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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, April 11, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 11, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 79.13 of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “Projecting the Revenue and Expenses of Canada Student Loans Program”.

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[*English*]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2019-20

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmits to the House of Commons the Main Estimates of sums required to defray the expenses of the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, and in accordance with section 54 of the Constitution Act, 1867, recommends those estimates to the House of Commons.

Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, on behalf of 88 departments and agencies, the departmental plans for 2019-20.

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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 responses to five petitions.

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[*Translation*]

FEDERAL TAX EXPENDITURES

Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, I have the honour to present, in both official

languages, a document entitled “Report on Federal Tax Expenditures”.

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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 90th 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.

Some hon. members: No.

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

BREAST IMPLANTS

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present an e-petition in respect of an important initiative in women's health, that of the health risks associated with breast implants. The more than 3,400 signatories call on the government, specifically Health Canada, to investigate the correlation between breast implants, autoimmune diseases, and breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma, BIA-ALCL, to ensure that patients are at the centre of these undertakings; to seek greater transparency from manufacturers of breast implants and to hold plastic surgeons to a higher level of accountability in respect of the health risks associated with breast implants; to require mandatory testing of recipients of implants for BIA-ALCL; and to have mandatory reporting of any confirmed cases of this disease.

I refer this petition for the government's careful consideration and thank Judith Coates, a constituent of mine, for her efforts in bringing attention to this important health issue.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

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

Routine Proceedings

The first petition is in support of Bill S-240, a bill that deals with the issue of illicit organ trafficking. It would make it a criminal offence for Canadians to go abroad to receive an organ for which there was no consent. It also deals with inadmissibility to Canada of those who have been involved in this terrible trade.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition highlights the plight of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers in Thailand.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to be urgently engaged with the Government of Thailand to address this issue and to ensure that these Pakistani Christian asylum seekers are given the full benefit of what should be their rights under the appropriate international conventions. It also highlights the issue of blasphemy law in Pakistan.

TURKEY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition draws the attention of members to an event I was involved in last fall dealing with the deteriorating human rights circumstances in Turkey. It calls on the Government of Canada to increase high-level engagement with the Government of Turkey on human rights issues, including civil and political rights, minority rights and religious freedom.

MEDICAL CANNABIS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to introduce today.

First of all, I was very proud to sponsor an e-petition, signed by over 12,000 Canadians, calling on the government to remove any tax on medically prescribed cannabis. They point out that this is inconsistent with the taxation of other prescription medicines, which are tax exempt. They point out that these taxes create financial barriers to the health and well-being of patients. They note that patients already pay sales tax on medical cannabis, and they are not eligible for reimbursement under most insurance plans.

The petitioners call on the government to remove all taxes, the excise tax and the sales tax, on medical cannabis, as it does for all medicine in this country.

● (1010)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by many Canadians who are appalled by the situation of the lack of clean drinking water on first nation reserves across this country. They point out that the government has made a pledge to end all drinking water advisories. However, they point out the inconsistency of the government spending \$4.5 billion on a pipeline when there is a \$3.2 billion capital investment gap that, if closed, would provide clean drinking water for all indigenous peoples in this country.

The petitioners call on the government to reverse those priorities and to put clean drinking water for all Canadians ahead of the fossil fuel industry.

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table three petitions on behalf of constituents in Pickering—Uxbridge.

The first petition calls upon the House to reserve all agricultural land in the remaining federal lands located in Pickering containing class 1 Ontario greenbelt farmland. This petition was signed by 65 members of my community.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, which contains 138 signatures, calls upon the House to allow Canadians who have taken part in clinical trials to continue using a trial drug if it has been deemed to have had a positive impact on their condition, even after their trial time has been completed.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, finally, the third petition calls on the House to support Bill S-214 and ban the sale and/or manufacturing of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada moving forward. In total, this petition was signed by 362 members in my community.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to urge the Parliament of Canada to move quickly on proposed legislation Bill S-240 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 trade in human organs.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition on behalf of Thornhill constituents and those across York Region and the greater Toronto region who are expressing their concern about the international trafficking of human organs and are urging the Parliament of Canada to move quickly on the proposed legislation now in the Senate, Bill S-240.

FIREARMS

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, on behalf of Davenport residents, to present e-petition 1923. It is signed by over 20,000 Canadians. It relates to firearms and the fact there is a huge proliferation of handguns in our cities, the fact that there is also a proliferation of military assault weapons being sold to civilians in Canada, and the fact that many of these handguns and military assault weapons are ending up in the hands of violent criminals as a result of illegal sales, theft and diversion.

The petition calls on the Government of Canada to implement a ban on the civilian ownership of handguns and military assault weapons. I would like to refer this petition to the government for its careful consideration.

HEALTH

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition that calls upon the Minister of Health to stop the approval of the Medicine Hat supervised consumption site location until a better suitable location is obtained that is not within 100 metres of residences, seniors and youth facilities and professional businesses and until meaningful consultations can be conducted with the community in the direct area of the site.

HONORARY CITIZEN

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this petition, which has accumulated over 700 signatures. The signatories call on the government to recognize the work of renowned author and social justice activist Arundhati Roy by granting her honorary Canadian citizenship.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of Canadians who are concerned about the international trafficking of human organs. They are aware that this is happening in other countries without the consent of victims, and often for profit. They want to see Bill S-240 and Bill C-350 come into effect as soon as possible to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction. Also, they want to render inadmissible to Canada any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in or supported the trade in human organs.

• (1015)

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from the ridings of Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Kingston and the Islands and Bay of Quinte. The petitioners call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to study a ban on guns that are already banned.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of two bills, one presently before the House and one before the Senate, Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. Both bills address the issue of the illegal harvesting of organs from donors who, in all likelihood, have not given consent for the removal of these organs. As well, the petitioners ask that the people involved in that industry be prohibited from entering our country.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I apologize, as I do not think I communicated my report very well. However, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 90th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented in the House earlier today, be concurred in.

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent 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)

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PROCESS USED TO DETERMINE LIBERAL CAUCUS MEMBERSHIP
—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on April 9, 2019, by the hon. member for Markham—Stouffville concerning an alleged violation of section 49.8 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

In raising this matter, the member for Markham—Stouffville argued that caucus expulsions or readmissions require proper due process. According to her, members of the Liberal caucus were prevented from voting on the rules for this decision pursuant to section 49.8 of the Parliament of Canada Act. She stated explicitly that, in this case, the matter of privilege is very much about knowing which rules apply for expulsion or readmission; it is not about a possible caucus expulsion, as was the issue addressed in my ruling on April 8, 2019. In her view, although the Chair has no role in the interpretation of statutes, it does not relieve the Speaker of the responsibility to ensure that all members are aware of their rights in this House.

[*Translation*]

In response, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons informed the House that the chair of the national Liberal caucus had indeed sent the requisite letter to the Speaker, specifying that the provisions of the act regarding the expulsion and readmission of caucus members would not apply for the 42nd Parliament. This, in his view, makes this question of privilege moot and removes any confusion as to which rules apply. Furthermore, he argued that it is not the role of the Speaker to adjudicate such matters.

[*English*]

The issue at hand is quite simple: The Chair is being asked, as was the case with the recent ruling on a similar matter, to determine whether provisions included in the Parliament of Canada Act, as they relate to matters of caucus, have been violated. Section 49.8(1) of the act states:

Government Orders

At its first meeting following a general election, the caucus of every party that has a recognized membership of 12 or more persons in the House of Commons shall conduct a separate vote among the caucus members in respect of each of the following questions:

- (a) whether sections 49.2 and 49.3 are to apply in respect of the caucus;
- (b) whether section 49.4 is to apply in respect of the caucus;
- (c) whether subsections 49.5(1) to (3) are to apply in respect of the caucus; and
- (d) whether subsection 49.5(4) and section 49.6 are to apply in respect of the caucus.

These requirements, which came into force when the House adopted Bill C-586, Reform Act, 2014, in the 41st Parliament, establish processes for the expulsion and readmission of a caucus member, the election and removal of a caucus chair, leadership review and the election of an interim leader. It is the caucus of each recognized party, not the Speaker, which bears the responsibility for ensuring that these votes are held.

• (1020)

[Translation]

In fact, the only role of the Speaker is to be advised of the caucus decision. Section 49.8(5) of the act states:

49.8(5) As soon as feasible after the conduct of the votes, the chair of the caucus shall inform the Speaker of the House of Commons of the outcome of each vote.

The Speaker's role stops there. It does not, in any way, extend to interpreting the results of the votes, how the votes were taken or interpreting any other relevant provisions.

[English]

This is very much in keeping with the general restraint on Speakers when they are asked to interpret the law. Speaker Fraser stated this fundamental principle in a ruling on April 9, 1991, at page 19234 of the Debates.

...the Speaker has no role in interpreting matters of either a constitutional or legal nature.

This is in addition to another limit on its scope of authority, that is, parliamentary privilege and, thus, the authority of the Speaker is limited to the internal affairs of the House, its own proceedings. It does not extend to caucus matters. The member for Markham—Stouffville was right to state that the Speaker bears the responsibility for ensuring that all members are aware of their rights in this House. While caucuses may have some extraneous relationship to the membership of the House, it remains just that. There is nothing to suggest that its proceedings constitute or relate to a proceeding of the House.

[Translation]

This leaves caucuses alone with the authority to govern their internal operations. This is also made quite clear by the wording of section 49.7 of the Act which bars against judicial review, stating:

49.7 Any determination of a matter relating to the internal operations of a party by the caucus, a committee of the caucus or the caucus chair is final and not subject to judicial review.

With the full authority given to caucuses themselves in such unequivocal terms, it is clear that the Chair has no role in the interpretation or enforcement of this statute, even when members feel rudderless without what they feel would be clearly stated and understood rules.

[English]

For these reasons, the Chair is unable to conclude that the member for Markham—Stouffville has been obstructed in the fulfillment of her parliamentary functions. Accordingly, I cannot find that there is a prima facie question of privilege.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

BILL C-93—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-93, An Act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so that the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

• (1025)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, we see the use of closure by the government. I want to ask a question about the particulars of the legislation it is bringing in closure on.

The Liberals call this, in the title of the bill, “no-cost” pardons. Of course, it is not no cost. It is just that the taxpayer would have to cover all of those costs.

I would like to know, given how limited the debate has been, the answers to a few key policy questions: How much is this legislation going to cost? Why is the government not considering targeting that cost relief to those who need it and those who cannot afford pardons while having those who can afford pardons still pay for them? Why is the government not considering alternatives, such as those proposed by other parties in this place that remove the records without the cost associated with the process that the government would put in place?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. We believe that, overwhelmingly, those individuals who have these criminal records have been impacted by them and that impact is disproportional to these offences.

Government Orders

One of the reasons we brought forward the legislation changing the way in which we regulate cannabis was to create a regulatory regime that is far more proportional to what is required to control this substance. We believe that there is strong consensus in the House that those records should be dealt with in an appropriate way. We are anxious to have the bill sent to committee so that its members can examine this issue at committee and, perhaps, provide greater insight into the questions posed by my friend opposite.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the minister failed to answer the question, even though he thanked me for asking it. I asked how much this is going to cost. I asked a number of other things, but maybe he can answer that point right off for us. Of course, it can be studied at committee, but it is his legislation and he should know the cost.

How much would this proposal cost taxpayers if the legislation passes?

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can provide a little more specificity. As the member knows, the current pardon system of records suspension, as implemented by the Conservative government, had a very substantial fee of \$631 imposed on these applications.

We know that for many of the people who have a conviction for simple possession, that fee is, frankly, a significant impediment to their ability to access these records and, therefore, to get on with their lives, to get a job and to realize their full potential as citizens. We believe this should be accessible.

The exact amount the cost would be is proportional to the number of people who will actually seek this. The high cost is such an impediment for so many people that it would strictly limit those who could take advantage of this opportunity for a fresh start.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is sad that we are seeing again, for the 60th time, the government imposing closure on important discussions that need to take place in the House.

I recall, as I am sure members do, back in 2015 the Prime Minister said it would be sunny ways, that Liberals would respect Parliament and that they would allow parliamentarians to debate these important issues. Instead, 60 times the government has imposed this legislative bulldozer and pushed aside the ability of members of Parliament to speak to the issue.

The issue is pretty fundamental. In this particular case, we are talking about a very complicated, convoluted and admittedly expensive process that the government wants to put in place, yet at the same time, the member for Victoria has presented a solution to this whole issue, which is the expungement of these records. The member for Victoria brought his private member's bill forward and has support from across the length and breadth of this country. Curiously, at the same time as his bill gains momentum, we see the government now bringing in the legislative bulldozer to push through its deeply flawed bill to try to head off the member for Victoria.

Is that not the real reason for closure today and why the government is trying to head off what is a very credible and

legitimate bill from the member for Victoria that all members of Parliament want to vote on?

• (1030)

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby's question gives me an opportunity to explain that we examined the issue of the best way to deal with these existing records and what would have the greatest benefit to Canadians who have these records.

Let me say that the practical effect of pardons and expungements is virtually identical. The exception is that pardoned records are sealed and segregated. They can be reopened only in extraordinary circumstances. Perhaps most important, a pardoned record is actually protected by the Canadian Human Rights Act, whereas expungement is not.

I can say from experience that because these records are not indictable records and for decades the vast majority of people who were charged and convicted of this offence were not fingerprinted, these records do not reside in a single, simple database from which expungements could be applied. In fact, they are often recorded in provincial and territorial databases, so the pardon process where an individual must come forward and identify the existence of the record so that it can be dealt with in an appropriate way is the right way to do this.

Although I know I share with the member opposite and his party a strong desire to redress those records for those individuals, I very sincerely believe that a pardon process is the right way to do it, the appropriate way to do it and will provide the most benefit to those who have these records.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right that there is a difference between expungement and pardons. Expungement, of course, is a legal process that essentially declares that the offences for which people were convicted are no longer an offence and the offences never happened. Therefore, it is obviously superior to a pardon for clearing a person's record.

My question really has to do with the fairness of this. We know the Conservatives made pardons much more difficult for Canadians to get. They lengthened the time period that Canadians had to wait before they could apply. They imposed a drastic increase in the costs of pardons, over \$600. We know that cannabis offences disproportionately hurt the most marginalized Canadians: indigenous Canadians, young Canadians, poor Canadians. It is exactly that population of people who are probably the least likely to have the resources to go and apply for pardons in the first place, whether there is a fee or not.

Therefore, the legislation the government is proposing would leave many Canadians effectively without a pardon where, with a simple act of this Parliament, we could expunge the records of all Canadians for simple possession. We should do that because it is no longer a crime in this country. The current government did that for crimes that were on the books against homosexuality. The Liberals used expungement then. Why did the government use expungement to clear the records of Canadians who were convicted of homosexual offences, but will not do it with respect to Canadians convicted of cannabis offences?

Government Orders

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify this.

With respect to those offences, they were expunged earlier as a result of an acknowledgement that certain criminal charges and the criminal law were in fact unconstitutional and were a violation of the Canadian Human Rights Act. In acknowledgement that the application of those laws was in fact a violation of both our laws and our human rights legislation, we believed that expungement of those records and dealing with them in that way was the appropriate path forward.

I would differentiate that with the legislation that existed in this country for over a century with respect to the criminal prohibition of the possession of cannabis. That law has been ruled many times to have been constitutional and not in violation of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It has also never been suggested that it is a violation of the Canadian Human Rights Act. That law was properly enacted, it was properly enforced, those prosecutions were properly conducted and those convictions were properly registered. That is a fundamental difference from those charges that related to the LGBT community and that is why we treated them in a very different way.

Those offences and those convictions for cannabis have had a disproportionate impact on the individuals who have those convictions. In particular, I am happy to acknowledge, as I acknowledged when I first spoke of this issue in the House nearly two years ago, that this disproportionate impact is something that requires redress. The impact on minority communities, indigenous communities and poor communities has been disproportionate and the impact on those individuals has been more significant in the quality and the outcome of their lives. Therefore, we believe that the right thing to do is to move—

• (1035)

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Oshawa.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here we are again with a government that is so disorganized and preoccupied with its scandal that it cannot seem to get anything organized and moving through this House, so we are faced with closure again.

My constituents have a lot of questions about this issue. One of them is the cost of these pardons, as well as the precedent.

My hon. colleague has had a wonderful, honourable career in the police force for many years, and I have a question for him today regarding precedent. We know that in the past, many Canadians have applied for these pardons and paid for the pardons themselves. Now the government is moving forward with this initiative without even allowing us to debate in the House how much the pardons would cost and how the Parole Board would filter out those who have been convicted of marijuana offences in conjunction with other offences.

I would like to find out, and my hon. colleague should know, is if this is a precedent. Is this something for which people who have had pardons in the past will be expecting the government to refund them or anything along those lines? How much is this going to cost us?

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, it is very clear in Bill C-93 that we speak very specifically to a certain set of offences.

On October 17 of last year, legislation came into effect that fulfilled our promise to legalize and strictly regulate the production and distribution of cannabis. We have done that for a number of reasons, but overwhelmingly, our intent is to reduce social harm, to do a better job of protecting our kids, to displace the criminal market from this enterprise, to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to provide the opportunity to individuals with records to have those records properly pardoned so that they can get on with their lives. We deal with regulatory offences in a far more effective, far more proportional and far more appropriate way.

It is an acknowledgement of that significant change and the way in which we control cannabis in this country that we believe it is absolutely appropriate, and I believe we have agreement on this, for individuals who have such records, who otherwise have led exemplary lives, to be pardoned of those records so that they might get on with their lives.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a little stunned to hear the hon. member, who is a former senior police officer in this country, arguing that a pardon is the same as expungement.

If anyone would know, it is he who would know that expungement means that when people go to the border or volunteer for a soccer group or boys and girls club, they can honestly declare they do not have criminal records, whereas with a pardon, people have to declare at the border they have criminal records. Remarkably, I read in the news this week that one of the Liberal MPs said that if people with pardons have a problem at the border, there is a number they can call and they will get help. It was the most extraordinary thing I have ever heard.

I would like to hear from the member how he can argue that a pardon is the same as expungement, which is exactly what the member for Victoria is calling for.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to offer a little perspective from my experience.

We know that many Canadians have records and have gone through the border. We also know that American authorities and authorities in other countries may have access to information about that historical conviction. Quite frankly, if the question put at the border to a Canadian attempting to enter the country is whether that person has ever been charged or convicted of such an offence and he or she says no, the Americans may have evidence of that historical record. From their perspective, there is no legal effect of expungement, and they would deny entry to that person, perhaps permanently, on the basis of that individual not telling the full truth.

Government Orders

However, a pardon has a legal effect at the border. Under our Canadian Human Rights Act and as acknowledged by the U.S. authorities, if a Canadian goes to the border and says he or she has no record for which he or she has not received a pardon, then that is the truth, and the Canadian will be able to enter that country. It is actually much to the advantage of Canadians who are travelling to and from Canada into other countries, particularly the United States, to have a well-documented record of that pardon so that they can tell the truth at the border and not be impeded from entering the country.

• (1040)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned earlier the existence of separate databases. How will the government separate the convictions for simple possession from convictions relating to other offences? I would like an answer to that from the minister of broken borders and the backdoor gun registry.

The Deputy Speaker: I will give a reminder to hon. members that creating new titles for a minister is usually something we recommend the House stay away from.

The hon. Minister of Border Security.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the insulting remarks by the member opposite, I am happy to answer the question.

In Bill C-93 there is already a clear articulation that a cannabis conviction would be subject to expungement, provided it meets certain conditions. If there are other criminal convictions within the same period of time, they would not be impacted by this legislation. However, we also know that very many Canadians have it as their only conviction.

As I said, I personally know, as I think everyone in this House likely knows, people who have otherwise led exemplary lives, but perhaps as a result of a youthful indiscretion have been caught. I have heard a number of members of this House, including the Leader of the Opposition, acknowledge that as youths they broke the law and used this drug. They were just fortunate enough not to get caught. For those who were caught, the consequences of that criminal record can have a lifelong impact upon them.

We believe it is appropriate to move forward on a system of making pardons accessible to them, regardless of whether they can afford it—to make sure they can have this remedy, a fresh start, and receive a pardon so that they can move forward with their lives in an appropriate way.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit ironic that during question period this week, members of the Liberal government repeatedly asked why we were not asking questions about the budget. Today we were supposed to be asking questions about the budget, but the Liberals have thrown this on the table, so obviously they do not really want to talk about the budget either, because it is that bad. They are avoiding their budget as much as the rest of Canadians are, because a \$20-billion deficit and \$41 billion in new spending is not something that even the Liberal government wants to talk about.

In the debate we are having today, the minister talked about what he is trying to accomplish. One of the comments he made was that one of the goals is to eliminate the criminal and black market aspects

of this. However, every study we have seen over the past year is that the black market is thriving as a result of the legalization of marijuana.

One of the questions that comes from that is about those who might have been convicted of a more serious crime but who had that crime, perhaps as a result of a plea bargain, reduced to simple possession. As they go through the process of granting these pardons, are Liberals going to look at whether the charges were simple possession charges or pleaded down from more serious charges, and will that be included as part of the discussion and the criteria around receiving a pardon?

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that we have finally met somebody on that side of the House who would actually like to speak about the budget. I point out to the member that in the 2019 budget, \$2 million is allocated to support the provisions of Bill C-93.

In addition, with respect to the pardon system, the member may know that the pardon deals with the record that was registered as a result of our judicial processes. Therefore, the offence for which a person was found guilty is what constitutes the record.

By the way, that has been the way with the record suspension system, as implemented by the previous government. It has been the pardon system in this country for over a century. The pardon system deals with the record as it exists, and that is what we are talking about.

The only records that are included in Bill C-93 are those records for simple possession of cannabis. That is clearly defined in subsection 3(2) of the old Narcotic Control Act for those who have convictions prior to 1982, and then in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Those are the records that are dealt with in Bill C-93, and only those records.

• (1045)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been a year now since we followed through on our commitment to legalize and strictly regulate cannabis possession.

Speaking as a former police officer, could the hon. member speak about possession charges and how a pardon could move a life forward, add to human potential and see communities thrive?

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about this system, it is really important to talk about the people who are actually affected by it. I am very grateful for my hon. colleague's question.

We all know individuals who have been impacted. Some of them are adults my age and a lot of them are young people. Many have carried the burden of that criminal record, the stigma of that criminal record, throughout their entire lives. It limits their ability, for example, to travel into the United States, to be bonded for certain jobs, to get access to housing and to get access to education opportunities.

When they go looking for a job, they always have it in their mind that they have that conviction. If they do not have a pardon, they have to disclose that conviction to a potential employer. That can limit not just the individual's opportunity to realize their full potential, but their own view of themselves.

Government Orders

By lifting those convictions, by pardoning those individuals and giving them an opportunity for a clean state and a fresh start, we can change lives, and that makes it worth doing.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this debate on cannabis legislation, New Democrats have advocated for full expungement for all convictions for offences that the new law no longer considers a crime.

We have already seen that the government has gone for the half measure of pardons versus expungement, and it has also limited the scope to simple possession. The law now is that a person can grow up to four plants in their house; there are people who were convicted who were growing a plant or two in their house and who still have criminal records. This legislation will continue the stigma of a criminal record on those people.

What is shocking to me is the confusion this member has about expungement versus pardon. I am going to read the definition of expungement. It is a "process in which the record of an arrest or a criminal conviction is...erased in the eyes of the law." When a conviction is expunged, the process may also be referred to as "setting aside a criminal conviction". That is as if the conviction had never occurred.

A pardon maintains the presence of the conviction; it just states that the individual has received a pardon. Those individuals always have to say, "I have a conviction, but I have received a pardon."

The other thing that this member is misleading Canadians about is that when people go to the border, American border guards have access to CPIC and other Canadian record databases. A pardon in no way obligates them to erase their records or to not deny entry to a Canadian seeking entry into the United States. A pardon will not have that effect for Canadians.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but acknowledge that there is a little inconsistency here, because I recall that during the last federal election campaign and also during nearly a year of debate on the cannabis bill, the member opposite and his party strongly advocated not for legalization but for decriminalization. The effect of decriminalization is to maintain the prohibition. It is to maintain the prohibition and simply swap out a criminal penalty for a civil one. Maintaining the prohibition is worse than a half measure, and it would not have enabled us to come forward and deal effectively and appropriately with these records.

By the way, just as another minor correction for the member opposite, under the protection of the Canadian Human Rights Act, what is actually protected is that an individual Canadian can say "I do not have a conviction for which a pardon has not been rendered." The pardon is in fact protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act; the Canadian Human Rights Act is silent on the issue of expungement.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I am listening today, I am hearing perspectives on different types of people who are in the scenario. We have marginalized people who need jobs and we have exemplary lives of people who have just had a single offence, yet have not paid the cost to remove this charge.

I am wondering if the government has done its due diligence in coming up with the numbers and the costs related to those two groups. Taxpayers will be paying for these pardons. How many of those individuals are in marginalized situations? Can the minister give me a number, please?

• (1050)

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of estimates with respect to the total number of people who have been convicted of this offence in the history of Canada. I have seen numbers. I do not have the data, because, quite frankly, as I said, these are not indictable records and they are not kept in a central national database.

We have seen estimates of 400,000 or 500,000. We believe that the overwhelming majority of people who have these convictions received an absolute or a conditional discharge, which did not have the effect of removing the conviction but discharges the record. Therefore, it is still important for those individuals who may not understand that they have a record to know that there is an opportunity for them to come forward and have a pardon issued for that record that in fact does exist.

One of the challenges, as I have mentioned, and one of the reasons we believe the pardon system as articulated in Bill C-93 is so important, is that these records do not reside in a single national database and are not verifiable by fingerprint. They reside in provincial and territorial databases, and it is therefore necessary for an individual to come forward and make application under the proposed system in Bill C-93 so that we can properly identify that record and deal with it in an appropriate way through a pardon system.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, continuing with this line of questioning, the minister knows that we in the official opposition are concerned that the Liberals are forcing Canadian taxpayers to pick up all the costs of these pardons. We recognize that certain disadvantaged groups perhaps should be given some relief in requesting and receiving pardons.

I would like to ask the minister why, in the interest of fairness, he and the government have not considered the application of a means test. We know that the many thousands of individuals who have been convicted of breaking a very serious law that existed until now have the full capability to cover the costs, which should not be imposed on Canadian taxpayers across the board.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate to talk about costs and saving, so I will speak about that briefly.

From experience, I know that the amount of work, and therefore the cost, to process an individual charged criminally with simple possession of cannabis was quite expensive. It was a great deal of work for the police, involving analysis, retention, chain of command for evidence, prosecution, conviction and record-keeping. It was a substantial cost and a substantial amount of work.

We have replaced this with something far more proportional. I will give members an example.

Government Orders

Prior to October 17, if a police officer saw a young person on the street in possession of cannabis, the officer basically had two options: do nothing, which was not a very good outcome for the kid, or charge the kid with a crime, which took, in total, 22 hours of work by officials to take that to conviction.

Now police officers have the ability to enforce an absolute prohibition for the possession, purchase and consumption of cannabis for that child, but they can do this by administering a ticket and a fine. They can also seize the drug. In appropriate circumstances they can take a child home. It is about 18 minutes of work versus 22 hours of work.

Therefore, we have saved time by implementing a far more effective and proportional way of managing and controlling the substance, which creates substantial savings for Canadians.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know of individuals who, in their early years of life, made the mistake of using marijuana and were charged with the offence of possession. In order to save court costs and save themselves money in legal fees, they pleaded guilty. Outside of that charge, they have a completely unblemished record. Individuals like this are justly considered for a pardon.

However, an RCMP officer spoke to me about situations in which a plea bargain was reached with individuals who had committed much more serious offences, like trafficking and the use of different substances, and had agreed to settle for a lesser conviction of simple possession of marijuana. If we are offering a pardon to those types of individuals, I have grave concern as do many other individuals. The problem is that the records indicating the original charge are difficult to ascertain.

Does the minister have any idea how the Parole Board will filter out those two different scenarios?

• (1055)

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. As I have said, a pardon system deals with conviction. The Parole Board is able to see if there was a criminal conviction and see the offence for which the individual was convicted. If it was simple possession of cannabis, the individual would be eligible for a pardon under the provisions of C-93.

I have taken thousands of these cases to court, and plea bargains do take place. However, the criminal record is part of our law. It is an acknowledgement of a charge for which an individual has been convicted in a court of law. We are dealing with those convictions.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The time allocated for questions has expired.

[*English*]

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.

• (1135)

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

(*Division No. 1294*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arya	Bagnell
Baylis	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubourg
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Gameau	Gerretsen
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McGuinity
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
Ouellette	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Picard	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard

Government Orders

Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Trudeau	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virami	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wrzesnewskyj
Yip	Young
Zahid — 153	

NAYS

Members

Aboulttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bergen
Berthold	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cooper
Davidson	Davies
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Egjiński
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Harcastle
Harder	Hughes
Jeneroux	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kusie
Kwan	Laverdière
Liepert	Lloyd
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathyssen
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nantel
Nicholson	Paul-Hus
Plamondon	Poilievre
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Reid
Richards	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shiplee	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Trudel
Van Kesteren	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong — 103	

PAIRED

Members

Ayoub	Fortin
Goldsmith-Jones	LeBlanc

Moore
Ste-Marie

Paradis
Thériault — 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

**AN ACT RESPECTING FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND
MÉTIS CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

BILL C-92—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families—

The Speaker: Order, please. I remind members, who I do not think seem to be aware of this, that members are not permitted to cross between the member speaking and the Chair. Members should try to avoid that. It is in the Standing Orders. I know all members have read the Standing Orders very carefully. Every night, for example, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot does. All members should do that. It is good reading and helps one to go to sleep, I am sure.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: I have been trying to read it every night, Mr. Speaker. However, I move:

That, in relation to Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

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

[English]

In the normal course, these 30-minute question periods are given preference to opposition members posing questions to the ministry. I would ask all members wishing to participate in this 30-minute question period to please rise. That will give some indication as to how we will accord the time. I would also ask hon. members as well as the minister responding to keep their interventions to approximately one minute, and that should allow members interested to participate.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a very appropriate quote, “Poor planning on your part does not necessitate an emergency on mine.” Perhaps we should say that the government's lack of planning should not constitute time allocation every time it is in a rush.

Whether it was Bill S-3, which had major flaws, or the indigenous children's language bill, for which the government had to table drop 20 amendments at clause-by-clause, Bill C-92 is another bill that will not get proper debate. The government is rushing it through the system because it just could not get it done.

Government Orders

Why is the government not willing to provide the appropriate time for us to identify what I am sure will be significant and major flaws in this legislation?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her ongoing support for what we are trying to achieve in this bill. It is important that we get the bill to committee so we can hear from the people affected by it, the people who have been fighting for a very long time to achieve jurisdiction over their children.

It is interesting that this morning I received this from Kukpi7 Christian of the Secwepemc band, “Vote yes to Bill C-92. “Vote no to delegation. Vote yes to jurisdiction.” “Reconciliation means recognition of jurisdiction and laws for First Nations children and families.” It is very important we get this bill to committee so we can hear from the people affected.

•(1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue for me personally. In Winnipeg North, a huge number of children are in foster care. In the province of Manitoba, as the minister is aware, 11,000-plus children are in foster care. A vast majority of those, somewhere around 90%, are of indigenous background.

We have been waiting for this legislation for many years. It is encouraging to see. Part of the frustration I have is this. We had the opportunity to debate the bill one day, but the Conservative opposition brought in a concurrence motion on something that had sat on the shelves for years. My fear is that the Conservative opposition does not want to see the bill go to committee. We need to move forward in this fashion to ensure we look out for these children. Could the minister provide her thoughts on that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I agree that, unfortunately, we have seen delay tactics in the House. This is about us getting the bill to committee so we can hear from the people. If we need to make amendments, if we need to make the bill as good as it can be, that is where we will find the kind of changes we are willing to make that are in the best interests of the children. We were very pleased yesterday morning to see the prestudy the Senate is doing in preparing itself to receive the bill.

The children have been waiting too long. Over 50% of the children in care right now are indigenous. This is unacceptable. For us to delay and have one more child taken into care because the bill did not go through is unacceptable. We ask that the House to expedite its passage into law.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that we need to do more to protect children. What I find really sad is that the government has said that reconciliation and protecting children is very important, yet it waited three and a half years to table a bill. Then it uses legislative measures to limit debate.

This is the 62nd time the government has moved time allocation on a bill. It is really worrisome. We know that in the past, when time allocation was used, members of Parliament did not have enough time to adequately study the bills and move amendments at committee. Therefore, it is important that we all take the time to

ensure we get this bill right. It is very concerning that the government is once again using time allocation on such an important bill.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I respect the member's comments, but I also think she knows the real work happens at committee. It will be at committee where we will hear from the people who would be affected by this bill. That is why it is important we get it to committee as soon as possible.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the tone the government is taking in moving time allocation. The Prime Minister continually says that no relationship is more important to him and his government than with first nations. There is nothing like a bill numbered 92 to demonstrate the importance of that relationship.

I have been contacted numerous times by my constituents of the first nations at Maskwacis. They have said that this bill would do nothing but benefit the provincial agencies and would maintain the status quo when it comes to services, thereby not having any trickle-down benefit effects for the people for whom the government claims the bill is intended to help.

Why has it taken so long for a government that has these priorities with aboriginal or indigenous Canadians to get the legislation to the House? The government is three and three-quarters of the way through its four-year term. Where indigenous people just not donating enough?

•(1145)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the cynicism and comments that were nothing about children. This bill is about children and getting the proper information out. We need to get it to committee and hear from first nations, Inuit and Métis, the mothers and grandmothers who are now living the nightmare of having their children and grandchildren taken from them. This is about us getting it right and it is exactly the opposite of what the member said.

It has been very clear that the communities want the money to go to kids and families to prevent them being removed from their communities, not for lawyers, agencies and non-indigenous foster families to apprehend children. This is about the best interests of the child. We know that when children are raised with a secure personal cultural identity that is their self-esteem and resilience, there are better outcomes in health, education and economic outcomes. This is about us stopping this tragedy of the millennial scoop and keeping children in their communities. That is why we need to get the bill to committee so we can get the best bill possible.

Government Orders

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here since the House began and we were supposed to be debating the budget. We have spent two hours wasting time instead of allowing members to debate matters. I find it, frankly, appalling that the minister is making the suggestion that it is irrelevant for the elected representatives of the people to share what those who elected us are telling us they would like to see in the bill and that the only important one is at committee. We know what happens at committee. The majority Liberals decide who is appropriate to bring in and then what to recommend.

If the government is so committed to assisting indigenous communities to better look after their children, and surely we all agree with that, why has it been ignoring the directives of the Canadian Human Rights Commission for three years and getting complaint after complaint, contempt after contempt ruled against it? The bill is missing one major thing, which is that it commits no money. That is the main concern that indigenous communities are raising. I do not see any money in the budget, which we would like to be debating, to go to these communities.

I am deeply troubled that we have to waste half an hour debating whether we should be allowed to speak and then wasting another half hour waiting to vote when we could be debating important bills.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I understand the member's frustration, but I also think she understands that a series of concurrence motions and a budget filibuster are in the way of us actually doing work in the House, to get on with the bills we need passed. I would encourage her to speak to her colleagues to ensure we debate the kinds of things that really matter to Canadians.

We want to move forward with this. We need to get this bill to committee so we can make it as good as it can be. The member would understand that the Canada Health Act did not have a budget assigned to it. This is a matter of us sorting out the implementation and ensuring the money goes toward the best interest of the child.

As we are hearing from coast to coast to coast, the kind of money that is now going to lawyers, agencies and non-indigenous foster families needs to be in community to prevent children from having to leave their community. These children should be left in their homes and have healthy aunts or grandparents to look after them. Children who have already gone into care need to be brought home. That is what I hear from communities and that is what we will hear at committee.

● (1150)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I first rose in the House for my maiden speech, I discussed child and family services and the absolute crisis we face in Manitoba, with over 11,000 kids in care. I am thankful that the government, after a year and a half, started taking action and consulting with indigenous people and indigenous organizations, looking for consensus.

From what I understand, the bill is historic in that an awful lot of time was spent negotiating, discussing and working together to try to come up with a piece of legislation that had consensus, not only on the government side and in the Department of Justice but also from indigenous peoples.

While it may not be perfect, it is time for it to go to committee. I remember having the debate about the Champlain Bridge in Montreal. It was a Conservative motion, which was dilatory, on a report, and it wasted a lot of time on that day when we should have been discussing this bill. I had looked forward to the opportunity. However, now I look forward to the opportunity of actually getting it to committee so I can actually put forward some additional amendments to make the bill even better.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his ongoing advocacy and for dealing straight up with the crisis in his city and in his province. It is heartbreaking to hear advocates like Cora Morgan explain what happens with the birth alerts. How do we get the jurisdiction into communities so that the grandmothers and community leaders can develop a program that will be in the best interests of the children?

As the member knows, from our earliest days in government, we were trying to address this. We knew that just money would not fix this. It had to be both money and genuine reform.

In terms of the consultations, in terms of the work of the minister's special representative, in terms of the emergency summit the member for Markham—Stouffville hosted last January to now actually co-developing a bill with an advisory panel, this has been a remarkable journey for a historic piece of legislation, and we thank the member for his support.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recall that just before Christmas, the former Indigenous Services minister, along with the current minister, had a grandiose news conference, with all three parties, in the old House of Commons. That was before Christmas. Here we are three or four months later, and the government is finally doing what it should have done months ago.

The bill is flawed. We need to talk about it here in the House of Commons. It is flawed because of a lack of consultation. It is flawed because of hurried consultation, especially in my province. I have heard loud and clear from the FSIN. It was forced to make recommendations within a two-week period. Here we are now with time allocation.

I am very disappointed by the government's lack of foresight. Here we are on Bill C-92. We are weeks away from rising, and now we cannot even debate probably the most important bill in Indigenous Services.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his concern, but again, I think the dilatory action really interfered with our getting this through.

It is very interesting that the member is speaking on behalf of the FSIN or other advocacy organizations and governments that need to come to committee. We signed an agreement with the FSIN on a pilot project for it to get to work on asserting jurisdiction over child and family.

Now it is important that we get this into law in the best possible way. That will only happen if we listen to the stakeholders, as the member articulated.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather unfortunate that this is the 62nd gag order imposed by the Liberal government.

Obviously, everyone cares about the well-being of children in indigenous communities, and we agree that action has to be taken. I do not understand why the government dragged its feet for three and a half years. I do not understand why this bill does not provide for the necessary funding.

I understand the minister when she says that we can examine this bill in committee, and all that I would ask her today is whether the government is prepared to accept the necessary amendments.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, it is very important to come up with the best bill possible. That is why our government intends to listen carefully to the testimony given in committee.

• (1155)

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House cares about the welfare of children, but the reality is that the current government has had four years to bring forward this legislation. It is clear that in this dying year, the Liberals' last kick at the can, they are now rushing. They probably just woke up and realized that their promise tracker shows that they have broken three-quarters of their promises. Is that not really the reason the Liberals are forcing and rushing this with time allocation?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite does not really understand how things work if we are going to do things with a recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

This bill was co-developed with first nations, Inuit and Métis. This is a way forward that came out of the summit, where it became clear that we needed legislation and that it was not going to work with just different funding allocations. We needed to make sure that the provinces and territories understood that section 35 rights are not optional, that families and communities need the jurisdiction to be able to look after their children in the best possible way.

Therefore, it was hugely important after the summit last year, and moving to separate summits, like the one we held with the Métis, to move into co-developing. This would actually be historic, this kind of legislation, and in the best interests of the child, so that we can move forward in a good way, keeping children secure in their personal and cultural identity. It is about the rights and well-being of indigenous children and youth. It is about their right to be raised indigenous and the right of their communities to look after them in the way they see fit.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for all her work on this bill. It is signature legislation in Canada. It has been asked for by indigenous governments and indigenous communities for many years.

I can understand why the opposition would like to delay this even further, because for 10 years, the Conservatives had no action on this file and on delivering for indigenous children in this country. We are now doing that, and we are doing it after very careful, very

thoughtful and very respectful consultation with indigenous groups and leadership. That is the means for this bill to continue with that relationship to get it right.

I want to commend the minister, and I want to support her in what she is asking today. I agree that the committee is the place to do a lot of this work that needs to be done. I would ask the minister to speak to that.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for all her hard work on this and for her understanding of what it takes to get this right and her understanding of how historic this is.

From residential schools to the sixties scoop to what we now, sadly, refer to as the millennial scoop, this has been a terrible outcome for first nations, Inuit and Métis in this country. We have to learn from our mistakes. We have to go forward in a way that actually respects the jurisdiction of first nations, Inuit and Métis to raise their children and to therefore see better health, education and economic outcomes as they go forward with a secure personal cultural identity.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the minister will have noted in my speech, one of only two speeches on this bill before there was time allocation, that I indicated that we support this bill in principle.

There is one area of concern. I would like to know if this bill has been assessed in terms of both charter and constitutional compliance. Is the minister willing to table those opinions?

The one concern I have heard expressed is that if first nations did not assume control of jurisdiction, this legislation would compel the provinces in an area that was constitutionally theirs. It is something that has been raised. It is an important question.

I support this bill, but we all need to know if this bill is constitutionally compliant and respectful of provincial jurisdiction if an indigenous community does not assume control of child welfare.

• (1200)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her support for this bill and for the intent and spirit of the bill.

I think it will be important, as we go forward, for people to understand that the issues raised at the summit came from a problem in the Indian Act. In section 88 of the Indian Act, it says "laws of general application". That is, they are not articulated. This bill would now articulate that section 35 rights would include child and family services and jurisdiction over their children and youth. I think that is something that will be sorted out at committee, but it is a very important question.

This is a very exciting time. As we have the journey to self-determination, as first nations and indigenous governments write their own laws, including their child well-being laws, they will identify best practices and always be able to assert jurisdiction over their children.

Government Orders

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested to hear more about this particular legislation, having just been through the one on indigenous languages at committee.

One of the things we found out at committee was that there was a lack of consultation. Although it was stated that it was long and lengthy, the more we heard from witnesses, the more we found that it was very, very short. That was one of the problems. For major organizations, yes, but when you got to the actual people who would be implementing it, no. As we found more and more challenges with the legislation, we had constitutional lawyers saying that you are just going to end up in court with this, because it was not clear, and it was done too quickly.

We met daily on that bill. It was rushed, and it was daily. Witnesses were limited in the sense of grassroots people and tribal organizations that wanted more input. They said that they were going to be left out of the legislation on indigenous languages, as it was going to the major organizations and not to them.

Again, going to committee is one thing, but I think you have rushed it too much, and there are going to be challenges with this legislation. You cannot fix it at committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind the member to address the questions to the Chair and not to the individual members.

The hon. Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I think it is really important that people understand that it is communities. In all the gatherings on missing and murdered indigenous women during the pre-inquiry process, almost every family explained the harm the attachment to the child and family services industry had done to that family, both the victims and the perpetrators, in terms of abuse. This is something that has been so clear at rallies on the Hill, at the summit last January and the conferences that fed from that and then with the advisory group and during the co-development of the draft legislation and the drafting instructions that were shared. This is a very good outline of what was heard. It is enabling and not prescriptive, but it really will, I think, be able to stop the tragedy of these children being removed from their families.

I look forward to hearing what the witnesses have to say at committee. It is the reason that when the Minister of Indigenous Services tabled this legislation, he had the support of the first nations, Inuit and Métis.

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would first like to applaud the minister for her tireless work and effort on this file and for her long-standing work with the indigenous peoples of this country.

I think it is important to note that this is just part of what the government has done. We moved forward on historic investments in indigenous education. We moved forward on ending boiled water advisories and moved forward on implementing the truth and reconciliation commission recommendations. The list goes on and on. However, there is no doubt that this country has been marred by indigenous children being taken away from their cultural identity and from their communities.

I know that this bill will go a long way in restoring an indigenous rights framework. Can you speak to how this would really impact indigenous rights and build upon what we are trying to do on a nation-to-nation relationship?

• (1205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the members to address questions to the Chair. I could certainly speak to it, but I am sure the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations will be able to respond.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, that question puts this in the proper context of not only the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but the first five calls to action, which were about children.

When we think of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the articles say clearly not to forcibly remove children from their communities. It is really clear that we cannot move forward on reconciliation until these children are able to be raised proud of who they are and able to achieve their full potential in society.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I am going to go back to the question I asked earlier. I think the move around jurisdiction and being very clear about jurisdiction is a good one.

The government has talked about it being a phased approach. Where a community has not taken over jurisdiction and the province is responsible, the technical adviser says this is going to be compelled on provincial authorities.

Given that the provincial authorities have constitutional issues around child protection, can the minister definitively say that this is compliant with the Constitution and the charter in terms of that advice?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, these are section 35 rights and it is about asserting jurisdiction, as these section 35 rights are being obstructed by article 88 in the Indian Act.

We are working with the provinces and territories at the trilateral tables to try to achieve a better outcome for these kids. We really are hoping that the acceleration of the child well-being laws in each of the nations will proceed. For over half of the Indian Act bands that we are dealing with in terms of self-determination, child and family services is a priority on their list. We look forward to being able to have them realize that vision for their communities.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 1295*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arya	Bagnell
Baylis	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubourg
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Leslie	Levitt
Lighbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk (Soeurs)	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Morrissey)
Monsef	

Murray
Nault
O'Connell
Oliver
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Scarpaleggia
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Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Aubin
Barlow	Barrett
Beaulieu	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Calkins	Caron
Carrie	Choquette
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Davidson
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeschen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Eglinski
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Finley	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hughes	Jeneroux
Julian	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kusie	Kwan
Laverdière	Lloyd
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nantel
Nicholson	Paul-Hus
Plamondon	Poilievre
Quach	Ramsey
Rayes	Reid
Richards	Sansoucy
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	ShIPLEY
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Trudel
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PAIRED

Members

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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration from April 10 of the motion that Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say that the budget is probably the most important instrument that the government can present every year. I am very disappointed that we were not able to hear the Minister of Finance give his speech. The following week, many of my constituents told me how much they deplored missing the opportunity to hear the speech. Therefore, I would like to clarify a few things for Canadians today and for the people of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

[*English*]

My presentation on the budget today touches on a number of themes. The first one, of course, is veterans, followed by seniors, youth, housing—which is extremely important—and black Canadians. I will also, of course, make reference to my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

With regard to veterans, we have made some big changes, and they are really important to note.

The first part is about transition. Transition has been a challenge for all governments. The objective is to make it as seamless as possible. We have expanded the coverage and support in the transition formula to non-injured veterans. Previously, it was only for injured veterans, but now it includes non-injured veterans. We have also established a guide that will help veterans to follow the process in their My VAC Account, which is extremely important. This is one piece.

We have also expanded education and training benefits, which is another important aspect. We have expanded this to include the reservists. This is important, because it is something veterans have been talking about.

We have also invested monies for the recognition and commemoration of Métis veterans. I am on the veterans affairs committee. I had the opportunity to go across Canada to speak to many Métis veterans who fought for our great country, which is extremely important.

Finally, I have advocated personally in the last couple of years to ensure that we have what some call a new survivor fund for veterans' families for when a veteran passes. I do not know if members are

aware of this, but if a veteran marries after age 60 and passes, his family does not have access to a percentage of his pension or to benefits. This is something our government has put into the bill. It is really important and would be much appreciated by many of my colleagues.

Let us now talk about youth, the young people of Canada. What we brought forward for them in this budget is quite impressive.

Two years ago, we talked about the idea that they would not have to pay back their student loans until they made \$25,000 a year or more. That was a big help, and young people have mentioned it several times to me.

Now we have also taken out the interest rate for the first six months so that they do not have to pay it for six months after they graduate, which is crucial. In addition, after six months, instead of having to pay prime plus 2.5%, they will pay prime.

I would like to note that I am sharing my time with the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

What is also very important for young people is the first-time homebuyers' tax credit. This provides an opportunity for young people to get into the housing market. It is quite impressive. When young people buy a house for \$400,000 and they put 5% down, that is \$20,000. However, there would be a shared equity investment for another 10%, which equals \$40,000. Therefore, a house for which they would have had a mortgage of \$380,000 only needs a mortgage of \$340,000. What does that represent? That represents a savings of \$228 per month for 25 years. That is very important.

● (1250)

We have made some great investments as well in the construction of new rental units. We will have 84,000 new units.

Let us talk about seniors. Between 2011 and 2016, my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook had the greatest increase in the number of seniors in Nova Scotia. It is extremely important that we do more to support our seniors. We have the new horizons program, which supports community-based projects. Seniors can submit an application for investment support for equipment, programs and transportation. There are all kinds of great opportunities around that.

One of the most important things that many seniors ask about is how can they keep more money in their pockets. Some seniors work part time; that is a good thing, because the economy needs more people in the workforce, but they may make \$100 on the one hand but lose \$100 on the other hand. Our government made some major changes to the GIS. Before now, there was 100% exemption on earnings up to \$3,500; now that exemption would go up to \$5,000. There is also a 50% exemption on the next \$10,000. Seniors are seeing a \$6,500 differential. They will get to keep more money in their pockets, and that is what it is all about.

Let us talk about health. Health is the number one priority in Nova Scotia. Up to 26% of Nova Scotians have underlined clearly that health is their first and most important priority. In the health accord, our government not only increased funding but added funding for mental health and home care, which allows seniors to remain longer in their homes if that is what they wish to do. That is very important.

As well, we are building the foundation for a national pharmacare program. We have created a Canadian drug agency that will be responsible for negotiating better prices for drugs in all provinces and territories. This should save up to \$3 billion a year, which is quite impressive.

We have a national strategy for rare diseases. Many Canadians face health challenges with rare diseases, and the cost is extremely high. We are going to increase coverage to support those individuals and their families in paying for their extremely expensive drugs.

Our government is investing some money into a national strategy for dementia. It is not that the disease is getting worse, but rather that more Canadians are living longer and are therefore facing challenges, including dementia challenges.

The last piece is about Ready, Willing and Able, an organization in Nova Scotia that supports individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. It is looking to get into partnership co-op programs. These individuals do some great work and contribute to the economy, which is important. Companies like Air Canada, Costco and Shoppers Drug Mart hire many of these individuals.

I have already talked about housing, but let me mention that for first-time homebuyers there is an increase in the permitted RRSP withdrawal from \$25,000 to \$35,000. That is very important.

We have invested in the construction of rental units. With the Speaker of the Nova Scotia legislature, Kevin Murphy—who is a former student of mine—I announced 13 units a couple of weeks ago in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia. I am waiting for many more announcements to be made in Nova Scotia and in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

To conclude, our government has invested in black Canadians. I have in my riding the biggest indigenous black community in Canada. I also have in my riding the biggest black cultural centre in Canada. We are leaders. We have received investments and capital assistance for various projects and we also have community-based projects that will come forward on anti-racism.

Budget 2019 is a great budget. I am very proud of it, and the community of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, my province of Nova Scotia and in fact all of Canada will benefit from it.

• (1255)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member raised the issue of a shared equity position that the Government of Canada is proposing CMHC would have for first-time homebuyers. However, he neglected to mention that it is based on income. The maximum someone could receive under the program is four times their income, and in the member's own riding, the median income is just under \$30,000. That is not a lot for someone to be able to borrow on and to move forward.

Does he not believe that in areas like his across the country, this amount would not be enough to even support someone, let alone if they actually want to be in partnership with the government and have it as a stakeholder in their home?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his comments and his question. I am happy to tell him that this is a

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program that did not exist in the previous 10 years. We have to start somewhere.

We are trying to help first-time homebuyers. Yes, it goes on the average, but keep mind that is still getting a piece of that pie. It will help people right across the country, based on income, and that 10% will still come down as a shared equity to help get that first home, which is crucial.

• (1300)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I spent three happy years in Nova Scotia. It is a beautiful province.

As I recall, the member mentioned that health care is a big priority for his constituents. Given that it is also a top priority not only in my constituency but across my province, I wonder if he could speak to the fact that his government chose not to introduce a national pharmacare program, despite the fact that over many decades, every commission has recommended to move now on pharmacare and that an all-party committee unanimously recommended introducing pharmacare now.

Why was that? It was because the Parliamentary Budget Officer has done an analysis showing that it is the most cost-effective way to proceed in making sure that affordable pharmaceuticals are available to everyone.

I wonder if the member could speak to that fact. Is he not disappointed and will his constituents not be disappointed that his government chose not to introduce pharmacare, which would have made those medicines available to all of his constituents at an affordable rate?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, in my mind, pharmacare is a very important national strategy that we need to move forward on as soon as possible. Again, in the 10 years that the Conservative Party was in power, there was no talk about moving on that important agenda.

Stephen Frank, the president and CEO of the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association said:

We're grateful that the government is listening to what Canadians say they want for national pharmacare—an approach that covers everyone, but that doesn't result in people losing the workplace benefits they currently have.

That is what they are saying on the ground, and it is very important that are supporting it.

However, we have a report that is going to come out in May or June, and I believe that this final report will be the final piece to get a full pharmacare program in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure and privilege to hear my colleague speak both official languages.

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Three and a half years ago, my colleague and some 180 other MPs were elected under the Liberal Party banner after making some very specific promises. On page 30 the electoral platform, they stated that they would run modest deficits for the first three years and then it would be a zero-deficit year.

I have a very simple question for the hon. member. What is the deficit for 2019-20, the year the Liberals promised to run a zero deficit?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

He has to understand that we Liberals are investing in Canadians. At home we might decide to borrow money to buy a house, a car, or something else. We are investing \$150 million and Canadians created 900,000 jobs. That is going to generate the revenue that will help pay down consumer debt.

[*English*]

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to rise to speak to Bill C-97, an act that would begin implementing budget 2019, a budget that builds on three and a half years of our government's hard work, a budget that shows our strong commitment to building a better Canada, a more inclusive Canada and a more economically prosperous Canada. That prosperity can be seen at home in Atlantic Canada and I am proud of the record investments our government is delivering for my region. Never have I seen a prime minister and numerous ministers pay such close attention and respect to the region.

It is no secret that Atlantic Canada experienced a decade of Conservative cuts and closures under Stephen Harper. We had a prime minister in Canada who made his feelings toward that region very clear. Atlantic Canada, Stephen Harper believed, was a culture of defeat. I can say first-hand that Atlantic Canadians are proud and hard-working. They are innovators and, in fact, game-changers. Atlantic Canadians overwhelmingly stood up against Stephen Harper's disdain for their region and sent a strong message in 2015 that they had had enough. We will not forget how the Conservatives treated Atlantic Canada.

Under the Conservatives' current leader, just a short while ago, we watched the Conservatives vote against funding for ACOA, the economic driver for Atlantic Canada. We watched them vote against funding for veterans, health care and so many things that are so important to Atlantic Canadians. I can say that this budget, just like our previous budgets, is very good for Atlantic Canada because we believe in Atlantic Canadians.

The best part of my job is seeing the economic decisions our government has made benefit my home riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. We know that our investments in the middle class are working. Since November 2015, Canadians have created over 900,000 new jobs and most are full time. Now the unemployment rate is at the lowest rate in more than 40 years.

Our investments in the middle class are complemented by our commitment to investment in small business. That is why it is important to us to create the type of environment where small businesses can flourish, grow and employ more Atlantic Canadians. We have lowered the small business tax from 11% to 9% and made

numerous regulatory changes to remove the red tape that was holding businesses back. We can see the difference it is making across the country, especially in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

There has never been a better time to live in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The city is experiencing strong growth and innovation. We can feel the opportunity around us. Downtown Dartmouth is now the trendiest part of the municipality, with restaurants like The Canteen, Battery Park, Portland Street Crêperie, Stone Pizza, Humble Pie Kitchen, Souper Duper Soup, Yeah Yeahs Pizza and so many more. My favourite thing to do on the weekend is visit the Alderney Landings Farmers' Market. I grab a cup of coffee from Port City, grab a few things from some of the local vendors and listen to a little live local music. I always see folks hopping off the Halifax ferry to the Dartmouth side to attend the farmers' market.

All around Portland Street, entrepreneurs are breathing new life into the community with shops like Grund Designer Goldsmith, Janet's Flowers, New Scotland Clothing, Strange Adventures and so many more. Of course, there is Kept, Room 152, Custom Curves and Audrey's Little Shop of Plants, arguably the coolest name for a business ever, and that growth extends right into Cole Harbour. North Brewing will be opening soon on Cole Harbour Road. We have wonderful restaurants like Jamieson's, the Palladium, the Brass Rail and the brand new East Coast Dumpling House. The list goes on.

Dartmouth is also home to lots of great craft breweries, from Nine Locks to Spindrift, Brightwood to New Scotland and we cannot forget Lake City Cider. Plus there are amazing breweries and distilleries right across Nova Scotia. This budget finally proposes that the government remove federal barriers to the interprovincial trade of alcohol so that our breweries can continue to grow.

Budget 2019 makes strategic investments in programs and services that will create long-lasting, positive impacts on the community. From the new El training benefit to the national dementia strategy, our investments will make a difference in the lives of Canadians.

● (1305)

With some programs, it can be hard to see the direct impact that they have on the lives of Canadians. However, with Ready, Willing and Able, we can visit with entrepreneurs across Canada and see the positive impact the program is having in their lives and in their communities. Ready, Willing and Able helps create employment opportunities for persons with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities. Some time ago, I had a chance to meet with Iain, the incredible young entrepreneur behind Dartmouth, Nova Scotia's Iain's Tartan Bakery. Iain bakes delicious gluten-free and dairy-free baked goods. We can usually find his breads and his sweets at the Alderney Landing Farmers' Market.

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This program matters. It is why all of our members of Parliament in Nova Scotia rallied around this program and advocated very hard for its inclusion in budget 2019. This budget includes a \$12-million investment in Ready, Willing and Able so it can continue to create good employment opportunities for persons with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities.

With Canada's economy among the fastest growing in the G7, it is important that all Canadians have the opportunities that they need to succeed. The Nova Scotia Association of Realtors has advocated for stronger resources so more Nova Scotians can make home ownership an attainable goal. That is why we introduced the new first-time homebuyer incentive that will make home ownership more affordable for first-time buyers.

I firmly believe that national pharmacare would save the Province of Nova Scotia a significant amount of money that could be used to improve health care services in our province. As members know, I am a strong supporter of national pharmacare and our government is taking crucial steps toward making this a reality. We believe that no one in Canada should have to choose between paying the rent or paying for the prescription drugs that they need.

We know that good, strong, local infrastructure can make all the difference in our communities. As a former municipal councillor, I understand that municipalities are best placed to understand the infrastructure needs of their communities on the ground. Budget 2019 includes a game-changer for the Halifax Regional Municipality. Through this budget, HRM would receive a top-up of more than \$26 million through the federal gas tax fund delivered this year. This is huge because the funds can be used for local infrastructure priorities like waste water, drinking water, cultural and tourism projects, and much more. It is a massive opportunity for our municipality and I cannot wait to see what projects are built with this funding.

Organizations like Nourish Nova Scotia have been advocating for a national school food program for some time. Recently, I visited Dartmouth South Academy and saw first-hand the difference that these programs make in the lives of our children. The budget includes a commitment for a national food policy, and I am excited that the budget also calls for the development of a national school food program.

As many folks in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour know too well, we must take action to protect pensions in Canada. Budget 2019 proposes the introduction of significant legislative amendments to make insolvency proceedings fairer and more transparent for pensioners and workers.

Low-income seniors want to know that they can work part time without worrying about their GIS being clawed back, which is why I am glad to see that the budget proposes an enhancement to the guaranteed income supplement that would provide increased take-home pay for low-income working seniors.

This budget is good for Canadians. I firmly believe that our investments in health care and our decision to move forward with national pharmacare will be a game-changer for my home province of Nova Scotia. Instead of austerity and cuts, we chose to invest in Canadians. We chose to invest in the middle class, in small

businesses and in good, local infrastructure priorities. This budget is about making sure that all Canadians have the ability to succeed now and into the future.

• (1310)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, what does the member think about the fact that the Prime Minister promised to balance the budget in the fourth fiscal year and has not balanced the budget? I would like to know if he made the same promise to his constituents and how his constituents feel about the failure to keep that promise.

We heard yesterday in question period the Prime Minister talk about the importance of honesty and truthfulness during election campaigns, and I agree. Therefore, how does the member feel about the Prime Minister's dishonesty, and did he repeat that same promise to his constituents in the last election?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, in 2015, Canadians had a choice. They could continue cutting and continue with austerity. We chose, at a very important time in Canada's history, to invest in Canada, to invest in Canadians, to rebuild this country and to give people an opportunity. Those folks who were trying to better their lives needed a leg up. We gave them that leg up. We invested in Canada. We invested in Canadians. I am proud to say I see that investment every day in Nova Scotia, in Atlantic Canada and in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

I will tell members a little story. There is a company in my riding that several years ago had six employees. Three or four years ago it had 60. Today, it has 130. When I asked it what its biggest impediment was, it was getting more workforce. It can hire more because we created the environment for that business to grow, to flourish and to hire more Nova Scotians.

• (1315)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend across the floor, and I do consider him a friend, for his speech. At times when he was making his speech, I thought we were speaking about my bill, Bill C-281, to establish a national local food day, which of course was supported unanimously by the House and is now in the Senate.

During the election the last time around, as well as this time, I called myself a "liberal-minded, environmentally green, fiscally conservative NDPer". However, I finished with the NDP because I truly believe that it has the best vision for Canada. That vision includes affordable housing, affordable child care, certainly universal public pharmacare and eventually, I hope, becoming a tuition-free country. Those are the fundamental things that I think will make Canada better.

Government Orders

However, this budget does not go nearly as far as it should at getting to any of those things that I think will really make Canada better. Therefore, I would be interested in my friend's comments on the disappointment that certainly the people in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia feel with respect to the budget.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the question. I certainly appreciate sitting on the environment committee with you. You bring so much to our committee and I thank you—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member needs to address his comments and questions to the Chair and not to the individual members.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, let me just say that I really admire the member and appreciate the time that we spend on our committee together.

The member touched on a bunch of things in that question. I want to talk a bit more about the national school food program. I had a chance to go to the newest school in the riding and see the volunteers who provide breakfast and lunch programs every day for the young students in the P to 9 age groups. The looks on the children's faces when they were in line getting food is why it is so important that we come up with a program where every Canadian child in school has the opportunity to have a healthy breakfast. The volunteers are doing the work. It is now time that we come up with a national program for this, because it is so important. I saw that in the eyes of those young children.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak about the budget.

This is the fourth budget to which I have had an opportunity to speak. Each budget tends to have its own flavour, and I like to give them nicknames. In 2016, it was a shopping spree budget. In 2017, it was a virtue-signalling budget. In 2018, it was a nothing burger budget.

If I had to give a name to the 2019 budget, I would call it the recap budget. It is 460 pages long, but in actual fact if we took away everything that was just re-announced, then it would probably only be about 60 pages.

I will try to provide my usual balanced perspective today. I will talk about things in the budget that I am not happy about. Then I will talk about the things that I think would be good for Canadians. Then I will try to bring some helpful suggestions forward on what should really happen to the budget in the future.

First, I was dismayed to see that once again there are huge deficits going on in perpetuity under the Liberal government. The Prime Minister was elected on a promise to Canadians that he would run small deficits of \$10 billion and that he would return to balance this year. However, \$19.8 billion will be the deficit this year, and that goes on and on.

Why does that matter to Canadians? We have to pay interest on that debt, which is currently \$15 billion, the debt we have picked up so far, and it will be \$26 billion if we continue at the pace described in the budget.

Let us think about what we could do with \$26 billion, such as repairing some of the hospital infrastructure that is missing across the country or spending on palliative care, about which I am passionate. Let us think about what we could do with the \$25 billion that currently will pay interest on a debt that is never-ending.

I definitely am not happy to see that we are still in deficit-spending mode.

That said, I think Canadians understand that from time to time, if there is something worth buying, they might take a mortgage on a house or sometimes run up their credit card if an interesting trip comes around. They understand that if they are getting something for it, there might be a point.

However, what are we really getting for these huge deficits that are proposed in budget 2019?

First, from a health care perspective, we are not getting very much. There was an incredible amount of hype in anticipation of the budget. The media was told that this would be a pharmacare budget and that people would be impressed. Everybody was all hyped up. Canadians believe that people who cannot afford their medications ought to be able to get it. Our universal health care system is about that. Canadians would like to see that.

What did the Liberals put in the budget for pharmacare? No money. There were \$35 million to create another bureaucracy to add to the PMPRB, CADTH and the pCPA drug approval processes that already exist, that are arguably very long and very costly. That is not going to give medications to anybody in Canada. It is not going to do a thing.

This is after the health committee studied pharmacare for two years. It gave very reasonable recommendations about how different options would be available to help fill the gap for people who could not afford their medications. That was a real miss on the part of the government. It is clear that Eric Hoskins missed his deadline when it came to the pharmacare report that was supposed to be delivered in March, in time for the budget. That is probably why there was absolutely nothing in the budget.

One thing that is good is the money for rare diseases, \$500 million a year. We know that one in 20 Canadians has a rare disease, so everyone can relate to a family member who has to spend, in some cases, up to \$1 million a year for these medications. Something definitely needs to be done. However, it will be put out in year 2022. That means it is another election promise.

If the Liberals get elected, then they will put \$500 million out in 2022. What is the Liberal record on keeping election promises: running small deficits, balancing the budget within the mandate and restoring home mail delivery, no; last election under first past the post, no; no more omnibus bills, okay. I could go on and on about the broken promises. Putting it in the budget and putting out that far means there is nothing concrete for Canadians. However, we need a solution of that nature.

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●(1320)

Another big miss in the budget has to do with the Liberal government's response to the opioid crisis. This has been going on since the Liberals were elected. Four thousand people died last year. We just finished a health committee tour across the country. We looked at the methamphetamine and opioid crisis to see where the gaps in the system were. A lot of information is available. What did the government decide? We have heard there is not enough affordable housing, not enough mental health aids for supporting the healing from the trauma that causes people to get addicted and not enough recovery spots. We know people have to wait between six months and two years to get a recovery spot. Winnipeg and Vancouver are epicentres of this crisis.

Instead, the government has allocated \$6 million a year to buy the addicts safe prescriptive opioids. That is the government's answer to this. People are dying. We know we need solutions on the prevention side, on the recovery side and we need affordable housing. The government has been all talk and no action on affordable housing for nearly four years now.

The Liberals recognized the need immediately and started to talk about it. However, we are still talking about it and these are the dying days of the Liberal government. Where is the affordable housing that people need? Homelessness is one of the key factors that contribute to people being addicted. Again, it is very disappointing. Although the Liberals recognize there is a crisis, the response to the crisis is inadequate.

That is the same story on suicide. We know we have a suicide crisis. We know we need prevention, especially in indigenous populations and in the north, among young people, among middle-age men. The budget allocates \$5 million a year. If we divide that among 338 ridings in the country, that is less than \$15,000 per riding to address suicide prevention. What are we going to do with that? It is another case where the government recognizes there is a problem, but has come in with a totally inadequate response.

There is another key miss on the health file. The health committee finished a study on diabetes. Eleven million Canadians have diabetes or are pre-diabetes. This is one of the most costly diseases in our system. We have an aging demographic, one in six seniors right now and one in four seniors within six to 10 years. People are moving more and more to chronic disease because of obesity, nutrition, lack of exercise, but what is being done about it?

Diabetes Canada came to us with a very cohesive plan, the 360 plan. The health committee reviewed the plan. One of our recommendations to the health minister was that the plan be adopted. However, it is nowhere in the budget, not a dime for addressing diabetes, which is a huge cost and huge struggle for many Canadians. Once again, it is a total miss.

I used to be the chair of the Status of Women. When I look at budgets, I like to look at them through a gender lens. The government does a lot of virtue signalling on the fact that we have a feminist Prime Minister, although with the way he has been treating women in his caucus and cabinet of late that is arguable.

Let us look at some of the key things that show the Liberals are all talk and no action. When I was first elected, I was put on a special

committee to study pay equity. We made recommendations to the government. The government agreed that it would come in with legislation that would address pay equity in the federal government sector for which it had control. How many dollars are available in budget 2019 to address pay equity? Zero dollars and zero legislation. Once again, it is all talk and no action on that file. That is too bad because a lot of women's issues really do need to be addressed.

Two nice things are in the budget. One has to do with addressing ovarian cancer. There has been a lack of research in the area of ovarian cancer and it is one of the top reasons that women die. I was pleased to see that in the budget.

●(1325)

However, if we look at research spending as a whole through a gender lens, about 3% of the research dollars go toward anything that will impact women. The government should put on its gender-lens glasses again and take a look at what the balance is and whether it is really addressing issues that are so important to women.

One other good thing that I see in the budget has to do with organ donation. One of the members of the Standing Committee on Health, the member for Calgary Confederation, brought forward a private member's bill to give people the opportunity to organ donate by declaring it every year on their tax returns. It would be a very easy way of allowing people to do that. The government agreed and put money in this budget to facilitate increasing the number of organ donors. This will save lives. After the Humboldt tragedy, there was a huge increase in the number of organ donors, which saved many lives.

There are some areas where taxes have been taken off, such as for fertility services. I think people would agree that medically necessary services should not be taxed. The government is a little hypocritical on this file. When it comes to medical marijuana, it has put a 15% on that. People who are suffering are having to pay a lot of extra money. The government cannot just pick and choose which medical services should not be taxed. It should be consistent in its approach. If it believes that medicines and medical treatments should not be taxed, then it has to be consistent across the board.

Let us move on to infrastructure. There was a delightful little nugget that said we would get \$2 billion of actual money in this year being spent for municipalities for infrastructure. While we may say that is very good news, we should remember that \$15 billion was taken away from municipalities from the infrastructure fund for the repair roads and bridges and it was put into an infrastructure bank that would do projects. It is only doing one project, which is coincidentally being done with SNC-Lavalin.

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Therefore, to give \$2 billion back after taking \$15 billion away still means the government took \$13 billion from municipalities for building roads and infrastructure. It is woefully inadequate and certainly not doing anything in the Infrastructure Bank.

It would be great if the government returned more money to people in ridings like my own. I was disappointed to not see any money to repair the Sombra ferry boarding crossing in my riding. I have been speaking about this. It has now been over year that this border crossing has been closed because of the damage done by Coast Guard vessels breaking ice and crushing the causeway.

We need \$2 million to fix this problem, restore a border crossing and restore the opportunity to increase trade with the U.S., which is on the other side. I represent a border riding. The government can find \$12 million to give to Loblaw's, but it cannot find \$2 million for Samia—Lambton to open a border crossing. It is absolutely distressing.

We also have a trade corridor project, which was not funded in this budget. I hope that can be remediated. I would like to give the government chance to reconsider. That project would create 3,000 well-paying jobs in my riding, and the cost would be \$6 million. Again, the government can find \$12 million to give to Loblaw's to put in freezers, a company that made \$3 billion in profit and can afford it. However, on the other hand, there is a project in my riding that needs \$6 million to create 3,000 jobs and that was not funded in the budget.

Palliative care is always something I love to talk about. I was pleased to see the government come with a palliative care framework after my private member's bill, and that spending is beginning. It is starting to fund training for paramedics, for example, to administer palliative care in their off-emergency hours. It is a very efficient way to get care to people, which is also a benefit to the people who have difficulties travelling to receive treatment.

However, there are a lot of things that should have been funded that are not. What about hospices? Canada has about 100 hospices compared to 1,300 in the U.S. There is a real opportunity to partner with communities and build hospices so people can get the palliative care they need. We know that 70% of Canadians have nothing. They have no opportunity for palliative care.

Another enabler for palliative care is broadband Internet. Therefore, I was glad to see a recognition that more spending was needed with respect to broadband Internet.

● (1330)

I had projects in my riding that we applied for in the first year I was elected that we have heard nothing about. We have continually asked the government to address that and it has not. I am not sure who will be the beneficiaries, but I would guess that it will be Liberal ridings.

We can then talk about the parts of the budget that have to do with climate change and the carbon tax that is going to be put in place. I am distressed when I hear the government talk about how this is going to save the children and prevent floods. We should ask, at what price are floods going to be prevented? There is no relationship there. One is a tax grab, and it has absolutely nothing to do with the other. People want to talk about a global problem that needs a global

solution, and Canada is less than 2% of the problem. If those regions that are 98% of the problem are not addressed, the problem will not be solved, and that is clear. The government definitely is off track when it comes to its environmental plan.

What about seniors? Earlier in my speech, I mentioned that one in six people is a senior, and that number is going to be one in four in a few short years. We see pretty much nothing in this budget that is going to help seniors. There is a doctor and nurse shortage across the country, and seniors who cannot afford to live. The measures that are prescribed here are, first of all, inadequate and also a recap. The government is recapping what it did with the CPP. It is taking \$1,200 out of each working person's pocket, but nobody will see a benefit for 40 years. That is not going to help people who are struggling right now. More is needed to be done for the seniors, and there is absolutely no doubt about that.

I have seniors in my riding who are concerned that we do not have a plan for long-term care spaces. The hospitals are logjammed because there is no place for them to go. We know that several provinces are trying to build long-term care spaces. We are building 2,000 spaces in Sarnia—Lambton, and we probably need an additional 2,000 or 3,000. That is another area the government did not address that would have been very important for seniors.

Second last, I will talk about the training benefits. The government has decided that \$250 a year is going to help people get the training needed to move on and get a good job. That shows how out of touch the government is. Does it not understand the cost of tuition, and the cost of training courses that are usually \$1,000 a day? Therefore, \$250 a year is not going to be very good.

There was an effort made to help first-time homebuyers acquire a home by allowing them to spend \$35,000 of their RRSPs, instead of \$25,000. I have two children who are of the age to buy a home, but I am not sure how many people of that age have \$35,000 in RRSPs. Therefore, that was a miss.

As one of my other colleagues pointed out earlier, there are some restrictions related to a homebuyer's income as to how much support can be obtained. There will not be a lot of people who will be able to take advantage of that. Once again, the government has recognized that it has made buying a home, which is desirable for many young people, unaffordable, but it has done nothing about it.

I am coming to the end of my remarks. This budget has not met people's needs, and for that reason I propose an amendment.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: 'the House decline to give second reading to Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, since the Bill does not balance the budget this year, as promised by the Liberals during the election, but instead the deficit will hit \$19.8 billion and the debt will soar to over \$705 billion.'

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•(1335)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment is in order.

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.): Madam Speaker, I would like to compliment the member, in the sense that I think she has spoken more about the budget than the member for Carleton did in 14 hours. At least she is definitely on focus, although somewhat off base, in terms of what the many measures within this budget actually do. I truly believe that it is going to have a wonderful and positive impact on every region of our country.

I would like to go into some of the details and draw out a specific example to see what the member's thoughts are on it. She talked about the importance of research in health care and made reference specifically to cancer. Within this budget is a commitment of \$150 million over the next five years to go toward The Terry Fox Research Institute, which is a substantial commitment. I would ultimately argue that it provides hope and an opportunity to look at ways in which we can do better on this terrible disease which affects every region of our country.

I ask the member this. What are her thoughts in regard to the government providing that particular grant?

•(1340)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, certainly I believe that the money designated for cancer research is another good thing in the budget. I was at the Atlantic Cancer Research Institute, which is one of the beneficiaries of the Terry Fox cancer fund money.

There are broader issues that were not addressed in the budget with respect to cancer. I highlighted that ovarian cancer has finally received some funding. However, the subject of who is going to pay for people's cancer medications was missed by the government. As well, its pharmacare offering was totally absent. When we look at the top ten reasons for why people die in Canada, we see that cancer is one reason, but diabetes is another. Again, that was a big hole in the budget, with no money at all for diabetes.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to serve on the health committee with the hon. member. I am holding in my hand a copy of the 2019-20 estimates of the Department of Health. It shows that the 2017-18 expenditures of the health department were \$3.491 billion, and the projected spending in the main estimates for 2019-20 is \$2.521 billion. In other words, almost a billion dollars less has been spent on the health department over the last two years. My hon. member and I just went on a cross-country tour to look at the state of the drug policy in this country. We heard that we need a massive investment, particularly in treatment, for people suffering from substance use disorders.

I am wondering, first of all, does the member think that taking a billion dollars out of the federal health budget is consistent with the need for additional investments and drug treatment?

My second question, quickly, is this. We know that the government is budgeting a billion dollars for rare diseases starting

in 2022. Does the hon. member have any comment on the practice of the Liberal government in 2019 purporting to spend money in a Parliament that has not even happened and in which the Liberals may not even be the government?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I very much enjoy serving with my hon. colleague on the health committee.

When it comes to the spend within Health Canada, I am fine with the government shifting priorities as situations occur and maybe not spending money here but elsewhere. However, that is definitely not happening. The government is spending less and it is not addressing the causes. We absolutely need more investment in recovery spaces. We heard about wait times of between six months and two years across the country. When an addict gets to the point where they want to take the exit ramp and get out of a life of addiction, they have to have the ability to go somewhere. They cannot be told to come back in six months, because then they are addicted again.

I am very concerned about the kind of budget cut that my colleague mentioned at a time when health needs are increasing, the population is aging and chronic disease is on the rise.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question around the concept of the additional funds available to young couples who want to purchase a home, supposedly through CMHC providing more of a down payment to them. On Evan Solomon's show, he asked the minister what that would mean. Of course, they would have to pay back CMHC with interest, but if they made a profit on that home, would CMHC be expecting some of those funds? The minister's response was that they had not worked out the details as yet.

What kind of confidence does that give to young couples in this world who are trying to move up in Canada and own a home when the minister himself does not even know how that program is going to be rolled out?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Yorkton—Melville for the question. It is an excellent question. It shows once again that the government has not thought this thing through in the details. It does not know whether it is going to be a stakeholder in the house, share in the profit of the house or just providing an interest-free loan. How can one budget without knowing the facts of what one is going to spend? How can consumers have any kind of confidence without knowing the full detail of what they are agreeing to when they get into an agreement with the government? It shows that the government has not thought this issue through.

Again, the government is virtue signally. It is trying to attract the young voter they are going after here, but with a mechanism that will not help the young voter, unfortunately.

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• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would like to take a look at the bigger picture. Since day one, this is a government that has been focused on Canada's middle class. There is absolutely no doubt about that, whether it is through budgetary measures, legislative measures or changes in regulations. Time and time again, there are many actions that see Canada's middle class building strength and adding to the economy. Ultimately, the proof is in the pudding.

My question to the member across the way is in relation to the overall job opportunities. In the last three and a half years, by working with Canadians, we have seen well over 900,000 new jobs added to the Canadian economy. Would she not agree that at the end of the day we want to have safe communities and an expanded economy? These are the two items that this government has been very successful at doing, because the numbers tell it all. Would she not agree?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I would disagree about the middle class. In fact, the government has made life for the middle class less affordable. It has increased taxes, according to the Fraser Institute, by \$892 per person. I would argue that it is because of all of the tax credits that the Liberals took away.

For example, on education, and I have kids in university, there was a \$5,000 tuition credit and \$1,200 for books. They took away the child fitness tax credit, which was another \$1,200 per child. Arguably, one could have had \$3,000 or \$4,000 from that. They took away income splitting. People who were taking advantage of that would be saving \$12,000 or \$13,000. On top of that, they have increased the CPP requirement for people, of \$1,200, and on top of that, there is a carbon tax.

They have hugely increased taxes on the middle class and reduced taxes on the wealthy. They are paying \$1 billion less. Again, I think the government is deceived in what it is trying to achieve.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have heard from a parent in my area who was quite concerned. In responding to the opioid crisis, the provincial health authority has been making drug kits available to youth rather than addressing the issue. In a place like Kelowna, which many consider urban, youth can wait up to six months and be transported to Vancouver to get the help they so desperately need.

The member has travelled the country to discuss opioids. Could she please comment on the mismatched priorities of how the government does not seem to be listening as to how to deal with it, particularly for the most vulnerable youth?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right that the government has missed the mark. To pledge \$6 million to buy safe drugs for addicts does not recognize the need to get people off of drugs. It does not recognize, from a priority perspective, that there are taxpaying people who cannot afford their diabetes medication, who do not have their cancer drugs paid for.

There are priorities, and we need to figure out how to cover all of those, but this is not it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we resume debate, I want to remind the next speaker that

unfortunately we will have to interrupt him about halfway through to go to Statements by Members.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I begin my formal speech, I cannot help but mention to the member for Sarnia—Lambton that, as she keeps quoting the Fraser Institute, that study has been debunked by just about anyone who knows how to use a calculator.

She should look at the OECD report that just came out this morning saying that the Canadian middle class has one of the lowest tax burdens of the OECD countries. That is largely due to the changes we have made by lowering taxes for the middle class and introducing the Canada child benefit, which is more generous and more progressive. I would suggest that she and other members broaden their horizons and perhaps look at sources other than the Fraser Institute, as that study in particular is just plain fallacious.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to be here today to speak to budget implementation act, 2019, No. 1 and about the measures we presented in budget 2019 to strengthen the middle class.

I would like to use my time today to highlight some important measures we are proposing in this budget implementation bill that build on what we have done so far. I believe that this bill will help us continue to improve the lives of middle-class Canadians and those who are working hard to join the middle class.

Before I explain the various measures in this bill, which presents the next phase of our plan, I want to remind hon. members of how we got to where we are today.

Nearly four years ago, Canadians voted for a government that promised to invest in the areas that mattered most to them, like well-paying jobs and more help for families facing a high cost of living that keeps rising, strong, connected communities, and better opportunities for young Canadians. We have kept our promises. For nearly four years now, our government has been dedicated to strengthening and growing the middle class and providing real help to those working very hard to join it and to low-income Canadians, to make sure everyone has a real and fair chance to succeed and reach their full potential.

First, the government created the Canada child benefit to help families with the cost of raising their children. This benefit has lifted close to 300,000 children out of poverty over the past three years. In fact, a couple of weeks ago, Statistics Canada reported that poverty has fallen by 20% in Canada over the past three years. We have been able to lift more than 800,000 Canadians out of poverty thanks to these policies, which the opposition voted against at every turn.

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Over nine million Canadians are benefiting from the middle-class tax cut, which is helping them save more and buy what they need.

The new Canada workers benefit also encourages more people to join and remain in the job market. It provides real help to more than two million Canadians working hard to join the middle class. It helped lift 70,000 people out of poverty. The enhanced Canada pension plan provides current and future Canadian workers with increased income security upon retirement.

Historic investments through the national housing strategy are helping more Canadians find safe and affordable housing.

Overall, these measures will have a long-term impact on all Canadians.

With our government's plan, the Canadian economy created more than 900,000 new jobs, most of them full-time. This has led to the lowest unemployment rate in the past 40 years. There were particularly significant job gains for women.

We know that we cannot rest on our laurels. If we want to continue growing the economy and the middle class, we must continue these efforts, which have proven to be successful these past four years. This is what budget 2019, which we are presenting today in the House, is all about.

[English]

Through budget 2019, the government is taking further steps to help build communities that Canadians can be proud to call home.

Managing household costs is one example of where some Canadians struggle. For instance, the price of electricity is a rising concern. Rates keep going up, outpacing salary increases, making it more and more difficult to make ends meet. Therefore, our government is doing more to make sure that families can afford their monthly electricity bills. Budget 2019 proposes to invest more than \$1 billion to increase energy efficiency in residential, commercial and multi-unit buildings, a measure that is included in this budget implementation act. This money could go a long way toward making Canada's homes and buildings more energy efficient, which would help reduce Canadians' electricity bills, whether they are homeowners, renters or building operators, and it would help build more sustainable communities.

Further to the point of building up communities, sometimes spending allocated from the federal government to provinces and territories is caught up in bureaucratic deadlock. When this happens, it prevents cities and towns from making progress on important projects, such as road maintenance, water infrastructure, public transit and recreational infrastructure.

Budget 2019 proposes to support municipalities' local infrastructure priorities by doubling the federal municipal infrastructure commitment with a further \$2.2 billion in 2018-19. This would give municipalities and first nations communities the funds needed to pay for crucial repairs and other important local projects. By supporting this BIA, hon. members would be supporting this \$2.2 billion injection that would provide much-needed infrastructure funds for communities of all sizes across the country. The legislation before us today would ensure that the money would get to where the needs are.

Building communities Canadians are proud to call home also means ensuring that these communities are prepared to respond to an emergency. When tragedy strikes, every second counts.

Since 1985, the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service, STARS, has provided rapid and specialized emergency helicopter ambulance services to patients who are critically ill or injured in communities across western Canada, including in indigenous communities and in national parks. Thanks to STARS, Canadians who live in rural and remote communities have better access to emergency care.

In recognition of the vital role STARS plays in delivering access to emergency care in the communities it serves, budget 2019 proposes to provide a one-time investment of \$65 million in 2018-19 for STARS to replace its aging fleet with new emergency ambulance helicopters. Support for today's legislation would directly support this measure.

On housing, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, our government is taking important steps to make housing more affordable and more accessible.

Buying a house or a condo is probably the most important investment most Canadians will make in their lifetimes. However, too many Canadians are not able to enter the market. That is why, through budget 2019 and with Bill C-97 before us, our government would build on Canada's national housing strategy and take action to improve the affordability of housing, especially for first-time homebuyers.

To help more middle-class families find affordable homes today, we would offer new, targeted support for first-time homebuyers through the first-time homebuyers incentive. The idea is to reduce the monthly payments required to buy a home to give first-time homebuyers greater flexibility, both in purchasing a home and in managing its ongoing costs.

Under the first-time homebuyers incentive, eligible first-time homebuyers who had the minimum down payment for an insured mortgage would apply to finance a portion of the home purchase through a shared equity mortgage with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC. With a shared equity mortgage, first-time homebuyers would save money every month, giving them more money to pay down their traditional mortgage sooner or to spend on their priorities.

As we all know, one of the hardest things for a first-time homebuyer is to scrape together enough funds for a down payment and to cover the associated costs of a home purchase. To help Canadians on this front, this legislation proposes to increase the homebuyers plan withdrawal limit to \$35,000 from \$25,000. With these new measures and improvements, the dream of owning a home would be a reality for more and more Canadians.

Statements by Members

● (1355)

[Translation]

Realizing this dream is also in good part a function of Canadians' ability to get good, well-paid jobs so they can afford that first home.

to that end, we must—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member. He will have 11 minutes when the House resumes this debate after oral question period.

* * *

*[English]***ROYAL ASSENT**

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

April 11, 2019

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 11th day of April, 2019, at 11:01 a.m.

Yours sincerely,

Assunta Di Lorenzo
Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor

The schedule indicates that the bill assented to was Bill S-1003, An Act to amend The United Church of Canada Act.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

*[English]***BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR**

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Dr. Ambedkar was an exceptional Indian jurist, social reformer and one of the founding fathers of the modern Indian state.

Babasaheb, as he was known, fought for equality and justice. He campaigned against social discrimination against those considered untouchable. He served as India's first law and justice minister and oversaw the drafting of the Constitution, which treats all people equally, regardless of their birth status. These achievements cannot be overstated.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a man who built the foundations for the largest democracy in the world based, on universal suffrage and respect for all. On April 14, we will honour his great legacy.

* * *

ORANGEVILLE LIONS CLUB

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Orangeville Lions Club, which

celebrates its 70th anniversary on April 27. Its history of service to our community is exemplary and its accomplishments are numerous.

Over the years, it has worked with many other groups in Orangeville and coordinated many activities. Some examples include the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life, The Salvation Army's Christmas kettle campaign, the Orangeville Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, the Scouts Canada, Choices Youth Shelter, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Headwaters Healthcare Centre, Lions Sports Park, the Santa Claus Parade, the Northmen Lacrosse club, the Wolves hockey team, Orangeville Legion and Community Living Dufferin and so many more.

The Lions Club has been an integral part of Orangeville life for 70 years, and its future looks just as bright. Therefore, it is my great honour to congratulate the Orangeville Lions Club on 70 wonderful years. We know the next 70 years will be just as great.

* * *

RELIGIOUS AMITY

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we approach Easter, the time of sacrifice, renewal and hope in the Christian world, I wanted to share a story.

In Fleetwood—Port Kells, we have a very large Catholic high school, Holy Cross. Last year, I was there to help it celebrate the grads, and with me was a member of my constituency office staff, a devout Muslim. Afterward, I asked him if Islam had any equivalent to the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus and the lessons he provided. His answer was, "Yes—Jesus."

The Lord and Saviour to our Christian world is an important prophet in Islam, the most mentioned person in the Quran by reference, mentioned over 100 times. Christians and Muslims alike believe that He will return.

To me, this demonstrates that there can be more in faith that unites us than divides us and that perhaps our thoughts of sacrifice, renewal and hope at Easter can be shared with more people of goodwill than we realize.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that Canada is warming at twice the global average. This finding should be a wake-up call for all of us.

As the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I am pleased that on Tuesday the committee tabled two reports, one entitled "Clean Growth and Climate Change: How Canada Can Lead Internationally", along with a second report on forestry, agriculture and waste, with a total of 34 recommendations on how the government can and must do better.

Statements by Members

Climate change is no longer a distant threat, and the cost of inaction is too great. The impacts are already being felt in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia and across the country. My constituents are calling for stronger action, just like the high school students who protested in Nelson or the grades 5 and 6 Ktunaxa students who wrote me letters worried about polar bears and the environment, or my granddaughter Lalita, who at times worries if her generation will have a future at all.

Canadians expect us to work together, and we must all commit to doing so. Let us start by agreeing to more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets and to making climate change a non-partisan issue. Our children and grandchildren deserve no less.

* * *

PEGASUS COMMUNITY PROJECT

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the Pegasus Community Project for adults with special needs, which was founded in 1994 by former Beach Citizen of the Year Marie Perrotta. Its work at three locations supports over 50 adults with developmental disabilities through five programs, with a focus on community involvement, individualized supports and helping participants to achieve personal goals.

Pegasus has a social enterprise thrift store on Kingston Road in the Upper Beaches that helps fund the organization so that it is not completely reliant on public funds. This coming fall, October 5 is the third annual Pegasus Inspirational Film Festival, which showcases short films made in partnership with Pegasus participants, film students and filmmakers.

Special thanks go to executive director Paula Murphy and board president Scott Burns for their tireless work to help people with autism and adults with special needs in Beaches—East York.

* * *

• (1405)

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are so fortunate that many people volunteer in our great nation. This week is National Volunteer Week.

Statistics Canada has reported Canadians volunteer roughly 1.9 billion hours annually, an equivalent of 1.1 million full-time jobs. Even more exciting is that young Canadians are the demographic most likely to volunteer.

These caring individuals work day and night on their own time. They feed the hungry and give company to the sick and the elderly. They coach our kids, plan community events and raise money for numerous causes.

Tomorrow, I am hosting my third annual Barrie—Innisfil volunteer award ceremony. I look forward to recognizing the outstanding work of 13 individuals and three organizations that have gone above and beyond as volunteers. These individuals always put their community above all else. I know that Barrie and Innisfil would not be as great a place to live if it were not for their selfless work.

I thank all volunteers across Canada from the bottom of all our hearts.

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JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Punjabi]

[English]

Mr. Speaker, this month, millions of Sikhs around the world will gather to celebrate Vaisakhi, the day the Khalsa was initiated.

It was on this day 100 years ago that thousands of men, women and children gathered in a park meters away from the Golden Temple to celebrate Vaisakhi, when the colonial Colonel Dyer marched in with a regiment of soldiers, blocked all entranceways, and opened fire. He did this over and over again.

Hundreds were killed by bullets, while others died jumping into a well or while trying to scale the walls surrounding the park. This became the tipping point for the Indian independence movement.

Families never saw justice for this atrocity. Colonel Dyer was merely forced to retire and was barely disciplined.

I rise today, 100 years later, to honour the victims of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Our thoughts and prayers are forever with them, and we will never forget this tragedy.

* * *

MISSISSAUGA TOWN HALL ON PLASTICS

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the accumulation of plastics in our oceans and lakes is one of the most pressing challenges of our time here and around the world.

In Mississauga, plastics enter the Credit River watershed and make their way into Lake Ontario, along with 22 million pounds of plastic that end up in the Great Lakes each year.

On March 9, our community gathered at the Small Arms Inspection Building for a town hall on plastics. We welcomed the participation of over 200 residents, organizations, and environmental advocates, including Chief Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, indigenous adviser Cat Criger, Chris Pyke of the City of Mississauga, the 1st Port Credit Sea Scouts, the Canadian Plastics Industry Association, the Port Credit Salmon and Trout Association, Professor Chelsea Rochman, the MDA corporation, Chantler Packages, Coextinction Film, Trash Walking Moms, Pixie Blue Studio, CVC's Jean Williams, and 4ocean.com.

I would like to thank the people of Mississauga—Lakeshore for their collective effort on this important issue, and I look forward to working together towards an environment free of plastic waste.

*Statements by Members***SASKATCHEWAN FARMERS' CONCERNS**

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I travelled through northern Saskatchewan to meet with farmers in Spiritwood, Big River and Meadow Lake.

Their message was loud and clear: their concerns are being ignored and they want a member of Parliament to champion their interests in Ottawa.

There is huge anxiety out there, and it is real.

They are troubled that Canada has lost its largest canola market and they do not know why their MP is doing nothing to get this issue resolved.

They know the carbon tax disproportionately hurts rural communities and will raise the price of everything.

I can only imagine what they would have to say about the Liberals giving Loblaws \$12 million to buy new freezers and fridges out of taxpayers' dollars.

As well, they know the tanker ban and the no-new-pipelines bills will hurt the economy and kill jobs.

Our Conservative team will always stand up for rural Canadians, and we will oppose bad policies and out-of-touch politicians who ignore their concerns.

* * *

• (1410)

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April is Be A Donor Month across Ontario. Organ donation is one of the most important and life-changing decisions a person can ever make.

Today, in Ontario alone, 1,600 people are waiting for a life-saving transplant. While 85 % of Ontarians agree with organ and tissue donation, only one-third of residents are actually registered. Registration is incredibly easy and only takes minutes. I urge people to visit the website at beadonor.ca

Today I want to encourage my constituents in Humber River—Black Creek and my fellow Parliamentarians to advocate for organ and tissue donations in their riding. I firmly believe that being able to give the gift of life after passing on is one of the most compassionate and Canadian things a person can do.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seniors in Saint John—Rothesay deserve more support from their federal government. That is why I am pleased to rise today to talk about the historic investments our government is making in support for our seniors through budget 2019.

To help low-income working seniors keep more of what they earn, we are enhancing the GIS earnings exemption to provide a full or partial exemption on up to \$15,000 of annual employment income. We are also investing an additional \$100 million over five years for the new horizons seniors program.

Finally, we are working to ensure that all seniors have access to the prescription drugs they need, regardless of their means, by moving toward the full implementation of a national pharmacare program. We are doing this by establishing the Canadian drug agency, a national formulary and a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases. These investments will change the lives of thousands of seniors in my riding.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister avoided every question as to when he would testify under oath to his numerous false statements, instead claiming he is focused on what Canadians care about.

In my riding, Canadians care about the carbon tax and the fact that life is getting more and more expensive. Among my constituents, 80% say they do not want a carbon tax and are already struggling to pay their bills.

Hard-working Canadians are worse off under the high-tax, scandal-plagued Liberal government. A carbon tax will not have any positive impact on global emissions. It only hurts hard-working Canadians.

Canadians want action, not a sales tax masquerading as an action plan. Canadians want change. They want a government with sound environmental policies, one that fights for them and makes life better. In a few short months, they will get that opportunity with a new Conservative government.

* * *

2019 FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the achievement of seven firefighters from Mississauga and their bravery in performing their duty when responding to an explosion that rocked the community in my riding last year.

On February 11, 2018, they arrived at the scene of a gas explosion at a Mississauga plaza. Three occupants were stranded on top of the collapsed section of the structure, which was still on fire. Acting without regard to the dangers that were present, pumper 101 and squad 101 acted quickly to rescue occupants and bring them to safety.

The men and women who are first responders put their lives on the line daily to keep us safe. They should be commended for their bravery.

I want to congratulate acting Captain Scott Taylor, firefighters Brendon Martin, Vanessa Gilbert and Jeff Duggan as well as acting Captain Mike Belan and firefighters Jeff Beatty and Brent Thomas as co-recipients of the 2019 Firefighter of the Year Award that will be presented to them later this month at the annual civic awards ceremony.

Keep keeping us safe.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a company by the name of Canadian Premium Sand has proposed a major frack sand mining operation on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Many people living close to the site, as well as many Winnipeggers, are concerned about the impact of this project on Lake Winnipeg and the highways between it and the city.

While a provincial environmental assessment process is under way, the information on the project comes from a 2014 technical report with a number of apparent inconsistencies. In fact, the company announced in January that it will be releasing an update to all financial and feasibility information previously released in a report that will replace and supersede the previous report.

The federal Minister of Environment has the power to trigger her own assessment process, one that could be based on the latest information. Manitobans deserve clear, reliable answers to their concerns before the project is allowed to move ahead. Responsible regulators should ensure that their decision-making is based on accurate and timely information.

I call on the minister to implement her own thorough review process, one based on the best and latest information.

* * *

• (1415)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Edmonton West is blessed to be home to many charities and not-for-profits serving Edmonton. One of them is the Our House Addiction Recovery Centre. Our House runs a vital year-long residential program for addicts. The people there discovered massive mould issues in their kitchen and they had to renovate and replace a refrigerator. They faced a crisis, though, as they had no money for the renovations and were at risk of shutting down.

I reached out to the Liberal government and it offered nothing, yet somehow the Liberals found \$12 million to give to Loblaws and the Weston family. The Westons are Canada's second-richest family. The 1% of the 1% of the 1% are not even close to that family's wealth.

What in the world is wrong with the Liberals that they would give money to billionaires for a photo op, but deny funding to our most needy? The Liberals have obviously lost their moral compass. October cannot come soon enough.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from April 7 to 13, we are celebrating National Volunteer Week 2019 to thank the volunteers in our communities for their many contributions.

Oral Questions

[English]

This year's theme is "The Volunteer Factor—Lifting Communities". Volunteers make a big difference for the people who need it the most. Their generosity, their time and their cheerfulness greatly contribute to the well-being of our community.

[Translation]

I thank the Canadians of all ages who demonstrate a commitment and willingness to improve our communities. I thank Nina Iacono, Brenda Sabbatino, Niko and George Tomaras, Mario Pecorra, Rosaria Rossini, Véronique and Erika Licursi and Guy-Philippe Helou. Thank you for giving of your time and energy. Thank you for your unwavering commitment. Thank you for making our communities better places.

[English]

As Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is politically interfering in a court case. He is denying the truth, resorting to intimidation, and trying to silence all those who do not think like him.

If the Prime Minister has any courage at all, even just a little bit, will he agree to follow through on his notice so that we can all find out the truth in this case? Is he afraid to testify under oath?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians need to know the truth. That is exactly why the Prime Minister had the courage to waive cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege. He did that so that Canadians can know the truth.

We did in fact send a letter to the Leader of the Opposition. We put him on notice because he continues to say things that he should not. That is exactly why he deleted his tweets.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for four days now, we have been standing in this place and asking the Prime Minister whether he intends to follow through on his notice. We are told "yes" over and over again, but that he needs to change his story. He has not changed it and keeps repeating it every day. He stands by everything that has been said. This is nothing but bullying on the part of the Prime Minister, because he is not happy when anyone has different ideas.

Oral Questions

Will he show some courage and follow through on his notice, so that we and all Canadians will hear the whole truth?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to hear the truth, and that is exactly why all the facts are now public. Yes, we took a first step. That is exactly why we put the leader of the official opposition on notice. He continues making false and misleading statements to Canadians. After receiving that notice, he changed the words that he has been using. He deleted some tweets and statements made online. He has already responded through his actions, because he knows he should not be doing what he is doing.

● (1420)

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister threatened to sue the Leader of the Opposition for daring to criticize his actions on the Liberal SNC-Lavalin scandal, he thought he could pressure the Conservative leader into backing down. Instead, the Conservative leader continues to state, inside and outside of the House, that the Prime Minister inappropriately interfered in an ongoing criminal proceeding and then conspired to cover it up.

If the Prime Minister actually believes he has a case, when will we see him in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, the leader of the official opposition was put on notice, and after he received that notice, the leader of the official opposition quickly deleted tweets online. He changed the words that he had been using. Even though Conservatives talk a big game and say there has been no effect of the notice that was provided to them, we have already seen that they have deleted tweets.

However, this was not the first time they did this. After the Minister of Innovation put the leader of the official opposition on notice, the leader retracted his comments at that time and deleted those tweets as well.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is threatening to sue the Conservative leader for stating that the former attorney general told the Prime Minister that she was feeling inappropriate political pressure from him. The only problem with that strategy is that the Prime Minister has now admitted that the former attorney general did warn him about his inappropriate political pressure to his face and in person. Therefore, the Prime Minister is threatening to sue for something he now says is true.

Threatening to sue is weak sauce if a person does not back it up, so when will we see the Prime Minister in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' only plan is to mislead Canadians. That is exactly why, when they did it earlier this year and the Minister of Innovation put the leader of the official opposition on notice, the leader of the official opposition retracted those comments and deleted those tweets.

The Conservatives, once again, continue to mislead Canadians, so the Prime Minister put the leader of the official opposition on notice. What did the leader of the official opposition do on March 31? He

deleted those tweets. The only plan Conservatives have is to mislead Canadians.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have put the Conservative leader on notice. He has repeated the exact same statement outside of the House. Now he is calling on the Prime Minister to take further action, to come before a court and get on the stand if he has nothing to hide. If he stands by everything in his threatening letter to sue the Leader of the Opposition, I ask again, when will we see him in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, yes, the leader of the official opposition was put on notice. After he received notice, he deleted those tweets. He and his team probably went back to their office and revisited some wording. Their new wording is exactly what they are repeating. They will not repeat the comments they deleted after they received notice. That is a fact.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to Maclean's, the Ethics Commissioner has become a useful fig leaf for Liberals keen to shut down further discussions. Harper Conservatives drafted a weak ethics bill, but it is the Liberals who are using it as cover to avoid answering questions.

The Liberals will be under the microscope when the anti-bribery groups meet in June. Will the Prime Minister assure OECD officials that the Liberals will not interfere with Canada's top prosecutor taking corporate corruption to court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member to revisit his wording, because I know he would never undermine the work of officers of Parliament. If, all of a sudden, the NDP members are taking that approach, they are even closer to the Conservatives than I even realized. We will never undermine the work of officers of Parliament.

When it comes to the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, yes, there is an ongoing investigation in this matter. Yes, we have confidence in our institutions. We know there is an ongoing court case. We know the justice committee did its important work. I guess only we, on this side, have respect for our institutions.

● (1425)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know a pretty good lawyer, so I will be all right.

[Translation]

Canadians are concerned. They see this Prime Minister ignoring questions about his scandal and want to know what happened. They are not the only ones who are concerned. The OECD warned Canada that it will be monitoring how the Liberal government manages this matter. People want the truth.

When will the Prime Minister launch a public inquiry?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March, the minister spoke with the chair of the OECD working group and confirmed that we are committed to fully co-operating with the OECD and that we firmly support its work. Canada is a strong supporter of the rules-based international order, which includes the OECD.

* * *

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is increasingly clear that the Prime Minister stands up for big business and not people.

Last year, people were horrified to learn that the big banks were aggressively selling services that people did not need. We have now learned that the situation was even worse than we thought and that the Liberal government whitewashed the report. Even worse, it gave the big banks the opportunity to whitewash it.

When will the Prime Minister admit that he is there for the richest companies but not for the people?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has drawn the wrong conclusion. As a matter of fact, as a result of the report, we have introduced legislation that prohibits the banks from providing misleading information and exerting undue pressure. It requires the banks to have a policy in place to make consumers receive the products that are appropriate to them and increases the penalties on the banks from \$500,000 to \$10 million.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since we launched our lower cellphone bill campaign, we have been swamped with stories from mistreated Canadians. Now we learn the agency tasked with protecting Canadians from the banks changed its report on aggressive sales tactics because the banks asked. Even a requirement that banks work in the best interests of consumers was removed. Experts say this shows a cozy relationship between banks, the agency and the Liberal government.

Why is the government supporting billionaire banks and not Canadians?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in both official languages, he is still wrong. As a result of the work investigating this situation, the government has introduced legislation that prohibits the banks from providing misleading information. It prohibits the banks from exerting undue pressure. It requires the banks to have policies in place to ensure consumers receive the products that are appropriate to them. It increases the penalties on the banks from \$500,000 to \$10 million. Parliament decides.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was accused of strong-arming the former attorney general to interfere in a criminal prosecution. He denied it. She provided proof. Then the Prime Minister was accused of firing her for refusing to interfere. Again, he denied it. Again, she provided

proof. The Prime Minister was accused of being aware that the former attorney general raised her concerns with the officials at the PMO. He denied it. Again, she provided proof.

Does the Prime Minister realize that if he repeats these denials in the court of law he will be charged with perjury?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the facts in this matter are public, and they are public because the Prime Minister provided an unprecedented waiver. He waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence so Canadians could decide for themselves.

I know the Conservatives believe they have to decide for all Canadians. The Conservatives will continue to represent Conservatives. The Conservatives will continue to focus on us.

We will focus on all Canadians. That is exactly why Canada is better off today than it was under 10 years of Stephen Harper. However, we have a lot more work to do. I encourage us to start talking about policy that matters.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, she is right. Canadians do know the facts.

The Prime Minister said that The Globe and Mail allegations of pressure on the former attorney general were false. We now know that is not true. He said that the former attorney general never came to him to speak of her concerns. We now know that is not true. He said that it was all about protecting jobs, but we know now that also is not true.

Does the Prime Minister realize that if he repeats these falsehoods in court he will be charged with perjury?

• (1430)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can help hon. members out.

The Conservatives said that the justice committee would not meet. That turned out to be false. The Conservatives said that witnesses would not get to appear. That turned out to be false. The Conservatives said that the Prime Minister would not waive solicitor-client privilege or cabinet confidence. That turned out to be false.

All facts are public for Canadians to hear. Canadians deserve to get to hear the truth and that is exactly why all the matters from the justice committee on this issue were in public.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 7, the Prime Minister said that the former attorney general's story and claims were false, but now the media, Canadians and, even worse, the Liberal caucus, know the truth.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he would be guilty of perjury if he repeated those same comments in court?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that the Conservative leader and his party have misled Canadians with false and defamatory statements.

This is not the first time that we have sent a letter to the Leader of the Opposition because he continues to repeat falsehoods. They erased public statements, their tweets, from December, February, and now March, because they know that they should have a little respect for our institutions—not a lot, just a little.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons that nothing has changed since the Prime Minister put the Leader of the Opposition on notice regarding the statement he made on March 29. The Leader of the Opposition has publicly stated to the media that he stands by his statement.

That being said, it is different for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister says things that are not true. Is he prepared to come to court and say the same thing, knowing that he would be committing perjury?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions the Leader of the Opposition, the Conservative leader, was forced to delete tweets and reword his statements. He changed the words he used and is now repeating the words he changed, but the facts are clear. After receiving letters from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Leader of the Opposition deleted the tweets and changed the words because he knew full well that action could be taken—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland. Order.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's letter was about the opposition leader's statement. It has nothing to do with tweets.

The Prime Minister said, over and over, that no one ever warned him that his pressure to interfere in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin was political interference and was wrong. However, last week he himself admitted that on September 17 that the former attorney general directly advised him, in person, to back off. Now, even though he caught himself in his own words, he still threatens to sue the Leader of the Opposition.

Does the Prime Minister know that if he repeats his initial denials in court he will commit perjury?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first step in any situation, as the members are referring to, is to put the leader of the official opposition on notice. We have now put the leader of the official opposition on notice numerous times.

Canadians can rest assured that we will not stand idly by, while those Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians. That is exactly why we provided them notice. What did the leader of the official opposition do? He deleted tweets and he retracted online statements. He knows very well that the notice he was served has consequences.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier and other hon. members that each side has a turn and everyone has to wait their turn to speak.

It is now the hon. member for Lakeland's turn to speak.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition leader did not retract any statements. In fact, he repeated every single word yesterday.

We look forward to the Prime Minister's testifying in court under oath, where he cannot control the process, he cannot control the people and he cannot shut it down like he killed two investigations. For once in his life, he will have to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Does he actually have the backbone to set a date? When will we see him in court?

• (1435)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question on numerous occasions. The members know very well that the leader of the official opposition was put on notice. They know very well that he has deleted tweets and retracted comments.

What do they do? The Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians. They mislead Canadians because they have no plan for the environment and no plan for the economy. However, what they do have is a plan to mislead Canadians.

That is exactly why, when it comes to programs and services available to Canadians, the Conservatives choose to mislead Canadians by refusing to admit that there is a climate action incentive. Luckily they cannot do that in New Brunswick, but they sure did in—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as much as this Prime Minister wants to change the channel, Canadians still want the truth on his political interference in the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. The Prime Minister says that he has full confidence in committees, the same ones the Liberals have shut down debate on.

The OECD is not letting it go, and that is why it referred the case to its working group on bribery. The Prime Minister's word is not going to cut it. This is a stain on Canada's international reputation.

Will the Prime Minister save us the embarrassment and launch a public independent inquiry?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March, the minister spoke with the chair of the OECD working group and confirmed to him that we were fully committed to fully co-operating with the work at the OECD and that we fully supported its good work.

Oral Questions

Canada is a strong supporter of the OECD and the rules-based international order.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my mom calls me and asks, “Did the Prime Minister really give \$12 million to Galen Weston to fix his fridges instead of to seniors. Did the Liberals give it to a company that cheats families out of bread?” That is my mom. She is a miner's daughter. She grew up in a different middle class than the Prime Minister did. I said to her, “Mom, it's about lobbying; it's about people you know in the PMO.”

Will the Prime Minister explain why two lobbyists from Loblaw's attended an exclusive cash for access event with him and senior staff of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change? Could he explain that to my mom?

The Speaker: Order, please. We are not going to hear the answer unless we have a chance to do so. I am sure the hon. member who asked the question wants to hear the answer. I trust other members will let that happen.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any serious climate plan is going to involve investments in energy efficiency. The project in question involves a \$36 million investment from the company. It is going to allow it to replace fridges in over 370 stores, which will have the equivalent impact of taking 50,000 cars off the road. This decision was based on science, facts and evidence and on the advice of our department.

With respect to the hon. member's mother, I would be happy to point him to the investments in budget 2019 that will help make homes more efficient, will save her money and do the right thing by the environment.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we now know the Department of National Defence used code names to avoid providing evidence in Vice-Admiral Mark Norman's trial. Since October, the Prime Minister has failed to comply with a court order to provide all documents, emails, memos, texts from Gerald Butts, Michael Wernick, Katie Telford and Zita Astravas.

Will the Prime Minister release all documents today and ensure Mark Norman gets a fair trial?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the prosecution in question is being handled by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which operates independently from the Department of Justice and from my office.

Counsel for the Attorney General of Canada is fulfilling all of its obligations to the court with respect to third party records

applications. We are co-operating, but it would be improper for me to comment on anything further as it is before the courts.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to do everything to politically interfere and frustrate Mark Norman's ability to get a fair trial. He will not comply with court orders to provide documents and when he does, they are completely redacted. Even worse, he will not pay Mark Norman's legal fees, hindering his ability to mount an effective defence.

Did the Prime Minister, or any current or former cabinet minister or any PMO staff discuss influencing the timing of Mark Norman's trial?

• (1440)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just stated, the government is meeting all of its obligations with respect to third party records applications. All documents requested from the priority individuals identified by the defence in February have already been provided to the court.

When it comes to the reimbursement of legal expenses, the Treasury Board policy on legal assistance and indemnification is being followed appropriately throughout.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): That is not so, Mr. Speaker.

We now know the Liberals tried to prevent the Davie shipyard from getting the contract for the *Asterix*. When that scandal broke, they backed down. We also know that no explanation was given for why Vice-Admiral Norman was fired in January 2017. The government has paid no legal fees since then.

How can the Minister of National Defence justify not covering the legal fees of a respectable officer even as taxpayers pick up the tab for the Prime Minister's shenanigans?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the Treasury Board policy is being followed to the letter, and that is what we are doing.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman is a 38-year, highly decorated member of the Canadian Forces, and was vice-chair of the defence staff. He served this country with honour and dignity.

The least those Liberals could do is give him a shot at a fair trial, but they will not release the documents to his lawyers so he can mount a proper defence. They are hoping he runs out of money before the end of the trial.

The Prime Minister has no problem undermining the rule of law. When will the Prime Minister quit manipulating these court proceedings and allow the vice-admiral a fair trial?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, counsel to the Attorney General of Canada is fulfilling all its obligations before the court with respect to third party applications for records. All the documents that had been requested by the so-called priority individuals identified by the defence in February have been provided to the court.

With respect to the reimbursement of legal expenses, the Treasury Board policy on legal assistance and indemnification has been applied rigorously.

* * *

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we learned that the finance minister and the big banks worked together to skew a report that proved banks had predatory practices and abused their own customers. Banks misled consumers by lying about credit card fees, mortgage rates and banking fees, to name a few.

Instead of protecting consumers, the Liberals decided to protect the banks by editing the report and trying to cover up the truth. This is shameful. Canadians are tired of the Liberal government being an apologist for consumer abuse, manipulation and exploitation.

The Minister of Public Safety bragged about fines and penalties. Does he actually have the courage to act on them?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to the contrary, nothing the member just said could be further from the truth.

We took the report very seriously and went forward with measures to prohibit banks from providing misleading information to customers to prohibit banks from exerting undue pressure on consumers to buy products or services, to require banks to have policies in place to ensure consumers receive products that are appropriate for them, and to increase penalties for banks from \$500,000 to \$10 million, something the Conservatives failed to do for 10 years.

May I remind the New Democrats that they voted against these measures.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was not the question. The fact is that the banks and the Minister of Finance influenced the agency that is supposed to be monitoring them.

Is anyone really surprised? This independent agency is actually funded by the banks themselves. Do we really think the banks' watchdog will bite the hand that feeds it? Canadians are sick of seeing the Liberal government side with the banks over the public. The government is letting banks rip off consumers, and the Prime Minister is turning a blind eye to the whole business.

When will the Prime Minister grow a spine and stand up to the big banks by creating a genuinely independent watchdog with teeth?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite. I wonder where the opposition member has been for the past three years, when we

were taking steps to protect Canadian consumers of financial products. For 10 years, under Stephen Harper, consumer protection and strong, robust bank regulation were not so much as an afterthought.

I will remind him of the same thing I just said to his colleague. Over the past few years, we went forward with measures to prohibit banks from providing misleading information to customers and from exerting undue pressure on consumers. We also increased penalties for banks from \$500,000 to \$10 million.

* * *

● (1445)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was particularly shocked yesterday when I heard that the Conservatives chose to mislead their constituents in their partisan taxpayer-funded tax guide. This partisan guide left out information on important elements such as the Canada child benefit and the climate action incentive rebate. It left out information on money to which their constituents are entitled.

Does the Minister of National Revenue agree that—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member used the phrase “chose to mislead”. This is very close to “deliberately mislead”. I would like him to withdraw that phrase and apologize for that phrase.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of National Revenue agree that purposely hiding important—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

I heard the member apologize. His microphone was not on at the time. I am going to give him another opportunity, and then we will go to the minister.

The hon. member for Richmond Hill.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize. I withdraw “purposely”.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this concerning issue. It is unacceptable that Conservatives choose to mislead Canadians on how to access their—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order. It is not unparliamentary to mislead the House, but it is unparliamentary to say someone acted deliberately. Saying someone chose to mislead the House is unparliamentary. I would therefore ask the hon. minister to withdraw her comments and apologize.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, I am so sorry. My English is not really good.

Families that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

* * *

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for over a month now, the Prime Minister's failures on the international stage have cost 43,000 Canadian canola producers dearly.

This week, Stephen Vandervalk, an Alberta canola producer, told the committee that this is the worst crisis his family has endured in 100 years. He said that Canadian farmers are the ones paying dearly for this political failure. China was asked to send a delegation, and we have been waiting 10 days for a response. What is the Prime Minister doing about this urgent crisis? He is waiting.

When will the Prime Minister stand up to China and fight for canola producers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that my colleague has finally developed an interest in canola.

This crisis has been going on for over a month. My colleagues and I, along with the Minister of International Trade Diversification and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, have been working very hard on this file. We are working very closely with the industry and our provincial colleagues. I have personally asked my Chinese counterpart to receive a delegation of experts led by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

[English]

Mr. Earl Dreessen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian producers need assurances that the Liberals will support them and our world-class canola as the crisis with China gets worse. Farmers know that this is a political issue and one that needs to be resolved immediately. The Liberals' lack of action demonstrates their contempt for western Canadian farmers and the importance of the canola sector to the Canadian economy.

When will the Prime Minister demonstrate leadership and take action to stand up for canola farmers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that finally my Conservative colleagues care for canola farmers, because we have cared for more than a month now. I have worked closely with the industry with our colleagues from the provinces. I have visited the western provinces. I have asked our Chinese colleague to accept the technical delegation that will be headed by the president of the CFIA.

I really care, I understand the issue, and we are working hard as a team to resolve it as soon as possible.

● (1450)

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Prime Minister's lack of leadership, his government has failed in all the international trade files. Steel and aluminum tariffs still have not been lifted. Compensation is being paid out in dribs and drabs, and let us not forget that the existing safeguards are set to expire on April 27.

I want to know why the Prime Minister signed the agreement before getting the United States to lift the tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the illegal and unjust American tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum must be lifted.

American legislators, both Republicans and Democrats, have asked Ambassador Lighthizer and even the President to lift these tariffs. Dozens of U.S. industries have called for the elimination of the American tariffs, citing the impact of Canada's countermeasures.

[English]

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives launched the most ambitious trade agenda this country has ever seen. The trans-Pacific partnership was a Conservative deal. Free trade with Europe was a Conservative deal. Our updated trade with Israel was a Conservative deal.

What is the Prime Minister's record? In negotiations with the U.S., he delivered losses. Steel and aluminum tariffs are still in place. On softwood lumber, there is no deal. For canola farmers, there is no solution.

With the Liberals so focused on their scandals, when will they be able to get something done on trade?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the question. The Conservatives have not asked a single question on trade for the last few months, and I am happy to engage him in this debate on this issue.

Today Canada is the only country in the G7 that has a free trade agreement with all G7 countries. Our government, under our Prime Minister and the minister of international trade, has been diversifying trade, investing in Canadian businesses and making sure that we are creating—

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: We need medical assistance for a member. We will suspend for a few moments.

Oral Questions

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:52 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:53 p.m.)

The Speaker: I thank the members who provided assistance to the member.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all our colleagues, I want to wish my hon. colleague the best.

I look forward to engaging my colleague in further debate on international trade, but our government is committed to supporting businesses to create wealth and create jobs for all Canadians all across Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the OECD is calling for us to do more for the middle class. That is not surprising since half of Canadians are \$200 away from bankruptcy. What are the Liberals doing to help those people? They gave \$12 million in taxpayers' money to Loblaws, a billionaire company that is making huge profits, so that it could buy fridges. We are talking about a company that refuses to give its employees decent work and working conditions.

Is that the Liberals' plan? Are they going to continue to help the rich instead of our seniors and families?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it curious that on the one hand, the NDP members say that they support investments in energy efficiencies, but as soon as the Liberal government makes these investments, they seem to oppose them.

In fact, this plan was awarded after an application process where the department indicated it would return one of the greatest returns on investment in terms of reducing emissions. The company is putting forward \$36 million. It will have the equivalent impact of taking 50,000 cars off the road.

If the hon. member is concerned about affordability, I look forward to her support for budget 2019, which is going to continue to put more money in the pockets of middle-class families.

● (1455)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I can think of a lot of small businesses across this country that would certainly appreciate a little bit of help. It is more of the same from the Liberal government. It continues to stand up for rich corporations while everyone else has a hard time making ends meet.

Seniors cannot afford their medication. When will the government stand up for them instead of for companies like Loblaws? Scott, from my riding, wrote the minister requesting when his new fridge would arrive to help him become more environmentally friendly.

The Liberals do not get it, but my constituents certainly do. When will the government stand up for Canadians and spend money on supporting them?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to something as important as the national pharmacare program, our government wants to ensure that we have a plan, and we want to ensure that we get it right. That is why I was very pleased that we launched the advisory council on the implementation of a national pharmacare program. This committee has been working for the past year. We received the report last month. I am looking forward to receiving its final report later on this June.

One of the key recommendations it made in the interim report was to make sure that we put in place a Canadian drug agency, and I was pleased to see it in budget 2019. The money is available to start that work.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a golden rule: Those with the gold make the rules.

When SNC-Lavalin was charged with stealing \$130 million from Libya's poor, he rushed in to block it from having to go to trial. When Loblaws billionaires ripped off the poor by fixing the price of bread and ripped off taxpayers by stashing their cash in the Caribbean, the Prime Minister gave them \$12 million for their efforts.

Why does the Prime Minister always take from the have-nots to give to the have-yachts?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a curious argument, coming from the member opposite, who voted against the Canada child benefit, which put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families, who voted against a tax cut for the middle class and voted against raising taxes on the wealthiest 1%.

The fact is, our environmental plan has over 50 measures, including putting a price on pollution. It will put \$307 in the pockets of his constituents. I look forward to seeing him campaign on a commitment to take that money away.

In 2019, Canadians will have a choice: to support a government that is serious about climate action or a government that opposes reasonable steps every step along the way.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will have a choice between the son of a working-class family, who will stand up for ordinary Canadians and let them get ahead, or the trust-fund Prime Minister, who will protect millionaires like himself by upholding their loopholes and forking over endless sums of taxpayers' money.

Oral Questions

Speaking of which, when it comes to SNC-Lavalin, the decision is still not final. The Prime Minister interfered to try to get the company off of charges. Will he now respect the decision of the prosecutor and promise that no Liberal politician will sign a deal to block the trial?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to quickly provide a quote that I have not provided for a while. The director of public prosecutions confirmed that prosecutors “exercise their discretion independently and free from any political or partisan consideration.”

That member is lacking confidence in our institutions. I can confirm to him, once again, as was provided in testimony at the justice committee, that the rule of law is intact in Canada. Our institutions are intact. Canadians can have confidence in them. That member should stop misleading Canadians.

The Speaker: Before I go to the hon. member for Carleton, I have to advise him to be judicious and avoid personal attacks.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have full confidence in the director of public prosecutions. That is why we think she should be allowed to make the decision on prosecuting SNC-Lavalin. The government refuses to guarantee that this will happen. It has interfered in this case, it has interfered in the Norman case, and now we know that it implicated the RCMP for nine months in orchestrating the Prime Minister's illegal vacation to billionaire island. That vacation might have violated sections of the Criminal Code, which the RCMP would be responsible for investigating.

How can Canadians be sure that there has been an independent vetting of this issue, given past interference?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts of the matter are that the RCMP is completely independent in its decisions about any investigation or prosecution. Any suggestion that a member of Parliament should in any way influence that decision-making process of our police force is absolutely wrong and false.

* * *

● (1500)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that it will take a bold, ambitious and inventive new vision to address the challenges we face today. Indeed, the urgency of action on climate change is clear, especially in Canada's northern and remote communities. We see the effects of this every single day. We know that reducing our reliance on diesel power generation will play a key role in the transition to a greener future.

Could the minister update the House on investments our government is making to reduce our reliance on diesel in off-grid and remote communities?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for her hard work.

It is clear that the best solutions for combatting climate change in rural and remote indigenous communities come from the people who live there. That is why our government is investing more than \$3.5

million in two indigenous projects owned and operated by the Gwich'in Development Corporation. Investments like these create jobs, cut energy costs and protect the environment.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Loblaw's is a billion-dollar company that is owned by the second-richest family in the country. This is the same company that rigged bread prices for 16 years. It really does not need handouts from a tax and spend Liberal government. Now the Prime Minister, our reverse Robin Hood, is giving the company \$12 million to buy new fridges while raising taxes on struggling Canadian families.

Why is it always with the Liberals that they are giving to the rich and robbing ordinary Canadians?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question a number of times. The fact is that every step of the way the Conservatives are opposed to meaningful action on climate change. Our plan includes putting a price on pollution. It is going to put more money in the pockets of Canadian families. It includes phasing out coal by 2030. It includes having 90% of our electricity generated from green resources by 2030 and, yes, it includes investing in energy efficiency.

In my province of Nova Scotia in October, I personally made an announcement through the low-carbon economy fund that would help homeowners make themselves more efficient and bring down their power bills, including by implementing a rebate on fridges for personal use. We are taking climate change seriously.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberals called out the Conservatives for cozying up to white nationalist Faith Goldy, but now the Prime Minister wants to close our border to asylum seekers who are fleeing persecution and violence with a law that prevents them from being able to apply for protection in Canada.

When Faith Goldy supports the Liberal immigration policy, we know we are on the wrong side of the issue. By hiding it in a 392-page omnibus bill and refusing to refer it to the immigration committee, the Prime Minister is trying to sneak through this shameful law. Will the Prime Minister stop talking out of both sides of his mouth and withdraw this legislation?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to a fair refugee system that provides protection to those who need it most, protects the safety of all Canadians and keeps our border secure. On the well-established international principle of asylum primacy, we wish to encourage all those who truly need protection to seek asylum at the first possible opportunity.

The measures that we are proposing are part of a broader package included in budget 2019 that is aimed at ensuring that people who genuinely need asylum receive it quickly and efficiently. I wish to assure the member that every claimant will have access—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East and the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby know that after a question is asked, they should listen to the answer. They may not like it. I cannot promise them that. That is not for the Speaker to rule or to comment on, but I would ask them to remember to listen and wait their turn before they speak.

The hon. member for Don Valley North.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from pioneering satellite communications technologies to building a Canadarm and space-based radar systems, Canada has been making key contributions to space science and technology for over six decades.

Could the minister update the House on our efforts to foster our future astronauts, engineers and scientists so that Canada continues to benefit from opportunities in the space economy?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Don Valley North for his question. Our government has launched a new space strategy based on exploration, imagination and innovation. The strategy aims to leverage Canadian strengths, while advancing science and innovation in exciting areas. Our space strategy will also capitalize on the inspirational power of space to engage youth in science, technology and engineering.

Our government is ensuring that Canadians are ready to take on the jobs of tomorrow.

* * *

• (1505)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an illegal vacation to a billionaire island, inviting a convicted terrorist in India, destroying relations with our most important trading partners, attempting to politically interfere with a criminal prosecution, countless ethics violations and an attitude that the rules and the law do not apply to him. Like so many Liberals

before him, the Prime Minister's record is scandal and failure with serious consequences for Canadians.

How come when it comes to the Prime Minister and his friends, they are taken care of, but ordinary Canadians are not?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member just demonstrated once again that the last people the Conservatives seem to care about are all Canadians.

Let us speak about our record. Almost 300,000 children have been lifted out of poverty. Over 800,000 Canadians have been lifted out of poverty. There were 900,500 jobs created by Canadians. We have trading relationships with each of the seven G7 countries, trading deals that we have today. We have lowered taxes on middle-class Canadians by raising them on the wealthiest 1% of Canadians. We have a climate plan that is showing results—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Manicouagan.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in response to my question yesterday, the Prime Minister said that there is no place for discrimination against our citizens, as though the bill on secularism introduced by the state of Quebec were discriminatory.

The bill sets rules for everyone. It is not discriminatory. The same rules will apply to everyone.

Is the Prime Minister accusing the Government of Quebec and the millions of Quebecers who support this bill of discrimination? Have the Liberals really sunk that low?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always defended the fundamental rights of each and every Canadian, and we always will.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the rights of all citizens. We cannot choose which to protect and which to limit. Our position is clear. The state must not dictate what people can or cannot wear, regardless of their beliefs.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, whether the minister likes it or not, it is up to Quebecers to decide what works for them.

The secularism of the state of Quebec will be decided by Quebec, not by Ottawa and not by the House, which even refuses to condemn the shameful remarks of the mayor of Hampstead, who has compared the secularism bill to ethnic cleansing.

Will the Minister of Justice respect the will of Quebec and undertake not to challenge Bill 21 or support any legal challenges?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a Quebecer, and so it is my duty to express my opinion on the issue.

Points of Order

We strongly condemn the use of inflammatory remarks, such as those of the mayor of Hampstead. They are hurtful to those who have suffered atrocities and they distract us from the real issues. As the Prime Minister has already said, we do not need to go to extremes. As Quebeckers and Canadians, we can debate the bill respectfully and without pushing too far.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

Hon. Jane Philpott (Markham—Stouffville, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I received a call from Chief Leo Friday of Kashechewan First Nation. Ten days from now, more than 2,000 people from this community will be forced to leave their homes in the annual evacuation process. The chief is concerned about the resilience of the dike and there are legitimate fears of severe flooding.

Our country spends millions of dollars annually for evacuations and for repairing flood damage in homes. When can we expect a serious commitment to funding the relocation that, for years, the community has been asking for?

Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our commitment to a long-term relocation plan has not changed. The member would know very well from her work as the former minister of indigenous services and president of the Treasury Board the work that is under way to deliver on this commitment.

We have made significant progress on priorities, such as the new modular school that will be built in the community in September. We are currently working with the first nation members to monitor the threat of flooding, conduct preliminary mitigation and support them in a smooth transition to host communities.

* * *

● (1510)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I rarely rise on a point of order but I felt compelled to do so today because I am very disappointed in the mocking my colleague received as she tried to answer in English.

I am especially disappointed in the member for Timmins—James Bay, who is supposedly the critic for ethics. He joined many of his colleagues across the aisle in mocking her, and in fact said, “What is she going to do? There is no one to write down her?”—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member, although that does, unfortunately, sound more like debate to me. Also, it is hard to interpret what people react to and how they react.

The hon. government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, one of our colleagues in the House needed a helping hand. I want to take a minute to thank every single member of Parliament, and namely the

member of Parliament for Peace River—Westlock, the member of Parliament for Oshawa, the member of Parliament for Kitchener—Conestoga, the member of Parliament for Markham—Stouffville, the member of Parliament for Brampton West, the member of Parliament for Toronto—St. Paul's and the member of Parliament for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

This demonstrates that we are all human beings and that we care for each other. I want to give a wholehearted thanks from our side to across the aisle.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. government House leader. I think Canadians, who often see the strong feelings exhibited on both sides and the vigorous arguments that occur here, would be gratified with the way that all members responded when a member was in medical distress. I share the hon. government House leader's comment and thank all members for their accommodation of that situation.

[Translation]

The member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert on a point of order.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Mr. Speaker, I hope we will hear some good news about the member for Oakville North—Burlington.

I will shortly be seeking the unanimous consent of the House for a motion. On Tuesday, Quebec's National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion moved by the MNA for Marie-Victorin, Catherine Fournier. This unanimous motion recognizes the work that creators do to promote Quebec culture and asks the Canadian government to modernize CRTC and broadcasting rules to defend Quebec culture.

We want to respect the consensus of the National Assembly. I therefore seek the consent of the House to move the following motion: That the House of Commons receive the motion adopted unanimously by the National Assembly on April 9, 2019, and relay its request that the CRTC and broadcasting rules be adapted to the new challenges of our era.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I move, given that, (a) Canadians expect that changes to our laws should be democratically and rigorously debated in the House of Commons; (b) all parties in the House have spoken against the use of omnibus bills to hide changes in initiatives from scrutiny; (c) the world is experiencing a global refugee crisis; and (d) Lloyd Axworthy is condemning proposed changes contained in the omnibus budget bill to the asylum system, while Faith Goldy is cheering them on, that in the opinion of the House, (a) Canada is at serious risk of being on the wrong side of history and (b) the government must immediately withdraw division 16 of part 4 of Bill C-97 and table it as a stand-alone piece of legislation to ensure that Canada continues to live up to its obligations under international law.

The Speaker: I did not hear it, but I think the hon. member is seeking unanimous consent. I see her nodding that she is.

Government Orders

Does the hon. member for Vancouver East have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. Today during question period, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food misled the House by insinuating that today was the first time I became interested in the canola issue because I was asking a question about it today.

This will be my eighth time asking for the unanimous consent of the House to discuss this, so for the eighth time, I hereby seek the unanimous consent of the House to hold an emergency debate on canola this evening.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order that is very similar to my colleague's.

Since the Minister of Agriculture said she was now seized with the canola matter and fully aware of it, I hope that finally our colleagues on the Liberal benches will agree to have an emergency debate.

The Speaker: I think we already know the answer to that and we are getting into debate.

It is now time for the usual Thursday question.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, we certainly want to send our best wishes to the member for Oakville North—Burlington and also thank everyone who came to her aid at the time. It was good to see her walk out of the House under her own strength.

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Easter during our time away.

I would like to ask the government House leader if she could give to the House the projected order of business for the remainder of this week and then for the week following the two weeks in our constituencies.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will resume debate at second reading of Bill C-97, the budget implementation act, 2019. Tomorrow we will continue with debate on the BIA.

[*Translation*]

The Monday following our return from the two weeks in our ridings will be an opposition day.

Tuesday we will resume debate at second reading of the budget bill.

[*English*]

I also want to reiterate the comments of the Conservative whip on behalf of the Prime Minister as well as the Government of Canada to all members and to all Canadians who are celebrating. Happy Easter.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope on April 10, 2019 with respect to statements made by the Minister of National Revenue.

My hon. colleague argued that by stating on numerous occasions that 1,300 new auditors were hired, the minister wilfully misled the House.

The hon. opposition member quoted an article from *Le Journal de Montréal* published on April 5, 2019, and argued that since the total number of auditors has grown from 6,265 to 6,457 since January 1, 2016, then the 1,300 number is erroneous and consequentially the minister misled the House.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, states at page 516:

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 over the facts surrounding the issue, and as such, is a matter of debate and not a breach of the rules or of privilege.

The facts are clear. Looking at the numbers, we see that in 2016, 440 new auditors were hired. In 2017, it was 394. Finally, in 2018, there were 555 hired. This brings us to 1,389 new auditors between January 1, 2016 and January 1, 2019, which is consistent with what the minister has been saying inside and outside the House.

As such, I believe this is a dispute as to the facts, and it does not constitute a prima facie question of privilege.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his arguments. I will come back to the House in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Government Orders

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance has 11 minutes left to finish his speech.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pick up where I left off on the budget implementation bill.

I was talking about the importance of having a skilled workforce and giving Canadians the opportunity to find and acquire skills to adapt to the fast-changing employment market.

Technology changes the nature of work and it is evolving rapidly. That represents a new challenge for Canadian workers, who must get the necessary training to keep their existing jobs or prepare to meet new challenges. The jobs of tomorrow will require more skills, and workers will need to be more flexible throughout their careers.

Budget 2019 will help workers find the time and money they need to improve their skills by introducing such measures as the Canada training benefit. This benefit will help Canadians cover the cost of training.

We are working with the provinces and territories on establishing new labour provisions to protect jobs when workers leave on training.

• (1520)

[English]

Our government also wants to make sure that Canada's seniors have more money in their pockets when they retire. After a lifetime of raising children, supporting their families, building strong communities and growing the economy, we want our seniors to know they are not forgotten. Canadian seniors deserve a secure and dignified retirement, free of financial worries. With budget 2019, our government is making new investments to help make retirement more financially secure for more Canadians. For instance, many older Canadians want to stay active and involved in their communities through work, but they face significant reductions in their guaranteed income supplement, the GIS, or allowance benefits for each dollar of income above the current \$3,500 earnings exemption. Those who are self-employed do not have access to the current exemption. Therefore, with Bill C-97, our government proposes to enhance the GIS earnings exemption by providing a full or partial exemption on up to \$15,000 and extending it to self-employment income. That means more money in the pockets of eligible working seniors.

We also want to make sure that our seniors do not live in isolation, especially when faced with ageism or poor health. To combat this, budget 2019 will further its support to the new horizons for seniors program. The program supports projects that improve the quality of life for Canada's vulnerable seniors, creating more opportunities for seniors to be active in their communities. Specifically, budget 2019 is proposing additional funding of \$100 million over five years, with \$20 million per year ongoing for the program.

[Translation]

Furthermore, as announced in budget 2019 and in this bill, our government has proposed measures to ensure that seniors keep more money in their pockets and receive Canada pension plan benefits.

These changes will proactively enrol contributors who are age 70 or older in 2020 but have not yet applied to receive their retirement benefit.

The Canada Pension Plan is a pillar of Canada's retirement system. It gives workers a secure, predictable benefit in retirement. Workers have to apply for CPP benefits, but some eligible seniors apply late or not at all. This change will ensure that they get it no matter what.

[English]

Finally, we believe that everyone deserves to have peace of mind when it comes to their retirement, especially people who have worked for their whole lives to help a company try to stay afloat. However, in recent years, the security of some workplace pensions has been challenged due to company bankruptcies, leaving pensioners out in the cold. That is why, following consultations with Canadians, budget 2019 proposes to introduce new measures to enhance the security of workplace pensions in the event of corporate insolvency. These measures, which are part of Bill C-97, would make insolvency proceedings fairer, set higher expectations for corporate behaviour and protect the hard-earned benefits of Canadians.

I am thankful for the opportunity to talk about Bill C-97 and how our government continues to work to strengthen Canada's middle class and those people working hard to join it. The measures I have highlighted today reflect the priorities of hard-working Canadians, regardless of the stage of life they are in. By voting in favour of this BIA, we are voting yes to affordable and accessible housing, a cleaner and safer environment, and a dignified retirement for those who have worked so diligently to deserve it.

[Translation]

It is worth reiterating that this BIA is entirely consistent with our government's agenda, an agenda that differs significantly from the former government's.

We are steering Canada in a direction that will truly reduce inequality. The previous government had very little interest in this important societal objective, namely reducing inequality in this country. On the contrary, during the Harper decade, inequality in Canada actually increased.

The gap between the wealthy and the rest of the population widened. When we were elected in 2015, our goal was to undo the damage caused to Canadian society. I think we have been very successful. Notably, poverty has been reduced by 20% over the past three years, which is huge. That is not easily done. This has been a lengthy process undertaken in concert with my colleagues, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, among others. The government tackled it with bold measures that are now paying off.

Government Orders

What were those measures? First, we had to cancel some of the tax breaks the previous government had implemented, tax breaks that invariably benefited only the rich. One example is the tax-free savings account, or TFSA. The Conservatives increased the contribution limit on these accounts to \$11,000 during their last year in power.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer and almost all the economists who were consulted at the time of the change, the TFSA was putting the government in a difficult fiscal position. The government would ultimately lose out of a large amount of revenue needed to fulfill its essential duties. The measure also very clearly benefited the highest-earning Canadians. A simple calculation shows that very few Canadians have \$11,000 a year to invest in a TFSA after paying their taxes.

The man who invented this investment vehicle said at the time that this would eventually put Canada in a fiscal straitjacket. Stephen Harper's government simply did not care—not that reducing inequality was one of its priorities. This was the first measure we reviewed.

We also reviewed certain boutique tax credits, which the Parliamentary Budget Officer analyzed and found to also benefit the 10% or 15% wealthiest Canadians.

Furthermore, we completely reformed the family benefits system by creating the Canada child benefit, which, unlike the previous benefit system, gives more to those who need it most. We stopped sending cheques to millionaire families and made the benefit tax free, which was not the case under the former government.

We now know that this has had a direct impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Canadians. It has reduced child poverty in Canada by 40%. Indeed, 300,000 children have been lifted out of poverty. I want to reiterate that that is something that all Canadians should be proud of.

Contrary to the direction in which it was going before the Liberal government took office, over the past three years, Canada has been clearly and firmly on the path toward reducing inequality and creating much more inclusive prosperity. Speaking of prosperity, I have to say that these measures also created growth. Although Canada was in a recession in 2015, it had the highest growth in the G7 in 2017. Canada was among the best in 2018 and, according to projections, we are still in a very good position since 900,000 jobs have been created over the past three years and the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in nearly 40 years. That is what comes of having a vision and ambitions for the country, things that were sorely lacking for a decade.

Take, for example, investments in science. My riding is privileged to be home to Laval University, which is a leader in the field of research in the Quebec City area, Quebec and Canada. One just has to wander the hallways of Laval University and talk to the researchers there to see just how lean the years from 2006 to 2015 were for them. There was not enough funding for research. When researchers and the scientific community are deprived of the funding they need to do their work, it closes the door on innovation in the long term.

● (1525)

There are all kinds of Laval University spin-offs in my region and across the country. Those companies are economic superstars that hire thousands of Quebecers and Canadians to do high-value-added jobs. That was made possible because past governments have had the courage, vision, intelligence and wisdom to invest in the sciences. That was on hold for 10 years under Stephen Harper, but has been reinvigorated thanks to government measures of the past three years. Budget 2018 contained the biggest investment in science and research in this country's history. I find it so hard to believe—well, maybe not that hard—that opposition parties, especially the Conservatives, would vote against measures like this that lay the groundwork for long-term prosperity, for innovation in this country, for a thriving knowledge economy and for a more just and responsible society where inequality is on a steady decline. That is what the government has been working toward for the past three years. Our plan is working, and it is working very well.

I think budget 2019 and Bill C-97, the budget implementation bill, are fully consistent with those goals. Our budget supports seniors and youth, and we continue to invest strategically to protect the environment and foster innovation.

● (1530)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, former parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health and hon. member for Louis-Hébert, with whom I will very likely have the great pleasure and good fortune of debating over the coming months, in September and October, during the election campaign.

I have a lot to say, but I will take things one step at a time. He said something I want to come back to. I took notes. I may be misquoting, but he said something about sending money where it is needed.

Let us talk about that. Let us talk about sending money where it is needed. A few days ago, his government decided to take \$12 million of taxpayers' money and give it in the form of a subsidy to a company that raked in more than \$3 billion in gross profits last year. It is good to want to buy new refrigerators, but it makes no sense for a company that has more than \$3 billion in the bank to get \$12 million from Canadian workers in a taxpayer-funded subsidy.

Does the hon. member stand by what he said about sending money where it is needed? Sending \$12 million of workers' money to a company with \$3 billion in gross profits, is that what he means by sending money where it is needed?

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I think that my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, gave a very good explanation that answers the member's question.

Government Orders

First of all, it is not surprising to see the Conservatives oppose any measure that would protect the environment and combat climate change. That is what they did for 10 years, and they are still doing it. They oppose putting a price on pollution. I was surprised to see the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent so enthusiastically applauding his colleagues who want to make pollution free in Canada. If I am not mistaken, he was in the National Assembly when Quebec adopted the carbon exchange. He is fighting against a tax on pollution, against an idea that he himself championed, or at least I assume he did, when he was in the National Assembly.

If it is good for Quebec, why would it be bad for the rest of the country? How is Quebec's taking responsibility for the environment bad for the rest of the country? I have a really hard time understanding that. However, my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, explained it very well.

As for the \$12 million, the decision was made after careful consideration. The company will invest \$36 million in the project, the impact of which will be equivalent to removing 50,000 vehicles from the roads.

Since we are talking about investing money where people need it the most, and where it is required, let's talk about the Canada child benefit, which sends \$68 million to 12,500 families in his riding. It provides an average tax-free amount of \$5,000 a year to these families and he voted against it. Why?

For the past three years, I have watched him get all worked up over the public transit tax credit. How much did the public transit tax credit yield? It provided between \$13 and \$25 a month to those who had a Quebec City transit pass. That is his plan to fight poverty, whereas our plan gives \$5,000 to every family in his riding.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passion. I believe that he truly wants to reduce inequality.

I heard him speak about seniors, among other things. Less than two weeks ago, I held a round table for the people from the Table de concertation des aînés de Beauharnois-Salaberry. They told me that, sadly, seniors today are very vulnerable. In spite of what was announced in the budget, they did not seem to think that there was more assistance or resources, especially with respect to home care. Given that the health transfer increase was cut from 6% to 3% by the previous Conservative government and that the Liberals did not increase it in the past or in this budget, there is a shortage of funds, and yet, our population is still aging.

On top of that, still on the topic of health care, no additional resources, whether material or financial, are being offered to community organizations that help seniors stay in their homes. Seniors often have to choose between paying for all of their drugs every month or buying groceries. This is a real problem. In my region, people who work for meals on wheels programs tell us they cannot raise the price of a meal by even 50¢, because seniors would be forced to cut the number of meals they get, since they simply cannot afford to pay any more.

Why, then, does the budget not increase health transfers? Why does it not create a pharmacare system? All studies show that

Canada would save between \$3 billion and \$11 billion a year in every budget if we had a single body to negotiate drug prices. Clearly, a number of measures are missing from this budget, measures that could have helped reduce inequality, especially for seniors.

• (1535)

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I agree with her completely that there is still work to do to reduce inequality. However, it is important to be fair in assessing our government's record over the past three years. We are not the ones saying so. According to Statistics Canada, poverty in this country has been reduced by 20% over the past three years. Some 800,000 people have been lifted out of poverty.

As for seniors, one of the first things we did when we took office was boost the guaranteed income supplement by 10%, which specifically aimed to help the most vulnerable seniors. This means almost \$1,000 more every year for nearly one million seniors who are among the most vulnerable in the country.

I am particularly pleased about one measure in this latest budget that will help low-income seniors by increasing the guaranteed income supplement earnings exemption for employed or self-employed seniors who choose to work part-time. Right now, the full exemption is \$3,500. We raised it to \$5,000 and introduced a partial exemption for income above that amount up to a total of \$15,000. This means more money at the end of the month for many seniors in Quebec and Canada because less of their benefit will be clawed back than was the case with the \$3,500 exemption. FADOQ supports this part of the bill, and I encourage the NDP to support it too.

I would like to remind the House that, although we will keep health transfer increases to 3%, back when I was parliamentary secretary to the minister of health, we committed to transferring \$11 billion over 10 years for mental health and home care. Factoring in that investment, which will be transferred to the provinces, including Quebec, the transfer payment increase is much higher than 3%.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance for finally getting us speaking about the budget after all the diversions we have had over the last few weeks.

The previous government added \$153 billion to the national debt and there was little help for climate change initiatives, social housing, mental health or, in fact, the economy, which grew slower than it did under R.B. Bennett. When we look at the changing world around us, we need to address these issues.

Government Orders

I am very interested to hear comments from the parliamentary secretary relating to the way that jobs are changing, the nature of work and what we are doing to support work-integrated learning, support tuition for students and support parental leave for researchers at universities, things that get us into future prosperity and the jobs of the future. Could the parliamentary secretary talk about the vision of the future that this budget presents us?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Guelph for his question. I truly appreciate it.

Budget 2019 reflects what we have been hearing everywhere in the country, whether it be from unions, employers or management, regarding the need for skilled workers and the need to offer workers opportunities to get the training and skills required to adapt to the changing job market. Budget 2019 allows workers to accumulate weeks that can be used for this training, and we will help pay them through the Canada workers benefit, so that they can adapt to a changing job market. This meets a need that we see in the Canadian economy of today. It will lay the foundation for sustainable economic prosperity in Canada, where we still do not have enough skilled workers to meet the job market's needs.

This is an ambitious measure that has been lauded by universities and training institutes. They support it and want to adapt their programs by offering training that will help Canadian workers who are seeking these kinds of skills and training.

I am very pleased to see that the government is aware of this reality and that it wants to give Canadians every opportunity to learn the skills they need to succeed in the modern economy.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be sharing my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Due to the precedents that have been set in this budget debate, I am going to ask whether I have a 20-minute time slot to share or a four-day time slot. It's 20-minutes. Okay, thank you.

I am proud to represent the fine people of central Alberta. My colleague from Red Deer—Mountain View is beside me. We have unfortunately seen over the last three and a half years, since the last election, probably some of the hardest times for all of Alberta since Pierre Elliott Trudeau was the prime minister of Canada. If anyone in central Alberta is asked what the issue is, it is the lack or loss of confidence in the investment climate surrounding the energy sector.

I want to take Canadians back to what happened. One of the very first things the government did after it was elected was to change the goalposts on the two pipeline projects, the energy east project at the time, and, of course, the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion. There was the absolutely devastating notion of cancelling the already approved pipeline. We had over 30 of the 40 indigenous groups along the route, and the National Energy Board had already approved the pipeline. Enbridge was seeking to fulfill all of its 206 obligations under the agreement.

The northern gateway pipeline was the only pipeline going to the west coast that would diversify Canada's market when it comes to its oil products. The Trans Mountain expansion pipeline, should it ever get built, and we will discuss that in my speech further, will add capacity, but it will not diversify the markets. All of the tankers that currently come into the port of Vancouver to pick up the oil that is moved from the current Trans Mountain pipeline end up along the American west coast to be processed at the crude refineries there.

Anyone from the Liberal Party or the NDP provincially who suggests to Albertans and to Canadians that this pipeline is going to close the gap on the market price between the North American price of crude oil and the international price of crude oil is not being honest with Canadians.

Alberta has been devastated by the job losses in the energy environment. It has been over 130,000 jobs directly. These are jobs where there were people with payroll taxes. They were counted amongst the people who were laid off from a business. This does not include the numerous people who have not found work, who are self-employed contractors in the energy sector. I am not sure that anyone across the row here understands what that means.

These people would never show up on an unemployment list, because they are self-employed. They are contractors. They are the folks who would be employed at the very high end of the energy sector to be out on site and doing all the consultations. These are consultants who are out on the drilling pads, out doing all of the work. These are the ones with the most expertise in the energy sector. They too have had to dig deep into their savings, and many of them have exhausted those savings a long time ago. It is also anyone with a small business. There are only a few service companies left, the long-standing service companies, that have been able to withstand the economic pressures. Numerous small businesses have all but closed up their shops and gone in a different direction. A lot of them are leaving Alberta.

With regard to those Albertans who remain and are trying to find work, about one in three have managed to keep their jobs and the others are finding employment in places like Texas. When I was first elected as a member of Parliament to this House, there were two flights a day to both Edmonton and Calgary direct from Ottawa. Those flights would source out of Halifax or Montreal, and they would stop in Ottawa and continue on to Edmonton and/or Calgary. Those airports would serve me and my colleague equally well, because they are equidistance from Red Deer, which is in the heart of central Alberta.

Those planes used to be full of workers. They would all be wearing their Firebag project jackets or their Kearl project jackets, and they would be coming from Atlantic Canada or from Quebec. Many, many workers were coming from Quebec, starting in Montreal. They were getting on Air Canada flight 104 on its way back to Alberta. I remember that number, as I took that flight for over a decade. Those people are not on those planes anymore, and the reason is that there is no expansion of the energy sector in Alberta. There are continuing operations for those projects that were already completed, but the reality is that the pipeline capacity is already there.

Government Orders

• (1545)

The other projects that were on the books, and there is over \$100 billion worth of these projects, have been cancelled or shelved. That money has been taken elsewhere to invest in other countries, basically to compete against our current energy sector here in Canada. Those employees are no longer coming and that investment is no longer there. The pipeline capacity is at max, and the current price of oil makes railing oil uneconomical, especially when we saw the devastating oil prices at around \$11 a barrel just a few months ago. This is for a sector of our economy that traditionally provides Canada with billions of dollars in revenue, which is shared among all the provinces through social transfers, the education transfer and likely even a good portion of it in equalization payments to other provinces.

I am proud to say that under the tenure when I was here, until the change of government in the last election, my province had not had to receive an equalization payment for the better part of 40 years. We had been a have-province. As a matter of fact, there have been times, because of the energy sector, that Alberta has been the only have-province in this confederation. However, it did not take very long for Premier Rachel Notley and the current government in Ottawa to put Alberta in a position where we had to beg for an emergency assistance transfer under the equalization program. I think it was a couple of hundred thousand dollars. I do not think it really amounted to a whole lot of difference other than a kind gesture.

Here is a sector of our economy that is typically producing billions of dollars of revenue, and not only corporate revenue, but also from employees, tens of thousands of workers. There were over 130,000 direct jobs lost, and probably another 30,000 or 40,000 of those consultants I talked about, people who are self-employed in the sector. Those jobs are all gone. On April 8, a few days ago, the industry came out with another forecast that is expecting another 12,500 jobs lost in the sector, most likely in Alberta.

Alberta is taking it on the chin, so much so that before Christmas, the government announced \$1.6 billion for the energy sector. Imagine that happening in three short years when the energy sector has rebounded everywhere else. Albertans are now going to Texas or other places on the planet to work in the energy sector. Energy is booming. The United States used to be a net importer of Canadian energy; now the United States, because of its domestic policies, is in a position to export to Canada of all things. Here we are in this situation. We know that it cannot be the international price of energy anymore. We know it cannot be, because the energy sector is booming in other parts of the world, notably right next door to us in the United States. Therefore, it can only be government policy here in Canada that is causing this problem.

These job losses are catastrophic. If we take a look in the budget document today, we will see that there are millions of dollars allocated for consultation. The Prime Minister got up on his high horse and said that the previous government had it all wrong with the CETA 2012 and everything else, and that the government was going to create a process that guaranteed that pipeline projects would go ahead. What do we have? We have a project to the east coast that is dead in the water because of the regulatory burden and the quagmire that nobody in their right mind would ever subject stakeholder investment to. We have a cancelled northern gateway project that is

likely never going to be reinstated by Enbridge. We have a group of indigenous people who are putting together the Eagle Spirit pipeline, which would follow a similar path as northern gateway.

We have Bill C-48, the northern coast tanker ban, which is only a tanker ban if that tanker happens to have Alberta oil on it. It is not a tanker ban for anybody else. LNG Canada is building a wonderful facility in Kitimat right now for liquefied natural gas, and we wish it the best of luck. We think that is a fantastic opportunity for the people there as well.

However, we are left with the Trans Mountain expansion from Kinder Morgan. The government has botched that so much and so badly that it had to take \$4.5 billion of Canadian taxpayers' money to buy a 65-year-old existing pipeline and the rights to continue to develop the Trans Mountain expansion itself. We know from the documents, which Kinder Morgan has publicly announced, that the Government of Canada likely paid \$1 billion more for that pipeline project than it should have paid. All we have in the budget out of the \$1.6 billion that was promised before Christmas are a few million dollars to continue on with consultations.

• (1550)

In the budget document that I have been able to look at and examine, not one dollar is allocated to putting a shovel in the ground to build the Kinder Morgan Trans-Mountain expansion. Until we can change the mind of the current government on how it is approaching the energy sector, the only hope we have in Alberta is a change in the government.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as someone who has had the opportunity to serve in the Canadian Forces, having been posted in Edmonton at the old Lancaster Park, having a family, including my mother and siblings who have lived in the province of Alberta, and as someone who was raised in the Prairies, there is an immense sense of prairie pride there. I like to think that the people who are living in the Prairies appreciate living in a wonderful country like Canada. I am often discouraged by some of the comments I hear from the Conservatives about the province of Alberta. It is as if they want to see more division. That discourages me. I would suggest to the member opposite that there is value in being able to say "I am Canadian", and that applies throughout the Prairies.

When the member said that the federal government has not invested, I would suggest that this government has invested far more energy and resources in Alberta than Stephen Harper ever did. I would suggest that the member take a look at one example in this budget. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being put into municipal infrastructure from gas, which in Winnipeg is something like \$37 million. That also applies to every municipality in the province of Alberta. Is he going to be voting against that initiative?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, you have been a member of Parliament here for as long as I have. You were here from 2006 to 2015, as was I. There were never many conversations in this place about national unity. I did not bring up anything about national unity in my speech. I do not know why the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is bringing it up. He is perhaps hearing it from other people, maybe even in Manitoba.

Government Orders

We did not have those issues, because we had a government that governed from 2006 to 2015 on behalf of all Canadians. We had a prime minister who took seriously all of the responsibilities across all of the sectors and regions of this country. So far, we have lost over 150,000 jobs in the energy sector. We know that can only be government policy. The farmers I represent have lost wheat access to Saudi Arabia. They have lost lentil access into India. Now they have lost canola access into China because of the fumbling of international affairs by the current Prime Minister and the government.

There is not a single mention in the budget to deal with the rise in the rates of crime, particularly rural crime and the crime that is happening in the city of Red Deer right now.

I am looking forward to the report from the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to see just how seriously the current government is taking the issues that are important to Albertans.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, having glanced over the budget implementation act in trying to find something for agriculture, the one thing I did find were the effects of bankruptcy. That was the only thing that pertained to agriculture, as it looks at specific farming and fishing income and tries to somehow work that into the tax bills. Unfortunately, that is what it is coming to with the way in which the current government is looking at our agricultural community. I wonder if the member could talk about some of the concerns, especially the concerns that the canola producers have with what has been happening in these last couple of months.

• (1555)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Red Deer—Mountain View. He is a staunch advocate for farmers and producers. I grew up on a farm in central Alberta. We grew canola, wheat, barley and oats, all of the crops that are typically grown there today. What we are seeing now is that the lack of market access for energy is happening in the agricultural sector because the current government has bungled that.

Spring seeding is almost upon us and farmers are worried. At night, they are staying up, looking out the window, wondering if anybody is going to come on to their property and steal from them. This is because of the unprecedented socio-economic problems that the bungling of the energy sector has caused in central Alberta. Now they are going to be worried all day long about whether they are going to be able to sell their products, if they happen to get them off the field in the fall. This is not a situation that any of these people have asked for. They are hard-working Canadians. They play by the rules. They work hard, day in and day out. They pay their taxes. All they want is a government that acts maturely, responsibly and delivers results for them.

In response to the parliamentary secretary's question, I will be voting against this budget, not because everything in the budget might be good or bad, but because the constituents I represent and I have zero confidence in the current government.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to follow on the words of my colleague. I come with a very similar

level of concern from my constituents. In this budget, they see no relief. They see no relief from a government that has shut them out in so many ways.

My colleague spoke about the energy sector and the jobs that have been sacrificed by the government. The employment base for the energy sector in western Canada is so large that it actually pulls people from my riding in eastern Ontario, in Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. The implications are far-reaching and will affect us for generations, and Canadians are rightly concerned.

Not that long ago, when I was running in a by-election for the seat that I am honoured to hold today, I heard a very consistent message from my constituents when they responded to what was put on offer to them.

In 2015, some of those people supported the government—

Hon. Wayne Easter: Wisely.

Mr. Michael Barrett: They heard promises. There was a promise that the Liberals would make historic investments in infrastructure and balance the budget in 2019. Well, when I was on their doorsteps, my constituents had seen the writing on the wall. They had seen that the government has no plan, no ability to balance the budget and, what is more, is unable to deliver on that infrastructure commitment.

We see commitments in 2019 in the form of much-needed revenue for infrastructure programs, which will come in the form of an increase to the gas tax benefit that the municipalities receive, but that is not what they are used to and it is not what Canadians expect of their government.

In 2008, there was a global financial crisis, the likes of which had not been seen in the lifetime of anyone in this House. In response to it, Conservatives invested in Canada. I can speak from experience in my riding that some of the investments made by the Conservative government have impacts that will last for a generation or more, which I am very proud of. They included \$12 million at the grain elevator at the Port of Johnstown in Edwardsburgh/Cardinal township, with matching funds of \$12 million from the province and \$12 million from the municipality. It directly employs many and indirectly employs many hundreds more, and it is a real service to the agriculture community. As well, \$60 million was invested in the two ports of entry at Prescott and at the Thousand Islands, easing access to our market and the American market, as well as allowing tourists to more easily visit the beautiful riding of Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes as a gateway to our great country.

Government Orders

We also saw \$110 million invested in broadband. That funding was sorely needed at the time, and funding is again needed today. We see talk of broadband investment in this budget, but it will be paid out up until the year 2030. That is not going to do it. That is not going to do it for people who want to work from home or for people who do not otherwise have access to reliable Internet. There are all kinds of implications from that, whether it is just basic connectivity, social and cultural literacy or kids being able to do their school work, but it also affects people who want to operate their businesses. Most farms today rely on reliable broadband Internet, and when we try to bring industry into eastern Ontario and Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, one of the first questions we are asked is what the Internet connectivity is like.

● (1600)

Similarly, when we have an energy sector that is being disrupted through government inaction, we also see the slowdown in expansion of natural gas availability. That is another area where the federal government could choose to make investments. Natural gas availability would reduce reliance on the energy sources that the government is telling Canadians that they need to get off. Natural gas availability would help to change that behaviour.

What Canadians also know is that Conservatives will stand up for things that they have asked us to stand for. One is to scrap the carbon tax. In Ontario and in Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, we suffered under Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne's reign from exorbitantly high energy prices. It was unbelievable. We were mortgaging the futures of a generation of Canadians. Their futures were being sacrificed at the altar of supposed clean technology. All kinds of great tillable land were being sacrificed for energy production that only works when the sun shines and the wind blows, while the turbines were left idle in places like Niagara Falls. We know that hydroelectric power is not only one of the cleanest sources of energy but also a natural resource, and that spilled water is not a resource that should be squandered.

Those are items that are not included in this particular budget, but we know that the Liberals were happy to slide other things into their omnibus budgets in this Parliament, something they campaigned against in 2015. An end to omnibus budgets and omnibus bills was another promise made and broken.

I will circle back to one particular item that was included in the last budget: My constituents remain concerned about proposed changes to firearms laws. We see the government falsely responding to terrible tragedies by looking to punish licensed, law-abiding, fee-paying, responsible Canadians who have had criminal record checks done, are daily run through police databases and responsibly own firearms for legitimate purposes like hunting. We know that hunters are wonderful stewards of conservation and have taken great care to protect the lands that they enjoy while enjoying that activity.

Beyond all of those things, we have seen that this budget was an attempt, a gasp, by the government to cover up what has become one of the greatest political scandals in the history of our country. It is the cover-up budget that spends, spends, spends and breaks promise after promise and seeks not to help Canadians as its primary goal but to distract them from the scandal and distract them from the Liberals' attempted interference in our judicial system. We

have seen how the government treats those who dissent, and Canadians are rightly concerned and discouraged.

I was excited in the month of November and into December to run as a Conservative. I am excited to serve as a Conservative in these benches with dedicated, hard-working members under the leadership of the leader of the official opposition. I look forward to standing in October with the Conservatives as we present a real alternative to a government that is plagued by scandal and mismanagement and an inability to get the job done.

Canadians expect better from their government. They can look forward to better from a Conservative government this October.

● (1605)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his speech the member mentioned the investments in Canada, which we are very proud to be presenting in our budget at a time when the Ontario provincial government is blocking intakes of federal funds into municipalities, including in his riding. We are now looking at ways of getting around that through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to try to get projects on track for this construction season.

The hon. member voted against the Internet investments that we proposed and the investments in the eastern Ontario development program when we were doing our all-night voting. I am wondering whether the hon. member will be voting in favour of our investments that will directly benefit his community and communities across Ontario.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. Along with my colleagues, I voted against the Liberals' cover-up budget. Just like Canadians who put their faith in the Liberals in 2015, we are being asked to put our faith in them here in 2019. We may have been fooled, but we will not be fooled again.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to comment on the fact that the budget provides for compensation for farmers for the concessions that were made in all of the trade agreements that were signed except for the one with the United States and Mexico.

However, to date, no program has been put in place to distribute that money to dairy and other farmers who got shortchanged in these agreements. What is more, we do not know how the compensation will be distributed. There is no mention of a mechanism or a date.

It was a total disaster the last time. Compensation was announced in July 2017 and was granted on a first-come, first-served basis. Farmers do not want that system to be used again because it is completely inadequate and unfair.

Does my colleague think it is a bad sign that the budget does not provide any details regarding the compensation that is supposed to be granted to farmers who were sacrificed in order to sign all of the trade agreements?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we have seen the government drop the ball on the trade file, and that dropped ball continues to roll into this budget.

When it comes to farmers, we know that the dairy and supply-managed sector was sacrificed in a mishandled NAFTA or USMCA or NAFTA 2.0 trade deal. That was done without consultation with farmers. They were promised that there would be compensation and that there would be conversations, and by the government's own admission, the deal should have been ratified by now.

However, the Liberals still have not honoured their commitment and their obligation to those farmers and to the supply-managed sector. The framework for the supply-managed sector and for farmers is conspicuously absent, but it is not surprisingly absent.

• (1610)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to comment on the great job my colleague is doing for his constituents.

I would like to ask him something very serious. It is about the manufacturing sector.

He knows very well that in Oshawa we had some horrible news about our plant being shut down. We had Windsor laying off 1,500 people under the Wynne-McGuinty Liberals. There have been 400,000 manufacturing jobs pretty much lost. Now the same people who ran that government are in Ottawa, and they are continuing. Even the Prime Minister said that we needed to transition away from manufacturing.

These are good-quality, middle-class jobs, and the Prime Minister keeps saying that he wants to support the middle class. Has my colleague seen anything in the budget that would actually help manufacturers and the families that depend on manufacturing for their way of life?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I wish my colleague from Oshawa a happy birthday. He is doing a great job fighting for his constituents and for the manufacturing sector, which is an important piece and a pillar in the economy nationally and also here in Ontario.

To answer his question, the budget fails to address the competitiveness that has been ignored and the anti-competitiveness that the government has championed. We know that a carbon tax is something that manufacturers are wary of, having suffered under that with provincial Liberals who are now in the halls of power federally. They know that it is not a sustainable system. Also, we know that with the tariff regime the government has failed to resolve and with the potential for more tariffs should the ham-fisted USMCA that it cobbled together fail, their sector will suffer even more.

There are troubling times currently for the manufacturing sector in Ontario under the federal Liberals, but there is sunshine on the horizon with a Conservative national majority in October.

Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to have this opportunity to speak this afternoon on what I know will be the last budget of the Liberal government before the election in October. I also want to let the House know that I will be

sharing my time with my colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge, as he will also enter this debate.

Every time I stand to speak in this place, I try to remind my colleagues of the uniqueness of the riding I represent. I know we all have great affiliation and love for our own ridings, but it is important to remind people that when someone represents a third of Ontario's land mass, 42 first nations, 22 of which are isolated, as well as 13 municipalities, there are some differences and some unique needs that maybe other members do not have to face every day. This is not to say that they do not have challenges because we all have our unique challenges.

I am rising today to talk about the differences between a Liberal government and a Conservative government in ridings like Kenora. In 2015, the riding of Kenora voted for change because it was looking for a better quality of life and a new approach to reconciliation. When a member represents constituents from 42 first nations, there is a need keep in mind how we will build relationships with indigenous people in the future. When someone represents remote and rural communities, like I do in the Kenora riding, that person votes for an approach to infrastructure that will stop the decade-long precedent by the Harper Conservatives of allowing the north to fall further behind by not investing in new infrastructure.

I am happy to say that Canadians and northerners are better off than they were four years ago. As this is my 20th year as a member of Parliament, I can say from experience that people have priorities they set as well as expectations of their government. One expectation is that the economy will be better. Other expectations are that their quality of life will improve, their children's education will be looked after, the government will think that their health care is important, and obviously, for seniors, that it will make sure their quality and standard of living is maintained during their twilight years and that they are part of our society and will continue to be part of it.

We have decided as a region that we are better off. We have better paying jobs, more families who have opportunities and stronger communities because Liberals decided to invest in the future. Under our government's economic plan, over 900,000 new jobs were created, driving unemployment to the lowest levels in 40 years. In 2018, wages have increased at one of the fastest paces of growth seen in the past eight years.

What is the message when we talk about these kinds of statistics that show that our economy is getting stronger and we have a better quality of life for Canadians? It means that the competing visions we will be talking about in 2019 are going to be important to northerners, as they are to all Canadians. Those visions are what the parties propose will work for the average citizen, whether that person lives in the north, in a rural riding or in the city. I look forward to the opportunity to speak to people in the north about why they should support a second term of this government, and that is because of the improvements the government has been able to make.

Government Orders

I brought a small list of some of the things we have accomplished since 2015. We have made historic investments in northern Ontario and in my riding, the largest investments that have been made in history. I will start with this. There was a \$1.6-billion announcement to connect 17 first nations to the power grid.

● (1615)

Here we are with the lights on and that seems pretty normal for those who live in Ottawa. However, where I live, some communities are still on diesel-generated power plants and basically cannot rely on their energy supply to grow an economy or to even use the basic infrastructure that all households have, like a washer or dryer. I do not think people even consider using a dishwasher, because the power supply does not allow for these kinds of appliances to be used in regions like mine.

The \$1.6 billion seems like a lot, but I can tell members that it is going to make a big difference in those 17 first nation communities that are now living in isolation. I am looking forward to the day when I can stand up in the House and say that they have all-weather roads and that people can drive to their neighbours and to other communities, can have their kids play sports and go to concerts, and can develop the relationships that we would see as normal in any other part of the country. That is the kind of infrastructure we want.

This is why we cannot afford to elect a government that does not have a vision for the future, a vision that includes making sure that communities, like the ones I represent, do not get left further and further behind.

Our budget continues reconciliation efforts and improvements of major infrastructure for first nation communities right across the country. It is also a municipal-friendly budget. It understands that the economy and a good quality of life starts at the municipal level, with the people who live in those communities.

The government has made the choice to ensure that the municipalities are real partners and not say to the provincial governments that it is their jurisdiction and their issue. In fact, we are all in this together as partners, working to make sure that we have climate change infrastructure in place and have water and sewer systems that can compete with the world's. We should have all-weather roads that are not little but that twin the highway between Kenora and Falcon Lake on the Manitoba border, so that we can attract more customers, tourists and people to come to our region. Just for safety reasons alone, the twinning of that particular stretch of highway would save a lot of lives.

I have been pushing the provincial governments to work with our federal government to put forward infrastructure dollars to build all-weather roads and to twin highways. Sometimes I get the weirdest responses from provincial governments. The Ford government we have now does not seem to think that this is very important. It continues to not put in place or open up the streams of infrastructure so that we can help municipalities and first nations and so that we can build the infrastructure that every other region takes for granted.

We have to be very vigilant to make sure that the provincial governments we put in place in this country are willing to understand the importance of real partnership, and not spend all of their time on petty, partisan politics, which really does nothing for the people we

represent. Frankly, I do not care if a provincial government is Conservative, NDP or Liberal. I just want a partner that is willing to work with the federal government to make things happen.

I was in the House when Mike Harris was the provincial premier of Ontario. It was a pretty sad state of affairs. There was a mess left in northern Ontario by Mike Harris. He had fights with the public school system, preaching that the unions were too strong and the teachers did not care about the kids. It was shocking.

We are starting to see this again. We will see massive cuts to our health care system. We have to make sure that we balance that with a good government in Ottawa.

I am looking forward to battling both Conservative Parties: the party on the side opposite, which wants to take over from us, and the provincial Conservatives. They both seem to think that their number one issue is to defeat our government, instead of working on behalf of their constituents.

In the budget, we really focused on seniors and young people. We had to live with a senior housing crisis under the 10 years of the Harper regime. Now we are starting to figure out what we need to do and that is going to make a big difference for seniors.

● (1620)

On the student side, training and education is lifelong. This budget is all about getting ready for an economy that we do not even know what it will look like a decade or two from now. We have to be ready.

I do not need to sell this budget to my constituents of Kenora, but I do need to explain to them the importance of having a vision for the future, the long term vision, not just looking at numbers from one year to the next.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kenora did not address some things that are very important.

He talked about the unemployment rate. Yes, it is low, but the Liberals are not looking at labour market performance. Ontario performs very poorly in North America. It is behind every state in the U.S. Many of the jobs that the government talks about are public sector jobs. Liberal policies are killing off private sector jobs, which is what I want to ask the member about.

A lot of manufacturing is done in Oshawa. Ontario, his province and my province. Under the Wynne and McGuinty governments, Ontario lost about 400,000 manufacturing jobs because of insane regulations and the highest cost of electricity in North America for industry.

The Prime Minister and the minister stood in the House in November when the plant closure was announced in Oshawa and said that they would have a plan to keep jobs in Oshawa, and I was hoping for a plan for manufacturing.

Government Orders

Could the member please tell me where in the budget the Prime Minister fulfilled that promise to the people of Oshawa, considering that Windsor just lost 1,500 jobs? What is the government doing to stop the bleeding of manufacturing jobs? Are the Liberals from Ontario, who are now running the PMO, going to continue to hurt manufacturing in Ontario?

• (1625)

Hon. Robert Nault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my colleague from Oshawa a happy birthday.

One of the things Canadians are pretty comfortable about and understand intrinsically is that governments have a vision, have policies and have direction, and that takes time to implement. They do not need to be told that over and over again. I know how difficult it is. Whether one lives in Alberta or whether one is the Oshawa representative, we all feel the same pain at the loss of jobs.

Our government does have a policy. We do have a plan. We did create the kind of technological hubs that will move forward in the not too distant future. However, we cannot expect results overnight. If we have a vision for the country over a decade long, we will see the results as they start to grow.

I did comment in my speech about how well we were doing with respect to job creation. However, there are particular places where it is not going as well. My own region has always had higher unemployment than most places in the country because it is harder to create employment.

As an ex-labour leader, it does not matter where the jobs are as long as they are good quality jobs, the benefits are good and people have a good quality of life. They we will make a real difference. I do not differentiate between public service jobs and private sector jobs. They are all good as far as I am concerned.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my hon. colleague talked about the importance of working together and working with the regions.

In the Drummond region, people are asking questions about the supply management compensation program. They want details and, most of all, they want all dairy farmers to be compensated. The last time, it was a total disaster.

Something else that is very important for Drummond is the Village Québécois d'Antan, a regional tourist attraction that is very important to Drummond's socio-economic vitality. This heritage gem needs renovations and a number of buildings need to be rebuilt. The Village Québécois d'Antan requested emergency financial assistance from the government, but the government has been dragging its feet.

Will the Liberal government commit to providing the Village Québécois d'Antan with emergency financial assistance?

[*English*]

Hon. Robert Nault: Mr. Speaker, the member puts me at a slight disadvantage not being from Quebec and knowing exactly what his project is. However, from my own perspective, tourism is a big business. It is one of the largest businesses Canada has, and I happen to be right in the middle of it.

I live next to one of the world's largest lakes in northern Ontario called Lake of the Woods. It is a billion-dollar business for tourism. The lake goes into the United States and Manitoba. I get where the member is coming from in that regard. I expect that if the project is a good one, the government will do its job to ensure we dedicate the resources to keep tourism growing and growing.

Whether it is in Quebec, northern Ontario or British Columbia, the fact remains that tourism is one of the areas that we should be the strongest in as we promote the direction we are going in.

On supply management, as we know, the budget talks directly to supply management and the importance of helping our agriculture community. This last week, I met with the Canadian agricultural group in my office. We had a good conversation about the economy that agriculture produces, which I think is the largest industry in Canada as far as the creation of jobs.

In my humble opinion, we will continue to protect agriculture and its economy simply because it is one of the most important parts of what we do.

Last, food security was a discussion in my office for one reason, and that is there is no agriculture in my riding. There are mining, forestry and tourism. However, people are very interested in the whole idea of food security and how our agriculture community can help individual families get into food security. We should look at that very seriously as far as resources.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Public Safety.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

• (1630)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great today to speak to Bill C-97, the budget implementation act, which introduces many of the measures we have brought forward in budget 2019. This goes to our central value of continuing to strengthen the middle class and help those working hard to join it in our great and beautiful country, Canada.

I am proud to be the member of Parliament for Vaughan—Woodbridge, a riding that is very entrepreneurial and a riding in which I have the benefit of raising my two daughters. It is also a riding that when I knock on people's doors, I hear plenty of feedback. My residents are doing well. They are working hard. They are creating a better future for them and their families, which is great to see. We are all here in the House to ensure that Canadians and their families have a better future. That has been a central tenet of our government.

It is my pleasure to rise today to speak about the government's next step in its plan to invest in the middle class and grow the economy.

Government Orders

Recently, our government tabled Bill C-97, the budget implementation act, which announced a number of new initiatives, including measures to make it more affordable for Canadians to rent or buy a home.

I mentioned the word affordable. I hear this a lot, and it is something our government is acting on, and has acted on. Today, the OECD announced that Canadians faced one of the lowest tax burdens among all of the OECD members. That is due to our middle-class tax cut, the Canada child benefit, the 10% increase in the guaranteed income supplement and a number of measures that we have adopted which help Canadians and Canadian families.

Canadians now face one of the lowest tax bases among all OECD countries. We should be proud of that. We need to applaud that and move forward on it. This includes lifting 820,000 Canadians out of poverty and lifting 300,000 children out of poverty. We should be proud of that as well.

Something that is near and dear to the residents of York region and across Canada is housing affordability. Housing affordability and market stability are issues that concern many middle-class families and they are issues that this government takes seriously.

Everyone needs a safe and affordable place to call home, but today too many Canadians are being priced out of the housing market. For 10 years, Conservative politicians, like Stephen Harper and the hon. opposition leader, did nothing to address housing affordability, pushing home ownership further out of the reach of hard-working middle-class Canadians and putting household debt on the rise.

With budget 2019 and through Bill C-97, the BIA, our government is making smart significant investments to help Canadians find an affordable place to call home. One of our responsibilities as a government is to support a healthy, competitive and stable housing market, one in which all middle-class families and first-time home buyers specifically have the possibility to buy their first home without having to take on excessive risk.

This is why our government, to date, has taken a wide array of actions to improve housing affordability. To help more young families take their first steps toward home ownership, our government is announcing targeted support to first-time homebuyers across the country in this budget and implemented through Bill C-97.

Through Bill C-97, we are introducing a first-time homebuyer incentive, a new program that will make home ownership more affordable for first-time buyers by allowing them to lower their monthly mortgage payments. The first-time homebuyer incentive will give eligible first-time homebuyers the option to finance a portion of their home directly with Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation. The program would provide up to \$1.25 billion in shared equity mortgages to eligible borrowers over the next three years. The program would mean more a more affordable down payment, as well as more manageable mortgage payments.

Also, we are proposing to provide first-time homebuyers with greater access to their registered retirement savings plan to buy a home. Budget 2019 proposes to increase the home buyers' plan withdrawal limit to \$35,000 from the current limit of \$25,000. In a

two-income family, that could mean up to \$70,000 could be withdrawn from an RRSP to purchase a first home. This means more equity in a home, lower mortgage amounts and lower debt for Canadian families. I believe that is a smart investment and a smart policy tool that our government put in place.

This change will help first-time homebuyers achieve their dream of purchasing their very own home. When Canadians can take pride in the place that they hang their hats at the end of the day, they feel better about their community and their country.

• (1635)

In 2017, our government also launched the national housing strategy. It is the first of its kind in Canada, and it provides a range of new tools and programming to build, repair and renew Canada's stock of community and affordable housing. The strategy will create 100,000 new housing units and repair and renew 300,000 units. Simply put, Canada's national housing strategy is a \$40-billion 10-year plan to help Canadians across the country access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford.

Most importantly, we need to ensure that Canadians have a safe, secure place and affordable place to call home so they can raise their families and have a brighter future for themselves and their children and grandchildren. As part of this strategy, our government also launched a \$13.2-billion national housing co-investment fund that will assist vulnerable Canadians in accessing affordable housing. That includes survivors leaving violence, seniors, indigenous people, new immigrants and people with disabilities.

Through the national housing strategy, more Canadians will have a safe and affordable place to call home, including in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, where currently we have under construction an affordable development in which 162 units will be offered to individuals who need assistance. That is what Canada is about: helping those who need assistance and ensuring that we all have opportunities to succeed.

I am happy to say that Canadians have created over 900,000 jobs over the last few years. We have set the conditions for foreign direct investment and for domestic investment, which is at elevated levels. We are recovering from the oil crisis three years ago, and we see investments across the country, particularly here in Ontario.

In my riding, manufacturing firms are continuing to expand and are continuing to hire. When I visit these firms and enterprises, the biggest issue they have is that they cannot find enough labour. There are currently 540,000 job postings unfilled, according to Statistics Canada. That reflects the robustness of our job market and also demographics. People are retiring, and we need to replace them through a robust and secure immigration system.

Through the national housing strategy, more Canadians will have a safe and affordable place to call home. In fact, these measures are expected to lift 530,000 Canadians out of housing need. It will lift 825,000 Canadians out of poverty, which I think we need to talk about, because that is how we create a better Canada for all Canadians. It will help reduce chronic homelessness by half over the next 10 years.

Government Orders

I am proud to say that budget 2019 would build on these actions, helping more middle-class Canadians realize their dream of owning a home. To start, budget 2019 proposes to further expand the rental construction financing initiative with an additional \$10 billion in financing over the next nine years. I am happy to report that this program is oversubscribed by individuals and developers building new rental construction.

We have not seen a lot of new rental construction over the last few years. In Canada, the housing market is a continuum, and we need a greater supply of rental housing, and through this program, we are getting it. The program will help build thousands of new units across Canada, with a particular focus on areas of low rental supply.

In recognition of barriers to developing new housing, budget 2019 also proposes a \$300-million housing supply challenge. Through this challenge, the government will invite municipalities and other groups to propose new ways to break down the barriers that limit the creation of new housing. Those ideas will be added to our consultations on how we can best increase the housing supply.

To that point, budget 2019 proposes support for the recently announced expert panel on the future of housing supply and affordability, launched in partnership with the Province of British Columbia. The panel will be tasked with examining factors that limit housing availability and will be recommending actions governments can take to build better, more affordable and more inclusive communities.

Finally, to ensure that future investments in the housing supply are put to their best use possible, budget 2019, through Bill C-97, proposes that CMHC invest \$5 million over two years in state-of-the-art modelling of housing supply and related data collection. That is what our government is doing on the supply side, because we know that greater supply is important in reducing costs.

• (1640)

Budget 2019 is also making the housing market more fair and more affordable for Canadians. After all, for many families, their homes are their most important assets, so ensuring a healthy, competitive and stable housing market for all is a priority for our government.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated listening to what the member had to say, especially with regard to the national housing strategy. I am on the veterans affairs committee and serve as shadow deputy minister for Veterans Affairs. We have just been studying homelessness among veterans and have a report coming out very soon.

The thing that is disturbing to me is that the intent was there to study the issue, but absolutely no portion of the national housing strategy funds were targeted especially to our veterans, who we know, when they are homeless, suffer a great deal in trying to hold down jobs and take care of their families.

Why is there no funding earmarked for veterans in the national housing strategy?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, with regard to our veterans, they should be afforded every service possible. They made the ultimate sacrifice in terms of serving our country.

This would, in my view, encompass a whole-of-government approach. We have put billions of dollars toward mental health in the provinces, have developed the poverty reduction strategy and have implemented the pension for life for veterans, and this would be an additional step. It should be done.

We are building housing for vulnerable Canadians, including those suffering from mental health issues. We all know someone who has been impacted. Our veterans need to be provided the services the hon. member has indicated, much like other Canadians, and our affordable housing strategy is directed at that.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his work on the finance committee when it comes to credit unions. He is also the all-party chair of the credit union caucus.

To that point, there were two promises made in the investing in the middle-class budget 2019 that were specifically requested in terms of regulatory reform, which the government committed to. In this budget implementation act, I see only one.

I would like clarification from the government member as to the rationale for not following through on the promises made on the floor of the House of Commons just a short time ago.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as the chair of the all-party credit union caucus, I have also inquired as to why only one of the two measures introduced in the budget has been put into the BIA, and I hope to have an answer shortly.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, regardless of whether everything that was in the budget is in the budget implementation act, we have certainly set the direction we intend to go and where we will be after next October 21.

The member is a great member of the finance committee. I know he strongly fought for many of the things that are in the budget implementation act, especially those things that relate to challenging the tax reform in the United States to keep capital in Canada, attract capital to Canada and allow our businesses to be competitive on an equal playing field with the United States.

I wonder what the member has to say.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, Canadians will face a choice in a few months. One of the choices they will face is to continue to grow the economy with smart investments and smart policies, such as the accelerated capital cost allowance that was put in place in the fall economic statement; the adoption of measures to enhance skills training in Bill C-97; and increasing the earnings exemption for seniors to \$5,000 and then by 50% from \$5,000 to \$15,000. That is a \$1.76-billion investment in our seniors so they can stay in the workforce a little longer and keep their hard-earned money. Those are smart, targeted investments.

Government Orders

Between now and October 21, the choice will be clear: continue to grow the economy, or go backward to the last 10 years, when we saw very low growth rates, the lowest since the Great Depression, and not lifting Canadians out of poverty. We have lifted 825,000 of them out of poverty, and Canadians have created over 900,000 jobs, with the lowest unemployment rate in over 40 years.

• (1645)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

I am delighted to participate in the election year distraction budget debate, misleadingly, inappropriately labelled, when it was tabled, “Investing in the Middle Class”. This budget was everything we in the official opposition and most Canadians feared it would be. Instead of the balanced budget promised by the Prime Minister in his 2015 campaign, the deficit will hit \$19.8 billion this year.

Instead of balance, the finance department estimates that the budget will not return to balance until 2040, and by then an additional \$271 billion of debt will have been generated. According to the finance department, Canada's net debt this year reached an all-time high of \$705 billion, or more than \$50,000 for each Canadian family.

This budget was so sloppily assembled that the Department of Finance had to correct dozens of pages of tables and dozens of pages of sloppy math. Did the finance minister catch the mistakes, or did the President of the Treasury Board or even the Parliamentary Budget Officer? No, it was caught by the diligent Conservative member for Edmonton West, a private sector professional who came to the office after 30 years of experience responsibly reading spreadsheets and balancing budgets in the hospitality sector.

The original budget document tabled by the finance minister detailed \$186 million in spending initiatives, but after a correction made quietly on the department's website after the MP's intervention, we see that spending will actually come to \$311 million. With some \$28 million more in underestimated costs, the mistake totalled almost as much as the original mistake, fully \$153 million. The member for Edmonton West characterized it all, with very gentle understatement, as “pure carelessness”.

I will shift from the careless, the sloppy and the clumsy to a deliberate mistake in the Liberal budget 2019. I direct members to page 373 of the cover-up budget, a page with the main title “Business Income Tax Measures”, and the misleading subtitle “Support for Canadian Journalism”.

It is true that there are hundreds of millions of dollars, more than half a billion dollars, but they are, for the most part, allocated to yesterday's journalism, not tomorrow's, to print, big city and small community print, not to digital. These hundreds of millions of dollars, almost \$600 million, will go only to Canadian journalistic organizations, which will have to apply to register for financial assistance and might be accepted by a Liberal-connected body as QCJOs, qualified Canadian journalism organizations.

The Liberal government is going to decide, through a commissioning body, which has not as yet been created, which struggling newspapers get money and which ones do not. I would remind the

House that there has been, since this misguided adventure was previewed by the finance minister in the 2018 fall update, stark disagreement between owners, publishers and shareholders of struggling newspapers, large and small, and those journalists who actually generate news content.

As a former practitioner of the craft, I agree with journalists of all stripes who have vigorously rejected this Liberal election year bailout for some Canadian news organizations as an unacceptable, not to mention wasteful, intervention that will compromise, I believe, the independence of the craft. I share their opposition to the Liberal proposal of a panel of news experts who would distribute the hundreds of millions of dollars in election year beneficence by deciding which newsrooms are acceptable and which newsrooms are not.

Members may have read the columnist Andrew Coyne, who said, in noting that this misguided policy excludes anyone outside the existing Canadian newspaper industry, that it is designed for “not the future of news but the past; not the scrappy start-ups who might save the business, but the lumbering dinosaurs who are taking it down.”

The founder and editor of *The Logic*, one of those scrappy start-ups, David Skok, complains that the mandatory full-time status of journalists required for funding ignores the vital role freelance journalists play in the news ecosystem. Mr. Skok notes, in an editorial:

According to Statistics Canada, as of 2016, there are about 12,000 people who identify “journalist” as their profession. Of those, it's safe to assume that the number of people not employed full-time with a newsroom is in the thousands.

• (1650)

Chantal Hébert, whose primary employer, the *Toronto Star*, will very likely be designated a qualified recipient of Liberal beneficence, said, “The government's half-a-billion package will not resolve the crisis that newsrooms face. It may end up doing little more than delaying the inevitable.”

Ms. Hébert further stated that “...among the ranks of the political columnists, many fear it is a poison pill that will eventually do the news industry more harm than good.”

I fully agree.

The finance minister cannot justify his \$600-million election-year bailout because he has no idea of what will happen after his subsidized transition period. That is unacceptable and it is wasteful, because intervention should have a goal of not only long-term survival of print but long-term sustainability of the evolving craft of journalism. The transformation and survival of robust, independent journalism platforms in Canada will require bold adjustments and political leadership, but how can any news organization be truly independent if it becomes dependent on government subsidies, temporary slush-fund tax relief or direct cash bailouts?

I will close my remarks as I began, with disappointment in an election year debate on a budget that promises much in desperation but delivers many more dire costs to the Canadian economy than meaningful benefits.

Government Orders

This budget, as I said, was everything that Canadians feared it would be. Instead of the balanced budget promised by the Prime Minister four years ago, the deficit will this year hit \$19.8 billion, and instead of balance, the finance department estimates the budget will not return to balance until 2040.

This budget will not distract from the broken promises, the fiscal incompetence, the legislative clumsiness, the empty virtue-signaling, the imposed narrow ideological values from a Liberal government that as its alpha and omega has bookended ethical lapses and moral corruption from day one until now.

Only two first-term majority governments in all of Canadian history have been defeated and denied a second term. I believe this budget and the ever-deepening scandal that has overshadowed it have set the stage for the current sorry Liberal government to join those historic losers.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suspect that might be the author for many of the Conservatives' spin doctors on the other side of the curtain. It is quite a litany of inaccuracies, to say the very least.

Let me try to put a little reality into the situation.

Back in 2015, the Liberal Party committed, first and foremost, to work hard day after day for Canada's middle class, and we have seen that every budget, government regulation and government legislation has had a profound positive impact. One of the tools we could use to measure that is that by working with Canadians, in excess of 925,000 new jobs have been created in Canada. We have lifted thousands of children out of poverty and thousands of seniors out of poverty. We have given tax breaks to Canada's middle class, which the Conservative Party voted against, and we have seen an increase in taxes on Canada's wealthiest 1%.

This is a government that listens to Canadians, not only during elections but in between elections, and that is why I anxiously await the election in October 2019, believing that Canadians will see what this government has done and hopefully reward us with another four-year mandate.

•(1655)

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, first let me say I will ignore the suggestion of the hon. member that I had assistance in composing my remarks here today. Again this is characteristic of the drive-by smears and character assassinations that we have seen in recent weeks in this House as the Liberals, even including the member for Winnipeg North, begin to worry about the possibility that they may not return here in November of this year.

As I said in my remarks, from the beginning, the government has broken every fiscal promise it has made. It has committed to sending billions of dollars offshore to build infrastructure in Asia and to create infrastructure in Canada that is not needed, even while it has had trouble pushing dollars out the door to assist the infrastructure in Canada that it has promised in successive budgets. I think the sorry Liberal government's record speaks for itself, and when my friend goes to knock on doors, he will learn that the middle class is not nearly as satisfied as he claims them to be with the performance for the past four years of the current Liberal government.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what does the member think of the government's plans, if there are any, for the Canadian auto industry? The only thing I remember in the budget on that are the rebates or the help for people who buy electric vehicles. I am all in favour of that, but it specifically excludes the one electric vehicle built in Canada, which missed out by a couple of thousand dollars, in helping that industry. That was followed immediately by Chrysler cutting back significantly on its jobs in Windsor.

Could he comment on the lack of a plan from the government in this budget for the auto industry in Canada?

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, I certainly need very little prompting to comment on the empty words of concern that we have heard from the government, from the finance minister and from the ministers of ministries that should be tasked with assisting and ensuring that good, quality Canadian automotive industry jobs are protected, preserved and that there is growth.

We have seen how laggardly, how tardy the Liberal ministers were in attending the General Motors plant in Oshawa when the first shock announcement came of the eventual closure, the downsizing of that of plant. We have also seen the lack of interest in supporting the industry and the plants in Windsor.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise to speak in this place and more so to speak to this Liberal budget.

As we know, the Liberal 2015 campaign promise was to deliver three years of modest \$10 billion a year deficits with a return to a balanced budget in 2019.

Let us remind ourselves that this was a promise the Prime Minister himself said was "very cast in stone", not somewhat cast in stone, not a little bit cast in stone, but very cast in stone.

In this budget, the 2019-20 deficit forecast is set close to \$19.8 billion. This is on top of the \$60 billion in deficits added in the first three Liberal budgets. The current budget indicates there is no path to balance until at the very least 2040, and by that point racking up an additional \$271 billion in new debt.

There are words as a parliamentarian that I do not like to use, and many of those words describe the Prime Minister's broken promise to Canadians.

As every person in this chamber well knows, the reality is that the Prime Minister did not even try to honour his promise. That is a Prime Minister who will basically promise anything if at the time he believes it is what Canadians want to hear. On this point, Canadians want a government that will live within its means.

However, we are not here to debate the Prime Minister's broken promises. We are here to debate this budget, and on that point I do have some serious concerns.

Let me start with household debt.

Government Orders

Aside from the fact this budget is silent on it, I would submit it will only serve to increase it. Why is household debt a problem? After the Liberals first year in government, household debt, as a percentage of gross income in 2016, was 166%. In January of 2019, that increased to a whopping 176%. Let us think about that for a moment. Canadian household debt is now 176% of gross household income.

In spite of the Liberal government spending over \$60 billion to date, people continue to fall further and further behind. Keep in mind we are not talking about the government debt being added onto their backs that one day somehow they will have to pay. We are talking about household debt.

How is that a concern in this budget? One example is the new Canada training benefit. On the surface, it sounds like a good thing. What could be wrong with encouraging job skills retraining?

When we read the fine print, only \$250 is available per year up to a career maximum of \$5,000. The challenge that I am already hearing is that the majority of training programs cost well in excess of that amount. Many skills training programs are literally thousands of dollars or more. For many workers to benefit from this \$250 training credit, it means borrowing thousands of dollars and increasing household debt.

Similarly, to access the credit of \$5,000 toward the purchase of a new electric car for most would mean borrowing up to the maximum for the program amount of \$45,000. This again results in more household debt for anyone borrowing for a new vehicle purchase.

A similar situation is created with the new homebuyers program. Rather than simply eliminate the GST on affordable new housing, which has been done with the provincial sales tax in British Columbia and which would save people money, this budget only offers more options that encourage borrowing. That means borrowing \$10,000 more from an RRSP up to a maximum of \$35,000. How many new homebuyers have a spare \$35,000 kicking around in an RRSP? This is not the reality for most new homebuyers.

The new first-time homebuyers incentive on the surface looks helpful. The program can help provide between 5% and 10% of the down payment toward a maximum CMHC insurable mortgage up to \$480,000. That is not counting the total down payment.

• (1700)

The challenge for this program is also in the fine print. The maximum \$480,000 mortgage value is based on the program's maximum allowable household income level of \$120,000 annually. However, in a community where the average household income is \$70,000, the maximum value under this program is set at four times the income. Therefore, the CMHC insurable mortgage limit is just \$280,000, which is a significant difference.

Here is the great frustration: Housing markets throughout Canada have been severely impacted by the changes made by the current Liberal government largely because of housing markets in just two Canadian cities. However, with this signature program, even at the maximum \$480,000, it will not make a dent in housing affordability in places like Vancouver or Toronto. In fact, it will most help in areas where housing is comparably already affordable. As public policy

goes, this is an expensive one and a misguided one. CMHC told us at the technical briefing that it will have to borrow in order to finance this program.

These are just a few of the examples that all point toward increased household debt in order to access the benefits of these programs. Ironically, these programs are being offered in a budget with a \$19.8-billion deficit, which means that the current Liberal government is borrowing money it does not have, which, as I have just demonstrated, will in many cases cause people to borrow money they do not have just to access these program benefits. That, my friends, is not good governance.

There is also another major missing part of this budget, which is any type of fiscal strategy to deal with Canadian competitiveness. We are hearing increasingly of plant closures, production shifts being eliminated, and of Canadian companies not investing here in Canada but in the United States and elsewhere. To be clear, the Liberals were warned. We know that the Department of Finance's own figures warned that the Liberals' enhanced CPP program would be a drag on the Canadian economy at least until 2030.

Now, we do not know what precisely the Liberals' carbon tax will do to the economy, but we do know that the Liberals are increasingly giving Canada's worst polluters carbon tax breaks. The Toronto Star has reported that polluting industries, such as cement, iron and steel manufacturing, lime production and nitrogen fertilizers, will get carbon relief based on a 90% industry average. Firms in other industries that emit at least 50 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas per year will get relief based on 80%. In New Brunswick, the federal government gave a 95.5% carbon tax relief to a dirty coal-powered plant.

Almost every day we hear the environment minister and the Prime Minister talk about putting a price on pollution, but of course, they do not talk about the growing list of exemptions and breaks for the worst polluters. Of course, our major competitors and trade partners do not have a carbon tax. Meanwhile, we continue to watch investment in these countries growing while this budget sits back and proposes no solutions.

I get that it is an election budget designed to buy people's votes with their own money. I also get that the Liberals who once promised a balanced budget now call that concept "austerity". It is bewildering but true to hear any discussion that talks about living within our means described by the finance minister as an austerity measure. At some point, the Liberal government is going to need to reconcile this with reality.

Private Members' Business

All of this deficit spending was not spent during a time of world financial crises. Further, despite all the deficit spending, the Bank of Canada forecasts are crystal clear. Our economy is slowing down at an alarming rate, and this budget proposes nothing to address that, I think, in part, because the finance minister does not believe these things to be true, yet we all know that they are. It is another denial budget, spending money that Canadians do not have, and it is not a budget that I can support.

Therefore, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

• (1705)

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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1745)

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

(Division No. 1296)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif
Albrecht
Berthold
Boucher
Calkins
Cooper
Deltell
Falk (Provencher)
Généreux
Gourde
Kent
Martel
Motz
Reid
Schmale
Shipley
Van Kesteren
Webber — 35

Albas
Arnold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Brassard
Carrie
Davidson
Eglinski
Gallant
Godin
Kelly
Kitchen
McCaughey (Edmonton West)
Paul-Hus
Saroya
Shields
Trost
Wagantall

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Aubin
Bibeau
Boissonnault
Cannings
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)

Alghabra
Arya
Beech
Blair
Bratina
Caron
Chagger

Choquette
Cuzner
DeCoursey
Drouin
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Graham
Hardie
Hehr
Housefather
Hutchings
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lametti
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
McCrimmon
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Soeurs)
Murray
Nassif
Oliphant
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Quach
Rankin
Rioux
Rogers
Rota
Rusnak
Sangha
Schulte
Simms
Sorbara
Tan
Vandenbeld
Weir
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid — 111

Cormier
Dabrusin
Dhillon
Dubé
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fragiskatos
Fry
Garrison
Gould
Hajdu
Hébert
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jowhari
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Laverdière
Leslie
Lockhart
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Nantel
Nault
Ouellette
Peterson
Poissant
Qualtrough
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Sahota
Scarpaleggia
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Young

PAIRED

Members

Ayoub
Goldsmith-Jones
Moore
Ste-Marie

Fortin
LeBlanc
Paradis
Thériault — 8

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 5:45 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

EXPUNGEMENT OF CERTAIN CANNABIS-RELATED CONVICTIONS ACT

The House resumed from December 7, 2018, consideration of the motion that Bill C-415, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain cannabis-related convictions, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the debate on Bill C-415, an act to establish a procedure for expunging certain cannabis-related convictions. I thank the hon. member for Victoria for his involvement in this file.

I know that we have different points of view on the terms, but we agree that people with criminal records for possession of cannabis should no longer have to deal with obstacles when it comes to employment or housing or any other aspect of their life.

[English]

We committed to legalizing and regulating cannabis as part of our platform for the last election. We upheld that commitment, and last October the new system took effect. At that time, we said we would introduce legislation to make it easier for people with criminal records left over from the old regime to have those records cleared. We have upheld that commitment too with Bill C-93, which was debated earlier this week.

It is worth remembering that while we were advocating for legalization, the NDP was merely calling for decriminalization. In other words, if the NDP had had their way, cannabis prohibition would still be in effect, and people found to be in possession of cannabis would be getting hefty fines. That would obviously be a bad idea, because many of the people who have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition are from marginalized and low-income communities.

Instead of adding to their financial burden, we have proposed legislation that will eliminate the fee to the Parole Board to apply for a pardon, which is normally \$631. As well, we have proposed eliminating the waiting period, which can be as long as 10 years. Under our proposal, the pardon application will be reviewed and decided expeditiously by Parole Board staff, rather than being referred to an appointed Parole Board member for review, as is the current process. The usual subjective criteria, like evaluating whether the applicant has been of good conduct and whether the pardon will bring them a measurable benefit will not apply. Plus, the Parole Board will implement an outreach strategy that will involve community partners and civil society organizations to help people take advantage of this new process.

Once a successful pardon is issued, the relevant authorities will be notified and the record will be sealed. It will not show up during a criminal record check, and can be reopened only in extraordinary circumstances, such as the commission of a new criminal offence.

The bill proposed by the member for Victoria would use the mechanism called expungement rather than expedited pardons. As I said during debate on Monday, the practical effect of expungement is for all intents and purposes the same as a pardon, unless the person commits a new offence. At that point, they are going to have a criminal record again anyway, so the reinstatement of the old cannabis possession conviction will have minimal impact.

When it comes to international travel, expungement may cause unnecessary complications. For example, if the United States had previously noted a person's conviction in its records, they could still have that information, despite one's pardon or expungement. If U.S.

authorities ask someone to provide evidence of their pardoned conviction, they can get that from the Parole Board. With expungement, there would likely be no Canadian records to provide.

We created expungement as a concept in Canadian law last year as a way to deal with historic convictions for consensual sexual activity between same-sex partners. That was a situation of grave injustice, where the law at issue itself was a violation of fundamental human rights and contrary to the charter.

That is distinct from the situation we are discussing today. The criminalization of cannabis was a bad idea, but it was not a charter violation. Nevertheless, because of its differential impacts on racialized communities, we have proposed a dramatically expedited pardons process. The NDP has also called on us to follow the example of some American jurisdictions that have moved to automatically clear past misdemeanour convictions for possession of cannabis.

In Canada, while federal records are held by the RCMP, there are also records, including paper records, held by provinces in local police offices and local courts. Going through all those records to find all the drug possession convictions and then digging into the details of each conviction to determine whether the substance involved was cannabis is a process that would take years.

● (1750)

There was a suggestion on Monday that we hire an army of summer students to go through hundreds of thousands of police and court records in cities and towns across the country. I could not tell whether it was serious or not. The fact is that an application-based process will result in people getting their records cleared much faster.

After careful and deliberate consideration, we chose a streamlined pardons process as the best approach. Under the bill that we have proposed, Bill C-93, there would be no waiting period and no application fee. Applications would be dealt with through an expedited administrative process, with no subjective criteria. People who have served sentences for simple possession of cannabis with nothing else on their records would get their pardons, full stop.

Once again, I want to thank the member for Victoria for his work, his contributions to this discussion and his thoughtful concern for the people of his riding and across this country. I know we have a difference of opinion about the modalities, but we share the objective of letting people who have criminal records for simple possession of cannabis move on with their lives. Those individuals should be able to get jobs, find places to live, study and travel without the burden of a criminal record for an activity that is now legal. We are all better off when people living law-abiding lives can put their criminal records behind them and contribute fully to our communities. I look forward to the passage of the government's bill, Bill C-93, which would allow for exactly that.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this evening's debate on Bill C-415, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain cannabis-related convictions, gives me the chance I have long sought to make a clear statement in the House of Commons as to the principles that underlie my long-standing views on cannabis legalization.

I have favoured the legalization of marijuana since I first sought elected office. My views on the subject were first expressed at a policy conference in 2001 and were published in *Policy Options* the same year, but I have always couched my arguments in practical rather than in abstract terms.

Here today, I can express my underlying belief. I believe today, as I did when I first published on the subject 18 years ago, that it is morally wrong to criminalize the personal use of any substance when the said use or misuse of that substance would cause no harm to any person other than the user himself or herself. When no person is victimized other than the person who is engaged in the act, then it is a moral evil for the state to penalize the person who engages in that act.

This principle would apply even if it were the case that none of the following were true.

The principle would apply even if it were not true, for example, that some people suffer from trauma that causes them to make impulsive choices, especially with regard to mood-altering substances. When these individuals are penalized, the law in effect singles out for punishment those who have suffered the abusive behaviour of parents or partners, or the trauma of war, or fetal alcohol syndrome, or simple brain trauma.

The principle that victimless acts should never be punishable would apply even if it were not true that some people are endowed from birth with genes such as the NRXN3 gene, which in 2011 was identified as being associated with a greater likelihood of becoming addicted, in which case the law is singling out for prosecution those who have lost the genetic lottery.

The principle would apply even if it were not true that those who have greater influence and power are far less likely to be prosecuted than an average Canadian who has committed the same offence. A case that makes this point is that of the Prime Minister's brother, Michel Trudeau, who escaped prosecution for marijuana possession 21 years ago because of the intervention of his father, who at the time was himself a former prime minister.

Here is how our current Prime Minister put this in a speech two years ago. He reported that back in 1998, his father, Pierre Trudeau:

...reached out to his friends in the legal community, got the best possible lawyer and was very confident that he was going to be able to make those charges go away,...

We were able to do that because we had resources, my dad had a couple of connections, and we were confident that my little brother wasn't going to be saddled with a criminal record for life.

The principle that no one should be punished for a victimless act would be true even if it were not the case that disadvantaged Canadians, who are statistically more likely than their fellow citizens to be caught and prosecuted and saddled with a criminal record, are far likelier to be members of social or racial groups that appear to be

marginalized in other ways too. Two widely cited statistics in this regard are from Halifax, where black people have historically been five times more likely than white people to be arrested for cannabis possession; and Regina, where indigenous persons have been nine times more likely than white people to be arrested for this offence. This would appear to be the very definition of systemic racism, regardless of the proximate cause for each individual arrest.

Of course, the foregoing examples of inequity really do exist, and therefore the provision of the Criminal Code prohibiting the possession of small quantities of marijuana, which happily is now repealed, was wrong at all of these levels too.

If the underlying offence ought never to have been an offence in the first place—which is not merely what I feel but what has already been decided by Parliament when it enacted the Cannabis Act a year ago—then it stands to reason that the retention of any long-term penalty, such as a criminal record for the formerly unlawful activity, must be wrong for exactly the same reasons. That is true whether it is a charter-protected right that we are talking about or whether it is merely the practical impact on some groups that have been discriminated against in the application of the law. It is true even when that is not the issue, but simply the case that a law was fundamentally wrong.

To be clear, the retention of criminal records for persons who used marijuana when it was a criminal offence represents an ongoing injustice that ought to be remedied.

● (1755)

Quite frankly, a provision expunging the records of persons found guilty of possessing less than 30 grams of cannabis ought to have been included in the Cannabis Act. Why it was not, particularly given the heartfelt civil libertarian sentiment that must have been the motivation for the Prime Minister to share the story about his father and brother, remains a mystery to me.

I note that in other jurisdictions that have legalized the non-therapeutic use of cannabis, such as California and Vermont, provisions expunging the records of those convicted under the repealed statutes are a part of the repeal legislation itself. It is now too late for Canada to make a perfect copy of this enlightened example, but it is not too late for us to correct the oversight. Bill C-415 is an effective and well-designed instrument for achieving an end to this lingering injustice.

About 500,000 Canadians, which is somewhere between 1% and 2% of our adult population, have criminal records for the possession of small amounts of cannabis for personal consumption. The bill would expunge their records.

An expungement is not quite the same thing as a pardon or record suspension. It differs in a number of ways. For one thing, a pardon must be formally requested. Any person can apply for a pardon, but only after waiting for a period of not less than five years, and only upon the payment of a fee of just over \$600. Expungement would be immediate and costless.

Private Members' Business

I am aware that the government recently proposed a measure of its own in an apparent effort to supersede Bill C-415. The government bill, Bill C-93, has a title that tells the entire story of what the government is proposing: an act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspension for simple possession of cannabis. In short, Bill C-93 would remove the five-year waiting period and would eliminate the \$600 fee.

As far as it goes, I think this is good, and if the bill comes up for a second reading vote, I will vote for it in principle. However, Bill C-93 does not go far enough, because a record suspension is not an expungement.

Let me show members how they differ.

As everyone knows, American border control officials reserve the right to ask Canadians who are crossing the border if they have a criminal record for using marijuana. Canadians are regularly turned back at the border if the answer is yes. Everybody should know that if people answer this question untruthfully and lie to an official of the immigration service while on American soil, as people are when at a land crossing, as opposed to the Toronto or Vancouver airport, they can be arrested on the spot.

If records are expunged, but not if pardons are issued, it would be possible for people to answer truthfully, whether travelling by land or air, that they do not have a criminal record for this former offence. This is a meaningful distinction.

I hold no remit for marijuana itself. I never used it unlawfully when it was banned and I have never used it since. I care only about sensible, generous laws and about doing all that we can as lawmakers to make Canada a place where nobody is punished for actions that hurt no one else, and where no person faces long-term penalties for actions that we now think should never have been unlawful in the first place.

I congratulate the sponsor of the bill and I plan to vote in favour of his excellent proposal.

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must humbly admit that something happened to me here yesterday that has never happened to me before, and I will probably remember it for the rest of my life.

Perhaps others have experienced something similar, such as thinking, for whatever reason, a Thursday was actually a Friday. They may have gone through their day as though it were well and truly Friday. Despite plenty of indications to the contrary, they may have been convinced it was Friday. Well, this week, I was slated to deliver two speeches in the House, one on Bill C-419 and the other on Bill C-415. For reasons that elude me still, the speech I gave yesterday was on the wrong subject. It was such a remarkably passionate and compelling speech that none of my fellow MPs on either side of the House thought it appropriate to rise and tell me that I was mistakenly talking about the wrong bill. I would have appreciated it if they had. If I were full of myself, I might choose to believe that people were hanging on my every word and wanted nothing but to hear what I might say next. Maybe they were just busy doing other things.

It still holds true that one cannot fix a mistake by repeating it. This evening, I will not speak about the credit card bill, although I really wanted to do so yesterday. I have been interested in this issue for years, even in the previous Parliament when I was the critic. If I may, I would like to extend my most sincere apologies to the member for Lethbridge, who is the bill's sponsor. I truly wanted to speak about her bill, because there is a lot to say. Moreover, I was previously a teacher and I have seen the consequences for all young people who, as they move from high school to college, are offered credit cards when they are not necessarily equipped to understand all the conditions of credit cards, which now are probably just as essential to Canadians as phones. It is impossible to make a reservation or to shop online without a credit card. To have one is one thing. To know how to use it wisely is another. Knowing the limits and all the terms and conditions is yet another. I am talking about credit cards, which I did not want to do. Once again, I apologize to my colleague from Lethbridge. I can assure her that I will be pleased to support her bill at second reading.

That said, I will come back to the topic on the agenda this evening, the bill introduced by my colleague from Victoria, someone I truly admire, as I told him yesterday. He has the ability to simplify a relatively complex situation and make it easier for everyone to understand. I gave a passionate speech and provided examples of people from my riding who are dealing with this problem as we speak. The Liberals' bill is not going to fix the situation. What is more, it is not likely to receive royal assent before the end of this Parliament. It is just smoke and mirrors. The government is not offering any solution to an issue that I believe is easily and very clearly resolved in the proposed bill from my colleague from Victoria.

My colleague has had the opportunity to review the blues and to familiarise himself with the speech I gave yesterday. It would be rather redundant of me to repeat ad nauseam the story that some of my colleagues may have heard during my moment of confusion. I will wrap it up since I had the chance to say what I wanted to say about this bill. Obviously, I will support the bill introduced by my colleague from Victoria.

I would now like to yield the floor to him as quickly as possible so he can draw this to a logical conclusion and try, along with me and everyone who spoke before me, to convince the Liberal government of the soundness of his arguments with respect to the bill this government has brought before us.

● (1805)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Trois-Rivières. He gave a passionate speech, although it did come a little early.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

I want to thank my colleague as well, the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, for his very passionate and clear support for my initiative. I am grateful to him for the clarity and for demonstrating the very obvious distinction that the government seems to wish to gloss over between what are now called record suspensions or pardons, and the notion of expungement, which, of course, is at the heart of my bill.

As a private member's bill, members would know that I was not able to talk about the automatic expungement, because that would cost money and private members' bills are not allowed to do that. Therefore, I was left with an application process of my own. What troubles me is that the government is trying to conflate expungement and pardon as if there were no difference, and to make an argument, frankly a legally baseless argument, that expungement is somehow to be reserved, as the Liberals have chosen to do with Bill C-66, for activities that violate the charter. First of all, as I pointed out in my speech on Bill C-93 on Monday, going through a number of scholars like Professor Roach, Professor Berger and others, there is absolutely no distinction for that. More importantly, the government itself continues to acknowledge that it has no choice; it is from government records.

However, this law, which has been around since 1922, the prohibition on cannabis, has had a disproportionate impact on indigenous people and black people in particular. The government admits that, yet the Liberals are content to stand here six months after they brought in the law that made cannabis legal, in essentially the dying days of Parliament, to bring forward a half measure that likely will not get on the order book. It is something they can check off, I presume, during the campaign. Whether it gets through the Senate, the House and all of its committees before then, I have my doubts. Nevertheless, they have chosen to do this. This has an impact on real people's lives. The government acknowledges that, but the Liberals are prepared nevertheless to do this application process.

The Liberals pejoratively say that I recommended there be an army of summer students. I did no such thing. There are ways to deal with it. If it costs money and it is inconvenient, let us talk about what it means to that black person in Toronto who cannot get his or her foot on the social ladder and has to perhaps be on social assistance, or that indigenous person who cannot rent an apartment because they have a criminal record. The government will say that the Canadian Human Rights Act has an answer for that, but that is not living in the real world, as far as I can tell. It is disappointing.

With regard to the government's initiative, the welcome that it is waiving the fees and making it faster, I would characterize it as a good first step. However, it is too little and it is certainly too late. It is disappointing that we here on this, and it is disappointing that the government has not done the full measure. I was hoping that my bill could go to committee along with Bill C-93, and people of goodwill could try to find a solution which would involve expungement, and make the changes that even the government admits are necessary. However, this measure simply will not do the job.

● (1810)

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.

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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 1, 2019, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in May 2018, the city of Grand Forks and the surrounding Boundary district of southern British Columbia suffered the worst flooding in 70 years. A record snow pack, sudden melting and heavy rain on snow events sent the levels of the Kettle River and the Granby River up over their banks and into people's houses, businesses and over farms.

I drove through the area the next day. The highway was temporarily closed and much of the historic downtown of Grand Forks was under water, and whole neighbourhoods were inundated.

About 3,000 people were forced to flee their homes, about 1,500 buildings were evacuated throughout the regional district and more than 500 were damaged. Many remain empty today.

The flooding caused over \$38 million in damages to residential neighbourhoods, farms, commercial areas and industrial operations throughout the Kettle Valley. Some farms lost huge areas of land when the river changed its course and swept through fields, turning valuable agricultural lands into watercourses or unusable islands.

Adjournment Proceedings

Local residents stepped up during the flood, sandbagging in the hot sun and raising dikes to fend off a threatened second flooding event as snow melt proceeded in the surrounding mountains. Charitable organizations stepped, feeding the volunteers, finding shelter for the homeless and helping affected residents clean out their ruined homes. So many were impacted, and many have lost their homes. It has been a very difficult time for the people of Grand Forks and the surrounding area.

An office for Boundary flood recovery was set up, and those folks have been working day in and day out to deal with the emergency and plan for the future. What does that future look like? With climate change, more extreme weather events are expected over the coming years, such as more precipitation in winter, earlier springs and rain on snow events. Luckily, the forecast for this spring is more hopeful as snow packs are, for the time being, below normal.

However, concerns for the future are driving the decisions being made by the citizens of Grand Forks and by the Boundary flood recovery team. These are tough decisions, decisions like which neighbourhoods are likely to be flooded again, which properties ought to be bought out to open up areas that can be flooded during future events so the river can take a more natural course and which properties should be bought out to allow the construction of proper dikes that can protect other neighbourhoods.

Nobody likes to see their home singled out on a map as a property that might be sacrificed to create a safer future for the community as a whole. The flood recovery team, the City of Grand Forks, the Regional District of Kootenay-Boundary, the Province of B.C. and other agencies have created a plan for the future that will build a more resilient community and region. It will take time. The plan covers multiple years. It will also be expensive, more than \$60 million.

Like all major infrastructure projects, funding will come from several sources. The City of Grand Forks will provide what it can, and has spent a lot of money already. The Province of B.C. has stepped up to the plate. However, local residents and agencies are relying on the federal government for a major part of the funding, primarily through an application to the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund. Without this funding, the future will be very difficult and uncertain for Grand Forks and the surrounding region.

• (1815)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member's question, let me first offer my sympathy to those impacted by this flooding in British Columbia last May and particularly in Grand Forks, the community that was hardest hit. As my own community of Constance Bay was devastated by flooding two years ago, I do understand the kind of trauma that the people are going through.

I can confirm that the Governor in Council has issued an order in council authorizing the provision of federal financial assistance under the disaster financial assistance arrangements to British Columbia for the 2018 spring flood event. Public Safety Canada is working closely with provincial officials to help Grand Forks and the other communities recover from the recent flooding as quickly as possible.

When natural disaster strikes, such as was the case during the spring flood that occurred in 30 communities across British Columbia, the provinces and territories are responsible for the design and delivery of financial assistance. In the event of a large-scale natural disaster such as this, the Government of Canada provides financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments through the DFAA, administered by Public Safety Canada.

When response and recovery costs exceed what individual provinces or territories could reasonably be expected to bear on their own, the DFAA provides the Government of Canada with a fair and equitable means by which it can assist provincial and territorial governments. All decisions regarding financial assistance to individuals, to small businesses and to local governments affected by natural disaster are taken by the province. It is important to note that the DFAA does not provide financial assistance to those directly affected by the disaster, but rather cost shares eligible provincial costs.

A province or territory may request Government of Canada's disaster financial assistance when eligible expenditures exceed an established threshold based on the provincial population. Eligible expenses under this program include but are not limited to rescue operations, restoring public works and infrastructure to their pre-disaster condition, as well as replacing or repairing basic essential personal property of individuals, small businesses and farmsteads.

I will share with my hon. colleague that the order in council has been issued and that the negotiations with the province are currently under way.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund is an excellent program for funding permanent solutions to natural disasters, solutions that consider climate impacts and the benefits of retaining natural assets and restoring ecological function. The city and regional district are looking forward to hearing the decision on DMAF and implementing their progressive and innovative proposal.

The DFAA is also a critical program. In support of the modernization of provincial DFA programs, we also encourage efforts in federal-provincial agreements under Public Safety Canada to support the delivery of permanent solutions such as land acquisition immediately following flooding disasters, as was demonstrated in recent flood recovery in New Brunswick.

The residents of Grand Forks and the Kettle Valley have had a very difficult year. Many are desperately hoping for good news, and we are all waiting to hear that the federal government will bring that better future to Boundary Country.

Adjournment Proceedings

•(1820)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right. There is the immediate response for when it comes to rebuilding for a particular emergency situation, but there is also the longer-term mitigation efforts that need to be made in order to adjust our communities to the realities of climate change. We are moving forward with both these kinds of initiatives.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:20 p.m.)

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