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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Windsor West.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

NETFLIX

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a broad coalition of Quebeckers made a public statement in the media today to remind the Minister of Canadian Heritage that her primary responsibility is to protect culture.

Prominent figures from the cultural and business sectors along with such broadcasters as TVA, Bell Média, V, Télé-Québec, Cogeco, TV5, SOCAN, the CSN, the FTQ, and Evenko have a message for the minister: just say no to special treatment for Netflix.

Nobody wants to pay more tax, but we all think existing taxes should apply to all businesses. That is called tax fairness.

Quebec culture is dynamic, and our artists' creativity is the envy of the world. The minister should stop sabotaging them by giving companies like Netflix, Amazon, and Google special treatment, she should start working for our creators, and she should pay heed to the coalition's message that Quebeckers are against special treatment for Netflix.

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FUTURPRENEUR

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I had the pleasure of joining a number of impressive young entrepreneurs at a reception in honour of Futurpreneur, a non-profit organization that has been fuelling the entrepreneurial passions of young Canadians for over two decades.

[*English*]

Since its inception, Futurpreneur has provided financing and mentoring to nearly 10,000 young women and men, launching more than 8,000 new businesses, and creating over 42,000 jobs from coast to coast to coast.

Our government understands that small business is the backbone of our economy, our communities, and our future. That is why I am proud that our government invested an additional \$14 million in Futurpreneur so it can continue to help aspiring young entrepreneurs bring their business ideas to life and to market.

[*Translation*]

I encourage all members to join me in welcoming young Canadian entrepreneurs Julia Deans, Futurpreneur's CEO, and the entire Futurpreneur team.

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[*English*]

ED NELSON

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House on a sad occasion to commemorate the life of an inspiring Albertan, Ed Nelson, who passed away.

A pillar in his community who always fought for the underdog, Mr. Nelson was a legend in Canadian ranching and politics. After serving in the Royal Canadian Navy in World War II, Ed returned home and was determined to grow Canada's cattle industry and to preserve vital grazing land along the eastern slopes. He, along with several other World War II veterans, returned to their family farms and helped raise \$1 million for a grazing co-op, purchasing what is now the world-renowned Waldron Ranch, which includes precious native fescue grassland.

Revered for his stubborn battles with the Canadian Wheat Board, Ed was a hero to Canadian farmers. In 1987, he was a founding member of the Reform Party, and certainly one of his proudest moments was seeing the end of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Nelson was an icon in his community. His contributions will last for generations.

Our hearts go out to his family, his friends, and his community. Ed will be missed, and it was truly an honour to know him.

*Statements by Members***FINLAND**

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Finland's independence from Russia in 1917, we reflect on the rich relationship Canada has with Finland and the tremendous contribution of Finnish Canadians.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Canada was one of the main beneficiaries of Finnish immigration. Finnish names are still common in the cities of Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and my hometown of Sault Ste. Marie. Today there are almost 144,000 Canadians with Finnish ancestry. Over 15,000 claim Finnish as their mother tongue. Some of them live in Suomi-Koti, a tremendous seniors' residence in Don Valley West, and worship at the Agricola Lutheran and Saalem Pentecostal churches.

We share the same values of democracy, good governance, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. More importantly, though, we share a strong passion for ice hockey and a deep friendship off the ice.

Happy Independence Day to Finland. *Kiitos.*

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●(1410)

[*Translation*]

LAURENT DUVERNAY-TARDIF

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I want to celebrate the success of Mont-Saint-Hilaire native Laurent Duvernay-Tardif. Earlier this year, he became the highest-paid Canadian in the history of the NFL after signing a contract with Kansas City.

That contract is not the only reason I want to pay tribute to this son of Mont-Saint-Hilaire; I also want to recognize him for his qualities as a person and his contributions to the community.

Mr. Duvernay-Tardif is studying medicine at McGill University, in addition to pursuing a successful career in football. He has even committed to practising medicine in Montreal once his football playing days are over. He has also started his own foundation to promote healthy living habits and physical activity among young people.

We have one last wish for the man being called the most interesting man in the NFL: a Super Bowl title.

* * *

[*English*]

HALIFAX EXPLOSION

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we stand in the warmth of this House, and my family in Nova Scotia lives in the warmth of our home. However, about 100 years ago today, the Halifax explosion left 6,000 people homeless, wandering through the wreckage in a major maritime blizzard.

Nova Scotian students could tell us the history of when the SS *Mont-Blanc* collided with the SS *Imo*. The explosion killed 2,000 people and injured 9,000. This explosion could be felt across my

riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. It is even said that it was felt in Cape Breton, 250 kilometres away.

Today, across the province of Nova Scotia, we are commemorating the brave rescue workers who played a major role. We are also honouring the victims.

In closing, let us remember Halifax with pride.

* * *

ROGER DAVIS

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Roger Davis, a Brant County businessman, a philanthropist, and a great Canadian.

His rags to riches story began in 1957, with Roger's single-handed determination to succeed. Sixty one years later, Davis Fuels exemplifies a service to community philosophy, modelled by its founder and family.

With business success, a pay-it-forward attitude, and a giving spirit, Roger donated generously and unselfishly, supporting many organizations and local initiatives. Even more importantly, he reached out to help many in need, quietly and without fanfare. Many community projects, sports teams, clubs, and causes would simply not have existed without the support of Roger and Davis Fuels.

Roger passed away on November 23. To his wife Edith and family, we are privileged to have known a man of such high character and virtue. His immense influence on our community will never be forgotten.

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[*Translation*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the sad anniversary of the day when 14 young female students at the École polytechnique de Montréal had their lives cut short by a madman.

December is an important month for raising Canadians' awareness of gender-based violence, a problem that unfortunately remains all too common in our society. We will never be rid of gender-based violence until we ensure that relations between women and men are based on equality, respect, solidarity, fairness, inclusion, and justice.

It is also vital to break the silence and combat the impunity enjoyed by abusers. We need to change mindsets and promote a culture of equality for all. This day is also a day of hope. We must have faith in our human capacity to keep improving.

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●(1415)

2022 WINTER OLYMPICS

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, China will be hosting the Winter Olympics in 2022. To encourage its citizens to play winter sports, China is seeking advice from the best.

Statements by Members

Canada is a world leader in winter sports. I have often mentioned the influence that my riding of Laurentides—Labelle has had on our country in that regard. Our expertise is also world renowned.

Today, we have the pleasure of welcoming to Ottawa a group of young hockey players from the Polyvalente des Monts de Sainte-Agathe, who are real stars in China. On July 30, 10 players and four coaches inaugurated the Zhengding Olympic facility in a game that was broadcast live to more than 150 million viewers.

The partnership is still going strong. In collaboration with the Laurentians school board and the Sainte-Adèle chamber of commerce, a new delegation of Sainte-Agathe players will represent Canada in a game scheduled for late January. Several delegates from China are also set to visit us in the next few years.

In 2022, we will win Olympic gold. As our national anthem begins to play, no place will be prouder than the Laurentians.

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[*English*]

FIRST RESPONDERS AND CANADIAN FORCES

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, brave Canadians at home and abroad accept the dangerous duty of protecting us, and their work does not end at Christmas. As we enjoy our holidays with family and friends, police officers and firefighters in our communities and our military members abroad will be away from their own loved ones while they are working to protect ours, standing on guard for us.

In 2017, the names added to the honour roll of police personnel killed in the line of duty expanded that tragic list to over 850 officers. The Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation's ceremony this year sadly added 13 new names to the list of over 1,300 firefighters who have lost their lives since 1848. One need only view the Book of Remembrance in Parliament's Memorial Chamber to understand the sheer number of soldiers who have paid the ultimate price.

May all our wishes this Christmas be for the safe return home of these brave men and women who serve to protect us and keep us safe.

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FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today more than ever, I am very proud to say, Nipissing—Timiskaming.

[*The member spoke in Anishinaabemowin*]

[*English*]

Later this afternoon, debate will begin in the House of Commons on Bill C-61, which would create the Anishinabek education system, designed by the Anishinabek nation for Anishinabek students. It is the largest first nation education self-government agreement in Canada.

I am honoured that the Anishinabek education board will be based in Nipissing—Timiskaming on Nipissing first nation land. It will deliver culturally relevant and community-tailored education

programs and services so that current and future generations of students can learn and honour their culture and past while getting the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the future.

Congratulations to first nation leaders and Canadian parliamentarians for putting students first and ensuring a high-quality education that will propel them to success.

* * *

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my actions matter. These three small words have the ability to help change the lives and well-being of all women.

December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. We have come so far yet still have miles to go.

There is no excuse. We, men and women alike, must stand together and give our voices to stop the violence that has been affecting the lives of women for generations. Every woman has the right to enjoy a life that is free from violence, yet the number of women who do not enjoy this freedom is staggering.

Today, tomorrow, and always, I ask members to join me in speaking out to end violence against women.

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HALIFAX EXPLOSION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago, Halifax was a bustling wartime port city. It served as a primary base for the Royal Canadian Navy and facilitated the transportation of tens of thousands of troops and millions of tonnes of supplies destined to support the Canadian, American, and British troops fighting in the First World War.

Tragedy struck on the morning of December 6, 1917, when the vessels *Imo* and *Mont-Blanc* collided, setting off a dreadful, deafening explosion that destroyed everything in its path with its initial blast and ignited a raging fire that swept across the city. It was the largest ever man-made explosion at that time and shattered windows in Truro, over 100 kilometres away.

The Halifax explosion resulted in the deaths of nearly 2,000 people. It injured and blinded 9,000 more and forced nearly 25,000 into homelessness. Shocked and saddened by the news of such devastation, aid poured in from across Canada and around the world to provide relief to the survivors.

Today we remember those who perished in the explosion, celebrate the heroes of the day, and show our continued appreciation for those who came to help Halifax in its time of need.

Statements by Members

●(1420)

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Ontario's only first nation member of Parliament, I would like to welcome all first nations leaders from across Canada who have come to Ottawa for the Special Chiefs Assembly and recognize the chiefs and community leaders from Ontario who helped make the Anishinabek education agreement a reality.

On August 16 of this year, the Government of Canada and 23 first nations of the Anishinabek nation signed a historic self-government agreement on education. This agreement recognizes these communities' law-making powers over education and supports the creation of the Anishinabek education system. Through the leadership of these communities, Anishinabek students will now be able to attend community-run schools with a curriculum that teaches Anishinabek language, culture, and history.

This is an important step in building the nation-to-nation relationship and is something all Canadians should take great pride in.

* * *

[Translation]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1989, 14 female engineering students were gunned down at École Polytechnique in Montreal. An entire generation is still grieving as a result of this horrible act of violence.

Twenty-eight years ago, 14 young women were killed and another 14 were injured simply because they were women.

Every year we have a duty to honour the memory of these women who were so brutally robbed of their future.

[English]

Every day, women experience persistent and disproportionate violence that men will never have to face. On this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, let us stand up and commit to building a Canada where women and girls can live without the fear of violence.

[Translation]

Together, let us build a country where women and girls can move about freely without fear, work without fear, and study without fear.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we remember the largest mass shooting in Canadian history and the 14 young women robbed of their lives by the unjustified hatred of one individual.

In their memory, we take a moment to pause to honour the lives they lived, the dreams they held, and the future that was robbed from

them. The 14 victims were chemical, mechanical, civil, and material engineers; a nursing student; and a future budget clerk. They were women pursuing their dreams. They were daughters, sisters, and friends.

Sadly, violence against women and girls continues to take many forms, and the number of names added to public memory is ever growing. Today, let us resolve to do all we can to strengthen the justice system and to positively impact societal values and cultural norms.

As members in this House, let us choose to lead by example. Let us commit to doing all we can to honour and empower women to be all they can be.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a solemn occasion, as we mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. Today is an important part of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

On December 6, we remember the 14 young women who were killed at École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. Our entire nation was shocked and saddened by their deaths. December 6 continues to serve as a call to action to eliminate violence against women in Canada.

●(1425)

[English]

Canadians can lend their voices in support using the hashtag #MYActionsMatter. Use your voices now and throughout the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

I encourage everyone to honour the memory of these 14 promising young women by attending a vigil on December 6 and by choosing to always speak out against all forms of gender-based violence.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand that there is agreement to observe a moment of silence. I now invite the House to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the tragic event that happened 28 years ago at the École Polytechnique in Montreal.

[A moment of silence observed]

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***STATUS OF WOMEN**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, my thoughts are with the women who lost their lives in an unimaginable horror, as well as the women who are victims of violence and live in fear every day. I am very proud to be the father of three wonderful daughters who will accomplish great things. I know that all members of the House want every woman and every girl to be safe.

Can the government tell the House what it is doing to ensure a safer future for women and girls in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his opening remarks on this very important day in Canadian history.

Coast to coast to coast, tears will be shed, candles will be lit, roses will be laid, and we will all resolve our commitment to do better by the women and girls of this country. We remember the 14 young women whose stories ended tragically. We acknowledge those whose names or stories we may never know. I know that all hon. members in this House will do everything they can to prevent and end gender-based violence.

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TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal attack on small businesses is getting worse. Yesterday the government announced that the enforcement of the new tax changes will come into effect on January 1 but that the details of the new tax hikes will not be made public until the budget is tabled sometime in the spring. That is like asking a football team to play an entire game under a new set of rules, but not telling the new rules until half-time.

Can the minister explain how he expects small businesses to operate under these conditions?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, one of the important things small business owners across the country know is that our government has lowered the small business tax, which will benefit thousands and thousands of corporations and create, we believe, hundreds of thousands of jobs for middle-class Canadians. That is something we committed to in the last election campaign. That is something our government was proud to do.

With respect to the changes for private corporations, the Leader of the Opposition knows very well that we said that those details will be well known before the implementation date of January 1. I know he is enthusiastic to understand that good news as well.

● (1430)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government had to be dragged kicking and screaming

into fulfilling its campaign promises and only because of Conservative pressure that it do that.

I can assure the hon. member, my valued colleague and friend, that no one in the small business community thinks that good news is coming on January 1. Nobody believes that a 73% tax rate on small business investment will be a good thing for the economy.

What kind of good news can small business owners expect? Will the good news be that the government is scrapping its tax hikes?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing we can tell the Leader of the Opposition is that not many small business owners I have met believe that phony 73% figure he keeps throwing around in the House of Commons.

One thing Canadians know is that our government is committed to supporting small businesses. We recognize the economic importance for Canadians all across the country. Small business owners and entrepreneurs are the economic engine of our country. We will be supporting them by lowering their taxes. We will continue to support them as they create the jobs that middle-class Canadians are looking forward to.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government announced its tax reform during the summer vacation, when everyone was trying to relax around the pool. That was 140 days ago. This reform will adversely affect businesses, workers, and the people who create jobs across Canada. The tax reform we are hearing about is to come into effect in a few days, on January 1, and no one knows the details.

When will the Liberal government provide business people, who create jobs, with the details of this reform?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to correct my hon. colleague, but what we announced during the summer was that we would consult Canadians. We heard, we listened, and we met with owners of small and medium-sized businesses across Canada. We listened to them and we cut their taxes, and we have always said that we will make the tax system fairer. The details will be released soon and will be in place for January 1, as the Minister of Finance has always said.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is just one problem, and that is that no one in Canada believes that this government is really consulting people. This government is more about imposing its views on people.

Yesterday, the parliamentary secretary told the House that this new tax proposal would be announced very shortly. The only problem is that “very shortly” needs to be now, because the measures come into effect on January 1, which is only a few days away. Canadians are worried, entrepreneurs are worried, and Canadian workers across the country are worried.

When will the government tell job-creating entrepreneurs what is going on?

Oral Questions

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned Canadian workers. They are a big concern for our government.

I am pleased to announce some very good news, since I know that people could use some. The economy has created nearly 600,000 jobs over the past two years, most of which are full-time jobs. Canada's economic growth is more good news.

For Canadian entrepreneurs who want a tax break, we are once again pleased to announce that we are lowering taxes for small and medium-sized businesses, and we will continue to support our SMEs.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage decided not to subject digital giants to the same rules and constraints as Canadian companies, to disastrous effect.

As a result, our media have lost virtually all of their advertising revenue and are in danger of closing. Our broadcasters and content creators are at a distinct disadvantage. That is the business case. Democracy is also an issue. We need a free and independent press to maintain our democracy.

Why does the minister not understand that her inaction is jeopardizing a pillar of our democracy: a free and independent press?

• (1435)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of protecting our culture, and that is why we, like the cultural sector, are concerned about the impact of American content on our culture.

It goes without saying that our government recognizes the importance of print media. We have already said that we want to work with print media stakeholders to help them with the digital transition and to support local journalism in general across the country because we know journalism is a pillar of our democracy.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they are already there. They have transitioned to digital, but if that is so popular, why are the cultural sector and the media speaking out against this reform?

[English]

Liberals have done nothing to fix the situation our local papers are in. They are threatened with closure because the minister is giving digital giants preferential treatment. After two years, in fact, the only thing she has done is to postpone a support strategy and tell the industry that it will just have to get used to the new reality. She does not seem to get it.

Why does she not understand that her inaction is jeopardizing a fundamental pillar of our democracy: a free and independent press?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that there have been thousands of job losses in newsrooms across the country and, of course, we value the importance of journalism, especially local journalism, because we

know that this is a fundamental pillar of our democracy. That is why, every year, our government supports local journalism through the Canada periodical fund up to \$75 million, that is why we reinvested in our public broadcasters to support local news by \$675 million, and that is why we will also make sure we work with the industry to help it transition through these difficult times to ultimately make sure that there is a sustainable business model—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before establishing official trade talks with China, issues with human, environmental, and labour rights must be addressed, and despite their recent report on Canadian job loss due to existing trade with China, the Liberals seem keen on pushing through a deal, but, once again, they are completely lacking transparency. First, the PM was going to China to talk trade; then he was not. In China, he talked trade, but there was no deal. Then, at the last minute, his trade minister stayed behind to work on a deal. What is going on?

When will the government be clear with Canadians and reveal its China trade list of priorities?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has always been a trading nation, and access to diversified, growing markets is critical for growing our economy and creating good jobs.

As we have said from the beginning, if we decide to strengthen our economic engagement with China, we will do so on our own terms, based on our interests, safeguarding our values, and at our own speed.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to a report commissioned by Global Affairs Canada, trade with China was responsible for the loss of 105,000 jobs in Canada between 2001 and 2011.

Now that the government appears to be in such a rush to enter into formal negotiations for a free trade agreement with China, does the government have any idea how many Canadian jobs will be at risk if we go ahead with a free trade agreement with China?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians are well aware, reaching successful trade agreements is no small feat and is a time-consuming process.

Canadians also understand how important it is to do things right and move forward on our discussions. With 600,000 good new jobs created in two years and an unemployment rate under 6%, it is safe to say that our economic plan is working.

TAXATION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians remember July 18, that sad day in the middle of the summer when the Liberal government launched a direct attack on our job and wealth creators, our SMEs.

Fortunately, Canadians were watching and, under the leadership of the official opposition, thousands of citizens rose up to tell the government that enough was enough.

The problem is that no one really knows when this is going to happen. The government has put the whole thing on hold, but some say that it will happen soon, as part of the budget, no later than January 1.

Can someone finally set the record straight for Canadians?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians also remember that in the summer of 2015, right in the middle of an election campaign, people were wondering whether we were in a recession or heading for a recession. The campaign lasted 78 days and cost taxpayers a fortune, all thanks to the former government.

Now, no one is wondering about that anymore. Canada has the fastest-growing economy in the G7, 600,000 jobs have been created, and entrepreneurs in my riding, and across Canada, know that we are lowering the small business tax from 10.5% to 9%, because we know how important SMEs are and how much they contribute to our economic growth.

• (1440)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if ever we needed one, here is a crystal clear demonstration that this government never tells Canadians the truth.

The question was clear: when will business people find out when this government will make tax changes? There is not even a hint of an answer.

Therefore, I will repeat the question: is there someone in this government that can give our Canadian job creators an honest answer?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I knew that there was a second question, and I would be pleased to respond to my opposition colleague.

The details about income sprinkling will be released soon. I can assure my colleague and all Canadians that we will always support SMEs. We cut their taxes from 10.5% to 9% in order to encourage investment in innovation and job creation. The details will be released soon.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, have the Liberals not learned a thing from being smug and brushing off serious concerns of small business owners? Yesterday, the government said that the changes would not be released until the budget, and then a moment later it said they would be released very soon. The bottom line is small business owners need to know and they are asking the government to respect them and to let them know when the changes are going to happen. When will the Liberals stop

Oral Questions

playing games with local small businesses, just be up front, tell them when the changes are going to happen, and exactly what those changes are?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to income sprinkling, as I mentioned in French earlier, the details will be announced very shortly, well ahead of the January 1 implementation date. We have listened to Canadians from coast to coast to make sure we get this right. Our goal, which I know is one that might be a little foreign to the opposition, is to bring some more fairness into our tax system. We think that it is a good thing to have a tax system that is fair for everyone while supporting small business owners across the country as they create jobs and as they innovate. That is why we have lowered the small business tax rate.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable hearing the Liberals talk about tax fairness when it was their Minister of Finance who has spent the last two years protecting his income from taxes. It is unbelievable. Dan Kelly, president of the CFIB, said that to expect business owners to make changes for January 1 with no details is appalling. It is appalling. Simple question: Will small business owners be given any advance notice before these tax changes go into effect, or is advance notice of tax changes only something that Liberal insiders get to have?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we listened to Canadians and business people from coast to coast to coast. The details on income sprinkling will be announced soon.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two years ago around this time, the Minister of Finance increased taxes on the floor of the House of Commons, but not before he could sell his shares and realize his gains before those taxes took effect. That meant he dodged the same taxes he was imposing on others. Now he is at it again, with new tax hikes that Morneau Shepell will not have to pay. In just three weeks, the minister's tax hikes on family businesses will take effect.

Where are the details?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the second part of the member's question, I have said it. We have reviewed the submissions that we have received. The details regarding income sprinkling will be announced very shortly, before the January 1 date.

With regard to the first part of his question, after the media and so many commentators have said that these are baseless allegations that the member has been making for a week, one would think he had listened. I get why he does not want to talk about the economy, because when we look at the average growth that we have known in this government, it is twice as much as they had in 10 years. They created close to a million jobs in 10 years, we created 600,000 in two years. That is what they do not want to talk about.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, the finance minister wants us all to cry crocodile tears for him. He is the one who called our small family-owned businesses a “privileged few”, using fancy accounting schemes to avoid paying their fair share, yet it was he who set up companies in the Bahamas, Alberta, and other places where he did not live to lower his tax bill. It was he who sold his shares before his own tax increases came into effect.

Why is it that whenever Liberals raise taxes it is always everyone but them who are stuck with the bill?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad he has talked about this tax increase, because this tax increase was something we campaigned on, to increase taxes on the wealthiest 1% and to reduce them for nine million Canadians. We know that when the middle class is successful, when the middle class is prosperous, the economy is doing well. That is something they could never figure out.

* * *

• (1445)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals failed to appoint several officers of Parliament, we know that some appointments are imminent. However, the process is neither open nor transparent. The appointment of parliamentary officers who work for all hon. members of the House should follow meaningful consultations. However, the process continues to be cloaked in secrecy.

We remember the time when the Liberals promised to be open and transparent, the time when they promised to do better.

When will they show true transparency and when will they establish an open appointment process?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we, in fact, put in place a new appointment process that supports open, transparent, and merit-based selection processes. Our aim is to identify high-quality candidates who will help to achieve gender parity and truly reflect Canada's diversity. Under our new process, we have made over 400 appointments, of which 56% are women, over 11% are visible minorities, and 10% are indigenous. It is a process that is evidently working quite well.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, officers of Parliament perform some of the most important roles in Canadian democracy. They run our elections, they police lobbying, and they enforce our ethical rules. The Liberals have completely botched the process of hiring these watchdogs. I do not know about everyone else, but when I am hiring somebody, I never pick from a list of one candidate. That is exactly what the Liberals are trying to force on Parliament. It is not consultation they are doing, it is an insult to this Parliament.

Newsflash for the Liberals: these watchdogs do not work for them. They work on behalf of this whole place and on behalf of Canadians. If they want to work with us, appoint the right watchdogs, use the right process, and end this sham.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no sham here. As a government, we respect the independent offices of these individuals who serve all parliamentarians. There is a process. That process is being followed. Members across the way are very much aware that the process is, in fact, being followed, and we are identifying outstanding Canadians who have the ability and credentials to do what is necessary in these very important positions.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's mandate letter told the finance minister that his “private affairs should bear the closest public scrutiny.” When first elected, he told everyone that he would show up to work and that he placed his assets in a blind trust, but instead he hid his assets from the public in a myriad of numbered companies. He failed to disclose an offshore corporation to the Ethics Commissioner and was fined for that. The same commissioner launched an investigation into his introduction of legislation that could benefit his family company.

With all these failures, how can the Prime Minister still trust this finance minister?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has done what is expected of all ministers, all parliamentarians, which is to work with the Ethics Commissioner. He met with her when he came to Ottawa, followed all her recommendations, and announced that he would go above and beyond.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no, he has not, and there is more. The Ethics Commissioner is looking into the 2015 sale of shares in his family's company after he refuses to explain why he only divested some of those shares, and just days before he introduced the new tax measures. The finance minister has failed to live up to the standards set by his Prime Minister.

Canadians need to know they can trust the country's chief financial officer, but they have lost trust in the minister. Will he do the right thing and resign?

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fully understand why the Conservatives want to talk about anything but the economy. When we look at growth in the country, in the last two years the average growth has been twice as high as they had in their years in power. When we look at job creation, it took them 10 years to create close to one million jobs. It took us two to add 600,000 jobs to the Canadian economy.

I will quote the fine Minister of Public Safety. He recently said that if we wanted to find as good an economic record, we would need to look back at the previous Liberal government. The Conservatives are trying to forget their 10 years. They should be taking notes on how the finance minister is managing this economy.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter what the Liberals do to improve the finance minister's image, nothing can be done. Ethical problems always seem to follow him around.

Canadians know very well that the finance minister did not follow the advice of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. He is under investigation by the Ethics Commissioner for having forgotten to declare a villa in Europe and for having introduced a bill that benefits his company, Morneau Shepell.

When will the Prime Minister decide that the finance minister should resign?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said many times in the House, and as the member for Beauce knows, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is the institution responsible for preserving the integrity of Parliament. The finance minister has always worked and always will work with her to ensure that all the rules that govern us are respected at all times.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that the Minister of Finance must have a high level of integrity, but this is not the case.

Canadians have lost confidence, and now small-business owners are worried. Business owners will be hit with tax increases, but we know nothing more than that at the moment. The government recently promised to provide details, but we are still waiting. These changes will take effect very early in 2018.

We have lost confidence, and business owners have lost confidence in the Minister of Finance.

When will the Minister of Finance resign?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance's record is clear. Nearly 600,000 jobs have been added to the economy. Child poverty has been reduced by 40%. We have moved forward with an ambitious housing strategy to ensure that all Canadians have a roof over their heads.

I think that the Minister of Finance's record makes the Conservatives' record during their 10-year mandate pale in comparison.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is dangerous and ill-advised. It will compromise peace efforts, and it violates international law and UN resolutions.

This is a devastating day for those who believe in peace, justice and security in the Middle East.

Why has Canada not spoken out against this decision? Will Canada condemn this announcement and make formal representations to the U.S. government on this matter?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a friend and steadfast ally of Israel and a friend of the Palestinian people.

Canada's long-standing position has been that Israel's status cannot be resolved until there is a settlement between the two parties. This is the long-standing positive of consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments.

We are committed to just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state, living side by side, living in peace and security with Israel.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, young people need structures in place to continue working and living in French.

The Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française is calling on the government to invest in national organizations, such as the Jeux de la francophonie, to help French thrive outside Quebec.

At yesterday's Standing Committee on Official Languages meeting, we heard that the commissioner's new mandate did not really seem to have the teeth to ensure the principles of bilingualism are properly enforced.

Will the Liberals commit to giving the Commissioner of Official Languages adequate power and resources to ensure the vitality of French and English across the country?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of our two official languages and the importance of our French-Canadian youth. I was actually at the Jeux de la francophonie canadienne, which the Department of Canadian Heritage supports every year.

That being said, my colleague has little credibility when it comes to bilingualism. Perhaps she should talk to her leader about his position on bilingualism in the Supreme Court because he is once again saying one thing when he is outside Quebec and the opposite when he is in Quebec.

*Oral Questions***VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently, media and public attention has once again been focused on a problem that has been confirmed by statistics for a long time: women in Canada and elsewhere in the world are subjected to abuse on a daily basis. Gender-based violence has devastating effects on individuals, families, and communities.

[*English*]

These effects can be long lasting and profoundly affect many aspects of a person's life.

Could the Minister of Status of Women tell the House why it is important to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women?

• (1455)

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, we remember a day when 14 young lives ended too soon, a day that shook our country and continues to do so to this day. Today, we recognize that gender-based violence continues, that we all have an opportunity to be part of a solution, that actions by individuals and institutions, like this one, matter.

Today, during the 16 days of action to end gender-based violence, we renew our resolve to do more, not just today but every day, to ensure every woman and girl in our country lives free of hate, misogyny, and sexism.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before May of this year, 80% of people with type 1 diabetes were being approved for the disability tax credit. After May, 80% are being rejected. The Minister of National Revenue changed the eligibility criteria. For months she denied it, but now we have the documents to prove it.

Will the minister now do the right thing and finally admit the truth, that she changed the criteria in May.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure all Canadians who receive the disability tax credit that the eligibility criteria have not changed.

That being said, I am always willing to listen to the concerns of Canadians from all walks of life. That is why, on November 23, I reinstated the disability advisory committee. If changes must be made to the agency's process, we will discuss them with the experts who sit on this committee. We will make those changes in a way that is fair to all recipients of the disability tax credit.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 2, a memo was sent to all tax collectors who assessed applications for disability tax credits. The memo told them to reject all type 1 diabetics for the disability tax credit, unless there were exceptional circumstances. This was done, despite the fact there is no

requirement in the Income Tax Act that Canadians with diabetes must have exceptional circumstances to meet the criteria.

I have a simple question. Did the minister approve this memo, yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, I want to reassure all Canadians who receive the disability tax credit that the eligibility criteria have not changed.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has a lot to say but is doing less than nothing for type 1 diabetics who are being denied the disability tax credit. Everyone knows it is true. The minister either has no idea what is going on in her own department, or she is intentionally misleading Canadians.

Either way, people with type 1 diabetes deserve an apology from the minister. Will the minister now do the right thing, apologize, and reverse this cold-hearted decision.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a social worker and now as minister, I have always worked on behalf of the most vulnerable.

That is why we have taken steps to make this tax credit more accessible. We simplified the application forms and are allowing specialized nurse practitioners to fill out their patients' forms. Anyone who wishes to dispute the agency's decisions can do so by providing new medical information and requesting a review or appeal of a decision.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time the Liberals raise taxes, the revenue minister keeps saying nothing has changed, like repeating it over and over somehow makes it true.

Nothing has changed for type 1 diabetics, who are now being denied under the government. Nothing has changed for small family-run business, like campgrounds, who are being faced with huge new tax bills for being too small to be a small business.

It seems like “nothing has changed” are code words for huge new tax bills for Canadians. Who is going to be the next victim of the “nothing has changed” tax increases?

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that all forms of physical or mental disability can have a significant impact on the daily lives of the people affected, their families, and their environment.

Oral Questions

That is why, last year, the government invested more than \$41 million in diabetes research. That is why, in budget 2017, we invested \$5 billion in youth mental health. That is also why, on November 23, I reinstated the disability advisory committee.

We continue to work for the most vulnerable Canadians.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last March, I asked whether the government would reject the Calgary Olympic bid committee's request to allow Olympic Games at Lake Louise, which could cause irreparable harm to Banff National Park. The answer was that the government had not yet been approached.

We have since learned from the media that a formal approach was made to Parks Canada staff and that "the federal agency did not shut down those talks."

Will the government stop this plan before it goes any further?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to protecting the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks.

Parks Canada has actually not received a formal proposal, and thus no decisions have been made. Without understanding the implications and the requirements of such a proposal, we are not in a position to make any judgements about what would be involved.

If and when we do receive a proposal, we will consider its implications based on a thorough review in the context of existing policy and legislation.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Cowichan River in my riding is a designated heritage river with significant cultural and historical importance to the Cowichan people. Climate change is causing unprecedented dry springs and summers, and river water flows frequently reach critically low levels, endangering fish and fish habitat.

The Liberals promised to protect our communities from climate change with investments in green infrastructure. The salmon that depend on the Cowichan River need strong federal leadership.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans commit in the House today to provide federal funds for raising the Cowichan weir?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we obviously share his concern about fish and fish habitat. The member is absolutely right. The Cowichan River is a critical piece of fish habitat in the country.

Our government is committed to doing more to protect and preserve fish habitat. In fact, we committed in the election campaign to return lost protections to the Fisheries Act. We announced habitat protection programs, including funding to ensure we did everything necessary to protect these iconic wild fish species.

I look forward to working with my colleague in that regard.

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in February, the Minister of National Defence said that we would not be buying used aircraft for our Royal Canadian Air Force. Today, however, we learn that the minister wants to help Australia off-load its rusty old clunkers.

Documents tabled in the House this week also confirm that the Minister of National Defence has no idea what the Australian jets are going to cost and he is unable to justify what need he is trying to fulfill.

Will the Minister of National Defence keep his promise not to buy used aircraft and spare Canadians from more Liberal wasteful spending?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our fighter jets should have been replaced a long time ago, but they were not. However, with our new defence policy, we will make sure our Canadian Armed Forces are well looked after.

We are going to have an open competition to replace our fighter jets, not with 65 like the previous government but with 88. The interim gap will be filled.

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that same minister in February said "we will not be buying used aircraft for our air force." However, defying all expert advice and financial logic, the Liberals will be buying used, rusted-out aircraft from Australia that date back to the 1980s. The Liberals are far more concerned about politics than doing what is right for our air force and for our taxpayers.

Will the government abandoned this ill-advised purchase of a bucket of bolts and get to work now to permanently replace our CF-18s?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the extreme passion of the hon. member with respect to purchasing the right equipment for our Canadian Armed Forces. Maybe he should have been more passionate, and actually purchased the equipment 10 years ago, when it should have been replaced.

With our new defence policy, we are going to make sure that we are not purchasing 65 aircraft, like the previous government wanted, but 88 aircraft, through a proper and fully transparent competition.

• (1505)

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Just promises.

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker, the documents tabled in the House this week confirm the defence minister does not have any clue how much used Australian jets will cost, when they will be available, and even how many will be available.

When the Liberals entered into a blind agreement to purchase jets from Boeing, they embarrassed themselves, turned their procurement into a circus, and wasted two years of taxpayers' time and money.

Will the defence minister stick to his commitment “not to buy used aircraft”, and save Canadians from yet another Liberal boondoggle?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is ensuring that our Canadian Armed Forces are well looked after. This is why, with our new defence policy for Canada, we are investing unprecedented amounts in the Canadian Armed Forces, an additional \$63 billion for the next 20 years, to make sure that our air force has the right aircraft, with a fully transparent competition.

As I stated, we will not be purchasing 65 aircraft, like the previous government wanted, but 88. We will make sure that our Canadian Armed Forces has the right equipment for the next 20 years.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly is taking place in Ottawa. I had the honour of attending yesterday.

[English]

Among their many priorities, first nations leaders across this country are calling for a new fiscal relationship with the Government of Canada that allows them to plan for and invest in long-term growth and development for their communities.

Could the hon. Minister of Indigenous Services please update the House as to the government's commitment to a new fiscal relationship with first nations?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, National Chief Bellegarde and I received a report which lays out recommendations for a new fiscal relationship. We are working with first nations on a number of proposals, including a permanent advisory committee to guide this new relationship, replacing the default prevention and management policy with a new proactive approach, and creating 10-year grants for at least 100 first nations communities.

These are steps toward a new fiscal relationship that is truly nation to nation, based on a recognition of rights and mutual respect.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just posted a tender to outsource the creation of questions for Canada's citizenship test. This contradicts the Liberals' claim that the citizenship study guide is still being developed. On the

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we should be standing up for the 200 million women alive today who have undergone female genital mutilation.

Has the Prime Minister finally decided to reverse his decision to remove FGM from Canada's citizenship guide?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, the citizenship guide has not been written yet. Unlike the previous government, we actually consulted Canadians and experts in order to find the right amount of diversity to put in there.

We are the party that ended conditional permanent residency, a policy of that party, which put vulnerable women in vulnerable situations of abuse. We eliminated that. On this day, I am proud of the fact that we did that.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Davie shipyard workers feel that the Liberal government has abandoned them. For lack of a short-term contract, 113 people have already lost their jobs and 800 more are at risk. Despite its fine promises, the Liberal government is asleep at the wheel. However, the needs are real and they are urgent. If the Liberals wait too long, these skilled workers will leave the country, and we will lose their expertise.

When will the Liberals take their heads out of the sand and support the Davie workers and the economic development of the Quebec City region? When?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly we are always concerned about the impact of job losses on workers and their families. We recognize the expertise of Davie workers and the excellent work done on the *Asterix*. In recent weeks, our government has been in contact with the management of the Davie shipyard. I had a meeting with the heads of the shipyard, and my colleagues, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Transport, had a meeting with the union. We are doing everything we can to help Davie.

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to first nations education. We also know that the best way to improve first nations education outcomes is to support indigenous-led initiatives, and to respect first nations control of their education.

Could the minister update the House on the government's progress toward supporting first nations communities in assuming jurisdiction over their own education systems?

• (1510)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Sudbury is absolutely right. First nations-led and first nations governed education systems achieve better results for students. The historic education self-government agreement we signed last summer with 23 participating nations of the Anishinabek Nation will allow them to take control of delivering education in their own communities.

[Translation]

This agreement is the first of its kind in Ontario and the most significant in Canada.

[English]

Our government is committed to advancing self-determination, and ensuring that first nations students have access to culturally appropriate, high quality education that meets their needs.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Champlain Bridge is at risk, and many of the parts being used are defective. Can the Minister of Infrastructure ensure that starting now, this construction site will be subject to extremely rigorous oversight by his department?

The department must protect worker safety at all times, control the quality of the parts being used, and make sure that the new bridge will last into the next century.

Will the minister pledge to deliver the Champlain Bridge on budget and on time, without compromising safety?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is delivering on our commitment to build a new toll-free Champlain Bridge. As we move forward the acceleration measures to meet the ambitious construction timeline, the quality of construction is our top priority.

On a project of this size, some technical challenges can inevitably arise. All defective material is corrected before the pieces are assembled. We are committed to delivering a quality bridge that will last 125 years.

Government Orders

HEALTH

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is tricky to do this, but I cannot ask my question until I express what I think is in all of our hearts. Best wishes to the Minister of Fisheries as he faces his new health challenges.

In my remaining eight seconds, will the Minister of Health consider working with the health accords with the provinces to pursue all medically necessary autism spectrum disorder treatments, including applied behaviour analysis, as part of a medicare approved treatment?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that autism spectrum disorder has a significant and lifelong impact on individuals and their families. Federal investments in research, data improvement, surveillance, and training skills are supporting those with autism and their families.

There are extraordinary stakeholders across the country raising awareness and providing services to families. Our government will certainly continue to provide support for them and for their efforts.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Madahbee, Deputy Grand Chief Hare, and a delegation of chiefs from Anishinabek First Nations, as well as community members who are here to witness the passage of Bill C-61, the Anishinabek Nation education agreement.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

The House resumed from December 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It being 3:13 p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, December 5, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-58.

Call in the members.

• (1520)

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

(Division No. 432)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Badawey

Government Orders

Bagnell	Baylis	Anderson	Arnold
Beech	Bennett	Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Bibeau	Bittle	Beaulieu	Benson
Blair	Boissonnault	Benzen	Bergen
Bossio	Bratina	Bemier	Berthold
Breton	Brison	Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr	Block	Boucher
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)	Boudrias	Boulerice
Cornier	Cuzner	Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Dabrusin	Damoff	Brousseau	Cannings
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal	Caron	Carrie
Dhillon	Drouin	Chong	Clarke
Dubourg	Duclos	Clement	Cooper
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Cullen	Davies
Dzerowicz	Easter	Deltell	Diotte
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Doherty	Donnelly
Erskine-Smith	Eyolfson	Dreeshen	Dubé
Fergus	Finnigan	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Fonseca	Fortier	Duvall	Eglinski
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)	Falk	Fast
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry	Finley	Fortin
Fuhr	Garneau	Gallant	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones	Généreux	Gladu
Goodale	Gould	Godin	Hardcastle
Graham	Grewal	Harder	Hoback
Hajdu	Hardie	Jeneroux	Johns
Harvey	Hébert	Julian	Kelly
Hehr	Holland	Kent	Kitchen
Housefather	Hussen	Kmiec	Kusie
Hutchings	Iacono	Kwan	Lake
Joly	Jones	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Jordan	Jowhari	Leitch	Liepert
Kang	Khalid	Lloyd	Lobb
Khera	Lametti	Lukiwski	MacGregor
Lamoureux	Lapointe	MacKenzie	Maguire
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc	Malcolmson	Masse (Windsor West)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Mathysen	May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
Leslie	Lightbound	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
Lockhart	Long	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Longfield	Ludwig	Moore	Motz
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Nantel	Nater
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	McDonald	Nicholson	Obhrai
May (Cambridge)	McKay	Paul-Hus	Paupé
McCrimmon	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Poilievre	Quach
McGuinty	Mihychuk	Ramsey	Rankin
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Murray	Rayes	Reid
Medicino	O'Connell	Rempel	Richards
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	Oliver	Sansoucy	Saroya
Monsef	Ouellette	Scheer	Schmale
Morrissey	Peterson	Shields	Shipley
Nassif	Philpott	Sopuck	Stanton
Oliphant	Poissant	Ste-Marie	Stetski
O'Regan	Ratansi	Strahl	Stubbs
Peschisolido	Robillard	Sweet	Tilson
Petitpas Taylor	Romanado	Trost	Trudel
Picard	Rudd	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Qualtrough	Rusnak	Vecchio	Viersen
Rioux	Sajjan	Warawa	Warkentin
Rodriguez	Sangha	Waugh	Webber
Rota	Scarpaleggia	Weir	Wong
Ruimy	Schulte	Yurdiga	Zimmer— 126
Sahota	Sgro		
Samson	Sheehan		
Sarai	Sikand		
Schieffe	Sohi		
Serré	Spengemann		
Shanahan	Tan		
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Tootoo		
Simms	Vandenbeld		
Sorbara	Virani		
Tabbara	Wilkinson		
Tassi	Wrzesnewskyj		
Vandal			
Vaughan			
Whalen			
Wilson-Raybould			
Zahid— 157			

PAIRED

Members

MacAulay (Cardigan)— 2

Gill

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent of the House to adopt the following motion: That, in the opinion of this House, in keeping with the declaration signed by over 100 prominent figures and companies in Quebec, the government cannot allow foreign giants to avoid the taxes that all Canadian companies must charge, that it must right this injustice, which penalizes our cultural businesses, our artists, our artisans, and our workers, and that it has a duty to protect Quebec and Canadian culture.

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif
AlbrechtAlbas
Allison

• (1525)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, government orders will be extended by eight minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Barbados on Air Transport” done at Bridgetown on May 9, 2017. An explanatory memorandum is included with the treaty.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government’s response to 11 petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to be here, on traditional Algonquin territory.

On this day in 1989, 28 years ago, 13 female students and a female administrator at the École polytechnique de Montréal were tragically murdered simply because they were women.

[English]

On this day in 1989, 13 young women and a female administrator at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal were tragically murdered simply because they were women. The shooter walked into the engineering school, into the classrooms, and separated the women from the men, not to spare the women but because he was directly targeting them as feminists. Twenty-eight years later, Canadians continue to come together to remember and mourn this tragic loss.

Today, from coast to coast to coast, candles will be lit, roses will be laid, and tears will be shed as the names of these 14 young women remind us that gender-based violence is still a reality for far

Routine Proceedings

too many. The shocking impact of the Montreal massacre shook our country, immobilized Canadians, and led Parliament to designate December 6 as a day to remember the potential we lost with these young women's deaths.

Annually, this day falls during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. It starts with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25 and ends with international Human Rights Day on December 10. Today, the names of these 14 young women will be echoed across the country.

[Translation]

Today we honour those 14 women who were so needlessly taken from their loved ones in 1989. They are Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

• (1530)

[English]

Today we recognize the ongoing tragic impacts of gender-based violence, and we honour those victims whose names and stories we may never know, and the families and communities devastated by these tragedies.

To those who are still vulnerable, such as members of the LGBTQ2 communities, indigenous women and girls, newcomers, and women with disabilities and exceptionalities, we will not tolerate discrimination and violence. To those Canadians who lost someone on December 6, to survivors and families of those impacted by gender-based violence, we know that these senseless murders have their roots in misogyny and have placed feminism under attack, and yet they have contributed to this moment in our history when feminism is something we are proud of.

While we cannot change the story of those 14 young women, we remember them and reaffirm our resolve to do better, and to be better, for the women and girls with us today and tomorrow. We know there is still much work to do. The need is made evident through the recent #MeToo movement, but there is hope. *Il y a de l'espoir*. There is hope for a future where we are all respected, where violence is not accepted, where women and girls are secure with choices and opportunities to pursue their dreams.

To support this vision, our government is working with Canadians to build an inclusive, respectful society by stepping up and speaking out to stop gender-based violence. We thank those who mobilize and who provide support, healing, shelter, and much-needed advocacy. We invite Canadians to share what they will do to end this violence by using the hashtag #MYActionsMatter and to take the pledge that 38,000 voices have taken to date to help end gender-based violence.

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We are acting through the first federal strategy to address and prevent gender-based violence, through the challenging but important work of a national inquiry into what happened to our stolen sisters, through a national housing strategy that recognizes that housing is a social determinant of violence, and through investments in shelter spaces across the country.

We each have a responsibility to stand up against misogyny, sexism, and hate, and it starts by creating a culture of respect. This means engaging everyone, including men and boys. Together we can honour the lives lost on December 6, 1989 by working to prevent this violence before it begins.

There are white roses on the desks of MPs in this House, and I hope you get one too, Mr. Speaker. These roses are symbols of the actions and the power each of us have, not just inside this House but outside, to be part of the solution.

We are living in important times. Every day, every week, and as recently as this week, survivors of gender-based violence are coming together, speaking as one, standing shoulder to shoulder. They are finding their voice and their courage through one another. We thank them and say to them that we believe in them, that we will stand with them always.

Today we mark our country's enduring connection to 14 women who were silenced while pursuing their dreams. We cannot change their story, but we can honour their memory and ensure that every Canadian woman and girl has an opportunity to pursue her dreams without the threat of gender-based violence.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at École Polytechnique in Montreal 28 years ago today, in the late afternoon on December 6, 1989, 14 young women lost their lives after being shot, and another 10 were seriously injured. This terrible tragedy marked the Canadian psyche in every province and territory and will remain etched in our collective memory forever.

We will never forget the day these women were murdered simply because they were women. Since 1991, December 6 has been officially recognized by the federal government as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in order to draw attention to all forms of violence against women.

Violence against women already existed in our society, in many forms, prior to that tragedy. Now, 28 years later, it still exists, and has even escalated, taking on new forms. In addition to murder, as well as domestic, psychological, and sexual violence, things like bullying, cyberbullying, and the trafficking of women and girls have also emerged over the years.

All forms of violence against women must be denounced, considered extremely serious, and severely punished. Violence against women is unfortunately all too common around the world, so we need to make it the number one concern of our society as a whole, with men being a key part of the solution.

It is absolutely unbelievable that today in Canada between 30 and 50 women are still murdered every year. In Quebec, roughly 15

women are killed by their spouse or ex-spouse every year, the same number of women who were killed at the École Polytechnique. What have we done since December 6, 1989? What have we done as a society, as a government, as individuals? Very little, when we consider how much there is left to do.

It is sad to see that, as a group, the women and girls who are victims of violence are getting younger and younger, and that we have failed to prevent this violence from escalating or slowing the lightning pace at which it has continued to destroy lives. People have been silent about violence against women and girls for far too long, and this has made it taboo. Because victims are isolated in a prison of violence and silence, violence against women has been allowed everywhere, in communities throughout the country, in families, in schools, and in workplaces. It has also quickly pervaded social media, and much faster than the measures taken to prevent it.

It is appalling to see that in Canada, in 2017, only one woman in 10 reports their abuser, the rights of victims are neither known nor protected in the same way as the rights of criminals, and the sentences handed out have been reduced.

There has been a lot of emphasis on condemning violence against women, but what actual steps have been taken? What has been done to fuel that drive to fight violence against women and support the brave women and girls who speak out?

We need to implement meaningful measures and commit to making sure that all women and girls in Canada feel safe and know people will listen to them and respect them. We need to send a clear message to perpetrators: in Canada, violence against women and girls is a serious crime. We must change Canada's Criminal Code to reflect that as soon as possible. As legislators, it is our duty to pass legislation amending the Criminal Code to protect women in domestic abuse cases. There is still no law that allows for preventive arrests in order to prevent a murder.

One of the four pillars in the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights brought in by the former Conservative government in 2015 is the right to protection.

• (1540)

This right has to be backed by legislation to further protect women and equip police officers, otherwise more women will become victims of homicide and will feature in our speeches the next time December 6 comes around.

I am sure that everyone here in the House wants the action part of this national day of remembrance to be taken literally, for action to be taken. The safety of women and girls is not a partisan issue. Combatting violence against women and girls is an individual responsibility, but mainly, it is a collective one. We must all work on this together.

Let us never forget Polytechnique and let us spare a thought for the women who have died at the hands of their attacker, including recent victims Julie, Chantal, Daphné, Gabrielle, Clémence, Véronique, and far too many others. We will remember them. We will take action. We owe it to them.

[English]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, twenty-eight years ago, 14 women were killed in the École Polytechnique massacre. Engineering students were murdered because they were women and dared to aspire to a so-called man's job. It is a tragedy we will never forget. These women held such promise.

This is not just a terrible story from the last century. Despite all the struggles of the past decades, women and girls continue to face crisis levels of violence in Canada right now. Young women between the ages of 15 to 35 are at the highest risk of violence. More than 500 women and children are turned away from domestic violence shelters daily. These are women who ask for help and are turned away.

Indigenous women are three times more likely to be sexually assaulted than non-indigenous women. Indigenous women are seven times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous women. Women living with a disability experience violence two to three times more often than other women. Domestic and sexual violence cost our country \$12 billion a year. Rates of violence against women remain largely unchanged over the past two decades. It is a terrible legacy.

Let us also be clear: poverty and economic injustice make women less safe. Without financial security, women are forced into unsafe work and precarious work. Without financial justice, some women stay in abusive relationships because they have no option. Violence against women puts women into poverty and denies women their voice, and that denies Canada the benefit of what these women have to offer.

Our country is impoverished by the absence of women's voices from our national conversation, legislatures, and parliaments. That is a real cost of violence against women and sexism. We give deep thanks to the front-line, heroic, brave organizations that, on a daily level across the country, support victims of violence in our communities. Their actions matter.

Canada should ensure these organizations have permanent funding to operate domestic violence shelters. Canada should lead national coordination of police responses to violence against women so that women have equal access to justice no matter where in our country they live. Canada should do everything it can to help the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry succeed, and support families of survivors. Canada should legislate pay equity for work of equal value, fix employment insurance, fund universal affordable child care, all of these things, because economic justice for women can help end violence against women.

Today, we all celebrate the silence breakers ringing the alarm on sexual violence in the workplace, reporting it, and accelerating the fastest growing social movement we have seen in decades.

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The best way to remember the 14 women murdered on this day and to mark the Polytechnique tragedy is to use the power we have as parliamentarians, the great privilege we have, to act to eliminate discrimination and violence against women. Our actions matter. New Democrats stand with all Canadians to end violence and to ensure never again.

• (1545)

[Translation]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member for Repentigny to add her comments?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, your names continue to be a rallying cry. When we hear your names, we come together. When we remember you, we stand against violence. When we remember you, we say: never again, no more killing spree, no more hate, never again.

Like a cross on the side of a highway that marks the painful memory of the needless death of a loved one, December 6 cannot be ignored. December 6 must not become just another day. Above all, December 6 must not, as a certain pro-gun group wanted, become an opportunity to advocate for some petty, self-interested and callous causes. No, December 6 is sacred. This day belongs to these women: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte.

To us, Quebeckers, this day is a symbol of our boundless grief, indignation, and anger, and of our boundless sadness. It is also a day of action. In 2015, over 15,000 women in Quebec were the victims of domestic abuse, victims of homicide, assault, confinement, and sexual assault. The violence continues, but it must stop. Too many lives have been lost or destroyed forever.

These were beautiful, talented, brilliant women with a bright future ahead of them, but hate took them from us. Hate tore them away from us. Hate deprived us of their presence. We still mourn their loss and we will never forget them. We will always strive to remain worthy of their memory.

That is why we categorically refuse to compromise when it comes to gender equality. We categorically refuse to compromise when it comes to ending violence against women. We stand firmly against subjugation and misogyny. We must preserve the memory of the women at École Polytechnique, and every victory for gender equality is claimed in their name, because these women were not victims. They were winners, and we miss them dearly.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to add her word?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues. Today remains a day of tragedy, a day of immense sadness, for today marks the 28th anniversary of a terrible tragedy in this country.

[English]

It is almost unbelievable that it has been 28 years. I remember it so clearly. It still feels like it just happened, because the shock of it was so great that someone would enter a school where young women and young men were studying engineering and target and kill the women because they were feminists, because they were engineering students who were also women. I agree and share all the sentiments of the Minister of Status of Women, of our colleagues in the Conservatives, the New Democrats, and Bloc Québécois.

[Translation]

● (1550)

We are here together as members of Parliament, all with the same goal and the same desire to end violence against women. What can we do to stop violence against women? That is what we need to ask ourselves.

[English]

We ask ourselves the question and we come up with programs. My friend from Nanaimo—Ladysmith used many of the statistics I had in mind. We know the numbers.

My dear friend from Repentigny has put forward the deep pain of everyone in Quebec who remember this day. We know this day is sacred in the memory of those 14 women. However, it stands for more. All of us must be watchful and take on the duty of being aware when we see misogyny.

We wish we could put ourselves back in a time capsule and find that young man who, with his hatred and resentment against women students, shot and killed 14 women. We wonder what we would have done if we had been in that classroom. It is a horrific event that left its survivors scarred.

I want to think of them for a moment, the young men who were removed from the room and who to this day wish they had not been.

We stand together as Canadians against violence of all kinds. We stand against violence against women. We are keenly aware that more indigenous sisters, mothers, aunties, and daughters are at risk every day.

Together, as a House of Commons, we say “Never again.”

[Translation]

The Speaker: I thank hon. members for their very eloquent remarks.

[English]

I would like to add my admiration and respect in women who work in this House, those in my family, and those our country and the world.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities in relation to Bill C-344, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act, community benefit. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

* * *

● (1555)

VIA RAIL CANADA ACT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP) seconded by the member for Laurentides—Labelle, moved for leave to introduce Bill C-387, An Act to continue VIA Rail Canada Inc. under the name VIA Rail Canada and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

She said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is very similar to one introduced earlier this session by the hon. member for London—Fanshawe. It carries some of the same characteristics, but it is different.

I have been working on it for some time, because VIA Rail lacks the legislative framework, a context within which we can ensure VIA Rail, as a crown corporation, is governed by the laws of Canada, with a mandate to expand passenger rail service, to modernize passenger rail service, and to ensure that our key routes as they now exist are protected.

While it shares much with C-370, in the name of the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, which I also support but I do not see this as competition in any way, it does contain other elements. Ideally, one would love to see these two bills brought together as one and brought forward by the hon. Minister of Transport, so it would have a good chance of passage.

I commend the bill to the House. I urge that we consider it at its next opportunity for second reading and debate. VIA Rail is a key part of our national identity. Passenger rail service is a key part of any national transportation plan, as is modernizing that service, ensuring we have service from coast to coast to coast, as we should have once the service to Hudson Bay is repaired. We have had passenger rail service in our country since our first prime minister established the national dream.

This private member's bill attempts to assure that this national dream endures.

Routine Proceedings

FALUN GONG

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

* * *

PETITIONS

INFANT LOSS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the tragedy of infant loss touches our nation and the lives of thousands of Canadian families each year.

In these times of great sorrow, organizations such as Hazel's Heroes, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network, Baby's Breath, Cuddle Cots for Canada, the October 15 campaign, and Hope Boxes have all come alongside parents and loved ones during the mourning and their healing.

I table this petition today calling on Parliament to join that cause, to stand up and look for ways to better support parents who are dealing with pregnancy and infant loss.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure today to table a petition on behalf of petitioners from Vancouver Island in support of my Motion No. 151 to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in aquatic environments.

The petitioners call on the government to recognize plastic pollution in aquatic environments and the fact that they pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems, communities, and the environment. They call on the government to create a permanent, dedicated, and annual fund for community-led projects to clean up plastics and debris, and additionally to reduce industrial use of micro-plastics, plastic debris, discharge from stormwater outfalls, and consumer and industrial use of single-use plastics.

[Translation]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it being December 6, I am honoured to present the following petition on behalf of hundreds of people not just from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, but from the entire Montérégie region, as well.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person. Women are most at risk of having this right violated in their own homes, and in 2014, police forces in Quebec recorded 18,746 incidents of domestic abuse.

There is broad consensus in support of equality between men and women. In spite of the work we have done, domestic violence still exists and represents a barrier to achieving this equality.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to support the 12 days of action to end violence against women, from November 25 to December 6, 2017, and to take swift, meaningful action toward ending domestic violence.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to table a petition that is very timely, given that a delegation of cabinet ministers is currently in China. It is a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians across the country who are calling on the government and the House to take action to stop the Chinese Communist regime from systematically killing Falun Gong practitioners, whose organs are often harvested and sold.

The petition also calls on the government to amend Canadian laws in order to combat illegal organ trafficking and to publicly demand an end to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

* * *

*[English]***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1253, 1256 and 1258.

*[Text]*Question No. 1253— **Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to disbursements through the Treasury Board Secretariat for trustee fees, in order to establish and maintain a blind trust, since November 4, 2015: (a) did the Minister of Finance claim any such expenses; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the amounts?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Finance Canada has not disbursed trustee fees in order to establish and maintain a blind trust since November 4, 2015.

Question No. 1256— **Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the implementation of a lottery system for the parent and grandparent stream of family reunification, broken down by province and by country of origin of sponsored individuals: (a) how many online applications for the 10,000 sponsorship spots were submitted; (b) how many applications were repeat submissions from the same sponsor; (c) how many applications were repeat submissions for the same sponsored individual; (d) of the original 10,000 applications that were drawn, how many were deemed ineligible on the basis of (i) being incomplete, (ii) not meeting financial requirements, (iii) not submitting the full application after being selected, (iv) was a repeat submission by the same sponsor, (v) was a repeat submission for the same individual being sponsored (iv) other reasons; (e) when were department officials made aware that fewer than 10,000 eligible applications were selected; (f) what was the decision-making process to determine a second lottery drawing would occur; (g) to date, how many completed applications have been submitted; (h) how many completed applications have been returned due to errors; (i) what is the current average processing time for these applications; (j) how many online applications were considered eligible for the draw; and (k) how many applications will be selected in the second lottery draw?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), IRCC received 100,211 interest to sponsor web form submissions.

With regard to part (b), from the 100,211 interest to sponsor web form submissions received, the department identified and removed 5,113 duplicates.

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With regard to part (c), the interest to sponsor web form did not include a field to identify the individual(s) to be sponsored. As such, the department cannot determine how many of those who submitted an interest to sponsor wish to sponsor the same individual. If a potential sponsor was chosen, they could sponsor their parent(s) and grandparent(s).

With regard to part (d), the department is still receiving parent and grandparent applications for 2017. For the first round of invitations, potential sponsors had until August 4, 2017, for IRCC to receive their complete applications. IRCC received 6,020 applications. IRCC validates that the sponsor was invited to submit an application and conducts a completeness check before starting processing. Eligibility is determined as part of processing an application. As such, IRCC does not know how many applications will be ineligible.

With regard to part (e), for the first round of invitations, potential sponsors were given until August 4, 2017, for IRCC to receive a complete application. The department confirmed that 6,020 applications were received from the first round of invitations and has now invited additional potential sponsors to submit complete applications. These potential sponsors have until December 8, 2017, for IRCC to receive a complete application. Eligibility is determined as part of processing an application. As such, we do not know how many applications will be ineligible.

With regard to part (f), since the department did not receive 10,000 complete applications as of August 4, 2017, additional individuals from the randomized list of persons who submitted an interest to sponsor were invited to submit an application to sponsor their parents or grandparents. The department is committed to receiving as close to 10,000 complete applications as possible in 2017.

With regard to part (g), the department is still receiving parent and grandparent applications for 2017 and completeness checks are ongoing. For the first round of invitations, sponsors had until August 4, 2017, for IRCC to receive their application. IRCC received 6,020 applications in the first round of invitations. For the second round of invitations, potential sponsors have until December 8, 2017, for IRCC to receive their application.

With regard to part (h), IRCC is still receiving parent and grandparent applications for 2017 and completeness checks are ongoing. For the first round of invitations, potential sponsors had until August 4, 2017, for IRCC to receive their application. For the second round of invitations, potential sponsors have until December 8, 2017, for IRCC to receive their application. If potential sponsors are missing a document, they are able to submit a letter of explanation in lieu of the document. IRCC is being facilitative in order to minimize rejections.

With regard to part (i), processing times are posted on the IRCC website. Please see the following link for the latest processing times for parent and grandparent applications: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp.

With regard to part (j), IRCC received 100,211 interest to sponsor web form submissions. After duplicates were removed, the department had 95,098 interest to sponsor web forms. IRCC validates and checks the completeness of the applications before

starting processing. Eligibility is determined as part of processing an application. As such, we do not know how many applications will be ineligible.

With regard to part (k), IRCC worked to determine how many potential sponsors should be invited throughout the year to yield up to 10,000 complete applications. Applications received are still being validated to confirm the sponsor was invited to submit an application and to ensure the application is complete. Potential sponsors who were invited in the second round of invitations have until December 8, 2017, for IRCC to receive their application.

Question No. 1258—Ms. Candice Bergen:

With regard to Bill C-27, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985: did the Minister of Finance sign the memorandum to Cabinet proposing the Bill?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the name of a minister who signed a memorandum to cabinet, like the memorandum itself, is a cabinet confidence.

* * *

● (1600)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1252, 1254, 1255, 1257 and 1259 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1252— Mr. Erin Weir:

With regard to federal funding in the constituencies of Regina—Lewvan, Regina—Qu'Appelle and Regina—Wascana, for each period from November 1, 2015, to December 31, 2015, January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016, and January 1, 2017, to October 1, 2017: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which the application for funding was made, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the three constituencies that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which funding was received, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the three constituencies, broken down by organization tasked with sub-granting government funds (i.e. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which funding was received, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

*Privilege***Question No. 1254— Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to permanent residence applications that were rejected pursuant to section 38(1)(c) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, since the Act came into force: (a) what is the yearly breakdown of rejected permanent residence applications, including (i) the category of application, (ii) whether the rejection was caused by the principal applicant or a family member, (iii) the age of the applicant found inadmissible, (iv) the health condition which was found likely to cause excessive demand, (v) how many were due to excessive demand on health services, (vi) how many were due to excessive demand on social services and, if applicable, details of social services affected, (vii) estimated cost to health services and social services; (b) what is the yearly breakdown of rejected permanent residence applications, that were appealed, including (i) the category of application, (ii) whether the rejection was caused by the principal applicant or a family member, (iii) the age of the applicant found inadmissible, (iv) the health condition which was found likely to cause excessive demand, (v) how many were due to excessive demand on health services, (vi) how many were due to excessive demand on social services and, if applicable, details of social services affected, (vii) estimated cost to health services and social services; (c) what is the yearly breakdown of rejected permanent residence applications, that were appealed and overturned, including (i) the category of application, (ii) whether the rejection was caused by the principal applicant or a family member, (iii) the age of the applicant found inadmissible, (iv) the health condition which was found likely to cause excessive demand, (v) how many were due to excessive demand on health services, (vi) how many were due to excessive demand on social services and, if applicable, details of social services affected, (vii) estimated cost to health services and social services; (d) what is the formula used to calculate excessive demand for (i) medical costs, (ii) social services; (e) how many cases of medical inadmissibility have had ministerial intervention to overturn the decision; and (f) how many outstanding applications are currently awaiting decision based on medical inadmissibility criteria?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1255—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the permanent residence applications submitted under the former Live-in Caregiver Program since 2000, broken down by year and by country of origin: (a) how many applications remain to be processed, broken down by year of application; (b) what is the average processing time; (c) how many medical checks on average has each application had to undergo; (d) how many work permit renewals on average has each applicant had to apply for; (e) what was the average time for security screenings for spouses and dependents to be approved; (f) for applications with above average security screenings, how many involved spouses or dependents that were employees of the country of origin's (i) police force, (ii) military, (iii) correctional services; (g) how many applications have seen dependents become too old to sponsor due to delays; (h) how many applications have dependents or spouses removed; (i) what is the average time an application is in process before a dependent or spouse is removed; (j) how many full-time equivalent are used for processing live-in caregiver permanent residence applications, broken down by location of staff; and (k) what was the budget allocation for processing these applications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1257— Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's processing times for various common interactions with taxpayers: (a) what is the median processing time for delivering Notices of Assessment for individual income tax returns; (b) what is the maximum processing time for delivering Notices of Assessment for individual income tax returns; (c) what percentage of Notices of Assessment for individual tax returns exceed 30 days to deliver; (d) what percentage of Notices of Assessment for individual tax returns exceed 60 days to deliver; (e) what percentage of Notices of Assessment for individual tax returns exceed 90 days to deliver; (f) what percentage of Notices of Assessment for individual tax returns exceed 120 days to deliver; (g) what are the respective processing times and percentages in (a) to (f) with respect to reviews of individual income tax filings; (h) what are the respective processing times and percentages in (a) to (f) with respect to adjustment requests; (i) on a year over year basis since 2010, is the percentage of cases in (a) to (h), which exceed 12 weeks to deliver, increasing or decreasing, and by how much; (j) how many employees at the Canada Revenue Agency are assigned to take telephone inquiries by taxpayers; (k) on average, how many telephone requests from taxpayers does the Canada Revenue Agency receive each business day; (l) what is the median time taxpayers spend on hold when calling the Canada Revenue Agency; and (m) how much of the new funding for the Canada Revenue Agency provided by Budgets 2016 and 2017

has been allocated to client services, including (i) telephone inquiries, (ii) adjustments, (iii) Problem Resolution Program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1259— Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to government correspondence: (a) what are the details of all correspondence between the Department of Finance and Morneau Shepell since November 4, 2015, including for each the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) topic or title, (iii) format (email, letter, facsimile, etc.), (iv) position or title of the Department of Finance employee sending or receiving the correspondence, (v) position or title of the Morneau Shepell employee sending or receiving the correspondence; (b) what are the details of all correspondence between the Department of Finance and the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) since November 4, 2015, including for each the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) topic or title, (iii) format (email, letter, facsimile, etc.), (iv) position or title of the Department of Finance employee sending or receiving the correspondence, (v) position or title of the OSFI employee sending or receiving the correspondence; and (c) what are the details of all correspondence between the OSFI and Morneau Shepell since November 4, 2015, including for each the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) topic or title, (iii) format (email, letter, facsimile, etc.), (iv) position or title of the OSFI employee sending or receiving the correspondence, (v) position or title of the Morneau Shepell employee sending or receiving the correspondence?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The member for New Westminster—Burnaby I believe is rising to respond to a question of privilege raised yesterday.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF REVENUE REGARDING THE DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having you here in the House today to follow up on the question of privilege raised yesterday by the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge regarding statements made in the House by the Minister of National Revenue.

As I said yesterday, I have a few comments to add for your consideration. I know you need to come to a decision fairly quickly, so I wanted to add these elements at the earliest opportunity.

Privilege

One of the main purposes of parliamentary privilege in the House is to ensure that the important decisions we make are based on information that is reliable, comprehensive, honest, and accurate.

When a question of privilege is raised, we task you, the Speaker of the House, with determining whether the matter constitutes a *prima facie* breach of privilege worthy of Parliament's time and attention.

I submit that all members must be able to rely on the information provided to them by a minister. We need to know for certain that this information is correct. In fact, ministers are subject to specific rules in this regard.

Ministers have a number of special procedural powers to help advance the government's agenda, among other things. They must also table any document that they refer to, and they have the power to table any document without seeking the consent of the House.

In exchange for those special powers, ministers must provide MPs with honest, authoritative, and accurate information.

[*English*]

In the case raised by the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, it is clear there is a real difference between the facts and the statements that have been made in the House by the minister.

What we know is that there are numerous reports in the media, including information received from the department and information released by the Diabetes Society, that indicate the Canada Revenue Agency had changed its 2017 policy regarding the disability tax credit, so Canadians on insulin therapy would no longer be considered eligible for that tax credit as the therapy was no longer considered to meet the 14 hours per week threshold, even though 14 hours has always been considered the amount of time insulin therapy takes and the therapy has always met the threshold.

The minister has been adamant and persistent that there has been no change in the policy or practice of her department in this matter. It is possible that the minister has been told there has been no change in the way the DTC is being administered and she is passing along this assertion to us. I submit that this also would be a breach of privilege.

We, as a House, and we as members of Parliament, need to have confidence in the facts presented to us. Be it a minister deliberately misleading us, or a minister being misled by officials, the delivery of false information is a breach of privilege that has a clear impact on our work, and we have a right to know how it happened.

[*Translation*]

On page 115 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, it reads:

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

We are dealing with a similar situation here. Many of our constituents across the country have contacted us to share their concerns about the changes to the eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit. The Minister of National Revenue has said many times

that no changes have been made to the eligibility criteria, but we now realize that this is not the case. We think the House has the right to know the truth. Is the minister misleading us or has the minister herself been misled, as was the case in Speaker Jerome's ruling in 1978? Both cases involve a *prima facie* question of privilege. It is therefore essential that we get to the bottom of this matter so that we can understand what led to this breach of privilege.

Naturally, we ask that this question of privilege be dealt with in short order, as we believe this issue should be a priority in the House.

• (1605)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his comments.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on the same question of privilege.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order today to respond to the question of privilege raised concerning statements by the Minister of National Revenue with respect to the disability tax credit. I submit that the matter raised by my hon. colleague is in dispute as to the facts and therefore does not meet the criteria for finding a *prima facie* question of privilege.

According to page 86 of O'Brien and Bosc's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, the following three elements have to be established when it is alleged that a member is in contempt or is deliberately misleading the House: one, it must be proven that the statement was misleading; two, it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect; and three, that in making the statement, the member intended to mislead the House. These criteria have not been met in the situation at hand.

On December 5, the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge alleged that the Minister of National Revenue deliberately misled the House when the minister stated, on October 23 and 24, "the law has not changed in any way. How the law is interpreted has also not changed in any way." I would also draw to the attention of the House the following statement made by the minister and quoted by the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge: "I would like to reassure Canadians that no changes have been made to the eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit." The statements referenced by my hon. colleague made by the minister are completely accurate. Let me take a moment to explain.

Paragraph 118.3(1)(a.1), which deals with credit for mental or physical impairment, has not been amended since this government came to power. In fact, the last amendment to this section of the Income Tax Act was approved by Parliament in 2005. This section provides that certain conditions be met to be considered for a tax credit. For the benefit of the House, I will quote the relevant text in that section, which describes the criteria used by the Canada Revenue Agency to determine whether a person is eligible for the tax credit. It states:

the effects of the impairment...are such that the individual's ability to perform more than one basic activity of daily living is significantly restricted...or would be markedly restricted but for therapy that

- (i) is essential to sustain a vital function of the individual,
- (ii) is required to be administered at least three times each week for a total duration averaging not less than 14 hours a week, and
- (iii) cannot reasonably be expected to be of significant benefit to persons who are not so impaired

The interpretation has always been clear that a medical practitioner must certify that a patient meets these criteria for a patient to receive the benefit. The eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit have not changed since 2005.

The member referenced an internal CRA document of May 2017, which was designed to give medical practitioners the opportunity to provide more details and explain more clearly how their patients meet the statutory requirements. This in no way represents a change in the eligibility requirements, yet the member across the way points to this memo as the smoking gun. That could not be further from the truth. The letter simply helps the CRA to more clearly establish, with the information provided by medical practitioners, which applications meet the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 118.3(1)(a.1) of the Income Tax Act.

I have reviewed the precedents set out by my hon. colleague, and I must admit that they are rather incongruous with the situation before the House. Let me review the applicability of the precedents cited by my colleague across the way.

● (1610)

With respect to the December 6, 1978, ruling respecting mail tampering, there were two statements that were at odds. The then minister stated categorically that the RCMP did not intercept the private mail of anyone. Around the same time, a former commissioner of the RCMP stated before the McDonald Commission that the RCMP did indeed intercept private mail in certain circumstances.

In the case before the House, no one is saying that the government has changed the criteria for eligibility for the tax credit. At the risk of repeating myself, the criteria have not been changed in over 10 years.

The 2002 precedent respecting the then minister of national defence's knowledge of the involvement of Canadian troops in taking prisoners in Afghanistan again has no bearing on the matter before the House.

At no time did the Minister of National Revenue make completely contradictory statements about changing the eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit.

We have a long tradition in the House of taking members at their word. Allegations of breach of privilege are often dismissed as disputes as to the facts. Page 510 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, states:

The Speaker, however, is not responsible for the quality or content of replies to questions. 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. As such, these matters are more a question of debate and do not constitute a breach of the rules or of privilege.

Privilege

On May 7, 2012, the Speaker ruled:

Accordingly, bound as I am by the very narrow parameters that apply in these situations, and without any evidence that the House was deliberately misled, I cannot arrive at a finding of prima facie privilege in this case.

In this decision, the Speaker referenced two rulings of Speaker Milliken. The first, from January 31, 2008, is found at pages 2434 and 2435 of *Debates*. In it, he stated,

any dispute regarding the accuracy or appropriateness of a minister's response to an oral question is a matter of debate; it is not a matter for the Speaker to judge. The same holds true with respect to the breadth of a minister's answer to a question in the House: this is not for the Speaker to determine.

Second, on February 26, 2004, at page 1076 of *Debates*, Speaker Milliken confirmed,

As hon. members know, it is not the Speaker's role to adjudicate on matters of fact. This is something on which the House itself can form an opinion during debate.

I submit that this is the situation with the matter currently before the House.

In conclusion, the matter raised by my hon. colleague is a dispute as to the facts and therefore does not meet the conditions for a prima facie question of privilege.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary.

I see that the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is rising on the same question of privilege.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I will not trespass long on our time.

I heard the point of privilege put forward by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. I tend to steer away from things when I see points of privilege that are purely partisan, but this one strikes home for me.

The test for deliberately misleading the House is a steep and difficult test to prove. I hope I do not trespass too long on your thinking on this matter, Mr. Speaker, but the minister says that the rules have not changed and that the interpretation has not changed, but I am hearing from constituents all the time, as are members throughout this place, that people who were receiving the disability tax credit, whose doctors say they are disabled, are now no longer receiving it.

Mr. Speaker, in your judging this particular point of privilege, it may require evolving the rules under O'Brien and Bosc in this way: *res ipsa loquitur*, the thing speaks for itself.

Something has changed here. Whether the minister is deliberately misleading the House or is misleading the House by inadvertence, people who deserve help, whose kids are suffering with juvenile diabetes or who themselves are suffering with diabetes, are no longer getting their disability tax credit.

On that basis, I rise to support the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

● (1615)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. It may surprise her that there are a few Latin phrases I do recall from our time together in law school a few years ago.

I will come back to the House with a ruling in due course.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***ANISHINABEK NATION EDUCATION AGREEMENT ACT**

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 25 minutes.

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.) moved that Bill C-61, An Act to give effect to the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-61, and I do so here on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people. This bill will implement an agreement that creates the Anishinabek education system, designed by Anishinabek first nations for Anishinabek students.

I would like to note that Grand Council Chief Madahbee and a large delegation of chiefs and community members from participating Anishinabek communities are here on Parliament Hill to witness the passage of this historic legislation.

This summer, I had the great honour of travelling to the Chippewas of Rama First Nation to sign the momentous agreement that led to this bill.

[Translation]

It was a beautiful ceremony.

[English]

There was a large circle of chiefs and youth representatives in their regalia. Proudly looking on were the education directors. Beautifully carved signing trays were circulated around the circle, and we signed this agreement in the circle.

The day had begun with a sunrise ceremony, the sacred fire by the water, watching the beautiful sunrise from the east, and the elder speaking in his language, Anishinabemowin.

As we came out of the darkness into the light, I spotted two Anishinabek youth on the opposite side of the circle wearing black sweatshirts with a medicine wheel and the words "Proud to be Anishinabek". On one arm it said "Stand Strong"; on the other arm it said "Walk Tall". It was so poignant. Only one generation ago young people were made to feel ashamed of speaking their own language at school, ashamed to be indigenous.

[Translation]

That was completely unacceptable, and it was also destructive.

[English]

We know that when young people have a secure personal cultural identity, they have better health, education, and economic outcomes. For these young people, being proud to be Anishinabek is the most powerful antidote that we have to racism and ignorance in this country.

Everything that we are speaking about today is ultimately about the young people, their education, their opportunities, their future, but also our future. It is about righting the wrongs of the past, ensuring that children can once again learn in a culturally safe way, with first nations-led educators in first nations-led schools and in first nations-led education systems.

I would like to take a moment to thank all of those who have brought us to this point today. It is especially fitting to acknowledge the late Merle Pegahmagabow, who led this important negotiation for many years. Merle has gone to the spirit world, and as with the other Anishinabek ancestors, we know he is here with us, guiding our work. I also want to acknowledge the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body, and acknowledge the hard work of the negotiating teams for Canada and the Anishinabek Nation.

This negotiated agreement is the first of its kind in Ontario. It is the largest education agreement and largest self-government agreement in Canada. Of course, it is also an agreement that can and will expand as other communities opt in, if and when they so choose to.

● (1620)

[Translation]

The Anishinabek Nation education agreement is a concrete step toward self-government.

[English]

It is a tangible example of a renewed relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. Today we get to demonstrate what a true partnership looks like. This is the path forward for Canada, Ontario, as well as first nations governments.

The agreement supports the vision of the participating first nations of a quality Anishinabek education system that will promote Anishinabek culture and language, and improve educational outcomes for Anishinabek students. Most importantly, the decision-making power on education will rest exactly where it belongs, in the hands of first nations.

It was 20 years ago that the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia decided to take over their education system. Eskasoni Chief Leroy Denny has said that it was on that day he decided to become a teacher. At that time, their secondary school graduation rate was at 30%. Today, the Mi'kmaq education system in Nova Scotia has a secondary school graduation rate of about 90%, a higher rate than the non-indigenous population in Canada. The evidence is clear: first nations-led and first nations-governed education systems achieve better results for first nations students.

Already, at Siksika First Nation in Alberta, children from Calgary are being bused from the town to the Crowfoot School on the reserve for a better education, one that is culturally safe and taught by a faculty, of whom more than 80% are members of the Siksika Nation.

Today, we are enabling and accelerating a self-determination agreement, not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it simply produces better results for indigenous people and the whole country.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

From coast to coast to coast, there is a consensus that indigenous youth want to be rooted in their language and their culture.

[*English*]

They want to be competent on the land and on the water. They want to learn from elders. They are questioning industrial-era agricultural school days from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and a school year in which the students are off all summer, yet are marked absent during goose and moose season when they go on the land with their families. They recognize that the indigenous pedagogy of learning by doing is the way they learn best. Senator Murray Sinclair has said that it was education that got us into this mess, and it will be education that gets us out of this mess.

Therefore, today, together in partnership, we chart this way forward and together we can make Canada a better place for indigenous children. *Chi-miigwech* to Grand Council Chief Madahbee and Deputy Grand Council Chief Glen Hare and the 23 Anishinabek communities for their leadership and persistence in arriving at this historic education self-government agreement. Today is an inspiration for ReconciliAction for all of Canada.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too will be speaking in support of this particular agreement. I did go through its many components, the master agreement and the fiscal transfer relationship.

In this day of technological opportunities, if a community has a budding scientist, for example, is there anything in the agreement to ensure the availability of broadband connections in every community? To me that is an important component of providing additional opportunities for students. Was that talked about and did the federal government commit to it?

• (1625)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, it is hugely important and more important in other regions, but, unfortunately, there are still parts of Ontario where broadband is not sufficient.

Although this agreement does not include infrastructure investment, it comes with a commitment by our government that between the Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, we recognize the need for infrastructure and building new schools, and have a real commitment to broadband connectivity. As the member said so correctly, it really does speak to having brilliant students connected with scientists, and to inexperienced teachers being backed up by experienced teachers and knowledge keepers around the country who use of Internet. This is going to be hugely important as we go forward in a modern education system.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the groundwork for this agreement was laid 22 years ago in 1995. Given the work the minister has done on this agreement, I would like to know whether she now has a plan to finalize such agreements faster and to ensure that other communities have access to an approach that enables them to achieve self-government faster and more efficiently.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, the member from Quebec asked a very important question. This is a good thing for communities that want a model agreement to work from. In Quebec, there is an agreement with the Cree Nation, and negotiations are under way with the Atikamekw. That is a good question.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the minister elaborate on how implementing this historic education agreement would improve education and economic outcomes for the Anishinabek students in participating communities?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, the evidence is now unbelievably clear that when young people grow up as proud indigenous people, when they are competent on the land and the water, and have their language and access to the knowledge keepers and elders, they do better. Regardless of the social determinants of health, people make healthier choices when they are proud of who they are. That is their self esteem, their resilience, their sense of control over their lives. We have good evidence coast to coast to coast that this is imperative in getting better outcomes, as in the example I gave of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

That is why this is so exciting and why we want the Anishinabek kids and all indigenous kids to want to grow up to be teachers, so they have great role models. We know that begets good outcomes. That is the vision we have.

Unfortunately, still only 10% of the children in this community are able to go to school in their own communities. Almost 90% have to go to town. This agreement is also with Ontario, to make sure that the kids who are still going to town have an example and a way of changing those schools, even if they are in town, because of our agreement with Minister Hunter in the Province of Ontario.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope, Taxation; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Fisheries and Oceans.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to speak in support of this historic bill, Bill C-61, Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement Act. It is a momentous occasion, and I want to offer my sincere congratulations to all those who have given so much time and energy in seeing this through.

As was mentioned, negotiations began in 1993 and concluded in 2015, at the end of the Conservative government's last term. The agreement was signed August 16, 2017. It truly has been created through a bipartisan process.

Government Orders

However, it is important to note that it has taken much too long. As we move to other agreements in the future, whether it be education or health, I hope we have a much more nimble process to get us to a final conclusion. The people who are here in the gallery listening today would agree that 20 years is much too long for this kind of important agreement to move forward.

We all recognize the importance of education. I want to share some of Roberta Jamieson's words:

Indigenous peoples are the fastest-growing demographic group in Canada. They have the potential to make a strong contribution to Canada's economic well-being. But if that is to happen, we must deal with the gap between the well-being of indigenous and non-indigenous people in Canada. That requires understanding the role education plays in closing that gap—and the action required to make that happen. The economic advantages of “closing the gap” far outweigh the costs.

As Matthew Calver of the Centre for the Study of Living Standards notes:

The benefits of education extend far beyond labour market performance...[It] is also associated with better health, reduced crime, political engagement and better financial decisions.

Ms. Jamieson went on to say:

We must build awareness that education is more than just the ABCs—it is the means of restoring cultural loss by strengthening identity, language, culture, and indigenous peoples' history. Our children require an education that recognizes and respects our values and our science, and is intended to contribute to the rebuilding of nations. When our youth realize they have reason for a strong affirming sense of identity, when they believe they are persons of value, knowing they are part of a positive change being woven into the history of Canada, they will respond by realizing that they have talent, potential, intelligence, and something special to offer the world.

As the minister described the signing agreement, and seeing the two youths with the sweatshirts, that just speaks to those words so clearly.

Hopefully, this agreement is going to do all that for these communities. As has been mentioned, 23 of the 39 Anishinabek First Nations have signed on, and of course the remaining communities have an option to sign on in the future if they want to. It recognizes the control over education on reserve from junior kindergarten to grade 12 in the 23 participating first nations.

It is an enormous agreement. There are over 25,000 students, of which approximately 2,000 currently attend band-operated schools. The 39 first nations in Anishinabek Nation are spread across much of Ontario, from Thunder Bay to Pembroke to Sarnia. For those of us who come from different provinces, it is important to really understand the scope of the massive area this is going to include. As has been mentioned, this is the first self-government agreement in Ontario.

The agreement comes with a number of pieces. It has an education fiscal transfer agreement, which is going to be updated and renewed every five fiscal years, the first of which the previous Conservative government signed on July 8, 2015. It provides stable, predictable, and flexible funding to ensure the school board can deliver quality education to the same standards as the province of Ontario.

• (1635)

It is important to note we are moving in the right direction. We still have a long way to go. The 2016 census revealed some positive steps forward in terms of completion rates. I do not think that we

have caught up to where we need to be, but there was a movement, very importantly, in the right direction, and agreements such as this will further close the gap.

The minister will not be surprised to hear that I am pleased to see there is clear language around the financial transparency of each first nation and the school board, which will be fully accountable to the band members for the spending to ensure the money will go where it is needed most. Having that financial transparency and accountability in these communities will be a very important measurement. It will include audited statements, which will be made available to the membership.

My children were raised in a small rural community with a small high school. At the time, rural broadband was not available. I remember looking at options, but they just were not available. However, now with broadband being widely available, there is an ability for our budding doctors to take physics, or someone who wants to be an engineer to take calculus, which are typically opportunities that are not available in small rural communities and some of our first nation communities.

Hopefully, in the future, when we have signed agreements, they will include a component where we commit to bring into these communities high-speed broadband, which will allow even greater opportunity for the students to have flexibility and an expanded scope.

The minister also talked about how many of the students could not stay in their communities and had to move on in terms of high school. Again, this would allow greater flexibility in terms of choices, and students could spend more time in their home communities and get a full and robust education. If we are looking at agreements, this should be something that requires a significant discussion.

In closing, this is a monumental achievement. My sincerest congratulations go to the people who have worked so hard on it. Jurisdiction over their primary, elementary, and secondary education will be very important, as well as the ability to deliver a culturally-relevant curriculum every day. Ultimately, as these schools learn by doing and succeed, perhaps we will have lessons that we can learn from for some of our more traditional schools in larger centres.

I remember visiting a day care in T'it'q'et, a small community, that welcomed members from the nearby off-reserve community to attend. I remember how enriching it was for the children that lived in Lillooet to go to that particular day care. They also benefited from the cultural programming that was part of this particular day care. Therefore, I see that there is going to be opportunity in the future for everyone to be a little better.

Again, I am pleased to support the bill and congratulations to all.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour for me to rise and speak to this bill, because I was born in Anishinabek territory, I grew up there, and I am now raising my children there. It is part of my life.

Government Orders

Too often, we forget that indigenous territories do not match up with the borders that we drew. The territories were not established based on the borders. They were established based on waterways and means of communication. Many nations share an ancestral territory that often spans two Canadian provinces. We cannot lose sight of this.

This is why we need to recognize the history of Anishinabek communities and of all indigenous communities.

• (1640)

[*English*]

The bill we have in front of us was a long time in coming. In 1995 the Anishinabek Nation chiefs, in assembly, mandated the restoration of educational jurisdiction with the Union of Ontario Indians to lead the self-government negotiations with Canada to restore jurisdiction over education.

The Anishinabek people have been working on this issue for more than 20 years, day after day, to gain control of their education system. It has involved about 90 members of the community since the negotiations began. It was supported by many elders, many of whom will not see the agreement put in place. This agreement reflected the vision of a number of Anishinabek members that pushed forward to regain control over the education of young children and teenagers.

It is important to remember what the bill is designed for. Chief Shining Turtle of Whitefish River First Nation explained:

The AES is designed by Anishinabek for Anishinabek and strives to ensure a quality of life based on the highest standards of Anishinaabe intellectual and holistic knowledge that supports the preservation and on-going development of the Anishinaabe. The AES will make positive advances in the development of culturally relevant curriculum and educational programs that support the Anishinabek student success and well-being.

The Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement (AES) is a concrete step on the path to self-determination and self-governance. Our hope is that your government will continue making foundational changes to laws, policies, and operational practices based on the recognition of rights to advance self-determination and self-government.

The AES sets the stage for the Participating First Nations to develop culturally relevant and community-tailored education programs for the benefit of the Anishinabek students today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. We need to set the stage and realize our vision of the AES.

This is important because at times we do not realize how broad education is. We often think of language as the first thing to be implemented. However, I am sure that the language of the Anishinabek is not taught in school. We must realize that this language is threatened and disappearing daily. There are a number of people in Anishinabek communities who are fighting to keep it alive, and striving to educate children and youth in their own language. It is an important part of education.

[*Translation*]

Language is so important. It makes a community come alive. This bill will certainly help the language be passed on. However, education is a much broader issue. It affects many other subjects, including the arts. Young people will have the opportunity to learn traditional arts, indigenous art, and Anishinabek art in their schools, which they could not do if we still had school boards that were not

run by the communities. They would become responsible for education.

• (1645)

[*English*]

The young kids would learn art, but maybe they would also be able to learn music, the drums, and the traditional music of Anishinabek Nation. Instead of just teaching music as usual in the schools, they would be able to really show their kids what music means for this nation. I think that is really great.

We would also be able to teach geography in a different way. The kids would be able to learn which nation was on which land, instead of just learning the geography that we learn after colonization.

There are a number of things that, by just giving back the power to the Anishinabek of their own education, would be improved in our schools. The way of thinking in school would be much different. I had the chance to go to an opening of a school in my riding of an Anishinabek first nation, the Long Point First Nation. Just the way the school was built is totally different from what we have seen before, because we gave the power back to those communities to think about what they want, and what they want to see in terms of education.

There are a number of other things that could be different. There are a number of other notions that I think Anishinabek kids want to learn. They want to learn about traditional plants, when we are talking about ecology, and what they can eat, and what nature can give to them. There is knowledge that is traditional, that the elders have, and they would be able to pass that on to those little kids.

With this agreement, I think it would achieve good experiences. Those experiences would be able to translate to other schools, for example, to Anishinabek schools in the province of Quebec. A lot of them are in my riding. Those experiences would be able to expand to other Anishinabek nations that are not in the agreement.

That is why we have to consider that with that agreement, every Anishinabek community would win something although they are not all part of the agreement, because they are not situated in Ontario, I think they would win something from this agreement. This agreement is supposed to take place, if everything is going well in the House, on April 1. Next school year, this would be ready. The kids would have control of their education, with the elders and the other members of their communities.

It would be those communities that would empower themselves, and that would be there for the children. We have to remember how difficult it is for kids on the reservation. A number of kids drop out of school. It is really difficult. There is a high rate of teen pregnancy. It is not easy.

Having an agreement like this, there is a good chance that more and more kids would finish school and graduate from high school, because the school would have something for them. There is also a good chance that young girls would find a way to manage their pregnancies and becoming mothers, while continuing their studies.

First nations control of first nations education is basic. It is a way of reconciliation. It is a way of self-determination for people who were here a long time before us.

Government Orders

Through this path of reconciliation, I hope that every kid will be able to learn about his past, how the Anishinabek Nation has evolved over time. They will be able to learn what was sad in their history, but also what makes them a great nation, a strong nation that has resisted a number of threats for many years. They will learn that they can be proud.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Bloc québécois to speak to Bill C-61 because we strongly encourage these types of initiatives.

With Bill C-61 we will be able to help implement the agreement enabling the Anishinabek Nation to create and oversee its own education system by partnering with the federal government and the Ontario government.

After more than 20 years of negotiations, 23 communities will now be united under their own education system, a system they will be able to shape according to their culture and their priorities. This means that Anishinabek communities in Ontario will be able to develop programs that promote their language and pass on their history. It is also an opportunity to develop educational environments that allow children to adjust to their schools more easily and to feel at home.

The Bloc québécois recognizes indigenous peoples as distinct peoples who are entitled to their cultures, languages, customs and traditions, and to the right to decide how to develop their own identity.

It goes without saying that nation-to-nation relationships begin with recognition of the different nations and their right to self-determination. We welcome these types of agreements, which give first nations more autonomy, an initiative that follows perfectly on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is essential that first nations have full control over their children's education.

In a context where indigenous languages are often on the brink of extinction and children's academic success is jeopardized by education systems that do not correspond to the cultures of the first peoples, gaining control over education means taking charge of the future.

Quebec has already signed agreements with nations that took this direction, such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which led to the peace of the Braves. We would never go back to the old way. We are sure that the Anishinabek people will not regret it either, but the federal government will have to become a real partner and meet its funding responsibilities.

Ottawa has been almost perpetually lax when it comes to funding for first nations education. One year ago today, the parliamentary budget officer criticized the Canadian government for underfunding indigenous schools. He found that Ottawa invests just half of what the provinces invest per child in education. What the numbers tell us is that the federal government considers indigenous children to be worth only half as much as non-indigenous children. Former prime minister Paul Martin has also harshly criticized this imbalance on many occasions since leaving politics.

Although funding is already massively deficient, federal spending on on-reserve education is increasing at a slower rate than indigenous populations themselves. These young and fast-growing populations are not being properly served by Ottawa's usual grand plans, in part because Ottawa is too far from these communities to know what people need.

In fact, the parliamentary budget officer criticized the rigidity of the federal funding model, which fails to account for a wide range of factors, including geographic location, school size, language and culture, percentage of students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, specific socioeconomic conditions, climate, and percentage of students with special needs.

The parliamentary budget officer must have had a sense of déjà vu, because in 2009, his predecessor came to the same sad conclusion that, at best, Ottawa was underestimating actual school infrastructure needs by more than half. Perhaps he got wind of the work that had been done in 2007 by the Quebec National Assembly's committee on education, which is in an ideal position to observe the differences between the treaty education systems and the work of the federal government. At that time, the committee members found significant differences between band schools and those of treaty first nations. They added:

At first glance, the funding formula of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development seems to put band schools at a disadvantage as compared to treaty first nation schools.

The committee ended its report by calling on the Government of Quebec to pressure the federal government to release the necessary resources so that indigenous communities in Quebec could offer education services comparable to those offered by the province.

The committee also criticized Ottawa's lack of flexibility with regard to funding. It indicated that federal funding failed to keep pace whenever changes were made to the programs and services offered by Quebec schools, and schools on reserves were unable to keep up with the advances that other Quebec students were entitled to, or were only able to make such advances after long delays. Simply put, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

The Bloc Québécois salutes the Anishinabek communities and fully believes that they will benefit immensely from this promising agreement. It should be clear by now that although it is unusual for the Bloc Québécois to speak on bills that do not involve Quebec, we have no hesitation about supporting Bill C-61.

● (1650)

The Prime Minister made a commitment on his very first day in Parliament. He said:

We will keep our diverse communities strong and will renew Canada's nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples.

He added that this would include:

...working in collaboration so that every first nations child receives a quality education.

We are taking him at his word. The government must take the initiative to ensure there are more agreements like the one we are implementing by voting for Bill C-61.

The government will have to be both a partner and a leader in its negotiations with first nations.

Government Orders

It took the Anishinabek people 20 years of hard work to get to this point. That is too long. A whole generation of children missed out on having an education system that was tailored to their specific cultural needs and well equipped to help them achieve their highest aspirations.

Make no mistake, first nations face many obstacles on their road to academic success. These will take some time to overcome, but one thing is clear: the future lies in self-government and a nation-to-nation relationship.

The future does not lie in non-indigenous governments imposing their own priorities. When it comes to decisions about education, the further away the federal government stays, the better off everyone will be.

•(1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make two statements. First and foremost, I want to recognize the fine work done by all of the different stakeholders and individuals who worked with the minister. A very important part of society as a whole is the great value in education. Second, in Winnipeg North, there is the Children of the Earth High School and the graduation ceremonies are very touching. When indigenous people provide spiritual and academic leadership, there are huge success stories.

I wanted to recognize and acknowledge the fine work of so many individuals who made today possible and to say how important it is for indigenous people and Canada to continue to move forward. My colleague across the way can comment on what I just said or conclude any other thoughts she might have.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the Bloc Québécois is proud to support Bill C-61. Continuing in the same vein, and my colleague opposite pointed this out, it is important for the international community that the rights of first nations be recognized. I also believe that they must take control of their education.

In my riding of Manicouagan, more than 12% of the population is Innu or Naskapi. They have their own educational programs that help young people feel more engaged in what they are learning, which means that they are more likely to succeed. I have experienced this as a college teacher. I taught literature for the most part. I saw how Innu texts from their community, their culture, and in their language could have a positive effect on these young people. I am not talking about a temporary, fleeting effect, but of a long-lasting benefit to their development, be it personal or educational.

For them to have a better future, it is essential that indigenous peoples have access to education based around their own culture and language.

I salute the people working in Tshakapesh, in my riding, for example. I also salute all the people currently working on building a school system in order to establish their own curriculum.

Of course I support the proposal set out in Bill C-61, but I believe that it must apply to all indigenous communities, whether they are remote or not-so-remote. Adequate funding is required not only to address the inequality between non-native and indigenous children, but also for communities to organize their school system. After all, these communities are not starting from the same point as all the others.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as other speakers have, I acknowledge we are standing on traditional territory of the Algonquin nations, and thank them in their language, *meegwetch*.

I can speak, briefly, in the language of the place where I come from. The Speaker recognizes me as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. Saanich is an anglicized SENCOTEN word of the WSÁNEC Nation. It is the nation of indigenous peoples that straddles both sides of the artificial border that separates the Coast Salish people, the territory of the Salish Sea, which is not observed by our southern resident killer whale population, or a division noticed by the wild salmon that inhabit our territories. It is the language of the people where I am honoured to live on their territory. I raise my hands to this place in the gesture of honour, respect, greeting, and gratitude, and say, “Hych’ka Siam”.

As we look at Bill C-61, it is a moment for gratitude. It is a moment to acknowledge hard work. As all the other members who have risen in this place today have noted, I was particularly touched by the personal reflections of the minister as she described the scene on that day when the agreement was signed. The signing of the agreement by the hon. minister on August 16, 2017 is a historic occasion. Having a bill like Bill C-61 universally supported in the House, to recognize the rights of self-determination as they relate to education of indigenous children, is an important step.

Certainly, Grand Chief Patrick Madahbee said it very clearly:

These 23 communities will be in the driver’s seat in creating a great future for their children. The impacts of colonialism in particular around the world with Indigenous people, they kept us uneducated and in poverty. And I think education is the key to our future, where we build capacity and we take over and run our own lives.

These sentiments were also reiterated in a letter that was sent to all of us as members of Parliament, urging us to pass the legislation, from Chief Shining Turtle of the White Fish River First Nation, in which he told us that the hon. minister had joined with his community for the historic signing, which he described as:

...the historic signing of the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement, a self-government agreement that recognizes Anishinabek law-making powers and authority of education for approximately over 8,000 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 on and off-reserve.

This is an important step for the Anishinabek Nation, but it is an important step for Canada. Other members have already noted, as did the minister, that perhaps this is a template, that the next set of agreements for self-government over education need not take decades to arrive at an agreement, to arrive at transparent financing, to arrive at the rules by which we at long last will say to indigenous children to hang on to their language, and be very proud of who they are.

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I want to quote briefly from the recommendations in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission discussing cultural genocide. It said:

Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. [Essential life services such as education, housing, clean water, medical care are restricted and substandard.] In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things.

If we look at this agreement, it is a very significant step on the path of reconciliation.

● (1700)

We know as settler culture people, the burden of reconciliation is mostly on us. Yesterday, I had the honour of putting questions to the soon to be, we hope, new Supreme Court justice, Madam Justice Sheilah Martin. She said that the most significant work she had done in her life was working with former Supreme Court Justice Peter Cory, at the request of Phil Fontaine, former first nations grand chief, to work on a settlement relating to the residential school issue. She felt that every survivor of residential schools was deserving of payment regardless of whether the individual could prove he or she suffered or not. The system was one of imposed state enforced bureaucratic cruelty and was an instrument of cultural genocide. As close as possible, I want to quote what she said, that first we needed to find the truth, then reconciliation.

For settler culture Canadians, we need to know the truth, the truth of the residential schools, the truth of more than a century of efforts to eradicate everything that makes indigenous people truly indigenous to their own cultures, spiritual values, and identity. Nothing is closer to identity than the language we dream in, the language we think in, the language we speak with our children.

This concrete step in Bill C-61 is an important one on that journey to real reconciliation. As we take more steps, I am conscious all the time of how we ensure the will of Canadians from coast to coast to coast stays consistent with the difficult job we have to do in reconciliation with first nations, Métis, and Inuit people, and we spread this work on education and right to self-govern on education.

I spoke earlier in some of the only words in SENCOTEN that I know, but it certainly is inspiring to me that on the Tsartlip First Nation, near Brentwood Bay in my riding, is a tribal school in the name of what we call anglicized Mount Newton. In SENCOTEN it would mean the place of refuge. The Tsartlip Nation tribal school, which is available for the children of the first nation communities in the Saanich Peninsula, has emersion in SENCOTEN.

Children are now playing again, speaking their own language. What is really important is that the kids who are learning SENCOTEN are proud and they know they are cool. They play in SENCOTEN, they sing in SENCOTEN. As each year in this school progresses, and they base this on educational programs for immersion in indigenous language that was picked up from Hawaii, another grade is added so more and more children in this area, on the territory where I live, which is a SENCOTEN word, W_SÁNEC, meaning the people rising, who are non-indigenous know more W_SÁNEC words, more SENCOTEN words.

As one of my colleagues said earlier, it changes our sense of where we live in our own geography because we are not living in a place. The Green Party has officially repealed as a matter of policy the doctrine of discovery. We did not come to an empty place and claim it as our own. We came as a colonial occupying power and took land from others in a culture that pre-existed us by thousands of years. In every corner of our great country this happened. We need the truth and then we need to move to reconciliation.

My great hope is that with Bill C-61 and other measures like it, which I thank the minister from the bottom of my heart for her hard work and to the hard work of the Anishinabek Nation that took this to a referendum and passed it community by community, nation by nation, that we take concrete steps to really understand. In that understanding, we are achieving justice with indigenous peoples. More than that, we are enriching our society.

It allows us to know that in my territory of Saanich Gulf Islands, those gulf islands were created when a creator reached down and picked up several smooth dark rocks, scattered them out to the waters and told the people gathered, that those islands were the people's relatives.

● (1705)

In SENCOTEN, there are the human people, whales are the whale people, salmon are the salmon people and they are our relatives. Our world view will be vastly improved and inspired on the path of reconciliation, and first nation languages for first nation children is an essential first step.

HÍSWKE SIAM.

● (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 30, Bill C-61, An Act to give effect to the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts is deemed read a second time, deemed referred to committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): This august place is not necessarily known for co-operation and complementary work, but I want to thank all the members for their hard work and our elders who are here with us today for such a momentous evening.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find it the will to call it 6:02 p.m., which would enable us to begin private members' business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:02 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

* * *

CANADA SHIPPING ACT, 2001

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP) moved that Bill C-352, An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and to provide for the development of a national strategy (abandonment of vessels), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, oil spills and marine debris from thousands of abandoned vessels across the country pollute our waterways and put local fishing and tourism jobs at risk. For too long, jurisdictional gaps have left coastal communities with nowhere to turn when they need help with abandoned vessels.

I first encountered this on Parker Island, a small island off Galiano. Constituents came to me saying that for 10 years they had been trying to get an enormous abandoned barge off of their white sand beach. They had asked every single department, provincially and federally, and got the runaround for 10 years. Someone had had a big dream of turning one of the old Expo 86 barges into a floating bed and breakfast, or something like that, but by the time it beached on the shore, it was rotting. My constituents would phone the Coast Guard, which would say it was a hazzard to navigation and that maybe they would have a look at it. The Coast Guard would then simply tie on the rotting pieces of rebar or the chunks of concrete or asbestos insulation that had fallen onto the beach. Children could not play there and the fisheries were harmed. It was a total mess, and no one would help.

I was chair of the Islands Trust Council at the time. We did not have any authority to deal with this, but we tried to find out whether this really was a result of a hole in jurisdiction and if other communities were having the same problem. We went to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities, the local government association for the Sunshine Coast on Vancouver Island. We took past resolutions, asking for action, to the Union of BC Municipalities, representing 180 municipal and rural governments all bound together.

One time, I led a delegation of 19 different local governments to meet with the Liberal B.C. minister of forests, lands and natural resource operations. There were 19 different local governments all in one room asking for help, saying that the minister should get it fixed or implore Ottawa to assume its responsibilities, that this was a marine issue, that it was about the oceans and vessel registration, and that the minister should be acting. Other countries act in regard to such vessels, but Canada fails to act.

For 10 years, we were completely ignored. That is one of the reasons I wanted to get elected as a member of Parliament: to bring the solutions here and to fix this once and for all.

During the course of the election campaign, the *Viki Lyne II* came into prominence in the riding I was hoping to represent. In Ladysmith Harbour, four years earlier, Transport Canada had found a beautiful old 100-foot fishing trawler adrift, the *Viki Lyne II*. She had been built in 1961 and had met a bad end. Transport Canada

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towed her into Ladysmith Harbour, which was viewed as a safe harbour, and there she sat for four years at anchor. Ladysmith had put an awful lot of effort into waterfront beautification, tourism promotion, and yet this horrific rusting hulk was sitting there, a hull that the Coast Guard, in a marine survey in year one, had said was maybe only being held together by the rust, yet it was a vessel with 125,000 litres of contaminants on board.

Ladysmith has jobs invested in aquaculture, tourism, and fisheries. All of them were threatened if the worst-case scenario happened to *Viki Lyne II*, and still we could not get action. A huge rally during the election campaign was organized by *Take 5*, one of the great local newspapers. Former MP Jean Crowder had been very active, trying to bring solutions to this. The former mayor of Ladysmith, Rob Hutchins, and then his successor, Aaron Stone, had a very strong alliance with the Stz'uminus First Nation. Here I raise my hands to Chief John Elliott, who was a very strong partner, he and his council. They repeatedly wrote letters to the federal government asking for help.

The Ladysmith Maritime Society, a community-owned marina, pushed as hard as it could for solutions. Finally, having been loud about this in question period, which some members might remember, a former fisheries minister, now the member for Nunavut, said that he would find a way to fund the removal of the *Viki Lyne II*. A little more than a year ago, there was a huge community celebration when, five years after was had first asked, the *Viki Lyne II* was finally towed away. In our effort, the *Ladysmith Chronicle*, a great local newspaper, had really helped us keep the pressure on and tell the story.

• (1715)

After the *Viki Lyne II* was towed away, every person who had been involved in her removal recommitted to a comprehensive coast-wide solution. The one off approach of dealing with the problem on a boat-by-boat basis, and not dealing with it until it became an emergency, had not been tenable. All them said that no community should have to work as hard as Ladysmith had to get that one boat removed.

Therefore, I brought to the House legislation based on all of the years of advice from coastal communities to fix vessel registration; to pilot a vessel turn-in program; to create good, green jobs by working with local salvage companies and innovating with recycling. Maybe we can find some markets for fibreglass, which has just not been done yet. Finally, my legislation aimed to end the jurisdictional runaround by making the Coast Guard the first point of contact. If someone finds an abandoned vessel, they contact the Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard works it out between other federal agencies who should take the first action.

From Tofino, B.C., to Fogo Island, Newfoundland, my legislation has been broadly endorsed. Fifty coastal communities; businesses; harbour authorities; marinas; and labour groups, such as the the BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union, Vancouver District Labour Council, and the Union of BC Municipalities all endorsed my legislation.

Private Members' Business

This summer I went to Nova Scotia and met with local leaders from all over who are facing the same problem, and they all agreed that this legislation would meet their needs and that we needed to accelerate it. We kept raising the pressure, along with many of my other Vancouver Island colleagues, some whom are sitting with me here today. We raised the issue of abandoned vessels 80 times in the House just in this Parliament alone.

The government kept promising that action was imminent. It did announce some funding back in the spring, which was better than a kick in the head, but, honestly, a drop in the bucket, with \$260,000 this year for small craft harbours and \$300,000 for removal from anywhere else in the rest of the country. The bill for removing the *Silver King* from my colleague's riding of Courtenay—Alberni was \$300,000. This one vessel would have blown the whole budget for the entire year. The capital regional district, which my colleague, the MP for Victoria, represents in part, has applied to the federal government for \$1 million to remove the backlog of abandoned vessels. Therefore, \$300,000 is not going to go very far.

Then, on October 22, another vessel sunk in Ladysmith Harbour, the *Anapaya*, which had already been on Transport Canada's inventory of vessels of concern for three years. It certainly was a lot more expensive to recover, and more damaging to local jobs and the environment once it was sitting on the bottom of Ladysmith Harbour leaking oil than if, proactively, we had been able to remove it before it sank. I am very grateful to the Coast Guard, as it has so many times risen to the call for action without really having the proper resources, and without a super-clear authority. Those good men and women of the Coast Guard have acted. However, we need to support and resource their work and give them clear responsibility.

On October 30, just eight days after the *Anapaya* sank, the transport minister introduced Bill C-64. The bill is compatible with my legislation, as there is no overlap. When I saw that the minister had finally acted, I thought, great, my bill would really fill the gaps in his bill, and both pieces of legislation could move forward together. The transport minister's bill does not legislate on the most pressing issues with abandoned vessels. It does not deal with the backlog and does not fix vessel registration. The transport minister wants to be able send fines and penalties to the owners of vessels, but if there is no proper vessel registry, how will he ever know where to mail the bill?

Therefore, these two pieces of legislation should have been able to go forward together. Again, because the government's bill did not deal with the backlog, part of my bill suggested a vessel turn-in program, kind of like the successful cash for clunkers program for vehicles, which many provinces have worked on. Without that kind of turn-in program, we will just not be able to deal with the backlog.

We have heard of all the procedural games the Liberals used. They blocked my bill at the procedure and House affairs committee. I went to an appeal and showed them exactly all of the ways the bills were compatible and not in conflict, but they used their majority on committee to vote me down. We then used an unprecedented tool that had never been used in the history of the House of Commons, a secret ballot vote.

● (1720)

Even under the cover of the secrecy of the ballot box, I had an awful lot of Liberal colleagues say they were sorry but were voting with the government on this one. I wish they had voted with coastal communities, voted to have the solutions from all of those coastal mayors, brought to this House, and at least had the courage to have these debated in committee. To me, it felt like a real betrayal of the Liberal commitment to work across the aisle co-operatively, and to work with local communities to find solutions. I am disappointed. None of the B.C. coastal voices are included in this legislation, and I do not believe there are any B.C. Liberals on the speaking list today who are willing to speak about why they did not want to support this bill. In contrast, in the previous Parliament, when the Liberals were the third party, they voted for former MP Jean Crowder's version of this bill. That included the fisheries minister, transport minister, and the prime minister. Anyway, times have changed.

Tonight is the end of the road for Bill C-352. It is what coastal communities have been asking for for decades, but this is our consolation prize final hour of debate. Because of the Liberal push, this will not go to committee or a vote, which almost never happens. However, here we are making history again.

Yesterday, I was very pleased to have the support of all parties of the House to fast-track the transport minister's bill, Bill C-64, to committee immediately. Our communities are so hungry for solutions, and I am really glad there was agreement to move that quickly. The minister's bill will go to committee and I will do my best, along with my colleagues, to insert as many of those coastal solutions that remain from my blocked bill within the minister's bill.

I will finish by saying that I continue to be awed by the power and innovation of coastal communities. These are people who take matters into their own hands, find fixes, and use the system to advocate for them. Honestly, they should not have had to work this hard. This should have been solved 15 years ago, as every other maritime country has pretty much done.

I will not forget that the Liberal government tried to stifle coastal voices. However, my resolve to include the innovation and problem-solving nature of coastal community leaderships into the government's bill continues so that we can finally solve the abandoned vessels problem and get it off the backs of coastal communities. For ecology, the economy, and local jobs, let us respect that coastal wisdom. Let us honour the advice of these elected local leaders and bring their abandoned vessels solutions to this House and into Canada's legislation.

Private Members' Business

• (1725)

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-352. Before I speak to the bill, I want to sincerely thank the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for her commitment to and her advocacy for coastal communities and the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels. We both agree that something has to be done about this ongoing problem.

I often use the example of a truck when I talk about abandoned vessels. If truckers are through with their rigs, they cannot leave them at the side of the road and expect someone else to look after them, so why should we expect anything different from people who own vessels.

During the election in 2015, I heard over and over again about the problem of abandoned and wrecked vessels and the problems they cause in our coastal communities. Living in Nova Scotia and representing a large coastal riding, this was not an issue that was uncommon to me. That was why I was happy to bring forward Motion M-40 to the House in February 2016.

My private member's motion helped put the issue of abandoned and wrecked vessels on the government's radar and set the wheels in motion, leading up to this fall, when the Minister of Transport introduced the government's bill C-64. This is comprehensive legislation that will deal with the ongoing problem of abandoned and wrecked vessels. We need to be proactive, not reactive.

I am proud of the fact that this legislation was based on a motion I put forward that was unanimously adopted in the House. Coastal communities have had a problem with these vessels, and those problems have been punted between federal, provincial, and municipal governments, because nobody wanted to deal with the issue. I am so happy that we have taken the initiative and are moving to provide long-term solutions to deal with this problem. Bill C-64 is a comprehensive plan that would address the problem of abandoned vessels and put the onus squarely on the owners, where the liability belongs.

Bill C-64 has many objectives that would be met to ensure a long-term solution to this issue. The bill aims to strengthen owner liability, including the cost of cleanup. It would address irresponsible vessel management, including by prohibiting vessel abandonment. It would enhance federal powers to take proactive action on problem vessels. It would introduce a compliance and enforcement regime, with offences and penalties, and it would clarify the roles and responsibilities of Transport Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Coast Guard. In short, it would make it illegal to abandon a vessel and would close loopholes that have made abandonment possible without recourse.

A key difference between Bill C-64 and Bill C-352 is the involvement of the Coast Guard as the receiver of all wrecks. On this difference, I believe that the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith and I have very different opinions.

In my opinion, our Coast Guard is there to serve our coastal communities with search and rescue operations and to conduct vital scientific research. To designate it a salvage organization would be

inappropriate for these men and women and the role they provide in our coastal communities.

Currently, lobster fishers in my riding are braving the Atlantic Ocean at times that are trying and in weather that can turn on a dime. I would hate to think that at a time when they may be needed off our coast in an emergency situation, resources for the Coast Guard might be tied up dealing with an abandoned vessel that someone has dumped.

I believe that the responsibility for vessels belongs squarely with the people who own them, not with the Coast Guard, and ultimately the taxpayers of Canada. A significantly stronger regulatory regime to make sure we can identify who owns vessels and that owners have a proper way of disposal would be a more comprehensive and better way of dealing with this issue.

There are times when the government has to step in to help with removal, as was the case this summer with the removal of the *Farley Mowat*, in my riding. The town of Shelburne had done everything possible to have the *Farley* removed, but unfortunately, it was met with resistance at every turn. The federal government recognized that the town could no longer face the impending environmental disaster this ship posed and stepped in to have it removed. The people of the town of Shelburne were ecstatic to get rid of that rusting hulk of garbage after three years of trying everything. However, we need to deal with these vessels before they become the kind of problem the *Farley Mowat* did, and Bill C-64 would accomplish just that.

In closing, I again want to thank the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for her advocacy and her support of Bill C-64. I note that there are some differences between Bill C-352 and Bill C-64, but we all want the best solution to address this long-standing issue. I look forward to working together to make sure we get this right. Like my colleague, I want us to be able to deal with the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels so that our coastal communities do not have to.

• (1730)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand before the House to talk to the private member's bill from our colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Bill C-352. It is unfortunate that we are speaking at a time when really the government has pretty much scuttled her bill, as we get jeers across the way, and really did everything in its power at every step of the way for the member of Parliament and her advocacy for the issue.

We cannot have a debate or a speech on abandoned vessels without first giving due to our hon. former colleague, John Weston, who also brought forth a bill very similar to this. It was in June 2015 in the 41st Parliament that Conservative MP John Weston introduced Bill C-695, which would have dealt with very similar issues or similar points that Bill C-64 and Bill C-352 have. One of the things that I will agree with our colleague across the way from South Shore—St. Margarets about is the responsibility. Whether it is somebody who is polluting or somebody who is abandoning a vessel, Conservatives also agree that there has to be some onus and responsibility on that person, the owner of that vessel or the person or organization that is doing the polluting.

Private Members' Business

One of the things that I will take a bit of deference to in terms of our hon. colleague who just spoke before us from South Shore—St. Margarets, whom I respect greatly, is the fact that her motion, Motion No. 40, really precipitated Bill C-64. I would offer that it probably helped along the way, bringing the awareness to the government, but I would also then say that those who walked before us, including our hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith and our hon. former colleague, Mr. John Weston, and the work that he did in the previous Parliament, set the ground for where we are today.

We have heard examples. While our hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith did name the Expo 86 barge, it was affectionately known on the Pacific coast as the McBarge. I believe that is the one she was referring to. It was a floating McDonald's during Expo 86 and it had been towed out to Ladysmith. Some entrepreneur had some grand ideas as to what he or she was going to do with it. However, as with many of our small businesses, with all the whims and whimsies and “fail to plan” and “plan to fail” it sat there and collected rust.

In doing research for this speech today, I looked quickly in the news articles. Just recently, at the beginning of November, the Town of Ladysmith applied for federal funding to remove nine derelict vessels. That is unacceptable. Whether it is a small municipality on the Pacific coast or on the Atlantic coast, this is unacceptable and that is what the challenge has been in terms of abandoned vessels. Whose responsibility is it? There is a lot of finger pointing when there are abandoned and derelict vessels as to whose responsibility it is, who is going to take control of and mitigate the situation. What I felt was compelling in our hon. colleague's private member's bill, Bill C-352, was something that I was not aware of. I have to say that when I was tasked to talk to this, I actually reached out to our hon. colleague and wanted to find out a bit more about the issue. I am from British Columbia. I can read the headlines and know that there are challenges and issues there, but I confess I am in a landlocked area. Outside of maybe a rowboat, there are not a lot of the huge derelict vessels that we will see in some of our coastal communities.

● (1735)

Therefore, I want to know what the difference is between Bill C-64, and our hon. colleague's bill in the previous Parliament, Bill C-695, and our hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith's bill, Bill C-352. She said that the fundamental difference is it assigns responsibility to the Coast Guard. I will touch on that quickly when I get a chance.

The overwhelming issue that we have, and I think our hon. colleague said it very articulately, is that when we are trying to track down the owner of a vessel that has perhaps changed hands three, four, or five times, how do we assign a fine to somebody who does not own that vessel anymore? The federal registration process for marine vessels is and has been flawed. I thought that Bill C-352 identified this issue, which I was unaware of. I look forward to Bill C-64 coming to committee and working with my colleague across the way from South Shore—St. Margarets to make some amendments to it, because I think there are some strong points that will allow us to finally put this issue to rest.

One of the things I want to talk about is the responsibility of the Coast Guard. Our hon. colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets

made a great point. The responsibility, as it sits with Bill C-352, would go squarely on that of the Coast Guard. Somebody ultimately needs to take responsibility for that. Whether with respect to enforcement, or mitigating the issue and removing it from the waters, somebody should be responsible. There should be a singular group or organization that one can call when one has a ship that is rusting in one's area, whichever that is, the Coast Guard or Transport Canada. There is no finger pointing. The challenge is that we have a Coast Guard today, and I think my hon. colleague knows where I am going with this, that is challenged for resources. My hon. colleague across the way from South Shore—St. Margarets knows that this is something that as the shadow minister for this file I am deeply aware of. We have 27 marine vessels in our Coast Guard fleet with 75% to 148% of their notional lifespan. We have perhaps the oldest marine vessel fleet in the world.

Canada has the largest coastline in the world, yet we are asking our brave men and women in our Canadian Coast Guard to brave the waters, to enforce our Arctic sovereignty, and because 90% of all of Canada's trade goes by marine and waterways, to make sure that our seaways and waterways are free of ice so that our ports and communities can remain viable, and our mariners, fishermen, and those coastal communities can receive the services they require from our Canadian Coast Guard, with a fleet and resources from a federal organization that I believe requires some attention.

I understand I have about a minute left. I do not know if there is much more that needs to be said.

I congratulate our hon. colleague for her tireless efforts in seeing this through, and working with our former colleague, Mr. Weston, in supporting his bill also, Bill C-695. I know Mr. Weston supports Bill C-352. I look forward to perhaps having our hon. colleague at committee, and working with our colleague across the way from South Shore—St. Margarets, to do some great work, as we usually do at the fisheries committee, and come up with a piece of legislation that will protect our harbours and our coastal communities, and make sure that those who require the resources are getting it, like our Canadian Coast Guard.

● (1740)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to start by stating into the record what an absolute pleasure it is to have such a dedicated colleague like the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. We are fortunate enough to be neighbours on beautiful Vancouver Island. We share a coastline. We both have a connection to Jean Crowder, the former member of Parliament Nanaimo—Cowichan. We often like to joke that it took two of us to replace Jean, because that is how good she was.

I want to set the stage for my constituents back home who may be watching this. We are here debating, and we have been given one hour for my colleague's Bill C-352. We are here because the Liberal government has used its majority, and has used bully tactics to silence her voice, to silence her right to take forward legislation in this House on behalf of her constituents.

Private Members' Business

The procedure and House affairs committee deemed this bill non-votable. The member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith appealed to this House and, for the first time ever, we had a historic secret ballot vote. We lobbied Liberal members of Parliament. We sent almost 30,000 emails to them from strong voices in coastal communities. However, still, the Liberals decided they were going to quash the member's voice and not let her stand in this place to bring forward legislation, as is the right of every member of Parliament in this place. That is why we are here today.

My riding has a long history with abandoned vessels. I could write a whole book just on Cowichan Bay and what it has gone through. In fact, we still have the SS *Beaver* below water, waiting for action to happen.

I have had a long history with abandoned vessels. The biggest problem with abandoned vessels has been the jurisdictional finger pointing. If it was laying on the seabed, it was the jurisdiction of the province, unless it was a municipality that had that particular foreshore; if it was an obstacle to navigation, the Coast Guard was called, which more likely than not would just tow it to the nearest sandbar and leave it there. In other instances, the port authorities could be involved. The main point is that constituents, when they found an abandoned vessel, had no idea who to turn to, and would just completely get the runaround.

I appreciate the government's efforts on Bill C-64. I am very glad that the House gave unanimous consent to move that important piece of legislation to committee. The argument that my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith has made is that her bill fills in some important gaps, and the two bills complement each other. It comes down to coastal voices. We have worked so long on this legislation, for many years. We have had the backing of the Union of B.C. Municipalities, and many different organizations that are involved in protecting our coast.

For the Liberals to use their majority just to silence us, and to not even bring forward this bill for a vote shows an extreme lack of courage on their part. I would have loved to have seen coastal British Columbia members of Parliament—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has said this on a couple of occasions, and I do not think it is appropriate.

We had a secret ballot, so it is unfair for the member to say that the Liberals actually voted one way or another. In fact, it could have been others who voted that way.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If the hon. member wishes to participate in debate, he may want to ask to be put on the list.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford has the floor.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, to the point of order, that is definitely a point of debate. I know my constituents know exactly how Liberals voted. We just have to take direction from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, but that is beside the point.

The point is that this House, with its Liberal majority, decided that coastal voices were not going to get their turn. The Liberals denied my colleague her chance to bring forward legislation in this House and have it debated. It shows bully tactics and extreme lack of courage, and it is absolutely shameful behaviour on the part of a government that came in with a mandate to give more respect to Parliament and parliamentarians.

In fact, I remember the speech by the Prime Minister when I was at the orientation session for new members of Parliament. He kept going on about how important our role as private members was in this place, our ability to bring forward legislation, bring forward those ideas, put them in a bill, and have it debated and voted on so we could actually have recorded votes on where individual members of Parliament stand.

We will never get to know that now with Bill C-352. We will not know where B.C. Liberal MPs stand on that bill because they decided to make it non-votable. Those are the facts. I could go on and on, but I just want to end with this. No matter what their tactics, it will not stop us from speaking up strongly.

Again, I want to salute my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith for the incredible work she has done on this file. Even with the criticisms I have just levelled at the Liberal government, I can assure members that when it comes to Bill C-64, we will do our due diligence on it. We have given agreement in principle, but I believe there are important amendments. I look forward to the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith working on that bill and making sure it actually is the right fit for our important coastal communities.

• (1745)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a huge honour today to rise to speak to Bill C-352 on abandoned vessels. I would like to thank the member of Parliament for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for tabling this very important bill and proving she is a strong steward and champion for our environment. It follows the work she has been doing in our coastal communities for decades, and in one of her many roles as the chair of the Islands Trust

I would also like to thank the former New Democrat member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Cowichan, Jean Crowder, for her work in Parliament for more than a decade on this issue. There is no doubt that the NDP and our coastal community MPs have led the charge for healthy oceans and federal leadership in addressing abandoned and derelict vessels.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-352 is important for the environment and the economy in coastal communities for several reasons. It would end the run-around and finger-pointing by designating the Coast Guard as the agency responsible for directing the removal and recycling of abandoned vessels. This is fundamental when dealing with abandoned and derelict vessels. It would get taxpayers off the hook, by fixing vessel registration and creating a fee to help cover the cost of vessel disposal, like in Washington State. It would prevent vessels from becoming hazards by piloting a turn-in program at safe recycling facilities. It would be great for the economy and green jobs by supporting local marine salvage businesses. Most important, it would build a coast-wide strategy, in co-operation with local and provincial governments, in service of our constituents as coastal people.

These key points, and they are all key to the bill, were derived from more than 15 years of work and advocacy by local stakeholders in coastal communities in British Columbia, and I cited the former MP Jean Crowder and the current member from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, working with individuals, organizations, and local mayors and councils from my riding, from Tofino to Qualicum Beach through the Association of Vancouver Island Municipalities, and a resolution that was supported by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. This bill reflects their concerns and priorities.

However, the government's response to Bill C-352 has been inadequate and undemocratic. In fact, it shut out coastal voices. Instead of thoughtfully examining the bill, offering amendments, and allowing a free vote, the government has chosen another path, deciding to table Bill C-64, which is significantly different in that does not take the advice of local and regional stakeholders, who have been engaged in this issue for 15 years. It is not without merit, but has some gaping holes.

For instance, Bill C-64 would not create nor define a national strategy to deal with abandoned vessels. It has no turn-in program or a cash for clunkers incentive for owners who may be at risk of losing or considering abandoning their vessels at sea.

Finally, while Transport Canada admits there may be thousands of abandoned and derelict vessels along our coastlines today, there is no mechanism or plan to clear this backlog.

Unlike the government bill, Bill C-352 directly deals with each of these glaring weaknesses. In spite of this, the government made an effort to defeat Bill C-352 before it could even be debated.

Again, I want to thank my colleague and neighbour from Nanaimo—Ladysmith for bringing this issue forward and for working and co-operating with other parliamentarians. My thanks for her good nature and commitment to progressive co-operation and getting results for her constituents and coastal communities. She has urged all MPs to give their unanimous consent to move the government's along to help our coastal constituents as quickly as possible.

My colleague has done incredible work in bringing coastal communities together, in bringing this forward and in demonstrating that she and the NDP members are leaders in defending coast communities on the environment and the protection of our coast.

● (1750)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, just to make sure I do not run out of time, I want to profoundly thank the coastal leaders who built this legislation and who kept this dream alive all this time.

The North Pender trustees on the Islands Trust Council, Steeves and Hancock, worked with me for years on this. Denman Island trustees Bell and Graham also worked closely with me. There was trustee Peter Luckham, who is now Trust Council chair, and Islands Trust staff, Adams, Gordon, and Frater. There was amazing female leadership and great wisdom that found solutions and helped coastal communities find their voice together to propose solutions and pitch them to provincial and federal governments.

From the Regional District of Nanaimo, I want to thank regional directors Stanhope, Houle, Veenoff, and Dorey, all within my region and all very strong partners. We would not have gotten as far as we did without them.

From Ladysmith, I thank former mayor Hutchins, current mayor Stone, and councillor Steve Arnett, who has been on this file with me the whole time, for 12 years at least. Duck Patterson and Carol Henderson, both councillors, have been very supportive. I thank the Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce. Rod Smith, at the Ladysmith Maritime Society, has been a treasure of information and someone on the water who gets these problems.

In Nanaimo, city councillor Diane Brennan has been working for years with me on this. Mayor McKay and councillor Bill Yoachim have both been really supportive. A former chair of the Nanaimo Port Authority, Jeet Manhas, has been a strong partner. I thank the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce CEO, Kim Smythe. I thank the Georgia Strait Alliance and the BC Ferry & Marine Workers' Union. They are all right in Nanaimo and Ladysmith and have all been strong partners committed to finding a solution.

The men and women of the Coast Guard have again and again come to the fore. I want to thank the mayors of Victoria and Oak Bay and also my fantastic staff team: Jennie, Michael, Hilary, Lauren, and Mikelle. I also thank Scott and Karen, who used to work on my team. They have just blown this out of the water. We have finished our campaign significantly earlier than we intended to, but they put all horsepower into it the whole time.

Private Members' Business

I want to thank tremendously all the coastal voices, in multiple ridings, on both sides of the country, who, over the last couple of weeks especially, emailed coastal Liberal MPs, imploring them to give coastal voices an opportunity to be heard in the House and voted on. Together they sent 27,000 individual emails to coastal Liberals. They made phone calls directly to their offices and sent Twitter messages. I thank them. We pushed as hard as we possibly could have. We could not have worked harder to get consensus here to have the bill heard. That is a real point of pride.

That said, I want to flag, for our next chapter, that this is a problem across the whole country. There are thousands of abandoned vessels Transport Canada has identified. In Newfoundland, the *Manolis L* is one that 25 years later is still burping up oil and harming fisheries. My colleague has been fighting for six years, at least, the *Kathrine Spirit*, an abandoned vessel threatening drinking water in her riding in Quebec. There is the *Cormorant*, in Nova Scotia. All over we are seeing these. We have to work together.

We cannot characterize my proposal to make the Coast Guard the receiver of wrecks as turning the Coast Guard into a salvage operation. If I can say anything to the government, it is that it must recognize that asking people to take a constitutional lesson or read an org chart to figure out who might be able to help them with the problem is untenable. We are not asking the Coast Guard to do the salvage. We are asking it to hold the expertise and to navigate the system and talk to the relevant federal agencies to figure out who is actually going to take action. However, it should not be up to local governments, or ratepayer groups, or environmental organizations, or businesses, such as in Cowichan Bay, where they themselves paid to helicopter out abandoned vessels when they got fed up waiting for federal action.

• (1755)

Please, let us pull together on this for our economy, for the environment, for jobs, and to give people faith that the federal government can work together and solve problems that coastal communities identify. Let us work together. Let us get this done.

I thank everybody who tried their best to make it happen.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member addressed her comments to the government at one point. I want to remind her to avoid using the word “you”. It would make life a bit easier here in the House.

[Translation]

The time provided for consideration of this bill has now expired. As the motion has been designated as non-votable, the order is now dropped from the Order Paper.

[English]

It being 5:56 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(7) the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-377 under private members' business.

[Translation]

AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.) moved that Bill C-377, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, today is a big day for my constituents. It is an important milestone in my first move as member of Parliament, which I undertook on behalf of my constituents, to change the name of our riding, Châteauguay—Lacolle, to “Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville”.

The reason behind this bill is that the name Châteauguay—Lacolle is inaccurate. If we look at a map of my riding, we see that the municipality of Lacolle is actually in the neighbouring riding of my hon. colleague from Saint-Jean. The municipality in my riding is Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, a municipality with its own history, its own institutions, and its own *raison d'être*.

Even before I took office, the residents of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle talked to me about this issue, and I pledged to do whatever I had to do to remedy the situation. It is with that in mind that I have the honour to rise today in the House. As if it were not enough that the name Lacolle is erroneously used to designate Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, which is not at all the same thing, we have also noted several times in the past two years that the name Châteauguay—Lacolle is confusing for the constituents of both ridings and has created misunderstandings for some stakeholders.

The names Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle and Lacolle are often used interchangeably by different stakeholders, such as representatives of national media, mainly because what is referred to as the Lacolle border crossing, which is located on Highway 15, the main road between Montreal and New York, and is the busiest border crossing into the United States, is located in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, not in Lacolle.

I am sure my colleagues are aware that the situation at the Lacolle border crossing these past few months, the influx of asylum seekers from the United States, has helped sustain the incorrect name. However, there is good news. For the most part, those involved have managed to set the record straight in recent months.

Many citizens have told me they do not like the name Châteauguay—Lacolle, not only for the reasons I have just explained, but also because it is damaging to the pride that the people of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle take in their municipality and to their feeling of belonging. Following many discussions and conversations with the people and organizations of this region, the name Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville emerged as a logical and meaningful choice for a number of reasons.

Private Members' Business

First, Les Jardins-de-Napierville is the name of a regional county municipality that includes nine of our 15 municipalities. Second, the main city, Châteauguay, is located at the northwest end of the riding, whereas the RCM of Jardins-de-Napierville includes the nine municipalities located in the southern and eastern parts of the riding. Most of the residents of the other six municipalities self-identify as being from Grand Châteauguay, a name we hear a lot. All of the citizens, those from the Châteauguay region and those from the RCM of Jardins-de-Napierville, could identify with the name Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

The Jardins-de-Napierville RCM, whose beauty is represented by the word “Jardins” or gardens, is known for being the top market gardening region in Quebec. Lastly, the name Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville is a good representation of the semi-urban, semi-rural nature of our riding.

I would also like to talk about a very special person who contributed greatly to choosing the name Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. I am talking about the late mayor of Napierville, Jacques Déglise.

● (1800)

If memory serves, he was the first to propose this name. This dedicated man, who left a remarkable legacy to his municipality, may also end up leaving his mark on the entire riding.

I would point out that I am sponsoring this bill for my constituents. A petition calling on the House of Commons to change the name of our riding to Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville has been circulating in the region for weeks. The response has been excellent. The petition has already been signed by people from all around our riding, including, of course, the mayors of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle and neighbouring towns. As elected officials, they are pleased to support my initiative on behalf of their constituents, as are my hon. colleagues from Saint-Jean, La Prairie, and, I believe, Salaberry—Suroit.

Since I still have a bit of time, I now have the pleasure of giving a brief history lesson to all those listening and watching. As indicated in my bill, the riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle was created in 2013, following a redistribution that came into effect with the dissolution of the 41st Parliament in 2015.

The current riding was formed from the former ridings of Châteauguay—Saint-Constant and Beauharnois—Salaberry. It seems the Quebec electoral boundaries commission erred when it named the new riding. The fact that Lacolle became part of the Saint-Jean riding during a previous redistribution process probably went unnoticed. We do not know what happened, but one can imagine.

After doing some research and discussing the matter with the mayor of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, I think there may have been some confusion between Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle and Lacolle.

Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle is a parish municipality that was established in 1855 in honour of Bernard-Claude Panet, Quebec's 12th archbishop.

The Lacolle part of the name comes from the name of the seignury to which the land once belonged. Today, Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle has a population of about 1,500. Lacolle is a village

municipality that was established in 1920 and officially constituted in 2001, and now has a population of about 2,800.

Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle was established long before Lacolle, but it has developed more slowly in recent decades and its population has not grown as much as that of its neighbour. That is why the municipality of Lacolle is better known.

● (1805)

[English]

Now that we have a better understanding of the history of our region, please allow me to outline how name changes come about and the criteria any proposed name change, including that proposed by my bill, Bill C-377, must meet.

First, given the practice of reviewing electoral district boundaries every 10 years following a new national census, Elections Canada provides the 10 provincial electoral boundaries commissions with guidelines on riding name conventions and best practices. While Elections Canada will enact any name changes legislated by Parliament, there are practical and technical issues that must be considered, such as the limited capacity of databases. Thus, riding names are limited to 50 characters or less in order to enable the easy display of the riding names on websites, maps and paper reports, as well as easily readable geographic products.

I note for the record that the name proposed by the bill before us, Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville, has 38 characters, including hyphens, dashes, and spaces.

My understanding is that any changes to federal electoral district names would require royal assent no later than January 2019 to be effected prior to the next federal election. According to the legislative timelines of our Parliament, I am hopeful that Bill C-377 will come into force in a timely manner.

The name selected for ridings should reflect the character of Canada and be clear and unambiguous. I believe this criterion is met by my bill, as the names refer to a major municipality in our area and a regional municipal county region.

Third, a distinction is also to be made in the spelling of names between hyphens and dashes. I would ask members to listen carefully. Hyphens are used to link parts of geographical names, whereas dashes are used to unite two or more distinct geographical names. This convention is respected, as a dash is used to separate Châteauguay and Les Jardins-de-Napierville and the hyphens are kept in Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

Elections Canada's guidelines also have positive characteristics that are all met in the proposed new name, for example, the sense of the location and the logical order of multiple elements. On the electoral map, we see that Châteauguay and Les Jardins-de-Napierville are two geographical names that correspond almost entirely to the territory of the riding and conform to a reading of the map from west to east, in other words, from left to right.

Private Members' Business

The name of an electoral district must be unique, meaning the components of each federal electoral district name should be used only once, which is indeed the case for the elements Châteauguay and Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

Finally, I should note the preservation of tradition is important and that it is quite acceptable to have same or similar names for both federal and provincial constituencies when their core areas embrace the same population centres. This is the case for the name of Châteauguay, which is the name of a provincial riding that includes Greater Châteauguay, consisting of Léry, Mercier, and St. Isidore, as well as the City of Châteauguay representing more than half of the population in our federal riding.

The guidelines also contain negative characteristics that are all avoided in the name Châteauguay-Les-Jardins-de-Napierville. However, I will name only those that do not correspond to the inverse expression of the positive characteristics already enumerated, and that are therefore already understood implicitly.

I can repeat that point if necessary, but I will give the House some examples.

The name of a federal electoral district should be clear in both English and French, and as much as possible be acceptable without translation into the other official language, thus avoiding multiple forms, possible inconsistencies, and confusion. Another characteristic to be avoided is the use of cardinal points such as east or west. This would only encourage clumsy translation between official languages.

The incorrect use of hyphens and dashes is to be avoided at all cost. Bill C-377 correctly uses a dash to designate the City of Châteauguay within the name, while the individual words of the region of Jardine are correctly separated by hyphens.

For the record, the use of actual names of provinces, personal names, and names that are imprecise or contrived from non-geographical sources are also to be avoided.

I believe that I have raised all of the arguments that should satisfy my hon. colleagues here in the House that the name proposed by Bill C-377, Châteauguay-Les Jardins-de-Napierville, respects all of the pertinent guidelines of Elections Canada.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

In closing, I would like to paint a picture of my wonderful riding, which is blessed with splendid natural beauty, fertile land, a vibrant economy, and really nice people. My riding is located in the province of Quebec, on Montreal's south shore, in western Montérégie. It is made up of 15 municipalities, including Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle.

I am also very grateful to represent a riding that is semi-urban and semi-rural. The city of Châteauguay, with its 48,000 residents, including over 15,000 anglophones and allophones, boasts a major industrial area that is home to many innovative businesses.

In contrast, most of the surface area of the riding is rural, and we are also very proud of our agriculture and agrifood industry.

I look forward to my colleagues' questions. I could go on for hours about my riding, Châteauguay—Lacolle, and provide much more detailed information.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is simple. The hon. government House leader has put a process in place for us to change the names of our ridings. It has been a streamlined process, and various members have submitted their changes to the hon. government House leader. Those changes are proceeding. It is quite simple.

The hon. member opposite has chosen to use her chance to table a private member's bill as the way to change her riding name. I understand her desire to change the name, but what I do not understand is why she would use such a rare opportunity to bring forward a private member's bill to do this, when there is already a process in place by the government House leader.

I am a little confused as to why she would not use her private member's bill opportunity to table another a piece of legislation that perhaps her constituents would be interested in.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As members, we have the privilege of introducing any bill that is important to our constituents.

The notion of identity may not seem all that important, but it is very important to my constituents. The name of a town that is not even in my riding was mistakenly included in the name of my riding. My constituents see this as a serious mistake that must be corrected. As soon as I had the opportunity to introduce my bill, I decided that it was a very important matter and I could not let the opportunity pass me by.

Based on my research, in the previous Parliament, it would seem that there was a 12-month period in which the members concerned could have corrected the riding's name, but they did not. My constituents consider this to have been a disservice.

● (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have had a great experience working with my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle on the government operations committee. However, I have to say, after that answer, it is still quite unclear why she has chosen to use a private member's bill to change the name of her riding.

We do not dispute the importance of this name change, but as we speak, there is a process under way by the House leaders of all parties to put together a bill to change the names of several ridings. The member for Châteauguay—Lacolle had access to that process, and we really do not understand why she did not use it, and why she is instead using a private member's bill, which is a rare opportunity.

Private Members' Business

There are a limited number of spots for private member's bills to be put before Parliament. Many members will not have an opportunity in this Parliament to have a private member's bill of theirs debated or voted upon, and we are using one of those opportunities here to do something that other MPs are doing through a collaborative process.

I want to give my colleague another opportunity to explain, not why it was important to change the name of the riding, but why it was important to do so through a private member's bill.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I am shocked. I am shocked that members of this House would question the choice of a fellow member to use a private member's bill. There is absolutely no precedent for that.

Members of this House are free to bring forward a bill. If I have the honour and chance to present a bill, I present a bill, not a bill that is important to me, but important to the people of my riding. That is what the people of my riding said.

[*Translation*]

They said, "Lacolle is not even in our riding, this needs to change!"

[*English*]

That is what I am doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the speech by my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle, a riding whose name will change in due time. I want to reassure her straight off that the official opposition fully agrees with the substance of the bill and that we will be supporting the measure.

As my hon. colleague has shown, there is indeed a major anomaly in the name of the riding, which refers to Lacolle, a place that is not even located in the riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle, but rather in that of Saint-Jean.

On a related note, the crossing at the American border is still known as Lacolle, even though that refers to the municipality of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle. I thank my colleague for that important clarification. In my own riding, in Quebec City, the Jean Lesage international airport is often referred to as L'Ancienne-Lorette airport, and yet, it is not located in L'Ancienne-Lorette, but rather in Quebec, but it still goes by its old name, even though L'Ancienne-Lorette is across the street. Much to my disappointment, I do not represent the Quebec City airport. It is a shame because aviation is a passion of mine, as I have often mentioned to the Minister of Transport. The airport and surrounding area are represented by the hon. member for Louis-Hébert, whom I value and respect.

We therefore agree with the change and appreciate the member's clarifications. She did a great job giving us the history of her riding and its parishes and towns and explaining the importance that should rightly be placed on having accurate names. I have two simple questions for my colleague regarding minor concerns.

First of all, I have always found it a little strange, to put it politely, that the names of federal ridings are so long. As I learned from the

member, they cannot be more than 50 characters, but that seems very long to me. I always have a hard time remembering the name of the riding of my colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, which is not too far from my riding. Federal riding names can go on forever. Look at my colleague from Foothills. It is one word. It is simple, impossible to mess up. Louis-Saint-Laurent is the name of a former prime minister, so people do not mess that up either. However, when ridings have four or five names stuck together, even if it is under 50 characters, I still think that is too long.

I mention this because the member is proposing that her riding be renamed Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. If this is what the people want, I have no problem with it, and I support the member, since she took the time to listen to the people. However, I was quite surprised to see that they wanted to change a relatively short name to a rather longer name. I recognize that this is perfectly legitimate, historically speaking.

Furthermore, I am just as surprised as my colleague from Lethbridge and the NDP member that this member chose to raise this important issue, which we do support, in a private member's bill, when if she had just waited a bit, she could have included it in the omnibus bill that the minister will be introducing soon.

For the information of those watching and listening, every 10 years, the electoral map and the riding names are reviewed. In a so-called omnibus bill, which we have no problem with, the government includes amendments proposed by members. Members can be for or against them. It is a legitimate debate.

It is unfortunate that my colleague instead chose to go out on her own by introducing a private member's bill, instead of joining the 337 other members of Parliament who are going to participate in good faith in the government's process, which has the support of parliamentarians.

• (1820)

[*English*]

We all recognize and will fight for the right of the member to table that kind of bill. However, I will express my surprise, because she should have used another way to achieve exactly the same goals. We do support the goals, and we recognize that the population will too. That is fantastic and we do support it 100%. However, we are a bit surprised that she tabled a private member's bill.

For us, a private member's bill is an important bill. A private member's bill is a front door bill. Why do I say that? It is because less than two years ago in the House, which my colleague from Foothills will remember, there was a strong debate about Bill C-4, introduced by the government, which was to kill two private members' bills tabled in the previous Parliament. They were Bill C-525 about democracy and unions, and Bill C-377 about transparency and unions. Those bills were tabled by Conservative members, but not the government.

Private Members' Business

For us, those private members' bills were front door bills. Unfortunately, the parliamentary secretary for the prime minister said many times in the House that the Conservative government used back door bills to table those pieces of legislation. What an insult. All members in this House are front door members. All bills tabled in this House are front door bills. No one here is a back door member, and no one here tables back door bills, contrary to what the member for Winnipeg North said so many times less than two years ago.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

I am going to repeat what I just said. I want to make it clear that for us, all bills are front-door bills, regardless of whether they are private members' bills or government bills, legislative bills or money bills.

Less than two years ago, the member for Winnipeg North, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, no less, made a huge deal out of things and told the House that the Conservative government had used backdoor bills. These were private members' bills. These bills were about union democracy and union transparency. Sadly, they were killed off by Bill C-4, a bill tabled, debated, and passed by the Liberal government.

[*English*]

To be clear for the hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle, and I am sorry to refer to her with that title, but I know it will be over in less than two years, Conservatives support the will of the people 100%. We appreciate the hard work that has been done by the member, the fact that she listened to her constituents, and did her homework. That is fantastic. We are just a little surprised by how many members will have new titles, but if that is the will of the people, we will recognize and respect it. We are also a little surprised that instead of getting on the train, and I do not know if that is the right expression in English.

[*Translation*]

Instead of jumping on the omnibus bill bandwagon, the member decided to go a different route.

[*English*]

Instead of going with an omnibus bill, which we recognize she has the right to do, she decided to go with a private member's bill, while so many other issues could have been addressed as opposed to changing the name of a riding. This could have been achieved with an omnibus bill.

[*Translation*]

I want to reiterate that we agree with Bill C-377.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, as has been said, we are beginning our study of Bill C-377, which was introduced by my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle.

I am very familiar with the western part of her riding, which used to be part of Beauharnois—Salaberry, the riding I represented before the boundary changes of 2015.

Like the current riding of Salaberry—Suroît, Châteauguay—Lacolle includes a city that contains half the constituency's population, as well as several rural areas. Montérégie-Ouest is a fantastic agricultural region that is also facing some challenges.

I fully understand my colleague's need to change the name of the riding to Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. As my other Conservative and NDP colleagues said, we understand and commend the initiative shown by the member in consulting her constituents, doing historical research, and keeping an election promise. That is why we are going to vote in favour of her bill.

However, I am wondering, and everyone else is too, why my colleague chose to go with this process and this tool, namely, a private member's bill, given the economic, social, and environmental issues affecting our region and the fact that the government has a process in place to handle riding name changes. Members mentioned an omnibus bill where all members had the opportunity to participate and propose new riding names. We are still able to do that.

The party leaders have already agreed on the process to allow all members of the House to propose new riding names and change the names of their ridings before the 2019 election.

We must first tell our House leader about the name change. Then, the staff of the House leaders will compile a list of the members whose ridings names need to be changed. A member is chosen to draft the omnibus bill that will encompass all of the riding name changes of all the MPs who submitted proposals.

Elections Canada will then be consulted to make sure that everything is in order with regard to the riding names and the time allocated to make the necessary changes. The member will then amend the bill as required, introduce it in the House of Commons, and seek the unanimous consent of the House to change the names of all of the ridings in question at the same time.

That process was used in 2014 with Bill C-37, which enabled all those name changes.

Why did my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle use a member's privilege, the privilege to introduce a private member's bill? We know that just over half the MPs will have the privilege of debating their bill in this Parliament. Our names are drawn out of a hat, and chance alone determines where our bill ends up on the list and whether we get to debate it right away.

For example, I am 194th on the list, and I may have the opportunity to debate my private member's bill. That means I have to choose my bill carefully. The bill my colleague chose to debate has to do with changing her riding's name. She could have done that and also chosen another issue altogether. She could have done both to have a positive impact and make life better for the people of her riding and all ridings in Canada, but that is not what she did.

I am quite surprised that she chose to use this tool to promote a name change that we all agree on and will vote in favour of.

Private Members' Business

I consider introducing a private member's bill on this topic a lost opportunity because a private member's bill can be life-changing for thousands or even millions of Canadians. For example, in Montérégie-Ouest, there are a lot of issues that would benefit from a private member's bill to bring about economic, social, or environmental change.

● (1830)

Les Jardins-de-Napierville is part of what is known as the “Jardin du Québec”. Many agricultural producers are located in this region and they need the support of their local MP.

First, we might consider the challenge of seasonal workers. We know that the vegetable farms need hundreds of foreign workers in their fields between March and October or November. There should be protections for these workers when the government negotiates free trade agreements.

If we look at NAFTA, there are no guarantees that supply management will still be there tomorrow. We have talked about this and raised the issue many times. Why not create a bill on one of these agricultural issues in order to help the agri-food sector, especially since it employs one in eight Canadians?

Our region needs to be more attractive to small and medium-sized businesses. Our rural regions have a dire need for things like high-speed Internet, 4G service, and infrastructure to help young entrepreneurs and to secure businesses that are already established in the region. Back home, a common joke is that when it rains, there is no Internet. When it is windy, there is no Internet. Could the hon. member have worked on a bill to improve that situation for our schools, hospitals, workers, and students?

An economic bill would also have been useful, especially from a government member, who may have the inside track on getting her bill passed.

The environment is another critically important issue. Protecting our waterways is as important for my colleague's riding as it is for mine and for every riding in Canada. In fact, my colleague was invited to the announcement on dismantling the *Kathryn Spirit*, which is a threat to a drinking water supply in Beauharnois, on Lake Saint-Louis. That shipwreck has been rusting away for six years. I would have liked to get more support from my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle on this subject and to see her work with the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

It is rather ironic that both bills were debated today. Bill C-352, introduced by my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith has been muzzled. We cannot vote on her bill because the government decided to declare it non-votable in order to make room for the Minister of Transport's bill, which would actually have complemented C-352. The 50 coastal communities that helped develop this bill for the past 15 years will not get to see members of the House vote on it.

An hon. member: That is terrible.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Indeed, that is terrible. It is an attack on democracy. It is sad to see the government misusing its tools to make changes to a riding name, something we are all able to do anyway, and miss out on an incredible opportunity to address

pressing issues in the ridings and make progress on currently problematic situations on the ground.

I support the constituents' request to change the constituency name from Châteauguay—Lacolle to Châteauguay—Les-Jardins-de-Napierville. However, I think that the hon. member could have used better judgment by using a better tool and tackling another issue for her private member's business.

● (1835)

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-377.

[*English*]

This is a private member's bill put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle. As we know, it proposes to change the name of her electoral district to Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

The municipality of Lacolle, which is currently included in the name of my colleague's electoral district, is actually located in the neighbouring riding of Saint-Jean. This is confusing as we have heard, for residents in both ridings and for this reason, the hon. member for Saint-Jean supports the legislation as well. Our government in turn supports the bill because it makes good sense.

Typically, as all members know, riding names are selected during a process every decade under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. In the latest process, census commissions were created in all provinces after the 2011 census. Each three-person commission, in accordance with the legislation, was chaired by a judge appointed by the provincial chief justice.

In the spring and summer of 2012, the commissions crafted and made public proposals for each of their respective provinces. They then held hearings to get public feedback and to consider possible alterations. Final reports were submitted by the Chief Electoral Officer to the Speaker of the House of Commons. They were then referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

This process is as exciting as it sounds. I think we can all agree with that. That referral gave MPs an opportunity to file objections, which the committee considered before producing its final report. That report was put forward to the commissions with the recommended changes.

In the case of Quebec, the committee sent 11 objections to riding names and suggested alternatives. All were adopted and the 2013 Representation Order was proclaimed that autumn, resulting in our new electoral map.

Private Members' Business

However, Parliament has the option of adopting name changes after this process finishes. Normally this goes smoothly, though in 2003-04 there were objections from the Chief Electoral Officer at the time, Jean-Pierre Kingsley. Mr. Kingsley pointed out that there was an excessive administrative burden imposed because it took place so close to the 2004 election. He also voiced concern that the change could lead to public confusion and additional costs because electoral materials would have to be reprinted and software reconfigured. However, there have not been any significant issues identified when name changes are proposed well in advance of elections.

In the case of the bill we are considering now, there is no indication that the name change will cause any technical problems. Elections Canada has asked that no name exceed 50 characters, including hyphens and dashes. This proposed new name is well below that threshold. I am sure the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent would agree with that.

Elections Canada has also asked that name change bills receive royal assent no later than January 2019. There is plenty of time.

In addition to this kind of legislation, our government and indeed all members of this chamber must do everything in our power to encourage Canadians to participate in our democracy. Confusing Canadians, confusing voters does not foster participation in our democracy. In fact, the Minister of Democratic Institutions has spoken passionately about the need for us to do everything we can to encourage and not discourage democratic participation.

As a result, we are committed to restoring integrity to our democratic process by reversing some of the previous government's Fair Elections Act, which made voting difficult for so many. We are accomplishing this with Bill C-33, which was introduced last year, as all members of the House know. This legislation, if passed, would make it easier for Canadians to vote, get more Canadians involved in voting, and build confidence and integrity in our voting system.

In essence, this private member's bill is about empowering Canadians. It is about empowering constituents to feel they are part of the process.

• (1840)

I do find it a little surprising that some members opposite are quarrelling about the process, although are supportive of the substance. However, there are many ways to get to the same objective. For instance, some people wear belts. Some wear suspenders. Neither is right and neither is wrong. They both get to the goal that is established at the outset, and in this case, it is holding up one's pants. Does it really matter what process is used if it supports the goal? It is a fair and open process. Surely we can all agree on that in this place.

My colleague for Châteauguay—Lacolle knows her constituents' concerns better than any of us. She has heard from them. We heard her say there is a petition in the riding asking to change the name of the riding. The member for Châteauguay—Lacolle would ignore that at her peril. How could she go back home and say she got the petition with the thousand names, but decided to ignore it because the opposition wanted her to do something else for them instead? Would they not ask if she were not here to work for them? Of course she is, as we all are throughout this country, working very hard for

our constituents. To the suggestion there is some flaw in her conclusion that it is important to her constituents, I would say, no, there is not.

I honestly believe, as I think we all do, that this private member's bill—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that the sound is getting quite loud in here, and it is getting hard to hear what the member is saying. I would ask members that if they want to hold conversations, they should hold them outside.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, no one in this House is calling into question the good faith of the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle. We all know that she is coming forward with her private member's bill from an honest place, a true place, and from a place her constituents can respect. I think we can all agree that our primary role is to represent our constituents in Ottawa. However, to call the member's bill into question is a little surprising, especially when the substance of the bill, as we heard, is supported, I think, by every member of this House.

I have not had the pleasure of visiting the member's riding, but I hope to get there one day. However, if I were in Châteauguay—Lacolle, as it is known now, I would not want to be confused into thinking that I might be in the wrong riding. Therefore, this affects all of us, not just the member's constituents, or the members for Saint-Jean and Châteauguay—Lacolle, who, I can assure members, are not easily confused. Canadians are busy people. When they want to reach out to their MP's office, they need to know which MP to call. It is as simple as that.

There is a border crossing near the member's town. Imagine if someone forgot their passport at the border crossing and needed urgent help, but called the wrong riding. The MP, I am sure, would be very helpful, regardless of whether or not that person lived in the riding. But if one lived in Lacolle, it might lead to confusion, which, of course, we do not want. We do not want people to be misled. We want Canadians to feel that they are participants in their democracy and have a riding name that reflects their community.

The member has heard from her riding. She is echoing their voices here in this chamber. I, for one, am glad to see democracy at the grassroots level in action here in the chamber, as we all are. I know every member will support this bill, regardless of my urging, but I urge them to do so anyway.

• (1845)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was on the fence about whether to support this bill, but after that speech, how can we not? I believe the member has convinced all of us on this side that we need to support this legislation, maybe with the exception of a few who might also want to change their riding names, but I will get to that.

Private Members' Business

Like some of the criticism that has been levelled up to this point, it is curious that this is the process the member has chosen to take with her private member's bill. There are members in the House who have been here 10 years and who have yet to bring forward a private member's bill. Then we have this private member's bill, which I guess is a priority for her constituents.

I am just going to read a little of the background for those following along at home, so they know exactly what we are debating.

This bill would change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle to “Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville”. The sponsor noted, in introducing the bill, that the name “Lacolle”, a reference to the parish of the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, with a population of 1,500, is often confused with the adjoining and larger municipality of Lacolle, which is in the adjacent riding of Saint-Jean.

She proposes substituting the name with the original county municipality of Les Jardins-de-Napierville, approximate population of 27,870, an upper-tier municipality, which includes the parish of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle and several other communities, mostly within the constituency.

The member was kind enough to provide a map, which she referenced in her speech. I also have not been to her riding. In looking at the map, it looks like a beautiful part of the country. I will have to get there at some point in time. Hopefully the name is reflective of the area, more so at that time, so I, like the member who spoke previously, will not get lost when I am there. However, I do sympathize with the member to a small degree.

My constituency is called Edmonton Riverbend. We have a river that goes through Edmonton. It divides south Edmonton and southwest Edmonton. A lot of what my constituents refer to as Riverbend is an older part of the community. The constituents who live there have been there for about 30 or 40 years.

On the other side of the river, where the river bends, is the newer part of the community. That community does not necessarily classify itself with the Riverbend part. We have community names like Sweet Grass, Blue Quill, and Twin Brooks. These areas of my constituency do not say they are not part of Riverbend, when we look at a normal map. However, according to Elections Canada, the constituency is classified as Riverbend.

For those reasons, it has crossed my mind to look into perhaps changing my riding name. However, I understand there is a process for that. If I were to go down that process, it is outlined pretty clearly, from what I understand. The process is that normally members are to submit the request for riding name changes to their respective House leaders. Members may justify a change on the basis that the current name does not accurately reflect the makeup or the geography of the region. House leaders then submit these requests to the government House leader, who combines all of them into one omnibus bill, which tends to pass swiftly through all voting stages, often in the same day. As an example, in 2014, 30 riding names were changed at once.

It is for this reason, again, that I find it a little peculiar that the member would use the time for a private member's bill to go after

this. However, as my colleague mentioned, it is her right, and we definitely do not dispute her right to do that.

As I listened to the debate, I thought that maybe we could make an amendment to the bill. Maybe we could help change the name of the riding for the member. I thought maybe we could name it “Harper Diefenbaker”. That seems like a responsible name. I wonder what her thoughts would be on that. She does not seem to be too open to that.

• (1850)

We have tried to assist the member in the process. However, it is her right to bring forward a bill like this. She could move to Calgary, I guess. It might be acceptable in Calgary.

At the end of the day, we have ridings, and we try to best reflect what the issues of the day are in our ridings. Right now in my riding, all I am hearing about is a fancy outdoor skating rink. My constituents are very concerned about the fancy skating rink. They are also concerned about what is going on with the finance minister, and the tax changes he has proposed. With respect to those two issues, I would say I am in here advocating for my constituents, because those are the most pressing issues of the day. It is impacting their pocketbooks. It is impacting taxpayers balancing their budgets. Those are the things I would propose in terms of a private member's bill.

Apparently, this is the most pressing issue in Châteauguay—Lacolle, soon to be known as Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. Therefore, it is within her right to bring this forward. Personally, I tend to support the private member's bill, because she has the right to bring this forward. However, I would think that it is not the best use of a private member's bill.

I served provincially in the Alberta legislature. We had a private member's bill that came forward there with respect to compassionate care leave. A very smart member brought that bill forward. He pitched something he had heard from his constituents, and from stakeholders from across the province. It was something that was not only important to his riding but to the entire province. He pitched this bill, and it was extremely successful. People drove from all around the province to come and meet with him, and talk to him about this bill. It ended up passing, but there was a process to go through. He talked to stakeholders, the opposition, and all the other parties about passing this bill.

He had the compassionate care leave group, the Canadian Cancer Society, and a number of not-for-profit groups on side. Some might say the opposition was on side. Some might say it was the most successful advocacy project in the history of the Alberta legislature. The bill passed, and the pride that was felt among all of the stakeholder groups was unanimous. We were all proud of the member for doing this work. There was a unanimous vote in the House, and it became law in Alberta. That was a successful advocacy for a private member's bill. It changed the province, and the lives of people. It really had an impact on the ground for a number of stakeholder groups.

However, instead of going through a process that has already been outlined, this member has chosen the opportunity to change the name of her riding. It is her prerogative. I tried to make a bit of a friendly amendment here on the floor. However, she did not seem to take to that. Although it is a little odd that she brings this forward, nonetheless I am prepared to support the bill. I look forward to voting on it.

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of this item of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to speak in the House, and tonight is no exception. I am following up on a question I asked the Minister of Finance regarding a member of the business community in my riding who owns a heating and air conditioning business in Chilliwack. I explained to the minister that this member of my community owns a small business, works hard, puts food on the table for his family, and employs other hard-working members of the Chilliwack community.

He was saying that the Liberal small business tax changes, the attack on small local businesses, would cause him to re-evaluate his ability not only to save for his retirement but to keep his business running. I asked the finance minister why his financial interests, his family fortune, was not impacted at all by the proposed Liberal attack on small business. He told me, quite frankly, that our system does encourage wealthy Canadians to take advantage of the system for their own gain, except that was not the case with small business owners in places like Chilliwack and Hope. It certainly was the case with the finance minister and the Prime Minister, who made sure through all these changes and attacks on our small businesses that their family fortunes, trust accounts, and offshore corporations were all protected. They would not be touched at all by these changes.

Even though the government was forced to back down on some of the most egregious proposals it made, there are still concerns. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is still very concerned with the proposals, the small business changes coming in, because they are coming in a matter of weeks. Here we are approaching the second week of December, these changes take place January 1, 2018, and small businesses still do not know what they will look like. They know change is coming, that it will not be good for them, but they do not know what the details are. That has been confirmed by the Department of Finance, which said that it will legislate that along with the budget in the fullness of time.

We now have a situation where in less than four weeks' time major changes will be made to the way small businesses are taxed and regulated, but we will not know the full impact because the

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government will not reveal to them the full impact prior to that. A few months later, it will give them the full details of the impact on their businesses. How does the government expect small businesses in my riding to be able to operate when they do not even know what the rules of the game will be? They know they are changing, that they will be detrimental to them, but they do not know what they will look like.

This is unbelievable. That the government, first of all, would have ever proposed these changes to attack small businesses in my riding and right across the country, and that when those changes were rejected wholeheartedly by a whole range of small business advocates, small business groups that came together to fight this attack on their way of life, entrepreneurship, and job creation, they still do not know what that is going to look like and we are just days away. How irresponsible can the government be, not only to castigate these job-creating people as being wealthy tax cheats, but to not give them the certainty they need to run their businesses?

I would like the parliamentary secretary to answer that.

• (1900)

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government was elected on a promise to strengthen the economy and to grow the middle class and those working hard to join it, and our plan is working.

[Translation]

More than 600,000 new jobs since 2015 and the lowest unemployment rate in the country in the past 10 years; that is why my colleague from Chilliwack—Hope is jealous. His government never achieved such good results in the past few years. We are proud that this plan is working. Companies, including small family businesses, have contributed immensely to this success.

As our economy grows, we are ensuring that the middle class enjoys the benefits of this growth. To that end, we have maintained low tax rates for middle-class Canadians, small businesses, and family businesses that support our communities.

First, we cut personal income tax rates for the middle class and increased them for the richest 1%. Then, we established the Canada child benefit, which allocates more money to those who need it most. Nine out of ten families receive more money now than they did with the Conservatives' benefits system. Thanks to this measure, child poverty has been reduced by 40% in Canada, at year end, compared to 2013.

In October, our government announced its intention to lower the small business tax rate to 10% on January 1, 2018, and 9% on January 1, 2019. We must ensure that these tax benefits help our companies to grow and create jobs. I think that is what we are seeing right now, since 600,000 new jobs have been created.

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During the consultations that we held on tax planing using private corporations, our government heard from small business owners, professionals, and experts. We are committed to avoiding any unforeseen consequences these measures may have in the future.

[English]

The government intends to advance measures to limit tax deferral opportunities related to passive investments on a go-forward basis. We will do this while providing business owners with more flexibility to build a cushion of savings for purposes related to their business, for example, to deal with personal circumstances, such as parental leave, sick days or retirement, as well as a possible downturn, or to finance a future expansion.

We will make sure that as we move forward to lower the small business tax rate, this lower rate will be effective in encouraging businesses to grow, buy new equipment and hire more workers, supporting the middle class and those working hard to join it.

As we continue to make smart and necessary investments in our people, our communities, and our economy, we will make sure that the success we create together is shared by reinvesting in Canada's middle class and in programs and services that all Canadians can benefit from.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Madam Speaker, what the government did with its small business tax change proposals was insult the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians. The government insulted the biggest job creators in the country. I would challenge that member to show me one small business owner who said "Please change the way I run my business, but do not tell me only three weeks before the deadline what it is going to look like."

On January 1, there will be major changes to the way small businesses are asked to operate. Why has the government not yet told them the details of those changes?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, as I told the member in my answer, we are committed to avoiding any unforeseen consequences these measures may have on small businesses.

I think that the opposition is frustrated because our plan is working. We created 600,000 new jobs, lowered the small business tax rate, introduced the Canada child benefit, and lowered taxes for the middle class.

We take SMEs very seriously, and we are investing in them. We are committed to ensuring that they create jobs in Canada, and that is what they are doing. Once again, 600,000 new jobs have been created, many of them by small businesses. We thank them for that, and we will continue to work closely with them.

● (1905)

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is with a renewed sense of urgency that I speak today about the irregular border crossings and asylum claims. This week, the U.S. Supreme Court gave approval for the Trump administration to fully enforce its third version of its discriminatory travel ban. There was

also a November announcement that roughly 59,000 Haitians in the U.S. could face removal within 18 months.

As we have seen throughout this year, Trump's xenophobic rhetoric and actions have a direct impact on our system, yet the current government has refused to stand up against this increasing normalization of hate. Instead, it has reacted to these irregular crossings in an ad hoc fashion, refusing to provide one additional dollar to the departments working hard to maintain the integrity of our system. As a result, the IRB is facing a backlog of 40,000 cases, and growing. IRCC has shifted employees from processing citizenship to asylum claims. The CBSA and the RCMP have had their budgets in the affected border communities stretched. Resettlement organizations are desperate for funds.

I was shocked to read that the Prime Minister has now borrowed the anti-refugee rhetoric prevalent during the height of the Syrian refugee crisis. On November 23, he stated:

Would-be Canadians need more than just a desire for a better economic future if they expect to be granted refugee status in this country.

The accusation that refugee claimants are economic immigrants attempting to game the system is not new and is often employed by anti-refugee groups and politicians. To see our Prime Minister shift from #welcometocanada to this is beyond disappointing.

I would like to draw the attention of the parliamentary secretary and the Prime Minister to another example of an irregular crosser denied protection by the U.S. and found to be a genuine refugee in Canada's system. She has asked that I not use her or her daughter's real names, but instead, Amina and Reem.

Amina and her then two-year-old daughter, Reem, left Syria in November 2014. They arrived in the U.S. hoping to make an asylum claim and be reunited with Amina's husband when he would come over. U.S. border officials thought she had too much luggage, cancelled her visas, and told her and her daughter to go back to Syria. She claimed asylum. Amina and two-year-old Reem then spent four months in the U.S. immigration detention system. She had to pay \$2,500 for an inexperienced lawyer to represent her, and her claim was rejected. Following U.S. court delays, Amina and Reem decided to make an irregular crossing into Canada at Roxham Road, in November 2016.

Since being in Canada, Amina has taught Arabic as a summer school teacher and has achieved ESL level eight. The IRB ruled in favour of her and her daughter's refugee claim, and my office recently had the opportunity to inform her that her application for permanent residence in Canada has been accepted.

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Will the government provide the resources needed to address the impact of these crossings? Will the government suspend the safe third country agreement? Does the parliamentary secretary believe, like the Prime Minister, that Amina and Reem are economic immigrants attempting to game the system?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member, my colleague from Vancouver East, for her question this evening.

I assure my colleague that our government has adopted a highly co-ordinated and collaboratively managed approach with our various partners on the issue she is referring to. I know that she spoke about a number of issues.

We have provided information to members of Parliament and we also shared a large amount of information in committee, while the member was there.

Officials from our department, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, as well as the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness appeared in committee to provide information on these irregular border crossings and on our government's approach to the irregular crossings we have seen in the past year.

Furthermore, we know that inaccurate information was circulating in some Canadian and American communities. This information implied that the Government of Canada allowed asylum seekers to freely enter the country.

This is why some members of the House visited communities to address some of these myths circulating on social media, and to also ensure that the public has the correct information before making the journey all the way here.

Furthermore, through the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Irregular Migration, we are ensuring that we can not only offer adequate support services to asylum seekers, but also give our officials the tools they need to keep Canada safe.

We also remain fully committed to ensuring orderly migration and guaranteeing the safety and security of all Canadians.

In addition, the government has worked very closely with other levels of government and organizations to make sure that the necessary support services are offered as efficiently as possible. As an example of our collaborative efforts to relieve the pressure on provincial social assistance programs, IRCC is fast-tracking work permit applications from all asylum claimants in Canada, and we are committed to meeting a 30-day service standard.

I would like to assure my colleague that the government is also working to ensure that organizations are able to deal with the growing volume of requests.

The Government of Canada proactively discusses these issues with the U.S. government and its embassy in Canada, and our two nations continue to work together to curb irregular migration at our border. The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

regularly meets with his American counterpart to discuss this and other issues.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship met with the new U.S. ambassador to talk about this very issue. The government has taken concrete steps to deal with the recent influx of asylum seekers who have crossed into Canada between designated points of entry.

We are also very determined to maintain our proud tradition of offering protection to people seeking refuge. Canadians are rightly proud of our country's excellent international reputation as a humanitarian leader.

We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that irregular crossings are managed in an efficient and orderly manner.

We will also continue to work with the member. If she has questions, I invite her to come see us. She is welcome to ask any question she wants. We are open to finding sound solutions together to ensure the problem is managed in an efficient and orderly manner.

• (1910)

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the fact is that the government continues to fail this test of moral leadership on the international stage, and now the Prime Minister has borrowed anti-refugee rhetoric, suggesting that asylum seekers are just economic immigrants attempting to game the system. Is this what real change looks like?

While the government fails to take action, the IRB backlog is increasing, IRCC personnel have shifted, the RCMP and CBSA budgets are stretched, and the resettlement organizations are unable to meet the demands for their services. Will the government take action to maintain the integrity of our refugee determination system by fully funding the IRB? Will the government finally do the right thing and suspend the safe third country agreement?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, as I have already said, the member was at committee. A tremendous amount of information was shared with the committee members and the general public on how we handled these irregular border crossings.

As for the Immigration and Refugee Board, as everyone knows, an independent review is currently under way. It aims to find ways to improve productivity. At committee, the IRB also talked about the many ways it has to deal with the spike in irregular immigration at the border over the summer, for example.

Furthermore, we have put together an entire team made up of MPs and public servants to make sure that people who want to come to Canada are familiar with our laws before making the trip here. We have organized awareness activities on social media, for example. We are on the right track, for as we have seen, the number of irregular crossings is dropping.

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[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, last month a 90-foot vessel, the *Anapaya*, sank in Ladysmith Harbour while leaking fuel into the ocean. In 2014, Transport Canada had identified this 100-year old boat as a vessel of concern. The government knew it posed a threat, but took no action until it sank. We are grateful for the Coast Guard's swift action. However, this is yet another example of the failed Liberal boat-by-boat approach to abandoned vessels.

For too long, jurisdictional gaps have left coastal communities with nowhere to turn when an abandoned vessel presents an emergency situation in their communities. Oil spills and marine debris from thousands of abandoned vessels pollute our waterways and put local fishing and tourism jobs at risk. We have raised this in Parliament, I think now, 86 times since the 2015 election.

I built 15 years of coastal community solutions into my legislation, Bill C-352, to fix vessel registration, to pilot a vessel turn-in program, to support good green jobs and vessel recycling, and to end the run-around by making the Coast Guard the first-responder and the receiver of wrecks, with a one-stop shopping approach for coastal communities.

Over 50 coastal organizations across the country supported my bill, from Tofino, B.C. to Fogo Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, to the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the City of Victoria, the Town of Ladysmith, and the BC Ferry and Marine Workers Union. There has been so much support from all sectors.

On November 9, the Liberal majority on the procedure and House affairs committee blocked my bill, which was an unprecedented interference. The government's new legislation, Bill C-64, tabled on October 30, complemented my bill. However, I do not believe the transport minister's bill will succeed without mine. For example, how can a penalty be imposed on an abandoned vessel owner, as the minister proposes in his legislation, without his being able to find the owner? That is where the element in my bill to fix vessel registration was so vital. Moreover, the transport minister's bill does not deal with the backlog or specifically support vessel recycling.

With the help of members of Parliament, both of the bills could have proceeded. No one had used the appeal tool before that we used in the House to have a secret ballot vote, in this case on the question of whether my bill should be deemed votable. It was a really historic moment and I am grateful to the Conservative, Bloc, Green, and New Democrat caucuses for saying that they planned to support making my bill votable.

Had the majority of members voted yes, it would have meant yes to over 50 coastal organizations who had endorsed the bill, yes to the 27,000 letters that were sent from Canadians to Liberal MPs that week, yes to standing with local governments and having their solutions brought into this House, yes to filling gaps in the transport minister's bill, yes to cooperation across party lines to solve intractable problems like the oil spill risks that come from abandoned vessels, and yes to restoring the one chance I had as an MP to have my community's legislation heard in this House.

Why would the transport representative not support hearing my bill?

●(1915)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her support in helping to move legislation forward. We look forward to seeing the results of the committee's work on this important issue.

On October 30, our government introduced new legislation, Bill C-64, Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels act that is more robust, and comprehensive than anything that has ever been seen previously in Canada, drawing on international best practices. The bill would strengthen vessel owner responsibility and liability, address irresponsible vessel management, and enhance federal powers to take more proactive action on problem vessels.

This is a core prevention measure under the national strategy on abandoned vessels and wrecks that was announced as part of the oceans protection plan last year. To complement the legislation, we are working with other levels of government to improve federal vessel ownership identification systems. This is needed to ensure owners can be held accountable.

I want to be clear that our national strategy goes above and beyond legislation. We recognized right from the start that we cannot wait for the legislation to kick in before addressing some of the most problematic vessels that are currently affecting our communities.

That is why the government launched two funding programs this year to support the clean-up and removal of legacy abandoned vessels and wrecks. One is transport's abandoned boats program, and another one is a separate funding initiative from Fisheries and Oceans, the abandoned and wrecked vessels removal program, to address vessels in federally owned small craft harbours. These two programs recognize that local communities, ports, and harbours, particularly those that are small and remote, often do not have the resources to cover the costs of removing and disposing of abandoned and wrecked boats. These programs will deliver tangible results. They will get boats out of the water. Indeed, work has already started under these programs.

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However, this is not all these funding programs do, they also support education and research. Owners do not always have a clear understanding of their responsibilities when their vessel reaches its end of life. Some are unaware of disposal options or the impacts of abandonment. The abandoned boats program will provide funding support to other levels of government, indigenous groups, non-governmental organizations, and other eligible groups for activities that educate vessel owners about their responsibilities.

Another challenge is that some vessels are made of materials that are difficult to dismantle and dispose of. For this reason, the abandoned boats program is supporting research into processes and materials that will help improve boat recycling and design. The goal is to improve recycling options for boats, and prevent further unnecessary pollution.

We are proud of the actions that we have taken to date to address this important issue. We will continue to collaborate with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, indigenous groups, and coastal communities, to implement our comprehensive national strategy on abandoned and wrecked vessels, and we look forward to all members supporting Bill C-64.

• (1920)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, through you, I ask the representative of Transport Canada if you are recognizing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will address the question or the comment to the Chair.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, through you, I ask the representative of the transport minister if the belief is shared with me that vessel registration needs to be repaired before the minister's

legislation can be implemented? Why not include fixing vessel registration in the legislation?

Also, what on earth does \$260,000 for small craft harbours this year and \$300,000 for the whole country even begin to deal with this backlog of thousands of vessels provide?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, I would like to assure coastal and shoreline communities across the country that we are seized with their interests related to abandoned and wrecked vessels. We are making significant investments, and taking concrete steps to address this issue as part of the \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan that we announced a year ago. The actions do speak for themselves.

Over the last year, we have launched two new funding programs to support the clean-up of small high priority vessels and wrecks across Canada. Problem vessels will be coming out of the water as a result. We introduced new legislation in the House which will help to prevent future occurrences of wrecked, abandoned, and hazardous vessels and to reduce the impacts of those that do occur.

Our strategy aligns with the best practices from around the world, and is delivering on our commitment to address abandoned vessels in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:24 p.m.)

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