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(HANSARD)

Monday, March 18, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 18, 2019

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has been appointed member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of the member for Berthier—Maskinongé for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

FRAUD AGAINST SENIORS

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should: (a) recognize the disproportionate effect of fraud activities against the seniors community across Canada; (b) coordinate a national response to fraud activities to ensure that seniors and other vulnerable groups have the resources they need to understand the signs of fraud; (c) establish tangible recourses for victims of fraud; and (d) work with local law enforcement agencies and the Canada Revenue Agency to introduce legislation to combat fraudulent attacks targeting vulnerable seniors.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I stand in this place to speak to my private member's motion, Motion No. 203, with regard to seniors fraud. While I am eager to talk about my motion, I must first acknowledge the contribution of our Conservative team.

I want to thank my colleague from Edmonton West and his staff for their hard work on this motion, as well as his engagement with seniors and stakeholders in Edmonton and across Canada. While he may not quite be a senior yet, it is very reassuring to see him and the younger generation of members in this place recognize the incredible value that our seniors contribute to our day-to-day lives. I have every confidence that he will be a stalwart champion of our wisest demographic for many years to come in this place.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague from Langley—Aldergrove for all of his hard work on the seniors file, as well as his constituents. In the next Parliament, this place will be losing a dedicated and principled advocate for seniors, for their financial security and palliative care. I look forward to continuing

our relationship when he departs from Ottawa later this year for his retirement.

May 18, 2011 remains as one of the most important days in my life. That was the day I was sworn in as minister of state for seniors under the previous government. It was a role that I served in with great reverence and respect for over four years. Being the voice at the cabinet table for nearly a quarter of Canadians is no small task. Each and every day, I went into the ministry with the hope of making life easier and fairer for the nearly five million Canadians I was asked to represent, in addition to my 100,000 constituents in the city of Richmond.

I am very proud of the work we did as a cabinet, including working with my colleague from Niagara Falls in implementing changes to the Criminal Code to combat seniors fraud. I hope today, with the support of all parties, to continue that work.

Unfortunately, domestic and foreign criminal elements are increasingly resorting to fraud in an effort to make a quick profit off of those who are most vulnerable. Our seniors have spent their entire lives building our country and deserve to live out their golden years with the dignity, respect and safety that they have earned. This is why I have tabled Motion No. 203 on seniors fraud.

In my home riding of Richmond Centre, two of the most popular tactics used by criminals are a famous CRA scam and visa scams. I think we are all aware of the former scam, but I would like to explain the latter.

As we all know, Richmond has a very high population of Chinese speakers, and many of the older generation come from abroad. Many of my constituents have family members who are legally here in Canada on visas or permits. Over the past year, scammers have been calling many of my constituents and claim to be representatives of a foreign embassy or consulate. They then go on to demand that a certain amount of money, under the guise of a visa fee or a similar administrative fee, be paid to them electronically. I have been the target of this scam, as have my staffers.

Private Members' Business

While some of my younger constituents who have the benefit of being educated from a young age on the dangers of the scams may be able to recognize and report this fraud to the relevant authorities, many of the seniors in my riding lack that awareness and knowledge. Couple that with the fact that many seniors are not familiar with the legal minutia surrounding visas and the immigration process, and we have a demographic that is ripe for being targeted by fraudsters, through no fault of their own.

A second scam, which made local headlines in Richmond, involves the targeting of local seniors by scammers posing as employees of the City of Richmond. The scammers call locals and inform them that they need to pay city taxes or a parking fine. However, this scam is lower tech. The scammers indicate that the fee or taxes must be paid in person and arrange a time and place to facilitate payment. In this case, it was the municipal parking lot at Richmond City Hall. Luckily for the individuals involved, they took the step of inquiring about these fees or fines at the city hall beforehand and were able to thwart the scammers.

This is an issue of concern not only for seniors, but for Canadians across this country. In a recent householder, I asked my constituents if they supported my motion. I am extremely proud to say that the overwhelming majority of constituents who responded, regardless of age, supported my motion.

I have also conducted consultative round tables with seniors and organizations serving seniors across the nation. I would again like to thank all of the participants for their contributions toward the debate on Motion No. 203.

This is what they told me.

The Ontario Society of Senior Citizens' Organizations has said that policing authorities cannot opt out of dealing with fraud complaints and reports from seniors. In other words, they need to be part of the solution and given the jurisdiction to do so. Seniors who have suffered or are suffering from fraud do not know where to go for help. There is a need for resources for these victims.

From my own recollection of consultation visits in earlier years, the City of Calgary has an excellent model, which I will discuss later in more detail.

Representatives from the CNIB point out that the most vulnerable are often those who are socially isolated. Seniors can also be better equipped with tools to fight against fraud by increasing their understanding of technology. In other words, they need to be better informed and better educated. A church administrator raised the concern of a lack of resources to advise seniors on how to identify frauds and not become victims.

Another issue, identified by The Neighbourhood Group, is that there is a language barrier for seniors who have limited English or French in understanding the laws and regulations in different levels of government. They are often scared because of the lack of correct information in their own language. This is especially serious in cities where there is a large number of immigrants. This issue was echoed by several cultural groups through the interpreters at the round tables. They also believe in tougher laws and sentencing to fight the criminals, the scammers.

The International Federation on Ageing shared its findings with respect to identifying seniors fraud across the world. It added that there is the need, as one of the prevention tools, to educate front-line bank tellers on awareness of financial fraud targeting seniors. The whole banking industry should be involved.

All these concerns regarding seniors fraud are real. My hon. colleague from Edmonton West had a similar response. However, I will leave it to him to comment on that, as I do not want to steal his speech material.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast are calling on the government to take action to combat seniors fraud. Here are more facts.

Today, we live in a society that is digitizing at an unprecedented rate. We are now able to store massive amounts of information on barely visible microchips and transmit massive amounts of information across vast distances in the blink of an eye. It has allowed for meteoric advances in all fields of society, including health care, infrastructure and research, to name a few. It has played an integral role in propelling humanity to its technological zenith. Its benefits are countless and cannot be understated. However, as with most things, there are unintended and serious drawbacks.

• (1110)

With increasing cellphone use, computers, email, the Internet and other electronic media, the digital shift in the modern economy provides many new opportunities for those who seek to do harm to our seniors. I do not think it is hyperbolic to say that there is not a single member in this place who has not received a complaint from a constituent about phishing, fake romantic interest, foreign embassies demanding visa payments or the infamous CRA calls. Despite efforts to increase digital literacy among all demographics, the reality is that these new and evolving technologies are not always easy to grasp and understand, especially for a demographic that grew up in an age bereft of the immense levels of the digital practices we see today.

Each day scammers are finding new and creative ways to swindle our seniors out of their hard-earned cash. For example, earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Justice charged more than 260 people as a result of the largest elderly fraud sweep in American history. These 260 people managed to steal over three-quarters of a billion dollars from seniors, or nearly \$750,000 for each person charged.

While an increasingly digitized society has provided innumerable benefits to society at large, it has also paved the way for new challenges. However, I would suggest that no group is facing these challenges more directly than our seniors. Apart from run-of-the-mill phone scams, statistics show that nearly two-thirds of seniors experience some sort of security issue online but are less likely to report it to authorities compared to younger Canadians. It is this disproportionate vulnerability that the shift to a digital economy has created for an aging population that my motion seeks to address.

Private Members' Business

Motion No. 203 calls on this place to recognize that seniors are disproportionately victims of fraud and scams that target vulnerable Canadians. The data is crystal clear and irrefutable. According to a 2010 report by the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, older Canadians were deemed to be at a heightened risk of attempted fraud for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, their trusting nature, their isolated social status and their personal savings. This is why I started working closely with banks and credit unions when I was appointed the minister responsible for seniors in 2011, which resulted in the age credit, the pension income tax credit, pension income splitting and steps aimed at increasing digital literacy. The previous Conservative government also passed Bill C-36, the Protecting Canada's Seniors Act, in 2012, which included vulnerability due to age as an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes.

The problems facing seniors today are more pronounced because of increasing amounts of fraud and an increasing senior population. Government statistics reveal that seniors are the fastest-growing demographic group in Canada. By 2030, the number of seniors will reach 9.6 million people, representing close to one-quarter of Canada's population. The life expectancy of Canadians is expected to continue to rise. Canadian men and women born in 2016 will live, on average, to 87 and 90 respectively, according to Employment and Social Development Canada in February 2019.

• (1115)

Recognizing that the dregs of civil society would target people specifically because of their trusting nature and their inability to readily rely on family is a very uncomfortable spectre, but it is a reality nevertheless. I, and I hope many in this place, consider making this formal recognition in this House a very important step in continuing the fight against seniors fraud.

The next step in addressing this very serious—

• (1120)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The time has now expired.

Questions and comments. 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, over the last few years, we have seen a lot of emphasis on Canada's seniors, from the guaranteed income supplement increases to the amount of housing for our seniors.

The member raises a very important issue, the exploitation of seniors that takes place every day, whether it is within the family, within Canada or abroad. It is of the utmost importance that we look at ways we can try to minimize the negative activities that ultimately lead to the exploitation of Canada's seniors. It is one of the reasons the Prime Minister has now appointed a Minister of Seniors. I know she follows this file very closely to look at ways the government can work with other jurisdictions to try to minimize the amount of exploitation.

To what degree does the member believe, as we do, that we need to be engaged with different stakeholders on age and opportunity and so forth? It is, in good part, also about education.

Hon. Alice Wong: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for giving me the opportunity to speak further to my motion. As identified by the member opposite, we definitely need a minister. After three years of pressure from all parties, except their own, the Liberals finally appointed a Minister of Seniors. I welcome her good work, but she has a lot to catch up on.

The next step in addressing this serious issue is to work together to ensure that our seniors and families are given the tools necessary to identify and combat fraudulent activity. If our seniors are equipped with the knowledge and ability to identify fraud when they are targeted, they will be able to properly defend their identities and their money. While we strive for a situation whereby all seniors will be able to identify and skirt attempted fraud, some will fall victim despite their best efforts. For these unfortunate victims, we need to ensure that there are proper resource materials available—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments. The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Richmond Centre for bringing forward this piece of legislation. I have enjoyed working with her on committee on a national seniors strategy. I share some commonalities in my role as the seniors critic for my party and have done numerous town halls in my own region to talk to seniors. Fraud, of course, came up in the stakeholders meeting I had in Ottawa with organizations from across Canada that serve seniors. We heard again that fraud is a concern.

We know that what we need in this country is a fulsome national seniors strategy. As the seniors population grows, we need to have a strategy across the country, because too many seniors are falling through too many loopholes. I wonder if the member could talk to us a bit about how this legislation would feed into the national seniors strategy.

Hon. Alice Wong: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for serving very faithfully with us at the committee. We co-operate very functionally, because our role as members of Parliament is to make sure that we serve all our constituents, including seniors. I also would like to thank her for all her efforts in pushing the government to come up with a national strategy for seniors. This is indeed a very important element in protecting seniors. It should be part and parcel of the national seniors strategy.

• (1125)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about an important issue affecting seniors. I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Richmond Centre for putting forth Motion No. 203, a motion to address fraudulent scams that target Canadians for their money, including seniors.

Private Members' Business

Unfortunately, we are all too familiar with automated phone calls posing as the Canada Revenue Agency, in which the recipient is threatened with arrest for unpaid taxes. At least 60,000 Canadians have complained about being targeted by this phone scam. I have received these calls as well.

It is certainly not the only scam out there. Every year Canadians lose millions of dollars to the activities of scammers who bombard us with online, mail, door-to-door and telephone scams. I have had many conversations with seniors in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine who have been affected by these scams. In fact, I had this conversation with seniors in my riding this past weekend. Everyone put a hand up when asked if they had received one of those calls.

Scammers target people of all backgrounds, ages and income levels, including seniors. The Government of Canada is taking action to help Canadians protect themselves against scammers. The Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, raises awareness by providing information on its fraud prevention web page, sharing information with news networks, posting tips on social media, distributing pamphlets by mail and working with its partners to conduct community outreach activities.

The CRA regularly provides interviews and issues tax tips to the public and to stakeholders to help individuals recognize and avoid common scams. In fact, the CRA's regional offices are very active through proactive media outreach and participation in local events with community associations, especially local police forces and seniors' associations.

To support these efforts, the CRA regularly updates the “protect yourself against fraud” web page with the newest examples of fraudulent communications, tips to recognize an actual call from the CRA and printable posters that can be displayed in gift card sections or at bitcoin machines, which are common methods of payment fraudsters use to collect money from their victims.

In addition, a comprehensive MP kit was distributed in October of last year with the view that MPs can use the CRA's communication material, in collaboration with their local community associations, to help raise awareness and protect citizens from falling victim to tax scams.

The CRA recently ran a \$25,000 Facebook campaign, from mid-August to mid-September 2018. The campaign targeted seniors and new Canadians to raise awareness about email, phone and text scams. As a result, more than two million individuals visited the CRA's anti-fraud web page to learn more.

That is not all the government is doing to protect potential victims. One of the goals of the new horizons for seniors program is to tackle elder abuse and elder fraud.

[*Translation*]

The government has rolled out a number of fraud prevention initiatives. For example, there is the Fraud Prevention Forum, which is chaired by the Competition Bureau. This group of about 100 public- and private-sector organizations fights fraud aimed at consumers, including seniors.

In addition, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada is leading a strategy called “Strengthening Seniors’ Financial Literacy”. One of the goals of the strategy is to increase tools to combat financial abuse and fraud targeting seniors. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada also keeps Canadians informed and issues consumer alerts about fraud, scams and sales practices.

Lastly, we recently made legislative changes to Bill C-86, which would amend the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada Act and the Bank Act to strengthen the rights and interests of bank customers, including seniors, and ensure that all Canadians benefit from rigorous consumer protection standards in the banking sector.

• (1130)

[*English*]

I would like to make one thing very clear: Our government cares about seniors. We care about their health, their well-being and their financial security. The Prime Minister's decision to appoint a Minister of Seniors certainly attests to that. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, I know first-hand how critical it is to ensure financial security for our aging population and Canada's most vulnerable.

Our government has taken several important steps to make sure our seniors are protected financially. For example, through our government's commitment to income security, the poverty rate for seniors fell from 4.9% to 3.9% between 2016 and 2017. We have increased the amount of the guaranteed income supplement by up to \$947 per year for the lowest-income single seniors. While some people might think that \$947 more per year does not sound like much, for seniors living in poverty, that \$947 makes a big difference in covering the cost of basic necessities. It can bring peace of mind.

[*Translation*]

Increasing the guaranteed income supplement improved the financial situation of almost 900,000 low-income seniors. We also lowered the age of eligibility for the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement from 67 to 65. This measure will prevent some 100,000 vulnerable 65- and 66-year-olds from slipping into poverty in the future.

[*English*]

We worked with the provinces to enhance the Canada Pension Plan and the Régime de rentes du Québec to help ensure that tomorrow's seniors can also enjoy a secure and dignified retirement.

To add to that, we are making it easier for seniors to receive their benefits by transforming the way we deliver programs and services. In short, we are creating an opportunity to complete more transactions online using the device of their choice.

Private Members' Business

For example, using a new integrated application will allow clients to apply for both the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement at the same time. For citizens in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine who may not have access to a home computer, my office helps them to apply for these benefits.

Here is another improvement we have made to the delivery of benefits: Seniors who receive their CPP benefits by direct deposit will receive their combined OAS and CPP or RRQ benefits in the same account.

We are simplifying and streamlining our services to make sure Canadian seniors get the benefits they are entitled to receive. We know that financial security is top of mind for older Canadians, and that is why we continue to put more money into their pockets.

As well, through the various outreach and awareness campaigns I mentioned, we are taking action to warn seniors about the scammers who are trying to take away their hard-earned money.

Budget 2018 included a \$116-million investment to strengthen Canada's ability to fight cybercrime by creating the National Cybercrime Coordination Unit. As we can see, there is a lot of work being led and funded by our government to support seniors, and I am very proud of that, but there is more to be done. Support for Canada's most vulnerable requires a collaborative approach with our provincial, territorial and community partners.

I look forward to working with all members of the House to make sure our aging population can live safely, enjoy good health and receive the care and financial supports that they need.

I have had the great pleasure to speak with seniors in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine and they have been incredibly helpful in sharing their concerns, their ideas and their advice. I want to thank them for their wise counsel.

Our seniors have paved the way for us, and together, we will be there for them.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are here today to talk about Motion No. 203, which addresses fraud activities against seniors, and I thank the member for Richmond Centre for bringing this motion forward to us today.

It is really important that all of us take a moment to recognize that the seniors in this country built this country. If it were not for them, we would not be sitting in the seats we are sitting in today and would not be in this country the way we are today.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the former mayor of Port McNeill, Gerry Furney, who passed away in February at the age of 85. If we want to talk about people building this country, Mayor Furney was a man who built a large part of northern Vancouver Island. We should all be grateful for the amazing work he did. He was the mayor of Port McNeill for 39 years and he served on council for a total of 46 years. Talk about community service.

I want to take this opportunity to send my condolences to his wife Carmel and his beautiful children, James and Liza. I cannot imagine how much they must long for him and miss him.

Today when we are talking about this important issue of fraud activities against seniors, it is important to recognize that the Canada

Safety Council has told us that fraud costs Canadians more than \$10 billion annually. We know many seniors are vulnerable to scams, and that can be very scary. I listened to the previous speaker talk about accessing information about scams and fraud and I know how often the government speaks about the ability to get information online. I know some seniors who are amazing online and are building their capacity, and I also know a lot of seniors like my own grandmother, who is in her eighties, who says that she has learned a lot in her life and has no interest in ever sitting at a computer to do the things she needs to do.

In the case of fraud, seniors' vulnerability can often be found in the simple fact that accessing information can be a challenge. It can also be about being asked to do things in a different way and then being confused when the fraudsters are going after them. I think of one 82-year-old constituent in my riding named Susan, who was defrauded of \$3,000. She received a phone call from somebody claiming to be from the Canada Revenue Agency, who said that if she did not pay immediately, the RCMP would come to her door and arrest her. She was told that the only way to pay her debt would be to go to the store and purchase iTunes cards. Sadly, this wonderful woman did not know that this was not how one pays the CRA.

The important point is that as we see a changing economy across this country, a changing way of doing business, sometimes people are vulnerable because they do not understand the changes that are happening. After spending \$3,000 on these iTunes cards, Susan went back home, phoned the person she was supposed to call, and relayed all the numbers. That person then told her that if she did not get the other \$3,000 she owed by the next day, she would be arrested. She went to her bank the next day and was obviously in distress, and very gratefully the bank helped guide her through this situation and understand that it had been a fraud attempt.

When we look at this information, it is really important we put the vulnerability into context and recognize that sometimes seniors have a challenge in getting to technology.

I also want to make sure we all remember in this House—and the government has not addressed this in a meaningful way—that there are many communities across this country that do not have Service Canada right there for them so they can access services. People may not have access to the Internet. I know a lot of people think Internet is everywhere, but in the riding of North Island—Powell River, we have communities that are really challenged to have accessible Internet. We still have communities and regions where the only access is through dial-up. It is important to recognize that and be mindful of it when we look at this issue.

Private Members' Business

When I look at where we need to go as a country in terms of serving seniors, I see that we need to remember the importance of having a national seniors strategy. Right now we have a government that has made multiple announcements about planning for this strategy, but we really need something concrete that seniors can rely on. Right now, too many loopholes exist around this country, and seniors are falling through them.

• (1135)

It is important to understand that in Canada the population of seniors is seeing a growth in poverty. We saw 7.6% in the year 2000, and it has gone up to over 11% as of 2013. Sadly, I feel that this number is growing based on the number of phone calls to my office. We have a lot of seniors who are really challenged to afford their medication. We are getting calls regularly about seniors having to make very painful decisions because they simply cannot afford the medication they need to stay healthy.

When we talk about seniors in housing, the vulnerability there is huge. I have talked to too many seniors who were sick and could not get their taxes done on time and had their GIS cancelled, and now they are at risk of being evicted from their homes. Eighty-six-year-old women should not be calling any office in this country, afraid that they are going to be evicted because they were sick and sent their taxes in late and now do not have their guaranteed income supplement.

This motion really narrowly addresses one part, an important part, which is fraud and the vulnerability of seniors to fraud. So many of them have low incomes, and this can be a big challenge if they are just trying to make ends meet. Even if they are wealthy, this can be totally disabling and provide opportunities for them to be scammed in ways that we cannot imagine. We need to make sure that this is addressed, but it should be in the context of a national seniors strategy that really speaks to the vulnerability of seniors.

In my riding, North Island—Powell River, we see too many seniors moving from one community to another. We see people in the more remote communities being forced to move to bigger communities to access services, but their absolute social isolation creates very bad health determinants. Then we have people who are getting pushed out of the larger urban settings because of the cost of living. They are moving to smaller communities, away from the services. It is important that we make sure we support seniors in the best way possible so that they stay in the communities they know and have that social infrastructure and have access to health services.

We also know that the poverty rate for senior women is growing. It has increased to almost 30% of senior women. Those numbers are highly vulnerable people. If they are scammed for even a small amount of money, it could have huge impacts on their health and well-being and even the stability of their home, because they may not be able to stay in their home.

Last year I had the opportunity—and I have spoken about it in this House—to sit with a senior in her 80s who had a health scare. The family thought she was not going to make it. She was in the hospital for an extensive amount of time, and because of that, they had to move her out of her rental unit. Once she got better—and happily, she did get better—she was given a notice from the hospital saying that she needed to be gone from the hospital within a week, and if

not she was going to be charged \$1,200 a day. This woman with a severe infection was moved to a hotel, to live there and to try to make ends meet.

The vulnerability of our seniors across Canada is growing, and it is so important that we stand up in this place, understand the role they have played in building this country and make sure that we support them in their most vulnerable times. Right now, we are seeing that that is not happening. A small boost in the GIS is not making the life of those seniors change dramatically. I disagree with the government. I hear too many stories and see too much vulnerability.

The justice department says that each year, 10% of Canadian seniors are victims of crime. They have so many frauds perpetrated against them and they should not have to deal with these situations. It is really important that the government does its job in making sure that services and support are accessible.

Let us see that happen. Let us see our seniors being valued, and let us protect them by having a national seniors strategy whereby the country and all the provinces and territories and communities work together to make sure that these big, gaping holes that too many seniors and their families are falling through are closed.

That is our duty, and that is something that we should be proud of as Canadians. Today, we are not proud of how we treat our seniors.

• (1140)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise today in support of Motion No. 203. I will start by thanking my colleague from Richmond Centre for bringing forth this very important motion. I would also like to thank her for her many years of advocacy for seniors in the House and across Canada.

There are four major parts to this motion: first, recognizing the disproportionate effect of fraud activities against seniors across the country; second, coordinating a national response to fraud activities to ensure that seniors and vulnerable groups have the resources they need to understand the signs of fraud; third, establishing tangible recourses for victims of fraud; and fourth, working with local law enforcement agencies and the CRA to introduce legislation to combat fraudulent attacks that target vulnerable seniors.

Motion No. 203 originates from a motion I put forward a year ago, Motion No. 176, and I am especially pleased to see it being debated today. It is also very timely that March is fraud awareness month, so it is a great time to be debating the bill.

For many of the people in the House, when they approached politics for the first time, they were asked what their motivation was for running. When I submitted my nomination for my party, I told people it was to work for seniors. In my past life, when I lived in Victoria, I worked with an amazing organization called the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation. It looked after six hospitals for the elderly and severely disabled.

Private Members' Business

March in Victoria, through the Eldercare Foundation, is recognized as the 14th annual Embrace Aging Month and I want to take a moment to thank two people who are still with the Eldercare Foundation and doing amazing work there: Lori McLeod and Donald Clark. Besides helping with the six hospitals, they have introduced a lot of very innovative health care and aging issues and programs for seniors, which I would like to touch on briefly.

There is the Embrace Aging Month I spoke about that connects seniors to resources and activities in their communities. It has a pilot program called "ElderConnect", a wellness navigation system to make the journey to aging easier, both in the community and in the hospital system. Eldercare Foundation has also created a program called the safe lifeline program that helps seniors stay in their homes longer as opposed to moving into elder homes. Its slogan for this month, Embrace Aging Month, is "Be Well, Be Secure, Be Connected and Be Enriched". It looks after seniors and the most disabled in, as I said, six hospitals: the Aberdeen Hospital, which is the main one; Mount Tolmie; Glengarry; Priory; Heritage Woods; and the Oak Bay Lodge.

I started out many years ago as a fundraiser for the Eldercare group, later joined the board and became vice-president, and then I was very proud to spend several years as president of the Eldercare Foundation. I still contribute as an adviser to the board to this day.

After receiving my nomination, when I was door-knocking, one of the biggest things, if not the major thing, I heard from seniors is the unfairness of the RRIF rules, the registered retirement income fund rules that force seniors to roll their pensions into an RRIF at age 72 and start withdrawing money from that program to be taxed, whether they need the money or not.

The C.D. Howe Institute has studied this for years and has done great work. One of the things it stated about the RRIF, with the changes in lower returns but also increased life expectancy, is that there is a very real problem that seniors are going to outlive their savings. Another issue with the forced withdrawal is that it pushes seniors into a higher tax bracket. Therefore, not only are they pushed into a higher tax bracket but they have OAS, provincial and other clawbacks.

Seniors living in housing arranged in Edmonton, for example, through the Greater Edmonton Foundation, pay their rent based on their incomes. We are forcing seniors to withdraw money to be taxed, which pushes them into higher tax brackets and forces them to pay higher rents at the same time. For what purpose are we doing this? The C.D. Howe Institute said, if we let seniors leave their money in their RRIFs until they pass, the government would actually collect a higher amount of taxes in the end, rather than the bit-by-bit process right now.

From talking to seniors when I went door to door, I promised I would introduce a bill to address that issue. Bill C-301, my private member's bill, would eliminate the mandatory withdrawals. It would allow seniors to withdraw the money when they decide they need it, not when the government decides.

• (1145)

The Canadian Association for Retired Persons supported my bill. The C.D. Howe Institute supported my bill. However, what did the

government say? The Liberal candidate who was running against me said that it is the government that should decide how and when seniors get their money. It is not seniors deciding for themselves, but that the government should decide.

One of the Liberal members who argued against my private member's bill said that we should not have it; otherwise, seniors will hoard their retirement savings. This person actually said this in the House of Commons, believing that seniors should not decide when to withdraw their money, since this would allow seniors to hoard their money. We had another person stand in the House and blatantly mislead members by stating that it would cost the government \$500 million a year in lost tax revenues.

Unfortunately, the government voted it down, which is funny because in the budget being introduced tomorrow, when we look at the pre-consultations, what is in there? It is changes to the RRIF program. At least the government has admitted that this is an issue that it will address.

The government further went on and immediately eliminated the former minister of seniors program. Why was this? I am not really sure. I am pleased that Liberals have changed their minds and reinstated the Minister of Seniors to help look after seniors.

I want to look at the issue at hand, which is seniors fraud. It is one of the fastest-growing crimes in Canada and Edmonton. It is not just stereotypical seniors who are being defrauded and targeted. It is not just the frail, the elderly, those getting on or those lacking access to technology. Young, active seniors are being targeted and defrauded as well.

Recently, I did a seniors seminar on fraud at a west-end seniors association in my riding. About 120 seniors came out, and every single one of them said they had been contacted within the last two weeks by a fraud attempt. Fully 20% admitted they had been defrauded of some money.

There are big frauds. We heard about the CRA fraud today, in which people contact seniors and pretend they are from the CRA. It is quite funny that the CRA will never actually answer people's phone calls, but people think it actually has time to call people.

There is a grandma-and-grandpa fraud, in which fraudsters will follow families on Facebook. They will see grandparents posting and reposting pictures of their kids and grandkids in Mexico. They will target those seniors by calling and pretending they are the grandkids and then they will say they are in prison and they are in trouble in Mexico and ask the seniors not to tell mom and dad and to send some money.

Private Members' Business

There is the email phishing scam. Of course, we have all received the emails purporting to be from BMO, Royal Bank, Shaw, other banks and other companies, which look very professional and very real. However, fraudsters are trying either to get credit information or to hack computers.

There is the romance fraud, in which people will meet others over valid websites, such as eHarmony or Match.com. People will spend months grooming seniors and then will defraud them, asking for money for trips or this and that.

There is of course identity theft as well. There is a new one. I actually just received a Facebook message today through the Edmonton Police Service, to which I have to give a shout-out. It helps me a lot in the community by sending out officers to present fraud seminars with me. It is now warning people not to put too much information in obituaries, because people are using that for identity theft.

Like my colleague from Richmond Centre, I sent out a survey to all my constituents asking if they would support the bill. This is what they said.

Randy said, "It is not just the scam that's objectionable. I'm angry that the Fed. Govt. does nothing to stop the frequent disruptions.... Thanks for finally...[taking] action".

"My parents are seniors or are underfunded.... Shame on the Liberals and the NDP." That was from Darcy.

Karen said, "It's time to put Canadian seniors higher priority".

Someone else said, "I have been called many times on my cellphone while I have been driving and told it was the CRA and I owed...money."

Diane and Tony said, "As seniors, my husband and I have seen the incidences of online scams, banking scams and telephone scams increasing at an alarming rate. Thanks to our interest in keeping up with technology, we have avoided and reported some of the fraud attempts we have encountered. Other seniors we know have not been so lucky."

Another said that they are aware of many seniors who are vulnerable and who have fallen prey to these scams.

I have hundreds and hundreds of examples sent in by seniors who have been ripped off and by other people in my riding who note their parents have been ripped off.

I am glad that the member for Richmond Centre has tabled Motion No. 203. I hope all sides in the House will support the motion so that we can do something about senior fraud in Canada.

* * *

●(1150)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Wednesday, March 20 shall be an allotted day.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the notice from the hon. government House leader.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

* * *

FRAUD AGAINST SENIORS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all deeply concerned with the well-being and financial security of seniors. Older Canadians have made and continue to make such valuable contributions to our communities, workplaces and our families.

Seniors have been a priority for the Government of Canada and they remain a priority with good reason. Like many countries, Canada has a growing seniors population. We are seeing a huge demographic shift, which will bring many new opportunities but also challenges that we need to prepare for.

Seniors are the fastest-growing demographic group in Canada. For the first time in Canada's history, there are more Canadians aged 65 and older than there are Canadians aged 14 years and younger. It is projected that by 2030, seniors will represent nearly a quarter of the population. That is good news. It means that Canadians are living longer and that is something to celebrate. It also means that our government must continue to develop and promote important initiatives that address seniors issues and work to promote opportunities for Canadian seniors.

I welcome the motion put forth by the hon. member for Richmond Centre concerning fraudulent activities against seniors. Fraud is a serious crime that can affect all Canadians, but it is especially disheartening when seniors fall victim to this particular crime.

Each year, countless Canadians lose millions of dollars to scammers who bombard us with online mail, door-to-door and telephone scams. Scammers target people of all backgrounds, ages and income levels, including seniors. How do they do it? Fake lotteries, Internet frauds, "get rich quick" schemes and miracle health cures are some of the popular means of separating the unwary from their money. New varieties of these scams appear all the time.

Who has not received the automated phone call claiming to be from the Canada Revenue Agency and threatening people with arrest over unpaid taxes? I know that I have received many of those calls, as have many others in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. Hanging up is the best way to mitigate those annoying calls. Indeed, tens of thousands of Canadians have been targeted by this scam.

I can assure everyone that the government is running outreach efforts on several fronts to help Canadians protect themselves from scammers. The Canada Revenue Agency raises awareness by providing information on its fraud prevention page on Canada.ca, sharing information through news networks, posting tips on social media, distributing pamphlets by mail and working with its partners to conduct community outreach activities.

The agency regularly provides interviews and issues tax tips to the public and to stakeholders to help individuals recognize and avoid common scams. The CRA's regional offices are particularly active through media outreach and participating in local events with community associations, especially with local police forces and seniors associations.

To support these efforts, the CRA regularly updates the “Protect yourself against fraud” web page with the newest examples of fraudulent communications, tips to recognize an actual call from the agency and printable posters that can be displayed in gift card sections or at bitcoin machines, which are common methods of payment fraudsters use to collect money from their victims.

However, our efforts go well beyond that. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre is also playing a role in preventing fraud. It is Canada's central repository for data, intelligence and resource material as it relates to fraud. The information gathered by the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre is primarily used to support prevention through education and awareness, disruption of criminal activities, dissemination of intelligence, support to law enforcement and strengthening partnerships between the private and public sectors with the aim of maintaining Canada's strong economic integrity.

The Competition Bureau of Canada also produces an important guide entitled “The Little Black Book of Scams”. This booklet is available to all Canadians and it outlines many of the most common types of scams and lists the contact information of fraud fighting agencies that are there to help. It also provides tips on how to stop fraudsters in their tracks.

We also have a fraud prevention forum, which is chaired by the Competition Bureau. This forum is comprised of nearly 100 public and private sector organizations that focus on fighting fraud aimed at consumers and that, of course, includes seniors.

• (1155)

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada has developed a strategy entitled “Strengthening Seniors' Financial Literacy”. One of the four goals of the strategy focuses on increasing the number of tools to combat fraud and financial abuse of seniors. The agency also issues consumer alerts on fraud, scams and sales practices.

In the same vein, we are taking action to prevent and raise awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse. We carry out these efforts through programs like the new horizons for seniors program, which provides over \$35 million each year to support community-based projects that address issues such as elder abuse.

Last, I would like to mention the recently introduced legislative amendments to Bill C-86. The bill proposes to make amendments to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada Act and the Bank Act, which will advance the rights and interests of bank consumers, including seniors, and to ensure all Canadians benefit from strong consumer protection standards in banking. It will also provide the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada with additional tools to implement supervisory best practices. This agency will engage with banks and seniors groups to create a code of conduct to guide banks in their delivery of services to Canada's seniors. The Minister of Seniors supports these engagements.

Privilege

We also restored the age of eligibility for the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement from 67 back to 65 years old. This is keeping about 100,000 future 65 and 66 year-old vulnerable seniors from falling into poverty.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Our Canadian seniors are valued members of our society.

[*English*]

We are working from a number of fronts to raise awareness of fraudulent activities for all Canadians, including seniors. As I mentioned earlier, the Government of Canada is concerned with the financial security of older Canadians.

[*Translation*]

That is why we have taken steps to help more seniors get out of poverty.

[*English*]

We have done this by increasing the top-up of the guaranteed income supplement. This move alone is improving financial security for almost 900,000 low-income seniors and lifting thousands of seniors out of poverty. It is our duty to support and protect them, and that is exactly what we are doing.

The Government of Canada is committed to providing Canadian seniors and future retirees greater security and a better quality of life.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for 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.

[*Translation*]

We have received notice concerning a question of privilege from the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise a question of privilege pursuant to Standing Order 48. This relates to misleading statements made in the House by the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary regarding the scandal involving interference by the Prime Minister's Office in the work of the former attorney general.

Before I address the core of the issue, I wish to remind the House of a few principles. Oral question period exists so that opposition members can hold the government to account. To ensure that we retain the confidence of Canadians, questions must be rigorous and based on facts, and not simply an attack on the government. We have no problem acknowledging that.

Privilege

Of course, this also means that the government's answers must be factual, credible and transparent, so that the information that comes out of question period is reliable and accurate. That is a fundamental principle of our democracy.

This brings me to my main argument and the question of privilege I would like to raise. We believe that the answers given by the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary during oral question period on February 7 and 8 of this year breached the privilege of the House.

[English]

This is an extremely serious matter. Misleading statements are not only a breach of the privileges that MPs must rely on in the commissioning of their duties as parliamentarians, but they are also a breach of the trust of Canadians who elected this Parliament to govern responsibly. Therefore, I will ask that you, Mr. Speaker, find a *prima facie* case of privilege exists, so the matter can be further investigated in committee.

I want to point out that this is the first opportunity I have had to raise this issue since it became clear to all of us on March 7 that the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary made misleading statements. In the past, as you know, Mr. Speaker, Speakers have often ruled in such cases, quoting from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* second edition, at page 510, which states the following:

In most instances, when a point of order or a question of privilege has been raised in regard to a response to an oral question, the Speaker has ruled that the matter is a disagreement among Members of the facts surrounding the issue. As such, these matters are more a question of debate and do not constitute a breach of the rules or of privilege.

I would contend that there is no possible way to interpret the current contradiction from responses of February 7 and 8 as a difference of opinion. I will now get to that.

● (1205)

[Translation]

Here is the Minister of Justice's response on February 7:

[English]

Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said earlier today, neither he nor his office exerted any pressure or issued any directives in this matter.

As Attorney General for Canada, I am the government's chief legal officer. I take my responsibilities very seriously.

Again, I quote from later in that same question period:

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister dealt with this matter very clearly earlier today. He stated that neither he nor anyone in his office pressured my predecessor or myself to come to any particular decision in this matter.

As the Prime Minister stated earlier today, the allegations contained in The Globe and Mail article are false.

[Translation]

Today, we know that those answers misled the House. Here is what the parliamentary secretary said the next day, February 8:

[English]

Mr. Speaker, as I have said several times in this chamber today, at no point whatsoever were the current Minister of Justice or the former minister of justice pressured or directed by the Prime Minister or anyone in the Prime Minister's Office to make a decision on this or any other matter.

Again, I quote:

Mr. Speaker, at no point, N-O point, has the current Minister of Justice or the former minister of justice been pressured or directed by the Prime Minister or members of his cabinet.

I take issue with the member opposite. The member opposite has construed this as not being about pressure or direction. That is exactly what is at issue here. That is exactly what I am saying on the record. There was no pressure and no direction given by the Prime Minister or members of his cabinet on this or any other matter.

[Translation]

Once again, we can only conclude that these answers deliberately misled the House.

The former attorney general was very clear in her testimony before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights about the pressure that was put on her. In his testimony, Gerald Butts never denied meeting with the former attorney general and speaking to her.

However, the ultimate proof came from the Prime Minister's own lips at his March 7 press conference. La Presse quoted him as saying the following:

In the months that followed that meeting, I asked my staff to follow up regarding [the member for Vancouver Granville's] final decision. I realize now that in addition, I should have done so personally, given the importance of this issue and the jobs that were on the line. In recent days I have reviewed the testimony from the justice committee, including that given by [the member for Vancouver Granville], Gerald Butts, the Clerk of the Privy Council and the deputy minister of justice and deputy attorney general, recalling various interactions.

Each of these interactions was a conversation among colleagues about how to tackle a challenging issue. Each came at a time when my staff and I believed that the former minister of justice and attorney general was open to considering other aspects of the public interest. However, I now understand that she saw it differently.

[English]

According to the Toronto Star's article on his non-apology statement of semi-contrition, the Prime Minister went on to say, "I'm sure there were a broad range of issues discussed in these conversations...but...There was no inappropriate pressure." Also, "Even though I heard that she had made a decision, she indicated to me that she had made a decision — I asked her if she could revisit that decision, if she was open to considering to looking at it once again...."

The Prime Minister clearly acknowledges that there was indeed pressure placed on the former attorney general by him and his most senior advisers. His defence against the very serious accusations of political interference morphed from the February 7 and 8 line that "at no point, N-O point", was there pressure placed on her to the assertion on March 7, during our constituency week, that the pressure on her was simply of the run-of-the-mill variety, in his view, and certainly not illegal.

His statement on March 7 corroborates, in many ways what is relevant to my argument today, the testimony of the former attorney general, who told the justice committee:

Within these conversations, there were express statements regarding the necessity of interference in the SNC-Lavalin matter, the potential for consequences and veiled threats if a DPA was not made available to SNC.

She also told the committee:

Privilege

I experienced a consistent and sustained effort by many people within the government to seek to politically interfere in the exercise of prosecutorial discretion in my role as the Attorney General of Canada in an inappropriate effort to secure a deferred prosecution agreement with SNC-Lavalin.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

Whether this pressure was or was not appropriate or illegal has nothing to do with the question of privilege I am raising today. All parties involved, specifically the former attorney general, the current Attorney General, the Prime Minister's former principal secretary and, especially, the Prime Minister himself admit that there was pressure placed on the hon. member for Vancouver Granville in her former role.

Whether this pressure crossed any legal lines is not what matters to the House today. What is abundantly clear, and that is what I am getting at, is that the minister and the parliamentary secretary misled the House in their statements.

[*English*]

Clear and easily avoidable false statements have been made to this House by the minister and the parliamentary secretary, which not only is breach of the privileges of all members of the House, but also of all Canadians who have put their trust and faith in Parliament.

Here is a three-point summary of what I have just stated.

[*Translation*]

First, the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary made misleading statements; we see that when we compare their statements in the House with their subsequent testimonies. Second, they did this knowingly in order to put an end to this scandal they are embroiled in; both the Prime Minister and his former principal secretary could have told the minister and the parliamentary secretary that they were making false statements in the House. Third, they did this to wilfully mislead the House, again to make this scandal go away as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

It is entirely possible that the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary were simply being briefed by the Prime Minister's Office ahead of question period on February 7 and 8 to give black-and-white clear answers in an effort to throw a wet blanket on the explosive story that broke on February 7, or they might have listened to the Prime Minister's statement on February 7, which was carefully crafted and legally vetted, and drew an unwarranted conclusion that the allegations were completely false. It could also be the case that the Prime Minister's Office told them the truth about what happened and they decided on their own that it would be better to deliberately mislead the House than to risk pouring more gas on what was becoming a dumpster fire.

Any of those things could be the reason that the two honourable members in question came into the House and blatantly misled members of Parliament about what really happened. They were clear and unapologetic. On February 8, the member for Parkdale—High Park said, “That is exactly what I am saying on the record. There was no pressure...given by the Prime Minister...”. That is blatantly false, and contemptuous of the authority and dignity of this chamber.

It should be said that the government was in full possession of the truth on this matter, and instead of sharing that truth with the House, they gave us politically expedient deceit instead. This is the very reason why the matter should be sent to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for further study: to determine why Canadians were all so badly misled by the government.

This situation is a stark reminder of a similar case from 2002, when former speaker Peter Milliken ruled that then minister of defence, Art Eggleton, had misled the House. Even though Speaker Milliken said that he accepted the minister's assertion that he was not intentionally misleading the House, he ruled that a prima facie case of privilege existed there. In Speaker Milliken's ruling, he stated:

in the case before us, there appears to be in my opinion no dispute as to the facts. I believe that both the Minister and other hon. Members recognize that two versions of events have been presented....

I am prepared, as I must be, to accept the Minister's assertion that he had no intention to mislead the House. Nevertheless this remains a very difficult situation. I refer hon. Members to Marleau and Montpetit at page 67:

There are... affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges... the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege, tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; [or that] obstructs or impedes any Member or Officer of the House in the discharge of their duties...

On the basis of the arguments presented by hon. Members and in view of the gravity of the matter, I have concluded that the situation before us where the House is left with two versions of events is one that merits further consideration by an appropriate committee, if only to clear the air. I therefore invite the hon. Member for Portage—Lisgar to move his motion.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Therefore, there is a very clear precedent. Even when a minister of the Crown sincerely believes—if we accept his or her allegations—that his or her statements in the House are true, there can be a breach of parliamentary privilege when these statements prove to be false. In the case that concerns us today, it is very clear that several versions of the events were presented to the House, and that only one can be true. The minister and his parliamentary secretary presented a version to the House that is contradicted in its entirety by the testimony of the former attorney general and Gerald Butts at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and also by the statements of the Prime Minister himself to the press.

[*English*]

To fully assert how the minister and the parliamentary secretary find themselves in contempt of the House, regardless of their intention to mislead the House, let me quote from a procedure and house affairs committee report that dealt with Art Eggleton's case:

Joseph Maingot, a witness to the committee on February 26 and a well-known expert on Parliamentary Procedure, defined the question of contempt. He stated that in the Speaker's ruling:

'(The Speaker's) concern was that there were conflicting statements, but they were conflicting statements on a very serious matter of government policy.

It's correct because it is incumbent upon the members to decide what is in their view contempt. By all of what you've heard contempt can be [that] you felt a person intentionally misled or the conflicting statements were such that [it] really reflected on the integrity of the House, the dignity of the House.'

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Given the striking similarities between the 2002 case and this case, I believe that we must inevitably conclude that the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary have breached the privilege of the House.

[*English*]

I want to leave the final word to Peter MacKay, former minister of justice and former attorney general, who in 2002 said the following:

I would suggest in the strongest possible terms that members of the House of Commons must be able to rely on the information they receive in response to questions placed to ministers. This goes to the very cut and thrust of the responsibilities of members of the House of Commons. A high standard has to be met....

Integrity, honesty and truthfulness in this Chamber should not ebb and flow like the tides. This should be something that is as solid as the ground we walk on and as solid as the foundation of this very building in these hallowed halls. Every time we come into this Chamber, we should be reminded of that.

[*Translation*]

Given the importance of this scandal of interference by the Prime Minister's Office, I believe that you could find this to be a clear case of breach of privilege that needs to be addressed.

• (1220)

[*English*]

Should you come to the same conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am ready to move the appropriate motion for this issue to be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few of my own comments to my colleague's request that you look at this as a point of privilege.

I want to begin by congratulating the member for New Westminster—Burnaby on his new position as House Leader for the NDP.

There are a couple of things that I think are important to note around this issue.

First, this issue is so important that the House will recall that two weeks ago, when I requested an emergency debate in the House on the issue of the SNC-Lavalin cover-up, the emergency debate was granted. The Speaker saw how important it was that we get to the bottom of this issue, that we, as parliamentarians certainly, and Canadians, understand and know the truth around the circumstances whereby the former Attorney General was pressured to interfere in a criminal prosecution. That pressure was brought to bear by the Prime Minister and his office.

The House will also recall that when this broke, the story from the Prime Minister changed continually. It first was denial. He said that nothing happened, that there was no pressure. He then blamed Scott Brison. He then said that her experiences were different from his. Overall, the story has changed continuously.

What has added not only to the confusion but what appears to be a massive cover-up are the different stories being presented by the current Attorney General, and the information, and as my colleague pointed out, the answers, given to the House by the current Attorney General, which we now know are not true.

We have had to have an emergency debate about it. The justice committee has been complicit in the cover-up, working with the Prime Minister's Office to help cover this up. We have seen the current Attorney General, the individual who is tasked with keeping the laws of this land, mislead the House, saying that he believes whatever the Prime Minister said and whose own story has been changing.

This is a crisis of moral authority in this country. This is not just a political discussion that happens in the chamber sometimes. This is not just a “he said, she said”, or “he said, he said”. This goes to the very fabric of our country and the moral authority to govern this country.

I appreciate that there have already been examples brought to the Speaker on previous times that the House was misled and a prima facie question of privilege was found. The one that was talked about was in 2002, when Art Eggleton, the then minister of national defence, was accused of deliberately making misleading statements.

In 2011, Bev Oda, the then minister of international cooperation, was accused of deliberately making misleading statements. That point was about the confusion created by the minister's contradictory statements. Speaker Milliken ruled that a prima facie question of privilege did exist, and the House agreed to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

In 2014, former colleague Brad Butt from Mississauga—Streetsville was accused of making misleading statements to the House, and again the Speaker found that it warranted a prima facie question of privilege.

Those were both instances that, although important in terms of not making misleading statements to the House, did not go to the very fibre and fabric of our system of democracy and the independence of the judiciary.

I make those points because this is a gravely important issue, and I want to add one more comment.

Another angle to this could be that the Attorney General himself has been misled by the Prime Minister. He could have not been told the truth by the Prime Minister. There is also a precedent for that. Page 116 of Bosc and Gagnon explains the following:

Misleading a Minister or a Member has also been considered a form of obstruction and, thus, a prima facie breach of privilege. For example, on December 6, 1978, in finding that a prima facie contempt of the House existed, Speaker Jerome ruled that a government official, by deliberately misleading a Minister, had impeded the Member in the performance of his duties and consequently obstructed the House itself.

We do not know. Would it have been Michael Wernick, the Clerk of the Privy Council, who possibly misled our current Attorney General? That is another question.

• (1225)

Either the Attorney General was misled by the Prime Minister and the Clerk of the Privy Council or their officials, or the Attorney General deliberately misled the House on an issue of grave importance, so grave that we had an emergency debate on it, so grave that we have been consumed with this.

Government Orders

The government, today by the way, just had its third cabinet shuffle in less than six or seven weeks. The government is not consumed with issues that are affecting the country, such as pipelines, canola exports to China, massive deficits and job losses. The Liberals are consumed with saving their own skins and moving cabinet around as they are constantly trying to fill holes that are being created by their own scandal and their own cover-up.

I fully support my colleague's request that a prima facie case be found, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this. I would ask that if more information becomes available, we could be afforded the opportunity to address this again.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Jonquière is rising on the same question of privilege. Before I give her the floor, I remind members that in cases like these, the Chair normally prefers that members present relevant arguments that are different from the ones already made.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as deputy House leader of the NDP, I want to add a few words to the comments made by my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby.

During question period on February 7, the Minister of Justice started his answers with a very weak attempt to cover himself by saying, “as the Prime Minister said earlier today”. The Minister of Justice repeated this phrase 11 times. Do not be fooled. This cautious language is meant only to protect the Prime Minister and the minister. It in no way changes the matter at hand.

The minister and parliamentary secretary gave the House a version of events that differs not only from the truth but also from the version that the former attorney general gave the committee and the version the Prime Minister himself gave to the media on March 7. I also want to point out that on the following day, February 8, the parliamentary secretary answered a number of questions without ever using this pseudo-disclaimer.

It is quite clear to us that the minister and his parliamentary secretary breached the privilege of the House. In the parliamentary secretary's case, he cannot even claim to have quoted the Prime Minister as a defence. As for the Minister of Justice, he can try to defend himself by referring to the 11 times he quoted the Prime Minister, but I am sure members would agree that the Prime Minister totally contradicted that version of events during his press conference on March 7.

Accordingly, whether they were quoting the Prime Minister or not, the Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary misled the House during question period on March 7 and 8. My colleague also reminded us of an example from 2002 involving former defence minister Art Eggleton. Speaker Milliken ruled that Mr. Eggleton had breached the privilege of the House, even though the minister believed he was telling the truth and therefore had not intentionally misled the House.

The same principle applies here. Although the justice minister was quoting the Prime Minister, he said something that was not true, as demonstrated in the Prime Minister's remarks on March 7 and in the former attorney general's testimony.

As for the parliamentary secretary, as I said, he cannot even use that defence because he never claimed to be quoting the Prime Minister. Let me add that it would be interesting to find out where the minister and the parliamentary secretary got the information that they used in responding to the questions raised on February 7 and 8. If we knew that, we would know whether they were acting of their own accord or in accordance with a PMO briefing.

In light of all this, Mr. Speaker, it is clear to us that the privilege of the House was breached and that you must refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

● (1230)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, the House Leader of the Official Opposition and the member for Jonquière for their comments concerning this point of privilege. We will review the matter and get back to the House in the coming days.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-84, an act to amend the Criminal Code (bestiality and animal fighting), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill C-84, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bestiality and animal fighting), be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1310)

[*English*]

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 1004)*

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albrecht
 Alghabra
 Amos
 Angus
 Arseneault
 Aubin
 Badawey
 Barlow
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beech
 Benson
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bittle
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Bossio
 Boutin-Sweet
 Bratina
 Brosseau
 Calkins
 Caron
 Carrie
 Champagne
 Chong
 Clarke
 Cooper
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 DeCoursey
 Dhaliwal
 Diotte
 Donnelly
 Drouin
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Easter
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Freeland
 Fuhr
 Garneau
 Gendreau
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gourde
 Hajdu
 Harder
 Harvey
 Hehr
 Hogg
 Housefather
 Hussien
 Iacono
 Johns
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kang
 Kent
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Levitt
 Lightbound

Albas
 Aldag
 Alleslev
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Arya
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Barrett
 Beaulieu
 Bennett
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Bibeau
 Blair
 Boissonnault
 Boucher
 Brassard
 Breton
 Caesar-Chavannes
 Cannings
 Carr
 Chagger
 Chen
 Choquette
 Clement
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Davies
 Deltell
 Dhillon
 Doherty
 Dreeschen
 Dubé
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Dzerowicz
 Eglinski
 El-Khoury
 Eyking
 Fast
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fry
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gill
 Godin
 Gould
 Graham
 Hardecastle
 Hardie
 Hébert
 Hoback
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Jeneroux
 Jolibois
 Jordan
 Julian
 Kelly
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Kusie
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 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Laverdière
 LeBouthillier
 Leitch
 Liepert
 Lloyd

Lobb
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Martel
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 Mathysen
 May (Cambridge)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Soeurs
 Monsef
 Motz
 Nantel
 Nater
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Ouellette
 Paul-Hus
 Peschisolido
 Petipas Taylor
 Picard
 Poissant
 Ratansi
 Rempel
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Sorbara
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tan
 Tilson
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Vandenbeld
 Vecchio
 Waganall
 Warkentin
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Wong
 Yip
 Yurdiga

Lockhart
 Longfield
 Lukiwski
 MacGregor
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 Masse (Windsor West)
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Nassif
 Nault
 Nuttall
 Oliphant
 O'Toole
 Paradis
 Pauzé
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough
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 Richards
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Saganash
 Saini
 Samson
 Sansoucy
 Saroya
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Sheehan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sopuck
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Tootoo
 Trudel
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Virani
 Warawa
 Webber
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Young
 Zahid— 284

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Leslie
 Sgro
 Moore
 Thériault— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (for the Minister of Justice) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time rising since the events on Friday. I want to state for the record my solidarity, and the solidarity of all parliamentarians, with the people of New Zealand and the Muslims who were killed and injured at the two mosques in Christchurch.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-84. The bill proposes to amend the Criminal Code to strengthen the laws around bestiality and animal fighting. As members will recall, proposed amendments to Bill C-84 will, among other things, address a gap in the law identified by the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of the Crown v. D.L.W. That decision and its interpretation of the bestiality provisions led to calls for law reform to address a gap identified by the court; that is the common law meaning of bestiality was limited previously to simply penetrative acts.

The bill's proposal to identify bestiality as "any contact, for a sexual purpose, with an animal" would address that very gap. Although some may view this provision as a modest step, it is an important one that needs to be taken, and our government is very appreciative of the non-partisan approach that members from all sides have taken to advancing this needed reform in an expeditious manner through Parliament. We would like to note, in particular, the unanimous support the bill received at second reading and in committee.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and to the members of that committee for their comprehensive review of this bill.

After listening to the testimony presented during the study of Bill C-84, the committee adopted three key amendments based on the expertise of witnesses who expressed their support for this bill. These amendments will provide for improved animal protections by authorizing the courts to issue a prohibition or restitution order when a person is found guilty of a bestiality offence. The amendments will also eliminate the requirement to destroy birds used in cockfighting.

Finally, these amendments will ensure that the names of those found guilty of engaging in a sexual act with an animal, or, in other words, those found guilty of the bestiality simpliciter offence, are added to the national sex offender registry. This amendment was proposed by the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton of the official opposition.

• (1315)

[*English*]

The issue of animal rights and welfare is an important one right around the country and in particular to the constituents in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. I have listened closely to the concerns of those residents. We are committed, as a government, to doing better on this issue by supporting this important bill.

I have heard in my riding, for example, from constituents such as Josie Candito, who has spoken to me repeatedly and testified while we studied the bill at committee, about the link between animal abuse and the abuse of children and women. What we know on that very point is that it is not clear that every animal abuser ends up abusing children and women. However, what is absolutely clear, and what the facts demonstrated at committee, is that people who abuse women and children have in their history an antecedence of having abused animals. This is a critical point because the bill targets that.

What we also heard from people like Anne Griffin and Tracey Capes, both of whom came before the federal/provincial animal welfare working group on Parliament Hill, are their thoughts regarding the bill and our government's continued efforts and progress to protect animals.

However, the one thing that my constituents have consistently reiterated is that there is still more work to be done to protect animals. They have told me that our next steps must be informed by a national consultation regarding the most important issues to Canadians or a high-level analysis by the federal government, taking into account the broad perspectives on an issue as vast as animal welfare. I have told them, the current Minister of Justice has told them and the former minister of justice has told them that Bill C-84 is an important first step toward our government's goal of more comprehensive protection for animals, and we indeed intend to continue this important work.

In my time today, I will review some of this important testimony and discuss how these amendments bolster the objectives sought by this crucial legislation.

As mentioned, the first amendment adopted by the committee would authorize a court to issue an animal prohibition or restitution order for each of the three bestiality offences found in section 160 of the code.

The object of this prohibition order is to prohibit offenders convicted of bestiality from possessing, having the care of or control over, or residing with an animal for any period that the court deems appropriate up to a lifetime prohibition. A lifetime ban may indeed be necessary in certain circumstances, having regard to the seriousness of the offence and the degree of responsibility of certain offenders. This was a helpful suggestion originally made by one of the important stakeholders who testified before the justice committee, Ms. Camille Labchuk of Animal Justice.

The restitution order specifically would require the offender to repay an individual or an organization the costs of caring for the injured animal as a result of a criminal offence. This would also make the offender more accountable for the consequences of his or her actions.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

The proposed amendment builds on section 447.1 of the Criminal Code, which authorizes the court to issue such orders for persons convicted of animal cruelty offences. Right now, when someone is charged with a bestiality offence under section 160 of the Criminal Code, such orders can be issued only at the time of sentencing as a condition of a probation order or conditional sentence. These orders are limited in duration to the term of the imposed conditions and expire after that.

This was pointed out by Sergeant Teena Stoddart, from the Ottawa Police Service, when she testified before the committee. That means there is a gap in animal welfare measures, since the courts can issue such orders for animal cruelty offences but not for bestiality offences.

[English]

The committee also heard from several other witnesses on this issue, including, as I mentioned, Ms. Labchuk, executive director of Animal Justice; Ms. Barbara Cartwright, CEO of Humane Canada; Dr. Alice Crook from the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association; and Professor Peter Sankoff from the University of Alberta, Faculty of Law. They all agreed on the need for this amendment to this important bill. Indeed, this amendment is entirely consistent with the objectives in the bill, and we on this side of the House are pleased to support it.

I would now like to turn my attention to the second amendment adopted by the committee, which provides for the repeal of subsection 447(3) of the Criminal Code.

The current subsection requires a peace officer who finds birds at cockfighting premises to bring the birds to a justice of the peace so the JP can order they be destroyed. That provision requires the automatic destruction of birds, but does not apply to other animals, such as dogs. It is very much a vestige of the distant past when animal fighting primarily involved only cockfighting and resulted in the roosters being so severely injured that they needed to be destroyed.

- (1320)

[Translation]

Nowadays, however, there are better ways to solve this problem in order to eliminate any legal loopholes in animal protection. Ensuring the welfare of these animals is a key objective for the provincial and territorial legislation and for the general powers set out in the Criminal Code.

First, the provinces and territories have jurisdiction over matters concerning animal welfare. That includes passing legislation dealing specifically with the seizure of animals in distress and the care they must receive, where possible, as well as the administration of humane euthanasia if necessary.

Second, some witnesses and parliamentarians believe that the criminal law does not address the seizure and automatic destruction of mistreated animals in an appropriate manner.

[English]

In fact, Madam Camille Labchuk, executive director of Animal Justice, testified before the committee that the automatic destruction of birds found in a cockfighting ring in the previous version of the section was “completely needless, and it ties the hands of authorities when there may be a better option for the birds.”

Ms. Labchuk further testified before the committee. She said:

We think the fate of any bird seized should be decided on a case-by-case basis. This is already done for dogs and other animals rescued from fighting rings. There is no principled reason that roosters or birds forced to fight should be automatically killed. It may be appropriate to rehabilitate them. It may be appropriate to send them to a sanctuary, where they can receive lifelong care and still enjoy a high quality of life.

It should be noted that Ms. Labchuk's position was broadly supported by other witnesses, including Ms. Cartwright, the CEO of Humane Canada.

[Translation]

All 10 provinces and the Yukon Territory empower peace officers and animal welfare inspectors to seize animals in distress. Furthermore, where appropriate, the legislation provides for the animals to be humanely destroyed.

Nunavut and the Northwest Territories allow peace officers and animal protection officers to seize dogs, and these territories have legislation requiring general rehabilitation for the dogs, as well as humane euthanasia where appropriate.

In addition to these protection measures, the Criminal Code also confers general powers on peace officers and public officers to seize offence-related property while executing a search warrant. Section 487 of the Criminal Code therefore authorizes peace officers to seize an animal, where circumstances warrant.

[English]

Once more, pursuant to section 489 of the Criminal Code, things not specified in a warrant can also be seized where a thing has been obtained by the commission of an offence, used in the commission of an offence or something that will afford evidence in respect of an offence under any act of Parliament. Accordingly, repealing subsection 447(3) would leave no gap in the law, which is an important point. Instead, repealing it would leave the matter of seizure and the question of whether care or euthanasia would be appropriate to be dealt with under applicable provincial laws and by persons trained specifically in such matters.

[Translation]

I would now like to draw the attention of the House to the third amendment adopted by the committee. This amendment would add the bestiality simpliciter offence, in subsection 160(1), to the list of designated offences for which an offender must be automatically ordered to register and comply with the requirements of the National Sex Offender Registry, pursuant to the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, or SOIRA, as it is commonly called.

This legislation, enacted in 2004, created the National Sex Offender Registry to help Canadian law enforcement agencies investigate sex crimes by registering specific information on sex offenders. When an offender is found guilty of a designated sexual offence, the court must order the offender to register with the National Sex Offender Registry and comply with the SOIRA for a period of 10 years, 20 years, or even indefinitely. Offenders found guilty of other designated infractions may be ordered to register with the registry and to comply with the SOIRA if prosecutors established the intent to commit a sexual offence during the commission of an offence like breaking and entering in relation to a dwelling-house, in paragraph 348(1)(d).

● (1325)

[English]

Currently, the designated sexual offences include subsection 160(2), compelling the commission of bestiality, which was added in 2011, and subsection 160(3), bestiality in the presence of or by a child, which was included in 2004 in an enactment of the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, known in English as SOIRA.

The justice committee received testimony and studies on the link between animal abuse and bestiality and acts of violence against persons, particularly women and children. I alluded to this at the outset, and it bears repeating. We do not know definitively that all animal abusers end up abusing women and children, but we know that for people who abuse women and children, their antecedents include abuse of animals in all instances. That was the evidence before the committee.

For example, the justice committee heard about the innovative work conducted by the Canadian Violence Link Coalition. It was launched to “study and bring forward all of the different academic research that’s going on and that supports the links between animal violence and human violence.” The work of the Canadian Violence Link Coalition follows a multidisciplinary, multi-sector and collaborative information-sharing approach in strengthening the response to animal abuse and neglect and establishing its link to the abuse of humans.

During her testimony, Ms. Cartwright commented, “While not all abusers are serial killers, all serial killers are animal abusers.” The evidence I have been referencing is that of Ms. Cartwright, before the committee. The evidence demonstrates that abuse of humans is a common step up from animal abuse for individuals who have a propensity for serial violence.

[Translation]

Ms. Cartwright's remarks were reiterated by other experts, including Sergeant Teena Stoddart, who spoke about research reported in the International Journal of Law and Psychiatry showing that, out of a group of 943 inmates selected at random, half of sex offenders and one third of child molesters had abused animals as adolescents. The same study also confirmed that child molesters use animals to attract and win over their victims. By making inappropriate sexual contact with the animals, the molesters desensitize the children and normalize sexual contacts between adults and children.

Government Orders

There is growing international research in this area, but we were pleased to learn of new Canadian data collected by Amy Fitzgerald of the University of Windsor, primarily on the link between animal abuse and interpersonal and spousal abuse. I have to admit I was surprised to hear that Canadian research shows that these violence links are worse in Canada than abroad, according to similar international studies.

More specifically, women who are victims of violence also report that their animal is in the same situation.

[English]

This violence link is further supported by the testimony of Ms. Lianna McDonald, executive director, and Ms. Monique St. Germain, general counsel, of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. They spoke about the growing online proliferation of child sexual abuse images, of which the most explicit and extreme images depicting sexual assault against children involve bestiality.

Having regard for the evidence demonstrating the very strong relationship between violence toward animals and violence towards humans, we believe that adding a bestiality simpliciter as a designated offence is consistent with the underlying objective of the SOIRA and with the existing designation of the two other bestiality offences.

● (1330)

[Translation]

I would like to close by addressing one last point, which was raised during the study of Bill C-84. Some committee members and witnesses feel that this bill does not go far enough and that a comprehensive reform of the animal cruelty regime is overdue in Canada.

As the minister mentioned in his testimony before the committee, our government remains open to dialogue and discussion as to the best way to address these vast and complex issues.

[English]

That said, we are equally mindful of testimony received at the committee on the importance of moving these reforms forward as soon as possible, particularly because they are designed to close a gap in the law and enhance protections for the most vulnerable members of society. Moreover, it is very important to keep in mind that Bill C-84 is a targeted response to two specific issues that enjoy widespread support from all the key stakeholders in this area of the law. Those stakeholders submitted a letter to the Minister of Justice. Ten of the most important stakeholders, from agriculture to hunting to veterinary care, all support the aspects of this bill.

Government Orders

Bill C-84 is a meaningful and much-needed step forward. We are confident that we can move this critical piece of legislation ahead today and in so doing come one step closer to enhancing protections for the most vulnerable members in our society. On that basis, I would urge all members to support the swift passage of this important piece of legislation, Bill C-84.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice is right. Bill C-84 is a critical piece of legislation, and I am glad he focused on three substantive amendments that were passed in committee unanimously upon hearing from various witnesses. That is committee work as it should be. I am pleased that the government supported my amendment so that all individuals convicted of bestiality would be required to register with the national sex offender registry. That is going to keep children, women and animals safe.

The one criticism I have, however, is that it has taken the government almost three years since the D.L.W. decision to close the gap in terms of the narrow interpretation the court has taken in terms of the definition of “bestiality”. Why did the government wait so long to pass a relatively straightforward piece of legislation that is so critical?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his work on the committee and for his role as vice-chair.

The amendment proposed by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, which I noted in my opening remarks, was critical in terms of having the sex offender registry include, for the first time, bestiality simpliciter offences and that such offenders be registered in the same registry we have for other types of sexual assault not involving animals. That was a critical amendment, and that was committee work at its finest. There is agreement on that.

With respect to the point about the time taken, there was private member's legislation in the first year of our government's mandate. That legislation received a considerable amount of support but not enough to get it across the finish line. Our government took lessons from that. We went back to stakeholders. We heard from stakeholders about what was needed and gathered consensus where consensus could be found. There were 10 different important stakeholder groups, including veterinary groups, hunting groups and agriculture groups. They came forward and said that it was something they support, and we moved forward on that basis. In the interim, there are other provisions that arise in the Criminal Code that can address some of the lacuna the member opposite pointed out. Those are the charges that currently exist for sexual interference, sexual exploitation, corrupting children and indecent acts.

In the interim, prior to the advent of this bill, all those provisions have remained in force and continue to remain in force to address the important issue that both the member opposite and I share, which is an important issue to address.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it curious that the parliamentary secretary mentioned the private member's bill brought forward by the member for Beaches—East York, Bill C-246. The government did not get behind that bill, which was a much more comprehensive review of animal cruelty laws. It would have provided us with all the things in Bill C-84, essentially, plus a lot more that we really need to address, including the change from considering animals under the property

sections of the Criminal Code to establishing a separate section of the Criminal Code for offences against animals.

I am wondering why the government did not support that private member's bill.

• (1335)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke that the important aspect of the private member's bill initiated by the member for Beaches—East York is that it started an important debate that needed to take place in this chamber. I will readily admit, as I am sure most parliamentarians would, that we learned a lot, in the process of going from that bill to where we are with Bill C-84, about the need to update and improve our animal protection laws and to find consensus where consensus can be found.

The difference between the private member's bill and the bill we have before us is that no fewer than 10 different stakeholders support the current bill. They include the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Chicken Farmers of Canada, the Canadian Pork Council, the Egg Farmers of Canada, the Canadian Hatching Egg Producers, the Turkey Farmers of Canada, the Canadian Bison Association, the Canada Mink Breeders Association, the Canadian Sheep Federation and the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council. It is an exhaustive list.

What is important is that it demonstrates what can be done to promote the same objective the member opposite and I share, which is promoting animal protection and ending animal cruelty when consensus can be found. We as parliamentarians have the responsibility to do that and to move forward on the best basis we can.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member has mentioned, I have some animal rights champions in my riding, such as Denise Paulin, Natalie Paulin, Emily Regier and Maureen Leblanc. Countless people are championing the issues here. They see the reality that Bill C-84 is actually a missed opportunity.

I would like to hear the member talk about some of the comprehensive things on which we could move forward but have not, such as addressing the issue of basic living standards for animals and tethering laws. We could have put those in Bill C-84, but we missed the mark.

We keep hearing that the bill is a first step, but we have had many first steps that the government has voted down in the past. We have momentum now. I would like to hear why we are addressing not only the issue of bestiality but also basic standards of care and housing and tethering.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, the question being raised by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh is important. I have multiple responses.

Government Orders

First, let us look at what is being addressed here. We are providing a concerted response to a Supreme Court decision that, incredibly, failed to convict an individual who committed an act of bestiality using his stepdaughter and his dog. He was let off because penetration was not involved. The judges in that case, which was held just down the road in the Supreme Court, said that there was a problem in the law, because it requires penetration.

We have sought to remedy that through legislation. This is important not only for that little girl but for all the little girls and boys like her who might be subjected to anything like this as well for all the animals that will continue to be subjected to things like this.

More importantly, as I indicated in my evidence at the outset, we know that people who commit bestiality offences go on to do that with other children and potentially with women. We are nipping this in the bud.

What is also important, although it has not been the subject of much debate thus far, is that the bill also targets the important issue of animal fighting and all that goes along with animal fighting: the people who engage in it, the people who bet on it and the people who run arenas. This is a harbinger of other criminal activity, illegal organized crime activity. By targeting this, we are addressing the broader ill in society of organized crime.

These are important points, but they are a start. This legislation is a starting point, not a finishing point.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I thought was interesting in my colleague's speech was that he made a good number of comments regarding the number of amendments that were introduced and ultimately accepted, and in looking at those amendments, we see they were based on consensus. Political parties worked together, which makes this government quite different from the previous one, in that we are seeing legislation going into committee and then coming out of committee healthier because there is a higher sense of co-operation.

We hear a great deal about the issue of animal safety and protection, and there are advocates in all regions of the country. There seems to be a great deal of interest in this issue. Maybe my colleague could pick up on the fact that this is a good starting point, at least in part, and that there are many other things we can continue to do to try to improve the situation.

• (1340)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, it is important to underscore again the three amendments that were proposed. One is the addition of bestiality simpliciter; second is the addition of persons who are convicted of bestiality to the sex offender registry, and last was this prohibition order. This is important because it dovetails with some of the comments raised by members on the other side of the aisle, who were asking what we are doing to address the concerns of advocates in the area of animal cruelty.

Animal cruelty advocates have said to us that there is no basis upon which somebody who has been convicted of bestiality should be permitted to own a dog, cat, etc. going forward. The prohibition order amendment proposed at committee and accepted by government members would allow for a prohibition order to be attached in

order to prevent exactly that. It would prevent it for a short period of time, or even for a lifetime if it is required in the circumstances. That is committee work at its very finest, because it is non-partisan, and animal cruelty should not be a partisan matter.

To refer back further to what was discussed earlier in the context of this debate, sometimes bills that are crafted and do not have widespread consensus can devolve into partisan battles. That is not what we are seeking to do here; we are trying to find consensus by empowering committees to do their work by picking up amendments that have wide consensus and that animal advocates right around this country want us to pursue. These three amendments are part of that, and the two main aspects of this bill focus in on it.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate, I will let the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton know that we will be somewhat shy of the 20 minutes he would normally have for his speech when we need to interrupt at 2 p.m. for Statements by Members. If he wishes the remaining time to fill out his 20 minutes, that will happen at a later time today.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-84, an act to amend the Criminal Code, as amended, with respect to bestiality and animal fighting. Let me say that I, along with all my colleagues on this side of the House, fully support this critical piece of legislation.

There are two main components to Bill C-84. The first is with respect to bestiality; more specifically, it is a direct response to the Supreme Court's D.L.W. decision. In D.L.W., the Supreme Court interpreted section 160 of the Criminal Code, which is the section that prohibits bestiality. In the decision written by Justice Cromwell, the court decided that in the absence of a statutory definition, bestiality should be interpreted only in those circumstances where the act involving the animal involved penetration. What this legislation does is clarify the law by providing for a statutory definition whereby any activity with an animal for a sexual purpose would be captured by section 160 of the Criminal Code, closing a very critical gap.

The second aspect of this legislation is to strengthen laws around animal fighting. I know the parliamentary secretary did discuss the amendments at committee in some detail, but I have in the last number of weeks been quite critical of my Liberal colleagues on the justice committee with respect to their handling of the SNC-Lavalin scandal and I stand by those criticisms. That said, in the normal course we are a committee that has often worked collaboratively. We have been able to put aside partisan differences to find common ground. That is precisely what happened.

We heard from witnesses who put forward ideas around how Bill C-84 could be strengthened, and three substantive amendments were passed at committee unanimously. I want to acknowledge the good work of our chair, the hon. member for Mount Royal, who from day one has set the tone that has enabled our committee to more often than not be one of the more productive parliamentary committees.

Government Orders

With respect to the first part of the bill, namely around section 160 and in terms of providing a statutory definition for bestiality, this is something that I fully support. I think there is widespread consensus to support this statutory amendment, but I will go back to the point that I raised when I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice a question, namely that I cannot understand what took the government so long to act.

The D.L.W. decision was rendered in June 2016. It is now March 2019. What that means is that if this legislation moves forward as quickly as possible, it will be essentially three years in which this gap in the law existed. Why did it take three years? The fact is that the Supreme Court expressly invited Parliament to introduce legislation to provide for a statutory definition. There is as close to universal consensus as we are ever going to find around the need to provide for a statutory definition.

● (1345)

The type of amendment that would be required to incorporate a statutory definition into section 160 of the Criminal Code is, quite frankly, a relatively straightforward one. Because the government dragged its feet and dragged its feet some more, my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, saw fit to introduce a private member's bill to close the gap established from the D.L.W. decision, Bill C-388. That bill would provide for a statutory definition. The statutory definition provided in her bill states, "In this section, 'bestiality' means any contact by a person, for a sexual purpose, with an animal."

That is pretty straightforward. We then turn to Bill C-84, which the government introduced one year after the member for Calgary Nose Hill introduced Bill C-388. The definition provided for in the government's bill states, "In this section, 'bestiality' means any contact, for a sexual purpose, with an animal."

There we have it. Word for word, it was copied and pasted from the private member's bill of the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, except that the government waited one year to do it and almost three years after the D.L.W. decision was rendered.

When I asked the parliamentary secretary the reason for the delay, the parliamentary secretary noted that the government had undertaken various consultations with a wide range of stakeholder groups. That is true and that is right, but that was with respect to the animal fighting and animal cruelty provisions of Bill C-84.

It was important that those consultations took place. The aspects of Bill C-84 that deal with animal cruelty and animal fighting are sensible. They do not interfere with traditional hunting, angling or trapping, and there was widespread stakeholder support. However, those consultations had absolutely nothing to do with closing the gap in section 160 of the Criminal Code with respect to bestiality. The notion that somehow there was the need for consultation is simply not the case. It is simply not true in terms of closing this gap. Quite frankly, that argument does not hold water. The bottom line is there is simply no excuse for the delay.

I would speak to the seriousness of the delay from the standpoint of the evidence that came before our committee with respect to bestiality. In that regard, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection carried out a study of 192 cases over a five-year period from

Cybertip, which the centre operates and which is the leading national tipline for online sexual activity in Canada. Of the 192 cases that the centre studied with respect to bestiality, a full 80% of those cases did not involve penetration.

That underscores the degree to which there is a gap in the legislation. As of today, since June of 2016, individuals who commit vile and despicable acts involving animals that fall short of penetration cannot be charged under section 160 of the Criminal Code. Again, when 80% of the cases, at least based on a review of 192 cases, did not involve penetration, I say that is a pretty serious issue that needs to be addressed and needs to be addressed as quickly as possible, which is something that the government has simply not done.

● (1350)

With respect to some of the amendments at committee, there were two that related to bestiality.

The first would provide a judge with the discretion to impose a prohibition order upon conviction that would prevent someone convicted of bestiality from being in the same premises or having access to an animal for a period of time that the judge deems appropriate, and with respect to repeat offenders, namely those who are convicted of a second or subsequent bestiality offence, for a minimum of five years.

The second amendment that was passed was an amendment that I brought forward. It would ensure that anyone convicted of a bestiality offence would be required to register with the national sex offender registry. Right now, anyone convicted of compelling the commission of bestiality under subsection 160(2), as well as anyone convicted under subsection 160(3), namely bestiality in the presence of a child, would be required to register with the national sex offender registry but all other offenders would not. As a result of my amendment, this legislation would close that gap.

It is an important step to keep children, women and animals safe because, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice laid out in some detail, there is a very clear connection between bestiality and violence against women and children. It is often part of a pattern involving some of the worst sexual crimes imaginable. Indeed, bestiality has been equated to sadism in terms of the impact that it can have on its victims.

In terms of looking at the severity of what we are talking about and how serious and how dangerous individuals who commit bestiality offences are, one need only look at D.L.W. himself. This is an individual who over a 10-year period sexually abused his two stepdaughters on a daily basis. The pattern of sexual abuse in that case escalated as time went on to the point that he committed bestiality against one of the stepdaughters involving the family dog. It is important to read into the record what the trial judge said of D.L.W. in terms of capturing the level of depravity that we are talking about here.

The trial judge in his reasons for sentence said:

I have been a judge for almost 40 years. This offender is one of the most evil men that I have encountered during my long tenure on the Bench. The man is evil incarnate. He is a monster. It is said that the devil can cite scripture for his own use. That is certainly the case here. With a warped vivid imagination and using passages from the Bible to justify his actions, D.L.W., in a most vile manner, sexually abused two of his stepchildren on a daily basis for over a decade.

Those are the types of offenders that we are talking about, and on that basis it is important that all individuals convicted of bestiality have to register with the national sex offender registry. I am glad that the government has lent its support in that regard.

• (1355)

Moving on to the second aspect of Bill C-84, there are important measures to strengthen laws around animal cruelty and animal fighting. We know that animal fighting is widespread and often under-reported. There are clear links between gangs and organized crime. There is an enormous amount of money that can be involved. We heard evidence before the justice committee that one dogfight can involve as much as \$200,000. When there are four or five fights, a million dollars could change hands and get into the hands of organized crime groups.

The legislation would make some practical amendments to the Criminal Code to give law enforcement better tools to be able to crack down on animal fighting and eliminate an important funding source for organized criminal elements. In that regard, Bill C-84 would make a few amendments to the animal fighting sections of the Criminal Code. First, again in respect to subsection 445.1(1), at present that subsection prohibits anyone from encouraging, aiding or assisting in fighting or baiting animals. What that section does not capture at present is activities involved in training, transporting or breeding animals for animal fighting purposes.

I see my time is up, so I will just carry on after question period.

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton will have three minutes remaining in his speech following question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

SPORTS IN REGINA

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the inter-varsity men's volleyball national championships. I particularly congratulate my taller cousin, James Weir, and all Saskatchewan athletes who played in the final.

It is an exciting time for sport in Regina. Our city will host the Grey Cup next year, and the NHL's outdoor Heritage Classic later this year.

In less competitive skating, I want to thank the 300 people who participated in my office's Family Day skate one month ago. This event enabled Regina residents to lace up for free, including many new Canadians learning to skate for the first time.

We must continue this type of inclusive activity to counter the intolerance that motivated the terrible attack on Muslims in New

Statements by Members

Zealand on Friday. I invite all members to join in sharing our condolences.

* * *

CLIFF ANNABLE

Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 5, our community lost a great advocate and a friend. Cliff Annable was a White Rock city councillor, the executive director of the chamber of commerce, a Rotarian and a volunteer on many committees and boards. He was recently honoured as a citizen of the peninsula in recognition of the many contributions he has made.

He was a role model and mentor for many young people, and he was a proud, doting husband, father and grandfather. He was a tireless passionate voice in and for our community. He loved people and was always interested in their lives and in sharing their stories. He made our lives more interesting, more fun and more meaningful.

He will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

* * *

4-H CLUBS

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to champion Lakeland's agricultural sector, from small and generational grain, beef and dairy farms, to large-scale processors and agri-food companies, and all the local 4-H clubs from Bruderheim to Wandering River to Lloydminster to Paradise Valley, and everywhere in between.

I was active in 4-H growing up on a farm near the village of Chipman.

“Learn to do by doing”, “make the best better” and using head, heart, hands and health in the service of community and country, those are more than a century of 4-H principles. They really embody the ethics and way of life of rural Canadians and Canada's world-class farmers and producers.

The more than 25,000 4-H youth members and 7,700 volunteers are participating in public speaking competitions across the country and at home in Lakeland. The 4-H Canadian Citizenship Congress is on May 2. I know of at least two young women from Lakeland who will be attending.

I give my best wishes to all 4-H members. They are developing the responsible, caring and contributing life, leadership and communications skills that will help them shape the future of Canada.

* * *

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I stand to congratulate London Police Chief John Pare on an outstanding career with the London Police Service.

Statements by Members

Last month, Chief Pare announced he would be retiring this June after more than 30 years of exemplary service with the force. John joined the London Police Service in 1989 as a cadet and climbed the ranks before being named the city's 19th police chief in May 2015. John has been described as level-headed, approachable, forward thinking, calm, and has had the necessary patience to lead in such a pivotal role.

The London Police Service is made up of approximately 600 officers, 200 civilians and 22 cadets who serve our diverse community. I witnessed first-hand their incredible dedication when I went on a ride-along in late 2017 with Sergeant Sean Travis.

To Chief Pare, the senior executive, all the officers, civilians and cadets within the LPS and all first responders for that matter, I say "thank you" for their selfless service to London and to Canada.

* * *

SUSTAINABILITY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just after the darkness of the terror attack on Muslims in Christchurch, it was heartening to see literally millions of young people around the world, and from my riding, striking to demand that governments take action to save our planet and their future. While governments fail to act, these students and others are busy charting paths to a more sustainable future.

Last week I visited the T'Sou-ke First Nation again, a small first nation that already has a solar farm in place that meets their own power needs and sells surplus power back to the grid. They have now launched a second phase of projects aimed at sustainability, including food security, with sustainable oyster farming and greenhouses to expand local food production. Soon the T'Sou-ke Nation will have created more jobs than they have members to fill them, proving that it is actually a sustainable future and jobs that go hand in hand.

Unfortunately the government is so anchored in the past that it thinks it is okay to tweet congratulations to the striking students, while continuing to promote fossil fuels. Instead New Democrats will join hands with climate leaders to build a sustainable future, starting now.

* * *

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this March we are celebrating the contribution of women in Canada and around the world. At a time when women and girls are speaking out, we cannot treat this occasion just like any other. As we know, the cause of women is the challenge of our time.

This cause really hit home for me when I met with the people at Femmes en emploi, the working women's association in Laval. The commitment and dedication of the association's members perfectly mirror the changes that are transforming our society. By helping women from all backgrounds gain employment, this association gives women the momentum they need to finally break the glass ceiling that is keeping us from achieving equality.

I thank them all.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the 25th anniversary of the Somalia affair, Australia, not Canada, has responded to the wrong done to its own. The Australian minister for veterans affairs announced that there will be \$2.1 million to support concerned veterans who have taken mefloquine or tafenoquine.

Why is Canada missing in action for our veterans? The Australian initiative responds to testimony heard from veterans during a senate inquiry and consultation forums across Australia. In response to the difficult sharing of their testimony, Australia is also providing veterans 24-7 free, confidential, nationwide counselling.

Australian veterans and their words matter. Why is the testimony of Canadian veterans being ignored? Opposition members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs; Dr. Nevin, executive director of the Quinism Foundation; and our Royal Canadian Legion continue to call on Canada's Prime Minister to support research on mefloquine poisoning among Canadian veterans and to reopen an inquiry that would clear the names of Canadian soldiers and the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

* * *

SHOOTINGS IN CHRISTCHURCH

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday night, Canada watched a terrorist attack unfold in Christchurch, New Zealand. The mass shooting of innocent Muslims shocked people around the world.

As Canadians, we will not back down in the face of Islamophobia. We are making it clear that terrorism and hate will not be met with indifference. Peaceful coexistence between religious communities is an important part of diversity. We are strong, not in spite of our differences but because of them. Both our Prime Minister and our government have been leaders on this since day one.

However, we have political parties that want to divide us. We have political leaders right here in this very House who will not acknowledge Islamophobia. These people have no place representing Canada and Canadians. It does not matter if individuals pray in a church, synagogue, gurdwara temple or mosque, they should feel free in their place of worship.

*Statements by Members***HOUSING**

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, homelessness can be ended. In fact, communities right across Canada are doing it now. I am proud to be part of a government that has made historic housing investments in support of these efforts. However, clearly more can be done and more must be done.

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness is leading the way on this issue. Last week, its 20,000 homes campaign reached its target. The organization has moved 21,254 people from streets and shelters into safe, affordable housing. Its new campaign, Built for Zero, aims to eliminate homelessness, person by person and community by community.

Our government knows the best way to end homelessness is to prevent it. When that does not work, the best way to solve it is to build housing and fund the supports that people need to stay housed. We know that people with lived experience and front-line workers are the best experts in this field.

Our government is committed to ending homelessness. We look forward to working with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, not just on Building for Zero but on getting to zero on this issue. Together, we can and we must end homelessness.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current Liberal government and Prime Minister continually put themselves and their cronies ahead of Canadian families. Canadians are struggling, and Liberal failures are making it increasingly difficult for them to be able to succeed. Half of Canadians are only \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills, and all Canadians are now afraid of what is ahead. While Canadians struggle, the government is making life harder and more expensive.

If Liberals cared about or respected Canadians, they would put in place policies for Canadians to be able to succeed. They would build pipelines. They would cut red tape instead of increasing it. They would cut taxes instead of raising them. They would create the opportunity for the private sector to be able to create jobs, and they would cancel the carbon tax.

Canadians know that the current Liberal government is doing nothing to make life more affordable and everything to make life harder. Times are tough and are getting tougher. One in three Canadians feels that his or her current standard of living has gotten worse. That is the sign of a Liberal government that puts its political interests ahead of Canadians. It is time for the Prime Minister to show Canadians some respect and start putting them first.

* * *

● (1410)

COMMONWEALTH DAY

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe we can all unite today in celebrating, with a week's delay, Commonwealth Day, an occasion to recognize the aspirational and inspirational objectives of this family of nations.

[Translation]

As a very active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I firmly believe in this organization's *raison d'être*, namely to promote democracy, human rights, international peace and security, as well as the rule of law and good governance.

[English]

Once again, allow me to rejoice in the commemoration of this special day and to offer special thanks to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for such committed dedication to the Commonwealth family.

* * *

[Translation]

CANCER PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge the importance of cancer awareness and activism. As I celebrate seven years in remission this month, I know perfectly well that awareness, early detection, and new treatments save lives.

We still have a lot of work to do and we must continue that work until we find a cure.

[English]

On behalf of the House, I want to thank every Canadian who has spoken up about cancer; every Canadian who has donated; every organization leading the charge; every researcher who has worked tirelessly to find that new breakthrough; every nurse and doctor who has diligently treated and cared for a fighter; and every spouse, friend and family member who has been there for their loved one when they needed them most. That love and care made all the difference for me, and I could not have done it without having my wife and best friend Paula by my side.

We are all in this together. We all have a role to play, and that is why I am confident that together one day we will beat cancer.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, life is getting more expensive for Canadians every day. Taxes are going up and we have little to show for it. A middle-class family with at least one child should brace for an average increase of over \$2,200 a year. It is an alarming amount, and the situation is made worse when you consider the cost of child care, rising interest rates and mortgage payments.

The Liberals promised Canadians that they would borrow just \$10 billion per year to create jobs and grow the economy, but now the deficit is three times as large and there is no plan to balance Canada's budget until after I am dead. We are in for decades of red ink. My city of Calgary, once the economic engine of Canada, now has the highest unemployment rate in the country.

Routine Proceedings

Canadians deserve better. They deserve strong leadership to get pipelines built and strong leadership to put our economy on sound footing. This fall, Canadians will have the chance to build a better Canada with a new, strong Conservative leadership. It cannot come soon enough.

* * *

PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to celebrate something historic in the world of professional tennis. As an athlete and former Olympian, it is always amazing to see our country rally behind an athlete. It is one of the reasons that sport is so important in bringing together a whole country.

We saw that this past weekend when Mississauga's own Bianca Andreescu took the tennis world by storm. She made history by becoming the first wild card player to win a master's tournament, the Indian Wells championship.

From all of us parliamentarians, we would like to congratulate her. We look forward to the amazing career that she has ahead of her.

This goes to show how strong Canadian tennis is right now. It started years ago, and then more recently, with Milos, then Denis and Genie. Now we have Bianca. We cannot wait to cheer her on and see everything that she accomplishes.

Love, game, set, match, Bianca.

* * *

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 302

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 crashed last week, Yusuf Abdullahi lost his sister, Amina Ibrahim Odowa, and her five-year-old daughter, Sofia Abdulkadir, both Edmontonians.

Yesterday, Abdullahi attended a candlelight vigil alongside dozens of Edmontonians to honour his family and the other 155 passengers aboard the Ethiopian Airlines flight. The same vigil commemorated the victims of Friday's mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. Fifty people were killed in the attacks and dozens more were injured.

Mr. Abdullahi remarked that "Every family is going through pain. The families of those people who were killed in the mosque, they are going through the same pain I went through, my family went through."

Also lost in the crash was former Edmonton resident, Darcy Belanger, and other Canadians headed to the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, to aid projects or to go to family reunions.

On behalf of the NDP, I offer our deepest condolences to all those who have lost family, friends and loved ones as a result of this tragedy.

●(1415)

SHOOTINGS IN CHRISTCHURCH

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the world was shocked by the brutal massacre of 50 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, as they gathered in their mosques for Friday prayers. This terror attack was a cowardly and hateful assault on the Muslim community, our shared values, and on the freedoms that we as Canadians hold so dear. Houses of worship must be places where people can meet and worship freely without fear.

Canada's Conservatives are united with Christchurch and the Muslim community across the world in their grief over this devastating loss.

Last week's events reaffirm that now more than ever, we must all stand shoulder to shoulder against those who would try to divide us in their mission to sow hatred and destruction. Freedom, love and peaceful understanding will persevere. Canadians will ensure it.

* * *

SHOOTINGS IN CHRISTCHURCH

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's heart is broken for New Zealand and the international Muslim community. On Friday, in Christchurch, 50 worshippers and bystanders were killed and many others wounded at the two mosques, in a senseless act of hate.

Every human being should be able to practise his or her faith without fear. We have a responsibility to stand against hate in every form it takes. We remember far too well the attack on the worshippers at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City two years ago.

Canada is very like-minded to New Zealand in our social and environmental policies, our trade deals like the CPTPP, and our historic alliances through two world wars and many other international conflicts.

My wife Pam and I, and our son Josh, had the wonderful pleasure of visiting New Zealand to experience the beautiful country it is.

As chair of the Canada-New Zealand-Australia friendship group, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in this vicious attack. Canada stands in solidarity with New Zealand and the Muslim countries around the world.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Ms. Rachel Bendayan, member for the electoral district of Outremont.

*Oral Questions***NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED**

Ms. Rachel Bendayan, member for the electoral district of Outremont, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Marc Garneau.

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● (1420)

[English]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Davidson, member for the electoral district of York—Simcoe.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Scot Davidson, member for the electoral district of York—Simcoe, introduced by the Hon. Andrew Scheer and the Hon. Diane Finley.

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NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Singh, member of Parliament for the electoral district of Burnaby South.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Jagmeet Singh, member for the electoral district of Burnaby South, introduced by Mr. Peter Julian and Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

SHOOTINGS IN NEW ZEALAND

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for all members when I say that we are all shocked and saddened by news of the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. I know that the Prime Minister and I, along with other opposition leaders, will be making statements after question period, but I wanted to give the Prime Minister the opportunity to join with me now, and indeed all members, in expressing our profound sorrow for the victims and their families, while standing in solidarity with Muslims all over the world and condemning the hateful ideologies that promote violence and intolerance.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country were appalled to learn of the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. We extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones in this terrible attack.

To the people of New Zealand and Muslim communities in Canada and around the world, they are in our hearts and minds and we stand with them.

I spoke with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern over the weekend to convey Canada's support through this difficult time, both as a government, as political institutions, and also from people to people.

I also want to highlight that in regard to the Netherlands, our thoughts are with the residents as we learn more on the possible terrorist attack they have gone through this morning. We will be reaching out to counterparts to offer our support.

* * *

● (1425)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister.

The former attorney general of Canada confirmed that the Prime Minister and his staff subjected her to consistent and sustained political pressure to end the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. The Prime Minister has retained the services of a lawyer to defend him against potential criminal charges. If he really wants to get to the bottom of what happened, he can waive solicitor-client privilege and allow the former attorney general to say everything she wants to say.

When will he do that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to have faith in their institutions and the people who serve in them. The events of the last few weeks have raised important questions about the relationship between the federal government and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Today I am announcing that the Hon. Anne McLellan will serve as special adviser to examine these questions and make independent recommendations. As a former minister of justice and attorney general and deputy prime minister, she has a unique understanding of these roles. Her work will help—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill and others will come to order. The hon. member for Carleton will also come to order.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there we have it. Liberals will investigate Liberals to get to the bottom of this affair: former Liberal cabinet minister Anne McLellan. Maybe Sheila Copps was not available. This is unbelievable and all for something that according to the Prime Minister was completely false. He said that none of these accusations were true. However, in order to prove that, he could do the right thing and let the former attorney general complete her testimony, starting tomorrow at the justice committee.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect and deserve to have faith in their institutions and the people who serve in them. The events of the last few weeks have raised important questions about the relationship between the federal government and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

I am therefore announcing that the Hon. Anne McLellan will serve as special adviser to examine these questions and provide independent recommendations to us. As former minister of justice and attorney general and deputy prime minister, she is uniquely suited for this role. Her work will be another important step toward maintaining Canadians' confidence in their institutions.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is right. Canadians should have confidence in their institutions, but it is his actions and those around him who have eroded that confidence.

Remember that on February 7 the Prime Minister said that all these allegations were completely false. We then saw two ministers resign on principle. Then his former principal secretary, Gerald Butts, had to resign in disgrace. Today, the Clerk of the Privy Council had to do the exact same thing.

If the Prime Minister wants to restore confidence, he can let the former attorney general complete her testimony, starting tomorrow at the justice committee.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have taken responsibility for the erosion of trust between the former attorney general and my office. That is why it was important that the justice committee be able to hear key witnesses in regard to this matter. That is why we put forward an unprecedented waiver of cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege.

The committee has been meeting for five weeks and Canadians got to hear all perspectives. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner continues to look into the matter. I have said from the start that the decisions related to the DPAs were always for the attorney general and the attorney general alone to make.

• (1430)

The Speaker: We could have a shorter question period if members do not settle down.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton had better come to order.

The hon. opposition leader.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a little mistake, it is not the events of the last few weeks that led to the erosion of trust. It was the coordinated, unwanted and sustained campaign of political pressure on the former attorney general that eroded trust under his government.

Other people have had the ability to come back to complete their testimony, but so far the Prime Minister is denying that right to the former attorney general. She wrote a letter saying that this matter was serious and that some questions remained unanswered. She can answer those questions if the Prime Minister lets her. Will he?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government gave an unprecedented waiver for the former minister to speak fully and in detail. Nothing related to this matter was off limits. The waiver covered the former attorney general's entire term and covers the entire period for which allegations have been made.

Since 1987, there have only been four similar instances where cabinet confidence was waived and none of those included solicitor-client privilege.

The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner continues his important work and we have appointed the Hon. Anne McLellan as special adviser—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by expressing our solidarity with the people of New Zealand who are mourning the attack on Muslim brothers and sisters at the masjid in Christchurch.

I met a mom in Burnaby. She bought a home, but cannot afford to live there anymore. Her daughter has a good job, but only gets by because she lives in the basement. Her son does not see a future. Like too many Canadians, he has lost all hope.

However, the Prime Minister is telling families like hers to wait for help. I believe that better is possible. Will the government commit to building half a million new affordable homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take this occasion to first congratulate and welcome the new member for Burnaby South to the House. I know that he, like every member of this place, will aim to best represent and serve Canadians and his constituents.

I hope he and his party will support the work our government has done to lift hundreds of thousands of children across the country out of poverty. We lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them on the wealthiest 1%. We indeed ended boil water advisories in so many communities across the country with more to do. These are the things we will continue to work on and we look forward to his support in creating a better and fairer Canada for everyone.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, three budgets and Canadians are still waiting for housing.

[*Translation*]

Last Friday, I was in the streets with thousands of young people to protest against the government's serious lack of leadership on the climate crisis. They say that the time for talk, political rhetoric and half measures is over.

Will the Prime Minister get rid of the carbon price exemption for major polluters?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many years, governments of different political stripes failed to take action. Now, our government is implementing concrete measures to fight climate change.

We have put a price on pollution. We launched a historic plan to protect our oceans, our land and our marine areas. We have made record investments in renewable energy and in greener solutions for our businesses and entrepreneurs. We will continue to believe that the only way to protect the environment is to create economic growth at the same time, and that is what we are going to do.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, environmental leaders do not buy pipelines.

People are concerned about how easy it is for wealthy individuals to access the Prime Minister's Office. They are troubled by how the rich managed to get legislation passed through the back door. Worse still, the OECD's anti-bribery unit is concerned about possible political interference.

Why is the Prime Minister so afraid to uncover the truth and launch a public inquiry?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP apparently, we will always stand up to protect workers and businesses across this country.

We know that there are good jobs in various industries across the country, and these workers deserve to be protected. That is why we are so pleased to point out that we have created nearly 950,000 jobs over the past three years. We will continue to create more.

We will always stand up to protect our workers, all Canadians and good jobs across the country. We will always do that. We will not apologize for standing up for jobs.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the only job the Prime Minister is concerned about is his own.

The OECD's anti-bribery unit is concerned about political interference and said this scandal set "all alarms sounding".

For Canadians watching at home, this does not look any different from when the Conservatives were in power: special access for powerful corporations, a closed door for everyone else.

Why is the Prime Minister so afraid to launch a public inquiry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since our first day in office, we have consistently stood up for Canadians, defended workers and created good jobs right across the country. Indeed, Canadians have created close to 950,000 good new jobs right across the country over three and a half years, because this government remains focused on creating opportunities for workers, opportunities for Canadians.

We are of course going to make sure that we continue to maintain the trust and confidence that Canadians have in their institutions and

we are happy to answer all of the various questions going on, but we will continue to stand up for jobs.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on at least four separate occasions at the justice committee, the former attorney general said that she could not talk about something because of privilege restrictions. She could not talk about why she left cabinet, even though the Prime Minister, Gerry Butts and the Clerk of the Privy Council all did. To add insult to injury, the Liberals on the justice committee are clearly nothing more than PMO puppets who are part of this cover-up.

The justice committee meets tomorrow morning. Will the Prime Minister finally remove all the restrictions and let the former attorney general speak at the justice committee?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the committee has heard from all perspectives. It was this Prime Minister and this government that actually made sure that cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege were removed so that the former attorney general could appear.

The opposition House leader recognizes that the former attorney general did appear. We know there were four hours of questioning—twice. We know that she was able to share her perspectives. More importantly, these conversations took place in public so that Canadians could also be able to hear what took place.

That member should know how committees operate. It is unfortunate that the Conservatives have no regard for committees.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear to everyone watching that the justice committee is controlled by the Prime Minister's Office through the Liberal members on that committee.

Today, we just heard that the Prime Minister is going to be asking his Liberal friend Anne McLellan to apparently investigate. I guess his Liberal friends Gerry Butts, Kathleen Wynne and Sheila Copps were busy.

We do not need any Liberals investigating Liberals. What we need to have is the former attorney general being allowed to speak and to give her whole story. Will the Prime Minister let her speak?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side we will focus on the facts. The government gave unprecedented waiver for a former minister to speak fully and in detail. The waiver covers the former attorney general's entire term. It covers the whole period during which allegations have been made.

The committee is doing its important work. The Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is doing its work. We know there are two ongoing investigations.

I am not surprised that the Conservatives would play their traditional game of smearing names. Maybe we should reach out to Jay Hill and find out how to undermine the work of committees. That was the Conservative way.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that they have not heard the whole truth when it comes to the Prime Minister's scandal.

In a letter to her constituents, the former attorney general said that these matters were still unfolding and that further clarity and information were needed. She said that this matter was serious and some questions remain unanswered.

Will the Prime Minister authorize her to appear again before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights tomorrow?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have confidence in the members who sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We know that they can do their job. They must do their job.

The government gave an unprecedented waiver of cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege so that the former minister could speak fully.

Since 1987, there have only been four instances where cabinet confidence was waived, and none of those included solicitor-client privilege. We will do so because we know that Canadians must hear her. This is exactly why the former attorney general was there.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians see what is going on. They know that the right to speak was cut off after January 14, but that the former attorney general should have the right to talk about what happened during a period of time between January 14 and February 12. There is a lot of information that is critical to this case.

Will the Prime Minister allow the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to have the former attorney general come back to testify?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will do their work and make their own decisions. The committee has heard different views. All the facts are now public.

The former minister appeared before the committee for nearly four hours. Waiving cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege means that all pertinent information can be shared with the committee. The former minister did just that. We know that the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will do their work. We have confidence in the committee's work.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister expects us to have confidence in a justice committee that shuts down debate 20 minutes into a meeting, before a motion can even be debated. Now Liberals are throwing up the smokescreen of Anne McLellan. Anne McLellan served in cabinet with the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and the Minister of Veterans Affairs. She was a minister during the Liberal sponsorship scandal. That is going to make this go away?

Why does the Prime Minister not lift the gag order tomorrow at the justice committee and let the former attorney general speak?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that we have regard and respect for the work that committees do. We have—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, we on this side have regard and respect for the work that committees do. We have respect for officers of Parliament. We know that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is actually looking into this matter. We know that there are two ongoing court cases.

From what we just heard from the member opposite, it is clear that Conservatives will continue to undermine our institutions.

The former attorney general appeared at committee. Something she said is that Canadians can have confidence in their institutions and that the rule of law was followed.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is these Liberals who are eroding Canadians' confidence in their institutions, and Anne McLellan is not an institution. She is a former Liberal minister who was there during the sponsorship scandal.

The former attorney general has made it clear that she has more to say. The Prime Minister is standing in her way, blocking her from completing her testimony.

Will he stop being so afraid of what she has to say, remove the gag order and let her speak?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, this government gave an unprecedented waiver for the former minister to speak fully and in detail. The Prime Minister and this government waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. Since 1987, there have only been four times when that has happened, and none included solicitor-client privilege.

One of those times was under Stephen Harper. It is interesting that the member now talks about how committees operate. It is clear that he is projecting, because he knows that Stephen Harper used to tell them what to do.

We on this side have confidence in our members who sit on the justice committee. We know that they can do their work fully independently of this place.

Oral Questions

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week at the justice committee emergency meeting, Liberal MPs shut down debate on the PMO's interference scandal. Tomorrow, Liberals intend to hold a meeting out of the public eye, behind closed doors. They keep telling Canadians there is nothing to see here, that it is just procedural. The fact is that the former attorney general wants to tell her whole truth, but the Prime Minister refuses to let Canadians hear it. This is a deliberate obstruction of justice.

Canadians deserve the truth. Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and allow the former attorney general to speak her whole truth for Canadians to hear, yes or no?

• (1445)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been clear on every occasion that the decision that is being discussed was for the former attorney general to take. It is clear that the decision that the former attorney general took remains in place.

We also know on this side that committees can do their important work. We see that the NDP now have the same talking points as the Conservatives, and they look for direction from their leader as to what to do at committee and what not to do. That is not the approach of this side. This Prime Minister and this government respect the work of members who sit on the committee. We will let them do their important work.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's attempt to interfere with the SNC-Lavalin bribery case has cost him his former attorney general, the President of the Treasury Board and the Clerk of the Privy Council. He is going to bring a Liberal back from the sponsorship days to make it all right. Who is coming up with these ideas?

It is no wonder the OECD anti-bribery unit said this has set all the alarms ringing. This is like a five-alarm dumpster fire of political cronyism, incompetence and now obstruction.

What is the Prime Minister so afraid of that he will not let the former attorney general speak her truth so Canadians can get to the bottom of this very tawdry scandal?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do actually want to start by thanking Mr. Wernick for his decades of service to this country, his 37 years of service to this country. We know that when it comes to our public service, we have the best public servants in the whole wide world, and they serve our country well. When it comes to members who sit on the justice committee, we have confidence that they will do their important work.

That member might choose to use name-calling, or whatever approach, but we know that the justice committee can do its work. We know that officers of Parliament should be able to do their work. We believe in and support the independence of the judicial system. We will focus on Canadians, while they focus on tactics.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting for answers on the SNC-Lavalin scandal. It is high time Canadians got the whole truth.

The former attorney general must be allowed to speak her whole truth. In her March 14 letter, she clearly reiterated that recent events have been a wake-up call for many across the country, and further clarity and information are needed.

Will the Liberal members on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights back off and agree to let her appear at committee tomorrow morning?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the government waived cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege so that the former minister could speak fully. We know that the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights are doing their work and asking questions. We know that the former attorney general testified for four hours and answered many questions. We saw them keep asking the same questions and get the same answers.

We can also see that the member was reading a question given to her by the House leader of the official opposition. She cannot ask her own questions. She has to do what her leader tells her to do.

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former attorney general says the SNC scandal is a serious wake-up call, and the OECD says all alarms are sounding. This is serious. Canadians and our allies must be reassured that our rule of law is intact. We need the whole truth, not just the pieces the Prime Minister will allow us to hear.

Tomorrow, Liberal members will determine the future of the investigation. Will the Prime Minister let the former attorney general speak tomorrow at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice?

• (1450)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, exactly as that member has asked, I would like to reassure Canadians and international partners that the rule of law is intact in Canada.

I would like to reassure Canadians that they can have trust and faith in our democratic institutions. It is the justice committee that is doing its important work, and it continues to do so. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is studying this matter. We know that they will do their important work.

We know that there are two ongoing investigations, court cases. We know that we can have confidence in the independence of our judicial system. We have confidence, and Canadians can too.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know Canadians would have more confidence in our system if the Prime Minister would just let the former attorney general speak.

Oral Questions

The SNC-Lavalin scandal has yet again shone a light on the government's ethical failures. The former attorney general's testimony detailed grossly inappropriate actions taken by the Prime Minister and his inner circle. However, this was not even her full story. The Prime Minister continues to refuse to let her speak fully and freely. Canadians deserve to hear the rest of her story.

If the Prime Minister has nothing to hide, will he allow Liberal members on the justice committee to let her speak?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will try this again.

There are members of Parliament from both sides who sit on committees. When it comes to our members, they make their decisions, and they know how to proceed. What they do know is that members have been appearing. It was actually this Prime Minister and this government that waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence to ensure that the former attorney general and minister of justice could appear at committee and share what she needed to share.

We know that she was there for over four hours. We know that the questions got asked. She was able to answer them. We also know that the questions were quite repetitive.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, imagine that. She was there for about four and a half hours. She was allowed to speak, yet she told us and all Canadians that she has more to say, that her testimony has not been made complete.

My question is very simple. Canadians want a full story. They want to understand the full picture here. They do not see why the government is shutting down the justice committee and not allowing the former attorney general to speak.

Parliament belongs to Canadians. They deserve answers. Will the Prime Minister end the cover-up and let her speak?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we have confidence in the work members of Parliament who sit on the justice committee will do. We know that they are capable of it.

We know that the Prime Minister has taken responsibility for the breakdown in trust and communication within his office. We know that he has committed to finding a better way forward, because that is exactly what it is.

When it comes to the Conservatives, it is interesting. They talk about what Canadians want. Canadians want an economy that works for them so that they can work and be able to contribute. Canadians want a clean, greener future for their kids and grandkids. That is what we are delivering. The Conservatives continue to have no plan and play their tactics.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of not having a plan, more than 150,000 students in Quebec went on strike on Friday to call for action on climate change. They are calling on governments to take action to limit

global warming to 1.5° Celsius. They are sounding the alarm because the government is getting further and further away from its greenhouse gas reduction targets every year.

Will the Prime Minister eliminate subsidies for the oil and gas industries?

Will he show some political courage by proposing measures to reduce pollution and investing in renewable energy, or will students have to jeopardize their education to get their message across?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the young people who marched across Canada and around the world to support climate action just last week. The irony is not lost on me that while students were striking for climate action, the Ford government in Ontario was actually touring university campuses to fight action on climate change.

In answer to the member's question, we are taking action to reduce emissions. We are putting a price on pollution that is going to make life more affordable and bring our emissions down. Our electricity is going to be 90% clean by 2030. We are making the largest investment in Canada's history in public transit.

These are real measures that are going to impact climate change. They are going to make a difference for Canadians for generations.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the safe third country agreement was not working over a year ago. The U.S. is not a safe country for asylum seekers. Children continue to be separated from their parents. Gender-based violence is no longer recognized as a basis for asylum.

The Prime Minister stated that the treatment of asylum seekers by the U.S. was wrong, but instead of suspending the agreement, the Liberals are looking to expand it and apply it to those crossing into Canada irregularly. Is this what a Liberal feminist government looks like, denying women fleeing domestic violence the right to make an asylum claim?

Oral Questions

●(1455)

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States have the most secure and efficient border in the world. The safe third country agreement remains an important tool for us to continue to work together on the orderly processing of asylum claims made in both our countries. We know that this agreement can be improved, and I have personally met with members of the U.S. Congress, border protection agencies and the Department of Homeland Security, because we believe that there are opportunities to improve this agreement to the mutual benefit of both countries and our citizens.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, we extended our military training mission in Ukraine, Operation Unifier, until 2019. Since then, 200 Canadian Armed Forces members have trained close to 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers, and Canada has been advising the country on NATO standard defence reforms.

Can the Minister of National Defence update the House on how our government is standing shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine in the face of Russian military aggression?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for his tireless advocacy for the people of Ukraine. He knows our government's support for Ukraine is unwavering.

Today we announced the renewal of our military training and co-operation mission in Ukraine for an additional three years, until March 2022. This mission is a key part of Canada's whole-of-government approach to supporting Ukraine. We want a strong, stable and sovereign Ukraine, and we are helping Ukrainians achieve that goal. We stand with the people of Ukraine.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, six weeks ago, the Prime Minister denied that he attempted to interfere in a criminal trial. His excuses have evolved as evidence of political interference has accumulated, despite sycophantic stonewalling by Liberal members of the justice committee. Now the Prime Minister and senior staffers have lawyered up, on the public dime, in apparent anticipation of criminal investigation and possible prosecution.

We are looking at unvarnished corruption here. Will the Prime Minister direct Liberal MPs to stop the cover-up at the justice committee tomorrow?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Conservative Party cannot understand that when it comes to members who sit on committees, they are capable of making their own decisions. Members who sit on the justice committee know that this file has been with the justice committee for five weeks, and they have been able to hear from all perspectives. Members also know that they have been able to ask questions. Witnesses have appeared and answered those questions.

When it comes to the former attorney general, we know that the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege. We know that he waived cabinet confidence. That is something that was unheard of under the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister, the SNC-Lavalin saga is turning into an outright corruption scandal, the likes of which have never been seen in Canada. A Prime Minister who refuses to accept the decision of his own country's Attorney General, and even refuses to allow her to immediately explain why, no longer deserves to govern.

We have even learned that the Prime Minister has hired outside lawyers to prepare his defence.

Why is the Prime Minister preparing his defence? Will he stop hiding the truth from Canadians?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights took the time to hear from witnesses who came to answer questions.

We know that the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights have been studying this matter for five weeks now. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is also looking into this matter. We know that we can count on the work done by the committee and the office of the Ethics Commissioner.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has had a stellar reputation as a founding member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Sadly, under the Liberal government, that reputation is being tarnished by the Prime Minister's conduct in the SNC-Lavalin affair, and the OECD bribery group is now investigating the Liberal government's actions.

When will the Prime Minister recognize that Liberal corruption and stonewalling is harming Canada's international reputation?

●(1500)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important the member recognize that when it comes to the rule of law in Canada, it is intact and it is being followed. We also know that in Canada, we have institutions and officers of Parliament who are able to do their work. We know that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is looking into this matter.

We have confidence that they are able to do that important work, something the Conservatives did not understand for 10 years. It is clear that they do not seem to comprehend that now.

We know that there is an ongoing court case. We will let the independent judicial system do its important work, because we know that it should.

Oral Questions

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the foreign affairs minister. In her formal response to the OECD, the minister pledged to update it on the “independent domestic processes currently underway in Canada” on the SNC affair.

How can she claim that the SNC investigation is independent, when Liberal MPs are preventing the former attorney general from testifying? The minister loves to talk about the international rules-based order, so will she live up to her own rhetoric and allow the former attorney general to testify tomorrow at the justice committee?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do indeed love to talk about the international rules-based order, because that is absolutely essential to the defence of the Canadian national interest in the world.

When it comes to the OECD, Canada is proud of our participation in this important organization. We have been clear from the start with the OECD that we support its work and will co-operate with it fully.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, our media industry is going through an unprecedented crisis. Last year, the government promised a tax credit and other measures to support Canadian journalism. A few announcements were made, but since then, there has been radio silence. The government issued a news release, but it has not provided any money or anything concrete.

Now rumour has it that the government is planning to delay all this until just after the election. Funnily enough, Facebook and Google have no trouble securing a meeting with the Prime Minister or a massive tax break. Meanwhile, our media industry is crumbling and thousands of Canadian jobs are at risk.

How many more years will the media have to wait?

[English]

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Broadcasting Act has not been reviewed since before the Internet was in our homes. Why is that? It is because for 10 years, the Conservatives took no action on this.

We have appointed a panel of experts to help modernize this act. Our starting point is clear. All players who participate in this system will pay. There will be no free ride.

I know that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, is working with our allied countries to find a consensual approach to this.

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SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, due to a glitch in CPP payments that started in 2009, for 10 years both the Conservative and Liberal governments overpaid seniors, and now they are telling these seniors that they have to pay it back. Seniors might have even been unaware of the overpayment. It

could also mean that they paid higher taxes. Paying these amounts back will impact seniors, the most vulnerable seniors, who are on or below the poverty line in this country.

Can the current government explain to the people of Canada what it is going to do to make sure that seniors are not overburdened with paperwork and that the most vulnerable are not paying, with so few resources?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our agenda on helping middle-class Canadians has started helping seniors. In budget 2016, we introduced an enhancement to the guaranteed income supplement, which is helping to lift 75,000 seniors out of poverty. We have also introduced an enhancement to the Canada pension plan, a historic enhancement, which we had not seen for many decades.

We are working very hard to make sure that all vulnerable seniors receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now the Prime Minister is bringing in a politician from the era of the Liberal ad scam to investigate today's Liberal Lav scam. However, Anne McLellan is a bit busy right now. In fact, on March 31, people can meet with her if they donate to the Liberal Party and attend a fundraiser. I guess that is where they will discuss this independent investigation.

I have a better idea. Tomorrow the justice committee will meet in the morning to decide whether to bring back the former attorney general to complete her testimony. Will the Prime Minister let her speak?

● (1505)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have committees in which parliamentarians and members of Parliament sit. The justice committee is the committee the member refers to. It is doing its important work, and we believe it should be able to.

It was this Prime Minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. It is important to hear members when they are speaking in the House, whether it is asking a question or giving the answer, even if we do not like what someone may be saying. I think members should respect that and recognize the importance of that. I would hope so in our democracy.

The hon. government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, what is always quite interesting is that when I get up to answer, the Conservatives do not let me speak. It is fascinating how they want people to be able to speak when it seems to be for political gain. That is not how we operate on this side of the chamber. We have confidence in the justice committee. It will do its important work. We know that the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is also doing its important work. We believe it should be able to.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's top adviser has resigned. His Attorney General has resigned. His Treasury Board president has resigned. Now the head of the entire public service has resigned. No one did anything wrong, but everybody is resigning for it.

We know something happened here, something bad enough that the former attorney general could no longer be part of the government at all, but she has not been able to tell us why. Will the Prime Minister join with us tomorrow morning at the justice committee to let her speak?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the Conservatives have never let the facts get in the way, but it is important that Canadians be reminded of them.

It was actually the Prime Minister and this government that waived solicitor-client privilege and waived cabinet confidence so the former attorney general could appear. It was justice committee members who asked that the clerk appear, asked the former attorney general to appear and asked for other witnesses to appear. Those people have been appearing.

We also know that the justice committee has been now sitting for five weeks. We know that the former attorney general appeared for over four hours and answered a series of questions, which, by the end, were quite repetitive.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Yes, Mr. Speaker, she did appear and the Conservative deputy leader asked her this, "Can you tell us why you've resigned from cabinet?" The answer was, "I cannot". The reason is that the Prime Minister kept in a gag order for the period after he moved her out of the position of Attorney General. During that period, she witnessed events so egregious she thought it merited her resignation from cabinet altogether.

If the Prime Minister has nothing to hide, tomorrow morning he will show up at the justice committee and have his members vote in favour of letting her speak. Will he?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if that member were more concerned about actually seeing what is taking place at committee instead of worrying about sign-outs, maybe he would see that the committee has actually been doing its important work. It has been studying this matter for over five weeks. There has been a series of witnesses who have appeared. We have confidence that the committee can do its important work.

Additionally, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is looking into this matter. We believe that officers of Parliament are independent of this place and should be able to do this work. We also know that there is an ongoing court case. We believe in the independence of the judiciary. We will not undermine them like the Conservatives continue to do.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, we are taking a big step towards improving

gender equality at home and at work with the introduction of the new parental sharing benefit.

[English]

Thanks to the parental sharing benefit, parents across Canada will be able to share the work of raising their children more equally.

[Translation]

Could the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell the House more about the new parental sharing benefit?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and commend the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his amazing work.

The government clearly understands that gender equality is good for Canadians and also for the economy.

[English]

That is why we have introduced a new parental sharing benefit, which is giving parents five more weeks to spend with their children. That is why, with investments in early learning and child care, with investments in the historic Canada child benefit, we are giving more money to parents to spend on their children and more time for them to spend with their children.

* * *

● (1510)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where there is smoke, there is fire, and that fire is burning so fiercely in the Prime Minister's Office that they had to call in the firefighters. News surfaced this weekend that private sector lawyers have been hired for the Prime Minister and cabinet members named in the cover-up.

Rather than waste Canadian taxpayers' money, will the Prime Minister come clean tomorrow at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights?

Did the RCMP contact him or his office about political interference in criminal proceedings against SNC-Lavalin, yes or no?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

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RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from spurring economic development to reducing greenhouse gases, the virtues of the VIA Rail high-frequency train proposal are well known.

One year ago today, the Minister of Transport promised us an answer before the end of the year, but we have no answer yet. It looks like high-frequency rail will end up being just an election promise, not one of this government's accomplishments.

Oral Questions

If the Minister of Infrastructure can announce a \$1-billion investment in light rail projects in Edmonton, why can the Minister of Transport not do anything for Canada's most densely populated corridor?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, we are reviewing VIA Rail's proposal for a major project in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor. It is a massive project, but we have to do our homework. That is what we are doing. When we have something to say, we will let him know.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the metal and mining industry is important for our economy and for our communities across the country, including many municipalities in Laurentides—Labelle. That is why our government is working hard to ensure that this industry continues to create jobs and generate economic growth.

Could the minister tell the House how our government is focusing on innovation, the development of clean technologies and strengthening the regulatory framework to ensure that the exploration and mining sector is prosperous, resilient and sustainable?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Laurentides—Labelle for his hard work.

Our government is supporting the minerals sector by extending the mineral exploration tax credit for five years, by investing in innovation and by fixing the broken review process for mines and other major projects. Now our new Canadian minerals and metals plan will ensure the sector continues to create good middle-class jobs for generations to come.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Scot Davidson (York-Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister refuses to come clean about his interference in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. He is choosing instead to cover it up at every opportunity. It is clear that the Prime Minister interfered in a criminal trial to defend his friends and now he has hired lawyers to defend himself.

Could the Prime Minister confirm if he or his staff has been contacted by the RCMP?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, the Liberals will table their last budget before the election. This is the Liberals' last chance to be forgiven for all the times it has betrayed Quebec. They cut health transfers, wasted our money on dirty oil, abandoned our aerospace

sector and failed our rural areas. The list is long, especially for our dairy producers, who were sold out three times in free trade agreements. It is their last chance.

Will the government finally compensate in full our producers for the three breaches in supply management?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government stood firm on supply management even though the Americans wanted to dismantle it. We are currently working with three working groups, producers and processors to ensure that we find the right way to fully and fairly support them. We will also ensure that we have a vision for the future, so that future generations can be prosperous.

* * *

● (1515)

BORDER SECURITY

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, PPC): Mr. Speaker, we are learning that the government has entered into discussions with the U. S. to close the loophole in the safe third country agreement. The government has allowed thousands of illegal migrants to flood into Canada and has spent hundreds of millions of dollars, yet it has done nothing to resolve the issue.

Why did the government allow the situation to deteriorate so badly before sitting down with the Americans to enforce our border laws?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear that people who come to Canada seeking our protection are overwhelmingly families and children. When they enter the country, regardless of how they enter, if they make a claim for asylum, they are entitled under Canadian law to a fair hearing, due process and our protection until a determination of their eligibility is made.

We have been working very closely with our counterparts in the United States to ensure that the bilateral agreement that exists between us operates fairly and efficiently to encourage people to cross at regular points of entry to maintain the security and the integrity of our borders. We will continue with that important work.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, over 150,000 students demonstrated in Montreal last Friday.

[English]

Thousands more walked in almost every town and city in Canada, with students saying that we were stealing their future and they wanted to take it back. One sign in Victoria, where hundreds and hundreds of kids were marching, said that the kids were the only adults in the room.

Routine Proceedings

When will the government get rid of the Harper target to extinction and bring in place a target that takes us to survival?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is real and the cost of inaction is enormous. For the young Canadians who marched on Friday, we hear them. We are taking action to put a price on pollution, to phase out coal and to keep our oceans and communities clean.

Unlike the Conservatives who want to make pollution free again and have no plan for the environment, our government has a serious plan to fight climate change. Our plan will create a cleaner, more prosperous future for our kids and our grandkids.

* * *

[Translation]

SHOOTINGS IN NEW ZEALAND

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart burdened with the painful memory of the terrorist attack perpetrated in my community in Quebec City on January 29, 2017, that I seek the unanimous consent of the House regarding the following motion to support the people of New Zealand:

[English]

I move:

That the House, (i) condemns the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand; (ii) extends its deepest condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones; (iii) expresses solidarity with the people of New Zealand and Muslim communities in Canada and around the world; (iv) affirms the need to confront hatred, Islamophobia, and white supremacy, in all their forms; and (v) commits to working to create a world where all people, no matter their faith, can feel supported and safe.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary 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)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “Infrastructure Update: Investments in Provinces and Municipalities”.

* * *

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 62 petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Accession Protocol for the future Republic of North Macedonia”, signed in Brussels on February 6, 2019.

* * *

• (1520)

SHOOTINGS IN NEW ZEALAND

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to say that our hearts are with the people of Utrecht and the Netherlands, who are reeling from the news of a tram shooting. This is breaking news, but we know that people have been killed and injured. The police are considering this a possible terrorist attack.

[English]

We stand with our Dutch friends as they grapple with the consequences of this violence, and we will be reaching out to our counterparts to offer our unwavering support. Prime Minister Rutte addressed this House mere months ago, and he spoke of the close ties between our countries. Canada will be there, as we always are, for the Netherlands in the difficult days ahead.

I rise today to express Canada's deepest condolences to all those grieving in New Zealand. Just a few days ago, our friend and ally suffered the worst terrorist attack in its history, an attack motivated by Islamophobia. Fifty men, women and children were murdered at prayer and dozens more injured. They were gunned down by a monster, a terrorist, a coward.

[Translation]

I have spoken with Prime Minister Ardern. I offered our sincere condolences and our support. I also congratulated her on the leadership and compassion she has shown in response to this tragedy.

We share in the pain of the parents, brothers, sisters and friends of the victims who did not have a chance to say goodbye to their loved ones. These loved ones were killed by a hateful individual who chose to adopt a hateful ideology.

[English]

Canada is home to over one million Muslims who live and thrive in a free and open secular democracy. It is our responsibility to maintain this freedom, so that those who choose to practice faith can do so without fear of violence.

Routine Proceedings

Our Muslim friends here in Canada, in New Zealand and around the world should know that we mourn with them. We feel their pain and we love them. We will stand by them in the difficult days and weeks to come. The Quran tells us, “The true servants of the Most Merciful are those who behave gently and with humility on earth, and whenever the foolish quarrel with them, they reply with [words of] peace.”

If that idea sounds familiar, perhaps people have also heard it in the Gospel of Matthew, which speaks not of revenge and retaliation but of turning the other cheek. Indeed, if we choose to look for them, the lessons found within our faiths will bind us together and are more powerful than those things that seek to divide us.

[*Translation*]

Just two years ago I participated in a vigil in honour of six innocent men from Sainte-Foy, Quebec. These men were brothers, fathers and sons who, like the victims in Christchurch, were fatally shot while they were praying. I mourned with their families. These families could not believe that their community had experienced an act of such hatred.

Tragedies like the ones in Sainte-Foy and Christchurch have become too common. Innocent people killed; headlines sounding the alarm as countries are plunged into chaos and violence; mass shootings; massacres targeting religious communities; terrorist attacks.

It is shameful. Unfortunately, world leaders share in the responsibility, and we cannot refuse to acknowledge this responsibility by pointing fingers at others. These days, those driven by anger have a bigger platform than ever.

• (1525)

[*English*]

Toxic rhetoric has broken into the mainstream. It is anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, anti-black, anti-indigenous, misogynistic, homophobic. The list goes on and on.

This rhetoric is dangerous, hateful and vile. It lives and festers online, spilling out into the real world with deadly consequences. We see it here in Canada, in online harassment, anonymous letters, defaced places of worship, acts of violence and even murder. When we fail to denounce hatred with total conviction, we empower those people and legitimize their violence.

Over the years, we have seen an increase in the number of terrorist attacks targeting Muslims all around the world, so families flee to democracies like Canada, the United States and our allies, praying that their new homes will give them safety, hoping that their kids will know a place where they are not targeted because of faith.

Sadly, these same families who fled violence in their homelands are now too often met by a new kind of violence when they reach new shores: anti-immigrant hatred, right-wing extremism, white nationalism, neo-Nazi terrorism.

These groups are alive in Canada, a nation that, under the leadership of Laurier, Diefenbaker and my father, has long championed the protection of minorities and promoted our diversity as our greatest strength, and yet, while the majority of our citizens

welcome these newcomers with open arms, small, toxic segments peddle the belief that greater diversity is a weakness.

The irony is that these fringe groups say they despise Daesh, al Qaeda, Boko Haram and others, but they spew hatred, incite violence and murder the innocent just the same. They are no better than those they claim to hate.

[*Translation*]

The problem is that politicians not only do not denounce hate firmly enough, but in many cases they court those who make hateful comments. I would say this to politicians and leaders around the world: partisan politics, the ease with which some choose to adopt extreme views, that has to stop. It is not just that people are dying, it is that people are getting killed. Mothers and fathers are ripped from their families and carefree, innocent children are shot down in an instant, without hesitation.

[*English*]

This happens at mosques, temples, synagogues, churches, concerts, malls and schools. People are murdered while vulnerable and defenceless here in Canada, south of the border and around the world. The response is always the same. We are aghast, as the headlines blare and moms and dads hug their kids a little tighter and thank God it is not happening to them.

As politicians we stand around and offer our condolences, and we say nice things in the aftermath. We say that we will do better. We will say that never again will such hatred be allowed to fester unchallenged. Then, when the flames die down and the smoke clears, we look the other way. We revert back to politicking, figuring out how we can tap into that powerful rage to harness a few more votes. We scapegoat the “other” to play to our base. With a wink and a nudge, we legitimize this evil.

I stand here today to cast a light on this hatred and on our unwillingness to call it out. As leaders, as a privileged few with power and an audience, we have a responsibility to do something. This responsibility is not negotiable. It is not to be waived when it is politically convenient. Courting these views is always the wrong choice to make. We have to chase out this hatred from our parties, fight it online, denounce it at town halls and push back when it reaches our front door. Choosing to stay silent while hatred stews is complicity in its most cowardly form.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Year after year, decade after decade, we mourn the loss of innocent lives in this and that country and we promise to do better, but then the cycle repeats itself. Leaders decide that hate is a feeling they can exploit, that insatiable anger will help them gain power.

As a society, as a global community, and as human beings have we learned nothing? To be honest, I am sick of this. I am sick of sending our thoughts and prayers. If I am sick of it, I can hardly imagine how it must feel for those who are affected by violence every day.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

People around the world are exhausted by the carnage. They reach out to console friends and neighbours when these tragedies rock their communities, incensed by their leaders' inability to take a principled stand. People come out to vigils in the hundreds, in the thousands, and plead for action, and we fall short.

Our communities set an example that our leaders consistently fail to follow. After tragedies like these, politicians often say that it is not a time to talk politics, but that instead we should grieve and support the affected communities. I think that is a farce. I think this is exactly the time to talk politics, because the best way to support people is to acknowledge that there is a problem and take concrete steps to fix it.

[Translation]

As a global community we have a choice to make.

Will we denounce our leaders who turn a blind eye to those who incite violence?

Will we denounce our colleagues who tell racist or misogynist jokes without anyone saying anything?

Will we denounce Internet trolls, these cowards who spread hate and hurl insults under the cover of anonymity?

[English]

Ultimately, will we do the right thing? Will we bury our heads in the sand today only to bury them in our hands later? The tragedy in New Zealand is, sadly, yet another example of how far we have gone astray. However, we cannot let the lessons of those 50 deaths go unlearned.

The path we are going down is dangerous and unsustainable, and people are tired of fighting this alone without the full backing of their leaders. However, we can take a stand here and now in Canada and around the world and say that enough is enough, that the days of spewing hatred and inciting violence without consequences are over. We owe it to the people of Christchurch. We owe it to the people of Sainte-Foy, of Pittsburgh and of Manchester. We owe it to our kids, and we owe it to ourselves.

I am calling on like-minded countries of the world to stand with Canada in this fight. Muslim, Christian, Jewish, black, white, all of us must fight this hatred as a team, a team that refuses to accept this as the new normal, a team that is tired of sending “thoughts and prayers”.

● (1535)

[Translation]

Here in Canada, we have already taken important steps to combat discrimination and hate. We have stepped up investigations into groups that spread hate propaganda, including white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups. We have implemented significant gun control reforms. We have increased funding to protect places of worship. We have also invested in programs that promote inclusion, build bridges between people and celebrate our diversity.

Nevertheless, we know there is still a lot of work to do, but I want everyone to hear me when I say that we are going to do what needs to be done. That is the message we are going to convey to the world.

[English]

To our partners around the world, the fight against racism and intolerance will be a major fight, but we cannot put it off any longer. I know that we can make real change here. We can turn the page and get off this dangerous path that we are on. We need only look to our communities for inspiration.

There are more good people than bad in this world; the light outweighs the dark, and the good greatly outnumber the evil. We see it when our citizens come together at vigils in the wake of tragedy. We see it when strangers link arms to protect places of worship. We see it in offers to walk with those who feel unsafe. We saw it in Sainte-Foy, and we are seeing it now in New Zealand.

This is an important fight. I am calling on politicians of all stripes to follow the example set by the good people we serve to do the right thing. We must counter this hatred, and together we will.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will start my remarks by adding my voice and all those in the opposition party to join with the Prime Minister in offering our deepest condolences to the people of the Netherlands. As more information comes to light about this viscous attack, we are certainly with them in spirit.

Canada, of course, has a long history of being a partner to the Netherlands. To all of our Dutch friends both here in Canada and at home in Europe, we give our best wishes and deepest sympathies in the aftermath of this tragedy.

[Translation]

It is difficult to describe the horror felt by all of us in this place and by Canadians upon hearing of the brutal terrorist attack targeted at New Zealand's Muslim community by an avowed white supremacist.

[English]

Nothing we say today will heal the pain caused by this hate-filled, anti-Muslim, deranged individual. However, what we say today and tomorrow and the day after that has the power to stop others from experiencing the same pain in the future.

● (1540)

[Translation]

We stand in solidarity with the victims' families, with the people of New Zealand, with the Muslim community all over the world, and with all those who feel vulnerable and targeted because of this despicable act of terror. We offer our most heartfelt condolences to the victims' families.

[English]

Mothers and fathers had to explain to their children what happened, and had to assure them that the same thing would not happen to them the next time they go to the mosque to worship and pray. These conversations should never have to happen, not here in Canada, not anywhere.

Routine Proceedings

Evil is real, and it takes many forms: Bigotry, hatred, racism and violence are among them. These forces must be met with both our finest virtue and our fiercest resolve. Hatred must be met with truth, cowardice with courage, bigotry with tolerance, and violence with justice.

The word “terrorism” has been used to describe random indiscriminate acts of violence intended to inspire fear in others. While that was certainly the intention of Friday's attacks, in many ways they were the exact opposite of random.

[*Translation*]

Fifty victims, all of them loved, all of them brave, all of them heroes and all of them Muslim.

[*English*]

Fourteen-year-old Sayyad Milne wanted to be a footballer when he grew up. His father said, “I remember him as my baby who I nearly lost when he was born A brave little soldier. It's so hard ... to see him just gunned down by someone who didn't care about anyone or anything.”

Abdul Aziz did not hide when the gunman approached. He fought back to defend other worshippers, initially with only a credit card reader, and then subsequently chasing after him with a gun that the shooter had emptied and dropped. What bravery in the face of such horror.

Mr. Aziz survived. Others, like Naeem Rashid, who also fought back, did not.

[*Translation*]

These are a few of the names we must remember and must never forget.

[*English*]

As leaders, we must be as forceful in our words as we are in our example. We must seize opportunities to ensure that Muslims and all others, of all faith communities, feel secure to live and practise their faith, both inside houses of worship and outside of them.

[*Translation*]

This tragic event is bringing back memories of the terrible attack that happened at the Quebec City mosque under similar circumstances. People who had come to pray and to reflect had their lives cut short by hatred. For the victims' loved ones the pain is still fresh, and our thoughts will always be with them.

We must be unequivocal in our condemnation of all doctrines of racial superiority or exclusionary ethnic or religious prejudice.

[*English*]

All of the great societies in human history have been founded on shared civic values, not on isolated ethnic nationalism. Canada has from its inception been a country built on values that transcend religious, ethnic and linguistic divides. This is who we were founded to be. This is who we are, and this is who we will always be. Those who think otherwise have no place in our democracy.

One need not look beyond the last few days to see evidence of this. Canadians have visited mosques, dropped off gifts and

otherwise taken steps to show their love and goodwill for their Muslim neighbours. I visited a mosque in my riding this weekend, and I know that many of my colleagues on all sides of the House have also done so. We have all paid similar visits in our own communities. These spontaneous outpourings from people everywhere show us that Canadian pluralism is not in the first instance defined by politicians but rather by the open hearts and helping hands of the Canadian people.

I say to my colleagues in all parties, we certainly have our differences on important policy matters that deserve rigorous and spirited debate, but on this, the very passion and humanity of our Canadian society, there can be no debate.

In conclusion, the words we say today are important, but words today are not enough. We must commit to turning words into concrete action, action to defend a concept of Canada rooted in shared civic values, respect for the principle of universal human dignity and freedom of religion for all. We must fight terrorism. We must stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters, people of all faiths, people of all racial backgrounds.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

The words we say today are important, but words are not enough. We must commit today to turn words into concrete action to defend a concept of Canada rooted in shared civic values, respect for the principle of universal human dignity and freedom of religion for all. We must fight terrorism. We must stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters and people of all faiths and all ethnicities.

[*English*]

Conservatives are firmly committed to this effort. We will work hard to breathe new life into the immortal words of the great John Diefenbaker, spoken on this floor almost 60 years ago, when he said:

I am Canadian, a free Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship God in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, free to choose those who [shall] govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all New Democrats, I too would like to express our solidarity with the community affected by this act of terrorism. There can be no doubt that what happened in New Zealand was an act of terrorism.

[*English*]

We all, of course, denounce this act of terrorism. We all denounce Islamophobia, which is at the heart of what happened in New Zealand. Muslims, brothers and sisters, loved ones, friends and family going to a place of prayer, a place of reflection, a place where they sought to find some peace and respite from their days, a masjid, were killed in cold blood.

Routine Proceedings

That attack reverberated across the world. Though it happened in Christchurch, New Zealand, the pain impacts all of us. It hurts here in Canada, where Muslim brothers and sisters, our friends, our close ones, people who work with us, are thinking about their own loved ones when they go to masjid, to prayer, and how much it hurts to know they are being targeted for who they are.

Of course, we denounce Islamophobia today. Of course, we denounce inflaming hatred against Muslims. However, we have to go further than that.

[*Translation*]

Of course we denounce hatred and discrimination, but we have to go further than that.

[*English*]

We know that hate knows no bounds. Once hate is allowed to grow, it consumes all in its path. Hate is like a fire. Once it is allowed to grow, it spreads, consuming everything. We have seen the impact of that hatred here in North America as well. African Americans attending a Baptist church in Texas were gunned down because of the colour of their skin. Sikhs in Wisconsin were attacked while meditating at a gurdwara. Here in Canada, in the city of Quebec, we saw the impact of Islamophobia. Anti-Semitism continues to impact people across the world. Therefore, it is not enough to just denounce Islamophobia; we also need to denounce all forms of hate.

However, to denounce hate is more than just calling out the acts; we have to go further. We must learn to do things differently, and ask ourselves a question: What are we willing to do to tackle hatred?

One of the things we have seen that is the root of hatred is fear. When fear is inflamed, when fear is allowed to grow, it creates a climate for hate to grow. We think about one of the earliest fears we all have, which is fear of the unknown. That fear is very real. When someone does not know about someone else, when we do not know where people come from, when we do not know what their values are or who they are, there are often folks who will use that unknown to create fear, and that fear can develop into hatred.

We know that language and policies can also dehumanize our fellow human beings, and this dehumanization can result in fear that leads to hatred, so we need to call out language that specifically dehumanizes people. The language of calling someone “illegal” dehumanizes the worth and value of another human being. When we use words like “barbaric” to describe another human being, again the purpose is to dehumanize, and then, once we dehumanize, it leads to fear and hatred. Also, when we refer to immigration as “a threat”, that again creates the climate for fear, and that climate for fear can be used to create hatred. We know that words can fuel white supremacy. Words can fuel hatred. We have to call out those words and call out those policies.

However, beyond all of that, we know there is another way that fear is allowed to grow, and that is in the fear and worry that everyday Canadians feel every day. There are far too many Canadians, far too many people living in our country, who live in fear of the future. They are worried about whether their job will pay enough to build a life for themselves and their family. Far too many Canadians are worried about whether they can pay their bills, whether they can find a place to live. They are uncertain about their

own future, so we can imagine how fearful they are for the future for their kids. There are some folks who will use that fear and that uncertainty to create divisions and to pit one group against another to divide us. The fear that is created can then be used to create hatred.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

We must have the courage to step up and do things differently so we can change society.

[*English*]

Therefore, let us have the courage not just to call out the language, but let us go further. First, we know that right now our Muslim brothers and sisters are hurting, so I ask everyone to reach out to their friends, to reach out to the people they know and ask them if they are all right, because people are hurting right now.

Beyond that, let us reach out to people we do not know about. Let us open our hearts and replace the ignorance and the lack of knowledge with understanding, which will create the climate for compassion so that we care for one another. Let us not only call out policies and words, but let us replace those words and policies with policies that unite us, that bring us together. Let us be conscious of the words we use so we never create any ground for hate to grow.

Let us unrig the system. When I talked about the system that creates this fear and worry for the future when people cannot find a good job, it is a system that has been rigged to ensure that more and more wealth is concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people. It is a system that frustrates everyday people who work harder and harder and cannot get ahead. Let us unrig that system so that everyone can realize his or her dreams and so that everyone can see his or her own potential realized and actualized. Let us build a system of shared prosperity—prosperity for the many, not the few, a system wherein everyone can achieve what he or she wants.

If we want to tackle hate, we have to go further than just tackling Islamophobia. We have to go further than just tackling anti-Semitism. We have to tackle all forms of hate, whether it is based on gender, on identity, on ethnicity or on immigration status. Whatever it is, we must denounce all forms of hatred and we must remove all the conditions that create fear, all the conditions that allow for fear to grow and for hatred to take hold.

That is what we need to do if we want to pay true tribute to those who have lost their lives, and that is what we can do to build not only a better Canada but a better world.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île have the unanimous consent of the House to add his remarks?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I join with the members of the other parties in expressing our solidarity with the people of New Zealand as they go through the terrible ordeal they currently have to face.

Routine Proceedings

Once again last Friday, people around the world were horrified by the hateful act of a terrorist who robbed 50 innocent people of their lives in Christchurch, New Zealand. Fifty people were killed simply because they wanted to practise their religion in peace.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to the victims' loved ones, the citizens of Christchurch and the people of the Muslim faith. Muslims there, like here, feel less safe today than they did yesterday.

I wish them the courage they will need to get through this ordeal. I want to tell them that we stand with them, that we join everyone else around the world who stands in solidarity with them. I want them to know that humanity will triumph over this horror and hate.

I want to tell them that, despite their pain, they will see that their community is full of heroes, people like Abdul Aziz, more than they could have imagined, people willing to sacrifice everything for their fellow humans, and that together they will find the strength to face every new day.

The Christchurch tragedy shows that we need to remember that hatred toward Muslims is unacceptable and must be condemned at every opportunity. It is important to reiterate that. We need to condemn every word before it poisons the atmosphere, before that atmosphere turns into irreparable acts, before the actions taken by a murderer in Sainte-Foy become an inscription on the gun of a terrorist in New Zealand, on the other side of the world. That is our responsibility, one that we must fulfill in memory of all those who lost their lives in Christchurch.

It is important to remember that everyone has the right to worship as they see fit, should they choose to do so, without any fear for their safety. Everyone has the right to worship freely. That is one of the pillars of our society, of our rule of law. It is one of the most fundamental freedoms of the western world, one that must be upheld at any cost.

We must remember that freedom that unites us and tirelessly condemn the hate speech that divides us. We need to condemn those words of hate before they take root. We need to tirelessly condemn the conspiracy theories that cloud the judgment of the easily impressionable. That is everyone's responsibility and we must fulfill it in memory of all those who lost their lives, not only in Christchurch, but also in Sainte-Foy, at the École Polytechnique, in Paris, in Nice, in Charleston, in Pittsburgh, in Norway and anywhere else where hatred momentarily won out over compassion.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, like all of my colleagues, I share in the deep grief of the people of New Zealand, and particularly the Islamic population of New Zealand as neighbours, friends and worshippers.

This is a horrific act of violence, and I appreciate so much that the Prime Minister shone a light on the fact that there are white supremacists in Canada who harbour the same kinds of views as the perpetrator of this act, this atrocity.

Those are hard words to say because Canadians are so very nice. We really are. Over the two-week break we had, I was in community after community for town hall meetings and there is no question that

Canadians, as a people, are a family. We may want to create divisions, region against region, but they are not real. Canadians are inherently really wonderful, loving, compassionate human beings. That we have such a thing as white supremacy anywhere in Canada should be as deeply disturbing to all of us here as it is to everyone across the country.

I will turn to New Zealand for a moment.

It does not fail to strike me with deep irony that the people of Christchurch were visited by another act, a natural disaster, that cut right to the heart of that community. The earthquake of 2011 killed 185 people. I am not speaking for New Zealanders, but given the commentary from people who were near the shooting and impacted by it, and as my friend James Shaw, who is a parliamentarian in New Zealand and co-leader of its green party would agree, I do not doubt that this act of violence has been more deeply painful to the people of Christchurch than even the earthquake that obliterated centuries of monuments and killed so very many.

That brave young woman Prime Minister of New Zealand has all of our support. I so appreciate that the Prime Minister spoke to her directly. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has already proven herself to be a strong woman in politics, as she is the first prime minister anywhere in the world to give birth while in office. However, this should never have come on her watch. It is so unfair.

I note her words in the moments after the killings. Speaking of the victims in the mosque, she said, "They are us. The person who has perpetrated this violence against us is not." She has completely excluded those who would do such a thing from having any right to feel that they belong in New Zealand.

We must do the same in Canada. We must be prepared to tell people who are attracted to a white supremacist movement that they do not belong in Canada and that they are not us. Those who are attracted to a rally where there are signs that suggest there are white supremacists in the group should not show up. They should not speak there. We should give no oxygen, even accidentally. All of us in political life must give no oxygen to hatred, violence, anti-Semitism, misogyny and Islamophobia.

We must stand together as Canadians and know that the people we represent call on us to be our best selves, to love one another and our neighbours and to be the kinds of people who will stand outside a mosque with a sign that says, "I'm a Christian but I'm here while you worship. I've got your back. I'm watching for you" or "I'm a Jew, but I'm standing here outside your mosque, as you will stand outside my temple." We should stand together in places that are secular and religious, in faith and as family. No hatred must be allowed to take root in this country.

We stand with the people of New Zealand. We say, "God bless you" for what they are going through. *As-salaam alaikum*. We are together as family on this planet. Let no hatred take root here.

• (1600)

The Speaker: Allow me to thank the right hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Burnaby South.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

I thank the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île and the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for their eloquent remarks.

There have been discussions among all of the parties in the House, and I understand that there is consent to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attacks at the mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

I invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

• (1605)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 87th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House, and I would like to move concurrence in the report now.

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)

[English]

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights presented on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, be concurred in.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

For the past six weeks, we have seen a government that is in total chaos, unable to govern and riddled with resignations to cover up corruption at the highest levels of government, corruption that goes right to the top, right to the Prime Minister himself.

It is very clear, based upon the chronological, detailed and compelling testimony of the former attorney general, the hon. member for Vancouver Granville, when she appeared before the justice committee that there was a concerted and coordinated campaign directed by the Prime Minister to put pressure on the former attorney general to interfere in the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin.

It is very clear that the conduct of the Prime Minister and his top officials is completely inappropriate, but it might be worse: It might indeed have crossed the line of criminality.

Section 139 of the Criminal Code makes it an offence to, in any way, seek to alter the course of justice. That appears to be precisely what the Prime Minister sought to do—namely, to alter the course of justice with respect to the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin to get a special deal for the Prime Minister's friends.

Do members know what to call that? We can call it obstruction of justice, because that is exactly the conduct that the Prime Minister engaged in, the type of conduct that he directed from top officials within the PMO.

We have seen a Prime Minister who has repeatedly failed to be straight with Canadians as these allegations came to light, a Prime Minister who has repeatedly changed his story, a Prime Minister who, by way of an admission of guilt, has pathetically resorted to trying to change the channel by saying it was all about jobs, all about saving jobs.

What a joke. What a farce to say that it was all about saving jobs. We know that is simply not true, and the Prime Minister knows it is not true.

Why? It is because SNC-Lavalin was required to stay in Montreal for seven years, pursuant to a \$1.5-billion loan agreement with the Caisse de dépôt. It could not move anywhere. It had negotiated a 20-year lease for its headquarters and had just finished multi-million-dollar renovations.

It gets worse, because two days before the Prime Minister directed the Clerk of the Privy Council to threaten the former attorney general in that fateful December 19 meeting not once, not twice, but on three occasions, the CEO of SNC-Lavalin was quoted in the very secret newspaper called the *Toronto Star* as saying that SNC-Lavalin was here to stay. For the Prime Minister to put forward that argument is simply just not the truth. Frankly, it raises new questions about whether the Prime Minister was trying to mislead the former attorney general as a way to put pressure on her. It provides evidence that there may not only have been obstruction of justice but that obstruction of justice by the Prime Minister had been taken to a whole new level.

• (1610)

In addition to being simply not the facts, it is also further evidence that the Prime Minister acted unlawfully and that his top officials acted unlawfully, because the legislation expressly precludes the consideration of jobs as a factor in whether to enter into a deferred prosecution agreement. What is more is that it may not only have contravened the Criminal Code in terms of the Criminal Code provisions that expressly preclude that consideration, but may also have contravened Canada's obligations pursuant to the OECD anti-bribery convention.

Routine Proceedings

That is why officials from the OECD have said that they have sounded the alarm in terms of what the Prime Minister has done and what his officials have done, and are monitoring the situation quite closely. Therefore, not only did the Prime Minister potentially contravene the Criminal Code, but he may very well have contravened Canada's international obligations as well, and he has certainly done much to undermine Canada's reputation when we are talking about widespread evidence of political interference from the very top, from the Prime Minister, in a bribery corruption case.

The Prime Minister has said the former attorney general has had an opportunity to have her say. She came before the justice committee. The Prime Minister says that this is enough. However, the fact is that the former attorney general does not seem to believe that it is enough, because she has been able to speak about some of the events but is not able to speak about others because the Prime Minister is silencing her.

The Prime Minister is silencing her because he has refused to waive solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidentiality for the period after she was fired as the Attorney General and was serving in cabinet as Minister of Veterans Affairs. In that regard, in a letter that the former attorney general wrote to the chair of the justice committee just before she testified, she stated:

I also draw to the Committee's attention that while Order in Council number 2019-0105, which I saw for the first time last evening, is a step in the right direction, it falls short of what is required.

When she was asked at the justice committee by the member for Milton whether or not she could tell why she resigned as attorney general and from cabinet, she said that she could not.

It is time for the Prime Minister to stop the cover-up. It is time for the Prime Minister to do the right thing and let the former attorney general speak, not just about things that the Prime Minister wants her to speak about but to speak to the full truth, the full version of events. It is time to end the cover-up. It is time to let her speak.

• (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member throughout his 10-minute commentary and I am not quite sure if he has exactly addressed the report, which is really a one-liner report on a public prosecutor recommendation, from what I understand, to the committee. The Conservative Party wants to debate that particular report when we could be debating indigenous legislation that has been waited for for generations.

Could the member concisely indicate to the House exactly what is in the report, as opposed to what he was talking about?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, what is in the report relates directly to what I am speaking about.

What is more, what is important is that the process continue to move forward, including hearing from the director of public prosecutions, unlike what the Liberals attempted to do in a shameful display last week. Instead of voting and debating at an emergency meeting about how the process could move forward, Liberals shut the committee down and ran out the back door, afraid to face the cameras.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think it is really important to talk about the independence of the role of the director of public prosecutions, because this is what brings us to the heart of this scandal. Elder Marques and Mathieu Bouchard attempted to go around the former attorney general to begin those conversations, and the former attorney general was very clear that this would represent illegal interference. The Clerk of the Privy Council was talking about starting a conversation with the director of public prosecutions. This is a complete undermining of the notion of the rule of law, and that is what the former attorney general spoke to.

We now see that the government is refusing to let her speak, to come back and rebut the less than credible testimony of Gerry Butts. However, it is now bringing in a former Liberal from the ad scam days, who is doing political fundraisers for the Liberal Party, to oversee whether it is okay for the Liberals to interfere with the work of the director of public prosecutions.

I would put it to my hon. colleague that what got the current Prime Minister into trouble in the first place was this culture of who one knows in the PMO. They said that they were not interested in legalities. They obviously were not interested in legalities. Now they are not interested in credibility, because how is it possible that someone who is now stumping for the Liberals and raising money for them can be put in a position to pretend to be an independent reviewer of potential interference in the role of the director of public prosecutions in the bribery scandal of SNC-Lavalin?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, what we have is a case of Liberals investigating Liberals. A former Liberal cabinet minister who was tied to ad scam, who sat in cabinet with, among others, the Minister of Public Safety, is somehow going to come in and investigate. It falls far short of anything credible, and I believe it is further evidence of a continuation of a cover-up on the part of the Prime Minister.

With respect to the first point the hon. member made about the independence of the director of public prosecutions, under the legislation, it is within her jurisdiction to make a determination about whether to negotiate a deferred prosecution agreement. The fact that the Prime Minister sought to do an end run around the director of public prosecutions by continually putting pressure on the former attorney general is clear evidence of the Prime Minister's total lack of respect for and understanding of her independent prosecutorial discretion.

• (1620)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, the events of the last six weeks have demonstrated that the justice committee has been unable or unwilling to deal with a constitutional crisis. Let me first explain why this is a constitutional crisis.

Routine Proceedings

In this country, our Constitution is both written and unwritten. The written Constitution is found in many constitution acts, such as the Constitution Act of 1867, which is the founding document of our Confederation. It is found in the Constitution Act of 1982, which contains the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, arguably, the bigger part of our Constitution is the unwritten part. The unwritten part of our Constitution regulates the Crown prerogative. It regulates the accountability of the executive branch of government, which is the Prime Minister's Office and his cabinet, to the legislative branch of government. It regulates the division of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the Canadian state.

One important part of this unwritten constitutional doctrine is the Shawcross principle. In fact, it is so important that all attorneys general in Canada at the federal and provincial levels have adopted it as constitutional law, as a constitutional convention. The Shawcross doctrine, in essence, says that the attorney general, as the senior law officer of the Crown, is not to be put under pressure by the Prime Minister or any other minister in the cabinet with respect to a criminal proceeding.

It is an important principle to protect the independence of our judicial system to ensure that no prime minister and no premier can interfere with who gets criminally prosecuted and who does not, who gets criminally convicted and who does not, and who gets sent to jail and who does not. These are foundational constitutional principles, not just in Canada but in all western democracies.

What happened here that is such a crisis? Quite simply, the Prime Minister, last September, told his attorney general, as the top Crown prosecutor in the country, that he wanted to see the criminal trial of SNC-Lavalin stopped. He made that clear to her in his discussion last September. The attorney general clearly indicated to him during that conversation that she had made up her mind and that the director of public prosecutions was going to take this matter to trial.

Over the course of the fall, the Prime Minister and his staff and other ministers put unrelenting, sustained and inappropriate pressure on the attorney general to stop this matter from proceeding to trial. In doing so, they violated the constitutional law of this country, the unwritten constitutional conventions that govern the division of powers between the PMO and the judicial branch of government. If they had not violated the Shawcross doctrine, this unwritten convention, last September, they had clearly violated it by the time Christmas came around.

To add to all of this, the Prime Minister fired the attorney general. Oh yes, that is not what the government will say. The government will say that she was shifted into a new portfolio, Veterans Affairs, but the reality is that the former attorney general was shuffled out of her portfolio and a new Attorney General appointed who seemed much more open to halting the criminal trial of SNC-Lavalin and giving it a deferred prosecution agreement. That is why this is a constitutional crisis. The unwritten convention, the constitutional law of this country, that the attorney general is independent in matters criminal has been broken.

The branch of our system of the Canadian state that can hold the executive branch accountable on a non-statutory, non-criminal breach of our unwritten constitutional conventions is the legislative branch of our government, the House of Commons and its

committees. However, that is not what is happening here in this legislature. It is not what is happening here in its committees.

• (1625)

The House of Commons, its committees and its parliamentary parties, recognized under the Parliament of Canada Act, can vote to censor the Prime Minister. They can vote to hold the Prime Minister or the government in contempt of Parliament. They can remove the Prime Minister as head of the Liberal parliamentary party and replace him with another leader. That is how this matter needs to be resolved. It is this legislature and its committees that need to hold the executive branch of government accountable for this serious constitutional breach of the independence of our judicial system.

However, it is clear that the justice committee, being under the control of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office, has been unwilling or unable to hold the executive branch of government accountable, in part because members of committees are all appointed and essentially sit at the pleasure of the party leader. In the case of the justice committee, the majority of members are appointed by the Prime Minister through his designates.

That is the problem here, and that is why the House needs to order the justice committee to do its work. That is why I am going to move an amendment to the motion on the floor right now, which is seconded by the member for Calgary Shepard. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

the 14th Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, presented on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights with instruction to amend the same so as to underscore its ongoing support for the appointment of Kathleen Roussel to the position of Director of Public Prosecutions and to recommend that she appear before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to discuss matters relating to her mandate.

I move this amendment because the justice committee is clearly not doing its work in holding the executive branch of government accountable. It needs to do its work, and an order of the House would ensure that it does do its work.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it somewhat sad that the opposition party has chosen today to once again attempt to conduct a filibuster.

Today we were supposed to debate Bill C-92. That would affect hundreds of indigenous children in my own riding. The minister has introduced the bill. It has long been waited for. The Conservatives are using a tool that is often used for a filibuster, and the member across the way knows that full well.

Does the member opposite not recognize the injustice indigenous people have had to incur for many years? We finally have legislation that would have a positive impact on children on the same day the Conservative Party has chosen to take such action. They have already had an emergency debate. There are all sorts of other opportunities to have that debate. Why put indigenous issues on the back burner?

Routine Proceedings

●(1630)

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, with respect to the member opposite, nothing is more important in front of the House today than the matter concerning the constitutional crisis in front of us. In the long run, nothing matters more than the principles that govern our people. Nothing matters more than the Constitution and the principles in that Constitution. If we fail to uphold these principles, we will be passing along to our children and grandchildren a much weakened constitutional order. Nothing will be worse for the indigenous people of this country, for all Canadians, than to pass along institutions that have been weakened because of a failure to follow unwritten constitutional conventions.

Unwritten constitutional conventions can change, and they can change through precedent. As a House, if we are not seized with the matter at hand that concerns the Constitution, the division of powers and upholding the rule of law, we will weaken this constitutional order, setting a new precedent that will allow future prime ministers and premiers to interfere with criminal prosecutions, and that will mean much worse outcomes for indigenous people across this country.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listen with great respect and interest to my hon. colleague. I am concerned, however, with his motion about inviting the director of public prosecutions to committee. To me, one of the things that has been very disturbing about the SNC-Lavalin case is the attempt to politically interfere with the independence of the director of public prosecutions, given the fact that there is a very serious case of bribery and corruption that is being watched at the international level. The SNC-Lavalin case is affecting Canada's reputation. It was the allegations raised by the former attorney general that there were numerous attempts to interfere, to go around her, to begin that conversation with the director of public prosecutions that I am worried may actually undermine the case.

I want to know how we are going to be reassured, if the Conservatives try to bring her to committee, that this is not undermining her work, putting her into a political spotlight where she should not be as an independent prosecutor, and is not going to affect the outcome of that case by any attempts to make it seem we are politicizing the role of the independent public prosecutor.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, it is possible for the committee to hear and to call for the director of public prosecutions to appear in front of the committee. It is possible for the committee to respect the *sub judice* convention, another unwritten convention of our Constitution, and ask her questions that are general in nature as it relates to the division of powers between the judicial system and the executive branch of government.

Members on the committee can be expected to uphold those conventions and I expect the chair of that committee will ensure that those unwritten conventions, the *sub judice* convention in particular, will be upheld and respected.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 43 minutes.

[Translation]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Calgary Shepard, Finance; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice.

[English]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to participate in this discussion. I will be frank in echoing the comments that were made by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. In the context of a debate we have had, which is an important debate and discussion, we have had fruitful testimony, justice committee hearings and an Ethics Commission investigator.

However, what has been questioned at times has been our government's commitment to indigenous reconciliation throughout all of these past four or five weeks. This afternoon we are meant to be debating Bill C-92, which is legislation that is defining in its content. It seeks to do something that I think all parliamentarians should seek to support and expedite in all candour.

Bill C-92 seeks to reverse the situation we have today. Any member of the Assembly of First Nations, the IITK or the Métis Nation could tell us that we now have a situation today where we have more children in child welfare custody proceedings than at the height of the residential school system. That is a fact. Bill C-92 is meant to address that by ensuring we are not taking indigenous kids from indigenous environments and putting them into non-indigenous environments, removing them from their families, communities, clans, reserves and their people. That is what we are meant to be debating right now, but instead we are debating the current motion. Therefore, I will debate it, because the opposition has chosen to do just that.

What we are debating is a justice committee report, which was tabled, if I am correct, in June of last year, with respect to the appointment of Kathleen Roussel as the director of public prosecutions. The NDP member who represents the community of Attawapiskat rightfully outlined that this role, this body and this title were extremely important—

●(1635)

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would point out for the member opposite that we are not on the original motion as moved by my colleague from Alberta, but rather on the amendment, which would, if adopted, become an order of the House ordering the justice committee to a particular course of action.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. As he well knows, there is a lot of flexibility when debate is happening on specific bills. I am sure the hon. parliamentary secretary will take note of the amendment. As the hon. member knows, it is part of the legislation that is currently being debated right now.

Routine Proceedings

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I am painfully aware of the fact that we are debating a subamendment, but I thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for his desire to clarify the record. If he needs to rise on another point of order, I am sure he will feel free to do so.

The point is that the member for Timmins—James Bay stood in the House just moments ago and asked a question of the member who just rose. That question was whether what he sought to do would jeopardize the independence of the director of public prosecutions. Therefore, let us unpack that.

The notion of the director of public prosecutions, if memory serves, was created around 2004 or 2006 specifically to address the need to ensure there was a depoliticization and an arm's-length nature of important matters and decisions that were taken with respect to prosecutions in the country. That is an important feature. It is hallmarked in the rule of law and the constitutional precepts that the member opposite has raised on numerous occasions in this very House.

By bringing that individual before the committee, the member for Timmins—James Bay raises an important point of whether that might be, unwittingly or de facto, politicizing the very exercise and decision-making power of that very individual. I put that to the House for the purposes of returning to this debate.

What is important to outline is that when we talk about the independence of the director of public prosecutions, a critically important role, it is a role that has been created for many reasons and a role that we need to jealously protect and safeguard.

I find it a bit ironic as well, as a prefatory comment to the comments I will be making, that the official opposition is seeking to direct the committees with respect to their work. We know from the record that when the official opposition was in power, which has been alluded to on numerous occasions by the government House leader, it reduced the resources provided to committees and took parliamentary secretaries like myself and inserted them completely within the committee structure and in so doing, ensured they served almost as de facto whips on committees.

What we did, conversely, was campaign on a different role for parliamentary secretaries and a different role for committees. We fulfilled that campaign commitment by providing better resources to committees and by ensuring that parliamentary secretaries like myself and 34 of my colleagues would not have a vote, for example, at committee. Those are important features that enhance the very committee process that the members opposite say we are somehow impugning.

Perhaps most egregious, and Canadians need to be reminded of this, is that on a day when the official opposition seeks to somehow take the side of the committee process, that is the same party that, when in power, circulated a memo to all committee chairs about how to deliberately obstruct committee processes to better manage the committees to do the Conservative Party's bidding. Those are facts and those facts are important so people understand how perhaps ironic and incredulous I find the position currently being taken by the members opposite.

Let us now look at the work the committees have been doing thus far. Official opposition members who sit on the justice committee, on pretty much every occasion I have seen when a justice bill is being debated in the House, have said it has worked in an amazingly harmonious and consensual manner. They have gone to great lengths to point out on many occasions the work of the member for Mount Royal, as chair, who has always sought to produce consensus-based, multi-party reports and have a consensus-based model and approach toward the committee deliberations, which is very important to note. It happened again earlier today, for Canadians watching or consulting Hansard.

Earlier today, we were debating Bill C-84 and the member for St. Albert—Edmonton talked about the member for Mount Royal, his studious chairmanship of that committee and his efforts to build consensus on numerous occasions. At the same time, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton reflected on the fact that he proposed an amendment to Bill C-84. What we did, like any logical government that is taking a non-partisan approach to committees should do and one that is empowering committees to do their work should do, we accepted that amendment, as we have done on other occasions on other bills, such as Bill C-75, the Criminal Code review amendment.

Again, those are prefatory comments about how committee structures operate and committees work. It is very important for people to understand that the justice committee stands out as an example of the great work committees can do on a multi-party basis. It stands out as an example where committees are fulfilling that kind of role.

• (1640)

In this context, what have we heard from the justice committee? We had people questioning their desire to engage in a discussion about the issues. We had people perhaps being surprised that the justice committee was very willing to hear from people.

The justice committee heard from the former attorney general, the current Attorney General of Canada and the deputy attorney general. It heard from the former principal secretary to the Prime Minister and the Clerk of the Privy Council. I will pause there to particularly acknowledge his 37 or 38 years of non-partisan service to the people of Canada and the Government of Canada and recognize that body of work.

It also heard from important experts and legal academics. That is something that I will confess tickles my fancy, as a lawyer who came here after 15 years of practice in human rights and constitutional law. It heard from people talking about the constitutional precepts that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills is regularly invoking here. The member for, I believe Victoria, from the New Democratic Party, who is the vice-chair of the justice committee, has also referred to it on numerous occasions. They have invoked concepts about what we call the Shawcross doctrine, which has been invoked so many times that people are starting to develop a familiarity about it. They have been talking about the importance of the role of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, and the fused notion that we have here in Canada, both federally and at every provincial level.

Routine Proceedings

They have also talked, by comparison, about how things operate in Britain. For example, in Britain, there is a divorced role. Each entity is fulfilled by different individuals, which helps to address or alleviate some of the concerns that have been expressed here. That is an important issue. It came up today once again in question period.

These issues are being discussed and entered into the public debate, which is a very good thing. It is a hallmark of the committees and Parliament doing their work, which is an important precept. The Canadians who are watching right now should understand that these issues have all been advanced because the committee has been allowed to do its work.

What has the committee learned or what has come out of the committee process? Let us go there for a moment.

A motion was raised today by the member opposite, when we were meant to be debating Bill C-92, child welfare legislation, which would take indigenous kids out of the child welfare system and keep them in and among indigenous families and communities. Instead, they wanted to raise the issue of committee structure and to compel the reappearance of Ms. Roussel at the committee. However, in understanding our position on that, the members opposite need to understand what has already been heard at committee. What I am hearing and learning from reviewing the materials and watching the proceedings is this.

We heard testimony that the former attorney general stated that the Prime Minister told her this was her decision to take. We heard her state on the record that it is appropriate to discuss job impacts. We heard her say that nothing occurred that was unlawful. In response to a question by the leader of the Green Party, she said that nothing that occurred was criminal. We heard her say that she was never directed. We heard her state that the state of our institutions, the rule of law and the independence of the legal process, are intact.

I want to go to a couple of quotes that arose during the context of the proceedings to illustrate this point. The former attorney general herself stated this at the very committee that the members opposite are impugning. She said, "I do not want members of this committee or Canadians to think that the integrity of our institutions has somehow evaporated. The integrity of our justice system, the integrity of the director of public prosecutions and prosecutors, is intact."

This position on this issue of the rule of law, which is an important point, has been raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills on numerous occasions in the context of this debate. It was also raised in the context of Mr. Wernick's testimony, when he said, "I think Canadians should feel assured that they work in a democracy under the rule of law."

In the same exchange with the member for Willowdale, Mr. Wernick went on to state, "I think Canadians need to be assured that their police and investigators, with the powers of the state, operate independently, and that the prosecution service, the state charging people with offences, is completely independent. There is a legislative and statutory shield around that, which demonstrably is working..."

● (1645)

That echoes exactly what we heard from the member for Timmins—James Bay. It also echoes what we heard from communications that have been put out by the director of public prosecutions. That office has gone to pains and at length to reassure Canadians that it has not been influenced in this case, nor has it been influenced in any other case with respect to how it conducts prosecutions. That is a critically important point to raise in the context of contemplations by the members opposite about recalling Madame Roussel before the committee.

In the end, what we heard at that committee was that the former attorney general made the decision not to proceed. The law was followed every step of the way. What we have also heard, and what we know, is that the rule of law has remained intact. Those are critical points to be underscored at this juncture.

I want to return to what was raised by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton this afternoon when he first raised the motion about the issue of appropriate versus inappropriate discussion points with respect to the remediation agreement regime. I want to read this into the record so that it is crystal clear for Canadians. The remediation agreement regime exists in the Criminal Code. It is entrenched in the Criminal Code of Canada, based on amendments that were made last year.

The remediation agreement regime was studied at length in Canada-wide consultations. Following that study, it was proposed in legislation. That legislation was then studied by the finance committee and the justice committee of the House of Commons as well as a Senate committee. That remediation regime was then enacted into law and fully gazetted in an open and transparent manner to the public.

As has been stated on different occasions in the context of debates that we have been having over the past five or six weeks, the remediation agreement regime exists in five member countries of the G7. Those include the United States, Britain, France, Japan and now Canada. What we are doing by invoking a remediation agreement regime is harmonizing Canadian law with the laws of many other western democratic nations, particularly many other western democratic nations with whom we have trading relationships, which is an important point.

What is misunderstood here is this notion of what the remediation agreement concept invokes, or more specifically what it involves. There have been active discussions about whether the Prime Minister invoking the necessity and propriety of discussing jobs and job impacts was in fact appropriate. The position of Her Majesty's official opposition, articulated even earlier this afternoon, is that somehow that was inappropriate.

I want to read this into the record so that is absolutely crystal clear. This is how one would conduct this matter if we were debating it in a much more rigorous way in a court of law. One would look to the statute for guidance.

Section 715.31 of the Criminal Code of Canada says:

The purpose of this Part is to establish a remediation agreement regime that is applicable to organizations alleged to have committed an offence and that has the following objectives:

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It then lists six objectives:

- (a) to denounce an organization's wrongdoing and the harm that the wrongdoing has caused to victims or to the community;
- (b) to hold the organization accountable for its wrongdoing through effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties;

That is an important point, because much has been made by members opposite about there being no accountability if a remediation agreement even enters the discussion points.

Paragraph 715.31(c) of the Criminal Code states:

- to contribute to respect for the law by imposing an obligation on the organization to put in place corrective measures and promote a compliance culture;

That objective is clearly redressing the circumstances or the harm or the organizational capacity that allowed such a problem to occur. The fourth objective is as follows:

- (d) to encourage voluntary disclosure of the wrongdoing;

That is to ensure that corporate actors or other actors come forward on a voluntary basis. The fifth point for the remediation agreement regime is this:

- (e) to provide reparations for harm done to victims or to the community;

Again, that is addressing the victims. We have repeatedly heard invocations about the harms that has occurred in the context of SNC-Lavalin or other corporate actors in the context of remediation agreement regimes. What the statute itself talks about is ensuring that there are reparations for harm done to victims. That is important.

•(1650)

However, the last point is the most important point. It addresses precisely what has been raised by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton in his comments, which is why government members or the Prime Minister are even talking about jobs. Well, here is why, and, again, I am reading the Criminal Code of Canada, subsection 715.31(f), which says that the purpose of a remediation agreement regime is as follows:

- to reduce the negative consequences of the wrongdoing for persons—employees, customers, pensioners and others—who did not engage in the wrongdoing, while holding responsible those individuals who did engage in that wrongdoing.

I will simplify that for the viewers. A remediation agreement is meant to ensure that the people who make decisions at a corporation are held accountable because they committed the wrongdoing, but those who are on the front lines, such as people who work on the assembly lines, answer the phone, stock the water cooler, are not held responsible, nor are people who no longer work at the company because they are pensioners. That is the point of a remediation agreement, which is why it has taken hold in now five member countries of the G7. It is why it has been adopted into law in Canada. It is important. The fundamental priority of any government is to keep its citizens safe and to promote their economic stability and security. That is a critical component.

These are important aspects, and I raise them today because it shows that concepts such as these need to be understood better. We can already understand them better by looking at the committee track record thus far. It has been a robust one. It has heard from a number of witnesses. That committee work is continuing as it should, in a manner that has been forthright and transparent.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice cited part of the applicable section of the Criminal Code, but he neglected to mention the key one, which is under subsection 715.32(3). It states:

- if the organization is alleged to have committed an offence under...the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act, the prosecutor must not consider the national economic interest....

That is the applicable section, which is precisely what the Prime Minister sought to do and is why the OECD has sounded the alarm of concern.

With respect to the factors that the hon. parliamentary secretary cited, those are factors that were pursuant to the legislation within the purview of the director of public prosecutions. The director of public prosecutions had looked at the facts, applied the law and made a decision not to intervene, and the Prime Minister refused to accept it. He tried to do an end run to alter the course of justice, to obstruct justice.

The parliamentary secretary stated that the former attorney general has come to committee. Yes, that is true, but as the former attorney general has stated, the order in council “falls short of what is required”.

Why will the government simply not allow her to speak to all of the matters? Why will the government not let her speak?

•(1655)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to table the government's response to Order Paper Questions Nos. 2149 to 2191.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for St. Albert—Edmonton for his contributions today and all days on the justice committee. We do not often see eye to eye on matters of policy, but I appreciate his robust contributions at the committee and in this chamber.

In terms of the national economic interest, the member is absolutely correct. There is a provision, which he has spoken about, subsection 715.32(3) of the Criminal Code, under “Factors not to consider”. It says that:

- the prosecutor must not consider the national economic interest, the potential effect on relations with a state other than Canada...

What is being targeted by that phrase is consideration about dual-nation relationships. In the context where there are allegations that relate to bribery of a foreign official, we are not meant to consider the international relationship or the economic interests of the particular source or destination country. This was made clear in Mr. Wernick's testimony before the committee on two occasions. It is a different aspect of the issue, but it is a valid point that is rightfully raised by the member opposite. However, I would reiterate that the purpose provisions outline not only the strict penalties, accountability and that the strict admission of responsibility needs to be done, but also the fact that jobs and pension concerns are perfectly legitimate.

Second, I would point out that the member again said that the Prime Minister refused to accept something, which is incorrect—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member's answer is a bit long and I do have other questions and comments. Maybe he could add it to the next answer.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, that entire speech gave us a very good example of everything that is wrong with the Liberal defence. It is as if they think if they continue to talk about how great the deferred public prosecution is, we will understand why the former attorney general was not good enough at her job.

The former attorney general told the government that this was a matter of law, that once the independent director of public prosecutions determined that SNC-Lavalin was not eligible for a deferred prosecution agreement, that is when the interference began. They are continuing this process today. They are continuing to tell Canadians that it was perfectly acceptable because they had a law. The problem is that the director of public prosecutions decided that the law did not apply to SNC-Lavalin. That is the fundamental question.

My hon. colleague said that no laws have been broken. Not yet, but the former attorney general said that she understood she was being removed because she would not go along with the deferred public prosecution. She said the first order of business for the new Attorney General was the deferred public prosecution agreement. He has promoted it and the Liberals continue to promote it.

I would ask my hon. colleague if the government is now still attempting to go with the deferred public prosecution agreement, after the director has decided that SNC-Lavalin is not eligible. That would be the clear reason why the government removed the former attorney general. If the government is going to push for the deferred public prosecution agreement, it would certainly draw the attention of the OECD and probably the RCMP for interference in the independence of the Public Prosecution Service.

• (1700)

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, in response to both the member for St. Albert—Edmonton and the member for Timmins—James Bay, the important point that needs to be clear on the record for Canadians is that it was stated that the Prime Minister refused to accept the position of the former attorney general. That is categorically not the case. The evidence has shown that the Prime Minister indicated that the decision was for the former attorney general to take, and she confirmed that in her own testimony. That is an important point.

The member for Timmins—James Bay said that it is a matter of law. I want to clarify for the record that directives have been done in terms of classes of litigation. Directives have occurred recently for HIV non-disclosure and also for indigenous litigation. Those directives were issued even once litigation was under way.

What I would reiterate for people to understand, including the member opposite, is that decisions are made about prosecutions on an ongoing basis until a sentence is determined. That happens all the time in the to-and-fro of a courtroom process. By way of example, there is the issue of the way a criminal trial unfolds. If it is meant to

be a five-day trial and pursuing one type of sentence, as the evidence unfolds on the stand, decisions are made, agreements are struck to change penalties that are being sought, etc. This is a well-known feature of Canadian criminal law and has been for literally centuries. It is something that is well entrenched in terms of how prosecutions are handled.

I hope that helps to address the concerns of the member for Timmins—James Bay in terms of the notion of what directives are and when they are applied.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on the questions that I have posed to members opposite in regard to the idea that we have had this report for almost a year. I think it was last June or July when it was concurred in or brought to the House. The Conservatives have chosen today to bring forward the motion, a day when we were supposed to debate an important piece of legislation dealing with child welfare, our system and reforms, which has been much anticipated by indigenous communities.

I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts. Maybe he could tell us why he believes the Conservatives are moving this motion today of all days.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I will confess that I do find it a bit concerning that we are doing this on a day when we have the Minister of Indigenous Services in the House and are meant to be addressing Bill C-92, regarding something that the member for Timmins—James Bay always advocates in the House with vigour, as he should, in terms of indigenous reconciliation and how fundamental it is as a priority.

Instead of working on how to get indigenous children out of the child welfare system and back in their communities, ensuring that their language, culture and customs are preserved, we are discussing a report that was tabled almost a year ago, a report that all members of the justice committee concurred in at the time. The Conservatives are using this as a means of further elaborating on the issue of SNC-Lavalin. I find that very concerning in terms of the business of the chamber.

People have been asking what the most fundamental important priority is. I would say it is the security of Canadians. It is economic security, but the most fundamental relationship for any government of any stripe has to be its relationship with indigenous peoples.

We have the opportunity this afternoon to get on with the important business of passing legislation that could be era defining, in terms of assisting children in indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast. My position is that we should be getting on with that very issue.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary is wrong. What we were supposed to be debating today in the House of Commons was the final supply day motion, but the government House leader took away that final opposition day motion and moved it, because the Liberal government was afraid to debate the fundamental rule of law issues associated with the SNC-Lavalin affair.

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Why is the Liberal government still preventing the former attorney general from speaking?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I am not going to speculate about discussions that I am not party to with respect to the government House leader and the negotiations that take place. I will confess that after three and a half years, I still find it confusing as to what happens on any given day.

That being said, we are talking today, right now, as we have been talking for several weeks now, about the rule of law and important constitutional principles. I relish these kinds of discussions. What I do think, and I remain steadfast in this, is that on a day when we are meant to be addressing indigenous reconciliation in a very meaningful and significant way, we should do just that.

● (1705)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured, as always, to rise to speak on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay. I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Victoria, British Columbia, which is a beautiful community somewhere west of Thunder Bay, I am told.

I want to begin with the fact that we are dealing with an ongoing crisis created by the Prime Minister through interference by his office to help some very powerful corporate interests through the use of lobbyists and the use of very powerful people like Kevin Lynch, who could call the Clerk of the Privy Council from his role as chair at SNC-Lavalin and say, “We want the public prosecution to back off.”

That is not how the rule of law is supposed to be exercised in Canada. That is the fundamental issue. We have come full circle, back to the worst of the cronyism of the Chrétien-Martin days, to “who you know in the PMO”. This crisis is from interfering in a bribery corruption scandal in Libya with SNC-Lavalin, which had been barred by the World Bank for 10 years for numerous consistent violations of the law in countries like Cambodia, with allegations in Algeria, allegations in country after country. The company was barred by the World Bank. It is a company that we are told used to make sure that their bribes were recorded so that it could get tax deductions in Canada. It is a company that is very tied to the Prime Minister.

The issue before us today is the question of the interference by the Prime Minister's Office in the work of the director of public prosecutions, and that undermines the rule of law. What has that meant? It has meant that we have had five former attorneys general from across Canada call on the RCMP for an investigation into what they call a constitutional crisis. Former Liberal attorney general Michael Bryant said that he had never seen interference as brazen and reckless as the Liberal government's interference that created this constitutional crisis.

We have lost the former attorney general from cabinet. We have seen the resignation of the former president of the Treasury Board, who spoke about her constitutional obligations to the people of Canada and that she had to step down because she had lost confidence in the Prime Minister.

Today, we saw the resignation of the Clerk of the Privy Council. This is unprecedented in the history of Canada. The Clerk of the

Privy Council has had to resign because what we saw from his testimony was that he had become a clear political actor, working at the behest of the Prime Minister to interfere with the work of the director of public prosecutions.

The first day of testimony by the former attorney general was very shocking to many Canadians, because we never get to see how decisions are made behind the scenes. She said that the reasons they were trying to interfere with the SNC-Lavalin prosecution was, number one, there was a Quebec election coming; number two, it was going to affect share prices; and number three, there was a board meeting and they had to get back to the chair of the board as quickly as possible to reassure him. None of these are reasons for a public prosecution in a credible company to be stopped and backed off.

We also saw the really shocking testimony from the former attorney general that the Prime Minister said that he needed action because he was “the MP for Papineau”. He was putting his own personal electoral interests ahead of the law of Canada. She said that the director of public prosecutions had determined that SNC-Lavalin was not eligible for the deferred public prosecution agreement, which had been handwritten for SNC-Lavalin and slipped into an omnibus bill. Even though it had been handwritten for SNC-Lavalin, it still was not eligible for it.

Then we had the Clerk of the Privy Council, Mathieu Bouchard and Elder Marques reach out to her to say they wanted to do an informal reach-around to talk to the director of public prosecutions. That is interference and obstruction in the rule of law. That was done from the Prime Minister's Office, with the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Gerry Butts, telling the former attorney general, when she was warning him about interference, that they would not get through this without interference.

He did not like the law because it was a Stephen Harper law. I have been on the record many times saying that I do not like very much that Stephen Harper did. However, when a law is the law and one does not like the law, one repeals it. One does not go around behind the scenes because one is trying to help Liberal friends. That is undermining the rule of law.

● (1710)

Then we have Katie Telford, who is still in the Prime Minister's Office and who told the former attorney general's staff that the PMO was not interested in legalities. How can someone run a government when the key people around the Prime Minister do not give a damn about the rule of law?

The former attorney general talked about meeting with Michael Wernick. Michael Wernick resigned today, and I think it was good for the people of Canada that Mr. Wernick resigned, because he had become a political actor and compromised his role.

I had asked the former attorney general if he had threatened her in that December 19 meeting. She responded that he did not threaten her once but threatened her three times.

I asked Mr. Wernick about the nature of those threats, and he said that he could not remember; he was not wearing a wire. We are talking about the Government of Canada, not a *Sopranos* episode.

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This is all swirling around the Prime Minister's Office. A belief I still see from the people in that office today is that they do not understand why people are upset. It is as though helping Liberal friends is how they do business, and if the law has to be broken, well, that is how it is done. They do not seem to understand that they have damaged their credibility even to the point that the OECD anti-bribery unit is now investigating Canada. It is not just a black mark for the Prime Minister's credibility but a black mark for Canada. A company can be charged internationally with bribery, corruption, paying for prostitutes for Gadhafi's son, building prisons and being involved in that whole torture regime, but then all these people have to do is come back and call in to the Prime Minister's Office and it will make it go away.

No wonder the OECD said that all the alarm bells are sounding. We should say that all the alarm bells are sounding for Canadians. We have to do justice better than this in this country. We have to respect the independent role of the Public Prosecution Service.

We still see the Prime Minister's Office attempting to get around this. The new Attorney General was put in and the former attorney general said that his first order of business was going to be SNC-Lavalin. The PMO is still talking about supposed new evidence that allows it to cut a deal and help its friends at SNC-Lavalin despite the fact that this has completely damaged the Prime Minister's credibility on reconciliation and completely damaged his credibility as a so-called feminist prime minister and completely damaged his reputation on accountability, but he still has to deliver for the friends of the Liberal Party.

That is the toxic, corrosive power of the 1%, and it is what is driving the Prime Minister's agenda into the ground.

Today the Prime Minister announced a solution to this crisis. He has ignored calls for an independent inquiry. What the Prime Minister sees an independent inquiry is to find a Liberal out doing the hustings and raising cash for the Liberal Party, a Liberal who was involved in Adscam in the worst days of sponsorship, and bring someone back from the sponsorship scandal who is doing fundraising for the Liberal Party to look at whether Liberals broke the law on the independence of the Public Prosecution Service in order to help Liberal friends. That is so politically toxic.

I almost feel we should call Gerry Butts back just to try to help the Prime Minister, the MP for Papineau, get out of this hole that he keeps digging. Liberals do not seem to understand that if they keep going back to that toxic partisan Liberal well, keep going back to the rum-bottle politics with which they have run business on the banks of the Rideau for the last 150 years, keep going back to that toxic relationship of insider friends, it is going to continue to burn the Prime Minister.

I urge the Prime Minister to do the right thing and let the former attorney general speak. I urge him to remove all the hand puppets on the justice committee who are interfering, to stop hiding and come clean with Canadians and tell us just how far he is willing to go in order to help his friends at SNC-Lavalin, even if it means undermining the rule of law in Canada.

• (1715)

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

Madam Speaker, few inside the House are better at political rhetoric than the member opposite who just delivered his comments. He tries to give so many false impressions.

If the member wants to talk about who the Prime Minister and the government have been standing up for in this process, while respecting the law throughout, it is in fact the thousands of workers, the individuals who are receiving pensions and are still working.

Since the very beginning, we have seen the unholy alliance of the NDP and Conservatives bring their political attacks on the Prime Minister personally and on other ministers. Consistently they do that. Now the member opposite is once again ramping up the rhetoric, when in fact there is a process being followed.

Does the member not recognize the independent office of the Ethics Commissioner, which is looking into the matter? Why does the member not wait to see what it has to say, as opposed to continuing to ramp up something that is nowhere nearly as big a story as he has created in his imagination?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I do not even know where to begin. Let us put aside the fact that the Ethics Commissioner is on long-term sick leave and is unable to finish what is a very narrow inquiry.

Let us talk about the notion that the Liberals care about jobs. Oh, my God. When Sears workers were having their pensions ripped off, the Liberals did not care about them because the Liberals were looking after the family business, Morneau Shepell. That is who they looked after.

We never heard once in the testimony that they were talking about jobs; they were talking about share prices. They were talking about the CEOs' meeting. They were talking about where the headquarters were going to be. That is what they were talking about.

There is the fact that the President of the Treasury Board has resigned because she has lost confidence over the ethics of the Prime Minister. There is the fact that the former attorney general is being silenced, the fact that the Clerk of the Privy Council has resigned, the fact that OECD is investigating Canada for breaches of its anti-bribery convention and the fact that five former attorneys general are asking for an RCMP investigation. The Liberals think this is okay. To them, it is business as usual, because they are helping their friends. That is why they were thrown out under the sponsorship scandal, and if they continue, they are going to be going down that road again.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have repeatedly stated that the Prime Minister conveyed to the former attorney general that it was her decision and her decision alone to make. When Gerald Butts appeared before the justice committee, he tried to sanitize the wrongdoing and misdeeds of the Prime Minister and his top officials by saying that the only thing they were conveying to the former attorney general was the need to get an outside opinion.

Why would there be a need for an outside opinion unless the former attorney general had made a decision that the Prime Minister did not like? Could the member for Timmins—James Bay speak to that?

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The evidence, based on what the former attorney general said and based on the efforts of Mr. Butts to try to sanitize the wrongdoing, confirms that there was a clear effort to alter the course of justice, as directed by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, if we listen to Gerry Butts, this is all like an episode of *Friends*. If he had only been a bit more sensitive before she slammed the door, we never would have had to deal with this.

When she talked about the political interference in the independence of the public prosecution, she said people kept telling her that they did not like her answer and that they would find someone who could tell her, someone who is smarter. Then Katie Telford said she would find some people to write some editorials, and they did. Once the former attorney general spoke up, the Liberals went to Sheila Copps.

The Liberals have to do better than this. Gerry Butts cannot come to committee and claim that he did not know, until she gave testimony, that a decision had been made. It shows us what Liberals think of independent, strong women in their own cabinet who say to back off when they have made a decision, and do so month after month, trying to push back. We still see today that the Liberals want to find someone else to agree with them so that they will be able to intervene and undermine the rule of law by changing the director of public prosecution's role and telling her to back off. That is not acceptable.

• (1720)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate following my friend from Timmins—James Bay, because he has channelled the anger that many Canadians have.

Today I come to this discussion more in sadness than anything, and I will explain why.

I was at the committee that chose Kathleen Roussel as the director of public prosecutions. As members may know, under section 4 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act, there is ability, I think appropriately, for members of Parliament from all recognized political parties to be involved in the selection process, and I was very pleased to be part of the group that chose her for that role. I do not know her, but over the last couple of weeks I have acquired enormous respect for her integrity. I think she has proven to Canadians that she is the right person for that job.

I raise that point because technically, of course, this is a concurrence motion in respect of her appointment, and I want to say that. Also, under her constituent statute, section 10 allows for an attorney general to take over a specific prosecution if he or she wishes, and section 15 allows that as well at a later time. If that is done, it has to be put in the Canada Gazette and the Canadian public gets to know that it has been done. I am happy to say it has not been done, although there were efforts made at the highest level of this country to cause that to be done, and to her everlasting credit, the former attorney general said no. She said no because the buck stops with the attorney general when it comes to decisions on criminal prosecution in our system. Even that has been constrained, as I said, by the Director of Public Prosecutions Act in the way that I have just described.

I come in sadness today because the Liberals have been trying to change the channel on this story for months. They started by saying that there is nothing here, that she was still in cabinet, until she was not, and then it was a different story. Then it was Scott Brison's fault, and then it was there is nothing to see here. I do not even know where the bouncing ball stops, but Canadians have to have serious concerns about this issue.

The former well-respected President of the Treasury Board left the employ of the Canadian public and said, in doing so, "Sadly, I have lost confidence in how the government has dealt with this matter and in how it has responded to the issues raised." She talked of the ethical responsibilities and constitutional obligations that she has as a member of cabinet.

Any Canadian who watched the testimony of the former attorney general would know, because of the way in which she spoke and the clarity of her testimony, that she was telling the truth. She wants to come back and tell the remainder of her story, but the government will not let her do that.

Tomorrow the justice committee is having another meeting. We will see whether the government changes its mind and allows that to happen, notwithstanding two previous efforts through motions the government, through the Liberal majority, chose to squash.

This is about the rule of law. That is part of our Constitution. It is in the preamble to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Does the government care? It is changing the channel again, and this is where the sadness I started my speech with comes to bear.

I have known Anne McLellan for many years. We taught constitutional law at the same time at different universities. She was an extraordinary academic and an excellent minister. I have great respect for her work on the cannabis report as well, which saw all of its recommendations implemented. Why she would let herself get into this charade saddens me greatly, because it is another example of changing the channel. She is now going to study whether the attorney general should no longer be a member of cabinet, but she is a partisan Liberal. There is nothing wrong with that, but how can Canadians have any confidence that our rule of law principles are going to be maintained?

Ms. McLellan is not, presumably, going to talk about whether the former attorney general was fired from her role because the Prime Minister did not like her standing up and doing her job. We do not know, because the Prime Minister will not let us know. He will not let her testify. I do not think that Anne McLellan, talented, competent and ethical as she is, is going to be given that mandate.

Liberals are turning this into an academic law reform question, rather than the central question Canadians are anxious to hear about.

• (1725)

When I say anxious to hear about, I was in a village called Witsset in northwest British Columbia on the weekend with many leaders of the Wet'suwet'en in First Nation. I cannot say how many people thanked me for the work we did on the justice committee when the former attorney general testified. They were watching, and they are angry at the government.

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I come at this more with sadness in that the Liberals they think they can get away with this and use Anne McLellan to change the channel.

I say I am sad for another reason. I have had the honour of serving with my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton on a committee in which we produced unanimous reports consistently. It has been an excellent committee and I have publicly praised the chair for the way in which he has run our committee meetings. However, that all changed dramatically when we had carriage of this hot potato issue.

We saw a bunch of new Liberals, who I had never met before, being brought in to committee. I wondered who those people were. All of a sudden they voted as a bloc. It looked to me that they were voting as they were told by someone else. However, the Prime Minister as recently as this afternoon said that we must let the committee do its job, as if it had any independent role yet to play.

Canadians should watch this process. They should watch this charade. However, they cannot because it will be held in camera tomorrow. All of us will be watching whether the motion I have put forward on the Order Paper will be allowed. The motion would allow her to come and testify again. Although it is an in camera meeting, we will find out very clearly what the answer is.

My point is that the Prime Minister said that we had the Ethics Commissioner and not to worry, that he would come to the rescue even though his mandate does not have anything at all to do with whether there was political interference in this issue. It has to do with private interests, which is economic in nature.

Then the Liberals tell us not to worry, that the justice committee will do its job. Canadians should watch TV and see how it is doing that job. I dare any Canadian to conclude that the fix is not in on that committee, which I am very sad to say.

The last version the Prime Minister used today was the *sub judice* rule. I invite anyone to read the decision of the Federal Court. It laughed SNC-Lavalin out of court in an absolutely staggering way. There is this notion that we can interfere legally within a court at the discretion of the director of public prosecution. There is no way that can be done, and the court has made that clear. A slap down would be a light way of describing it. The Prime Minister tells us we have *sub judice* rules, it is before the court. If that case is appealed, it will be even more of a joke than what happened at Federal Court. Do not take my word for it. I invite Canadians to read the decision of Madam Justice Kane. If they appeal to keep this before the courts, that would be even more scandalous. Then there is a simple fraud case in Montreal, as if that has anything to do with the work we are doing here.

All three excuses are completely bogus. That the justice committee will get to the bottom of it is wrong. That the conflict commissioner will deal with this is wrong. That it is *sub judice* is essentially wrong. We need to have a public inquiry into this. I am sad to say that the justice committee is completely debased. I am so sad to be saying that because I was so proud to be on that committee. It is not going to get to the bottom of this. People should watch TV to see what it did. They should watch what the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell did at the emergency debate last Friday. He moved adjournment. It was non-debatable and home we

went. We sat for 15 minutes at great expense to the taxpayers to bring people to committee from different parts of the country, and for what?

It is supposed to be coming up tomorrow I am told. The eyes of the nation will be on that committee tomorrow. We will see whether the Liberals are prepared to let the former attorney general be unmuzzled and let her tell her truth. They let other people like Michael Wernick come back. We will see whether the Liberals will allow that to happen. If they do not, we will know how they feel about the rule of law in our country.

• (1730)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have three quick clarifications and then a question. The *sub judice* rule applies to two ongoing matters in respect to SNC-Lavalin: the judicial review that the member opposite just mentioned and the basic prosecution. Second, the member asked about the rule of law. A statement from the office of the DPP head, Kathleen Roussel, is that prosecutors in every case exercise their discretion independently and free from any political or partisan consideration.

The statement about the rule of law from the former attorney general at committee is, “I do not want members of this committee or Canadians to think that the integrity of our institutions has somehow evaporated. The integrity of our justice system, the integrity of the director of public prosecutions and prosecutors, is intact.”

Those are the three clarifications.

The member invoked the indigenous leaders he met with during constituency week. The member for Timmins—James Bay is participating in this debate as well. He is a strong advocate for indigenous reconciliation. Do those members believe it would be better served for those Canadians to be addressing Bill C-92 and child welfare legislation that would address indigenous reconciliation in a meaningful way rather than raising this issue, which is debating a report that was tabled not in June 2018 but in June 2017?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Madam Speaker, first, I did point out the basic fraud prosecution in Montreal along with the judicial review. It is a simple fraud case, which has nothing to do, I would argue, with what we are doing in Ottawa.

Second, the DPP had indeed said that there had never been any successful interference, and the Liberals are holding this out as a virtue. Katie Telford is alleged to have said, by Jessica Prince, that the time had passed for legalities. Mr. Butts was quoted as saying that there was no solution without interference. Those are the words she said. Are we supposed to take that as a good thing about the rule of law?

What about the fact that the former Treasury Board president resigned and talked about constitutional principles and ethics? Are we to forget that conveniently as well?

I would dearly love to talk in the House about indigenous issues. However, on a principle like the rule of law is at stake, I make no apologies for talking about that every day I can.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Victoria is absolutely right that over the last three and a half years we have worked well together as a committee on a personal basis. It has really been sad to watch the Liberals on this matter. At every opportunity, they have blocked and obstructed the ability of a committee to do its work to the degree with which they believe they can get away.

One of the saddest moments in the last three and a half years was last week when a temporary member of the committee came in and shut down debate and the Liberals all walked out the back door, afraid to face the cameras. They do not have the guts to make arguments in public about why the former attorney general should not be called back to committee.

Mr. Butts went on at great length about the circumstances surrounding the former attorney general being removed from cabinet, yet the Prime Minister continues to silence the former attorney general from speaking about those matters.

As a matter of fundamental fairness, is it not imperative that the former attorney general come back to committee?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from St. Albert—Edmonton for his service on the committee. He has been a very effective member.

I was also ashamed to observe the motion from the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. To my knowledge he has never been on the committee in the three and a half years I have served there. He came in and basically was given the job to be the fixer or the hammer and everybody apparently walked out the back door. The Liberals were afraid to face the public and afraid to face the music.

There is a question of fairness, to which he alluded, that I also want to address. There were some very serious things said by the former attorney general about one of the most senior people in the Prime Minister's Office, whose name is Katie Telford. The allegation, which again is hearsay, was by Jessica Prince, the chief of staff to the former minister. She alleged that she had said that the time for legalities was over. Those are serious things that were said. We need, in fairness to her, to give her the opportunity to come and tell her story as well. Hearsay should not be enough in these circumstances.

● (1735)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I often will stand in my place and talk about what a wonderful privilege it is to speak to a particular issue when we talk about legislation, whether it is government business, private members' business, resolutions or motions of the day. Today, I am feeling a bit different. I am feeling somewhat discouraged because I know what we were supposed to be talking about today and how critically important that debate was supposed to be for all Canadians but in particular indigenous people and literally hundreds of children who live in Winnipeg North who are in foster care.

To get an appreciation of it, the province of Manitoba has well over 10,000 children in foster care. A vast majority of them are of indigenous heritage. For me, this was very important legislation. It was providing hope for communities across the country. In fact,

during the break, I had a wonderful discussion with Sharon Redsky about the potential of the legislation we were supposed to be debating today.

However, the Conservatives, and what I refer to as the unholy alliance between the Conservatives and the New Democrats, have decided to change the channel. They do not want to talk about reconciliation and the importance of that legislation. They knew it was on the Order Paper today. Instead, they want to continue the debate on an issue that has been debated extensively. What did the opposition do in order to bring forward this debate? They did not really give it too much thought. They brought forward concurrence in a report.

Even when I was in opposition, and I was in opposition for many years, that was a give-me. The Conservatives went through all these different possibilities. They looked at the kind of a report they could bring in today to try to throw the government off track. The opposition members chose a report that was brought in back in June, not 2018 but 2017. That report has been sitting, collecting dust and that is the report they have chosen. They could have chosen from many reports, but that is the one they wanted to zero in on in order to try to frustrate the government so we would not be able to talk about what was important to Canadians.

This is not the first time the opposition has done that. The opposition continuously looks at ways to do two things: to attack the persons of this cabinet and individuals within this government on a personal level more often than not it seems; and come up with ways in which they can filibuster or try to frustrate the government so we cannot implement the type of good things on the agenda we made to Canadians back in 2015. Today is an excellent example of that.

I will get right to the point on that debate shortly. However, let me assure those individuals who are following the debate or watching what is taking place and the behaviour of the unholy alliance between the New Democrats and the Conservatives, that as much as they want to focus inside the gutter in many ways, we will continue to be focused on Canadians from coast to coast to coast in ensuring we are bringing forward progressive legislation and budget bills and plans that are in the best interest of Canadians. We know it is in the best interest of Canadians because we are working with Canadians day in and day out. In fact, we have a Prime Minister who has ensured that we there is a higher level of transparency and accountability, second to no other especially compared to Stephen Harper. There is a lot of irony there.

● (1740)

The Conservatives talk about the importance of the rule of law and the charter. I remember the attempt by Stephen Harper to get Mr. Nadon into the Supreme Court when I was in opposition. Recently, when I was posting something on Facebook, I saw something that had been posted regarding 101 Harper scandals. If members want to get a sense of the violations against the independence of our court system and the government of the day, they should look at Stephen Harper's performance.

Routine Proceedings

I believe that absolutely nothing has gone wrong here. The Prime Minister and his government have done their jobs. I want to assure members that no matter what sorts of frustrations the opposition works together to come up with to prevent this government from presenting good legislation and positive budgetary measures, we will continue to represent, argue and debate what we believe is important to everyday Canadians who are trying to make it: Canada's middle class, those who are trying to be a part of it, and those who are in need, all of whom are priority one for this government.

We will not be sidetracked by an opposition that has one focus alone. That is why its members reach back to June 2017, when the item we are debating right now was brought forward. I hope later today that my colleagues across the way will reflect on what we could have been debating. I made reference to the 11,000 children in my home province of Manitoba. There are thousands of children all over our country who need to see the progressive legislation in Bill C-92 pass. I hope we will have a better chance of opposition members working together to ensure that this legislation is able to pass, even though they want to maintain their focus on attacks on the government.

I have been in opposition. I can appreciate that in opposition, they want to look at ways to hold the government accountable, and there could be some merit in that.

I listened to a lot of the debate. I would like to go over some of the things I picked up from the committee meetings. Some of the comments I heard were interesting, in particular those of Mr. Wernick. He was Canada's top civil servant. There was no one higher than Mr. Wernick within the Canadian civil service. The Conservatives have implied that this is scary. However, they should realize that this professional civil servant worked with Stephen Harper too. It was not one political party. This is an individual who committed his life for over 30 years to serving Canadians.

Mr. Wernick came to committee and made a presentation. When he looked at the matter as a whole, this was his conclusion. He stated:

It is my conclusion and my assertion, based on all the information I have, that there was no inappropriate pressure on the Minister of Justice in this matter.

It was interesting to listen to the former minister of justice with respect to two questions that really caught my interest.

● (1745)

The member for Edmonton Centre posed a question to the former attorney general:

did the Prime Minister...ever direct you to enter into a remediation agreement with SNC-Lavalin?

The former minister was very clear: "No."

If Canadians listened to the Conservatives and the New Democrats, they would think that the Prime Minister was in her office every day of the year telling her to interject. However, she used her own very simple word to a very simple question, "No."

The leader of the Green Party posed a question to the former attorney general:

do you believe that...the pressure...contravened the Criminal Code?

What did she respond? The former minister said, "I don't believe that."

It is pretty straightforward stuff.

There are many quotes from those committee meetings. I would encourage members to do a little research on some of those quotes. What I believe they will find is that nothing has taken place that could not be defended in any sort of public meeting.

I would welcome members opposite in Winnipeg North. If they are so bold, and they feel they are so righteous on this particular issue, I would love to host any one of them in the riding of Winnipeg North to deal with this issue.

Every Saturday I go to a local restaurant. Some days I get 30-plus people coming to see me at that restaurant, and I have had maybe two, possibly three, talk about this issue, and one of them was actually very favourable. The other one expressed concerns. He expressed concerns, and I said that it sounded like he might be listening to what the official opposition was talking about and that maybe he was on an email list or something of that nature. He kind of laughed about it. He has come back since, and we have changed topics.

I give the Conservatives credit for being good in opposition. They are very good in opposition, and I wish them many more years in opposition.

At the end of the day, if members join me at that local restaurant, they will find that what people are talking about is immigration, the economy, and all sorts of other personal matters. People are not talking about SNC-Lavalin, at least not at that local restaurant. I might have had maybe 10 or 12 verifiable emails coming from my riding of Winnipeg North on the issue. If I compare that to other agenda items, what people want us to be debating in this House is what is important to Canadians.

The Prime Minister stood in his place today and said that over 900,000 jobs have been created by working with Canadians in all regions of our country. I will compare our efforts to former prime minister Stephen Harper's any day of the week.

Even when it comes to the rule of law and the charter, this is the party that brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are the ones who brought the Constitution home to Canada. We do not need lessons from an opposition party that, when it was in government, tried to put in a Supreme Court judge, which ultimately had to be taken away because of the prime minister's interference, in good part.

● (1750)

Seriously, do we need to take lessons from a previous government that had such a lack of respect for our charter that it often brought in legislation that violated the charter? When the Supreme Court made decisions, the Conservatives were found lacking in bringing in the legislation required to make amendments that were necessary. Some of the first legislation we had to bring in as a government was because of the Conservatives' unwillingness to respect the decisions of our Supreme Court.

Routine Proceedings

At the end of the day, the Conservatives and their unholy alliance with the NDP will stand up and talk about SNC. However, I believe one of their biggest motivating reasons is that they have nothing else they really want to talk about.

If we look at the last three and a half years, we see a government that has consistently delivered from coast to coast to coast on a wide range of ideas, plans and programs that have assisted in the generation of well over 900,000 jobs, lifted thousands of children out of poverty, lifted thousands of seniors out of poverty and provided hope for many who did not have hope before. It has implemented a national housing strategy that is going to make a difference not only today but into the future. It has implemented an infrastructure program that is going to build stronger and healthier infrastructure across Canada. These are the types of things this government has been doing for the last three and a half years.

The NDP and the Conservatives realize that, and that is one of the reasons that today it is SNC, but they will always come up with something personal. We see that in their questions. We see that in their actions, as opposed to debating good, solid legislation. This is just one example.

At the end of the day, I believe that if the NDP and Conservatives—

An hon. member: The unholy alliance.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, the unholy alliance. Members are catching on across the way. It takes a little while, but if we repeat it every so often, it will sink in. However, that alliance needs to recognize that there are many opportunities they can actually be engaged in.

I look forward to the budget tomorrow. I suspect that Canadians are going to see a lot of good stuff in that budget. I would suggest that those members focus on the budget. It matters to Canadians.

With my 20-plus years of opposition experience, I will give them free advice. Give some time and focus on the budget. Give some time and focus on the legislation. Even opposition members can get credit if they start focusing on Canadians and what people really want to see happening. We can share some of that credit. If things are going well, there is nothing wrong with talking about good ideas going into the next election. They do not have to take the old Stephen Harper approach to election campaigns. They can get out of the gutter.

There is a better way of communicating to Canadians a positive message that will continue to provide hope where there is often no hope, a message that the national government really does care and that we can in fact work with other jurisdictions in Canada and make a difference. There are examples of that. As opposed to debating what they want to debate today, why not talk about the agreement between the Canada pension plan and the different provinces? Why not talk about the price on pollution and how Canadians are going to benefit from that? Why do the Conservatives not share in the importance of many of the different policy announcements?

The government House leader, the proud member for Waterloo, consistently talks about the positive things we are able to do. I will bet that her constituents appreciate it when we actually work with

Canadians, bring back their ideas and incorporate those thoughts into debate, whether it is in this beautiful chamber or in our committee rooms.

• (1755)

I ran out of time. I was hoping to speak about committees.

At this time, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I look to your guidance and clarification. It did appear that the member's time had expired prior to his moving the motion. I seek your clarification as to whether that was in fact the case and whether that would make the motion eligible to be receded.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Normally what happens is the Speaker uses his judgment on when to end. If you check it—

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: I have a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am in the middle of answering a point of order. I will come to the hon. member for Carleton when I am done answering the question.

Normally, what I do as a Speaker is, when the person who is speaking is in the middle of a sentence, I usually let that person finish. The member was a little over his time but was not unreasonably over. Technically, yes, but the way I have interpreted and applied it is that I let the person finish the statement. If he had been a minute over his time, I think the hon. member for Perth—Wellington would have a very good point but it was a matter of seconds.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you know, members of the House of Commons are given the freedom to express themselves on all matters of debate. Now we have the member seeking adjournment on a discussion before all members have had the opportunity to speak.

Tomorrow the justice committee will discuss whether we bring back the former attorney general to examine the fullness of her testimony. Canadians are going to be watching carefully to see if the Prime Minister covers it up or lets her speak—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): That is debate.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I had been listening with great interest to my hon. colleague, and I was pretty sure he was over the line. However, in deference to my incredible respect for the Speaker, I will recognize the fact that even though the goal light had sounded, even though he should not have been able to even get close to the net with that shot, the New Democrats will certainly take under advisement the wise counsel you give the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Routine Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Call in the members.

• (1835)

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

(Division No. 1005)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benson	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Boutin-Sweet
Bratina	Breton
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Carr	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Donnelly
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Eyking
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardcastle
Hardie	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Johns
Jolibois	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Khalid
Khera	Kwan
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	Lebouthillier

Lefebvre	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nantel	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Saganash
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Singh	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Stetski	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesniewskij
Yip	Zahid— 194

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Anderson	Arnold
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Block
Boucher	Brassard
Calkins	Carrie
Chong	Clarke
Cooper	Davidson
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeschen
Eglinski	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Généreux	Genius
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kniec	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Motz
Nater	Nuttall
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Poileviere

Reid
Richards
Schmale
Shipley
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Vecchio
Warawa
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 85

Rempel
Saroya
Shields
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Wagantall
Warkentin
Weir
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Members

Leslie
Sgro

Moore
Thériault— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans that, during its consideration of Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts (ending the captivity of whales and dolphins), the Committee be granted the power to travel throughout Canada to hear testimony from interested parties and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee, provided that the travel does not exceed 15 sitting days.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, any effort to go travelling, pursuing Bill S-203, is a transparent attempt to kill the bill.

We went through years of hearings in the Senate. The bill is now before the committee. We hope for its speedy passage so that Canadians can celebrate the House coming together to do something for animal welfare by ensuring that these sentient creatures, these cetaceans, are no longer tortured by being kept in captivity. Therefore, the request for permission to travel across the country is again a transparent attempt.

The Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. House leader that banging on the desk is not permitted. The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness seems to be surprised at that. All members would do well to remember that.

Resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1855)

And the bells having rung:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The vote has been deferred until 3:55 p.m. tomorrow.

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my constituents in my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills to the government on the issue of climate change. They ask the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to increase the targets for Canada's greenhouse gas reductions and to charge an annual carbon fee increase to a more aggressive rate.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today. They are, however, on the same subject so I will just read the one.

The petitioners want to draw our attention to international trafficking in organs taken from people without their consent and ask that we support Bill C-350 in the House of Commons as well as Bill S-240 in the Senate. Presumably, they mean S-240, should it arrive here for us to vote upon.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition by Canadians pointing out that 18 years ago the Chinese Communist Party started a violent and illegal persecution against Falun Gong due to its popularity and the fact that it was not controlled by the state.

The petitioners are calling on the Canadian government to condemn the illegal arrest of Canadian citizens for practising Falun Gong and they are calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Canadian citizen, Sun Qian.

Routine Proceedings

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from constituents that is actually similar or the same as my colleague has introduced. It states, “We, the undersigned residents of Canada, draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following: Whereas increasing concerns about international trafficking in human organs removed from victims without consent have not yet led to legal prohibition on Canadians travelling abroad to acquire or receive such organs and, whereas there are currently two bills before Parliament proposing to impede the trafficking of human organs obtained without consent as a result of a financial transaction”. These are Bill C-350 in the House of Commons and Bill S-240 in the Senate.

It continues, “Therefore, we the undersigned, urge the Parliament of Canada to move quickly on the proposed legislation so as to demand the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction and to render inadmissible to Canada, any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in this abhorrent trade in human organs.”

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we continue with petitions, I just want to remind the hon. members that when they are presenting a petition, it is not about reading the entire text but giving a synopsis in their own words. I am sure the hon. members are quite capable of this and they do a very good job normally.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to table a couple of petitions from Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are concerned and asking for the Government of Canada to establish conscience protection for physicians in health care institutions. The petitioners state that coercion, intimidation and other forms of pressure intended to force physicians in health institutions to become parties in assisted suicide or euthanasia are a violation of the fundamental freedom of conscience. Therefore, they call upon the Parliament of Canada to enshrine in the Criminal Code the protection of conscience for physicians in health care institutions from coercion or intimidation to provide, or refer for, assisted suicide or euthanasia.

● (1900)

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, petitioners from my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands wish this House to consider the fact that women in this country are still paid less than men for work of equal value and that women are still suffering from a lack of equity. They call on the House to enact legislation and policies to ensure pay equity and pay equality and that women in Canada get equal treatment.

DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my first petition is from petitioners in my riding. They are supporting Bill C-399, which is my private member's bill offering more tax fairness for persons with disabilities. We know that 1.8 million Canadians suffer from a disability so the petitioners are drawing the attention of

the House of Commons and the Government of Canada to this very important private member's bill.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): The second petition is actually on the CPTPP. My petitioners from my riding came a little too late to provide it to me but it still is certified by Journals. I am tabling it on their behalf. The petitioners again are asking the Government of Canada to do everything possible in order to maximize the gain of Canadians in the CPTPP.

EYE HEALTH AND VISION CARE

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from Canadians who are concerned about the lack of action on eye health and vision care.

The petitioners are calling on the government to commit to acknowledging eye health and vision care as a growing public health issue, particularly with Canada's vulnerable populations of children, seniors, diabetics and indigenous people, through a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition in the House today in regard to organ donation.

There are times when people leave Canada and go to a country abroad in order to receive an organ that has been illegally harvested from another individual in that country. We on this side of the House feel that this should not be permitted and that the individual who goes abroad to do that should face prosecution.

I am presenting a petition from people across this country who believe the same.

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member for Lethbridge that presenting petitions is not a time to present one's own opinions in the House, but simply to present a petition.

MYANMAR

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from a number of residents in my riding of Oakville North—Burlington that deals with the crisis of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I proudly stand to present a petition to the government on natural health products.

All members of the House have constituents who rely on natural health products as an affordable and low-risk means of dealing with their health. Many Canadians rely on non-western and self-care products to maintain and improve their health.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners note that natural health products are an important part of our overall health care system but also that consumers have a right to know that their products are safe and properly labelled.

The petitioners call on the government to create a separate licensing category for self-care products to certify their safety and efficacy based on sound evidence and ensure that natural remedies remain accessible to all Canadians.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present today. There seems to be quite a theme across the country from those who are concerned about organs being taken without permission and in some cases under force, and those individuals that go abroad to receive those organs. There are currently two pieces of legislation that would put an end to that.

These petitioners would like to see us reflect that in the House as well.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I rise with a petition from residents of my riding and Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are calling once again on the Prime Minister to remove the attestation from the summer jobs grant program.

I would remind the House that section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms identifies, among other things, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought and freedom of belief as fundamental freedoms.

The petitioners call upon the Prime Minister to defend the freedoms of conscience, thought and belief and withdraw the attestation requirement for applicants to the summer jobs grant program.

• (1905)

The Speaker: It has been brought to my attention that the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George has already presented a petition today, so to do the second one he would need to have the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from constituents regarding their concern about the reprehensible international trade in organ harvesting. Very often individuals who are taken into custody extrajudicially have organs removed for those travelling from western nations to in effect buy those organs.

These constituents are urging the Parliament of Canada to deal urgently with Bill C-350 in the House of Commons and Bill S-240 in the Senate.

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this being the last time I rise to present a petition concerning the high-frequency train that is supposed to go to Trois-Rivières. My hope is that tomorrow, on budget day, the thousands of

people who signed this petition will finally get an answer from the minister.

We know that this project has many benefits. It will reduce greenhouse gases, contribute to the economic development of the regions and expand tourism. There is no reason to ignore this project. That is why I am supporting this petition.

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member for Trois-Rivières that presenting petitions is not the time for debate or providing one's opinion. He is to give a brief presentation of the content of the petition.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Richmond Centre.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition to establish conscience protection for physicians and health care institutions from different cities in B.C.

The undersigned residents of Canada draw the attention of the House to the following: That coercion, intimidation or other forms of pressure intended to force physicians and health institutions to become parties in assisted suicide or euthanasia is a violation of fundamental freedoms of conscience; that during testimony at the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, witnesses stated that the protection of conscience should be included in the government's legislative response to *Carter v. Canada* (Attorney General); that the Canadian Medical Association confirm that conscience protection for physicians would not affect assisted suicide or euthanasia because 3% of physicians, 24,000, would be willing to do it; that—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Richmond Centre, but the idea is to present a summary of a petition, not the whole thing.

The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

VISION CARE

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just like my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, I am also tabling a petition on a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care. The petitioners are from Whitby, Lindsay and Oshawa. They raise concern regarding the expected doubling over the next 20 years in vision loss of Canadians. They also talk about the emerging crisis in eye health and vision care, which affects all of Canada's population. However, it impacts children, seniors and indigenous people who are most vulnerable. They also ask for a well-coordinated response involving government health professionals, non-government organizations, industry and individuals working collaboratively to help on this front.

It is not the first time that I have tabled this type of petition, and I am glad to table another petition on a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care.

Routine Proceedings

•(1910)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my petition is reflective of the many who have talked about people travelling overseas, believing that we should move the two bills expeditiously through Parliament because that would help the situation.

FINANCIAL ADVISERS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see such passion from Canadians bringing petitions to Parliament. It shows the vibrancy of our parliamentary democracy.

The petition I am tabling is on behalf of several dozen Canadians from both Ontario and Alberta specifically asking for financial advisers and professionals in that realm to have the ability to individually incorporate like other professionals within the financial services and professional sphere. This has been in consultation with advocates, The Financial Advisors Association of Canada, and many of the other legal and regulatory issues that those professionals would like to bring.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2153, 2156, 2163, 2167, 2169, 2170, 2171 and 2186.

[Text]

Question No. 2153—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:**

With regard to the announcement by the Minister of International Development that up to \$50 million would be granted over two years to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East: (a) is the \$50 million a new investment; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, is this amount in addition to the funding Global Affairs Canada gives to the Agency every year; and (c) how will the \$50 million be granted, broken down by annual investment?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 12, 2018, the Minister of International Development announced Canada's support of up to \$50 million over two years for Palestinian refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or UNRWA.

With regard to a) and c), this \$50 million amount is new support from Canada to UNRWA over a two-year period, 2018 and 2019. Of this amount, Canada committed \$40 million over two years, \$20 million for 2018 and \$20 million for 2019, to help meet the basic education, health and livelihood needs of millions of vulnerable Palestinian refugees, especially women and children. Canada committed \$10 million of this amount over two years, \$5 million for 2018 and \$5 million for 2019, to provide emergency life-saving assistance to more than 460,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon, through UNRWA's emergency appeal for the Syria regional crisis.

With regard to b), since 2016, Canada has committed a total of \$110 million in support for UNRWA. The \$50 million announced in

October 2018 is in addition to the \$60 million previously committed in support for UNRWA, consisting of a total of \$25 million in 2016 for UNRWA's core programs and its response to the Syria regional crisis, a total of \$25 million in 2017 for UNRWA's core programs and its response to the Syria regional crisis, and an exceptional \$10 million in March 2018 for emergency assistance for Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza.

Question No. 2156—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to overpayment holds from the Phoenix pay system since April 1, 2016: (a) how many employees have had their pay, or part of their pay, put on hold; (b) of the employees in (a), how many of these employees have had their overpayment deducted from their pay; and (c) of the employees in (b), how many of these employees have not yet had their file resolved?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, employees deserve to be paid properly and on time. Supporting employees facing pay issues and stabilizing the pay system remains a top priority.

While there is still work left to do, the government has taken significant steps to resolve pay issues. We have made steady progress in decreasing the backlog of transactions, improving processes, strengthening and increasing capacity, and providing enhanced services to employees calling the client contact centre.

The government is proposing new measures to support employees who carry the burden of having to repay overpayments due to no fault of their own. These measures will build on our commitment to minimize the financial impacts of Phoenix on employees and fix this unacceptable problem that we inherited from the Conservatives. The government's proposed measures would allow employees to repay their employer only the net amount of overpayments received in the previous year. As a result, affected employees would generally no longer have to bear the burden of recovering these deductions from the CRA and repaying them to their employer.

In regard to (a), federal employees' pay is never put on hold, including when employees have an overpayment. Overpayments are usually the result of late processing in the Phoenix pay system and can result from the following situations: an employee's acting pay did not stop when their acting assignment ended; an employee is, or was, on leave without pay and their pay was not stopped; or an employee received pay that they were not entitled to receive.

In early March 2018, the government implemented additional flexible measures to help minimize the financial impact and hardships to employees for the repayment of overpayments related to Phoenix pay system issues.

Routine Proceedings

Recovery of overpaid amounts does not begin until all monies owed to the employee have been paid, the employee has received three consecutive correct pay cheques and a recovery agreement has been established.

Additionally, the government has ensured that employees facing pay issues can request emergency salary advance or priority payments.

For more information, individuals can refer to <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/remuneration-compensation/services-paye-pay-services/systeme-paye-employes-pay-system-employees/trop-payees-overpayments-eng.html>.

With regard to (b), 223,173 employees have had an overpayment recovered from their pay between April 1, 2016, and January 31, 2019. The last day of January 2019 was used as a point of reference to provide a month-to-month breakdown.

Members should note that this number includes overpayments that remain in progress for certain employees, in accordance with the individual employee's recovery agreement. In addition, this number is comprised of true and technical overpayments. However, the Phoenix pay system currently cannot segregate true overpayments from technical overpayments. True overpayments are created in situations where employees receive pay to which they were not entitled. For example, this occurs when an employee's termination or leave without pay, for example, parental leave, is entered after the pay period of their departure date. Technical overpayments are created to adjust pay and ensure employees receive the pay to which they were entitled. For example, this occurs when an employee's acting assignment is entered after the pay period in which the acting assignment began. Technical overpayments are typically netted out in the next pay period. They do not have a negative impact on employees. They are entered to offset a payment adjustment and are seamless to the employee.

With regard to (c), producing this information would require manual work that cannot be completed within prescribed timelines.

Question No. 2163—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to Environment and Climate Change Canada's sponsorship of events and organizations which are opposed to the Trans Mountain Pipeline since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the complete list of such events and organizations which received funding from the government; (b) for each event and organization in (a), what are the details, including (i) name, (ii) date, (iii) title and description of event or organization, (iv) amount provided by the government; and (c) for each sponsorship, what is the government's justification for providing funding to anti-pipeline entities?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Environment and Climate Change Canada does not collect or track the names of events or organizations opposed or in support of the project referenced in Question No. 2163.

Question No. 2167—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the television advertising being done by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) during the 2019 NFL Playoffs: (a) what was the total amount spent by the CPPIB during the 2019 NFL Playoffs; (b) what are the details, including the total amount budgeted for the advertising campaign from which the expenditures in (a) were drawn; (c) why did the CPPIB advertise during the NFL Playoffs; and (d) does the government consider this advertisement to be a prudent use of taxpayers money?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, or CPPIB, is neither a department nor an agency of the Crown and, therefore, does not fall within the same guidelines for disclosure. CPPIB is subject to disclosure requirements as set out in the CPPIB Act and reports to federal and provincial finance ministers and Canadians.

CPPIB operating expenses are disclosed in its annual report, which is available online at <http://www.cppib.com/en/our-performance/financial-results/>.

Question No. 2169—Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:

With regard to the briefing note titled "Subject of national security concern granted permanent residency" and the January 2019 media reports that an individual of national security concern was granted permanent residency status: (a) has the individual's permanent residency status been revoked and, if so, on what date was it revoked; and (b) if the permanent residency status has not been revoked, why has it not been revoked?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 26 of the Privacy Act, the discussion of case specifics without the prior written consent of the individual in question is prohibited.

Question No. 2170—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to the effect of wind farms on birds since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the government's estimates regarding how many birds have been killed by wind farms; (b) how many wind farms have been issued fines by the government under the Migratory Birds Convention Act; and (c) what specific measures, if any, has Environment and Climate Change Canada done in order to protect birds from getting killed by wind farms?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), overall mortality to migratory birds caused by wind turbines is low relative to other sources of mortality, such as cats, windows on buildings, vehicles and transmission lines. More information is available at <https://www.ace-eco.org/vol8/iss2/art11/>. The most recent estimates, based on extrapolated data, indicate that up to 47,000 birds could be killed from collisions with turbines each year in Canada. More information can be found at <https://www.ace-eco.org/vol8/iss2/art10/>. Presently, there are more than 6,300 turbines installed across Canada with the largest number of turbines in the province of Ontario. For most species of migratory birds, which have estimated populations that number in the millions, wind turbine-related mortality is not likely to have a biologically significant impact on their populations. However, it is possible that turbines sited in sensitive habitats or where species at risk are concentrated could have population-level impacts.

In regard to (b), our records indicate that no incidences of unlawful migratory bird deaths due to wind turbines were reported to ECCC's enforcement branch. As such, no wind farms have been issued fines under the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (c), Environment and Climate Change Canada recognizes that multiple renewable sources of energy, including wind, make an important contribution to Canada's energy mix. In Canada, the provinces have primary jurisdiction over the development of their energy resources, including wind energy. On non-federal lands, both land use planning and the conservation of wildlife habitat are primarily matters of provincial or territorial jurisdiction. The responsibility for conservation of wildlife in Canada is shared between the federal and provincial or territorial governments.

Despite relatively low mortality, in keeping with the federal government's Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, ECCC requires that all reasonable measures be taken to avoid incidental mortality of migratory birds. ECCC also provides detailed guidance on this subject to all proponents undertaking activities that could result in incidental mortality of migratory birds. More information can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/avoiding-harm-migratory-birds.html>.

Question No. 2171—**Mr. Steven Blaney:**

With regard to the government's decision to rename the Champlain Bridge to the Samuel De Champlain Bridge: (a) how much did the government spend on its consultations and the process to pick the new name; and (b) what is the detailed breakdown of the expenses in (a) by line item?

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the government's decision to rename the Champlain Bridge the Samuel de Champlain Bridge, existing internal resources were used for consultations in the process of naming the new bridge the Samuel de Champlain Bridge. Therefore, the consultations did not result in any additional costs.

Question No. 2186—**Mr. Steven Blaney:**

With regard to foreign vessels engaged in coasting trade in Canadian waters: (a) how many exemptions did the Minister of Transport issue in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018; and (b) in the case of each vessel, what was (i) its country of registration, (ii) its tonnage?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Coasting Trade Act is intended to protect the domestic marine sector by reserving coasting trade to Canadian registered and duty-paid vessels. The act includes a licensing process for the temporary importation of foreign vessels into the Canadian marine sector when a suitable Canadian vessel is not available.

The Minister of Transport has not provided any exemptions given that there is no authority under the act for the minister to issue a general exemption from the licensing requirement. However, the act does include exclusions for foreign vessels to engage in a number of specific coasting trade activities. Responsibility rests with vessel owners to ensure they are eligible to undertake the excluded activities and remain in compliance with the act. These exclusions constitute deregulated activities and are therefore not subject to licensing requirements.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2149

to 2152, 2154, 2155, 2157 to 2162, 2164 to 2166, 2168, 2172 to 2185 and 2187 to 2191 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2149—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, between the fiscal year 2012-13 and the current year: what are all the federal infrastructure investments (including direct transfers to municipalities, to regional district associations or to First Nations, national parks, highways, etc.), broken down by fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2150—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to the Department of Veterans Affairs, between the fiscal year 2004-05 and the current fiscal year: (a) what are all the official departmental service standards and key performance indicators used to evaluate the performance of the department, (i) monthly, (ii) quarterly, (iii) annually, broken down by fiscal year; (b) what are the annual results for each standard or indicator, broken down by fiscal year; and (c) broken down by fiscal, what are the details of each amendment made to these service standards or indicators, including the (i) effective date, (ii) rationale applied in amending them?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2151—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to Parks Canada, between the fiscal year 2009-10 and the current year: (a) which national historical sites have received funding from the agency; (b) how much funding did each historical site receive; and (c) how many visitors accessed each historical site each year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2152—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to Parks Canada, for each fiscal year between 2010 and 2018: (a) in which national parks did the agency operate life guard and surf guard programs; (b) how much funding did each park receive to administer these programs; (c) how many staff worked in each park in support of these programs; (d) how many visitors accessed each park, broken down by year; and (e) how many rescues or contacts were made under these programs, broken down by park?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2154—**Mr. Wayne Stetski:**

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of Kootenay—Columbia, for each of the following fiscal years 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-2018 and 2018-19 to date: what are the details of all grants and contributions, and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2155—**Mr. Wayne Stetski:**

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of Kootenay—Columbia, for the calendar years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018: what are the details of all grants and contributions, and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2157—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the arbitration case that the Canadian mining company Infito Gold brought against Costa Rica, asking for \$321 million in compensation, Infito Gold's invocation of the 1998-1999 Foreign Investment Protection Agreement signed between Canada and Costa Rica, the Government of Canada's request to participate as "amicus curiae" in the case, and Global Affairs Canada recently becoming a non-disputing party in the case: (a) why did the government involve Canada in this four year-old case that dates back to February of 2014; (b) why did the government seek permission to have observer status at the proceedings of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID); (c) what new information concerning this case has prompted the government to ask for and receive observer status at this international arbitration, including (i) where did that new information come from, (ii) date the information was shared, (iii) with whom it was shared, (iv) were the relevant ministers notified, (v) was the relevant parliamentary committee notified; (d) what are the details of Global Affairs Canada's "amicus curiae" submission to the ICSID requesting "observer status" in this case dated August 24, 2018, including (i) title, (ii) subject matter, (iii) file numbers, (iv) author, (v) sender, (vi) name of the recipients, (vii) location of the submission online, if available, (viii) the names and titles of all individuals who were involved in negotiating, preparing and approving this written submission on behalf of Global Affairs Canada, (ix) the recommendations that were made by these individuals to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; (e) what are the details of the written submission from the government shown as formally registered on November 30, 2018, including (i) title, (ii) subject matter, (iii) file numbers, (iv) author, (v) sender, (vi) name of the recipients, (vii) location of the submission online, if available, (viii) the names and titles of all individuals who were involved in negotiating, preparing, and approving this written submission on behalf of the government, (ix) the recommendations that were made by these individuals to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; (f) what Canadian government officials are involved as observers in this case; (g) did Canada indicate a concern about what harm a sizeable award if handed down, well over \$400 million for Costa Rica to pay if it loses, might do to Costa Rica's vaunted social and ecological programs and, if not, why; (h) if the answer to (g) is affirmative, what specific measures is the Canadian government taking to address these concerns; (i) following the two submissions to the ICSID on August 24, 2018, and November 30, 2018, what are the details of the ministerial directives or recommendations to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and (j) if the government is celebrating the end of the investor-state provisions in the new USMCA or NAFTA, why is Canada continuing to demand that such damaging provisions be adhered to in the case of a country like Costa Rica?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2158—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to federal spending from October 20, 2015, to December 31, 2018: (a) what expenditures were made in the following municipalities (i) City of Burnaby, (ii) City of New Westminster; and (b) what are the details of all grants, contributions and loans, including (i) name of recipient, (ii) date of funding, (iii) granting department or agency, (iv) amount received, (v) granting program, (vi) purpose of the expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2159—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to equalization payments: what are the details of the documents used by the government to determine the annual size of the equalization payments in 2018, 2017 and 2016, including (i) title, (ii) file number, (iii) location, if available online, (iv) type (text, spreadsheet, table, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2160—Ms. Elizabeth May:

With regard to negotiations over modalities for the accounting of climate finance at the Bangkok conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from September 4 to 9, 2018, what is the government's position on: (a) whether, as per Article 9.7 of the Paris Agreement, following the guidelines for reporting climate finance issued to developing country Parties ought to be mandatory of voluntary; (b) whether, as per Article 4(f) of the Bangkok draft negotiation, climate finance ought to be itemized for 'loss and damage,' in addition

to 'adaptation,' 'mitigation,' and 'cross-cutting'; (c) which, if any, of the following elements should be accounted as climate finance given to developing country Parties, as per Article 4(g) of the draft negotiation (i) a non-concessional loan, (ii) an equity, (iii) a guarantee, (iv) insurance; (d) whether, as per Article 4(h) of the draft negotiation, climate finance reporting should include information about the face value and grant equivalent value of the grant element issued to developing country Parties; (e) whether, as per Article 4(m) of the draft negotiation, climate finance should be reported as a net value that deducts for repayment and interests on loans and returns on investments; (f) whether, as per Article 4(t) of the draft negotiation, climate finance reports should comment on how the support is "new and additional"; (g) if the answer to (f) is in the affirmative, what methodology would the government use to distinguish climate finance as an addition to existing international development assistance; (h) whether, as per Article 4(u) of the draft negotiation, climate finance reports should show how support is targeted at the developing country Party's NDCs or NAPs; (i) whether and what forms of private sector contributions to Canada's climate finance should be reported under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, if at all, and whether such reporting would reflect the full face value of the loan and investment guarantees; (j) whether and by what means support for fossil fuel energy ought to be distinguished in a Party's climate finance reports; (k) whether climate finance should be reported under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement on a project-to-project basis and whether such reporting should include blended finance involving the private sector; (l) what should be done with the information collected under Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement relating to expected future climate finance; (m) what steps should be taken and what considerations made in setting a new climate finance goal for 2025; and (n) how much will Canada commit to the Green Climate Fund when the fund is replenished?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2161—Ms. Irene Mathysen:

With regard to the statement made by the Minister of Transport before the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities on November 27, 2018, that 87% of routes dropped by Greyhound Canada have been picked up by private carriers: (a) what is the total number of routes covered to date; (b) which routes have been covered; (c) what date did Greyhound end service for each of these routes; (d) what date did coverage for each of these routes resume; (e) which private carriers are covering each route; (f) what are the departure and end points of each route; (g) what are the schedules for each of these routes; (h) what are the stops along each of these routes; (i) which Canada Post outlets exist along each of these routes; (j) which routes remain uncovered; (k) what date did service end for the uncovered routes; and (l) which Canada Post outlets exist along each of the routes that remain uncovered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2162—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to the twinning of the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the statement made multiple times by the Prime Minister in the House on February 13, 2018, that "We will get the pipeline built": (a) when will the government get the pipeline built; and (b) how many kilometers of the pipeline expansion were built or completed in the 2018 calendar year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2164—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to the new Canada Food Guide which was released in January 2019: (a) what is the total of all expenditures related to the production of the guide; and (b) what is the breakdown by type of expense, including (i) graphic design, (ii) layout, (iii) photography, (iv) printing, (v) other, broken down by type of expense?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2165—Mr. Mark Warawa:**

With regard to federal-provincial-territorial meetings or conferences held since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of each, including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) title or purpose of meeting, (iv) ministers in attendance; (b) what are the total government expenditures broken down by meeting or conference; and (c) what is the itemized breakdown of the expenditures in (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2166—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to advisory boards or advisory panels set up by the government since November 4, 2015: (a) how many have been set up; and (b) what are the details of each advisory board or panel, including (i) name or title, (ii) date board or panel was announced, (iii) dates of meetings held so far, (iv) specific recommendations made so far, (v) which recommendations have been fully implemented by the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2168—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the new ministries announced in 2018, including Export Promotion and Organized Crime and Border Security: what is the total of all costs associated with creating each ministry, including the costs for any office renovations resulting from the creation of the ministries, broken down by line item and ministry?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2172—Mr. Steven Blaney:

With regard to the position previously taken by the Minister of Justice that piracy “may be beneficial to one’s emotional and social development, and thus justified, ethical and virtuous”: (a) does the Minister of Canadian Heritage agree with the previous position of the Minister of Justice and, if not, why has the Minister not denounced the position; (b) what is the current position of the Minister of Justice regarding piracy; and (c) is the Department of Justice concerned that the previous writings of the current Minister of Justice may undermine any current and future prosecutions related to piracy?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2173—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to expenditures on clothing, including outerwear and footwear, but excluding uniforms, by the government since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department or agency: (a) what are the total expenditures broken down by year; (b) what are the details of each expenditure, including (i) amount, (ii) date, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods, including brand and quantity; and (c) what was the purpose or reason for each expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2174—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to compensation payments planned or made to Canadians who live in proximity to the border in areas with high level of illegal or irregular border crossers: (a) how many individuals are projected to be eligible for the payments, broken down by province; (b) for (a), what is the breakdown of the number of individuals who will be eligible for the (i) \$25,000 payment, (ii) \$10,000 payment, (iii) \$2,500 payment, (iv) other payment amount, including details of amount and eligibility; (c) what is the total amount projected or budgeted to be paid out from the program; (d) what criteria was used to determine who would receive a payment and what payment level individuals would receive; and (e) are any recipients of the payments required to sign a non-disclosure agreement or gag order and, if so, why is the government requiring a gag order?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2175—Ms. Georgina Jolibois:

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (a) how much federal funding has been spent in Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River on housing over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (b) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (c) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in Desnethé—

Mississippi—Churchill River over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (d) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (e) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (f) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; and (g) what government buildings and lands have been identified in Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2176—Ms. Georgina Jolibois:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they applied for funding under, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (i.e. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2177—Ms. Tracey Ramsey:

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (a) how much federal funding has been spent in Essex on housing over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (b) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in Essex over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (c) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in Essex over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (d) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in Essex over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (e) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in Essex over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (f) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in Essex over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; and (g) what government buildings and lands have been identified in Essex as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2178—Ms. Karine Trudel:

With regard to federal spending from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018: (a) what expenditures were made in the following municipalities (i) City of Saguenay, (ii) City of Saint-Honoré, (iii) Municipality of St-Ambroise, (iv) Municipality of Saint-Fulgence, (v) Municipality of Sainte-Rose-du-Nord, (vi) Municipality of Saint-Charles-de-Bourget, (vii) Municipality of Bégoin, (viii) Municipality of Saint-Nazaire, (ix) Municipality of Labrecque, (x) Municipality of Lamarche, (xi) Municipality of Larouche, (xii) Municipality of Saint-David-de-Falardeau; and (b) what are the particulars of all grants, contributions and loans given to any group, broken down by (i) name of recipient, (ii) date of funding, (iii) department or agency that provided the funding, (iv) amount received, (v) program under which the funding was granted, (vi) purpose of the expenditure?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2179—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:**

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (a) how much federal funding has been spent on housing in Salaberry—Suroît over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year and by municipality; (b) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in Salaberry—Suroît over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (c) how much federal funding was invested in cooperative housing in Salaberry—Suroît over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year and by municipality; (d) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in Salaberry—Suroît over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (e) how many housing units were owned by the government in Salaberry—Suroît over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year and by municipality; (f) how many housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in the constituency of Salaberry—Suroît over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year and by municipality; and (g) what federal buildings and lands have been identified in Salaberry—Suroît as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2180—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Salaberry—Suroît, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each (i) the name of the organization, (ii) the department, (iii) the program and sub-program through which funding was allocated, (iv) the date of application, (v) the amount requested, (vi) whether funding was approved or not, (vii) the total amount of funding allocated, if applicable, (viii) the amount spent; (b) what funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued in the constituency of Salaberry—Suroît through its various departments and agencies that did not require a direct application, including for each (i) the name of the organization, (ii) the department, (iii) the program and sub-program through which funding was allocated, (iv) the total amount of funding allocated, (v) the amount spent, if applicable; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Salaberry—Suroît by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each (i) the name of the organization, (ii) the department, (iii) the program and sub-program through which funding was allocated, (iv) the total amount of funding, if applicable, (v) the amounts spent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2181—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the Canadian delegation which attended the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) that took place in Poland in December 2018: (a) what was the total number of Canadian delegates who attended the conference; (b) what were the names and titles of the members of the Canadian delegation; (c) what is the total aggregate cost incurred by the government to date for Canadian delegates to attend the Conference, including but not limited to transportation, accommodation, security, and per diem costs; (d) what is the itemized list of costs incurred by the government to date for Canadian delegates to attend the Conference, including but not limited to transportation, accommodation, security, and per diem costs; and (e) of those in the Canadian delegation that travelled to the Conference, how many individuals travelled for the purpose of providing communications, social media, photography, or videography services to members of the delegation, including but not limited to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2182—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Sherbrooke, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they applied for funding under, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Sherbrooke that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Sherbrooke by organizations tasked with sub-granting government

funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2183—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (a) how much federal funding has been spent in the constituency of Sherbrooke on housing over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (b) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in the constituency of Sherbrooke over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (c) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in the constituency of Sherbrooke over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (d) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in the constituency of Sherbrooke over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (e) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in the constituency of Sherbrooke over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (f) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in the constituency of Sherbrooke over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; and (g) what government buildings and lands have been identified in the constituency of Sherbrooke as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2184—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to the White Rock pier in British Columbia: (a) what is the estimated cost to repair the collapsed pier; (b) how much of the estimated cost will be paid for by the government; (c) will the government permit work on the pier to continue uninterrupted through the spring and summer months and, if not, what restrictions is being put on the repair work; and (d) what is the projected completion date of the repairs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2185—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to the government sending employees to the SHOT Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, in January 2019: (a) how many employees were sent from each department or agency; (b) what are the total expenses incurred by the government related to attending the event; (c) what is the breakdown of the expenses in (b) by (i) airfare, (ii) accommodation, (iii) meals and per diems, (iv) other transportation, (v) attendance or conference fees; (vi) other expenditures; and (d) what was the rationale for sending employees to the event?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 2187—**Mr. Blake Richards:**

With regard to the Sunshine Village Ski Area site guidelines: (a) what was the process and result of the consultative process to develop the guidelines, including, but not limited to, (i) the dates of all Parks Canada consultations, formal and informal, on draft site guidelines, (ii) how many responses were received, (iii) the details of each of the responses received, (iv) what conversations took place, written, online, spoken or otherwise, regarding the submissions or process of the consultation, (v) how were Sunshine Village and its staff included in the consultation, including all correspondence and notes relating to the staff of Sunshine Village, (vi) how were stakeholder groups consulted on the development of the site guidelines, including but not limited to environmental organisations, tourism organisations, consumer organisations, and sport organisations, (vii) what briefings were produced for the Privy Council Office, the Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Office of the Prime Minister or any other government department, (viii) whether the Minister of Tourism, her staff, or her department were contacted on the consultation process and, if so, what was discussed; (b) how were the guidelines related to ecological considerations developed, including but not limited to (i) what conversations took place around changing the boundaries of Sunshine Village, including, but not limited to written, online, or spoken conversations, (ii) which stakeholder groups were consulted in the drafting of the guidelines related to the Upper Healy Wildlife—Gondola Base Corridor, Sunshine Meadow, Lower Bye Bye Bowl, and Eagle Crest, (iii) what reports, documents, opinions, or research were commissioned regarding the Healy Creek Wildlife—Gondola Base Corridor, the Sunshine Meadows, the Lower Bye Bye Bowl, the Eagle Crest and the ecological effects of the Sunshine Village, (iv) what recommendations were taken under consideration in preparing the site guidelines, with reference to ecological considerations, (v) what conversations, written, online, spoken or otherwise, took place to develop the final site guidelines, with reference to ecological considerations, (vi) what were the considered implications, positive and negative, of changing the boundaries of the Sunshine Village site, (vii) were the Minister of Tourism, her staff, or her department contacted on the ecological considerations and, if so, what was discussed; (c) what are the maximum future growth limits of Sunshine Village and how were they calculated, including, but not limited to, (i) which “third-party industry expert” prepared and calculated the maximum future growth limits, as alluded to on page 21 of the Site Guidelines For Development and Use, Sunshine Village Ski Resort, December 14, 2018, (ii) what were the details of the analysis, (iii) what were the recommendations of the analysis, (iv) how did Parks Canada consider the analysis, as demonstrated through written, online, spoken or other forms of communication, (v) were the Minister of Tourism, her staff, or her department contacted on the maximum future growth limits of Sunshine Village Ski Resort and, if so, what was discussed; (d) how were the guidelines surrounding parking developed, including, but not limited to, (i) what reports, documents, opinions or research were consulted in drafting the parking recommendations in site guidelines, (ii) what conversations, online, written, spoken or otherwise, took place between Parks Canada and Sunshine Village in discussing and drafting the guidelines, (iii) what conversations, online, written, spoken, or otherwise, took place amongst Parks Canada officials in determining the parking recommendations, (iv) what consideration, as documented through emails, notes, minutes of meetings, telephone calls or video chat, or other forms of communication, was given to the express wishes and proposals of Sunshine Village with reference to the parking proposals, (v) who approved the parking proposals as indicated to Sunshine Village, (vi) what briefings were produced for the Privy Council Office, the Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Office of the Prime Minister or any other government department regarding the parking proposals, (vii) were the Minister of Tourism, her staff or her department contacted on the guidelines surrounding parking and, if so, what was discussed; and (e) how was the decision to require Sunshine Village to accept the draft site guidelines by January 21, 2019, made, including, but not limited to, (i) what conversations, online, written, spoken, or otherwise, took place to decide how to respond to CEO Ralph Scurfield’s letter of November 30, 2018, (ii) what conversations, online, written, spoken, or otherwise took place in determining the January 21, 2019, deadline to accept the draft guidelines, (iii) what conversations, online, written, spoken, or otherwise, took place to prepare for a public request for proposals should Sunshine Village have not agreed to the site guidelines, (iv) what briefings were produced for the Privy Council Office, the Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Office of the Prime Minister or any other government departments regarding the January 21, 2019, deadline and potential public request for proposals, (v) were the Minister of Tourism, her staff, or her department contacted on the January 21, 2019, deadline or on the preparation on a public request for proposals and, if so, what was discussed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2188—**Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to government expenditures on Huawei products or services since January 1, 2016, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation and by year: (a) what is the total amount spent on Huawei products or services; and (b) what are the details of each purchase, including (i) amount, (ii) description of products or services, including quantity, (iii) date, (iv) price per unit, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2189—**Mr. Steven Blaney:**

With regard to the Royal Canadian Navy’s (RCN) at-sea refueling support requirements and oil replenishment needs not currently supplied by MV Asterix: (a) how many non-Canadian entities or vessels are being used to fulfil the replenishment needs; (b) what is the breakdown of the number of non-Canadian vessels by country of origin; (c) what are the (i) costs to date, (ii) projected future costs of the services provided by non-Canadian vessels; (d) in what countries, ports, and territorial waters do these replenishment services take place; and (e) what is the projected time period for which non-Canadian vessels will continue to provide the RCN with its replenishment needs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2190—**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:**

With regard to diplomatic appointments made by the government since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all diplomatic appointments made of individuals who were not diplomats or employees of Global Affairs Canada prior to their appointment, including (i) name, (ii) position, including country and title, (iii) date of appointment, (iv) salary range?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2191—**Mr. Michael Barrett:**

With regard to the concerns raised by dairy farmers about the Canada Food Guide: (a) does the government have any projections on how the new guide will impact the dairy industry and, if so, what are the projections; (b) what role did the Minister of Agriculture play in the development of the guide; (c) does the Minister of Agriculture agree with the decision by Health Canada to remove dairy as its own category from the guide; (d) were possible detrimental impacts to the dairy industry a consideration in the development of the guide and, if so, why were such impacts ignored in the final version of the guide; and (e) has the government done any analysis on what impact the guide will have on the various agricultural industries (dairy, poultry, beef, wheat, etc.) and, if so, what are the results and projections of such analysis, broken down by industry?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

FAR RIGHT EXTREMISM

The Speaker: I have notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Government Orders

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to this issue of vital importance.

Today I request that the House hold an emergency debate regarding the rise of white nationalism and far right extremism in Canada and across the globe.

Two years ago, Canadians, and especially Muslims, were devastated by the news that an act of terror had been carried out at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City. Six innocent lives were stolen from us, and 19 other people were injured, when a gunman indiscriminately opened fire at worshippers.

For those impacted, the healing process has been a long, slow, painful journey. They were shaken to the core. Their city and their place of worship were places they believed to be safe, and they should have been able to believe that. We would learn that the motives behind this act of terror were hatred of Muslims and opposition to immigration and multiculturalism. We would find out that he was radicalized online by far right extremist messaging.

On March 15, the healing journey for Quebec City's and Canada's Muslim communities faced a significant setback. A horrific act of terror was carried out in New Zealand. A far right white nationalist took the lives of 50 innocent people and injured 50 more. He, too, acted out of hatred and xenophobia targeted at Muslims. He, too, destroyed the sanctity of the places people come to worship. In this case, they were the Al Noor mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre, in Christchurch.

Since the Syrian refugee crisis, there has been a troubling increase in anti-immigrant xenophobic rhetoric, acts and policies, primarily targeting Muslims, by western nations. It has led to a significant growth in the popularity of far right and nationalist political parties and the implementation of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee policies.

As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, you granted my request for an emergency debate on January 29, 2017, when the newly elected President of the United States, Donald Trump, in one of his first acts in office, enacted a discriminatory Muslim travel ban. While the most recent events in New Zealand happened far from Canadian shores, we must recognize that Canada is not immune to this trend and the threat of white nationalism and far right extremism. We must recognize that these events are linked. The name of the perpetrator of the Quebec City mosque shooting was etched on the weaponry used by the New Zealand shooter.

Elected officials in this country have a duty to stand up and speak out against hate. We cannot continue to allow and implicitly support rhetoric and individuals that foster this hatred in our communities, online and abroad.

Should my request be granted, it would allow parliamentarians to address the situation before us. We must determine a way forward that deals with these troubling trends and events. We cannot sit idly by and allow our neighbours to no longer feel safe in our communities.

● (1915)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Vancouver East. I should point out to members that requests for emergency debates

should be brief. I do not find that it meets the strict requirements of the Standing Order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed consideration from March 1 of the motion that Bill C-83, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It being 7:15 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-83.

Call in the members.

● (1940)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 1006*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyking	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauson (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)

Adjournment Proceedings

MacKinnon (Gatineau) Maloney
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon McDonald
 McGuinty McKay
 McKenna McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod (Northwest Territories) Mendès
 Mendicino Mihychuk
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
 Monsef
 Morrissey Murray
 Nassif Nault
 Ng O'Connell
 Oliphant O'Regan
 Ouelletle Paradis
 Peschisolido Peterson
 Petipas Taylor Philpott
 Picard Poissant
 Qualtrough Ratansi
 Rioux Robillard
 Rogers Romanado
 Rota Rudd
 Ruimy Rusnak
 Sahota Saini
 Sajjan Samson
 Sangha Sarai
 Scarpaleggia Schiefke
 Serré Sgro
 Shanahan Sheehan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon) Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sikand Simms
 Sohi Sorbara
 Spengemann Tabbara
 Tan Tassi
 Vandal Vandenbeld
 Vaughan Virani
 Whalen Wilkinson
 Wilson-Raybould Wrzesnewskyj
 Yip Young
 Zahid— 167

Mathysen
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Nantel
 Nuttall
 Paul-Hus
 Plamondon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Rempel
 Saganash
 Saroya
 Shields
 Singh
 Stetski
 Stubbs
 Tilson
 Trudel
 Vecchio
 Warawa
 Webber
 Wong
 Zimmer— 123

May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 Motz
 Nater
 O'Toole
 Pauzé
 Poilievre
 Ramsey
 Reid
 Richards
 Sansoucy
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Wagantall
 Warkentin
 Weir
 Yurdiga

PAIRED

Members

Leslie
 Sgro

Moore
 Thériault— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
 (Bill read the third time and passed)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in November, I was alerted to two troubling cases in which Syrian refugee families were targeted by the CRA for Canada child benefit clawbacks. We have long known that the government has failed to provide proper access to language training for the Syrian refugee cohort. We also know that in the government's struggle to find Syrian refugee families affordable, long-term housing, many families were moved around numerous times. As a result, many Syrian refugee families entered month 13 without having had access to the settlement services they needed to integrate into Canadian society during their first year here.

Despite all of this, the CRA had apparently deemed it reasonable to target these families. In at least two instances during the summer, refugee families were given short timelines to respond to CRA demands to prove eligibility for the CCB. Despite it being the summer, one family had to prove that their children were enrolled in school, which is a difficult task on a tight timeline when school is out. This was made more difficult by the family's lack of technical English knowledge.

As a result, one family did not respond quickly enough, and the CRA billed them \$27,000. Thankfully, the family's private sponsorship group found out and were able to help the family clear things up. This allowed the group to intervene in advance to prevent a second targeted family from being billed.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albrecht
 Anderson
 Aubin
 Barrett
 Beaulieu
 Benzen
 Bernier
 Blaikie
 Boucher
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Cannings
 Carrie
 Choquette
 Cooper
 Davidson
 Doherty
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Eglinski
 Falk (Provencher)
 Fortin
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gourde
 Harder
 Hughes
 Johns
 Julian
 Kent
 Kmiec
 Kwan
 Laverdière
 Liepert
 Lobb
 MacGregor
 Maguire
 Martel

Albas
 Alleslev
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Barsalou-Duval
 Benson
 Bergen
 Berthold
 Block
 Boudrias
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Caron
 Chong
 Clarke
 Cullen
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gladu
 Hardcastle
 Hoback
 Jeneroux
 Jolibois
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Kusie
 Lake
 Leitch
 Lloyd
 Lukiwski
 MacKenzie
 Maril
 Masse (Windsor West)

Adjournment Proceedings

The CRA has long been accused of only targeting so-called “low-hanging fruit” for audits and clawbacks, but this is a new low.

The use of tax havens, tax-law loopholes and aggressive tax avoidance schemes result in fat cat CEOs and wealthy international corporations failing to pay their fair share every single year. The stock option loophole allows the wealthiest executives to drain over \$1 billion from federal and provincial budgets. Federal and provincial governments lose an estimated \$7.8 billion through wealthy corporations hiding their profits in offshore tax havens.

The paradise papers and the Panama papers provide the compelling details of the aggressive tax avoidance that is well entrenched in Canada, yet the CRA has done little to address the issues presented there. Instead, it goes after refugee families.

Whether it is ignoring the issues of aggressive tax avoidance by the wealthiest among us, paying billions for a 65-year-old leaky pipeline to bail out a Texas oil company or putting backroom pressure on the former attorney general to go easy on SNC, this Liberal government has made it abundantly clear whose side it is on: the rich, the powerful, the well-connected.

The Liberals are not here to make life better or more affordable for average everyday Canadians. The Liberal government gave the CRA \$1 billion to tackle tax fraud and avoidance, and this is how it is being spent.

Budget 2019 gives the government one last chance to live up to its own rhetoric. Will the government use this opportunity to finally ensure that the wealthiest in this country pay their fair share, or will it be more of the same, where working-class and middle-class Canadians, including recently settled refugees, are targeted by the CRA to fund more corporate cash giveaways?

● (1945)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians receive the benefits and credits to which they are entitled. This commitment includes seeing that new Canadians have the information they require to understand the benefits and credits for which they may qualify as well as their tax obligations. The CRA is working hard to deliver services that make tax filing accessible and to ensure that the system is fair.

Members can appreciate, I am sure, that for newcomers to Canada, there is a lot to learn as they get settled in a new country. It is with this understanding that the CRA is part of a multi-departmental effort to provide information to refugees on tax filing and benefit entitlements upon their arrival in Canada. The CRA works closely with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to ensure that all benefit-related questions are answered and also aims to quickly resolve any problematic cases that arise. I know that some of the most rewarding work we do in our constituency office is helping those who have been wrongfully denied the benefits they are owed.

The CRA's work does not stop there, though. It is important to ensure that newcomers know about the benefits they may be eligible for, such as the Canada child benefit, the goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax credit, and provincial and territorial programs.

However, it is most important that newcomers understand that it is by filing their tax returns, even in cases where they have no income, that they can access credits and benefits for which they may be eligible. This is why the CRA actively promotes the awareness of benefits to newcomers through various information materials and in-person outreach activities.

The community volunteer income tax program is a CRA program that supports community organizations and their volunteers in hosting tax preparation clinics, where modest-income individuals, including newcomers, can have their taxes done for free. Indeed, we offer this service. One of my staff members, Betty MacDonald, in Antigonish, actually does this as part of the CRA volunteer program.

The CRA has produced a number of promotional and information materials for newcomers in various languages that are digital and paper based. Designed for a broad audience, these products include a newcomers fact sheet, a newcomers promotional card, a newcomers poster and an eight-part video series entitled “Newcomers to Canada and the Canadian Tax System”.

Having the materials available is one thing, but making sure that the information reaches the people who need it is another. It is why the CRA works with Canada's vast immigrant services network, including outreach through national, provincial, regional and community organizations, to share products and information.

Budget 2018 provided additional funding to the CRA to increase its outreach activities and the reach of the program I described earlier to help more vulnerable individuals access the benefits and credits designed to support them.

In addition to making sure that people have access to the services they need, the CRA is supportive of Canadians seeking to comply with their tax obligations. It provides newcomers with information, in a multitude of languages, to understand what is required of them and to help them settle into a new life in Canada.

I will note, in particular, that the hon. member raised certain concerns about tax loopholes for wealthy corporations. We have put forward a number of measures, particularly in our last federal budget, to combat this kind of activity to ensure that our tax system is fair, helps those in need and makes sure that those who are eligible for certain benefits receive them in a timely way.

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Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his comments, but he misses the point. The point I was raising was that the CRA was targeting refugee families who lack the language capacity to respond quickly enough for the CRA to address the issue.

The issue was raised in the middle of the summer, when the children were out of school, and they were required to provide proof that their children were in school, for example. They had to go back and provide tenancy agreements, within a very tight timeline, when they had had to move multiple times, to prove that they actually lived here in Canada. No provisions were made to address these concerns. Even when their sponsorship families would say that they were prepared to verify that these families were here in Canada and that the children went to school here in Canada, and so on, it was not good enough.

That is the point, and that is what I am calling on the government to address to not target these individuals in that way. They are already—

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, over the past three years, the CRA has made significant changes to its services, including to the benefit validation program.

To the member's point about people potentially being targeted and not responding quickly enough, the CRA has simplified its letters, expanded the list of eligible documents and is now proactively communicating with those who do not even respond to the initial request.

The fact is that there is a serious effort being made on the part of the CRA to ensure that those who are entitled to benefits know how to apply and what they are entitled to and that they, in fact, receive those benefits. During my initial remarks, I listed a number of programs the CRA uses to make sure that those who are entitled to benefits receive them. This includes newcomers to Canada.

• (1950)

FINANCE

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be rising during adjournment proceedings to follow up on a question I asked the Minister of Finance on February 4, specifically on his plan to raise taxes and raise additional revenue to pay for the exorbitant spending that the Government of Canada had embarked on for the last three and a half, almost four years. I have been told many times it is better to ask 10 times than to go astray once, which is a Yiddish proverb, and members know I am a great fan of Yiddish proverbs. Therefore, I will go back to the same well and ask the same question of the parliamentary secretary, which has to do with the series of spending mistakes we have seen by the government.

Originally, Canadians were promised in 2015 there would be a \$1 billion surplus come 2019. We are on the cusp of a new federal budget being tabled tomorrow, although it might be delayed a little. Canadians, especially in my communities, want to know whether the budget will be balanced sometime in the near future. They have long realized that any promises made by a Liberal government are not promises it intends to keep, and a repetition is happening here. A series of policy mistakes has happened and has cost the government

dearly. Because it costs the government dearly, it is costing Canadian taxpayers dearly.

One of the ones I want to highlight right now is the stress test introduced on first-time home buyers, introduced on new Canadians, introduced on anyone obtaining a mortgage as of 2018. We know that mortgage origination is down 20% by young people. It is a policy mistake introduced by the Government of Canada, imposed on young people and on first-time home buyers. We know that 50,000 Canadians were unable to purchase a home last year, and 50,000 Canadians were forced to refinance with their lender. They could not move to a new lender because of the decisions made by the Government of Canada.

These types of policy mistakes accumulate, policy mistakes like enforcing and forcing a carbon tax on provinces that do not want one. We have an Alberta provincial election coming very soon where we fully expect the current government to be replaced by a common-sense government, a government looking to reduce the cost of living on Canadians, Albertans specifically, and it knows that just getting by is not enough. We want Canadians, and Albertans especially in my case, from my home province, to get ahead.

I am going to ask the parliamentary secretary again. What taxes is the government expecting to raise tomorrow in the new federal budget, when will the budget balance itself and how much more debt can we expect the government to burden future generations of Canadians with?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I am always entertained by the hon. member's Yiddish proverbs that he works into his comments, I am less entertained with the argument he puts forward.

The fact is that from the very beginning of our government's mandate we put people at the heart of our plan for economic growth for Canada. Since coming into office, our government has invested in things that actually matter to people like those I represent. These investments reflect the choice that Canadians made to invest wisely in strengthening the middle class and helping those who were working to join it.

One of our first actions was to raise taxes on the wealthiest Canadians in order to cut taxes for the middle class. I note that the entire Conservative caucus voted against that. The fact is that over nine million Canadians are benefiting from this tax cut today. We also introduced the Canada child benefit. Compared to the old system of child benefits it replaced, it is simpler, it is more generous and the benefits are targeted to those who need them most.

Nine out of 10 families are receiving more under this program than they did under the previous system. As a result of this tax cut and the Canada child benefit, a typical middle-class family of four is receiving about \$2,000 more in support today than they were in 2015. If we look at the Canada child benefit, in my riding and across Canada, families that received the benefit received, on average, \$6,800 tax free to help with the high cost of raising kids. This benefit amount is going to continue to rise with the cost of living since it was indexed to inflation as of July of last year, two years earlier than we initially committed to.

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The fact is that we have a plan to invest in and strengthen the middle class and to grow our economy, and the results are showing that this plan is working. Our unemployment rate is at the lowest level in 40 years. Canada has been among the leaders in economic growth in the G7 in the last three years. During this period, more than 900,000 people have a job today who did not have one in 2015. This includes strong employment gains by women, with the pace of job gains for women in Canada more than doubling since November 2015 compared to the previous three-year period.

Not only are there more jobs, but wages have increased, rising in 2018 at one of the fastest paces of growth seen in the past years. Coming tomorrow, if the Conservative Party does not seek to interfere with procedural games, in the 2019 budget, the government is going to unveil the next step in its plan to strengthen the middle class and to grow the economy to give more people real and equal opportunities to succeed. That has been our mission from day one and it has not changed.

I would be remiss if I failed to point out that despite the rhetoric built into the hon. member's question, when the Conservatives were last in government, over 10 years they added \$150 billion to that and saw the worst rate of economic growth since the Great Depression.

● (1955)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, with respect to some of the points the member brought up, that is not an answer. It is partially the same answer I got from the Minister of Finance.

With regard to the first part, the Liberals promised a middle-income tax cut conditioned on raising more revenue from the top 1%. Canada Revenue Agency statistics show that they lost \$4.6 billion. They collected less money by increasing taxes on the top 1%. The middle-income tax cut, because of our progressive income tax system, actually gave a tax break equivalent to around \$800 to every single member of Parliament. However, Canadians earning \$45,000 or less got zero. In fact, they got hit with a carbon tax, higher payroll taxes and higher EI premiums. At the end of the month, they have less in their pockets, which is why I am asking these questions again. What taxes do they intend to raise tomorrow? What new revenue are they wanting to extract out of Canadian taxpayers?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question would be good if it relied on facts that have any sort of basis in truth.

The fact is that families are better off today than they were three years ago. I know the hon. member has difficulty accepting that, because he seems to prejudge any action that a Liberal government takes, but the fact is that with the Canada child benefit, families are better off. With the Canada workers benefit, families are better off. Families living in poverty have access to our national poverty reduction strategy, affordable housing and a number of other measures.

I see that I am running out of time. I would be happy to carry on this conversation when time allows.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in adjournment proceedings this evening to revisit a question I put to the government on November 2 of last year. At that point, we were a month away from the opening of the 24th Conference of the

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. I hoped at that point that the very serious warnings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the 1.5° special report would result in the Government of Canada, at long last, yanking the Harper target under which the current government still developed its inadequate planning for climate disaster, a target that is the weakest in the industrialized world. I hoped that by looking at the IPCC report and its call for urgent action, its clear warning call that if we fail to hold global average temperatures to a 1.5° Celsius global average temperature increase, the risks are high of a trajectory toward runaway, unstoppable, irreversible climate disaster and catastrophic impacts, of which the end of civilization is not even the worst. Extinction of humanity and other species on this planet with us is where we are headed if we go above 2° Celsius to 3°, 4° and so on.

We really do not have time to continue to talk about this, but I will finish the point about the IPCC report and what happened at COP24.

I was horrified to attend COP24, because no country, except Fiji and the Marshall Islands, had improved their targets.

Young Greta Thunberg from Stockholm was there. She looked at the delegates and asked if they had any intention of ever acting. Then she said she did not expect them to act because they had been a disappointment for so many years and that it was the children who were leading. She went on to say they did not have the courage to tell it like it is, and to quote her exactly, "Even that burden you leave to us children."

Here we are, months later, with no change to Canada's climate target. We are still holding to Harper's target to extinction. Greta Thunberg, on the other hand, has mobilized, and last Friday, March 15, 2019, over a million and a half children marched to demand that governments finally do what they have been procrastinating on, with politicians kicking it down the alley to the next government, maybe hoping someone else can pick up the challenge or that no one will remember that they are responsible for doing nothing when the clarion call was clear.

We do not have 12 years, as some would take it. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said we have to reduce to 45% below 2010 levels and that we have to do it by 2030.

That does not mean we have 12 years. We only have now. We do not have years.

Let us take it in months. When the panel report came down on October 8 of last year, we had 144 months. We now have 139 months.

Adjournment Proceedings

The clock is ticking, and without action, we in this place and legislators all around the world will be culpable for bequeathing to our children an unlivable world. We must set legislated targets to cut fossil fuel use, such that it is cut in half before the end of the next decade and completely eliminated by the year 2050.

At the same time, we must ramp up efforts of adaptation. We must plant trees. We must plant gardens. We must do everything within our grasp and anything beyond our grasp, anything in our reach, because we, this generation, must not give up on our children.

• (2000)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always I would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her passion for defending our environment.

The fact is that we all see the very real impacts of climate change across our country. There are floods in New Brunswick, droughts and forest fires in the west, a melting Arctic, and rising sea levels on the east coast where I am from. We understand the need to take action to ensure a sustainable planet for future generations. We understand the importance of limiting the temperature increase globally to 1.5°C, as examined in the IPCC report. That is why Canada supported this goal during the Paris Agreement negotiations and why we were one of the first countries to ratify the agreement.

At the same time, the government was working to establish the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change to reduce our emissions in line with our Paris commitments. This was a landmark achievement. The framework is the first climate change plan in Canada's history to include joint and individual commitments by provinces and territories to have been developed in consultation with indigenous peoples in Canada. This plan will grow the economy while reducing pollution at the same time and building resilience to a changing climate.

We know that pollution is not free, and one aspect of our plan is to put a price on pollution. It is a central feature to it, but it is not the only thing we are doing. This is going to be the most efficient way to reduce GHG emissions while maintaining a strong and growing economy: putting a price on pollution in all jurisdictions in Canada in 2019 either through provincial and territorial systems, adapted to their specific circumstance or through the application of the federal carbon pricing pollution system.

We are making significant progress on implementing our plan and it is starting to work. Our most recent emissions production, published in December of last year, show a widespread decline in projected emissions across all economic sectors, reflecting the breadth and depth of the pan-Canadian framework. When our plan is fully implemented, it is going to position Canada to meet the 2030 target, and, importantly, to continue to achieve carbon pollution reductions well beyond 2030.

I agree with the member that the time to act is now. We have to take this threat seriously. I note that the strategy, which focuses on meeting climate change objectives and enabling growth in the longer term, describes various pathways consistent with limiting the global temperature increase to as little as possible by 2050, as called for in the Paris Agreement. The agreement calls for countries to routinely update their ambitions.

We are working to ensure that we are doing all that we can as fast as we reasonably can to help prevent the dire circumstances that the member outlined in her question. The fact is that our government is committed to working with all partners in tackling climate change. We understand the huge economic opportunity of clean growth, and we want to leave a cleaner and healthier planet for our kids.

As someone who grew up in a different generation than many members of this House, it kills me when people throw up their hands and say that we cannot do more, that we cannot do it. We do not have an option. We are moving forward with a plan that is going to have meaningful emissions reductions in our country. It is the right thing to do and it is the smart thing to do.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, it is neither right nor smart to deal with a climate emergency as though incremental half measures will cut it. Incremental half measures may be better than parties that want to do nothing. However, when incremental half measures have the same impact as doing nothing, in other words, setting us on a trajectory above 2°C, above 3°C, above 4°C, if every country on earth had Canada's target—and this has been studied by the scientific community—the world would go to 5.1°C.

We are not leaders now. We could be. We are laggards now. It is time for the government to act, with people of goodwill and good minds, like the hon. parliamentary secretary, who understands this issue well enough to know that half measures are just about as good as no measures. The era of incrementalism and procrastination is over. What matters now is that we act to reduce emissions and end fossil fuel dependency.

• (2005)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I expect that with our limited time, the hon. member and I may have to have follow-up conversations, as we often do.

The fact is, we are starting to make very serious progress in implementing our plan. To date, this includes the adoption of new legislation that provides the authority to implement the federal carbon pricing pollution system. It involves extensive engagement on the development of this federal system and confirmation of where it will apply and where the proceeds are going to be directed.

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However, that is not the only thing we are doing. We have adopted new regulations to reduce methane emissions by 45%. I have benefited from the expertise of folks like Dr. David Risk at StFX University to fully understand these myself. We are accelerating the phase-out of coal-fired electricity by more than 30 years, and we are looking to reduce emissions from heavy-duty vehicles. We have established the low-carbon economy fund. We are seeking to have, by 2030, 90% of our electricity in Canada generated from clean resources.

The fact is that we know this threat is serious. We are taking actions as quickly as we can to reduce emissions in an effective way, and we can get there together.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.
[*Translation*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:06 p.m.)

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