equipment. I hear the same thing from businesses I visit in Sherbrooke. Business owners want more support so that they can invest in their companies. The problem I have with this measure is that it is basically a general gift from the government that leads to a much more advantageous accelerated capital cost allowance, especially for items that qualify for accelerated depreciation. Unfortunately, it would have been better if the government had taken a more targeted approach that focuses on job creation.

That is what our leader Jagmeet Singh and I say all the time. The government really needs to ensure that incentives to invest are more targeted and better focused on job creation and more tangible things that would help it meet its objectives. It is not enough to give a general benefit and hope that it works.

• (1740)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I have a question for him about tax rates.

[*English*]

The NDP speaks often about corporate or business tax rates. In my mind there are two issues: the question of business tax rates and the question of the tax rates we charge to higher-income individuals. Those two issues are often conflated by the discourse we hear from the NDP.

There is certainly logic on the personal income tax side, focusing our tax reductions on lower-income individuals, and that is what we did while were in government. We raised the base personal exemption, we lowered the lowest marginal rate and we lowered the GST, which is the one tax that all Canadians pay. At the same time, we lowered the business tax. We saw when we lowered business taxes that it made it easier to do business in Canada and that it led to an increased amount of tax revenue coming in through business taxes. It also led to job creation here in Canada, which benefited those who were unemployed.

Would my colleague reconsider his approach a little in recognizing that if we want to raise taxes on those who are well off, there are maybe arguments for what we do on the income tax side? Certainly on the business tax side, we have seen that lowering business taxes actually increases tax revenue for government and it also helps the unemployed get into the workforce.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me an opportunity to comment briefly on the issue of corporate taxes compared to personal income taxes.

Unfortunately, the trend we have seen that drives government spending up over time, which is what the Liberal government is proposing, is that, year after year, taxes are not collected in a manner that is fair.

Government Orders

There is a pattern that has been emerging for many years now. It started under the Conservatives and continues under the Liberals. It is that personal income taxes are constantly going up. For instance, personal income tax revenues are expected to increase next year from \$161 billion to \$170 billion. During the same period, between 2017-18 and 2018-19, corporate tax revenues will decrease from \$49.5 billion to \$45 billion.

Who is left paying for Canada's social programs these days? The financial burden falls less and less on corporations and more and more on individual taxpayers. We must ask ourselves why that is.

[English]

BILL C-86—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-86, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018, and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at those stages.

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BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-86, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to join in on the debate so soon after the bringing in of closure again.

I am pleased to speak on budget implementation act, no. 2, an omnibus bill that is a sequel to Budget Implementation Act, No. 1, which is also an omnibus bill. This is a sequel omnibus bill to an omnibus bill.

Who cares, some might ask, that this is another omnibus bill? Apparently not our government Liberals. I wonder if they forgot their pledge from the last election regarding the practice of omnibus bills. If they forgot, I will remind them. This is from their website: "We will...bring an end to this undemocratic practice."

Maybe the Liberals say it does not count because they had their fingers crossed behind their backs when they made that pledge. Maybe they say it does not count because at the time they did not put their hands over their hearts when they made that pledge, so it is okay to break that promise. That is fine. We just ask them not to be hypocrites and to just own it. They should come out and say they are going to do omnibus bills. Unfortunately, what we have right here is another omnibus bill.

The Liberals said they were going to end this practice of bringing forward omnibus bills, and it is actually on the Liberal mandate tracker. In the mandate tracker, it says, under the words "Completed—fully met", that "[m]easures are in place to end the improper use of

omnibus bills". The Liberals have said in a mandate tracker that they have ended the practice, yet here we have another omnibus bill. Maybe they are hinging this on the word "improper". It is improper for perhaps Conservatives to use omnibus bills, but it is okay if they do it, because they are Liberals.

What else does it say on this wonderful Liberal mandate tracker? There are 23 items labelled "progress made, facing challenges", including balancing the budget in 2019-20. With respect to running a \$20-billion deficit next year, instead of balancing the budget as Liberals promised, progress is being made and there are challenges.

The world has not seen this level of denial since perhaps the Black Knight in the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Like the Black Knight refusing to see the truth with his limbs cut off, I can see the finance minister, in response to the \$20-billion deficit, bouncing about the finance ministry saying, "Tis but a scratch. It is under way with challenges."

What other lies can we find on the Liberal mandate tracker with respect to progress made? "Make sure the Infrastructure Bank supports the construction of new, affordable rental housing." Keep in mind, Liberals say this is "progress made", yet their fabled infrastructure bank has not put a single penny into housing. In fact, the only thing Liberals have done so far, which was politically motivated, is invest in a Quebec transit project that is actually going to deliver below-market returns for taxpayers.

One of their other promises is to "Ensure that the [CRA] is a client-focused agency." Liberals have said they made progress in ensuring that CRA is delivering services to Canada, the same CRA that the Auditor General called out for doctoring its performance standards. CRA was basically hanging up on Canadians or stopping its calls from coming through to show a higher response rate than actually reported. The same Auditor General just recently talked about how the CRA would give special extensions for large companies and offshore tax cheats, but not give those same extensions to small individual businesses or Canadians. However, to the Liberals, this is progress made.

Government Orders

One of my favourite items labelled “progress made” in the Liberal mandate tracker is “Ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have the equipment they need.” We have the fighter jet issue. The Liberals promised they were not going to buy the F-35, and then, as the Auditor General stated, they manufactured a capability gap. It used to be NORAD first and then NATO. Then Liberals said they needed a reason not to buy the F-35s and get Super Hornets, and said that NORAD and NATO were on the same level so they would need more jets. Then they decided to buy sole-source Boeing Super Hornets, but Boeing got into a fight with Bombardier, and since the Liberals did not want Bombardier to be picked on, Boeing was punted out. They decided they were not going to buy jets from Boeing, so what did they do? They decided to buy used Boeing Hornets from Australia.

They launched what they say was an open and fair competitive process to replace the fighter jets over about a five- or six-year period, even though the mandate letter actually said to have it done by 2019.

● (1745)

Our allies, Israel, Germany, Denmark and South Korea, have all managed to do an open and honest competition in two years or less. South Korea actually started its open competition, suspended it while it reviewed whether it wanted to go to a new plane or stick with the F-16, restarted its open competition and managed to finish it within a two-year period, but we are going to take five years or six years.

Regarding ships, we know the President of the Treasury Board is embroiled in the scandal with Admiral Mark Norman for his political interference with buying the *Asterix*. Of course, he says that it his job to interfere with contracts as Treasury Board president. We asked him why he did not interfere with the Phoenix pay system, the same system he paid to have the Gartner report done on. The Gartner report very clearly said not to go ahead and that there were too many problems with Phoenix. However, he looked at the report and threw it out because it was not his job to look at it, but it was his job to interfere with the ship contract at Davie.

With sleeping bags, the government is asking our soldiers to return their sleeping bags. We need to use them for other troops because there are not enough sleeping bags, but progress is being made on the mandate letter of course. Our soldiers have to buy their own boots and seek reimbursement from the government, but again, under the mandate letter, progress is being made.

What is the point of all this about the mandate letter? It is to point out the truth and expose the Liberal talking points for what they are, which is simply empty rhetoric. Do people want more empty rhetoric? Just go to any speech made by the Liberals on how they are helping my home province of Alberta. Listen to anything from the mouth of the natural resources minister, who is allegedly representing Edmonton Mill Woods in Alberta.

Here is what the natural resources minister says on Bill C-69, the famous “no pipeline ever” bill. He says, “It gives a pathway to proponents...You engage early, you get good results.” For seven years, Kinder Morgan engaged and consulted, and was side-swiped by the government. Northern gateway was years in consulting and engaging, and it was killed by the government. It is the same story with energy east. Even the Black Knight from *Monty Python and the*

Holy Grail would look at Bill C-69 and say that this is a disaster which is going to kill the energy industry in Alberta.

What else do we get? A five-year extension of unfair equalization of Alberta shifting money to other provinces. There was no consultation, just a tiny line hidden in a 700-page omnibus bill. In Alberta, we have been in a financial crisis for three years now and a human crisis. Donations to charities are low, access to food banks is at a high, unemployment is at a high, families are falling apart, suicide is rising and the government does nothing. This is how bad it gets, because I am actually going to quote the NDP. Joe Ceci, the Alberta finance minister, said that if it was Bombardier, all hands would be on deck.

The Prime Minister was recently in Calgary and said, “...things... are beyond our control here...we are constrained and have been for a long time...” Out of their control. I have to ask, how is killing northern gateway out of his control? How is hitting energy east with rules and regulations he would not dare put on Saudi Arabia oil out of his control? How is banning oil tankers from the B.C. north coast beyond his control? How is Bill C-69, the “no more pipelines ever” bill out of his control? Basically, I think telling the truth to Albertans is out of his control. The only truth we have heard from the PM was when he said that he wanted to phase out the oil sands business.

With this bill, we have \$19 billion of debt this year, another \$20 billion next year. Bombardier is laying off people, and obviously GM is laying off people in Oshawa today. What tools are we going to have when the recession hits? Almost nothing. The government is spending now in good times when it should be putting money aside for when the recession hits. Budget implementation act, no. 2 is as bad as Budget Implementation Act, No. 1. It pushes us further into debt and leaves nothing for Canada and Canadians when we do need it.

● (1750)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to make sure the record is straight about omnibus bills, because this has come up a number of times, and to make sure people know the facts.

The facts are that the reason it was in the platform is that the Conservatives dramatically abused budget implementation bills by making large corrections to another act that had nothing to do with it. I think it was the environment act.

The member mentioned that the promise was kept, and that is true. If we look at Standing Order 69.1, there are two subsections to it. One prevents omnibus bills being improperly used for a bill that is not a budget bill, and another prevents them from being used for a budget bill. That mechanism has been used in the House already to prevent the abuse of omnibus bills.

I wanted to make sure that people knew that. We cannot do unrelated bills in one big bill and that provision is now in place in the Standing Orders, and that promise has been kept.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I do not think anyone in Canada would look at a 900-page budget bill with legislative changes inside of sections. Recently, Bill C-75 lightened the penalties for many serious crimes. It had 23 sections where legislative changes were hidden inside of sections making other legislative changes. I have to say that if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it is a duck. It is the same with these omnibus bills that the Liberal government campaigned against, and yet it sits here day after day and introduces them in the House.

• (1755)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, to correct my Liberal friend, it was the Speaker ruling on this and some other Liberal omnibus bills, chastising the government for cramming things into them that had nothing to do with the budget. The government then had to break up the omnibus budget bill. This was something the Liberals criticized very strongly, as New Democrats did too. There are some bills that have to be more extensive in dealing with the budget, but governments tend to fall for the temptation of sneaking things in. The Harper government did it before. The Liberals have now been chastised twice within this session alone.

I have a specific question about General Motors, because it is very much in all of our hearts and minds. Thousands of jobs were affected today by the decision by GM. I think it is a cowardly decision and showed very little respect for the community in Oshawa and the people of Ontario in its timing and the way it was done.

In 2009, the Canadian and Ontario governments loaned GM \$9.5 billion and acquired some of its shares. Then it ended up losing almost \$3 billion in reselling those shares. In 2014, the Auditor General of Canada found out that GM could not account for how much more than half a billion dollars of that money was used. The whole point of the public bailout was to save jobs.

In October, Export Development Canada showed a one billion dollar outstanding loan to General Motors that now apparently is going to be written off.

With all of these billions and billions of dollars going to sometimes profitable, sometimes not profitable, companies which then decide to pull up their stakes, Canadians are wondering what accountability there is. What responsibility is there back to the taxpayers who only loaned or gave this money with the intent and the knowledge that it would somehow be protecting jobs, particularly when a company like GM decided today to pull out and leave two and a half thousand families without work or income?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, it is a valid point. It is obviously very tragic what is going on in Oshawa right now. I have lived all over Ontario, including in Kitchener, where we had a lot of

Privilege

parts makers, like Budd, which I do not think exist anymore. What is happening in Oshawa today is happening every single month in Alberta. Last week, Total laid off 3,000 workers with high-paying jobs in Calgary. We have lost over 100,000 jobs in Alberta since the government came to power. All we have heard from the Prime Minister is that this is out of the Liberals' control. They killed off all these pipelines, but killing them off was out of their control.

The comment of the Minister of Natural Resources, who represents Ottawa, but lives in Edmonton, was that seven years is not enough time to plan and consult, so they are going to shut down the oil industry.

It is a very valid point about corporate welfare, but the government needs to stand up with the same amount of energy for jobs in Alberta as it will in Ontario.

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PRIVILEGE

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR SAINT-LÉONARD—SAINT-MICHEL

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will not take too much of the House's time. I simply want to add to the question of privilege I raised earlier with respect to a member of Parliament. My friend from Yukon asked what aspect of the question of privilege I was raising. I thought some clarification for the Speaker's office and for you, Madam Speaker, would be helpful in the decision we believe is forthcoming.

This pertains to the member of Parliament for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel. This is the member of Parliament who got up in this place last spring, in April, and said he was resigning his seat. We all clapped, I suppose, and congratulated him and assumed that was the end of it. We then found out in the subsequent month that he had in fact not resigned his seat. He continued to occupy the seat but did not show up to work. He continued to receive his pay and benefits as a member of Parliament, but did not show up. He could not make the two-hour train trip from Montreal. Some of us in this place make a great deal longer trip to be here.

What I wish to clarify is that the breach of privilege I am speaking of is not any personal infringement of my privileges. I am not unable to do my job as a member of Parliament as a result, but I refer instead to a category of privilege that affects this entire place. On page 148 of Bosc and Gagnon, 3rd edition, it states that a question of privilege can concern a matter which either infringes upon a member's ability to do their job, or appears to be a contempt against the dignity of Parliament. That is specifically what we are talking about here, the second category, the dignity of this place, which suffers often from political scandal, misappropriation of funds or just bad behaviour by some members of Parliament. We seek to protect the reputation of this place, and when a member of Parliament conducts themselves in a way that infringes upon that reputation, I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to seek some remedy.

Government Orders

The remedy is that we appeal to the Speaker's office to find a prima facie case of a breach of privilege that then passes to the procedure and House affairs committee, which can then bring forward whatever witnesses it deems necessary—certainly, the MP for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, as well as others who might have some information. It concerns the reputation of this place and the respect for the principle of representation that operates at the very heart of our democracy. As Canadians lose faith with and a favourable view of the House of Commons in general, it makes all that we do more difficult to do.

The only place that can eventually find contempt and seek some remedy, either a suspension or expulsion from the House, is the House of Commons itself. We rely on the procedure and House affairs committee, where all recognized parties are represented, to bring forward the evidence and make its recommendation back to us. That is our process. However, I sincerely believe this goes beyond any partisanship. This is simply about our doing our jobs as members of Parliament, because we pass across the stage but for a moment, and it is up to us to make sure that we leave the place a little better than we found it, and when bad behaviour is not considered and goes unpunished, that reflects badly on all of us.

I wanted very much to clarify that particular point, the reputation of Parliament, of the House of Commons, which is the privilege we believe has been breached. That is what we are appealing to the Speaker.

I know a colleague from the Conservatives spoke in favour of, and many colleagues from the Liberals at least applauded, the effort we were making to address this issue, which I personally have not seen.

The House is very compassionate, and has shown itself to be so when members of Parliament fall ill, or a near and dear relative, like a spouse or a child, falls ill and a member cannot be here. We also understand that members of Parliament are away from time to time doing parliamentary business. That is also fine, of course, because that is the duty. Therefore, I would say that while we are not lenient, we are compassionate when dealing with this. What few arguments we have heard from this member in particular, in his speech in April of this past year, seven months ago, was that he was quitting, and that was it. We have heard nothing since. Now, we have seen from some media commentary, from posts he has made in the media, that maybe he is quitting in January or February. That will be nine months at least in which he said he was no longer doing the work, or has not done the work, that we are aware of, and certainly has not been here, and yet has been compensated as a member of Parliament. For working Canadians, that is not an experience they are familiar with. If they go to their boss and say they are quitting and say goodbye, that is usually the end of it. They do not continue to receive a salary for not showing up to work.

Members of Parliament, of course, have some latitude because of the complexities sometimes of our jobs and lives, but only so much latitude. If we do not act on this behaviour, we are simply condoning it by our inaction. That is not to anyone's benefit, regardless of their political persuasion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this time today. I know that we will resume debate, and I appreciate being able to add to this discussion.

● (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will certainly take the additional comments under advisement as we continue to look into the question of privilege, and all will be considered.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

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BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-86, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to offer a few remarks on the budget implementation act that has been the subject of rigorous debate in this chamber. Over the course of my remarks, I hope to cover a few items that relate to the last federal budget and the implementation act, particularly the themes of pursuing economic growth but also supporting those who could use a little extra help, and some measures we have put in place to help improve the quality of our environmental protections across Canada.

When it comes to the need to help grow the economy, this is at the front of mind for most members of Parliament who become elected in Canada to represent their communities. We have seen some exciting developments over the past few years when it comes to our record of helping Canadians grow the economy. There are over half a million Canadians working today who were not working at the time of the last federal election. We have pursued new trade agreements with the European Union, with the Pacific Rim countries, and recently secured a deal with our largest trading partner, with the new NAFTA. We have invested in skills development and are continuing to invest in ensuring that when it comes to the skilled trades, unrepresented groups have a fair shake. Moreover, we are supporting small business with a cut in its tax rate to 9%, which represents the lowest such tax rate of any comparable economy in the world.

The fact is, growing the economy is front of mind for our development. I know in my own community, on the heels of a secure trade deal with the United States, we recently saw a great announcement that protected 200 temporary jobs that were made full-time and permanent, and 150 additional jobs to manufacture a new product at the Michelin tire plant in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. This is one of a number of exciting developments we have for the economy, including investments in infrastructure that are going to put people to work, like the highway-twinning project from Sutherlands over to Antigonish, the new Institute of Government and Centre for Innovation in Health on the campus of StFX University, the new Trades Innovation Centre at the Pictou Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, and many others as well.

Government Orders

I would like to shift gears to talk about how this implementation act is not just about creating growth for the sake of growth, but also actually about making sure that growth works for everyone. In particular, I would like to draw attention to the Canada workers benefit, previously the working income tax benefit. It would put about \$500 extra in the pockets of people who are working their tails off but are unable to escape poverty. This is going to make a meaningful difference in the lives of many hard-working Canadians who come from low-income backgrounds.

In addition to the Canada workers benefit, there is a larger rubric at play. I would like to thank the minister responsible for establishing, for the first time in Canada's history, a national poverty reduction strategy. This will rely, in particular, on serious investments in housing that we expect will reduce homelessness in Canada by 50%. It includes the Canada child benefit, which is putting more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families and stops the sending of any child care cheques to millionaires.

In particular, I cannot stress enough the importance of this policy change. It is one thing to cite the statistics I have just shared or talk about 300,000 Canadian children who will no longer be living in poverty, but behind every one of these statistics there is a very human story. I have had conversations with constituents of mine on Foord Street in Stellarton. I met a young mom who said that September was always a difficult time of the year emotionally for her because she could never afford a new outfit for her kids on the first day of school. She said that she felt proud of herself because the little extra bit of cash she had on hand allowed her to take care of her kids, the same way that her neighbours can take care of their own kids. These are the kinds of human stories that breathe life into the importance of these policy changes that we are making. They touch kids, they touch parents, they touch families and they touch communities, and they are making our country a better and stronger place.

In addition to these measures, we are introducing a poverty line so we can better track the number of people who are living in poverty in our country. Without good data, we do not have the basis for good policy. Our policy changes need to be based on science, facts and evidence, and I am glad that we are moving forward with gathering these data so we know that we will have people living in better conditions based on evidence, and not based on sticking our finger in the air and hoping the wind is blowing in the right direction.

I also want to touch on an important part of this budget implementation act that deals with our plan to help protect the environment as our economy grows. This concerns the topic of putting a price on pollution, which has been the subject of thorough debate in question period and over the course of a number of different committee studies, and during legislative debate in the House as well.

● (1805)

The plan we are moving forward with is a simple one. We do not want pollution to be free anymore. Pollution has been free in Canada since its inception as a nation. We are moving forward with a plan that is actually going to put a price on pollution and that will also leave families better off at the end of the day.

This is going to work, because it is not just people who are going to be paying a price for pollution but industries and businesses as well. We know that at tax time, families will not only be proud to be doing the right thing by our environment but will be left better off at the end of the year.

In the province of New Brunswick where this applies, this means the average household is going to have about \$250 extra at the end of the year and will also have done its part to help reduce emissions. In Saskatchewan, where the revenues will be greater, because there are more polluting industries in that province, the average family can expect to retain, I believe it is, just over \$600 a year. That is only in the first year.

The Canadians I talk to want to do the right thing by the environment, but they do not necessarily want to be worse off financially as a result. That is why this plan is actually going to help achieve both of those goals. If members do not want to take my word for it, we can point to the former director of policy for Stephen Harper, Mark Cameron, who has actually suggested that this is the right path forward. Members can talk to the chief budget adviser to Doug Ford, who has indicated that the single best thing we can be doing to transition to a low-carbon economy is putting a price on pollution. Members can talk to this year's winner of the Nobel Prize in economics, who came up with this kind of solution and actually pointed to British Columbia as a great example of the kind of policy that could be implemented around the world to help make a meaningful difference in the fight against climate change.

I do not want to belabour the point, but I hope members will take away from the nature of these comments that we are doing the right thing to grow the economy, but we are also doing it in a way that is going to help everyday families and not just the wealthy few. We are at the same time growing the economy and protecting the environment, as we insisted we would do during the last campaign.

I could not be prouder to be part of the government, because I know we are growing the economy in a way that works for everyone and protects the environment at the same time.

● (1810)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, this last weekend, I went back to Prince Albert, where they had their Santa Claus parade. It was very interesting, watching all the kids chase the candy and stuff. They were happy, but looking at their parents, looking at their eyes when I drove by, I could see the uneasiness.

Bourgault Industries just laid off 8% of its workforce, and that is on top of what happened at Bombardier, and that is one top of what has happened in Oshawa. This is heading into Christmas. These families are going toward Christmas not knowing what their future holds. There is nothing in Bill C-86 that gives them comfort. There is nothing at all.

When will the member go to the minister and the Prime Minister and stand up for these families, these families that do not have a nice Christmas coming? They do not know where their future lies. They have been shut down, whether they are in the forestry sector, the manufacturing sector or the gas sector. When will the member tell them to get their heads out of their asses and do something for these families?

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would just ask the member to use parliamentary language in the House.

Mr. Randy Hoback: I apologize, Madam Speaker. He can use whatever language—

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I think it is important that when we are having these discussions, we are able to maintain composure and debate one another's ideas.

He is continuing to interrupt. I will be polite when he has the floor, and I would ask that he return the favour.

The fact is that families across Canada—

Mr. Randy Hoback: You are not listening.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member for Prince Albert that he had an opportunity to ask a question. Should he wish to try to ask another question, he just needs to stand up and do so, once it is time. In the meantime, I think he has a responsibility to hear the answer the member wants to provide.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, it is important that we maintain our composure and maintain control of our emotions when we have these important policy debates.

The fact is that the families that are attending these parades the member is talking about are actually anticipated to be, on average, \$2,000 better off at the end of the year as a result of these policies. If the hon. member is insisting that blame for any job losses that take place in Canada lay at the feet of the government, then he should similarly give us credit for the 500,000-plus jobs that have been created since we took office.

The member is yelling “government workers” from the other side, and that is not true. There has been significant full-time, private sector job growth under the government. Our record of economic growth is the stuff Conservative dreams are made of. They had 10 years to do something about this. They had the worst economic growth record since the Great Depression. The only reason the member is so upset is that we are doing something the Conservative government could never have achieved.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government did go out and buy a 65-year-old pipeline for \$4.5 billion. No one could have conceived of that.

There is something interesting missing in those 850-odd pages of the budget. It is the money needed to build this new pipeline the Prime Minister keeps talking about. The Liberals actually have a line for the Trans Mountain pipeline, and in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, the figure they have associated with building that new pipeline is zero dollars. That is curious, because the Prime Minister keeps saying that he is going to build this pipeline, yet he has accounted zero dollars to do it. Besides the question of whether it is a good idea to nationalize parts of the oil industry, it is more than curious.

I am looking at the finance minister's own numbers. At the end of last week, the finance minister said that it was the strongest wage growth in years, and he claimed to have facts in hand that showed that wage growth has increased dramatically. However, according to his own departmental statistics, from September 2015 to September of 2018, inflation was 5.2% and wages grew by 4.9%. Wage growth

has not even kept pace with inflation. It seems pretty condemning of the finance minister's record that this is true and that he misrepresents the facts to Canadians.

I wonder if my friend can comment.

• (1815)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of things the hon. member touched on in the question.

On the Trans Mountain pipeline, it has been well canvassed in this House that right now we are taking an extreme haircut on the cost of our national resources because we are captive to the U.S. market. The fact is that if we want to grow our economy, we need to move forward with a plan that creates other opportunities for buyers outside the U.S. market. That is why we are seeking to move forward with the Trans Mountain decision, but we are seeking to do it in the right way that properly complies with the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal. At the same time, we are putting forward steps that are going to help bring our emissions down and prevent some of the environmental risks that we know come with energy development.

When it comes to families being better off, I will just remind the hon. member that we are taking steps that will leave middle-class families with \$2,000, on average, extra in their pockets.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-86, the budget implementation act no. 2.

The Liberal government is attempting to ram a budget through the House that paints a rosy picture of our national finances. It insists on spending massive amounts of money and promising to increase taxes through its new tax on everything, the carbon tax. In fact, the leader of the official opposition hit the nail on the head when he said of this Liberal government, “Never has a government spent so much and achieved so little.” It is true.

Despite the promises of the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, all is not well in Canada, certainly not for the people of Oshawa. For over 100 years, Oshawa and General Motors have had a partnership. Now the Oshawa plant is going to be shut down. This is a tremendous blow to the people of Oshawa and Canadian manufacturing in general.

Before going any further, let me express my concern for the people of Oshawa. I cannot imagine what far too many Canadians in Oshawa are experiencing today. My sincere condolences go out to all of those who are going to be negatively affected and will lose their jobs. This is terrible news, and it comes just before Christmas.

The GM plant is important not only to families in Oshawa but to families across Ontario and Canada. The Oshawa plant is closing, and the Liberals have nothing to show for it. Their high taxes and lack of regulatory clarity are forcing businesses all over the country to stop investing or to just plain leave Canada. They have no way of backstopping anything except through more debt. It is important to run a surplus during good economic times so that when the bad times come, there is money to be spent, and as they say, money to be invested. Running deficits during good times means there will be less when the bad times come.

Government Orders

For the people in Oshawa, times are hard. The only way the Liberal government can help them is through more debt. This is debt that Oshawans and all Canadians will have to pay through increased taxes down the road. All Canadians will have to pay through increased taxes down the road, as will the folks in Oshawa, but if there are no jobs, there will be no extra money to pay extra taxes. This is precisely the situation the Liberal government is creating in Canada.

The U.S. administration has cut taxes for businesses, and this has caused many businesses to choose to relocate to the United States. The finance minister and the Liberal government declined to match any of those tax cuts. Consequently, many businesses are choosing to invest in the United States as opposed to Canada. The tax cuts and the corresponding lack of action by the Liberal government may have played a role in the closing of the Oshawa plant by General Motors.

Manufacturing across Canada is concerned, particularly about the issue of tariffs on aluminum and steel. Despite significant concessions to the U.S. in the recent NAFTA negotiations, now called the USMCA, the Liberal government was not able to get the Trump administration to lift the tariffs on steel and aluminum. This is costing manufacturers and industry dearly.

In my riding, my constituent Marilyn N. is a small business owner. She imports aluminum-based products from the United States, and because of the tariffs and the retaliatory tariffs we have put on, she has indicated to me that if these tariffs are not lifted, she may be forced to lay off workers, as her costs are not sustainable in the long term.

Many business owners across Canada can relate to her story, but Liberal failures are not limited to manufacturing. The Prime Minister and his Liberal government have failed with our natural resources as well. Their failures have resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs and over \$100 billion of investment in our energy sector.

Energy east, Pacific Northwest LNG, northern gateway, Aurora LNG, and Grassy Point LNG are all examples of the government's inability to deliver on developing and getting to market our natural resources. The Trans Mountain crisis has made things even worse. The taxpayer is on the hook for \$4.5 billion for a pipeline that may never be built. Under the previous Conservative government, four pipelines were built. This included the Enbridge Alberta Clipper, the Trans Canada Keystone, the Kinder Morgan Anchor Loop, and the Enbridge Line 9B reversal.

• (1820)

As soon as the Liberals took office, the Prime Minister and his government started their reckless spending and arbitrary regulatory changes. This caused business investment to plummet and confidence in Canada to decline. Even the Montreal Economic Institute said, "People are giving up on Canada as a safe place to invest in natural resources...It's seen as a very hostile environment now."

It is quite clear that the Liberal government has failed in encouraging foreign investment in Canada. Our country has so much to offer and the Liberal government is throwing away potential investment opportunities because of its failures. In fact, though the

economy has grown, very little has been the government's doing. Growth was driven by oil and gas markets, a strong housing market and consumer spending. Consumers were able to spend because interest rates were low. The Liberal government has had very little to do with any of that. It has not helped and in many cases it has hindered growth areas in our country.

When it comes to oil, the Liberal government, under the current Prime Minister, has been an absolute failure. When he formed government in 2015, he did so with three large pipelines ready to be delivered. Two of those pipelines abandoned Canada due to the regulatory environment created by the Liberal government. The third was bought by Canadian citizens, through no choice of their own, for \$4.5 billion for a pipeline that was worth just over a billion dollars and a potential of building and constructing a new pipeline for another \$3.5 billion. That was basically goodwill, and now that goodwill does not look like it is going to be worth very much.

The Prime Minister has failed to realize that oil and gas is not an unfortunate part of Canada; it is a vital component of Canada and our economy. It is important to the people of Alberta and all Canadians who depend upon government services, which are possible because of oil royalties.

When the Prime Minister said that he wanted to phase out the oil sands, I think he meant it. The cost to Canadians has yet to be fully accounted for, but already it is hurting our country. His reckless commitment to dismantling the oil and gas sector, an essential of Canada's economy, will undoubtedly lower our growth potential.

In addition, his inability to build a pipeline to tidewater means that our oil is largely captive to the American market, where it is bought for considerably less than it would be worth on the world market. Less money in the provincial and federal coffers means that without spending cuts, the governments must either raise taxes or borrow more money.

If governments borrow more money, interest rates will go up. Higher interest rates will affect consumer confidence. Less consumer confidence means less willingness to undertake large expenses. Housing will suddenly be less sought after as Canadians are forced to pay more interest. They will borrow less money. Suddenly, the three main drivers of growth in Canada, oil and gas, housing and consumer spending, are no longer the powerful drivers that they once were.

Due to high levels of government debt and historically low interest rates, the federal government will have very few tools left to deal with any upcoming crisis. This is not a healthy place for a government to be in. Nor is it good place for our country. The next crisis to befall Canada is going to be dangerous.

Government Orders

The Liberal government loves to talk about the debt-to-GDP ratio. That sounds good. However, it is only one tool and if we consider the implications, it is not reassuring at all. In fact, it could be bad and very bad for Canada. This way of accounting is only positive if the economy grows. It is based on economic growth. If the government continues to spend money, but the economy starts to slow, then we are in a bad situation and that debt-to GDP ratio quickly gets skewed.

Debt consists of principal, which is the amount borrowed, and interest, which is the amount paid to service the debt. If interest rates go up, we are paying more for the money that we have borrowed. Debt is a reasonable option if it allows for long-term gain. However, the Liberal government has borrowed money with reckless abandon and very little of it has gone to any kinds of projects with long-term sustainable benefit to Canadians.

Spending on infrastructure has not materialized. Of the \$180 billion that the government committed to infrastructure spending, only 6% or just under \$10 billion of that has actually been spent and invested in Canada. That would be a real investment, spending money on infrastructure, but the government has not allowed it to happen.

• (1825)

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am always pleased to hear the interventions of my friend for Provencher, Manitoba. However, I want to point out the things that are happening. The member has mentioned several critical issues that are unfortunate. We hope to make better and make whole the economies of the hard-hit areas of our country, and he gave some good specifics.

In the particular, in the case of my city, the Conference Board of Canada cites 32,000 net new jobs in 2017. The unemployment rate is at 4.9% and the economic growth has been at 3.6%.

Among the facilities that have been enhanced by government investment is the Parrish & Heimbecker flour mill. Parrish & Heimbecker from Manitoba saw advantages in shipping grain through the port of Hamilton, created a facility, and our government was pleased to provide several million dollars to allow for the creation of a flour mill. Of course, rail cars are being made in Hamilton at that facility, which will enable grain to move in his province and so on.

Would my friend not admit that even though there are serious issues that we have to approach, some good has been created, such as the 32,000 net new jobs in Hamilton?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I am delighted that Hamilton has experienced 32,000 net new jobs. However, the Parliamentary Budget Office paints a different picture. This year, so far the only growth in real jobs has been in government jobs. In the private sector, there actually has been a shrinkage in real job growth. That is not very encouraging news.

I recognize that part of the Liberal ideology is bigger government, more control, more taxes and more spending. However, I am delighted that the member from Hamilton has seen good things happen in his constituency.

[For continuation of proceedings see part B]

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, November 26, 2018
(Part B)

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 26, 2018

[Continuation of proceedings from part A]

EMERGENCY DEBATE

• (1825)

[English]

GENERAL MOTORS PLANT CLOSURE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the closure of the General Motors plant in Oshawa.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for granting this emergency debate tonight and I want to thank my colleagues for being part of this. I want to say how much it meant to me. After the Conservatives requested an emergency date, following the terrible news that leaked out last night about the General Motors closure in Oshawa, it was heartening to see the NDP and the Liberals also request an emergency debate on this, many of whom are in the House tonight.

This is an event that needs to be addressed and I am glad the Chair granted the debate tonight. It was earth-shattering news this morning with respect to GM Oshawa. The reverberations are being felt in Oshawa, Bowmanville, Whitby, Pickering and the greater Toronto area, but primarily in the Durham region. While my riding is called Durham, I do not claim to represent the entire region. Many people in the House represent the residents of Durham and we all feel the pain of the families impacted by the announcement of the closure of the GM assembly operation by the end of next year.

We often talk about numbers in the House, large deficit numbers or the number of people impacted, but every single number is a kitchen table. We heard today there would be 2,600 layoffs, some people said as many as 4,000. A report filed a few years ago about the impact of the operations of General Motors Oshawa suggested the closure would lead to 33,000 direct and indirect job losses as a result of stopping to make automobiles in Oshawa. Those are numbers, but at the heart of every one of them is a family, a kitchen table, where people will be talking tonight about the fact that mom or dad may be losing a job. I do not think that is lost on anyone in this

place, regardless of the side of the House. That is why I hope an emergency debate will address some of the underpinnings of the decision that went into GM's announcement today. I certainly think it was a bad decision and badly executed, but we can maybe address some of the underlying causes that led to it.

Also, this is very personal for me as the member of Parliament for Durham. I grew up in a GM household. I knew my father John, who later went into provincial politics, as a guy who worked at GM. We used to go, like many families, to the forklift truck races held by the CAW, now Unifor, and the Christmas parties for families. I saw my dad as one of 25,000 men and women at the time, in the 1970s and 1980s, who worked at General Motors Oshawa.

I know first-hand the impact this is having on the 3,000 or so directly impacted by the news today. However, I also know that it is reverberating across the GTA and southern Ontario to many of the retiree families and pensioners, because they are part of the GM family. In fact, the private member's bill I introduced was, in part, to give a bit of certainty to pensioners, many GM pensioners, who were very worried about their pension a few years ago.

This personal impact is when Parliament functions at its best. Not only was my father an employee at General Motors, but when I was at Bowmanville High School, I worked there as a summer co-op student in the battery plant. The battery plant ceased to exist some time ago, but it was a great experience for a young person like myself to see a workforce in action, to see the jobs that created the opportunity across our region. I still remember the impact of that job for me. The engineer who I worked under, John Toomey, was a Royal Military College of Canada graduate, an engineer. I saw the problem solving he brought to efficiency issues within that plant. That was one of the factors that led me to look to the Royal Military College of Canada.

I have said that family tables are impacted by the announcement today. Around those tables are also the bedrock of our community: the hockey coaches, the soccer coaches, the dance instructors, the Kiwanis members, the Rotarians, the legion members. In the Durham region, there have been generations of GM families that have been building the community. That has to be part of this debate. This is why I am glad all sides wanted this to happen.

S.O. 52

•(1830)

These are not just numbers. These are families. Their cumulative impact has shown that each year, at least \$1.1 billion of the Canadian GDP is a direct impact of GM of Oshawa. That study I talked about earlier which projected the risk of 33,000 job losses as a result of the GM Oshawa closure also said that the GDP of our country and the province of Ontario would drop in the amount of about \$5.7 billion over the two years following the closure.

As I have said often when speaking about the challenge facing our resource sector, the resource sector in western Canada benefits Ontario, and the success of the auto industry in Ontario has benefited all of Canada for a century or more. These are the important national debates we have to bring to this Parliament and that we have to address as a team.

I will speak for a minute about this 100-year origin. The plant itself is not 100 years old. I have heard that expression today so let us wipe that away. The McLaughlin family, which was the origin of GM Canada, and truly one of the founding partners of GM worldwide, was a small family from Enniskillen, Ontario, in my riding. The family made carriages for horse-drawn carts and vehicles as they were at that time. It was a remarkable family which lost one of its sons, who was a lawyer in the area, in the Great War. One of the other members of the family created Canada Dry. This company was at the forefront of innovation in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

In my area, the town of Bowmanville made a big mistake. It would not lend the McLaughlin family some money, and so the family found its loan in Oshawa and Oshawa became “The City that Motivates Canada”. That was its slogan when I was young. The auto industry developed in Canada in Oshawa as a result of the McLaughlin Carriage Company and then later, McLaughlin Motor Works.

The McLaughlin family then partnered with the Durant family of the United States, and the McLaughlin-Buick became a key vehicle. Later on, the family acquired Chevrolet. The McLaughlin family was one of the original investors in General Motors.

That is the century of heritage and that is what makes this so disappointing. Were it not for the presence of our industry in Oshawa a century ago, there would be no GM today. It is not lost on the families in our community, who have had not just two, but in some cases, three generations of their families working at General Motors.

Does that mean that out of historic convention or out of feeling like it owes it to the community GM has to stay? No. We have to remain competitive. We have to show GM that Oshawa is a place where it wants to continue to build vehicles for the future. That is why we are having this debate tonight. The news today was less about there not being any allocation of vehicle to Oshawa. The news was that Oshawa was not considered to be part of the future of General Motors. It was not seen as part of its competitive ecosystem of making vehicles, assembling vehicles and their component parts.

That should concern people because in the past and in recent years, the men and women at General Motors have statistically been some of the most productive workers within the GM network of assembly plants. They have had the ability to respond and be very competitive. For many years, a skilled workforce, a community that

has supported the development and growth of GM, our health care system, which provided a competitive advantage to manufacturing in Ontario through the 1960s, our dollar differential, all of these items were part of the competitive advantage that kept General Motors manufacturing vehicles in Canada.

•(1835)

Why I think we need the emergency debate is it concerned me today that the Prime Minister wanted to just turn the page and talk about how we have to support the families and the workers. I agree with him on that. However, within mere hours of that announcement, I felt that we, as the elected officials of the area, owe it to those families to at least determine what we can do in the next year to address the underlying conditions that made Oshawa appear as one of the facilities listed today.

I know that Oshawa has shrunk in size from its heyday when my father was there and I was a young kid, with 25,000 men and women working there. However, it remains a productive and effective facility. In fact, it is an adaptive facility which, just in the last few years, with investments and flexibility in the line, could produce sedans or trucks. Therefore, when I saw the news today that it wants to pivot production to electric, zero emissions, zero collisions, this is the type of flexible facility that could easily pivot to that as well.

I would also note that our university, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, or On Tech, as I like to call it, has world-class automotive supports, including the best and most advanced wind tunnel and research facility for automobiles in North America. We have a very advanced and progressive local distribution company for electricity, Veridian, which has been working on electric and hybrid car promotion within the region, working at making more spots available for GO train commuters, and these sorts of things. We also have the Darlington nuclear generation station, where we generate part of Ontario's electricity emission-free. We could pivot far easier than any other of the Great Lakes area manufacturing facilities that are impacted to a zero emissions, zero collision, high-tech smart car system off the line in Oshawa. Why not?

We owe it to the families to not just turn the page within hours, but to work together on a plan to address the underlying decisions which led to Oshawa's inclusion, that despite 100 years of history, it is no longer going to be on the production schedule for the next 10, 20, 30 years. Let us look at what the conditions are and whether we can, as a team, address them.

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The minister for industry has been doing a lot of media interviews. I appreciate the compassion he has shown. However, I want to know what he has been hearing from General Motors. As is the normal case, and as was the case with the Conservative government, the industry minister impacts jobs and employers across the country, and is usually one of the most regularly met with, or might I say lobbied. In the last few years, the company that has met with him more than any other is General Motors. I would like to know what underlying concerns it had, because if we can work on some of those concerns, we will see the opposition supporting that.

I fear it is a cumulative effect of some things out of the hands of the federal government, in the hands of the provincial Wynne government. Some of the moves it made on labour rates put upward pressure and contributed to an environment where power rates and labour rates were making Ontario less attractive to manufacturers. I heard that everywhere I travelled in the last two years. Add on top of that payroll tax increases a few years ago by the Liberal government. Potentially we have an environment where, if we address some of these conditions, we can make it competitive again.

I would also note that the government's carbon tax plan it has levied would have exempted General Motors as a large emitter. As my colleague the member for Carleton noted today, perhaps the fact that it had to omit large emitters or risk the fact the emitters would leave because of competitiveness issues, might be a sign there was concern about a rush to a carbon tax at a time when there was no such tax in the United States.

For a few years in this House, I have said that the auto industry, since the 1960s, has been so integrated in Canada, it is really a Great Lakes auto production area.

● (1840)

Since 1965 in Oshawa, 85% of the cars we produce have been sold in the United States as a result of the Auto Pact, which led to the U.S. FTA, which led to NAFTA. We are integrated, so if Windsor faces a new input cost or rising pressures or payroll taxes, and communities across the border in Michigan do not, that is a competitive issue that we cannot let happen when there is a Great Lakes region for auto production.

It is the same with the carbon tax. The government recognized that and exempted emitters like the auto industry from it but it did not exempt small to medium-sized industries. The government knew there was going to be continued upward cost pressure from supply chain networks within Ontario. Is that part of it? Can we delay the implementation of this tax? That should be something we talk about.

I would be remiss if I did not reference the fact that I have had concerns for over a year with the NAFTA discussions. In the minister's speech that she gave two summers ago at the University of Ottawa outlining Canada's objectives for a renegotiated NAFTA, she did not mention the auto industry. We know the so-called progressive agenda, but we did not hear about the auto industry. There would be no free trade between Canada and the U.S. but for the auto industry. At the time, I said consistently, "Get auto right and the rest will fall in line." Six months later, in January, when they proposed a new parts calculation approach for the North American, Great Lakes and now Mexican auto production industry, I praised that at the time. Get

auto right between Canada and the U.S. and the rest of our trade concerns will follow.

We did not see that. In fact, we saw section 232 security tariffs applied toward steel and aluminum which have impacted General Motors and its suppliers. A lot of parts and chassis development are stamped steel. Much of that steel is from the United States. What we have seen are months of prolonged tariffs. We have seen now Canadian retaliatory tariffs actually hurting Canadians much more than they impact the U.S. I do not mind putting a tariff on bourbon, although I have friends who like bourbon, because the LCBO buys bourbon. It is a state monopoly in Ontario. However, to put in retaliatory tariffs when we know they are going to hurt Canadian manufacturers more than the U.S., the intended target of this retaliation, is dumb policy. The Liberals said they would be nimble and adapt. Was that part of it?

I said from the beginning my personal connection here through my family, and the fact that I remember in grade school at St. Joseph's that most of my friends, either directly or indirectly, were touched by or had a parent working at General Motors. This strikes at our community. I do not want to attach blame. Let us come up with a plan to make ourselves competitive, and let us not just wait for them to come to us. I know full well the government knew there were risks here before yesterday. The pace and quantity of meetings showed there were concerns about competitive operations. The minister has said that every time he met with GM's president he would mention, "What about Oshawa?"

Well, what about Oshawa? What are we doing to make sure this is not the first of big manufacturing jobs in Ontario which are now saying that after payroll taxes, after carbon taxes, after wage rate pressures, after tariffs, and after trade uncertainty, they may start looking at other jurisdictions? Let us address those issues. This is an opportunity where if the Liberals do not turn the page but come up with a plan to address some of the underlying risks, we will be there shoulder to shoulder to address these issues.

● (1845)

I believe in manufacturing. We have the best and most highly skilled workforce. We are innovators. We have a heritage, access to markets and great colleges and universities. We just need to be competitive within the Great Lakes market and with our U.S. neighbours. When they are making moves, we cannot go in the opposite direction, raising taxes and regulations.

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I hope with this emergency debate that we show our support for the families impacted but also show them that until a lock is put on the gate, I am going to be looking for ways to showcase the opportunity in Oshawa, address some of the underlying competitive issues that must have gone into the inclusion of Oshawa on this list and show that we stand with the workers.

• (1850)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Liberals share my hon. colleague's sentiments. Our government is deeply disappointed by GM's decision to close the plant in Oshawa at the end of next year.

The member spoke about wanting to understand the factors that underpinned the decision by GM to make this announcement. We know that GM has made the decision to close eight plants, including in Oshawa, Detroit, Ohio, Maryland and Korea and two other plants outside North America. We know from what GM said to us, what it said in its letter and what it said publicly, that it is based on decisions the company has been making for the last four years to move toward more autonomous vehicles. We know that the plant in St. Catharines opened around the same time as the Oshawa plant. The Ingersoll plant is staying intact.

We all want to ensure that the people of Oshawa and Durham region stay protected, and we will continue to work with our hon. colleagues to ensure that this happens.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, it is appropriate that the member for Whitby asked me the first question. She knows, as I do, that my colleague, the MP for Oshawa, is on the ground in Oshawa tonight, as will be the Leader of the Opposition. I am glad the member is part of this debate, because we should, as a team, address the issues.

As the member said, there are several other plants impacted in the Great Lakes Basin, but there was a decision made. What I would like to see this debate lead to is a discussion of some of the issues I know would have been part of the decision: tariffs, trade uncertainty, vehicle types and a move to zero emissions and zero collisions.

The bailout in 2009 was a totally different scenario. Without spending any money, we can address some of the policy decisions that went into the decision by General Motors to say that, despite a century, it does not see the Oshawa assembly as part of its next 10 to 25 years. We can address some of those things on a non-partisan and provincial-federal basis, working with Mayor Henry, who is soon to be regional chair, and Mayor Dan Carter, to make a three-level, full-court press so that we get the balance right in Oshawa, because we do not want to see other towns hit like Oshawa was today.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Durham for being part of this emergency debate and for his heartfelt speech and his personal touch on this. It is very important.

We know that the city of Oshawa has been hit hard today. I think the member has answered this already, but would the member support an all-party committee at the federal level joining the all-party committee at the provincial level, along with the union, the mayor and the company ASAP? There is a short time span. This is very short notice, but would he support us all sitting down to try to find a resolution?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member for Hamilton Mountain joining the emergency debate tonight. That is the very reason we are here. The first all-party consensus we can drive is in the chamber. With the NDP echoing a lot of my concerns and the Liberals also asking for an emergency debate, I think there is a willingness.

I have been speaking in the last 18 hours, since the rumours started, with my provincial counterparts, including Jennifer French, the MPP from Oshawa, Minister Todd Smith and Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy, the members of Premier Ford's team. We need an all-hands-on-deck approach. As I said, this is not just saying that there is a fund people can apply to. This was a decision made on Oshawa because of a number of existing conditions on the ground. If we can address them on an all-party basis, I think we have the time to not turn the page and just say we need to work on retraining. Let us make Oshawa competitive so that we remain in operation.

• (1855)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Durham for being here. I am here to support him just like he has been there to support us out west in the oil and gas sector and the forestry sector.

It is amazing what the government has done to the Canadian economy in three years. The forestry sector is hanging on by its fingernails. If it were not for hurricanes in the U.S., we would see massive layoffs there. In the oil and gas sector in Saskatchewan and Alberta, hundreds of thousands of people have been laid off. Again, this is a total disaster.

Now to manufacturing. This summer we did round tables across Canada, and manufacturers told us that they are not competitive and that they cannot be based in Canada with these tariffs and these regulations. The transport committee has been hearing this over and over again in testimony.

The environment minister has said that we are going to embrace the new green jobs and replace the oil and gas jobs with all the new green jobs. The member talked about Oshawa in his speech. That would be a perfect place to see some of these green jobs. Could he explain to me what is going on such that this is not happening in Oshawa?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, as my friend from Prince Albert knows, just a few months ago, the MP for Oshawa and I hosted an energy executive in Oshawa to highlight the opportunity for our manufacturing sector, particularly small and medium-sized players, to do contracts in our resource sector. As I said in my speech, the success of one region and of one industry is a Canadian success. We cannot pit them against one another. We have to support jobs in communities.

The member highlighted the fact that if their move is toward zero emissions, zero collisions, with GM's history, with our university in the Durham region, and with clean, greenhouse-gas-emissions-free generation in Darlington, we have an opportunity, with the flexible line in Oshawa, to come up with the vehicles GM says consumers want. It would be much harder for other plants in Ohio and Michigan to retool. We have the flexibility to move quickly, but we have to show leadership to show that we want the jobs for the next 20 years, not just the last 20.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague has a great deal of experience with regard to the Oshawa community and the people who live there.

One of the things that has been troubling me a great deal is the fact that in 2009, the Canadian auto sector was in difficulty because of the recession, and at that point in time, the Government of Canada loaned \$10.85 billion to that industry. Certainly General Motors was a recipient. What troubles me is that it seems the requirement that General Motors provide jobs and stay in the community only lasted until 2016. It would seem to me that the \$10.85 billion should have been the basis of a requirement for something far more secure than just that short time.

Could my colleague comment on that?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member for London—Fanshawe certainly knows the heritage of the old GM Defense company in London as well.

The issue of 2009 brings up a great question. There was going to be insolvency affecting not only hundreds of thousands of jobs but all the retirees. I remind my friend from Hamilton Mountain that he can still vote for Bill C-405, which came out of concerns from General Motors' pensioners about less flexibility. They were worried that all pensioners would be left out.

We do not have insolvency here. I spoke to Mark Cameron, who was in the Prime Minister's Office at the time. The requirement to produce 16% was the result of the negotiation. At the time of the bailout, 16% was how much was being produced in Canada. As part of Canadian participation and the Province of Ontario, GM maintained that. That was the longest time period for vehicle cycles, going out several, that could be agreed to, and I would remind the member that it was done on an urgent basis to prevent a massive failure.

I think Parliament has acted before to address the shock from the great global recession. Now is a time to address the signal being sent that our manufacturing environment in Ontario has some underlying competitiveness issues. The mini-budget released a few days ago by the finance minister is not enough to address some of the concerns that have been there since payroll tax increases and others. Let us use this debate tonight to come up with a plan to address some of these underlying competitiveness issues.

● (1900)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is deeply disappointed by GM's announcement regarding its global restructuring, which will affect its plant in Oshawa.

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This decision will affect not only their operations and their workers here in Canada, but also in the U.S. and around the world. This is terrible news for the women and men whose jobs will be affected, for their families, and for the community.

[*English*]

I want to thank my colleague from Durham for his remarks. I am looking forward to the opportunity to highlight some of the key aspects he raised. I also want to acknowledge the member for Whitby, who spoke so eloquently about the impact this is having on her constituency, for the great advocacy work she has done to promote the automotive sector.

As mentioned, today is a very sad day, disappointing, to say the least, and devastating for the community of Oshawa and the workers and their families. Our government understands that this is a very difficult time for the region and the workers but also for the suppliers and so many people who are indirectly impacted by this news. The company officials highlighted that this was a decision that was not specifically targeted at Oshawa. They indicated that this was part of their global restructuring initiative. However, from our perspective, this is not a good day for Oshawa. This is not a good day for our auto workers.

I have a personal connection to this particular sector. I started my career in the automotive sector. My first co-op job was with the Ford Motor Company of Canada. I really started to understand how important this sector was in terms of the impact it had on the community. I was very fortunate that after my placement at Ford Motor Company, I was offered a full-time job in Oakville, very near to where I now live and where I represent Mississauga—Malton. I had the opportunity to meet with the dealers and see the outreach work they did to promote a sense of community by supporting the local soccer club or swim team or by helping out through volunteering or providing donations. That is an example of the impact the automotive sector has, not only because of the manufacturing or the sales and marketing aspects but because of the dealerships that are on the front line with consumers.

We are very fortunate in Canada. We have a very strong and vibrant automotive sector, a very strong and robust dealership sector. We have over two million vehicles produced on an annual basis, and that really speaks to a vibrant automotive sector. I saw that as a student when I was in Windsor. I did my MBA there, and I recall looking at the Ambassador Bridge and the number of trucks that would cross that bridge with car parts. On average, we have been told, car parts cross that bridge seven or eight times. That speaks to the integrated supply chain and the impact the automotive sector had in Windsor and Detroit and the surrounding region. This is a sector that is very important to me.

Now as the member of Parliament for Mississauga—Malton, I deal with many suppliers who provide logistical support and parts support to the major auto makers, particularly to the auto manufacturing facilities at Ford in Oakville but also to those in Oshawa, Cambridge and other parts of Ontario.

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I have heard directly from my constituents and from Canadians how devastated they were to hear this news when some of it started to break last night and when it was officially confirmed by General Motors today. I want to very quickly highlight that all is not doom and gloom. What happened today is of course a major setback for the community of Oshawa, but it is a resilient community, and I am confident that we will talk about a path forward momentarily.

Overall, the automotive sector in Canada employs 500,000 people. Both directly and indirectly, 500,000 Canadians are connected to the automotive sector. It contributes a significant amount to our national economy, \$18 billion. It has an impact not only in Ontario or in the southwestern region or in the area I represent. It has an impact across the country. This is a significantly important sector to our economy.

●(1905)

As well, there are suppliers that support this sector, some 700 unique suppliers that really create a value proposition for the automotive sector. It is not only that we have a world-class workforce and an incredible supply chain, but it is also important to note that we have some of the best academic institutions supporting the work they do.

Just a few months ago, at the end of August, along with my colleague from Whitby and the Prime Minister, I was very fortunate to make an announcement at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology of a \$9.5-million investment in the Automotive Centre of Excellence. That confirms how important we see UOIT as being, because of the work it does with GM and within that local community. We clearly understand how important academic institutions are. It is why we increased funding for grants and contributions in the last budget by \$4 billion so that our academic institutions could have some of the world-class research that can really support this very important sector as well.

While some people wonder if the automotive sector is one that represents the past, it is important to note that it is not. This sector is so innovative and has so much technology associated with it. I remember going to the Detroit Auto Show, and it was not all about horse power. Vendors were talking about software power. It is incredible the amount of technology that is vehicles now, and we want to be part of that future and that technology.

We are very fortunate in Canada. We produce one car every 13 seconds. Think about that. We have eight plants, notwithstanding the announcement today, and we have an incredibly strong footprint as well. We also export to the U.S. and other key markets. In 2017, our export numbers were \$86.5 billion. As a trading nation, we recognize that we build these vehicles not only for domestic purchases, but also to make sure that the vehicles produced here in Canada, which are of the best quality, are very competitive and are sold abroad. Significant business is done with the United States as well.

I have highlighted that we have some of the best-quality plants. I have visited many of these facilities and seen first-hand the numerous J.D. Power awards these facilities have received because of their quality workmanship. This fundamentally speaks to the fact that our number one asset, our value proposition, that distinguishes Canada and why companies invest here and why GM has such a

long and proud history here in Canada is our people. It is because of our workforce. It is because of the skills the people have, their commitment to their craft, their dedication to make sure they understand and have the latest knowledge of what goes into a vehicle to make sure that we have the best quality standards globally.

This is what this discussion is about today. I want to give some context about the automotive sector, because it is really important to know that this sector is doing reasonably well, all things considered. When we formed government in 2015, we recognized that we inherited a program called the automotive innovation fund, AIF. There are tons of acronyms in government. For many people viewing this, as well as my grandmother, who was telling me she was listening to this debate, the automotive innovation fund was introduced by the previous government. However, the terms and conditions were such that the automotive sector was not using this fund. It sounded good, was very targeted, but it did not necessarily help the automotive sector.

Once we formed government in 2015, we changed the fund's terms and conditions. We looked at how to make sure that the fund actually worked to bring investments into Canada, and because of that, we have seen a great deal of success. Once we changed those terms, it really helped negotiations between unions and management in 2016. Because of this fund, and the new larger fund we ultimately created called the strategic innovation fund, which again helped the automotive sector, we were able to secure through direct partnerships—that means people who use this fund—\$4.1 billion worth of investments in the automotive sector.

There are some skeptics out there who are asking if companies want to invest in Canada. We have a clear track record since we formed government of putting forward policies and programs for significant investments in the automotive sectors. Overall, \$5.6 billion worth of additional investments were made in the sector in the last three years. This speaks to the fact that we have an incredible automotive sector in Canada.

●(1910)

I highlighted the reasons why. It is because we have an incredible workforce and an incredibly integrated supply chain. We have some of the best research coming out of our academic institutions that support the latest technology and research being done. This is really important and Canadians need to understand that. Again, today's announcement was devastating. It was very painful to watch, and when the news came out, I heard directly from many of the businesses in my riding and many of my constituents as well.

I also want to highlight that when we changed the terms of the automotive innovation fund and ultimately called it the strategic innovation fund, fundamentally what it boiled down to was more money, more resources to make sure that we compete with other jurisdictions because we are in a global race for some of these mandates. We are competing with other jurisdictions to make sure we attract investment.

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Yes, we have very competitive tax rates. Yes, we have among the best workforces. Yes, we have free trade agreements, but ultimately other jurisdictions say that if companies want to invest in their state, in their community, they will provide additional tax breaks or additional support for them to do so. That is why we have a strategic innovation fund. Through this fund we have made significant investments, but let me be more specific.

Toyota, for example, invested significantly, over \$1 billion dollars, which helped maintain and create 8,500 jobs, a significant footprint for the Cambridge—Woodstock community. It is very important that this investment was made.

It was the same thing with Honda. We made sure that we invested money from the strategic innovation fund and were able to secure \$492 million, which helped secure 4,000 good quality middle-class jobs. These are significant jobs in those communities.

My colleague from Guelph will be speaking in a moment about Linamar. This was a significant investment made in the company of \$750 million. Linamar is a Canadian company and a Canadian success story that is expanding its footprint here. It is a major automotive parts supplier. It also secured 9,500 jobs. Many new jobs are also created, in total 1,500 new jobs because of this investment.

This is how the strategic innovation fund is working. It boils down to jobs. It boils down to making sure we get investment, and that is exactly what we have seen in the automotive sector. As mentioned, this fund is important because we are competing with other jurisdictions.

Some would ask why we are investing this money, that it is corporate welfare and are we not cutting cheques? Absolutely not. We are competing with other jurisdictions. How can we turn our back on 500,000 employees? How can we turn our back on a sector that contributes \$18 billion? We cannot and we will not.

That is why our Prime Minister has been very clear. We stand with the workers and with the automotive sector. We brought this fund forward so that we could compete with other jurisdictions as well.

Today, we also had the opportunity to engage with our provincial counterparts. The Prime Minister spoke with Premier Ford and made it very clear that we are going to be here for the workers. Premier Ford also acknowledges that this is not a political issue where we point fingers. This is not a partisan issue. This is about our coming together. The members for Durham and Hamilton Centre have said this on several occasions. It is a great opportunity to show Canadians that we are all united with one key objective or focus, to make sure that we do everything possible for Canadian automotive manufacturing workers.

We are engaging with the province. We are going to look at all options. We are going to examine what we can do and what it can do and how we can work together to make sure that we protect our employees.

I have also had the opportunity to speak directly to Mayor Henry. It was a difficult conversation, because he talked about his own personal experience and story with the company. As mentioned by the members for Whitby and Durham, everyone is touched by this. GM has been there for over 100 years, so every family has a story to

tell directly and indirectly. This is not simply about jobs alone. This has an impact on the local community and we recognize that. My message is very clear to Mayor Henry, who will become the new regional chair in the coming days: How can we work together?

● (1915)

Our government wants to be a partner. We have a track record of demonstrating that partnership. It is not empty rhetoric. We have put policies and programs in place to support the automotive sector. This is not old industrial policy; it is part of our innovation and skills plan. It is about how we move forward.

We have also engaged with the unions. I spoke with Jerry Dias and made it very clear that we are here to support the workers. What can we do? We have a very good working relationship with labour. We want to make sure that we provide every opportunity for our workers to succeed.

This is all hands on deck. This is about our coming together and working for this critical sector. To highlight that, we made some significant announcements in the fall economic statement. The Minister of Finance announced an additional \$800 million for the strategic innovation fund. That means more money for this fund to attract more investments. That is a clear indication that we had something that was working, a highlight of those success stories. Going forward, we wanted to send a clear signal to industry that we have their back, and we wanted to send a clear signal to workers that we have their back. We wanted to send a signal that we wanted to see more research and development, more mandates, more jobs, and more investments. That was clearly demonstrated by that additional \$800 million investment announced in the fall economic statement.

This is part of our overall plan. This is not a one-off initiative. This is part of our new smart industrial policy called the innovation and skills plan. This plan was officially launched as part of the 2017 budget. My parliamentary secretary knows full well that this plan really paves the path forward for how we are going to compete going forward. One of the key aspects of this plan is investing in people. The way we succeed is not just with innovation but also with skills, by investing in upscaling and re-scaling, and lifelong learning and education. That is how we differentiate ourselves. That is our value proposition. It is our people. It is Canadians. It is our workforce.

That was a key part. We also invested in research and development. Again, I talked about some of the investments, the \$9.5 million invested in the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, as an example, a small but a specific example for that region. The member for Whitby was there when we made that announcement.

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Of course it is all about seeing growth. We have seen record growth, 3% growth of our GDP last year. We have seen over 500,000 jobs created in the Canadian economy since 2015, when we took office. Those are full-time jobs, I might add. This is really important. We have more to do. That is what was clearly demonstrated in the fall economic statement as well in talking about our plan going forward.

I want to make it very clear that we are not done yet. When I talk about our innovation and skills plan, we have a supercluster for advanced manufacturing. This is an area of strength for us. Manufacturing is a point of pride for us. This is an area where Canada can continue to lead. We know that manufacturing represents significant growth opportunities. That is why, when we put forward this \$950 million initiative, led by industry, advanced manufacturing succeeded, and many automakers are part of this supercluster initiative as well.

We have different policies and programs in place to make sure that our economy grows. We believe in the automotive sector. We know it has enormous potential. We want to continue to support this sector as well.

The bottom line is that if there is one number I can leave with the House that really encapsulates what I have been saying and why this debate is so important, why I am so glad that we supported this emergency debate, why I am so glad to see members from all political parties participating in this debate, it is the 500,000 jobs connected to the automotive sector. This is about jobs, jobs, jobs. Our government will continue to fight for good quality, middle-class jobs in the automotive sector.

• (1920)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree with the minister that it is about jobs. That is why we called for this emergency debate. I agree that Ontario is competitive and that a lot of good things happening, and that we have to send that signal. I appreciate his comments about renaming the auto innovation fund started under the Harper government as the strategic innovation fund.

I do not really want to talk about funds. We have steel and aluminum tariffs, and we have retaliatory tariffs, now raising costs in the supply chain. There are payroll taxes, the carbon tax, the Gordie Howe bridge, industrial power rates, and wage pressures. Are any of these factors issues that factored into GM's decision?

The Hill Times had a story on the minister being the most lobbied minister in the government. As I said, that is normal, but it did say, "General Motors of Canada Co. is by far the most common lobbyist of [the minister]."

Were any of those issues raised? I want to have a serious discussion on how we can come up with a plan together. Have these issues, steel tariffs, NAFTA, payroll taxes, the Gordie Howe bridge, and transportation challenges, been addressed by GM Canada in those meetings with the minister? Is he prepared to put forward a plan that we can get behind to eliminate some of those issues before November 2019?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Durham for his question. Ultimately, he is asking the

right question, which is how do we compete going forward, how do we succeed going forward, and how do we create opportunities for Canadians.

He talked about the automotive innovation fund. Sadly, the previous government had that program in place, but the terms and conditions were such that no automotive company used it in a meaningful way. Therefore, it sounded good on paper, but it was not a true incentive to bring in investments. We changed those terms and conditions, which allowed both management and the union to understand that the government wanted to be a meaningful partner. That really helped in the negotiations. Ultimately, we used that fund to bring in the investment that I highlighted, the \$4.1 billion worth of investment.

With respect to steel and aluminum tariffs, as the member opposite raised, this speaks to why these are unjust, unfair tariffs. My colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has led the charge to push back against the United States on this issue, saying this is unacceptable. We are not a security threat or concern. Ultimately, this is not good for Canada, but it is not good for the United States and our integrated supply chain, and we will continue to work to eliminate these tariffs.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his remarks, and I am encouraged by the attitude that we will work collectively. However, I am a bit concerned about some naïveté that I am hearing. The minister talks about the strategic innovation fund and how it is working and how successful they are as a government in terms of investing in new technology and innovation. It sounds wonderful, but the truth is that General Motors is leaving. There must be some problems. There must be some issues in that regard. I would like to know what kinds of discussions the minister has had with the company and with the union, and what leverage he has applied to make sure that General Motors does not abandon the community of Oshawa, leaving its workers in the lurch.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Speaker, that is really the most important issue we discussed today. It really is about the workers. I highlighted that in my remarks, and colleagues opposite have raised that issue. It really is, today, about the employees in Oshawa and making sure we are there to support them. We have been very clear that this news is disappointing. We are devastated by the impact this will have on Oshawa and the surrounding region as well.

What is the plan forward? We want to work with our provincial counterparts. We want to work with the municipal government. We have been very clear about protecting the automotive sector. That was a clear point in our discussions on NAFTA. If President Trump says he wants to use section 232 to undermine the automotive sector, we shielded the automotive sector from any of these tariffs going forward. I wanted to quickly highlight that point as well from the question asked before.

These are the measures we have taken, and not only GM, but all the automotive companies know full well that our government is a meaningful partner when it comes to supporting the automotive sector, and we will continue to support the sector for years to come.

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Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. minister for his remarks, as well as his leadership on this issue and on the innovation file generally.

We have heard a number of people in the House, including the member for Durham, talk about the future of the auto industry and where we ought to be going, so I would like to ask the minister to elaborate on where we are going, for example, on the car of the future and automated clean, green technology with respect to cars. I know he has more to say about it, and I would like to hear him.

● (1925)

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Speaker, as I have said before, the automotive sector does not represent old industrial policies. It represents a bright future going forward. It is a key part of our government's innovation and skills plan. It is about how do we build the vehicle of tomorrow and at the same time protect good quality jobs, and making sure they transition to these new opportunities. Therefore, we are coming forward with a zero emission vehicle strategy. We are investing significantly in 5G technology to help with autonomous and connected vehicles. We have supported companies with software technology that is being used in the new vehicles that are being produced.

We have also supported up-to-date, flexible manufacturing facilities as part of the strategic innovation fund to make sure we have the production capacity, industry 4.0. The bottom line is, we are investing in skills and technology to make sure we build the car of the future.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to give a little context to the discussion here today.

I was happy to point out to the minister that Toyota Motor Manufacturing is in Oxford County, as is a General Motors plant and a Hino Motors truck plant. We probably have somewhere in the area of 15,000 employees in the secondary industry of suppliers.

However, it is more important, as we go forward, to talk about going forward as opposed to where we have been in the past. What would the minister suggest we do collectively to work together to support all of those industries in the future, and how do we get together to do that? I am convinced that it is not necessarily what we have done in the past, if that has worked, but now we need to move on.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his passion and commitment to this very important sector.

We have been very clear. Our path forward when it comes to the automotive sector is to talk about the bright future of the sector and what it represents in terms of opportunities to Canadians, particularly youth. We want to highlight all the changes that are occurring in the technology associated with these vehicles.

We want to play a leadership role when it comes to these new emerging technologies, such as the lightweighting of vehicles, the software that is used, connected vehicles, autonomous vehicles, or any of these types of advancements or changes that are occurring. We want to make sure that Canada plays a leadership role. It is why

we put forward this innovation and skills plan, and why we will make sure that the automotive sector benefits from it. It is about making sure that we highlight this as a sector that is going to succeed going forward. It is a forward-looking sector that is doing great work and creating tens of thousands of jobs in the process.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech, but I did take offence when he said it is not all doom and gloom. It is very hard to say it is not doom and gloom to the workers who got the announcement that they are going to be losing their jobs.

However, in saying that, I understand he is talking about the future of the business. Therefore, I would ask him what we are doing about the situation today. Will he support and organize a federal all-party committee to join in with a provincial all-party committee, along with the unions, the company and the mayor of Oshawa for a meeting as soon as possible so that the people can see that all the people in the House are working together to try to resolve this issue?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Speaker, I was highlighting the fact that, overall, the sector is headed in the right direction. Make no mistake, what has happened today is devastating. Make no mistake that what the families are going through is unimaginable. This is serious stuff. These are workers and communities that are impacted. I do not want to minimize that nor have I minimized that.

However, I highlighted that we want to build a strong and robust automotive sector, and we are more than willing to work with other political parties, unions and auto manufacturers. We have an open-door policy, because we believe in this sector and we believe that it creates good-quality, middle-class jobs.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, the announcement this morning of the GM closure came as a surprise to everyone and obviously it is devastating news. It is devastating news for our economy, for the community and for all the workers, their families and the pensioners who will be affected. The effects of this closure will be huge. The economic and human effects will be felt far and wide beyond just Oshawa and the GM facilities. Up to 30,000 people who work in jobs dependent on the auto sector could be affected. That is 30,000 families that will experience the incredible hardship a closure like this produces.

I am relieved that we are having this debate tonight. I am also very heartened by the fact that the three major parties in the House all agreed on the need to have this discussion and have it as soon as possible.

I have spoken today with colleagues from both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, and have suggested to them that we need to focus on what we can do to help the workers now in moving forward. Of course we will talk about the politics of the situation, how we arrived at this point and who is to blame, but to me that is a secondary issue. We must first do all that we can to help.

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In my view, plan A should be an attempt to keep the plant going. The government must immediately examine ways of keeping the operations going and keeping the workers employed. The Liberal government must explore options to encourage GM to reverse its decision, including targeted investment that would ensure our workers can continue to build the vehicles Canadians need now and in the future. These options must be examined immediately.

Plan B would be to find new investors. Is there anyone out there willing to invest in a way that maintains employment levels? Could the workers be involved in some sort of investment strategy? There are more questions that need to be examined and answered as soon as possible.

Plan C would be the development of a proper and adequate process of adjustment for the workers and the community. Such a process must ensure that workers are treated with dignity and that proper support systems are put in place. Surely, we have learned that asking workers to rely on EI when their workplace closes is not an adequate response.

Everyone in Canada knows that the retraining programs offered to workers in this situation are not even close to being a real solution. It is a joke really to think the majority of these workers are going to be trained for a job that is going to provide anything near the wages and benefits that they are relying on now.

What about older workers? It is very unlikely they could even be given the new skills that would make another company want to take them on, especially at the wage level they now earn.

Those close to retirement will end up losing significant value from their pensions. The loss of health care benefits will be devastating for older workers who have worked their whole lives in physically demanding jobs and count on those benefits for the medicine and therapy that they need.

This is not an easy situation for the workers, their families or the pensioners, and often the effects go beyond what may be obvious on the surface, the loss of income and benefits.

I have lived through this situation before and have seen the effects first-hand. When I was employed at Stelco and was president of my local union, the company announced that it was closing. That was at Canada Works in 1984 in Hamilton where we had what is called a screw manufacturing plant. When the company announced that closure, I had never seen such devastating results. Some people took their lives. Some people lost their marriages. Some people turned to addiction. It was incredibly unbelievable what happened.

This situation has to be addressed and it has to be addressed as soon as possible, because many people as of today are taking their anger out on the company. They do not know what they are going to do in the future. They are mad. They are asking all of us for help. We have to show them that help and we have to show them support, otherwise different things may happen. Right now, they will be going into a toxic work environment. We must show that we are there for them.

The union and the company are going to be talking but they need more support than that. The union and the workers need every level

of government possible to go forward, to show that we are all united in helping them out.

Make no mistake, the effects of this closure will be severe and difficult. That is why we needed to have this debate tonight and why we must act immediately to help the workers, their families and the community.

• (1930)

Both GM and the Premier of Ontario may be saying the ship has sailed, but we do not accept this is a done deal. There is more we can do and we must act and we must do it immediately.

Our thoughts go out to the workers, pensioners, families and communities affected by this decision. Thousands of good-paying Canadian jobs will be lost. This will leave the families and communities reeling from the impact.

As I said, it is the communities, workers and families. It is just a ripple effect of what happens. We really do not see the devastation across the country unless we experience it. That is what these workers are going through today. The support systems they need will not just be on training issues, but they need the jobs to be trained for. With the government previously saying that people must get used to only precarious, part-time and contract-type jobs, it is not a very good sign to say that people will be trained. For what? That is the problem we are having.

It is vital for the government, for all us to encourage GM to keep the plant open or find a new investor. It could be a competitor. All that stuff is there. The building is there. All we have to do is do it right and we can do it for everybody.

I will do everything in my power to help those affected by this devastating news. I trust all my colleagues in the House will do the same.

• (1935)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for not only his good words and strong support for the workers, families and communities that are struggling with today's news, but also his contribution when it comes to issues of labour relations and for standing up for important issues that relate to the rights of workers.

The question I have for him is a bit more complex than some of the comments he made. It centres around the centre for excellence, the new research facility that General Motors has opened in Oshawa and the thousand new jobs for engineers in pursuit of the next generation of vehicles. Hopefully, those vehicles will not only be built in Canada, but will be built in Oshawa.

I am curious. We know that one of the things that attracts that next generation of investment is the tax rate. We have heard today from the NDP about the need to increase corporate taxes. In light of today's news, are they rethinking that strategy as it relates to the automotive industry to encourage investment in Oshawa, to encourage the retooling of that facility to hopefully take advantage of the good research that is being done at the new facility recently opened in Oshawa by GM?

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Mr. Scott Duvall: Mr. Speaker, we can have all we want for engineering and new development, but when closing the manufacturing company down, I am not sure what all that does except help the future of other plants.

When it comes down to tax giveaways to try to encourage, as the government has said, keeping jobs in Canada, this is living proof that it does not work. I am not sure if all these tax giveaways are all that great. Maybe we should be looking at another method, whatever that method would be, to protect employment standards in Canada and protect the workers in Canada.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member cares about the employees. I see it in his face and hear it in his voice. What concerns me is that this is not just Oshawa. We are talking about Oshawa tonight, but this goes right across Canada. Manufacturing is under attack. Manufacturing over the last three years has complained over and over again about competitiveness, saying it cannot survive in Canada, that it cannot compete.

Could he give us some ideas of things that the NDP would do to create an environment so manufacturing would be competitive?

Mr. Scott Duvall: Mr. Speaker, that was an excellent question. I have been saying that since the eighties and nineties when the actual manufacturing base was leaving our country. It was a big issue then and it is a bigger issue now as they are leaving.

We have come up with several ideas to work together and have a strategy together. All we have so far is the Conservatives, when they were in government, saying they were going to do one thing and when the governments change, we have the Liberals saying they are going to do another thing.

We must work together. I think that is what we are all trying to do to ensure we have business in Canada and a future in Canada for our children and grandchildren so they will have jobs to go to.

• (1940)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like him to comment on something very specific. International trade is not a bad thing and trade deals are not a bad thing per se. Once we buy into the argument that it becomes dogma, that it has to be a free market and free trade at all costs, we are seeing the repercussions of that in this instance.

We had the Auto Pact in Canada, which would ensure that cars built here would be bought here. We gave that up on the altar of free trade at all costs. I would like my friend to comment on the future of manufacturing in the auto sector, especially the manufacturing in the absence of an Auto Pact and with the signing of agreements like NAFTA and now the USMCA, and everything else. At some point we need to start think, if we are dealing, what the future of Canada is. Is it manufacturing or services, which is lower productivity and less wages because it is lower unionization density? I would like my friend to comment on the future he sees for Canada.

Mr. Scott Duvall: Mr. Speaker, free trade is one thing, but we never had that. What we are looking for is fair trade. The new USMCA deal and the whole idea of trade is not to make tariffs. Unfortunately, we have tariffs in our steel and aluminum industries that are having devastating effects on our businesses now and in the future. They cannot compete unless they want to lower wages and

that is the way of the future on some global companies that want to lower their wages. We need a fair trade agreement that is fair to all countries and not just one.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the devastating reality for the workers, their families and the entire city of Oshawa. It is very clear that this is a failure of the obligation that is owed to the working people of the country.

Last week, the Liberal government gave corporations like General Motors a \$14 billion giveaway, because, as the government said, it would guarantee that jobs would remain in Canada. However, today, while GM stakeholders and shareholders got a bump of 7% on their profits, more than 5,000 Canadian families may be affected by these layoffs. This should never happen. We cannot afford billions in tax giveaways to the most profitable companies when those same companies are pulling up stake, leaving people out of work and leaving families devastated.

London, Ontario is an example of this kind of behaviour from corporations. We have lived it for a number of years. We lost Siemens, which provided good jobs, but it is gone. We had Ford at Talbotville and it is gone. Most recent, despite the Conservatives giving Caterpillar \$5 million, it left, not because the workers did not produce a world-class product but because it had no commitment to the community. It was profitable and it was doing very well. In fact, the investments and the benefits that it gleaned were because of the quality of the workers in our community. However, when these companies left, people and families were abandoned.

There should be government investment. We hear a great deal about the various investments that have been put in place by the Liberal government and by the Conservative government before it. However, these investments must have strings attached. There can be no open season. There must be requirements and commitments by these companies to stay and to continue to be part of the community. It was the community that made them profitable.

The NDP has been calling for investments that would make Canada a leader in clean energy jobs. It is important to note that successive governments, both Liberal and Conservative, have dismissed this call for a plan. Today we are reaping the results of that. We are seeing the manifestation of failing to have a plan. Part of that plan is a national auto strategy.

Members will recall that the MPs for Essex, Windsor West and Windsor—Tecumseh have been very clear in asking for a national auto strategy. In fact, the member for Windsor West tabled a petition, with 9,000 signatures from his community, asking for this plan. If we had a cohesive, well-thought-out strategy, it would attract investment, support research and engineering, support innovation and sustain good jobs.

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This lack of a national strategy has cost Canadians some crucial jobs, jobs that would place us in the lead in regard to efforts to create electric hybrid cars and a green economy. It would be the kind of sustainable economy that would alleviate the environmental and climate change crisis we all face. It would be a strategy that would begin by convening an auto summit with provincial, municipal, industry leaders and labour, and labour is constantly forgotten in this scenario, to develop a consensus for that important national automotive strategy.

This is not new. This is something that I first heard from Jack Layton in 2003, when he unveiled the proposal for a program to create 40,000 new sustainable jobs. He talked about the auto industry and how we could become part of that new green non-polluting future. It would go a long way, not just with respect to jobs but in the elimination of greenhouse gases.

● (1945)

The investment would require commitments, as I said, long-term commitments from automakers like GM to continue to support Canadian jobs well into the future. GM is saying that that ship has sailed and there is nothing we can do but accept that this is a done deal. The Liberal government must explore options to encourage GM to reverse this decision, including targeted investment that would ensure these workers can continue to build quality vehicles, the vehicles Canadians need now and in the future, investment that makes demands for commitments from the company.

New Democrats stand with the workers and their families in Oshawa and with workers throughout the country. We will continue to push the Liberal government to implement the needed changes to protect our industries. We have been calling for investments to make Canada a leader in clean energy jobs, and again we are back to a national auto strategy as part of the future. It is also absolutely essential we explore these sectoral investments.

Whatever we do, we must avoid the mistakes of the past. By that, I am referring to 2009 when the Canadian and Ontario governments lent GM \$10.85 billion. It was \$7.23 billion federally and \$3.62 billion provincially. That amounts to \$474,000 per GM employee. The governments received stocks. They were able to retain stocks as part of the agreement, but they sold those stocks in 2015. That was a mistake because those shares were leverage. They were part of what we held in keeping General Motors accountable, but they were sold. The result of that sell-off is the public lost \$3.5 billion to General Motors due to the bailout. In 2014, the Auditor General found that Industry Canada had no documentation of how GM used more than \$528 million of those funds. Imagine that: governments which give away money to corporations but there is no accounting and no accountability. It is not acceptable.

In October, Export Development Canada showed a \$1-billion outstanding loan to General Motors Corporation. Apparently, that \$1 billion is going to be written off. Just this summer, the member for Windsor West was asking, in light of the Trump auto tariffs, what we were doing to make sure we had a predictable strategy since we are dealing with a very unpredictable U.S. President. Part of that strategy is to address tariffs. Has the Liberal government addressed the issue of the steel and aluminum tariffs? It is quite prepared to sign the

USMCA, but has it made it very clear that there will be no signature until those auto tariffs and steel and aluminum tariffs are addressed?

We need a government that will step in and do what it takes to keep these jobs in Canada and in place in Oshawa. We are calling on the Liberal government once again to protect workers, to implement a national auto strategy and to look at the trade deals which have been put in place and make sure we have not given up too much and that we have protected employment, workers and labour in this country.

Two weeks ago, the government bragged about how the USMCA, which it is still planning to sign, would protect the auto sector. Well, apparently it will not. A week ago, the economic update gave \$14 billion to corporations like General Motors to guarantee jobs in Canada. Clearly, these giveaways have not worked. They have not achieved what the government said they would.

● (1950)

Therefore, let us get to work. Let us make sure there is a transition, like my colleague suggested, which involves the city, the union, the province and the federal government. Let us make sure that these workers will get their pensions, that GM will live up to all of its pension obligations. Let us make sure that severance is in place. Let us make sure that the company is required to do the environmental remediation of its sites to allow other industries to go in. The company should not get off scot-free. It should be held responsible for what it is doing. It should be held responsible for this behaviour.

We are on the side of those who work in Oshawa, and we are prepared to fight for them.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member called for a national strategy. Quite clearly, a \$5.6-billion investment into the auto sector by this government since taking office is that strategy brought to life. The tens of thousands of jobs supported by that investment, including the 1,000 high-paying jobs in the Oshawa area for the new GM research facility specifically supported so that it can develop the next generation of vehicles, driverless vehicles, emission-free vehicles, is that strategy. It is that forward-looking strategy to get to the next generation of automobiles.

The member opposite suggested that we should not have signed the free trade deal. However, that free trade deal is supported by Unifor, the very union at the heart of today's disappointing news.

Is she really suggesting that there is no \$5.6-billion investment? Is she suggesting there is no support for innovative automotive research and investment in GM? Is she also saying that Unifor should be ignored when it says to support the free trade deal?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I would be fascinated to hear what Unifor has to say today in light of General Motors shutting down its Oshawa plant.

The Liberals talk a good game. They talk about how they have put things in place, but where were the requirements that there be a commitment from the companies involved? If there were commitments in the past, they would not be able to leave without even a how do you do and they are gone. If what the Liberals have put in place is so very good, why has General Motors indicated that it is leaving, and why is it leaving without there being any penalties or anything in terms of compensation?

• (1955)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the underlying themes that I think we can all agree on with respect to this issue is competitiveness. We are seeing steel and aluminum tariffs imposed by the United States. In retaliation to those tariffs, we have imposed our own tariffs. In fact, companies that are purchasing steel and aluminum and then reselling it back into the United States, much like the automotive sector, are facing double tariffs, and it really is causing a problem, not just in the automotive sector. For the last couple of weeks, representatives of the steel and aluminum industries have been coming to Parliament Hill to talk about the impacts this is having, such as the impacts on small and medium-sized enterprises with upwards of 150 employees.

Would the hon. member not agree that in order to meet this competitiveness challenge, our retaliatory steel and aluminum tariffs would be better removed at this point to allow us to be more competitive, not just nationally but internationally as well?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. These tariffs that have been placed on steel and aluminum are indeed hurting many companies. The retaliatory measures that the current government has put in place have not achieved anything very effective. The government has collected lots of money. It has collected millions and millions of dollars and has paid out very little to the companies it promised it would help, support and make sure that they did not fail or in some cases fold entirely.

In regard to competitiveness, Canadian workers are probably the best in the world. They have skills, work ethics and they believe in doing good work. However, the government has failed to support them. The government needs to put things in place so that we can be competitive across the globe as we deserve to be.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, we have heard some very legitimate criticism of the bailout of General Motors. Two potentially encouraging aspects of that bailout were the fact that GM committed to maintain its share of Canadian production and the Government of Canada gained an equity stake in GM. Unfortunately, that commitment to maintain a Canadian footprint expired last year. Meanwhile, the federal government sold off its stake in General Motors to create the impression of a balanced budget.

I wonder if the member for London—Fanshawe would agree we might be in a better situation today if the Government of Canada had negotiated a longer commitment to Canada from GM, or had at least maintained its equity position in the company so that it could influence management decisions on behalf of our Canadian workers.

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Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I did refer to this in my remarks. The Government of Canada should have made this commitment, in regard to the \$10.8 billion, a much longer-term requirement from General Motors. However, most important is the equity stake that the people of Canada had in General Motors. That was leverage. That was an important opportunity to make demands and dictate to General Motors. What a lovely thought to be able to turn a corporation on its head instead of being the one constantly spinning, trying to manage.

I believe it was a significant mistake for the government to sell off that equity, because we could have and would have been at the table. We would have been able to make those demands I spoke of.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly pleased to be here this evening to participate in this emergency debate. Of course, we are very disappointed at the news from Oshawa this morning. It started last night. It will have an impact, not only on Oshawa but also my riding of Whitby and the surrounding Durham region.

Before I go any further, I do want to commend the member of Parliament for Durham, one of the individuals who decided to bring forward this emergency debate. All three parties agreed to have this emergency debate this evening. I do also want to send my support to the member of Parliament for Oshawa. We work really well together, and I know that today would be a particularly tough day for him. I know he is in the riding. He is going to have a tough go, going forward. Both members represent some part of Oshawa. I do want to lend my support to them.

I also want to be sure to lend my support to my local MPP Lorne Coe, who represents Whitby and Oshawa, as well as MPP Jennifer French. At this point in time, we need all levels of government, all hands on deck, to ensure that we make a way forward. It is not a partisan issue, but one in which the people of Oshawa will see all levels of government and people across all sectors standing in solidarity and support of them. I want to first lend support to those individuals.

Throughout the day, I have been in many conversations with leadership across the community, across Durham. I have given them the opportunity to send me their messages so that I can make sure to get their message out in my speech today.

The first is from John Henry, whom we have heard many people talk about. He is the mayor of Oshawa, soon to be the regional chair of Durham Region. He said to me today that “It takes a lot of great people to make great cars, but this today is not about the end product. It is about the people who make these cars and their families.”

It is about the people. It is about the neighbours. It is about the individuals and their families who are impacted by this devastating news.

Before I go further, I want to say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Guelph. My apologies, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague who reminded me.

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Additionally, Heather McMillan also wrote to me. She is the executive director of the Durham Workforce Authority in Oshawa. The organization does great work in looking at data and the ways we can utilize it to see what our workforce looks like and how we are responding to various issues. I do want to thank Heather for not only weighing in but also for the work that she does. She said wrote to me that “The Durham Workforce Authority helps to mobilize and build capacity of our communities. We address workforce and training needs in areas experiencing workforce realignment. The Oshawa GM plant is one of the best plants in General Motors and we are disappointed with today’s announcement. A closure and a layoff of this magnitude will have a significant impact on the local economy. This layoff will be a challenge for the community service providers. We will work with the union, the workers and the community to support these workers through this transition by supporting their transition to education, training and other employment.”

Lastly, as I mentioned, this closure is not just going to have an impact on the people of Oshawa, but also on the Durham Region and my riding of Whitby.

● (2000)

The re-elected mayor of Whitby, Don Mitchell, said, “The closure of General Motors in Oshawa is beyond devastating and disappointing”. I share that sentiment. He continued, “We recognize that this is an especially difficult time for all employees and families who have been impacted by the news. The automotive sector has been a vital part of the Canadian economy, including Whitby, for almost a century. Whitby is one of dozens of communities who benefited enormously from the growth, innovation and good, middle-class jobs supported by Canada’s automotive industry. We will work together to support Canadians facing the loss of high quality, well-paying jobs.”

The mayor’s sentiments are absolutely right. Oshawa has been the heartbeat of the Durham region, especially with GM there, an anchor to our community, providing good-paying, middle-class jobs, as the mayor said, for almost a century. We heard that from the member for Durham as well.

We know that the way this company has survived through the last 100 years is a testament to the resilience of the people who work there. It is a testament to the resilience of the people of Oshawa. It is a testament to their tenacity and their ability not only to make a thriving company, but also to make a thriving community within Oshawa and spread that across the Durham region. It of course had some impact in my riding of Whitby.

We heard people say today that they hope the doors will stay open at GM. I for one hope that happens. However, we know that no matter the outcome, the people of Oshawa and those in the Durham region will build back better. They are strong and resilient folk, and I know they will do that.

I will use the opportunity of this emergency debate to speak of the resilience of the people of Oshawa. I would like to refer a little bit to a letter from General Motors. GM wanted to underscore that today’s decision had nothing to do with the performance of its Canadian workforce and the people who work at the Canadian facility. GM says its worker have done everything it has asked them to do, and that they have done it with high quality, outperforming business

standards. We did not need a letter from GM to attest to that. We know that is the case simply from the work those individuals have done at the plant.

I know that the closures will, of course, not only make people in Oshawa upset and disappointed, but also may make others across the country quite nervous. I want to re-emphasize our government’s support for the auto sector.

We heard the minister talk about the 500,000 direct jobs in the auto sector here in Canada.

In that regard, we have extended the automotive innovation fund to a \$2-billion strategic innovation fund that attracts investment and keeps Canada’s automotive sector competitive.

GM’s decision was made because of a restructuring. It says that it is closing not only the plant in Oshawa, but also those in Detroit, Ohio, Maryland, and Korea.

We heard that this might be due to the price on pollution or the tariffs. There is no price on pollution in these other jurisdictions, and yet GM is closing plants there, so we really need to look at what is happening here.

I want to close with this. The member for St. Albert—Edmonton, in his earlier question to the member for Durham, wanted to talk about the opportunities. If, by chance, this plant closes, there is tremendous opportunity in the Durham region. We see the work shortages with the Ontario Power Generation at Darlington. We have seen our government make a \$9.5 million investment in the climate wind tunnel at UOIT’s Automotive Centre of Excellence. There is the capacity to really build back better, to harness the investments we have made so far and to make sure that Oshawa comes out of this thriving.

That is what I want to see. We want to be here to support the people of Oshawa to ensure they know that all levels of government will work together, across all aisles, so that at the end of the day we are here for them.

● (2005)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that all three parties in the House share the concern and a commitment to do the right thing, even if between us there are differences on exactly what things need to be done.

While investment is essential for jobs in the manufacturing industry under threat by so many factors these days, we have to remember that jobs in manufacturing are directly related to consumer preferences and the products offered. Dennis DesRosiers, a pre-eminent automotive consultant, reminded us today that the Oshawa plant, where the work was magnificent and the workers delivered on every commitment, produced more than 900,000 vehicles 15 years ago, and in 2016 fewer than 150,000 of the particular vehicles being made there.

Would my colleague agree that where investment is possible, so also is encouragement by the government of the day to ensure that the investment goes into manufacturing companies and industries where the products being produced will ensure the success and continued viability of a company?

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● (2010)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, we did hear from GM today that it is restructuring its global business to focus more on electric and autonomous vehicles. Investments are essential and it is essential that companies make forward looking investments.

When we talk about pricing pollution, we have heard about the multi-trillion dollar industry available to those who are a part of it. Ministers across government talk about the importance of making those investments and ensuring that we have a green economy. We have heard about the investment that we made to make sure that we have the skilled labour force that we need.

Yes, the investments are important, but the strategic investments that are made are even more important to ensure that we have not just the jobs of today, but also the jobs of tomorrow.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it really is an honour to represent the riding of Mississauga—Malton, where I am raising my family and my two young girls, Nanki and Kirpa. It is a riding where there are also many small and medium-sized businesses that are part of the auto manufacturing sector, supplying key parts to many of the key automakers.

From her knowledge of the automotive sector, what is the member for Whitby's message to those small and medium-sized enterprises? What is her message to the auto suppliers about how the government should respond to those workers? I would really appreciate it if she could shed some light on what we should do as an important step for suppliers, which are part of the debate as well.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, what we want the suppliers and the people in Oshawa to know is that we will support them. We will be there for them every step of the way.

We have to be forward looking. I was a small business owner as well, and I know that many businesses in the region will be impacted by this news today, some of them in Whitby. We want them to know that we have made investments along the way to ensure that small and medium-sized Canadian businesses thrive. We have lowered the small business tax rate. We have made conditions through trade that make it possible for some of these business not just to thrive locally, but also internationally.

This is a very devastating day, but we also have to look at what we have done so far to ensure that our businesses do well and to know that we will stand with the businesses that are particularly impacted by the decision today. We will stand with the auto sector as we have done in the past, and we will make sure that going forward it will have the same opportunities.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate, I would like to briefly remind the House that, for emergency debates, as with adjournment proceedings, for example, the Standing Orders allow members to address the House from the seat of their choosing.

● (2015)

[English]

All the other debate rules, essentially, are followed in the same way that we do during normal debates, on Government Orders for example.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Guelph.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the government, we are incredibly disappointed and concerned by the announcement today from General Motors to shut down its facility in Oshawa. My heart goes out to the women and men whose jobs will be affected along with their families and their communities, as well as everybody in the supply chain who is affected by decisions like these when they occur.

As a member of another community with deep ties to the automotive sector, I can understand the feelings of workers, families and the community in Oshawa today. The Oshawa assembly supports thousands of high-paying, good middle-class jobs, and we want the people of Oshawa and all Canadians to know that we are committed not only to them but also to ensuring the economic growth, strength and diversification of the Canadian economy. Canada has a strong and proud automotive history stretching back more than 100 years and that proud legacy continues today, employing over 500,000 people, directly and indirectly. It contributes \$18 billion to our GDP and is the country's largest export industry.

Coming from Guelph with the automotive supplier Linamar, I can speak to the importance of automotive suppliers and the impact of the network of suppliers that support all the plants impacted by GM's announcement today, regardless of which side of the border or, in fact, where in the world they are located. Canada's automotive supply sector is a major employer in Canada, accounting for approximately 130,900 jobs and contributing \$9.7 billion to Canada's GDP, and more than 90% of our suppliers in Canada are SMEs. Therefore, decisions like this have a ripple effect throughout our economy.

Our government recognizes the importance of this sector, especially suppliers. That is why, through the strategic innovation fund, a \$2-billion program, the government has provided funding to support innovative projects in the automotive sector, including the automotive suppliers that are adding value and providing innovation within this sector. For example, we provided \$49 million to help Linamar Corporation launch a new innovation centre in my town and my riding of Guelph. It is dedicated entirely to research and development. It is going to create 1,500 new jobs and maintain another 8,000 jobs in Guelph.

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Additionally, through the strategic innovation fund, we also provided \$110 million for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada in Cambridge that will help to retain 8,000 jobs there, create 450 new jobs and provide 1,000 more co-op placements, making Toyota's Canadian plants the largest producer of Toyota hybrid vehicles in North America. These investments are a testament to the strength of Canada's automotive sector and speak to the quality and skill of our highly educated and efficient workforce. On days like this, we need encouragement and we need to see where Canada really stands in this key sector. It really stands with the talent of the people who operate and work within the assembly plants and in the feeder plants going onto the line.

Canada continues to be home to the world-renowned experts working in many of the technical areas that are contributing to automotive innovation, and really redefining the car of the future, including cybersecurity, battery and fuel-cell technology, ICT, sensors, lightweight materials and alternate powertrains. Industry 4.0 is alive in Canada. This makes Canada an ideal place to do automotive R and D, and I know that this strong tradition is going to continue and in fact is going to grow forward from here.

In addition to the strategic innovation fund, our government recently put in place measures to ensure that our automotive and manufacturing industries remain competitive in the global economy. We are committed to enhancing confidence in Canada by supporting Canadian businesses as they grow, expand into new markets, and create additional good, well-paying jobs.

The fall economic statement implemented several measures to ensure that Canada continues to innovate in the face of international developments and increasing competition. These measures will allow businesses to immediately write off the cost of machinery and equipment used for the manufacturing or processing of goods, as well as write off the full cost of specific clean-energy equipment.

● (2020)

The fall economic statement also introduced the accelerated investment incentive, an accelerated capital cost allowance for businesses of all sizes, across all sectors of the economy that are making special capital investments. It will help to encourage investment in Canada, providing a timely boost to investor confidence and ensuring that Canada remains competitive in the global market going forward. There is a path forward. These measures are in addition to previously announced initiatives that will strengthen Canada's economy and ensure that Canada remains a place that can develop the car of the future.

Our world-class talent, and leading institutions and researchers make Canada an ideal place for cutting-edge R & D, not only in the automotive sector but across all disciplines, including agriculture, looking at bioproducts, and what can come from the farm to the factory floor. Our budget in 2018 made a significant \$925-million investment in fundamental research through the granting councils, which is one way our government is committed to R & D and our world-leading researchers and institutions. This investment will ensure that Canada builds upon its incredible reputation for talent and skills, making Canada the place to develop the car of the future. From alternative fuel research in British Columbia to lithium-ion battery research in Nova Scotia, Canada's automotive R & D

stretches from coast to coast to coast. I know that I speak for all Canadians and my constituents when I say the people of Oshawa have the support of those across the country and they will lead us on the path to the future.

Further, our government has committed to strengthening our free trade agreements and opening global markets for business. We are committed to diversifying our economic exports to the Asia-Pacific region and Europe, as well as developing new markets in services, digital products, health technology and e-commerce. We will continue to promote Canada abroad as a world-leading destination for investors and businesses. To do this, we launched Invest in Canada, an organization dedicated to attracting global investment and simplifying the process for businesses to invest in Canada. Paired with our major investments in R & D, our competitive funding support programs and our recent announcements in the fall economic statement, our government has positioned Canada to take advantage of a rapidly changing global landscape, and to be the location of choice to build the car of the future.

While we are devastated by today's announcement, all Canadians, and especially those in Oshawa, should know that our government is considering every option to ensure that those affected by today's decision will be supported.

Canada has a long and proud automotive history. We will continue to ensure that rapidly changing industry continues to call Canada home. The measures being taken by our government that I have outlined will increase our economic prosperity and increase opportunity for well-paying quality jobs, not only in Oshawa but right across our great country.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to questions and comments, I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate, informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, Bill C-89, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of postal services.

* * *

GENERAL MOTORS PLANT CLOSURE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

S.O. 52

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation and the talking points that are embedded within it. The Liberals talk the game. They talk about having done all these things. They talk about the fall economic update, yet this happened after that statement. We have been hearing from companies and manufacturing right across Canada, since June, July, that they cannot survive unless they see changes and some things addressed as far as competitiveness. They have been saying this at the trade committee over and over again. They continued to say it even last week, yet the current government does not understand that. It is not taking this seriously.

I have a manufacturing facility in my riding where 8% of the employees were laid off. There were 80 people laid off just before Christmas. It did not want to do that, but it had to do it. We are hearing this over and over again.

When will the Liberals get serious about what they need to do, like reverse some of the bad decisions they made in the last three years and move forward with some progressive policy that will see our manufacturing be competitive in the global environment?

• (2025)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about progressive policy, the Conservative Party does not come front of mind. However, this is not a political discussion in terms of one party doing something differently or better. We are looking at providing support for Canadians.

When we look at the pathway to the future, the pathway will get past the current decisions. It will get past the fact that an automotive plant has decided, based on volumes, that it can no longer continue to provide yesterday's products. We are working on alternate fuel cells. We are working on vehicle-to-vehicle communications. We are looking at the car of the future, positioning our workers and our researchers to support the ongoing industry 4.0 that we are all heading toward globally.

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Guelph knows that we in Hamilton have gone through similar disturbing chapters in our economic history. Certainly, the member for Hamilton Mountain will remember when there were 25,000 people working at the Steel Company of Canada. There was a layoff of 7,000 in one year alone. Currently, the workforce is well under 1,000. However, we found many assets that were left behind when the industry changed, which allowed Hamilton to reinvigorate to the point now where we have the most diverse economy in Canada and a very good unemployment rate. I spoke earlier about that.

What I would ask my friend from Guelph is: What assets would be left in place that another company or group of companies might take advantage of in the situation in which we are finding ourselves in Oshawa?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, I have worked in the steel mills in Hamilton. I worked in the Oshawa plant as well when we were introducing new technologies for the paint booths. We were putting pneumatic cylinders in the place of electric drives, which are now being replaced by the next version of electric drives. Oshawa has kept up with investments in equipment, so there is the equipment of the physical assets that are there, similar to the steel mills. When

we looked at transitioning the steel mills and going into new servo systems and variable drives, Hamilton had the basis and the bones of a good steel mill that was made better by new technology that was then making it into world-class steel, and now is shipping around the world as well.

We have the physical assets, but most importantly, we have the human assets, the people who have been trained to be world class in their field in the automotive sector, who were hoping to pivot into new jobs, working together with the provincial government and with business.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely agree with the member on one thing. It is important for those families who are going to be impacted to get access to EI. They have paid into that system and will expect those benefits to be there when they need them. I appreciate that end of it.

The finance committee, last November and in the spring of this year, went to Washington and New York. We spoke specifically to politicians and businesses there. The tax reform measures the Americans passed late last year absolutely had drawn the attention of a lot of people, because we saw a lot of opportunity for investment, and people were doing that.

Since then we have had tariffs put on the Canadian economy that continue to make things worse for us. In his speech, the member talked specifically about some of the investment provisions in the fall economic update. Does he not agree that this is far too late? For these kinds of incentives if someone is looking to go out of business they are not looking to invest, so it does not help them. It does not help the people in Alberta, and it will not help the people in Oshawa tonight. Does he not see how his government has allowed for this to go on far too long, where we are seeing some of these decisions are made in advance?

• (2030)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, as the co-chair of the automotive caucus, we spoke this morning with the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association. We talked about the trade agreements we have been able to negotiate. We talked about the vehicle of the future, with zero emission vehicles, and what is needed in terms of technical developments.

We are very encouraged by the CVMA telling us that we are on the right track, that we are working toward global competitiveness. Right now, we have some unreasonable, and we think illegal, tariffs that have to be removed. The steel and aluminum tariffs will be lifted. Right now, we have also provided support for companies like Linamar in Guelph, which are being affected by the steel tariffs, so they can still be competitive on the supply chain. We are supporting throughout the tariffs, and as we negotiate out of the tariffs, we are also supporting financially, and with a vision to the future. The CVMA was very complimentary on what we are doing. We are working very closely with it through this issue and all issues going forward to develop the vehicle of the future.

The Deputy Speaker: That five minute period has finished, and before we go to resuming debate, I have a note for hon. members.

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The Chair takes note of the fact that all three parties supported today's request for an emergency debate. Accordingly, with the nature of this type of debate, we will be abandoning the usual form for choosing members by their party affiliation during the period for questions and comments.

It is also apparent that this is an issue that is relevant to many of the members who are here this evening and the taking of their time, so we want to make sure that all members who want to stand up during questions and comments get the opportunity to do so regardless of their particular affiliation. Certainly members who may not have stood up under that part of the debate will be given preference to make sure that they have an opportunity to do so.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank you and the House for agreeing to host this debate this evening. I think members of all parties will agree that it is an important conversation and that our constituents across the country will be listening. This is one of those rare occasions when a national news event sends reverberations right across the country, even though its crucible is in one particular geographic location. All Canadians stand with the people of Oshawa today.

Tonight, moms and dads will go home in that city and sit their children down at the dinner table and tell them they have terrible news, that the place they go to work every day might not be around for very much longer. After the kids go to bed, moms and dads will come together and talk about what they are going to do, how they are going to pay the mortgage, how they are going to make that minimum contribution to the registered education savings plan so that the kids who are graduating from high school in just five or six years will have a chance to go to university.

This night might be a very long one. Those parents might go to bed, but they might not sleep because those incredible pressures will weigh on them all through the hours of darkness. We want them to know that there will be light at the end of this tunnel and that we have the opportunity to rebuild these opportunities. We have the opportunity to rebuild the economic livelihoods of the people who have received this terrible news.

There is nothing I can say or that any of us can immediately do this evening that is going to change the decision of General Motors to shut down its operations in Oshawa. There is nothing we can say that will provide comfort to those families, but what we can do is learn from the events over the last 24 hours and plan accordingly. What these events teach us is that no matter how good things seem to be going on the surface, trouble may just be around the corner.

I remember back in the early 2000s, both Liberal and Conservative governments faced criticism. People asked, "Why are you so focused on paying off the debt?" Ministers, like Martin and later Flaherty said, "We have our reasons." Both of them paid off large quantities of national debt, to their credit. The member for Milton, with whom I will be splitting my time, will comment further on this point. Those men understood that good times do not always last, and that is why it is always wise to save up money and store it away for a rainy day.

Our ancestors taught us that. We are a nation with agrarian roots, and when our ancestors had sunny days, they filled up the cellar with goods so that when a rough season came, when the rain fell too hard for a crop to be harvested, they would have something to get them through the hard times. That was the same lesson that governments, both Liberal and Conservative, followed during those earlier years.

That wisdom became apparent when the great global recession of 2008 hit. For a brief moment, I think all of us who were around at that time were reminded of those terrible days. We turned on the news and Lehman Brothers and massive investment banks were literally collapsing. Large financial institutions were losing literally tens of billions of dollars a month, and that is individual financial institutions. Of course, large sectors literally came to the brink of falling right off the cliff and being eliminated altogether. The manufacturing heartland in Ontario was threatened, and GM was among those companies that received a bailout just to survive.

● (2035)

Of course, no one is suggesting that we have returned to that crisis-level situation. The worldwide economy has not collapsed. To the contrary, the world economy has done very well over the last couple of years. It peaked in 2017, with roaring growth both around the globe and, in particular, south of the border with our largest trade partner, the United States, which purchases 75% of our exports. Times have been good and it is very easy for us now to forget that it was not so long ago, only one decade, when the entire global economic system had come crashing down.

The fact that the Flahertys, the Chrétiens, the Martins and the Harpers made the decision to pay off tens of billions of dollars of debt gave us enormous structural resiliency going into that crisis. Members of both parties, historically, deserve some credit for those decisions. As a result, Canada was the last country to go into recession and deficit and the first country to come out of both. Consistently, we had among the lowest unemployment rates in the G7. We did not have to bail out our banks. We had no debt crisis at the governmental level. However, now Canadians look on with great concern as their government is doing precisely the opposite of what our wise predecessors did 10, 15 and 20 years ago.

We are reverting to the first Trudeau government's approach of diving deep into debt, structural deficits that exist even when times are good. The government recently released its annual financial report and in it pointed to the factors that delivered massive revenue windfalls in the 2017-18 fiscal year. The government's own admission was that those factors were low interest rates, booming housing markets in Vancouver and Toronto, roaring U.S. and rural economies and high commodity prices. These are all factors out of the government's control. They are also factors that can come and go with the wind. They generated \$20 billion in additional unexpected revenue for the government in the last fiscal year. What did the government do with that revenue? It spent every single penny and then borrowed \$20 billion more.

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The Prime Minister had said that next year we would have a balanced budget. He famously said the budget would balance itself. We learned in the recent fall economic update that not only will the budget not be balanced next year but the deficit will be bigger than it is this year. He plans to put another \$20 billion on the national credit card. Again, this is in the good times. As Canadians look on with great compassion and sympathy to their compatriots in Oshawa, they first think how can they help and, second, what if this happens more broadly across the country and across the economy? Will our foundations as a government and as an economy be solid enough to resist the kinds of storms we have seen in the past? With the debts the government is accumulating, many Canadians are concerned that the answer is no.

Our suggestion, as the official opposition, is that it is not too late to do the right thing, to turn the corner, to moderate government spending, allow the economy and the taxpayer to catch up with the cost of government so that we can gradually return to a balanced budget in the medium term and, hopefully, even begin to pay off debt as the government, as represented by both Liberals and Conservatives, did in the past. That is the responsible thing to do. That is the Canadian way. It is what our ancestors, were they here today, would advise us to do with their great knowledge of history. Not only would our ancestors advise us to do it but our grandchildren would thank us for doing it.

• (2040)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, focusing on us versus focusing on the automotive industry is not the way forward or what we do in this House criticizing each other versus looking at the bigger picture. GM's global restructuring plan is what we are debating tonight. We are looking at what GM has done in Oshawa, Detroit-Hamtramck, the Lordstown assembly plant in Warren, Ohio, Baltimore operations, the Warren transmission operations, the Gunsan plant in Korea and two other plants outside North America that are being closed by the end of 2019. Clearly, we are looking at an industry that is pivoting into a new car. It is pivoting into a new design. What we need to do to support the workers in Oshawa and the new industry that we are creating through our talented workforce is what we should be debating.

Could the member comment on Oshawa and what he thinks about the people of Oshawa tonight?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: I did, and I can comment, Mr. Speaker. I opened my remarks by very extensively talking about the great people of Oshawa, among the most productive and talented auto workers in the world, who, through circumstances completely out of their control, that are not their fault or their doing, are now in this terrible situation.

There is no doubt that the government should immediately dispatch teams from Service Canada to make sure that these people know exactly what services they are entitled to receive in the form of work-sharing potential agreements, in the form of employment insurance and in the form of job training, all of which exist already. We believe those should be made available to those people, and we encourage the government to deliver them.

I think the member would acknowledge, if he had listened to my remarks carefully, that I praised both past Conservative and Liberal governments for deeds well done. I simply ask that the present

government learn some of the lessons those past governments have to teach them.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend from Carleton that this is a nonpartisan debate. The Speaker made reference a few moments ago to the fact that this emergency debate is supported by all three parties. The Green Party also very much supports having this emergency debate tonight. This is an emergency, and as the member for Carleton quite eloquently put it, it is a devastating blow to families where one or more of the partners is employed by GM in Oshawa.

I would like to ask the member if he could turn his mind to the fact that GM announced more than a year ago that it was going to discontinue manufacturing internal combustion engine cars and would be shifting to all-electric and potentially some diesel-powered cars. Was there not something we could have done through a recognition that the world is shifting from internal combustion engines? Could we not have done something to be prepared to talk to GM, to talk to the Ontario government, which is moving in the other direction, and to talk to the federal government, which has not yet put in place the kind of program that could entice any corporation to decide to get rid of the internal combustion engine and manufacture electric vehicles here?

• (2045)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that the member and all the other parties support this debate, and I commend them for that as well.

Could any government have done something to address the fact that GM is shifting to electric and self-driving vehicles? I do not know how any government could decide for a particular corporation what its production line will be.

What we can do, though, is create an environment that is attractive for investment and capital. That should be our goal. Our goal should be to be a low-tax, light regulation, open free-market, free-trading nation, where international investors say that this is the place to build the next great product. That will not happen because of central planning or government edict. Businesses do not want to go where governments are going to try to control their decisions. It will happen in a place where there is a big free-market open economy that allows businesses to get ahead by producing the best product rather than in a government-run economy where businesses get ahead by having the best lobbyists.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity for us to debate such an important issue this evening.

Last night, when I was sitting in my house, I received an alert that there were rumours in Ontario, in the GTA, that there was going to be an announcement in the morning that the Oshawa GM plant was going to be closed, and unallocated vehicles would be their future starting in 2019. I knew in that moment how devastating that was going to be for that community.

S.O. 52

I decided to write a friend of mine. His name is Jerry Dias, and he is the president of Unifor. I told him I was hearing these rumours and asked if there was any truth to the rumour that the Oshawa plant was going to be closing. His comments back were very swift and to the point. He said, "Over my dead body."

I bring that up, because it shows the importance of this plant and what it means to the families there from an economic point of view as well as from a social point of view. I know many of us have said this already, and I will say it again, because it should be repeated consistently. My heart goes out to the families who are so impacted by the decision they heard about today.

I have been there. I grew up in Cape Breton in the 1970s and 1980s. During that time, there were changes in the world economy, and choices were made by different companies. As a result, a decision was taken that the steel plant was no longer going to be part of the Sydney infrastructure, and the coal mine, as a result, was going to be closed down too. At the same time, we had difficulties in the fisheries. We experienced in that short period of time some incredible body blows to the economy of the area. The government stepped in to try to help out with more EI, more programming, possibly a tax-free zone and all of those kinds of things governments try to do to deal with a terrible situation when it happens. The reality is that the impact and the lasting effect on the people who have lived the experience is devastating.

The situation in my part of the world, in Cape Breton, is the reality that the saddest place in the world is the Sydney airport. That is where grandmothers who have never seen their grandchildren come to see their babies for the first time as they come off the plane, because their children have moved away. I do not know of many of my colleagues I went to high school with who are still in Sydney. It is a handful at best. In my family, it is about 50%. Fifty per cent go away to make their living and 50%, the lucky ones, we call them, get to stay home and make whatever living they can. The reality is that when we lose such an important private sector employment opportunity in a smaller community that is so dependent on that source of income, it takes a lot to make sure that it can be, in fact, replaced.

I was struck by the fact today, looking at an economic impact statement about the importance of GM to not only the Oshawa economy but the GTA economy, that of the top 10 employers in Oshawa right now, GM is number one, but it is only one of two private sector employers on the entire list. The second private sector employer is way down at number eight, and in between are universities, hospitals and all the other public sector jobs that are there. However, it really is the private sector jobs that drive the economy and are the lifeblood of a community.

As I pointed out, we lost that in Cape Breton, and as a result, we lost our population, and we have lost generations. In fact, we have never been able to come back. The sad part is that while the government, with its great intentions, whatever the political stripe, tried and was determined to help Cape Bretoners by giving them that cheque to get them through to the next time, the reality is that it did not help us as a people, because we still do not have private sector employers, even 40 years after we suffered the terrible tragedies we did in losing the manufacturing base. I tell this place that story because we cannot put any more emphasis on the importance of

having private sector employment or manufacturing in a place like Ontario than by looking at examples of where it was lost.

● (2050)

I spoke to someone who is in the auto parts business today. I asked, "What is your best advice? What do we do now? Where do we go? What should we be talking about tonight in the House of Commons?"

He said that the most important thing we need to do is make sure that, as Canadians, we retain the footprint we have of auto manufacturing. He reminded me that around the world, every country would like to attract an automotive manufacturing industry, because it is high tech and there are well-paying jobs that are great for communities and for economic development. We truly do compete with the rest of the world.

As a result, we have to look at how to present ourselves to the rest of the world as a place to invest. My colleague, the member for Carleton, has done an excellent job laying out the difficulties associated with Canada's unfortunate reputation as not being competitive in the world. Perhaps this came into a lot of the decision-making made by GM in the past number of years.

I also know that when these larger companies are making decisions, they look at some very important issues. They take a look at the tax policy of the country. They take a look at what the energy costs of the country are, and they take a look at what the regulatory system of a country is at the time to determine whether they are going to be able to make money going forward. That, in reality, is what corporations do.

As much as it hurts to see that share prices may rebound as a result of the decision to cut so many jobs in a community that does not deserve to have the jobs cut, that is the system we have. That is something a government should be always aware of and understanding. It is important to show that the country is competitive and understands the bigger picture in competing on a worldwide basis.

In the economic update the Minister of Finance just presented, there were some good things that many of the auto parts manufacturers, and indeed some of the auto manufacturers, indicated were good, such as accelerated capital costs, something that had been asked for for many years, and a regulatory review, which are all great. However, we are being presented those in 2018, nine months after the United States has implemented so many other incredibly, I guess, business friendly moves to improve their competitiveness.

Where was our government in 2016? I will tell the House. It was in Davos. In 2016, it had a crucial meeting with the head of GM, Mary Barra. It was the government's first opportunity, just two months into the new government, and it sent every minister that had a pulse over to Davos to have conversations about the importance of competitiveness. It gave very flowery prose to the media, and it was reported. The story was that Canada is great, therefore companies should invest in it.

For the record, I just want to read into Hansard some of the reports that came back and some of the quotes. What I believe they show was the naivete of the government in dealing with an issue that I submit could have been foreseen and could have been mitigated instead of having the issue we have today.

[The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development] spoke this morning with Mary Barra, CEO of the General Motors Company, just before she had a closed-door meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

[The minister] said the government made the case for GM to keep its plant open in Oshawa, trying to play up Canada as a high-tech hub and Ontario as an automotive centre.

This was in January 2016. The government was talking about keeping this plant open.

He said the company didn't give the government any specifics about the future of the Oshawa plant....

"These decisions by companies are not made on the spot. What they're looking for is a government that's willing to work with them, to partner with them,"

How did the government partner with them? We ended up with steel tariffs, aluminum tariffs and countervailing tariffs. We ended up with a carbon tax, which made energy incredibly expensive. We saw an incredible unwillingness to react to the Trump competitive issues that were introduced by the government.

The minister said:

We made it very clear that Canada is open for business, that we're a willing partner in that and as they plan production, as they plan their business plan for the next two to three to five years, that we're part of that business plan....

At the very end, to show the complete naivete of the government in dealing with incredibly important issues to Canadians, he said:

Relationships matter. There's so much global competition that when they have a relationship, when they have a level of comfort, it does go a long way.

So much for sunny ways.

● (2055)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a little astonished. I have been sitting in the House since the election of this government and I have never heard the Conservatives talk about GM until tonight.

I just listened to the member for Carleton talk about the fact that everything is great in the country, that everything is booming and therefore we should be implementing things, like the member for B.C. said, such as the tax cuts that Donald Trump put in place that added a trillion dollars to the U.S. debt. A party that pretends to be concerned about the deficit has no problem recommending we add a trillion dollars to the debt through a bunch of reckless tax cuts.

The Conservatives say that there is no strategy for the auto sector in the country, yet that very same meeting at Davos and the \$5.6 billion the government has invested in the auto industry has produced 1,000 high-tech jobs at one of the leading research facilities in the country in Oshawa, operated by GM. Quite clearly, this government is very focused on it. However, if the Conservatives had advice for us three years ago on how to save this plant, what was it and why did they not table it publicly?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, we were not invited to Davos where the Liberals did all their work, so it is kind of difficult to know

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what was happening at the Hy's and champagne cocktail circuit at the time.

However, the member should take a look at the clippings. He would understand from people who know the industry and know this business that those 700 engineering jobs, which the government took as a sign that it was as good as having a definite promise that there was going to be a plant there, are nowhere as good as 7,000 manufacturing jobs on the line. That is the absolute truth.

We will stand here and support a government that will go out there and have a plan to retain these jobs. We are not throwing in the towel. We are not raising the white flag. We are going to stay here and debate this issue because it really matters to the lives of people. Their complete trajectory of what kind of life they could possibly have is going to be fundamentally affected by decisions taken in this place right now.

● (2100)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I share that sense from Unifor leader Jerry Dias of "over my dead body", but in concrete terms, we know GM has made a decision. We know it flagged and signalled that it would be making that decision more than a year ago because it was changing its product line.

We know the federal government is not supposed to dictate what product line a company manufactures. However, I remember the story of the response from FDR in the Second World War when he told the car manufacturers they needed to make tanks, because they were facing a real threat, and they refused to make them. The president of the United States said that by law, they were not allowed to make cars anymore, that they were to make tanks.

In some ways, and not all ways, the climate crisis resembles preparation for war. It involves disruptive technology and it involves change. We want to protect workers through that change.

Would the member for Milton share what the government should do now to save those jobs and can we manufacture electric vehicles instead?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I believe electric vehicles are part of the mix, but here is the piece that people are glossing over. The reason why these vehicles on the line currently in Oshawa are not being sold is because people do not want to buy them. It is pretty simple. What they do want to buy are buy trucks and crossover sport utility vehicles. The reason why they want to do that is because they can get more comfort for the money they spend and the value they put into these vehicles.

If members do not believe me, talk to any of the automotive manufacturers in the GTA that will tell them exactly the same thing. It is not about whether somebody is moving to an electric vehicle. This about the fact that people are actually utilizing vehicles that are bigger and more comfortable because they have become so technologically advanced that they can give the same kinds of results and better fuel mileage than they ever did before.

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The reality is that Oshawa was building vehicles that no one was buying, but Canadians should be competitive enough to say they can build anything. What is the most popular vehicle that will be sold in the North American continent in the next year? We have the ingenuity, we have the competitiveness, we have the tax system and we have the people who can build it. That is the conversation we should be having instead of a conversation about we are really good here, we hope GM can do good things with us and Canada is back.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know, today General Motors announced that it would be shutting down its assembly facility in Oshawa, affecting thousands of women and men in Oshawa and southern Ontario, including in my riding of Northumberland—Peterborough South. As a member of the surrounding region, I was personally deeply disappointed to hear today's announcement by GM. I want to assure my neighbours in Oshawa and the surrounding communities that our government is prepared to take action to assist those affected.

I know the automotive industry is a major contributor to the Canadian economy, employing over 500,000 people in direct and indirect jobs and contributing \$18 billion to our GDP. For decades, the Government of Canada has worked closely with the automotive sector and it is heartbreaking to know that thousands of people will be affected by the decision of GM to stop operations in Oshawa. Our government is committed to ensuring we do everything we can to alleviate the concern that many Canadians, particularly my friends and neighbours in Oshawa, are feeling right now, and we continue to support good middle-class jobs for Canadians.

As a government, we are committed to assisting those who have been directly affected by today's decision and will deliver the benefits that employees are entitled to with the quality of service they deserve. There is a suite of services available which can be deployed quickly to support workers. Those in Oshawa and all Canadians should know that our government is working closely with our provincial and municipal partners to explore every option available for affected employees.

We recognize that this decision not only impacts those employed at GM's Oshawa facility, but also the thousands of people across southern Ontario who work for many of the suppliers to the Oshawa facility. In recognizing that this decision will have impacts on communities across the province, we are continuing to monitor the situation and are examining all options to not just help affected employees but businesses as well.

Employment insurance can provide temporary income support to Canadians when they have lost their job through no fault of their own while they look for work or indeed upgrade their skills. Additionally, Service Canada has an online job bank that lists available positions, labour market information, career exploration and resumé building. These programs work hand in hand with available labour market information that will help affected workers find information about occupations as well as labour market trends and outlooks. While these are established programs, they will be available to those currently affected in Oshawa and we will be examining all other options to ensure that all affected workers will be supported.

I would like to mention at this time, Mr. Speaker, that I will be splitting my time with the wonderful member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

In addition to what our government is providing, the Ontario government has various programs and service offerings available to workers and employees who have been directly affected by the closing of GM Oshawa. The provincial second career program supports unemployed laid-off individuals with skills training to help them find employment in occupations that are in demand. The sector partnerships planning grant supports the development of partnerships and strategies that will identify workforce needs among industry employers and develop employment and training solutions that meet the needs of employers, job seekers and workers.

Our government provides programs to support not only the employees but the businesses as well. Since we formed government, total investments in the automotive sector have exceeded \$5.6 billion, showing the strength of Canada's automotive environment and the strength of our world-leading talent. Our government has been a steadfast partner of the automotive industry and our strategic innovation fund has been an excellent example of that mutual relationship, providing support to large, small and medium-sized businesses across Canada to be more innovative and competitive.

● (2105)

The strategic innovation fund is just one part of our larger innovation and skills plan announced in budget 2017, which is positioning Canada as a leader in the global economy, with commitments to support digital innovation and invest in clean technology. Our government is taking concrete action to ensure that Canada is the location of choice to build the cars of the future by making investments in foundational research, such as our budget 2018 announcement of \$925 million through Canada's granting councils. This money will support cutting-edge research across Canada.

Our government will continue to invest in autonomous and zero emission research and development at our leading facilities, universities, colleges and research labs.

While we are deeply disappointed in today's decision of GM, we want Canadians to know that every option is on the table to help those affected. We will continue to work closely with the province and municipality to monitor the situation and provide support as necessary.

Canada has a long and proud history of automotive manufacturing and the steps our government is taking will ensure that we are the location of choice to build the car of the future. Our government will continue to strengthen Canada's economy in order to remain competitive in the global market. We will do everything we can to support those affected by today's decision.

On a personal note, for over 40 years, I have lived 30 minutes from GM in Oshawa. My first job when we moved to the area was with a company that was part of its supply chain. Everyone knew someone or many someones who worked at General Motors.

General Motors is and has been an integral part of the fabric of the community of Oshawa and surrounding area. I know this is a day that we are all very truly sad has come.

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ROYAL ASSENT

• (2110)

[Translation]

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

November 26, 2018

The Honourable
The Speaker of the House of Commons
Ottawa

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that Ms. Assunta Di Lorenzo, Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor, in her capacity as Deputy of the Governor General, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 26th day of November, 2018, at 8:33 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Christine MacIntyre
Executive Director, Events, Household and Visitor Services

The bills assented to were Bill C-62, an act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other acts, and Bill C-89, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of postal services.

has been innovation and new technologies that we and the former provincial government have been able to support to in fact increase jobs.

However, he is absolutely right. I have members in my riding who are worried. I just received a couple of notes from friends who have children working at that plant, and they are worried about their futures.

One of the things I talked about in my speech was the opportunity for skills training and retraining. There are a lot of very talented skilled trades workers and employees at that General Motors plant in Oshawa, and certainly, as a government, we will be doing everything we can to make sure they have all the skills they need to transition into other jobs that will be available.

• (2115)

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[English]

GENERAL MOTORS PLANT CLOSURE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South speaking in this debate. However, she should know from her riding its history, particularly with Collins & Aikman, which was one of the parts suppliers that in the global recession of 2007-08-09 went down and jobs were lost.

The good thing is that in that period, GM and Chrysler were retained and those assembly facilities, the GM Oshawa, remains a very competitive and productive facility. However, if we look at the reasons why Oshawa was chosen as a site for no vehicles, we have tariff issues on steel and aluminum, rising costs that relate to the retaliatory tariffs that Canada is imposing and a whole range of issues that we could address on a bipartisan basis.

She is my neighbouring member, and I know she has residents impacted and worried about this. Will she raise with her caucus the importance of listening to the manufacturing and parts sector on the impact of Canada's tariffs? They are not having the retaliatory impact on the U.S. we thought or hoped they would. If they are hurting jobs and our competitiveness at home, will she undertake to push her government and her minister to remove some of these uncompetitive tariffs?

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, the member's information is a little out of date. What was Davidson Rubber, a supply company to GM, became Collins & Aikman, but it did not close. In fact, it just received money in the last couple of years from the provincial government and some from the federal government, and are looking at hiring 100 more people. Its contracts are actually with Chrysler, so while we certainly have had a downturn in the supply chain, there

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was also listening to the Conservative intervention and trying to tie the tariffs the Americans are putting on Canada and the retaliatory tariffs Canada is putting on the States, when really, one out of the eight plants is a Canadian plant. Four are American plants. One is in Korea. Two other are global plants. We are looking at a global restructuring by General Motors that we are responding to. We need to keep up with the market, to get to where the puck is going and to be in the new vehicles, the new fuels and the new communications technologies.

We have a riding that is very close to nuclear facilities. We have the best welders in the world working there. We have people who are involved with the electronic supply chain. Could the member just mention how, with these transferable skills that people have, though they may not be feeling like they have them today because of the terrible news we received, they can transition into new jobs, and that if they do not have them, we can help them transition into these new jobs through our work integrated learning programs and other programs to help them re-skill and retool for the jobs of the future?

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, the supply chain is alive and well, certainly in the member's riding. I know, because I have visited.

He mentioned the hockey analogy of our going to where the puck is, which is very appropriate. It is what the work integrated learning and the opportunities for skills acquisition are all about. It was clear as I read the release from General Motors, in which it talks about the other plants in the U.S. and other countries, that this is about global restructuring. Unfortunately, it happens more than we would like to see it happen, but the reality is that out this will come opportunities, and we will be there every step of the way to help those employees and businesses realize those opportunities.

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Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously it is a little melancholy to rise to speak about something that will impact a lot of families in a specific region of Canada, Oshawa, families who want to have better futures for their children, want to see a better day when they wake up and whose careers have been altered by today's announcement.

It goes without saying, and we have all commented tonight about how deeply saddened and concerned we are about General Motors' overnight announcement and this morning's confirmation that it would be shutting down a number of facilities in North America and one in Korea. The automotive parts sector and manufacturing industry is close to my heart.

In my riding last week, I spent a considerable amount of time with the CEO and president of Martinrea, Rob Wildeboer. We toured the oil field facility in my riding, which employs about 550 people in good, middle-class jobs. In talking to some of the folks who work there, I could just imagine, and in some ways just try to empathize with, what the folks in Oshawa are going through in finding out that their jobs will most likely not be there in a few months. It is devastating, and we always need to think about that.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, our government has been a big supporter of the automotive industry. Last year, he came to my riding and visited an auto parts facility owned by The Woodbridge Group. We spent some time there talking to some of the employees. We could see the diversity that Canada is about, and how the people there go to work with pride, much like the pride demonstrated day in, day out for the last 100 years by the folks who work at the Oshawa facility.

In the time I covered the auto sector, both at a credit rating agency and later at a bond desk, year in, year out the Oshawa facility was rated as one of the most efficient facilities and as producing one of the highest quality products. J.D. Power gives annual rankings, and the Oshawa facility would always come out on top. Unfortunately, we know some of those products were recently taken out of Oshawa, which is what we call "product cadence", and production volumes over the years have declined. It was something I was very cognizant of.

However, my conversation last week with the CEO of Martinrea affirmed to me that there is a future for the automotive industry in Canada, and that our government is providing the right policies and regulatory environment and support. Rob praised our negotiating team for the recent USMCA. He worked very closely with our team, and he praised the minister of global affairs for the job the team had done. That was something I took back and was very proud of. I spent several hours with him and his team at Alfield, which supplies the General Motors facility in Ingersoll, Ontario. Actually, my wife and I drive a Chevrolet Equinox, and that is where that vehicle was made. I am proud to drive that very good quality vehicle.

As I said, our government has been unwavering in its support for the automotive industry since 2015. A number of my colleagues have commented on that today, and I would like to re-emphasize that our government has invested \$389 million, leveraging \$4.1 billion in investments, in the sector, leading to a total investment of \$5.6 billion. Our strategy continues to do that.

What we must understand is that the automotive sector, much like a lot of industries these days, is transforming itself. We need to make sure we are focused on the importance of a policy of moving up the value-added production chain, whether it is electric or autonomous vehicles. Our government is there with investments in skills training. The GM facility in Markham is hiring literally hundreds of engineers.

Earlier today, I also had an opportunity speak on another matter, Bill C-86. I mentioned that Canadians are bold and tough people, who expect the same thing their government. They expect us to be bold, tough and decisive. One thing I know I have learned since I have been here is that our government will have the backs of these employees, that they can rest assured of that. We will have the backs of the automotive industry.

In the time I spent covering the auto sector, I had the opportunity to travel to BMW in Munich and to Würzburg, as well as to Volkswagen, and over to Asia and, obviously, to Detroit. They were the big three at the time, which has since changed because it used to be DaimlerChrysler, which is now FCA, and Ford and General Motors.

● (2120)

The industry has changed a lot. The 2008-09 crisis taught us that we need to work together. The provincial government worked alongside the federal government, two different parties, to save those jobs, to save the supply chain, which was the right decision.

If we fast forward to today, our government continues to ensure that key investments are made and that the regulatory environment is favourable for manufacturing here in Ontario and across Canada from coast to coast to coast.

Our government's strategy leverage is to have a broad array of policies intended to support innovation, enhance manufacturing competitiveness and secure investment through a comprehensive approach, including support for auto innovation programs such as the industrial research assistance program, tax incentives through the scientific research and experimental development tax credit and the ACCA allowance for manufacturing.

I would like to speak to that because we did introduce our 2018 fall economic statement last week. I am a pro-business MP from a riding that is very entrepreneurial, with a number of head offices located in it. Magna is located not too far away. Martinrea is about a kilometre from my constituency office. Some of the largest entrepreneurs in the county live and work and employ tens of thousands of Canadians not only in my riding, but also tens of thousands of Canadians across North America.

It was great to see our government put in an accelerated capital cost allowance, the annual incentive for investment.

One thing that we have committed to is skills training and making sure that every Canadian has a career and finds his or her fullest potential. We will do that with these employees in Oshawa. We will ensure that they have a brighter future for their families.

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Transition is tough. I grew up in what was basically a one or two industry town in northern British Columbia. My father worked in a pulp mill. Just before he retired the pulp mill closed down, the company went bankrupt, and the pulp mill is no more. It was Redpath Industries.

I can empathize on a personal level with what some of the families are going through this evening and will go through in the following months. It is tough to go through transition, because there are a lot of questions that have to be answered and bills to be paid.

Our government will be there. We have a great Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and a Prime Minister who knows the sector. He recently visited FCA's facilities in Windsor. As I said, he came to my humble riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and visited the wonderful people who work at the Woodbridge Group there, a plant that has been there since just before the Great Depression. The plant's history is phenomenal.

I have believed in the sector for a long time. I have covered it and met with many industry leaders, from CEOs down to treasurers. I can still remember the conversations about how great the industry was to operate in Canada, our highly skilled labour force, the quality of our supply chains, the tool and dye makers all over southwestern Ontario into central Toronto. We need to remember that.

We can look at other industries worldwide that have gone through similar transformations, whether the steel industry in Pittsburgh or industries in Cleveland, where tens of thousands of people were once employed. We have had to change and transform. This sector is to a certain extent like that.

We need to be at the forefront, and our government is at the forefront by investing in skills training, making investments and partnering in autonomous vehicles. We have had some success with Honda, Toyota, Ford, and other OEMs and General Motors, especially in Ingersoll and its other facility. We will continue to do that.

With respect to Oshawa, we will make sure that we have the employees back. We will make sure that we can do something. We will look at all options. These folks are skilled and talented. They have a future. We are doing the right things to ensure that manufacturing in Canada, especially highly value-added manufacturing, remains robust. That is what we are seeing.

I hear it everyday when I speak to stakeholders in my riding, whether it is Vision, Vision Products or Martinrea and Kisko. I could name about 20 or 30 of them that operate in my riding and that are doing very well and are proud to be Canadian and to continue to invest in Canada.

• (2125)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge talked about Martinrea and a number of the world-class parts manufacturers in southern Ontario. The challenge with what we see today and why we are here in an emergency debate trying to forge solutions is the Prime Minister's initial response. Understandably, he was sympathetic for the families. We are sympathetic, too, but with the closure over a year away, is there not time to address some of the underlying uncompetitive elements of our economy, be they payroll taxes,

tariffs on steel and aluminum, some of the retaliatory tariffs? We see the retaliatory tariffs in particular impacting the supply chain and seeing cost pressures creep in. One large assembly customer is now going to be out of the network in the Great Lakes auto basin.

Can the member, who has lots of parts suppliers in his riding, not tell the House that the pressures from Canada's own retaliatory tariffs are causing undue price increases and making some of our world-class suppliers, like Martinrea and Magna, pay more and be less competitive? Can he push to come up with a plan to start addressing these fundamental issues?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, when we became government, we had an auto innovation fund which we transformed so we could make direct investments to auto parts suppliers and the OEMs, and we have done that. The hon. member for Durham should know that. We have created literally tens of thousands of jobs, direct and indirect, with that plan. Second, just recently we introduced the accelerated capital cost allowance, which allows for the immediate expensing of investments. On the accelerated investment income, we have tripled the rate to invest and get returns, which will be another great thing for manufacturers.

The one salient point the hon. member for Durham misses is that these assembly plants are based on a product cadence, which is determined by each of the individual automotive manufacturers. It is up to each of the individual private companies to determine that. General Motors has made a strategic decision to determine that. If anything changes between now and next year, that will be wonderful, but we need to be realistic. I do not believe in the pie in the sky and I do not believe in being Pollyannaish. We need to deal with the situation at hand, support the workers, support their families and move forward. If there is a solution, great, but let us make sure these workers know a brighter future awaits them and that their government has their backs.

• (2130)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Milton just proclaimed Unifor president Jerry Dias to be a very close friend. I will read a quote while she was minister of transport, which states:

"I have called the minister every day since last Thursday, and she won't even pick up the phone," said Jerry Dias, national president of Unifor. "We're prepared to work around the clock to find a sustainable solution, but [the] Minister...would rather pick a fight than find a solution."

The member for Durham just said that it is the tariffs that are causing the problem, but today on Reuters News Agency, explaining the move to close plants in the United States, the head of GM said that the tariffs in the United States have cost GM \$1 billion. Those are the American tariffs costing GM \$1 billion and it is one of the things that has prompted this set of decisions that GM made.

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Could the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge please expand upon why the tariffs are not just an impact in Canada but also a huge impact in the United States and that those tariffs have to be removed, of course, but that they are not the only decision that is driving all of the information we have heard today from GM?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, we have a very integrated supply chain. When a vehicle is made in Canada, it will cross the border between Canada and the United States several times before it is finished. The tariffs are impacting both sides of the border. Just as much as they are impacting us, the tariffs are, unfortunately, impacting many American businesses. The decision that was made by General Motors had nothing to do with the tariffs that were put in place at all. We know that. In this morning's conference call with the GM CEO, we know that sides have to produce an explanation. The retaliatory tariffs or the initial tariffs had nothing to do with any of these types of decisions. A company bases its decision on a long-term plan of product cadence and product portfolio and this would not enter into that calculation at all.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, who is a great member of Parliament.

Like many today, and the thousands of General Motors employees and pensioners, I too stand here stunned at the news of the General Motors closure in Oshawa.

As we all know, General Motors confirmed today that as part of its global restructuring plan, the Oshawa assembly plant will cease operations at the end of 2019, thus ending a long and proud tradition in Oshawa, which has been a reliable home to General Motors for decades. There are over 2,500 Canadian workers and their families who will now have a very different Christmas than the one they envisioned just a few days ago.

There is more at stake, though, than just the 2,500 jobs at the plant. The closure of this assembly plant will wipe out \$1 billion in GDP and will ripple throughout the supply chain, putting tens of thousands of jobs at risk. We are talking about truck drivers, restaurant workers, employees who work in auto parts manufacturing, retail employees and the list goes on.

Let us also not forget about those who worked for decades at GM, the over 37,000 pensioners who built the most productive and versatile assembly plant in the world. They have been calling my office in Lindsay today, and rightly so, concerned about what this might mean for their retirement.

In 2009, the automotive industry faced one crisis in particular. General Motors was facing bankruptcy. Canadian taxpayers stepped up and ensured that the automotive industry would remain healthy and would continue in southern Ontario.

GM employees stepped up, and they did what they needed to do to ensure that taxpayer dollars were not wasted. GM employees in Oshawa worked hard and stepped up their game. They put their best efforts forward, and as a result, they earned the best productivity ratings of any GM plant in the world.

What about that taxpayer loan of 2009? CBC is reporting today that the Minister of Finance quietly wrote off a loan last March, leading to speculation that it could be in the automotive industry.

For years we have been warning this government that investment is fleeing this country to more business-friendly jurisdictions. This has become more pronounced in the last year in the energy sector. We have watched in disbelief as Alberta oil and gas has been decimated by the Liberal government. The Prime Minister has created a toxic environment for resource investment in this country, raising taxes and creating new regulations at the precise time that other countries are lowering theirs. This has driven billions of dollars of oil and gas investment and thousands of jobs out of this country. We are faced with trade uncertainty and sector-crippling steel and aluminum tariffs.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the Liberal carbon tax will take \$10 billion out of the Canadian economy by 2022, while other estimates argue the cost could be as much as \$35 billion a year.

Let us not forget that this year's deficit is more than three times what the Prime Minister said it would be, and the Prime Minister has added \$60 billion in new debt. Next year, the deficit will be even higher. The Liberals have no plan to return to balance, and as we all know, more debt today means higher taxes tomorrow and even service cuts.

As a result of the Prime Minister's reckless borrowing, last year the Liberals spent \$23 billion servicing the national debt alone. By 2023, the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that amount will rise to \$37 billion, which is a 60% increase. At that point, the Liberals will be spending more on debt interest than we currently pay in health transfers.

Just last week the Prime Minister presented a fall economic update to Canadians that painted a rosy picture of Canada's economy. Despite mounting debt and deficits, rising inflation and interest rates, billions in lost investment in the energy and resource sectors and a continuing crisis in the resource sector with no plan to get us out of it, the Prime Minister insisted that all was well. We know how that turned out. Only days later, we learned of this closure.

I have been critical up to this point, but members must understand that I am quite frustrated. I represent part of north Durham. As we all know, the city of Oshawa is in the Durham region, so in my riding, there are a lot of people who work at the GM plant and a lot more pensioners.

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● (2135)

Not only that, I think we all witnessed that with General Electric in Peterborough. Many of those workers lived in my riding of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock. They lost their jobs when the Liberal government failed energy east. It had a contract to build motors for that pipeline. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. That plant closed after that announcement was made. Now we are seeing the same thing again. However, I must remind myself that we are here to find solutions. We owe it to General Motors workers and their families to not give up on day one.

For decades, GM workers have contributed to the economy of southern Ontario and have contributed directly to their community as coaches, volunteer firefighters, neighbourhood volunteers and the list goes on. As I mentioned, we see this in my communities in the townships of Brock and Cavan Monaghan, and in Kawartha Lakes. Now more than ever we need to focus on how we can get those affected back on their feet.

As I mentioned, we are not ready to throw in the towel yet, because we know that if we do not fight for the jobs today, they probably will not be back tomorrow. Therefore, we need to push for increasing investment attractiveness here in Canada to create business-friendly environments for future generations. I and many of my constituents know there is much more the government can do to improve the business climate here in Canada. I keep repeating that I am not willing to give up the fight just yet.

General Motors mentioned in its press release that there is a possibility the plant could be retooled. I want to be optimistic and I see this as an opportunity to get our foot in the door before it is closed for good. As such, I would encourage the government to look at all available options in its tool box to save these jobs.

In the General Motors announcements of the plant closures, the company talked about transforming its business to focus more on electric and autonomous vehicles over the next two years. I think we would all agree that is good news. Canadians are number one in the world in green technology. If GM said it will refocus and redirect resources to autonomous and zero-emission vehicles, I say perfect. Let us build them here, though.

Perhaps there is a partnership the government can facilitate between GM and our green technology entrepreneurs. We have built centres of excellence for other sectors before. There are places of convergence, places to explore, discuss and create ideas. With the right investments, we can create a green vehicle technology hub and work with GM and other interested automotive companies to reach their business goals, protect the environment and create jobs and wealth for Canadians. That is just one idea. Of course, there are many more, and we have heard them all this evening in this emergency debate. I encourage the government to take some of these suggestions back with it, explore these ideas, and not give up on Oshawa.

As we all know, GM workers have shown resiliency before and they will do so again. As parliamentarians, we need to stand side by side with them and ensure that we have done everything possible before throwing in the towel. I think we all believe there is a future for automotive manufacturing here in Canada. That is why the

Conservatives have asked for this emergency debate this evening, to discuss what immediate action the Liberal government will take in response to the significant number of job losses due to this Oshawa plant closure.

Conservatives and Canadians stood up for GM workers in 2009 and we will continue to stand up for them now.

● (2140)

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his speech the member said that in 2009 the previous government bailed out General Motors. He said that we should not throw in the towel and that we should explore every option available. Those are sentiments I and all members on this side of the House agree with.

I would like him to give me specific examples of what he thinks can be done, particularly in light of the fact that his own leader, Doug Ford, said that it is done and it is over.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way is the chair of the natural resources committee, and I enjoy working with him each and every day. I appreciate his comments.

As I have said many times before, I do not think the Ontario government is throwing in the towel at all. In my speech, I outlined a number of areas and initiatives the government could use to help the situation, such as facilitate conversations between interested parties to ensure that if General Motors wants to build the green technology car of the future, it does it in Oshawa. We have the infrastructure. We have the skilled labour. Everything is set up. We have the options to do that.

The government could also ensure that Canada is a business-friendly environment. That is something we have not seen in the energy industry. We only have to look at Alberta right now and the price of oil to see how that province is suffering because of the policies of the Liberal government.

I outlined a number of options. The member opposite is the chair of the committee and we have been discussing way more options than this. I invite him to continue this debate at any time.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I sat in the House all evening. I just heard the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore speak. I think it was an attempt at a cheap joke. However, this is not a laughing matter to those 2,800 families, plus the thousands more who are going to be affected by this. I do not appreciate that and I am sure those families in Oshawa do not either.

I want to ask my hon. colleague about the issue of competitiveness because that is one of the underlying issues in effect here. The tax regime and environmental regime imposed by the government are having a significant impact, as we have found out, not only in the automotive sector. The tariffs are also having an impact as well.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague could speak to competitiveness in general.

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Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, every time a government puts in place a tax, a rule, a regulation or a policy, and implements those costs in business, business will adjust some way, somehow, somewhere. I think that is very important to understand in this context of how we make Canada a competitive market.

Given that we just experienced a massive investment fleeing Canada in the oil and gas industry and we are seeing this announcement here by General Motors in Oshawa, something clearly went wrong. I was just reading that the finishing of the Chevrolet Silverado and the GMC Sierra is done at the Oshawa assembly plant. Those are some of the hottest selling vehicles in the market.

Therefore, the question is why? How did this happen? If we have the infrastructure, we have the best workforce who are the most productive, and we have the hottest selling vehicles in the market being finished at that plant, what happened? I could probably guess rules, regulations and red tape. We have some of the highest energy costs in North America right here in the province of Ontario.

I think as this comes out and as we move forward, we need to figure out why this happened and then work at ways of fixing that, allowing the manufacturing sector in Ontario to continue to survive and also, hopefully, find a way for this plant in Oshawa to be retrofitted to produce what GM is calling the green vehicle of the future.

• (2145)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could give everybody great hope. I am from the city of St. Thomas where, back on January 23, 2006, the day of the federal election, Ford Motor Company announced that it would be reducing down to one shift. On October 14, 2008, our next federal election, the Sterling truck plant announced that very day that it was closing. Therefore, I come from a city and region that has felt this economic impact so greatly, and that is what I want to focus on. We do need hope here, but we also have to have some reality checks. Tonight is going to be a difficult debate. I have seen so many families who have gone through this.

As I have always mention in this House, I was the proud assistant of Joe Preston, the member of Parliament from 2004 to 2015, and that gave me the opportunity to work with so many individuals who had worked at the Ford Motor Company and the Sterling truck plant. These were very difficult times. People were coming in and saying they had lost their jobs. They usually blamed it on the government, which I understand because, at the end of the day, there is some part that the government has to play. That is why, when we have talked about competitiveness and about tariffs, all of those pieces are part of the puzzle and we cannot forget that.

Back in 2006 when it was announced, it was a very difficult day.

In 1967, the Ford Motor Company came to the city of St. Thomas and people leaving high school were able to get fantastic-paying jobs. Students were able to pay for their college and university, just based on their summer jobs there. People were able to work Fridays and Saturdays for 12-hour shifts and, once again, pay for their university and college. There were so many opportunities, and all of those opportunities disappeared when the Ford Motor Company disappeared.

It was the same thing with the Sterling truck plant. In 2008, it announced that it was leaving. As I said, it was the federal election day. It seemed to always happen to Joe and me as we were working on these federal elections. We just did not know what was going to happen. In 2011 and 2015, when we escaped with no terrible announcements, we were very pleased.

We have to recognize it is not just the 2,800 jobs, but it is also all of those secondary and tertiary jobs that really matter. It is much greater than the 2,500 unionized staff and the 300 non-unionized staff. That is why I want to speak about the challenges we saw in St. Thomas as well.

The day that the Ford plant closed in St. Thomas, it was noted in the Financial Post, "Making matters worse is that a number of Ford's suppliers in the area, including Lear Seating, have also announced they will be closing their own doors as a result of the plant's demise."

We still have about one in four jobs in St. Thomas that are tied to manufacturing, and many of those are still in the automotive parts. In that year, we lost Lear and Schulman. Schulman did not deal with the fabrications per se, but with the plastics that had to do with the steering wheels. We lost people who worked in the cafeteria, who prepared over 4,000 meals a day. Those were great jobs and people knew they could go to work and get paid, but we lost them. One other huge part of our industry that was really impacted was Auto Holloway. I remember going to school with many kids whose parents worked at Auto Holloway. It had great-paying jobs. My brother worked for the company, and when the Ford Motor Company left, that job was gone as well.

We are not just talking about the cars once they are manufactured and shipped off; we are talking about the tires, the engines and all of the different parts of the cars that are brought in by CN Rail or CP or by the 400 road series. All of these jobs are lost as well. Therefore, today as we are talking about Oshawa and about the 2,800 jobs, we have to recognize all of the spinoff effects and impacts and ripple effects that this is going to have on that community.

It is important for the government to step up. I am hoping that during this emergency debate the Liberals will step up and work with the opposition parties that asked for this emergency debate. We need to make sure it is not just about employment insurance, but that it is about what we can do next. Employment insurance is a band-aid solution. Although Service Canada will set up in special areas where people will work with the workers, that has to be seen as a short-term fix. Employment insurance is only meant to get people through the rough spots.

• (2150)

This is where I really encourage the government to get a plan for how we can keep this company here in Oshawa and keep people working today, or how, in the future, the government can make sure that these jobs come back.

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St. Thomas is in the county of Elgin. We are lumped in with the city of London when it comes to our unemployment rates. During the global economic downturn, we were able to separate that information. In the county of Elgin, in the city of St. Thomas, we were at about a 15% unemployment rate. We had growing poverty, growing job losses, and people were losing their homes.

I had the opportunity to work with many of these people. There were a lot of crying parents. That year our office bought Christmas presents for families we had met. This is what the people of Oshawa are going to go through, not this Christmas but perhaps next Christmas. It is really important that the government is listening, and asking, "How can we do things better?"

One of the things I have always heard is, "Our job as government is to set the field. It is to create the field and create all the opportunities for competitiveness." This is really important. Our Conservative caucus is saying today that competitiveness has left the building.

It is really important that we recognize that tariffs are having an impact on many of our companies. We can talk about the CPP, about all of the new costs to business. We are seeing this across the country. I truly hope that the government recognizes that until it changes the manner in which it is doing business, this may be the first but it may not be the last. We have to be on top of that.

We also need to talk about labour and talent. We recognize that there are great workers who have worked there. We have talked about some of the products that have been taken off the line. I am sure many of the people in this room tonight and many of the viewers watching at 9:55 p.m. on a Monday evening can remember the Crown Victoria. It is the cop car that we see across Canada. For many years, people in St. Thomas could sit there and say, "That's my car. That's my car. That's my car." Every time I see a Crown Vic, I know it came off the line in St. Thomas, Ontario.

I have the feeling that the people who work in Oshawa are feeling the exact same way. Many individuals take great pride in the work that they bring forward. Today, as our member for Carleton mentioned, we have to remember the children and the families that are being impacted.

I am going to go back to another conversation I had. Many years ago, we did a lot of round tables. We always dealt with manufacturing. As I indicated, one in four jobs in the city of St. Thomas are with manufacturing. One of the biggest things that one of our companies said was that if they could move today, they would, but they could not, they were here, and they had everything set up.

One of the biggest issues for him was the cost of hydro. That is something the Province of Ontario is really working on, and I am really proud of the work that they have done following this last administration's failures.

We also have to understand employment costs. These are really big factors as well. It is really important. I understand that this is a balance between labour rights and family, but we also have to look at the work in the companies to make sure that they are productive. We have to find that balance.

I do not know if the government is consulting enough to make sure that we are actually on the right path all the time. Those are some great concerns of mine.

My final message is that we do have to stay positive. This is a very difficult situation that many of our workers are going through. They are going to be left without jobs. They are going to be left with mortgage payments and bill payments that do not cease just because they have lost their jobs. If they are like the government, they will have credit card bills to pay as well.

There are many things that we need to think about. We need to come up with a plan. I am not saying I am the right person for the plan, but there are 338 members of Parliament who should care enough about Canada and care enough about our economy that, together, we can come up with a non-partisan plan that will keep these people working in Oshawa, and that will keep this country the great country it is.

• (2155)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember the plants closing in St. Thomas. I remember the Sterling plant. We were a supplier to that plant, as well. Some jobs had come up to us from the United States, and then they got removed. I also remember, just down the road, the Navistar plant and the labour disruption there in 2009, 2011. They closed the doors there.

We have not talked much about the role of labour. I am thinking that our consultations with labour are critical in these types of situations. I wonder whether the member could comment on how important it would be for all of us to work with labour to find solutions for the people who work under their watch?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the member is saying about the labour, but we need to look at this as the entire pie. In order for our businesses to be successful, it has to be the labour, it has to be the business owners, it has to be the consultants and it has to be consumers.

Business is about everybody. A business is about the entire piece of the pie. When we make something, we need a consumer. We need all of that together. The labour is a very important part of this, but I have to always recognize that we have to ensure we focus our needs on everything, and that includes everybody from the beginning of the supply chain to the end of the supply chain.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, we have a real difficulty debating this issue tonight because we have a very close lens right on top of the people of Oshawa desperately worried about their jobs, their livelihood, what happens to Oshawa and GM workers. However, if we went to 40,000 feet, we would see a disruptive technology called electric vehicles. We would see the world moving off fossil fuels.

We would ask ourselves if, in 2018, we were replicating, what never did happen, by the way, when people were saying we must protect the horse and buggy and that we must not let cars into market. People even earlier than that were saying that we had to keep whale oil going, that we had all those whalers and we must not let kerosene into the market. Every now and then, and quite often, a disruptive technology comes along for many reasons.

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The electric vehicles are disrupting. GM warned us more than a year ago that it would be moving off the internal combustion engine. Therefore, the question now is not necessarily those jobs, but ensuring we have just transition for workers, whether in the oil patch or in making internal combustion engines, saying that there will be better jobs for them, but not necessarily in whaling and not necessarily in horse and buggies.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, the consumer is the one who is going to choose. I know that I should not eat chocolate bars, but I eat chocolate bars. I will always be a chocolate fiend.

My husband worked in the auto sector for a number of years. Not only did he work at the Sterling plant where his job was lost, but he also worked for Elgin Chrysler in the city of St. Thomas. It is interesting, because 10 years ago we would have seen a lot of sedans and small family vehicles. Now that entire lot is filled with RAM Dodge trucks, Jeep Cherokees. I have a Jeep Compass. It is looking at new technologies, but we have to recognize that the consumers are going to buy what they want, and the biggest selling vehicle is the Dodge RAM.

We can try to push things upon people, but at the end of the day, consumers are going to be the ones who choose. We always have to remember that as well.

• (2200)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague for Brampton North.

As many have said, the decision by GM today is a deeply disappointing one. While we understand this is part of its global restructuring plan and affects its operations globally, I cannot start to understand how devastating this must be for the men and women whose jobs are affected, along with their families and community.

Although I represent a riding from Quebec and have lived the last 30 years of my life there, some people will remember that I grew up in Niagara, and General Motors in St. Catharines was a very important part of our ecosystem. I had a cousin who worked there and family members. We knew what was happening with GM and the ecosystem. We understood its impact whenever there was a downturn in the market or an adverse decision was being made.

I understand full well that today's news will have a significant impact on the community of Oshawa surrounding that plant, the network of suppliers that support the Oshawa plant, as well as the other U.S. plants impacted by the General Motors announcement. General Motors has a long and storied presence in Oshawa, going back over 100 years, and it is simply devastating to hear of this plant's closure.

While GM has made this decision in the context of its overall global restructuring plans, a plan that is closing multiple North American plants as well as three global facilities, it is important to highlight that this is not a reflection of the workforce in Canada. Canada's auto workers, and particularly those in Oshawa, have a global reputation as highly skilled and award winning workers.

[Translation]

We will continue to work closely with our provincial counterparts to help those affected by this closure. We are committed to supporting the workers and the community of Oshawa during this difficult time.

[English]

We are also committed to providing assistance to those affected directly by this closure. The government will deliver benefits to employees as they are entitled, with a quality of service that they deserve.

[Translation]

A range of support services and programs is currently available and can be deployed quickly to help workers who may be affected. These services include employment insurance benefits, counselling, job search assistance, and skills training and development provided by the provinces and territories under labour market transfer agreements.

As a government, we will continue to monitor the situation and the impact on workers closely to ensure that those affected receive the assistance they need to quickly find new jobs.

[English]

Our government understands that the automotive industry is a vital component of our economy. Over half a million jobs in Canada directly and indirectly depend on the auto sector. Our government understands the importance of this sector and we remain committed to keeping Canada's automotive manufacturing sector globally competitive and innovative.

[Translation]

Our government's support for innovation in the auto sector is an essential component of our plan to stimulate economic growth and create better opportunities for Canadians.

To that end, we are building on several key policy initiatives to strengthen Canada's auto sector by supporting innovation and technology development and by creating the ecosystem that will help Canada become a leader in designing and building the car of tomorrow.

[English]

We have a plan that builds on and leverages the expertise in the industry and the expertise in technology shaping the industry's future. Our innovation and skills plan helps position Canada as a leader in the global economy with commitments to grow Canada's automotive footprint, support digital innovation and invest in clean technology.

The strategic innovation fund, now a \$2 billion program, has provided funding to support innovative projects in the automotive sector. Since November 2015, our government has invested \$389 million in 37 projects undertaken by Canada's automotive sector, resulting in leveraging of nearly \$4.1 billion in total investments in the sector.

In addition to this, 23 other projects were announced without any federal government support, leading to a minimum of \$1.5 billion in additional automotive sector investments. It is about the ecosystem and we are investing in it.

For example, and as mentioned previously, earlier this year we provided \$49 million to create 1,500 new jobs and maintain another 8,000 to help Linamar Corporation launch a new innovation centre in Guelph, Ontario, and I am seated next to the member for Guelph and honoured he is beside me this evening, dedicated entirely to research and development.

Furthermore, in May, we provided \$110 million for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada in Cambridge, Ontario, that will help retain 8,000 jobs, create another 450 new jobs and provide 1,000 more co-op placements. That is our future, making Toyota's Canadian plant the largest producer of Toyota hybrid vehicles in North America.

Our innovation superclusters initiative announced earlier this year will invest up to \$950 million to support business-led superclusters with the greatest potential to energize the economy and become engines of growth. This new fund is encouraging cross-sector partnerships in investment in areas such as advanced manufacturing, which has a direct impact on the Ontario automotive sector in particular, as well as digital technology and artificial intelligence, all of which go to support the car of the future.

I welcome what was said just a moment ago by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands with respect to encouraging the kinds of disruptive technologies that will in fact make our economy of the future that much stronger.

● (2205)

[Translation]

Thanks to our global skills strategy, it is now easier for businesses to recruit the talent they need, which helps Canadian businesses grow their operations and create more jobs. The strategy comes with \$39.4 million in funding over five years starting in 2017-18 and \$6.7 million annually thereafter.

We launched a new agency called Invest in Canada to attract international investments and make it easier for businesses to set up shop in Canada.

[English]

In addition to these policies, we are continuing to encourage investments through tax policy. In the fall economic statement last week, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance, proposed some important changes to Canada's tax system to encourage more investments, including accelerated write-offs on new investments, with the overall tax rate in Canada on new business investment falling from 17% to 13.8%.

We have heard from Canadians who told us that we needed to work on our competitiveness, and we have with these very measures.

[Translation]

We will continue to work closely with industry, the provinces, municipalities, unions and all other stakeholders to protect and grow Canada's auto industry.

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As the second largest manufacturing sector in Canada, the auto industry generates roughly 130,000 jobs and contributes \$18.1 billion to the GDP. This sector is vital to our economy, and we are deeply committed to supporting it.

[English]

As technology is rapidly transforming the future of mobility to one that is connected, automated, zero emission and shared, the government continues to amplify Canada's automotive manufacturing strengths, innovative research capabilities, technological expertise and talent. Together, with a robust supply chain comprised largely of small and medium-sized enterprises, these strengths contribute to the ecosystem, which makes Canada a location of choice for the design, development and manufacturing of the car of the future.

Our hearts go out to the people of Oshawa. Our government has said that it will remain open to all possibilities to not just help those workers or the transition that may happen, but also to continue to invest in the automotive ecosystem, not just in southern Ontario and not just in Oshawa, but across Canada, when we talk about those supply chains.

● (2210)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the parliamentary secretary cares. I know he is familiar with some of the government programming with respect to the competitiveness of the auto industry, but he referred to a plan in his remarks. In fact, his remark was "We have a plan that builds on the expertise in the industry."

The industry has actually spoken. The global automakers, making up the largest assemblers in Ontario right now with Toyota and Honda, have said the tariffs, both retaliatory and steel and aluminum, and taxes on the industry are making them less competitive, myopic, in their words. Even their friend and former senior Liberal adviser, Flavio Volpe, at the Automotive Parts Manufacturer's Association, described the tariff situation months ago as "a mess". He called it a mess before Canada applied retaliatory tariffs.

There is actually no plan. We are having this emergency debate so we can come up with a plan to address "the mess" that industry is saying is happening right now in the competitive landscape in Ontario: tariffs; retaliatory tariffs; higher taxes; uncompetitive moves; opt in or opt out of the carbon tax, depending on their size as an auto parts or manufacturer. We need a plan to address the uncompetitive elements of our landscape.

When will the member truly bring a plan forward to the House?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend and colleague, the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge, explained a few moments ago, based on his extensive knowledge of the industry, recent tariff decisions by either the United States or Canada would have had nothing to do with the kinds of decisions that were made globally by General Motors in this case.

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As for a price on pollution, it is a wonder that the party on the other side wants to make pollution free again.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was really interesting and helpful for me to hear from my friend about all the different programs our government is investing in to encourage further investment, and in fact, how it has worked to attract people or companies to invest in the automotive industry. I have also been hearing some of the criticisms from across the way.

What I was hoping was that the hon. member could help me understand, at a time like this, when we are facing such a situation, how the orders of government, the provinces, municipalities and the federal government, can work together rather than pointing fingers?

Can he please speak to the importance of pulling together so that we can keep our eyes on the most important part, which is helping the workers?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Prime Minister said today that he had spoken with the Premier of Ontario and that they would try to work through non-partisan solutions. The minister of innovation has done the same thing.

Indeed, we will get through this by listening to each part of the ecosystem, including labour, business, big business, small business, the large automotive producers and the smaller supply chain producers, to see the future and adapt to this particular situation on the ground.

The last thing I would add is that creating a strong economy, as we have done, with historic low levels of unemployment, may very well be the best guarantee for the Oshawa ecosystem. They are in a strong and robust economy where there are a number of positions that are unfilled. It is a good guarantee for a transition for those workers who may very well have to find new employment.

● (2215)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as many of us have noted today, the closure of the General Motors plant in Oshawa is devastating news. As a member of a community with a strong automotive sector, Fiat Chrysler in Brampton, and many suppliers, such as Magna, I can understand the devastation today's news has brought to those in Oshawa and others all around Canada.

I cannot reiterate enough that we stand behind all the affected workers and their families. We are taking every step possible to make sure that we continue to support Canada's automotive workers and protect Canadian jobs. There is no doubt that our automotive industry is vital to Canada's economy and that we will be working together with the province, the unions and all stakeholders involved to minimize any potential impacts from General Motors' global restructuring plan.

GM Canada is one of five automotive original equipment manufacturers operating in Canada and currently employs 8,100 workers, with approximately 2,500 at its Oshawa assembly facility. It has been an integral part of the Oshawa community for over 100 years, and I cannot imagine what the closure means to the community. As a government, we are committed to supporting Canada's automotive workers, who are vital to our national economy.

The automotive industry is one of Canada's largest manufacturing sectors and largest export industries, contributing over 130,900

direct jobs and \$18 billion to Canada's GDP. Canada is home to an incredible automotive ecosystem. We have approximately 700 suppliers, 40 academic institutions and a world-class workforce that produces high-quality products. Our integrated supply chain with the United States means that an automotive part can cross the border up to six times before it ends up in a finished vehicle, a testament to the importance and strength of Canada's automotive environment.

Canada is also home to world-renowned experts who work in many of the technical areas that contribute to automotive innovation and are redefining the car of the future, including cybersecurity, battery or fuel cell technology, ICT, sensors, lightweight materials and alternative powertrains.

Since November 2015, our government has invested \$389 million in the automotive industry, leveraging nearly \$4.1 billion in investments in the sector and contributing to a total of \$5.6 billion in automotive sector investments. The recently released fall economic statement is proposing to provide a further \$800 million over five years to the strategic innovation fund to accelerate support for business innovation in Canada and to continue to support innovative investments in Canada's automotive sector.

The fall economic statement is also proposing to improve competitiveness in our automotive sector by allowing the full cost of machinery and equipment used in the manufacturing and processing of goods to be written off immediately for tax purposes and by introducing accelerated investment incentives to support investment by businesses of all sizes and across all sectors of the economy. It also introduces the export diversification strategy, which is aimed at increasing Canada's overseas exports by 50% by 2025.

Through a range of current and previous federal programs, the Government of Canada has worked to attract and support high-quality business investment, promote technology development, accelerate areas of economic growth and job creation and strengthen and expand the role of Canadian firms in regional and global supply chains.

● (2220)

We recognize that our highly skilled workforce is the driving force behind the success of our automotive industry and is on the front line of innovative and clean technologies. This is why the government's innovation and skills plan focuses on people, technologies and companies to help to position Canada as a leader in the global economy, with commitments to grow Canada's automotive footprint. The plan aims to equip Canadians with the skills necessary for the digital economy and to connect Canadian employers and research institutions with the world-leading talent that will accelerate innovation, help build Canada's future workforce and create opportunities for Canadians.

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We are committed to assisting those who have directly been affected by today's decision and will deliver benefits to those employees who are entitled to them. We will continue to engage actively with affected workers to ensure that those workers and their families have the assistance they need. A suite of services and programs is currently available and can be quickly deployed to assist workers. These include income supports through employment insurance and counselling, job search assistance and training and skills development programs delivered by provinces and territories through labour market transfer agreements.

Today's news is devastating for all of Canada, but we remain committed to supporting the automotive industry.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that was brought up during the hon. member's speech was the issue of accelerated tax credits. The reality is that this may be good in terms of spurring investment and buying, but if companies are leaving the country, there is no need for an accelerated tax credit, because they will not be buying any machinery.

My question is related to overall competitiveness in this country. We have a tax regime that continually increases. We have a regulatory regime that is causing problems for businesses. I am wondering what solution the hon. member could suggest with respect to solving some of these competitiveness issues facing businesses in this country, not just for large businesses but for small and medium-sized enterprises, which employ 80% of Canadians.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I find the member's question narrowly focused. The hon. member refers to Canadian jobs across the country. What we have seen in our Canadian economy is a growth in jobs over the last three years. We have seen over 700,000 new jobs created. Our economy is doing better than all G7 countries.

These initiatives announced in the fall economic statement are only going to continue to help those companies grow and be competitive in the global market. The fund created to increase exports by 50% is going to continue to create well-paying jobs.

Although we are disappointed by this news of the Oshawa plant closure, that does not exclude all the other industries and businesses that will continue to benefit from all the wonderful measures in the fall economic statement.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, that is amazing, because in the course of five hours, the government has seemingly created another 200,000 jobs. Throughout this evening, I have heard that 500,000 jobs have been created. Now we are up to 700,000 jobs.

I want to get back to the issue of competitiveness. The tax regime and the regulatory regime in this country are not affecting just the auto industry. They are affecting every single business across this country. We are seeing investment flee. We are seeing it in the resource sector in Alberta. We are seeing it now with this news with GM.

For the last several months, businesses and lobby groups have been coming to Ottawa to talk about aluminum and steel tariffs and the impact they are having on their businesses. What is the government going to do to deal with this situation?

●(2225)

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I really disagree with my colleague. Our small business tax rate is very competitive. It was lowered and will be lowered once again in January.

Since November 2015, our government has invested \$389 million and some 37 projects have been undertaken by Canada's automotive sector, resulting in nearly \$4.1 billion in investments in total in the sector. That is not a government that is doing nothing. That is not a government that is not standing by the automotive sector. We have been standing by it. We have made many investments in the sector. As a result, many of the companies have experienced growth. There have been 23 other projects announced without any federal government support, leading to a minimum of \$1.5 billion in automotive sector investments.

Once again, although we have heard bad news today, there has been much good work that has been done. We will continue to do so and continue to stand by the families and the workers who are affected by this closure.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Tonight's debate is very serious. This is much more than a conversation about a plant closure. This is about employees. It is about families. It is about a community, and it is even broader than that. It is about suppliers and ultimately it is about workers across this country who are rightly saying that if this can happen to a solid industry like the auto industry that has existed as a foundation of the Canadian economy since 1908, and governments over time have dedicated time and attention to this industry, then clearly it can happen to any industry in Canada.

Therefore, I know I speak for all Canadians when I say that our hearts go out to all of those families who are sitting at home discussing tonight how they will build a future after these potential job losses; to the pensioners who have retired from GM who are concerned that perhaps their fate might be similar to the fate of pensioners of other companies like Sears who have left this country, which they might not be protected from and wondering how they will endure in their retirement; and to suppliers, who are wondering what GM's plant closure is going to do to them in their industry. For all of those affected, directly or indirectly, by today's announcement, I say that the game is not up yet, we have work to do and, yes, we must hold the government to account for the role it has played and will play in addressing the issue and positioning for success in the future.

To arrive at solutions, a way forward, we must critically assess the situation that we are in and the role of governments in contributing to the circumstances that we currently find ourselves in, and the solutions that they may arrive at. The current government has said that GM is laying off lots of people south of the border and that this is not about Canada, but a business decision that GM is making, and that Canada really has no part to play in these restructuring announcements, because it is just business as usual and these are decisions that businesses make.

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I can say that I was employed in a multinational global corporation at IBM and at Bombardier, and to say that Canada has no role in the decisions that GM has made is to be incredibly naive and uninformed. Global corporations make decisions on a daily basis about which jurisdictions they are going to invest in. They make these decisions internally within their corporations in almost as competitive a way as externally with other organizations. These corporations are looking at the terms and conditions within a nation to decide whether they are going to continue to invest in that nation. Therefore, yes, the terms and conditions or the foundations of the economic structure of Canada have a significant impact on whether GM will decide to put future business here in Canada or future business in the U.S. or in Europe or somewhere else. Therefore, to say that the current government's actions have absolutely no impact, again, is to be uninformed.

Last week, the finance minister said that everything is fantastic with the Canadian economy, that things are moving in the direction we need them to go and that Canada is in a sound economic and competitive position. I will say that GM's decision today is the ultimate vote of non-confidence in the Canadian economy.

• (2230)

Let us understand why that is. What are the factors that perhaps contributed to the decision GM made?

First of all, we are looking at this new negotiated USMCA agreement. In this agreement, yes, we avoided auto tariffs, but we did not really. We were able to avoid auto tariffs under a certain point. What that means is that for the first time ever, the growth potential of Canada's auto industry sector has been capped. An auto industry invests a significant amount of money in its operations. Why would it invest significant money in the future business of a corporation if it knew, before it even got out of the gate, that the maximum amount it can ever achieve is capped? It would say that it is going to another jurisdiction where, if it made that same investment, it would not be capped. It would do so because it is not going to risk having its growth constrained by having to pay tariffs. That is the first thing.

The second thing is our tax structure. When it campaigned in 2015, that government said that it was going to fundamentally change and reform the tax structure, because it understood the competitive implications of a tax structure attracting and retaining global corporations in Canada. However, that is not what it did. Our tax structure has now put us in a position where we are not an attractive jurisdiction relative to our peers and other competitors. That is the second thing.

First is the cap in the USMCA; second is our tax structure. The third is the national security tariffs. We heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly tell us that anyone considering us as a national security threat is clearly delusional. No one in their right mind would look at Canada as being a national security threat, yet the Americans imposed national security tariffs, which have had a punishing effect on our steel and aluminum industry, jeopardizing the competitiveness of our industry. That has also affected the auto industry.

These are the foundational elements that the industry is looking at when it is making that decision, whether or not to invest here. This is not limited to the auto industry. This expands far beyond the auto

industry. This is merely the beginning of what is a frightening trend. Bombardier Aerospace announced that it is laying off 3,000 personnel. That is significant. That is just one example in a very long list of manufacturing companies in this country that, as a result of the actions of the government, are no longer viewing Canada as a competitive jurisdiction.

Do not be fooled. The actions of the government matter. The actions of the government determine whether or not the basic foundations and elements of the competitive nature of this country attract and retain manufacturing industries here.

Where does that leave us? The government has not set out the critical conditions necessary to ensure Canada's competitiveness. That is why we are seeing these manufacturing jobs and foreign investment leave. We, on this side of the House, are not about 10-second soundbites. We are not about throwing money at something without any outcomes and measurable connections to those investments. We understand that the foundational elements of the economy must be restructured, so that not only can we keep the auto industry here and help it to choose this jurisdiction as an opportunity for electric vehicles in the future and to retool our plants, but also encourage all manufacturing in Canada to ensure that Canada remains competitive and can move forward not only for the next 10 years but also the next 20, 50 and 100 years.

• (2235)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the hon. member's speech and trying to find a coherent thread within it.

I was at an announcement this morning in Montreal when the hon. member's former company, IBM, announced a major artificial intelligence investment in the Montreal economy.

I would ask the member to comment on the fact that Toyota, Honda, Linamar and Ford have all made major investments in the automotive ecosystem in Canada.

Finally, if the hon. member is condemning the Canadian government's policy because of this one global investment decision made by General Motors, what would she have to say about the American position? They lost three plants. I am curious to know if her logic would coherently extend to condemning the actions and economic policies of the American government.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, that is a very disconcerting position for the member to take.

Ultimately we need to focus on the jobs within Canada. Simply because some companies are making investments in Canada, and one could ask whether it is because the government has found some way of buying those jobs through an innovation fund, it is not about the jobs that are being created. It is about the significant number of jobs that are being lost despite the investments the government has made and what the government plans to do to set the very fundamental foundation of tax reform, competitiveness and national security tariffs to ensure we have more jobs in this country.

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Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, in my area of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola there are mills that operate on both sides of the border and they have said that with the recent reforms to the American tax system, they are now in a competitive marketplace where they have not just to compete against their own Canadian mills, but they now have to compete directly with American ones.

Because the nature of the game has changed, those multinational corporations are making major decisions. When they find that the Canadian space has higher regulatory issues and higher levels of taxation, we are being wiped out with those kinds of investments.

Does the member think this is just one particular step toward a reconcentration of capital as it begins to move across international boundaries and is the government is paying attention to this new dynamic?

• (2240)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, we have a responsibility in this nation to understand what the competitive landscape is, what other jurisdictions are doing, and to set the foundation to ensure that we attract and retain foreign investment, which we have lost recently. We need to establish a tax structure that is attractive rather than negative. We need to ensure most importantly that we are not a national security threat because the economy and security go together. We want to attract business and ensure that we have the backs of our allies because they do not see us as a national security threat.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when we talk about the competitive landscape, 110,000 cars were produced at this plant between September 2017 and 2018. That was actually 50,000 cars fewer than the year before and 5% of Canada's total production. In order to protect these jobs we are looking at investments in technology and new types of jobs.

Could the hon. member comment on the importance of investing in new technologies?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, it is a very important question because the government has indicated to the Canadian people that it is focused on investing in innovation and technology, in particular, in the auto sector, yet when GM openly stated that it is going for green vehicles and electric and technologically advanced vehicles, it did not choose this jurisdiction. Clearly there is a disconnect between the investments that the government is making in those innovative technologies and the actual result of our economy and our manufacturing industry being able to pick up on that and utilize that technology.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the first thing I would like to do is thank the Speaker for granting this emergency debate today. I sat through all of it tonight with sincere concern for the families in Oshawa and, in fact, the families around Durham region.

In general terms, the tone of the debate has been very, very strong with a strong level of concern. Some solutions have been proposed. That is the reason we are here tonight, to try to find solutions and to work not just with the government, but also with the community and labour, along with the employees and all those who are affected as a result of the very devastating news from Oshawa today.

I have been spending a lot of time, actually, in Oshawa over the last several years. My son plays for the Oshawa Generals. By the way, the Generals are named after General Motors. I go to the games as much as I can. I talk to a lot of people. People who recognize me because they have seen me on TV or CPAC or whatever come up to me and we talk politics. Just on Friday night, a gentleman came up to me at the Tribute Communities Centre arena. We talked about pensions and the need to protect pensions and how important that was to those employees at General Motors. We had a long conversation about it. This is a conversation that is happening over and over again in the Oshawa community.

I think of those people who I saw at the Friday night hockey game and those people who I am going to see this coming weekend at a couple of games in Oshawa. I will give them a hug if they need it. I am sure there are some of them who are up tonight watching this debate with great interest after the devastating day that they had today and are trying to find out what, if any, solutions the Government of Canada and this Parliament of Canada can come up with.

If we look back, a certain amount of prophecy happened back in May. Magna International's chief executive officer, Don Walker, was talking about overall competitiveness in the automotive industry. He was doing this at a shareholder relations meeting. He said:

[I]nitiatives such as Ontario's cap and trade program, as well as rising electricity costs and new labour legislation are making it increasingly difficult to remain competitive against other jurisdictions that don't face "all these burdens." "I'm worried about what's going on in Canada," Walker told employees and shareholders gathered in Markham, Ont. on Thursday.

"I get very frustrated when I see the decisions being made that put undue administrative costs and inefficiencies on our plants, specifically here in Ontario, because we have to compete... We're not going to get business if we're forced to be uncompetitive."

Walker was talking specifically about some of the initiatives in Ontario with respect to the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act as an example of how the government is affecting business and competitiveness.

I think the same could be said of any of us who have been in Ontario over the course of the last 15 years. Those of us who represent Ontario know just how devastating some of the policies of the Wynne and McGuinty government have been to business. This announcement today is the culmination of not just those policies in Ontario, but I would also suggest the policies of the current federal Liberal government. The reason is simple. I have said many times in this House that those who are running Ontario into the ground are now running the Prime Minister's Office and, therefore, by extension, running Canada into the ground as well. Those failed policies in Ontario are not going to work here federally. It has been proven that they do not work. It is quite concerning in just three short years.

It is funny because I think back to the last election when I had debates and I was talking about this very issue. I would ask people why we would want to go down the same path federally as Ontario did. Why would we want that? We knew there was no difference between the Ontario Liberal Party and the federal Liberal Party.

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• (2245)

Canada, in general, and the state of our economy and competitiveness have really taken a hit over the course of the last three years. There are several reasons for that, such as regulatory requirements, environmental requirements, tax requirements, when seemingly our biggest competitors are going in a completely opposite direction. When it comes to tax and regulatory regimes, Canada is going in the opposite direction, and we are imposing more regulation and taxes on businesses, which is creating more uncertainty, not just in the automotive sector but also in the energy sector. We have seen hundreds of billions of dollars that have left the energy industry. We have seen hundreds of thousands of jobs that have been lost. That uncertainty is cascading throughout the economy.

The other side will talk about the 500,000 jobs that have been created, or the 700,000 jobs. Nobody on the other side seems to get that number right. However, the reality is that there is doubt and uncertainty that exists within our country. Any time there is doubt, it limits investment. In fact, it restricts investment, because the one thing that businesses do not like is uncertainty and they will not make the investments they need to make in an uncertain economic business environment.

What is causing that uncertainty? Well, the Leader of the Opposition was in Barrie in August. We held a round table. We had some of the largest manufacturers. Napoleon was represented there, a large steel and aluminum manufacturing facility, and there were others as well. Every single one of them talked about the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs on our country, and not just what was imposed by the United States, but the retaliatory tariffs that we imposed on ourselves as causing a problem and creating this uncertainty.

I walked away from that meeting remembering what one of the largest employers in central Ontario said to me. He said, “The one thing the Liberal government needs to understand is that my money is portable. I can take it anywhere I want. I can take it to another country or another continent. I can set up shop there and hire people there. I choose to be here because these are my roots, but as long as this continues to go on, this doubt and uncertainty within the business environment, there is no reason for me to stay here when I could take my money somewhere else, and it is portable.”

That is a warning, just like the warning from the CEO of Magna that every Canadian should be heeding right now. We have been heading down a path over the course of the last three years that has put us in an uncompetitive environment in almost every sector of our economy. It is concerning, and it certainly came to light today with this announcement at GM.

We want to come up with solutions. We do not want to just complain about what is happening to this country, although what is happening within this country is very real. However, let us talk about competitiveness. The hon. member for Durham said it right when he started off this debate earlier this evening. We have to work together to find a way to retool this plant. We have some of the best skilled labour, some of the most innovative people in North America, arguably around the world. We could use that expertise to figure out how we can retool this plant. We have to look after these employees.

It has been said many times tonight that it is through job training, benefits and pensions. It is just like the gentleman who approached me at the Tribute Communities Centre the other night said about protecting the pensions. That has to be critical for these employees.

I talked about tax competitiveness and aligning with the provinces a tax competitive regime so that when one end of government tries to give a credit or benefit, the other end is not trying to take it away. That has to be an option.

As well, for God's sake, we have to stop this carbon tax now. It is putting us in an incredibly uncompetitive position, and that is coming from every business sector in this country. We have to look at regulatory competitiveness and make sure that the carbon tax is not imposed on businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

The new NAFTA agreement, the USMCA, is causing uncertainty. There are the steel and aluminum tariffs. I mentioned the retaliatory tariffs. We have to eliminate those. That is what business is telling us they need in order to move away from this doubt and uncertainty.

I will conclude with this—

• (2250)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I tried to give the member the signal that his time was up. Maybe he will be able to add to the questions and comments.

The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened with interest to the member across the way. I find it fascinating that he is blaming a price on pollution as one of the issues in this debate. It is simply not a reason that has been provided in any way by General Motors. I think it undermines the fact that the families who depend on the jobs at the GM plant and elsewhere are people who care about their families and their children and want to make sure that we have a healthy environment for their future.

What I really wanted to hear from the member was a comment. I was reading an article in the Financial Post on this specific issue, which said that General Motors did not blame a trade deal or government policies for its decision to eliminate nearly 3,000 jobs at the assembly plant in Oshawa. When I hear that and I see that there were three plants closed in the United States, perhaps he can explain why he is coming up with an explanation for this decision that has not come from GM and does not seem to be coming from the people who are observing it.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I would encourage those of us who are engaged in this debate to not be so naive to think that General Motors is going to tell us the exact reasons why it pulled out.

There is a tremendous amount of uncertainty in this country and it speaks to the issue—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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• (2255)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Somebody is speaking. Therefore, no discussions should be had, except for the person who has the floor. The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil is very capable of answering the question.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I know it is a late hour. I know it is an emotional issue. I know that, in some cases, the members on the other side may feel some guilt with respect to a lot of their policies and how they are impacting businesses and families in this country, as evidenced by the announcement today.

As I said earlier, to think that General Motors is going to give us all of the reasons publicly why it decided to close the Oshawa GM plant I think is rather naive. If we go out there and talk to businesses, when we are dealing with them on a one-on-one basis they will tell us exactly what is going on in this country, and most of it is dealing with issues of competitiveness. For the last several weeks, we have had steel and aluminum manufacturers come to Parliament Hill begging us to do something about the retaliatory steel and aluminum tariffs, and not just the retaliatory ones, but trying to knock some sense into what is going on with the steel and aluminum tariffs and trying to get the government onside. The concern is real.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier today, Dennis DesRosiers, an expert consultant to the automotive industry, said that, despite the dedication, the expertise and the commitment of the workers at GM's plant in Oshawa, the closure of that plant by General Motors should be seen as the canary in a coal mine. Mr. DesRosiers said he believes there will be other closures. He does not know where, he does not know when, but there will be closures unless the current government goes beyond sympathetic words and creates meaningful action to increase the competitiveness of this industry. I wonder if my colleague could expand on the fears of Mr. DesRosiers.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. "My heart goes out to" is not an answer resolving this situation. It is something that we hear quite regularly around here. The fact is that this will have a cascading effect along our economy and will affect thousands of families, just like it is affecting those families at GM tonight, because those people who supply the boots and the uniforms, the plumbers and the machinists who deal with the equipment on those lines will all be affected by this. Every single one of those people who I see at the Tribute Communities Centre watching those Oshawa Generals games, in some way, shape or form, will be impacted this. Frankly, my concern is that we are going to see more of what we saw today because of the uncompetitiveness in this country, and it needs to be resolved now.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the soon-to-be wed member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the leader of the Green Party, who I congratulate on her engagement.

Any of us who have grown up in and around the Golden Horseshoe know of the presence of the Oshawa plant. As we drive down the 401, we see the smokestacks and the workers filing in. People who have been at the Oshawa GO station to catch a train to Ottawa know of the gravity of the situation. I have been part of

organizations that have experienced layoffs, and we know of the devastation of layoffs, not just for the people whose careers and jobs disappear but also their partners, and the teachers, doctors and people in the community. It ripples through a place like Oshawa, Hamilton and small towns that have large employers like this. Tonight, our thoughts, as a government and as Canadians, are with the people of Oshawa, the impacted families, the community at large and the region.

We have heard expressed by the members from southern Ontario tonight that the GM plant does not just impact Oshawa. The supply chain reaches every corner of the province and there are many people tonight, business owners and families in communities far away from Oshawa, who are sharing the nervousness and worry as to what will happen next.

When I listen to the debate, what I am not hearing are views about what happens next. I am not hearing optimism about the extraordinary investment in education and training, the hiring of engineers, the \$5.6 billion we have invested in the automotive sector, which has secured plants in Alliston, St. Catharines and Windsor, even in Oshawa, with the innovation centre that was put there by GM. I am not hearing a sense that we can get through this; I am hearing that we have to surrender.

I listen to the other side talk about trying to out-trump Trump, that we should mimic the tax cuts that have added \$1 trillion to the U.S. debt. The party that pretends to balance budgets is now pretending to care about deficit financing, but to mimic the Trump tax cuts would be to add \$1 trillion in equivalent Canadian debt. That is insane. Even though those tax cuts were put in place by the United States, even though the tariffs were put in place by the United States and even though there is no carbon tax in Indiana or Michigan, those states are losing auto plants tonight, just like Oshawa is. Clearly, this is not being driven by any individual policy that governments on either side of the border has put into place.

If we read the article that the members opposite keep referring to by Dennis DesRosiers, he talks about a massive disruption in the auto industry that is driving change through all parts of the sector. Because the GM plant has been operating at about one-third capacity due to its product line not selling as well as others, GM has made a decision that will have a devastating impact on the community. Unfortunately, it is understandable from a whole series of different perspectives, but it is not the tax cuts of Trump that are going to save or define this issue. What is going to save, define and build a strong future in Oshawa is a rethinking of the technology, the application of that technology in the transportation sector and getting out in front of change, as opposed to being dragged through the process, as we have just seen happen in Oshawa.

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When we look at electric vehicles in this country and the investments this government has made in technology and innovation in the auto sector in supporting local economic development, there are some great success stories. I was at the CUTA conference in Toronto just the other day and spoke to three different bus companies, one from Edmonton, one from Winnipeg and one from Quebec, about the close to 260 buses they are supplying to the Toronto Transit Commission in the next year and a half. All three of those manufacturing sectors have substantial orders not just in Toronto and in Canada, but also around the world. In fact, the factory in Edmonton has a massive contract selling buses to China.

We have the opportunity here to rethink the auto industry and the transportation sector and to invest in it, with the principles of a clean, green economy driving some of the vision, a vision that recognizes that engineers are a critical part of driving this industry forward and the investments that have been made, including smart investments in the technology institute in Oshawa, smart investments in Waterloo a generation ago, smart investments in the community college sector that trains the workforce.

• (2300)

We can build a better auto industry if we decide we will fight for the future instead of arguing about the past. The past is that sense of just cutting taxes and not making the investments that are required to generate the new industry.

We are not going to save Oshawa with tax cuts. We are going to save it by rebuilding that plant, by supporting investments in that plant, supporting training for that plant and building a future in that plant, which is about where the auto industry is going.

The side opposite says environmental regulations kill the auto industry. The fastest growing auto sector in the United States right now is the electronic private vehicle market. Guess which state is growing that market? It is California, a state with a carbon tax and strong environmental regulations. In fact, that is what is driving those sales. It is getting factories, startups, investments and auto plants with a future, not just on the horizon but arriving day by day in that part of the world.

It was not tax cuts in California that did it. It was smart investment by the private sector, paired with good, strong government policy, combined with a highly-trained workforce and a forward looking set of government policies, which include putting a price on pollution. That has delivered security.

Indiana and Michigan did not do that. They have been cutting taxes. They have been supporting a president who put in the very same steel tariffs that we are talking about here. GM said today in Reuters, when announcing the cuts in the United States, that the American move to put tariffs on steel and aluminum cost GM \$1 billion in the United States. That is the dynamic we are dealing with here.

For the people of Oshawa, let us be very clear. This government, all of Canada, all of the Parliament of Canada are here for them tonight, but more important, we will be here with them next week, next month, next year. We see a future in the plant. We see a future in the city, in the region and in the supply chain. We know the

investments we are making in the auto sector are going to drive that change.

Therefore, when we talk about the three bus companies I mentioned, the one in Quebec, the one in Manitoba and the one in Alberta, when we ask their leadership what has made the difference, it was the investment in infrastructure by our government. It has allowed Toronto, for example, to have the youngest bus fleet ever and to lead the country in ordering and delivering electronic buses. That has given those companies the platform not just to provide clean transportation for citizens in our country, but a platform to take on the world. As I said, BYD in Edmonton is selling thousands of buses into China.

That is creating good, strong, sustainable jobs, but, again, it is an investment in technology. It is an investment in education and in training. It is changing EI to ensure the training programs support lifelong learning. It is about investments in the auto sector, but most important, it is about investment in Canadians. It is why we have created 500,000 full-time jobs, 700,000 full-time and part-time jobs, if the member opposite wants clarification. It is why we have one of the fastest growing economies in the G7 and why our government is committed to the plan we put in place since being elected.

We are growing the middle class, working hard to ensure those people who are close to joining it get the support they need to get across that line and ensuring every city in the country, from Oshawa to Ottawa and every city in between gets the support it needs to build an economy into the future that not only talks about their needs but the country's needs.

I am proud of what our government has done, but I know we have hard work to do in Oshawa. I hope to goodness the side opposite joins us in this fight and does not simply trade it away for a few tax cuts.

• (2305)

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, clearly, there is a discrepancy between reality and what is actually happening, because the member opposite—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order please. The hon. parliamentary secretary had an opportunity to do his speech. Now he needs the opportunity to hear the question so he is able to answer it. Nothing would make me more happy on my birthday.

The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, the government has spent a significant amount of money investing in innovation and green technology, yet this GM plant had the opportunity. It said that it is focusing on innovation, green technology and electric cars, yet it chose not to retool the Oshawa plant with that green technology and innovation.

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Therefore, for the member opposite to say that his government has provided a jurisdiction that attracts and retains business is overlooking the critical facts around manufacturing in our country. The Oshawa plant is closing, Bombardier has let go 3,000 jobs, the General Electric plant in Peterborough has closed, Procter & Gamble in Brockville has closed, and that is just the beginning. Clearly, there is a pattern that is not limited to GM and is not attracting that retooling and investment. What would the hon. member say to that?

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, I will not try to figure out what the difference is between reality and what is happening now. Those are usually one and the same.

When I was in New York this summer at the United Nations high-level meetings on sustainable development goals, GM was there. The plant GM was talking about as its pace-setting plant in terms of environmental performance, the elimination of waste and adding productivity to its product line was the plant in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

When the member opposite lists a half-dozen companies, which we are very concerned about when they close, she also has to understand that there are 500,000 new jobs being created simultaneously, above and beyond those losses. If we look at the manufacturing sector in southern Ontario, it is starting to gather steam exactly where jobs are being lost.

Yes, there is a transition happening in the economy. Technology is extraordinarily disruptive, and there are certainly trade winds that have been difficult to manage over the last year and a half. However, I will put our record of job creation up against the Conservatives' record any single day. Why the member chose to join a party that cannot create jobs and leave one that did I will let her explain to constituents across this country.

• (2310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the next question, I see that on this side, they have started doing what they were doing on that side, so I would ask for a little respect in the House as debate is going on. I know it is getting late, and everyone is just having a grand old time, but it is an important and serious issue. I really appreciate everyone's patience as we get through this.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, happy birthday.

I am really happy that we are having this important debate tonight. Like other people in this House and across Canada, when we heard this news, it was like we were being kicked in the gut. It is absolutely heartbreaking to think that 3,000 people will be losing their jobs. These are well-paying jobs. Their families will be affected. It is not only the losses at this plant. It is the domino effect. All the restaurants and businesses around Oshawa will be impacted. It is devastating for southern Ontario.

Something the NDP has talked about for many years, dating back to 2003, with Jack Layton, is a national strategy for the auto sector. The member for Windsor West tabled a petition in the summer with 9,000 signatures. We have been asking for this strategy for a long time. This is an opportunity for members on all sides of this House to

get together and talk about solutions. I am really hoping to hear some proposals from the member opposite.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, I agree. I do not think we have framed it as a national strategy as such, but the \$5.6 billion in additional investments we have made in that industry constitutes that national strategy. The changes we are making around e-vehicles and the adaptation of the infrastructure program to accommodate that is part of that strategy. When we look at the investment specifically in bus fleets across this country to build and support the industry that delivers those buses in Canada, it is part of an automotive strategy that includes the future and is forward looking. There is a report coming forward to the Minister of Transport to further those aims.

To frame it as a strategy is a fair question. Perhaps it would be more obvious to the industry and more obvious to Canadians that there is a concerted effort on this side of the House to make sure that we build not only the strongest auto industry and auto sector in this country's history but the greenest one, because that is where the future is leading us, and we must help Oshawa get there with the rest of the successful communities right across this country.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for splitting his time with me.

I want to start by saying how deeply distressing it is to lose jobs in any industry at any time, and we know that families are suffering and individuals are faced with great uncertainty. We have seen job losses in the past in industries or sectors where people suddenly lose their jobs and overnight a government has wanted to respond. Therefore, I want to talk about the things that governments have done in the past that did not work. I want to come to that later.

I want to focus first on the irony of something that we might generally call "disruptive technologies". It brings us back to thinking about a 2006 documentary, which is ironic as we stand here tonight as the clock ticks toward midnight. There was a 2006 film that was enormously popular, a documentary called *Who Killed the Electric Car?* It documented efforts back in the mid-1990s by the State of California to pursue zero-emission vehicles, both because of the acute health impacts of smog in the Los Angeles area and the climate crisis, in order to move us away from the dependence on fossil fuels.

Who Killed the Electric Car? is a fascinating story of the development of the EV1, an electric car made available at the behest of government pressure. It was manufactured by General Motors, and the industry fought that electric car. General Motors bought back every EV1 to destroy it. Therefore, *Who Killed the Electric Car?* ironically dealt with an early effort to convince General Motors that the future lay with electric vehicles. This was pushed back by those in the big three who wanted to continue with the internal combustion engine.

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Earlier in debate tonight, it was mentioned, when I put it in a question for one of my friends in the Conservative Party, that the Oshawa closure was anticipated, that more than year ago General Motors said that it would be moving away from the internal combustion engine, wanting to move toward zero-emission vehicles, electric vehicles, and that we did not prepare for that in Canada. We did not start thinking about how we would protect those jobs in Oshawa. The response by my Conservative colleague was to say that consumer choice would rule, that people would buy what they want to buy.

Let us revisit this. In Canada and right now in the year 2018, the move toward electric vehicles is not a result of governments demanding it. If anything, the Trump administration is moving in a different direction. The move to electric vehicles is a result of a disruptive technology that is better than the one we now have. In the face of this, there were electric vehicle rebates put in place by the former government of Paul Martin. They were eliminated at the federal level by the government of Stephen Harper and, to my bafflement, they have not been brought back by the new Liberal government, which still needs to embrace every possible tool in the federal tool kit to have anything that looks like a plan to fight climate change. We have very little that has been done on electric vehicles by the current government federally, but it is true that disruptive technologies do not really need government help. It really helps if disruptive technologies are not obstructed by government efforts to prop up industries that are on their way out.

This is very similar to the problem we are facing in Canada right, where we want to pretend that there is a future for the oil sands. There may be a future for the oil sands, but not in mining bitumen for fuel. The future for the oil sands might be in mining bitumen for petrochemical industries for other products, but the reality is that disruptive technologies happen very fast and if we were not subsidizing fossil fuels as much as we are, we would be seeing much more uptake of renewable energy.

Let me just quickly describe historical examples of a couple of disruptive technologies, so they will resonate. When the automobile, the Model T Ford, came along—ironically again this is an automobile example—the horse and buggy disappeared. There were not organized lobbies in those days for people who made horse whips and buggies and people who drove the horse-drawn carriages. The disruptive technology was simply more attractive and better. There was an industrial revolution to take up the individual car and it took place within a decade.

● (2315)

There is an even earlier example, from the 1850s. In the 1850s, every household was lit by lamps burning whale oil. We were not yet running out of whales, although the damage done by the whaling industry was devastating on specific species. The whale oil industry did not end because of a public movement to stop the killing of whales for oil. After we had discovered coal, the whale oil industry was done in when a Nova Scotian, Gesner, figured out he could adapt that product into kerosene, which burned brighter, was cheaper and was a disruptive technology that ended the whaling industry.

There is an interesting thing about these disruptive technologies, which has been demonstrated by Amory Lovins out of Rocky

Mountain Institute, who has written books on this that I recommend to members. He pointed out that the price falls for something before the demand falls. The current drop in oil prices has a lot to do with the fact that we are moving away from fossil fuels.

The larger context needs to be remembered when we look at these things. Amory Lovins actually has a classic photograph of the Easter parade in Manhattan, with a caption like “Can you see the car?”, and there is one Model T Ford somewhere in the background. Then 10 years later, he asks, “Can you spot the horse and buggy?”, because at that point, the streets are clogged with cars.

When we look at this, we have to recognize that General Motors is now making a decision, because the future is moving and General Motors does not want to be left behind. The future is moving to electric vehicles. The Canadian government should not want to be left behind. We need to assist individuals in moving to electric vehicles and insist on it. We need EV charging stations to be consistent across the country. I noticed that in the budget update we received last week there is a reference to one section of highway in Canada that is getting electric vehicle chargers.

The Government of Canada has the largest purchasing power of any purchaser in Canada. It should decide not to buy any cars with internal combustion engines and only buy electric vehicles. That drives the marketplace and that gives us a chance to compete. When we look at what is being manufactured in Oshawa, we should make sure those jobs are protected, but not through manufacturing internal combustion engines. Should workers be building windmill components there? Should they be building electric vehicles there?

We need to bear in mind the principle of just transition for workers. I turn to the situations I can remember in which lots of workers lost their jobs all at once in Canada, and to the really poor responses of government.

Certainly one of the worst I can recall involved Hawker Siddeley. Being from Nova Scotia, I remember it clearly, as my friend from Milton would, as she mentioned earlier in debate tonight that she is also from Cape Breton.

When Hawker Siddeley decided to close its steel mill in the late 1960s, the government panicked and decided it could not lose all those jobs and that it would buy the steel mill. I remember Gordon Ritchie telling me once that he had advised Allan MacEachen that it would be cheaper if every year the government had a helicopter hover over the doors of the steel plant to drop a bag with \$60,000 for every worker, telling them all to go home for the year. That would save the taxpayers of Canada a lot of money. As I recall, Allan J. MacEachen told Gordon Ritchie, “That is probably true, but this is an election year.”

The result of that foolish decision was the creation of the largest toxic waste site in Canada, which took \$400 million to bury. It was never cleaned up.

Another poor example of government response was when we lost our North Atlantic cod fishery, which was destroyed by bad Department of Fisheries and Oceans policies. I could go into that, but simply put, our fishery was destroyed by DFO mismanagement.

The response to the individual fishers was to give them new jobs. The department was going to train them up for something new. What did DFO think of? I remember the slogan, "Trade the fish net for the Internet". A lot of these fishers, who were decent, hard-working people, had never completed high school. "Trade the fish net for the Internet" became such a cruel joke.

If we are serious about just transition for these workers, we should start figuring out what just transition is going to really look like. We have trained-up people who are some of the best workers in Canada. Can we train them up for other jobs, like the new clean-tech jobs? By the way, we have massive shortages of skilled people in many other sectors. Can they be retrained to work in the mining industry or to build different components right in Oshawa for things we really need?

We must not abandon these workers. We do not protect these workers by destroying their children's futures, just as we did in creating toxic waste in the Sydney tar ponds that killed not only the workers but their children. We do not support these workers by letting their grandchildren die by clinging to fossil fuels and the internal combustion engine. We move into the future.

• (2320)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member made some wonderful remarks. At one particular point she did refer to the cod fishery, which is an issue dear to my heart.

I remember I was in first year university at Queen's when the moratorium was declared. It was quite a shock to everyone, because Newfoundlanders have such an emotional connection to the fishery and its importance to our economy. Then of course the population dropped by almost 80,000.

The member raised an issue regarding how the retraining worked. The retraining might not have worked for all people in the fishery but it certainly trained a generation of young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians into industries that did not exist. They went off to other parts of the country and did quite well. Some 80,000 of them went elsewhere and are doing quite well in various fields, including in the Internet, working in Silicon Valley, or Toronto, or Boston, or wherever else their skills may have taken them.

I would like the member to comment on how important it is to make sure that the folks in Oshawa are provided with opportunities in their communities so they can continue to maintain their community roots with the people they have grown up with, which is so important to all of us.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I can recognize that as a university student the member may have been shocked, but I had been working for years with inshore fishermen who went to the Federal Court to try to reduce the quota so that the jobs would not be lost. They were not shocked. As they always put it, the moratorium was not declared by the Government of Canada. It was declared by National Sea Products and Fishery Products International when they scooped up the last fish and could not find anything because they had taken over the offshore with draggers that destroyed that fishery, with the support of DFO and the government at the time.

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I refer to the TAGS program. I will tell my friend from St. John's East that the fisheries retraining process did not help the workers who were on those fishing boats. They were devastated. Thirty thousand jobs were lost overnight. While a new generation left Newfoundland to find jobs elsewhere, Newfoundland has an economy now that is swimming in red ink because of the idiotic decision to build Muskrat Falls. The jobs did not come back to the small communities.

If the current government comes up with a program to help the workers, it should make it community-based, not individual. That TAGS program, which wasted a lot of money, should have gone to groups of workers organized through their union, to create new opportunities. They will come up with better ideas than the federal government will.

• (2325)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I found the exchange between the Green Party leader and my friend the Liberal MP for St. John's East interesting. The one place he omitted where most Newfoundlanders went after the moratorium is Fort McMurray, so much so that Newfoundland politicians go there because a lot of people went to work there to provide for their families.

What is disappointing for me at this late hour is my colleague from Trinity Spadina and the leader of the Green Party are using this as an opportunity to talk about a future they would like to see. They are not living in reality.

The reality is a lot of Newfoundlanders are working in our resource sector. A lot of families are driving their minivans. We do not have a dream world scenario right now where the internal combustion engine is obsolete. The member might like that but it is not the reality. The reality is that in the U.S. market, people are buying trucks, not sedans.

We have to work with our domestic industry. Right now we are not competitive. We can build more efficient cars but we have to be competitive in terms of the marketplace here.

Does the member not recognize that we have to come up with policies that recognize consumer trends, consumption and the fact that we are burning fossil fuels today? It is little solace to families talking in the present about a future that does not exist.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, with all due respect to my hon. colleague from Durham, if the world was not moving to electric vehicles, General Motors would not be closing the plant to say it is now moving to no longer make internal combustion engines. That is a business decision made in Detroit.

I want the workers in Oshawa and all the supply chain that is impacted by this devastating decision to know that we are capable of shifting gears and producing vehicles which, by the way, are not only important because that is where the market is shifting, that is where disruptive technologies are shifting, but that is where we must shift.

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The Conservative Party must take account of the science that says if we do not hold to 1.5°C, we will lose human civilization. That matters to every single person in this place and the Conservative Party had better get some science tutorials.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am truly glad to rise today to speak to this very sad situation. Talking about cars is a joy, but it is unspeakably sad to learn, as we did today, that 3,000 Ontario workers will be losing their jobs. It is appalling.

I said it is a joy because cars are one of humanity's guilty pleasures. I am 55 years old; I was born in 1963. When I was younger, I dreamed of owning a Duster with big tires and side pipes. That was my dream for years. I have been driving a Prius for the past 17 years, and it may not be terribly exciting, but it is the right thing to do. The problem with the Prius is that it is imported, so it does not really support Canadian industry. The Oshawa plant that will be closing its doors has been open since 1930, if memory serves. People have been making cars in that part of the country for a long time.

Which vehicles are made there today? They make the Chevrolet Impala, a small police car. I have had one as a rental car on occasion, and it is pretty nice to drive. Surprisingly, it is relatively good on gas. When the speedometer was showing 110 or 115 kilometres an hour—yes, I drive 15 kilometres over the speed limit—the car used 6.7 litres per 100 kilometres, if I remember correctly. That is pretty good, but that is not the current market trend, as my Conservative colleague said. People want big cars and SUVs. It is too bad, since we need to think about the environment right now, but that is the market trend.

The GM plant manufactures the Impala, the Cadillac XTS and the Equinox. Anyone, including the Prime Minister, can see that those models are on their last legs. Those old models are not very trendy. The Chevrolet Equinox probably still sells well, but it is definitely not the car of the future. Everybody knows that everything is built on platforms. I do not know the name of the platform used to manufacture the Impala and the Cadillac XTS, but it is a platform that has reached the end of its life cycle.

My colleague from Durham talked about the Chevrolet Volt. That car was manufactured in a plant in the United States that also shut down. I do not think that the closure of the American plant is an indication that hybrid vehicles have no future. The reality is that the Chevrolet Volt is built on the Chevrolet Cruze platform. The Chevrolet Volt is a hybrid of the Chevrolet Cruze. It is not the plug-in hybrid technology that is being abandoned, but the look of the Volt. Anyone who knows a little about cars will notice the similarities between the two, particularly with regard to the way the cabin is built. Only the look of the Volt is changing. The car will eventually be back in a different form. Obviously, that is what is intended because it was a great commercial success.

When I bought my first Prius in 2001, everyone laughed at me, even Jacques Duval. Today, he is a great supporter of the Tesla, but at the time, he said that these cars were ridiculous and that they were not going anywhere. Toyota gambled on hybrid vehicles and won. That is why we are proud to know that some Toyota hybrids are built

here in Canada. Hybrid cars popularized the idea of driving a vehicle powered by something other than a combustion engine.

The Chevrolet Volt is a commercial success. Quebeckers love that car. The Chevrolet dealership in Rawdon is the top dealership in North America. It is no doubt the General Motors dealership that sells the most cars like the Volt, the Sonic, or perhaps the Sprint, and the Bolt, both by volume and per capita. It gets the lion's share. Many Ontarians buy from that dealership because Quebec offers a lot of incentives for purchasing an electric vehicle. The Volt is a major seller, and I find that reassuring. In my opinion, that model will come back on another platform.

● (2330)

Canada's auto manufacturers always end up with the short end of the stick. Having spoken to workers' groups and representatives of Canadian manufacturers, I can see that companies are fond of describing themselves as international players. They do not want to say that their made-in-Canada cars are better than the others. They do not want to get into regionalization. As members can imagine, this would not be beneficial for them. At the very least, they do not see it as a positive.

We have to do this, at least as much as our trade agreements allow us to. We should be proud of what is manufactured here. We should be promoting the vehicles manufactured by our workers.

Earlier I said that a long time ago, in 2003, Jack Layton pushed for a plan, a vision, to renew Canada's automotive sector.

I understand that Canadian auto workers look down on Japanese vehicles or other vehicles that come from elsewhere. Unfortunately, up until now, the electric vehicle movement was essentially limited to imports.

Our relationship with the auto industry in general is not one of equals. It is the epitome of cynicism. If I look at the notes we had on GM, it would seem that bailing out companies is inevitable. Two days later, the boss gives himself a bonus before closing up shop. In this case, the government gave GM a \$14-billion tax break just last week.

In the meantime, we cannot be so self-centred as to ignore reality. GM is facing challenges. According to the numbers I saw and the consultations I have held, the company is very profitable. It is in the process of downsizing. We see it quite often. These companies are posting profits, but in this case it was not enough, because 2,500 jobs are being cut in Oshawa. It is cynical. It is even more so when we consider that it was just given a lovely \$14-billion gift. The company got financial assistance when it needed it, and now it is closing its doors.

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That said, what I want to focus on is the pride we should take in what we make. In Canada, we manufacture vehicles that may seem a bit outdated, a bit last-generation. However, not many people know that we also make cars like the Toyota Corolla, a top seller with broad appeal. Normally, the plant should not have to close. Of course, the Cruze is a whole different story, because the platform needs to change.

In Canada, we manufacture the Toyota Corolla, the Toyota RAV4, the Lexus RX 350 and the Lexus RX 450H, which is the hybrid model. We also manufacture the RAV4 hybrid. Not many people know that.

Once the car is in the dealer showroom, is there anything preventing us from saying that the car was built in Canada or that it is a modern, environmentally friendly car? I would think that would be a plus, yet nothing is ever said about that.

The last time I went to California, I drove through strawberry country and saw signs saying “America's best strawberries”. Americans are always tooting their own horn. In Canada, we never brag about what we do. I think that is a bit of a shame.

Toyota manufactures its cars here because we have good workers who do an excellent job of assembling cars and who know how to do it. They know very well that they are going to sell those cars to their neighbours, and they want them to be made right. We can be proud of our workers. Unfortunately, I do not know why we are so embarrassed about this.

● (2335)

I want to point out that there are a lot of RAV4 hybrids in the government's fleet. This is a good thing, and I am proud of it.

In addition to those three GM vehicles, we also make the Ford Flex, which, I must admit, will soon be discontinued. This model was quite unique, but it is clearly not a car of the future. The Ford Edge and its equivalent at Lincoln, the MKT, are interesting vehicles, but as far as I know, they will soon be discontinued. We have been making these cars for quite a while, so this is a bit worrisome.

As a politician in Ottawa, I do not find it reassuring to know that we make the Ford Flex, the Lincoln MKT and the Ford Edge. These are old models. We also make the Ford GT, an extremely prestigious car with a short run, but I still think it is worth pointing out that skilled Canadians hands manufactured such a prestigious vehicle.

Before I talk about Chrysler, I need to talk about Honda, which manufactures the popular Civic. Something tells me that this model is not going anywhere. I would be shocked if there were problems at that plant. We also manufacture the Honda CR-V, a much larger, but extremely popular, model. I have no concerns about this plant either, although I cannot say the same about Ford's.

Next, I wanted to talk about Chrysler, for I am not at all reassured, given that in Brampton, a suburb of Toronto, the price of a bungalow keeps going up, not to mention all the rumours going around. I am pretty sure that neither management nor the union would disagree with me on this: the Brampton plant just completely renovated its paint facility. I think tens of million of dollars were invested in it.

That is where the Chrysler 300, the Challenger and the infamous and aptly named Demon are manufactured. I think the Demon has 700 horsepower under the hood, which is about the same as eight Honda Civic engines. It is a beast. These are limited editions, and they can be very exciting and quite beautiful. However, they are relics of transportation prehistory on our planet, since they are powered by engines that produce an appalling level of pollution.

The Dodge Charger, Dodge Challenger and Chrysler 300 are three very nice cars that many young men might find exciting, but honestly, we have to admit that their future does not look bright.

Now we come to the model that interests me the most. Yes, I am interested in the Dodge Caravan, but I especially like the Chrysler Pacifica. My colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands mentioned the movie *Who Killed the Electric Car*. I went to the Windsor and Detroit area and had the chance to see the sites that are interesting to people who are into cars.

First, I saw the first versions of the Pacifica, which is delivered with a rechargeable hybrid engine. It is a regular car for a regular family. I agree that it could be less expensive, and could be better supported, but it is equipped with a rechargeable hybrid system.

That means it is not unreasonable to think that a family living in a Toronto suburb with a Pacifica Hybrid could leave their house, drop off the children at day care and school, go to work, park the car, not plug in, all without using a drop of gas. Then when they go to visit grandma in Muskoka, the engine will start. At the end of the day, the family will fill up the gas tank once every two months. That is not bad as far as I am concerned. It is progress.

Has anyone really ever heard of this vehicle, though? It would appear that even the government has never heard of it, because I have been keeping an eye on it for two years now. There were two vehicles here in front of Parliament for the Canada 150 celebrations. This year, another official vehicle was used for the Canada Day celebrations and it ran on gas. What a bad idea.

There was no shortage of tourists that could have been shown those vehicles and who would have thought to themselves, “It's probably built in Windsor and it's all electric”. People can tell when a car is electric because they do not hear it pull up. It runs clean without exhaust emissions. We will not talk about it though. It is far too great of a Canadian success to actually talk about.

● (2340)

I visit Windsor to see that plant and that truck. People who like cars and who visit Windsor also go across the way to Detroit, Motor City, while they are there. Detroit is home to the headquarters of GM and the big towers that are right across from Windsor. Detroit is also home to the famous plant where the Ford F-150 is built.

I was therefore pleased to learn, even though this still surprises me, that the Ford F-150 is the best-selling vehicle in North America. It outsells the Honda Civic and other brands of pickup trucks.

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There is a reason for that, however. A lot of people need a pickup truck, and that is fine. I have a few doubts about my neighbour in Longueuil who has a really big pickup and, as far as I know, does not have to tow a trailer full of tools, a fifth-wheel trailer, or anything like that. Does he really need a truck like that to go to Jean Coutu? I have my doubts. It seems to me that it may not be a very good choice, but overall it is top selling vehicle.

I was delighted to see it at the plant and to see a plant like that one. I have not visited plants in Canada, but I can say that the Ford F-150 plant in Rouge River is a marvel of automation. The employees there work in a lab-like setting with gloves and little mitts. It is a model factory very much inspired by the man who invented the assembly line, Mr. Ford himself. I visited that place, and I was overjoyed to see that the gas tank is made in my riding, in Boucherville, by Spectra Premium Industries.

Obviously, this will have a huge impact on jobs and the economy. Anyway, I took a little detour to go see the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation. While there, I saw GM's famous EV1, the electric car that debuted in the 1990s through Saturn. That model was destroyed, put out of commission by the oil industry. That was such a shame, and I have never really forgiven GM for making something so wonderful and then selling out to the oil lobby.

Today, in 2018, the Chrysler Pacifica hybrid is a vehicle that is well suited to the needs of Canadian families. Unfortunately, there is no sense of pride, no Canada-wide incentives, for this vehicle. We also do not have a vision for what we could do to improve Canada's automotive sector.

Unfortunately, the dealers that have these cars do not promote them. They do not want to sell them and would rather sell the regular Caravan minivan, which carries a profit margin of \$1,200. The Pacifica does not have such incentives, and the margin is just \$200 or \$300. They would rather not convince a customer to buy a \$50,000 van to earn just \$300.

What this means is that I am worried for the Pacifica Hybrid, a vehicle than can be plugged in and that is manufactured in Windsor. This is the most futuristic vehicle ever manufactured in Canada, and I think that if we do not do something, we will lose it. We need to wake up, have some vision and be proud.

• (2345)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for his speech this evening. My father started his career at General Motors in Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec. He moved to Oshawa after a few years, where he lived for 30 years.

The member spoke for a few minutes about electric vehicles, like the Prius or Tesla. However, these cars account for just 1% of the market.

Does the member have any ideas now for the workers in Oshawa?

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank the member for asking his question in French.

Second, I am touched to know that his father worked in Sainte-Thérèse. Back in the day, Sainte-Thérèse is where they made the four-door Pontiac LeMans, that run-of-the-mill car everyone's

mother-in-law drove. It was fine. Eventually, however, front-wheel drive took over and rear-wheel-drive cars fell out of fashion.

What happened next? The Sainte-Thérèse plant manufactured the last of those prehistoric vehicles: the Firebird, the Trans Am and the Camaro. We ended up with a mediocre factory. We always wind up with scraps, leftovers, auto manufacturing flotsam and jetsam. Can we make the next vehicle? Can we invest in a facility that will last 10 years instead of producing cars that will no longer be made a year and a half from now?

The member mentioned electric vehicles. What can we do for the people of Oshawa? When Bombardier announced it would be cutting 2,500 jobs, Montreal's aerospace sector banded together and took action. Can we work together to find places for these people? An entire city is traumatized by this turn of events. Can we stop quarrelling amongst ourselves and work together to find a way to put pressure on GM to retool the factory for the cars of tomorrow, not some old diesel dinosaur?

• (2350)

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for your service to us tonight on your birthday. I think there could be nicer places to spend your birthday, but thank you for doing what you are doing.

I thank the hon. member for all the car references. I am thinking of Ste-Thérèse. I visited that plant many times. They made the F-body Camaro and the Pontiac Firebird. They made the Chevrolet Vega back in the seventies.

Quebec has always been progressive in terms of climate change. The cars on the road are Jetta diesels. They are European cars. They are smaller cars, whereas Quebec used to build the bigger cars.

Could the hon. member comment on the incentives from the provincial government toward electric vehicles and how important it is for the provincial government and the federal government to work together on climate change initiatives, such as they have in Quebec? Could the hon. member comment on moving toward the car of the future in Quebec and how it can contribute to the national discussion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is true that there seems to be an interest in alternative vehicles in Quebec. In fact, Quebec has the highest number of electric vehicles per capita in Canada, and I am very proud to say so.

The biggest market in Quebec is the south shore, and more specifically Longueuil. That is why I formed a coalition in Longueuil with my provincial and federal colleagues. We are six elected officials who fight to raise the profile of transport electrification.

No one knows this, but a company called Avestor, which is owned by Hydro-Québec, was building a battery. It was eventually sold, at an astronomical price, to the Bolloré Group, a French company that created a vehicle based on that battery. If I remember correctly, it was designed by Pininfarina, a great car designer, which created a small, four-door car with that battery, which can now be found in 4,600 electric cars in Paris's car sharing program.

Unfortunately, this program is winding down. As in the case of BIXI, there were problems and operating deficits. That said, at the time, it was the biggest test fleet of electric vehicles ever seen. We have every reason to be proud of our prototypes. The battery must have had some great qualities to have spawned such a tremendous project, but ultimately, they moved on to the next generation. The Minister of Science said that he had supported Blue Solutions in the development of its next generation of batteries.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague clearly knows a lot about cars, something that I do not. More importantly, his speech talked about the promotion of pride, which is to buy Canadian. I think that is what he is talking about. British Columbia used to have an aquaculture program promoted by the former minister of agriculture, Corky Evans. He talked about it all the time and it was everywhere, in all of the shops. I think that is what the member is talking about, discussing promoting Canadian-made products.

Talking about the future of cars, in British Columbia, Premier John Horgan just made an announcement, saying that B.C. will move to zero emissions for cars by 2040. That is an ambitious goal, one that I think we can all look to across the country. To that end, can the member comment on what role the federal government can play in working with the provinces and industry to move into the future with new vehicles and, at the same time, ensure that those vehicles are built here and technology is developed in Canada to support our workers?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and for being here. We are having an emergency debate about the closure of the GM plant in Oshawa. My colleague just flew in from Vancouver about an hour and a half ago, and she is here. I congratulate her, and I think that all the workers at the Oshawa plant will thank her.

We are talking about electric vehicles. Electra Meccanica is a Vancouver company that builds great three-wheeled electric vehicles for the commuter market. Their vehicles are used by DHL, an express courier service. Many of these yellow vehicles are on the streets. Electra Meccanica also makes a convertible model, the Tofino, which will be fully electric. These cars are manufactured in Vancouver. We know that there is an interest in the environment and best practices in that region.

I have here the brief submitted by Electric Mobility Canada, which made five recommendations to the federal government. This organization was heavily involved in the consultations requested by the Minister of Transport. However, nothing has happened yet, unfortunately. It is really deplorable because delays on current issues

like transport electrification can lead to our automotive industry being perceived as a dinosaur with no vision for the future.

I would like to point out that Toyota manufactures a RAV4 that is completely electric, but it is only sold in California. No one has ever seen it here.

● (2355)

[English]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is certainly a very serious subject that we are speaking about in the House of Commons tonight. In the context of all the pain being felt by the workers, who have obviously heard the bleak news in the last 24 hours regarding General Motors, one of the things that stunned me when I was first elected as a member of Parliament was learning that Innovation, Science and Economic Development had invested \$20 million in the car of tomorrow program out of Kitchener. When asked how many jobs it would create, even spinoff jobs, the answer was zero.

Given the number of jobs that will be lost, could the member speak on that specific investment and how to put measurements in place to ensure that the dollars we do spend on the auto sector actually bring a return for the Canadian auto worker?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. Tonight is about the workers losing their jobs. We want to take emergency measures, such as convincing GM to give rebates or 0% interest on the Equinox and sell the Impala at a lower price. These are last-ditch efforts.

Ideally, we would build a car of the future in Oshawa. Why does the plant not build the next Volt? It is no longer being built in Detroit, and we want it here. We want to build the new Volt here.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will remind the member he will have only a few minutes to speak. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to take the floor this evening at this hour to share a few thoughts before we wrap up this emergency debate.

It may seem like a late hour for us, but I know that there are many families tonight in Oshawa, in Durham region and across Ontario who are having late nights themselves, because they are worried. They are worried about what is next, about what their jobs may entail or if they are going to have jobs. Each employee is connected. They have families and they have loved ones. They are soccer coaches, Sunday school teachers, volunteers and members of service clubs. They are all part of our community and today their lives were shaken. They were changed and now they do not know what is next.

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This decision came out of the blue. We did not see it coming. We have to ask why. What caused this decision to be made and why was it that GM decided that in Canada this plant in particular was not the one it wanted to keep open, it was not the one it should be keeping open? We know that the innovation, technology and workforce is there to produce those vehicles and do that manufacturing. This affects not just the region but all of us across Canada, whether it is parts manufacturers in my riding of Perth—Wellington or others across the country.

I know that my time is up, but I did want to be on the record tonight to say how important it is for us as the opposition and Canadians to voice our support for the people of Oshawa, Durham and across Canada.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As it is midnight, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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