



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 254 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada*, led by the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

PIERRE LOZIER

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I often think of this place as being a family. Regardless of political party, we are all here together and are supported by amazing people.

We had a death in the family. On January 14, we lost one of those who truly does stand on guard for us. Constable Pierre Lozier, a member of our protective service, died tragically and far too young. He was only 50.

Pete, and he went by “Pete”, had served this place and protected parliamentarians for over 30 years. He was part of a tremendous group with esprit de corps, and it was Pete who, on October 22, 2014, unarmed, ran toward gunfire to protect us.

We lost him, and I want all of us to say to his family and those grieving his loss how much we honour and respect him and to express our gratitude to those who continue to protect us.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of meeting with community leaders from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, which educates Canadians about the plight of impoverished people and supports women in their search for social and economic justice.

While we have made great strides, and this government is committed to making the involvement of women the priority in all of

Canada's activities in fragile states to enable women and men around the world to have an equal voice and equal rights and to live equally in safety and security, more needs to be done.

Women play a key role in conflict prevention and resolution as well as in building and sustaining an inclusive, lasting, and fair peace. When women are better represented in parliaments, those nations are significantly less likely to resort to violence in response to a crisis. This proves that a woman's place is in the House, in the Senate, and on the executive.

Let us continue to commit to stand alongside women and organizations that strive to build a more just and peaceful world.

* * *

[Translation]

HÔPITAL NOTRE-DAME-DE-FATIMA

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said last May 10, it has been almost 56 years since I, by virtue of my birth, inaugurated a room at Hôpital Notre-Dame-de-Fatima. The hospital was built to serve the population of Kamouraska and the surrounding area. Over the past year, local residents and health care professionals working together have organized a march, a petition, and more to keep our hospital and to keep health care alive in our region.

It is important to me to celebrate this grassroots movement by repeating myself. Apparently repeating things eventually gets the message across. I strongly support this movement because, with our aging population, we are going to need all of those services and more. I am wearing a “K” with a red heart around it because I love my community, and my community includes health care. Clearly, we need to keep health care close to home.

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[English]

JIM TOVEY

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with a heavy heart, I pay tribute to my friend, Jim Tovey, who served as councillor for Mississauga's Ward 1, or “Ward Wonderful”, as he loved to call it. We lost Jim suddenly on January 15.

Statements by Members

Jim Tovey was pure life force. He saw our shared humanity in every person and put all his energy into everything he did. Jim also saw government as a force for good. An accomplished musician, poet, and carpenter, he entered politics to champion the arts, culture and heritage, veterans, science and technology, social justice, the environment, and the Great Lakes.

I stand with Jim's wife, Lee, his family, colleagues at all levels of government, friends, and the residents of Ward Wonderful as we say goodbye. We miss Jim terribly, but we take comfort in knowing that his memory will inspire us for years to come.

I will close with Jim's own words:

And as we sleep our spirits soar amongst the stars and run to build new worlds in empty space, where love will be our sun.

* * *

●(1410)

PAT CHEFURKA

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like today to pay tribute to our sister, Pat Chefurka, a proud New Democrat, a trail-blazing feminist, and a relentless advocate for social justice. Pat died January 21.

Born in Manitoba in 1924, Pat received a bachelor of science degree from Brandon College and became the first woman to receive a master's degree in physics from Montana State College. She accepted a position teaching physics at the University of Western Ontario in 1963 and resigned in 1974 due to pay inequity, a problem then as now.

Pat became actively involved with the CCF in the 1940s and was a good friend of Tommy Douglas. Among her many accomplishments, she was the first woman president of the Ontario NDP and was a recipient of the Agnes Macphail Award.

In addition to her many worthy pursuits, Pat managed to be a mentor to countless women over the course of her life. I will miss her steely determination, her unflagging optimism, and her dedication to fighting the good fight.

Rest in power, Pat. We will take it from here.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Richard Hébert (Lac-Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for every text message, tweet, and retweet sent today using the hashtag #BellLetsTalk, Bell will donate 5¢ to mental health initiatives.

This high-profile nationwide effort is very important not only because of its mission, but also because it will help put an end to the stigma associated with mental illness in Canada. I am sure every one of us knows someone, a family member or friend, who has mental health issues. There are significant economic, social, and human costs associated with mental health problems. That is why I am so proud that our government is investing \$5 billion to ensure proper mental health support for perhaps as many as 500,000 young Canadians under the age of 25.

I therefore encourage all members in the House to talk about mental health, not only today, but throughout the whole year, in order to break down—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Edmonton West.

* * *

[*English*]

PIERRE LOZIER

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too rise to honour Pierre Lozier, one of our parliamentary family.

Pierre Lozier was a veteran protective service constable, serving this place for 33 years. He was always good for a laugh, lending anyone who asked a hand or an ear when they needed it. Pete was also one of the responders on the floor during the 2014 attack and ran toward danger, despite being weaponless, when gunfire erupted in the Hall of Honour.

My heart goes out to Pete's friends and family during this tragic time. May they rest assured that they have the prayers and the support of everyone in the House.

As for our protective service team, I would like them to know that we appreciate all that they do in keeping us safe. My thanks to all of them and to Pete for 33 years of honourable service to the House.

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[*Translation*]

LAVAL MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Laval's Meals on Wheels association comprises eight independent Meals on Wheels organizations that prepare and deliver over 150,000 low-cost meals to seniors and vulnerable people in Laval.

[*English*]

The meals are prepared according to the instructions and under the supervision of health professionals and nutritionists.

[*Translation*]

These organizations employ some 50 people, but what is even more remarkable is the contribution made by over 400 volunteers, whose average age is about 70.

[*English*]

Together these individuals have volunteered more than 42,000 hours and have driven nearly 120,000 kilometres to deliver meals to the citizens of Laval.

[*Translation*]

I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing these volunteers' exceptional contribution to the community of Laval and in thanking them for their efforts.

*Statements by Members***GEORGETTE LEPAGE**

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today in the House. On January 22, we lost a remarkable woman, Georgette Lepage, the former and first mayor of Brossard, who served from 1983 to 1990. Ms. Lepage was also a devoted wife and active member of the community. She declared Brossard to be the first multicultural city in Quebec in 1989.

Many people will remember her as an energetic, hands-on politician who was always helping others. Ms. Lepage was a very deserving recipient of the Ordre du mérite de Brossard, the Mérite municipal from Quebec's Department of Municipal Affairs, and the medal of the National Assembly for her social involvement.

What is more, the municipal library was named after Georgette Lepage in order to honour her dedicated work as a volunteer and recognize her contribution to Brossard's cultural development. We will always remember Ms. Lepage as an inspiring woman who brought people together. On behalf of the people of Brossard—Saint-Lambert and all those she inspired, I offer my sincere condolences to her family.

* * *

•(1415)

[English]

GROUNDHOG DAY

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

Once again on Friday February 2nd
Wee Wiarion Willy will be beckoned.

It will be his very first prediction
Done with fervour & conviction

While he's a rookie in groundhog circles
He'll be far more famous than Steve Urkel

He'll talk to Mayor Janice in groundhogese
And do it all with a glamorous ease

Take Alberta's brown coated Balzac Billy
His prediction skills make him look silly

Or Nova Scotia's Shubenacadie Sam
Whose prediction record is simply a sham

And Pennsylvania's Puxatawney Phil
He can't hold a carrot to our "Wee Will"

I will be there when he comes out of his cage
I'm convinced Wee Wiarion Willie will be the new rage

With his glistening white fur coat
He will instill in Wiarionians eternal hope

When he declares that beautiful thing
There's only 6 more weeks until spring

* * *

TAMIL CANADIANS

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past month, Canadians have reflected and celebrated the invaluable social, cultural, and economic contributions that Tamil Canadians

have made to our society. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight two amazing organizations in my riding

The Brampton Tamil Seniors Association works tirelessly to build a better community for seniors by organizing weekly socials, yoga, and computer classes. The organization is an inspiration to us all.

We also have the Brampton Tamil Association, which has been indispensable in building bridges between communities and enriching and sharing the Tamil culture and heritage within a multicultural Canadian environment.

Tamil Canadians, just like all Canadians, are working tirelessly to achieve their very own Canadian dream.

A very happy Thai Pongal and happy Tamil Heritage Month to all those celebrating this year.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the future economy will be a green economy, and Canadian businesses are leading the way.

Last week, 13 Canadian companies, seven of which are from British Columbia, were on the prestigious 2018 Global Cleantech top 100 list. This list highlights the most innovative companies world wide, with promising ideas best positioned to solve humanity's sustainability challenges.

From my own riding of Vancouver Quadra, Axine Water Technologies is one of them. It was recognized for its impressive chemical-free, low-cost solution to waste water problems. Its novel approach solves a multi-billion dollar problem across multiple industries. Axine's technology is a perfect example of how environmental stewardship is not just good for our communities, but good for business and the economy.

Today, Canada's innovators are proving that going green is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. I am proud to recognize their vision and entrepreneurial spirit in the House.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in any given year, one in five Canadians will experience mental illness, and by the age of 40, 50% will have experienced it as well. Mental Illness does not discriminate against age, education, income level or culture.

Although mental disorders are all around us, in our family members, friends, colleagues, or even ourselves, the stigma still remains. Just because we cannot see it does not mean it is not there.

Today is Bell's Let's Talk day, where it supports mental health organizations across the country to raise awareness. It carries out conversations of mental illness with our communities to help bring an end to the stigma.

Statements by Members

As parliamentarians, we have a duty to keep this conversation going long past today so people know it is okay to talk about mental health.

As deputy health shadow minister for the official opposition, I am proud to join the conversation.

* * *

• (1420)

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): There is more good news, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

From day one, our government has worked to help the middle class and local businesses, including those in the construction industry.

Today, we are keeping our promise by announcing our intention to introduce prompt payment legislation for Government of Canada construction projects.

[*English*]

This is the result of over a year's work, in close collaboration between our government and the Canadian construction industry. We have developed a 14-point action plan on prompt payment.

[*Translation*]

We have taken meaningful steps in implementing this action plan by publicly posting payments to business owners, establishing a statement of principles, and changing our policies to ensure that payment can be made within 30 days.

[*English*]

I am proud to say that we are on track to complete our action plan by later this year.

[*Translation*]

This will benefit tradespeople across the country.

* * *

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 51 years ago, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women exposed widespread discrimination against women, yet Canada has since dropped to 25th on the UN Gender Inequality index: Time's Up.

Forty years ago Pierre Trudeau promised women in Canada pay equity. Two years ago, the House voted with the NDP for equal pay. Seven months ago, the Prime Minister missed the all party committees' deadline for legislation: Time's Up.

One year ago *The Globe and Mail* reported that in one out of 5,500 sexual assault reports, police deemed one in five unfounded, yet no federal action: Time's Up.

All the progress on women's equality has been from women and their allies marching and standing together. Why should women

always shoulder the burden of change? Time is up for the government to use its majority to enact real change for women.

* * *

MEMBER FOR CARIBOO—PRINCE GEORGE

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a Facebook post that I wrote to my friend from Cariboo—Prince George, which summarizes how we feel about his recent knock on Heaven's door:

“Can't tell you, [the member from Cariboo—Prince George], how shocked I was (the few of us that knew early on) that your life literally was hanging in the balance. I felt for Kelly, Josh, Kassi, Kaitlyn & Jordan that they may lose you. Too concerned that I would lose a friend and felt how much good you still have left to do. How soon life can change. I have seen you rise from a nervous nomination candidate to Conservative candidate to a seasoned MP and proudly tell people how great of a job you are doing for Cariboo—Prince George. But I/we want you and need you to be here for the long game.”

“So take the time you need to get well. This job can be a stressful one at times (most of the time) as you know with so many expectations of so many. But it all doesn't matter if you are gone. You've been given a precious second chance and I want to see you use it. From all of us here in this chamber to you watching from home today, we love you. Love you, brother. Get well and we'll see you soon.”

The Speaker: I assume that sentiment was unanimously felt.

The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind everyone in the House and across Canada that today is Bell Let's Talk day. This is a great time to let folks know that we are listening and that we support them.

We know that in any given year, one in five people in the country will personally experience a mental health problem or illness. It is one of the many reasons our government announced \$5 billion through budget 2017 for stronger mental health support across Canada.

For every tweet today, including #BellLetsTalk, and for every post to Bell Let's Talk Facebook page, Bell will donate 5¢ to support Canadian mental health programs. Whether people want to share their stories, support others or tell people what they are having for dinner, include #BellLetsTalk, and they will help raise money for mental health programs in Canada.

Let us all join the conversation and end the stigma surrounding mental health.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister forced a minister to pay back more than \$3,000 for inappropriate expenses. He forced his chief of staff and his principal secretary to pay back more than \$64,000 for inappropriate moving expenses. Before he became prime minister, he himself had to pay back nearly \$1,000 in expenses.

When will the Prime Minister follow his own rules and give Canadians back the \$200,000 that he charged them for his illegal trips?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immediately after the commissioner's report was tabled, the Prime Minister took responsibility, accepted the findings, and committed to working with the office of the commissioner on future personal and family vacations.

The opposition members for weeks and months have been asking these questions, demanding the report, and now that the report has been tabled, they refuse to accept the findings.

On our side, we thank the commissioner. We accept the findings, and we will follow every recommendation.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): The issue, Mr. Speaker, is that nobody is buying the Prime Minister's phony remorse about being caught breaking the law. He wants to pretend like this is all about addressing things going forward, but he has not addressed what has happened in the past. He would have us believe that it was a close family friend, despite the fact that they did not speak for over 30 years. He would have us believe that the meetings had nothing to do with government business, even though there was a request for an official meeting just days before he left.

When will the Prime Minister do the right thing and pay back taxpayers' money for the cost he imposed on them?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous commissioner, both in her report and in her testimony to committee, answered many questions related to her report. We accepted her findings in respect of her work.

On this side, we respect the work of all officers of Parliament. Unlike the opposition, when officers of Parliament make recommendations, we take them seriously and we work with them to ensure we follow them. On top of this, the Prime Minister has committed to working with the office of the commissioner to clear all future personal and family vacations.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an apology is meaningless if it does not come with a sincere attempt to make amends.

Oral Questions

By the Prime Minister's logic, it is okay to bill taxpayers for expenses, even when the purpose of those expenses is used to break the law. I believe Canadians reject that premise.

Canadians do not want to see any more of his fake apologies; they want real action. If he truly wants to fix this issue and re-earn the trust of Canadians, he can pay them back for the money he cost them.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, immediately after the commissioner's report was tabled, the Prime Minister took responsibility, accepted the findings, and committed to working with the office of the commissioner on future personal and family vacations.

When it comes to the Prime Minister and this government, we are committed to working hard on behalf of Canadians. When the Prime Minister apologizes in his capacity as prime minister, as he did yesterday to a group of individuals who had been waiting a very long time, it means something to Canadians. We will continue engaging with them. We take this work seriously and will continue to do so.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would suspect that the House leader has not quite read the document that the Ethics Commissioner put forward. If she did, she would know that there are actually no recommendations from the Ethics Commissioner. There are findings of fact. There is a determination of guilt. That is all that is in there. She should stop hiding behind the Ethics Commissioner.

To that point, what I would like to know is this. Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, accept responsibility, and pay back that illegal gift?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, immediately following the tabling of the report, the Prime Minister accepted responsibility and he accepted her recommendations. The commissioner has made recommendations on how to best manage the Prime Minister's family friendships moving forward and he will follow the commissioner's advice. We will continue to work with the commissioner.

As it pertains to the Prime Minister's family and personal vacations, he will ensure that they are all cleared with the office of the commissioner.

• (1430)

The Speaker: I appreciate the efforts of the hon. member for Milton to encourage colleagues to listen to the answers to make sure she can hear and the rest of us can hear.

The hon. member for Milton.

Oral Questions

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only advice the Ethics Commissioner gave was to stop breaking the law. That is it. That report was delivered to two people: the Prime Minister, in his capacity as the prime minister; and the person who had the allegations against him, again, the Prime Minister. Why does it go to the Prime Minister? It is because that person decides the appropriate punishment for the public office-holder. What did he do in this case? He forgave himself.

On this side, we do not forgive him for this and we want him to pay back the taxpayers. When will he do it?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have also said on numerous occasions, on this side of the House, we appreciate the work of officers of Parliament.

The previous commissioner, both in her report and in her testimony in committee, answered many questions related to her report. We accepted her findings, and we respect her work. At committee, she also suggested and made recommendations, and that is why the Prime Minister has put a screen in place.

On this side, we respect the work of all officers of Parliament. Unlike the opposition, for us, when officers of Parliament make recommendations, we take them seriously, and we work with them to ensure that we follow them.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming crystal clear that we are at a turning point in the fight for women's equality. We will not let these moments pass us by. We simply cannot.

We owe it not only to the generations of amazing women who have fought hard to get us where we are today, but more importantly, to the young women and girls who will step up and finish the job, the fight for women's equality.

Time is up for words and platitudes. It is time for action now. What is the concrete plan of the Liberals to make sure that we elect more women in the House in 2019?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleague's efforts to make this place better and safer for more women. Just like her and I am sure so many in this House, I want to see more women running for office, getting elected, and being successful when they are here. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to do what we can to make this somewhere where women can be successful, where they can thrive, and where they can feel safe.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but this is a moment when we need bold actions, not just platitudes.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister said that he would guarantee that all incumbents could keep their seats. Doing the math, that means he will have to find 116 female candidates for the remaining 155 ridings if he wants to reach parity. I would love to see that. The parties have

been making efforts for 151 years, but today we need concrete action.

Can the government tell us what it plans to do to ensure that more women are elected in 2019?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question.

I am thrilled to see so many strong women here in the House, working hard for Canadians. I think everyone in the House needs to encourage more women to run for office.

[English]

When they are successful in being elected to the House, we must ensure that they are able to thrive and to do well here. All of us in this House can do more to reach out to women, to encourage them to run, and to make sure that they are successful and elected here in the future.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 31 days ago, Iceland made it illegal to pay men more than women. It is the first country to legislate equal pay.

In Canada, we have a Prime Minister who calls himself a feminist. That is great, but real change has to be more than just an election slogan. It has to be a reality. Real change shows up on the paycheques of women who see their male coworkers making more money for doing the same job.

When is the government going to make equal pay a reality?

[English]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course they expect to be full participants in our economy, and they deserve equal pay for work of equal value.

Our government is working with the public sector unions. We are working with public servants. We will achieve exactly that.

● (1435)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two years ago this week, Parliament voted for the New Democrats' motion on equal pay for women, but we still have not seen any legislation to protect equal pay in law.

Liberals promised pay equity, but shelved it until 2018. It is 2018. Time is up. Words are not enough. Women want concrete action. We have waited far too long already.

Can the Prime Minister explain to women in Canada why they should have to wait another day to be paid the same as men?

Oral Questions

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working in consultation with the unions, the public sector unions, and the CLC and Unifor. We are working broadly in Canada.

First of all, our government has restored a culture of respect with our labour movement in Canada. We have also made it very clear that our government, as a feminist government, is committed to pay equity, a proactive pay equity system. I can assure the hon. member we are moving forward with exactly that.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of Canada, the Prime Minister has been found guilty of violating the Conflict of Interest Act. He travelled illegally, charging taxpayers more than \$200,000. He told us that he takes responsibility. Can he, or his House leader, if he cannot do so himself, tell us why the Prime Minister would not reimburse Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous commissioner, both in her long report and in her testimony at committee, answered many questions related to her report. We accept her findings and we respect her work. On this side of the House, we respect the work of all officers of Parliament. Unlike the opposition, we take the recommendations of senior officials seriously and we work with them to ensure that we follow their recommendations. Furthermore, the Prime Minister has committed to submit all future vacation plans to the commissioner—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just do not understand the answer that the leader keeps repeating. The Prime Minister took a vacation, an illegal vacation, on the taxpayers' dime. He was found to be in violation of the law not once, but four times. All members of this House must obey the law. The ministers who were found guilty had to repay the monies, as did government employees. It seems that there are two laws: one for the Prime Minister and another for all the other MPs and Canadians.

Could he simply pay back the money taken out of taxpayers' pockets?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the opposition asks the same question, it will hear the same answer. For weeks and months on end, the opposition asked that the report be tabled. Now that the report has been tabled, the opposition refuses to accept its findings. For our part, we would like to thank the commissioner, we accept her findings, and we will follow all her recommendations.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by not paying back these expenses, the Prime Minister is basically telling all of us as members of Parliament that it is okay, go ahead,

take a really expensive trip as a gift, do not report it to the Ethics Commissioner, mislead everyone about the details for years, deny, deny, deny for a year, and then when we get caught, just say, "Oh, I'm sorry." Wow. What a sweet deal.

When will the Prime Minister see how arrogant and entitled he is being by not paying back these illegal expenses?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said time and time again, we on this side of the chamber respect the work of officers of Parliament. Immediately after the commissioner's report was tabled, the Prime Minister took responsibility and accepted her recommendations.

The opposition members for weeks and months have been asking these questions, demanding the report, and now that the report has been tabled, they refuse to accept the conclusion. On our side, we thank the commissioner. We accept the findings, and we will follow every recommendation.

• (1440)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the conclusion is that he is guilty, which is what we have been asking about for the last year, and he has been denying. When he took this illegal trip, he forced the RCMP to be complicit in these illegal expenses. He is now forcing taxpayers to be complicit. Those are the facts.

When will the Prime Minister own up to the wrong that he has done, be a leader for once, take responsibility for what he has done, and pay back these—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous commissioner, both in her report and in her testimony in committee, answered many questions related to her report. We accept her findings and we respect her work. On this side we respect the work of all officers of Parliament.

What is clear is that the previous Conservative government's way was to undermine officers of Parliament. That is not our approach. We respect the work that they do. We accept the findings and we will take her recommendations. Moving forward, the Prime Minister will clear all family and personal vacations with the officer.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner was very clear. The Prime Minister should have never gone on his fancy private island vacation. The trip was deemed to be illegal; therefore, the \$200,000 bill he sent to Canadians to pay for it is invalid.

Oral Questions

While the Prime Minister has a family fortune, many Canadian families are struggling to make ends meet, living paycheque to paycheque. Why does the wealthy Prime Minister think it is okay to send taxpayers the bill for his illegal vacation, and when will he do the right thing and pay them back?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been the case with past prime ministers, and as is the case for this Prime Minister, whenever and wherever the Prime Minister travels, there are costs related to security. We always accept the advice of our security agencies as to how to best ensure the safety of the Prime Minister.

As the Prime Minister has said, going forward he will engage with the commissioner's office to discuss personal and family vacations.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister may not want to answer questions in here, but he cannot hide from what the independent officer of Parliament concluded about his conduct. On the charge of improperly arranging his personal affairs: guilty. On the charge of accepting illegal gifts: guilty.

Some hon. members: Guilty.

Mr. Mark Strahl: On the charge of illegally accepting a ride on a private aircraft: guilty.

Some hon. members: Guilty.

Mr. Mark Strahl: On the charge that he engaged in illegal government—

The Speaker: Order. As I have heard Speakers and presiding officers say before in this place, we do not have chanting. We have one person asking a question and one person answering.

Let us have the rest of the question. The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, on the charge that he engaged illegally in discussions about government business: guilty.

The Prime Minister is guilty of breaking the law on four separate occasions. Why does he not do the right thing for once and pay back Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has answered these questions repeatedly, and since the new year, the Prime Minister has answered a number of questions from Canadians across the country in open and public town halls, including tonight when he will be present in Winnipeg answering questions from Canadians directly.

Canadians continue to be concerned about jobs for the middle class and those working hard to join it. With our plan, Canadians created 422,000 jobs in 2017, the best single number since 2002. Also, the unemployment rate is at its lowest since 1976. We understand the opposition not wanting to talk about the economy, because the opposition knows that the economy is doing well with our plan.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the shutdown of STC, people living in Saskatchewan are risking their lives hitchhiking just to get around. In November, mental health counsellors went public with fears for northern Saskatchewan residents that the situation would lead to a new Highway of Tears. The cancellation of STC made it difficult for families to testify at the only missing and murdered indigenous women and girls hearing in the province.

Will the government allow the situation to worsen or will it step up to prevent a new Highway of Tears?

● (1445)

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue. As the member knows full well, this is an issue that we are working on. We will work with her office to make sure we take the appropriate steps that are required and needed to address the issue in a meaningful way.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Tina Fontaine, the Highway of Tears, the list of symbols representing the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women is long. There is not one indigenous community in this country that has not been touched by this epidemic. While we have to deal with the ongoing impacts of colonization, indigenous communities deserve action now, in real terms, including through safe transportation.

Will the government move from words to action and at least start by funding, in part, safe transportation along the Highway of Tears?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the Province of Saskatchewan on a number of projects, including improving public transit systems in many of the communities through investments we have made in budget 2016. We will continue to work with the province to make sure that every person that needs public transportation has access to public transportation.

The decision was made by the provincial government to cancel that regional transportation system. That is its decision and its responsibility.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just this once, I would like to give a Liberal government minister credit where credit is due. A year and a half ago, the Minister of Indigenous Services made the mistake of using a limo for personal reasons and billing taxpayers for it. Caught red-handed, the minister decided of her own free will to pay back over \$3,700 to taxpayers. That is as it should be. The Prime Minister, however, deserves no such credit. He was also caught red-handed and found guilty of violating ethics rules four times but is refusing to reimburse Canadians.

Since today is Wednesday, the Prime Minister's day, will he rise and do exactly—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, immediately after the commissioner's report was tabled, the Prime Minister took responsibility and accepted the findings. He committed to clearing all future personal and family vacation plans with the commissioner. For weeks and months, the opposition demanded the report, and now that the report has been tabled, the opposition is refusing to accept the findings. We, in contrast, are grateful to the commissioner, we accept her findings, and we will follow all her recommendations.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the government House leader, rather than reading her cue cards written by someone else, she should read the report from the Ethics Commissioner, who concluded that the Prime Minister broke the ethics rules four times. As the minister well knows, when the Minister of Indigenous Services was caught and had to reimburse taxpayers, she said at the time, "This does not live up to the standard that Canadians expect."

Does the Prime Minister think that not paying back the \$200,000 for his illegal vacation is the responsible thing to do and, more importantly, does that live up to the standard that Canadians expect? Canadians want an answer.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as was the case for the previous prime minister and is the case for the current Prime Minister, wherever and whenever the prime minister travels, there are costs related to security. The hon. member knows I have a great deal of respect for him, too. However, we must accept the commissioner's conclusions and respect her work, and that is exactly what we did.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "This situation was a reminder for all of us to be extremely careful about our expenses and about the public trust that we wield." Those are not my words; those were the high-minded-sounding words of the Prime Minister as he stood in front of his cabinet a couple of years ago, referring to the then health minister and thousands of dollars of inappropriate travel expenses. That minister did the right thing: She repaid Canadians. Why will the Prime Minister not do the right thing, attempt to regain public trust, and repay Canadians?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the security agencies make determinations on what is needed to protect the Prime Minister, as they have done for previous prime ministers, and we will follow their recommendations. The former commissioner has acknowledged that these costs are incurred as part of the role of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will continue to work with the commissioner's office to clear future family vacations.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when his minister misspent thousands of dollars in improper travel expenses, she apologized and repaid those misspent expenses, and the Prime Minister preached about recognizing "public trust". Now, in another flagrant display of double standards, he not only refuses to do the right thing, but he demeans his House leader by forcing her to recite

his empty lines. When will the Prime Minister do the right thing and repay Canadians?

• (1450)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question numerous times.

There is a really tough conversation taking place across our country and around the world. This person, the member of Parliament for the riding of Waterloo, the Minister of Small Business and Tourism, and the government House leader, is not forced to do anything. I am proud of the work of this Prime Minister. I am proud of the work of this government. No individual will tell me to do something. I respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I know that I have rights and freedoms, and I will do my best to represent my constituents and my stakeholders.

When it comes to this report, the Prime Minister has accepted responsibility. He will continue to work with the office.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PENSIONS

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have broken their promise to make the guaranteed income supplement available to all seniors. The Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, a Quebec seniors' association, reports that nearly 450,000 seniors who are eligible for the guaranteed income supplement are not registered to receive it. That is unacceptable. Furthermore, most vulnerable seniors are single women.

When will the Liberals, who call themselves feminists, honour their promise to automatically register all seniors for the guaranteed income supplement?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every member of the House knows how important it is for Canadians, especially the most vulnerable Canadians, to receive the benefits they are entitled to. Over the past few years, we have made changes and improvements to the guaranteed income supplement. In recent weeks, we have also put mechanisms in place to ensure that the most vulnerable seniors, including women, get the benefits they are entitled to faster and more easily. We are going to keep working very hard to that end.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across Canada too many seniors are being left behind, and single women are particularly vulnerable. For women over the age of 75, poverty is almost double what it is for men. Canadian seniors should not have to struggle to make the most basic of ends meet. When will the government commit to a national seniors strategy that actually benefits the many senior women living in poverty today?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted and very grateful for this occasion to signal two things. The first is how much we have worked for seniors over the last two years, with an increase in the guaranteed income supplement of up to almost \$1,000 for 900,000 vulnerable seniors across Canada, taking 13,000 of them out of poverty, 90% of whom are single female seniors, the very vulnerable ones. The second thing we have done in the last few weeks is to make sure that we have the mechanisms in place to ensure that all seniors and all Canadians have access to the benefits on which they depend, and which they deserve.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year I had the privilege to travel with the Standing Committee on National Defence to Latvia to witness the important work our women and men in uniform accomplish overseas as part of Operation Reassurance. I understand that new Canadian personnel have recently left for Latvia. Also, HMCS *St. John's* was just dispatched to the Baltic Sea for a six-month deployment. Can the Minister of National Defence update this House on our contribution to security in Europe?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for his hard work.

Canada is actively contributing to NATO's efforts to support global stability and deter Russian aggression. In July 2016, the Prime Minister announced that Canada would lead a robust multinational NATO battle group in Latvia. In addition, through Operation Unifier, we are also assisting Ukraine's armed forces with military training. These efforts represent Canada's largest sustained military presence in Europe in more than a decade.

Today, I am very proud and honoured to welcome to Ottawa the Latvian Minister of Defence.

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[Translation]

MARIJUANA

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of the 86 federally licensed cannabis producers, 35 receive considerable amounts of funding from unknown investors in tax havens. No one invests that many millions of dollars, not Liberal Party elites or unknown investors, without being sure that they will benefit greatly.

Can the minister confirm today that the unknown investors are not members of organized crime groups?

● (1455)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians' health and safety is our top priority. We are proposing mandatory security checks for people who hold key positions in all of those organizations. We are also proposing background checks for major investors who own over 25% of a cannabis company. The Minister of Health has also signed an agreement with her provincial and territorial counterparts to find out

who owns these companies and to crack down on tax evasion, money laundering, and other criminal activities.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat the question. We know that of the 86 cannabis producers in Canada, 35 of them get funding from tax havens. That means some of that funding is coming from organized crime.

Before implementing Bill C-45, can the minister confirm that the government will sort out that mess so that Canadians can be sure that organized crime has not infiltrated supposedly legal businesses?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my answer. Canadians' health and safety is our top priority. We are proposing mandatory security checks for people who hold key positions in all of those organizations. We are also proposing background checks for major investors who own more than 25% of a cannabis company. The Minister of Health has also signed an agreement with her provincial and territorial counterparts to find out who owns these companies and crack down on tax evasion, money laundering, and other criminal activity.

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today injured veterans announced that they are taking their case to the Supreme Court. The Prime Minister promised these veterans lifelong pensions and that they would not need to fight him in court. He has broken those promises to our vets.

Under this Prime Minister's watch, the number of veterans waiting for disability benefits has ballooned to a backlog of more than 29,000. Rhyming off a list of benefits that veterans cannot access will not cut it. When will the Prime Minister stop fighting veterans?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we value the contributions that veterans have made in protecting the peace and security of Canadians at home and around the world.

Our government took immediate action to address many of the issues raised in this case. We increased pain and suffering compensation for all injured veterans. We created an additional pain and suffering compensation award. We increased income replacement. We invested in education and career transition services for veterans and their families. We enhanced mental health benefits. Veterans asked for a pension for life option. We delivered. Our newly announced plan is monthly and tax-free.

We will continue to do everything we can—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, veterans have made the solemn decision to turn to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In 2015, the Prime Minister promised them, hand on his heart, the return to a real pension for life. He also promised them that they would never ever have to take the government to court to fight for their own rights and their pensions. That is another broken promise. This time it affects our valiant veterans.

Will the Prime Minister honour the solemn promise he made in 2015 to our veterans or will he once again turn his back on our valiant soldiers?

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's veterans bravely defend the peace and security we enjoy. When they come home broken, it is our duty to see them mend. However, under the previous government, veterans came home to cut services, to closed offices, and to their voices ignored.

With our recent announcement of a pension for life, this government's total investment in veterans in two and a half years is \$10 billion. Veterans asked for a monthly pension for life, for enhanced supports, for a simpler system. We delivered, and we will continue to deliver.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister really likes to talk about feminist foreign policy, but in the meantime his government is not shy about selling arms to Saudi Arabia, a country with an atrocious human rights record, especially when it comes to women's rights.

[English]

How does the Prime Minister feel about making Canada a nation of feminist arms dealers?

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we condemn all violations of human rights and call for their protection, both at home and abroad.

Canada expects the end-user of all exports to abide by the end-use terms of the export permits. Canada has directly engaged Saudi Arabia to underline the importance of ensuring that its security operations respect international human rights law. We have engaged repeatedly with Saudi leaders and authorities on the protection of human rights, and we will continue to do so.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not just the RCMP that is failing to address complaints about sexual assault in its ranks. It has been 10 long months since the

Oral Questions

Canadian Armed Forces promised to review a large number of sexual assault complaints they had previously dismissed as unfounded. These women were brave enough to come forward, and the Liberals are using the protection of their privacy as an excuse to do nothing.

Will the government commit today to stop stalling, show women the respect they deserve, and immediately take action?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we remain fully committed to ensuring that the military's culture reflects respect and dignity for all.

A sexual assault review program is being created to implement an open and transparent review mechanism of all sexual assault cases labelled as "unfounded". The program intends to include participation of external stakeholders to ensure that the review process of unfounded cases is more effective.

In order to protect the privacy of individuals, the military police are working with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that the review process is made in accordance with the laws and regulations.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know pipelines are the safest and most environmentally friendly way to transport energy. While the Prime Minister waffles, the British Columbian government adds another roadblock on the Trans Mountain pipeline, putting the project on life support. Canadian jobs are at risk. To make matters worse, a growing number of Canadian drilling companies are moving south of the border for brighter prospects. Many admit they may never come back.

When will the Prime Minister step up and protect Canadian energy jobs?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we stand by our decision to approve the Trans Mountain expansion, just as we stand by our commitment to all Canadians to implement world-leading measures to protect the environment and our coast.

The decision we took on the Trans Mountain expansion remains in the national interest and that has not changed. The project is subject to 157 legally binding conditions to protect the environment and ensure it moves forward in the safest, most environmentally sound manner.

Our historic investment of \$1.5 billion in the oceans protection plan builds on that.

Oral Questions

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the price of western Canadian oil is some \$20 less than the market price and shamefully our colleagues in the NDP applaud that. Put another way, this financial loss is the equivalent to one hospital being built in the United States every week instead of here in Canada or one school every day being built in the United States and not here in Canada.

When is the Prime Minister going to stand up to the B.C. government, stand up on behalf of Canadians, and western Canadians, and have hospitals and schools being built in Canada and not in the United States?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have done more to support our country's energy sector and get our resources to market in two years than the Harper Conservatives did in 10.

We have approved infrastructure projects that will create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs across the country: expanded export capacity for the Alberta Clipper project, the NOVA Gas pipeline, the Line 3 replacement project, and the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline. We support the Keystone XL pipeline. I could go on and on.

These projects and others represent tens of thousands of good-paying jobs and billions for the Canadian economy.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the B.C. NDP government is adding new hurdles to the building of the Trans Mountain project, as we just heard. The decision not only threatens important jobs in western Canada, like in my riding, but also investor confidence in Canada's economy.

Will the Prime Minister defend his government's decision to approve this project, or will it become yet another failed project by the Liberal government?

• (1505)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, we stand behind our decision to approve the Trans Mountain expansion just as we stand by our commitment to Canadians to implement world-leading measures to protect the environment and our coasts. Through multiple consultations and discussions with Canadians, the decision we took on the Trans Mountain expansion remains in the national interest and this has not changed.

As I mentioned before, the project is subject to 157 legally binding conditions and our investment of \$1.5 billion in the oceans protection plan is another example of our leadership to safeguard our—

Mr. Ron Liepert: Tell that to the NDP.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill has a fine voice but we should only hear it when he has the floor. He knows that.

The hon. member for Willowdale.

SCIENCE

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, genomics and precision research have the potential to create new breakthroughs that will reshape medical care and lead to improvements in the lives of Canadians. Last week, the Minister of Science announced new funding for genomics and precision medicine research projects at institutions across the country.

Could the minister provide an update to the House on our government's support for this significant initiative?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science and Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to announce that along with our partners we are investing \$255 million in genomics and precision medicine research through Genome Canada and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research.

The member for Willowdale is a strong advocate for improving care for Canadians, and he is right. Genomics and precision medicine have the potential to greatly improve the lives of Canadians. The research projects receiving funding will help children who are living with asthma, brain cancer, cystic fibrosis, and other rare genetic disorders.

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[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is on the sidelines at every international negotiation. As a result, there is no one to defend the producers and farmers who work hard to feed Canadians.

This week, we twice asked the minister what his plan was for compensating egg, dairy, and poultry producers. Twice he did not answer. This week he even asked the Minister of International Trade to stand in for him and explain the TPP to farmers. Four billion dollars was proposed. What is his plan?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that I think my hon. colleague is fully aware that when the CETA was signed, he saw exactly what would happen. He saw that we stood behind the agricultural sector. He saw that we put \$350 million in place in order to make sure the dairy farmers were on the cutting edge, to make sure that the manufacturers were on the cutting edge.

My hon. colleague will find out that this government has and will continue to support the agricultural sector, including the supply management sector, in this country.

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[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one in four members of this Parliament is a woman. The ratio has barely budged in the past 151 years. The government wants ideas, we have some. Under the current system, Elections Canada reimburses parties for up to half of their campaign expenses.

Oral Questions

The member for Burnaby South suggested reducing reimbursements slightly for parties that do not nominate enough women. Sadly, the government shot down this proposal.

What exactly are the Liberals planning to do instead to increase the percentage of female members above the current 26%?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that excellent question and for her passion about getting more women into the House, which is something I definitely agree with.

In my opinion, it is extremely important that all of us in the House do our part to encourage women to stand as candidates and that we make an effort to support them and make sure they succeed. We, the young female MPs, serve as examples for other women, and we need to make sure there are more women in the House—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

* * *

● (1510)

PENSIONS

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, members from all parties had questions about the changes to the policies governing the guaranteed income supplement and the involuntary separation provision.

Could the minister responsible for seniors tell the House what has been done to ensure that Canadians who are involuntarily separated from their spouse receive the appropriate benefits?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this opportunity to commend the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle and thank her for the wonderful work she is doing for seniors and the most vulnerable Canadians.

Our government committed to ensuring that senior couples who are unfortunately separated, for reasons beyond their control, receive the benefits they are entitled to. In recent months, Service Canada has been tracking down the seniors affected and has paid nearly 700 vulnerable seniors the benefits they need. We are very determined to make sure that all vulnerable Canadians receive the benefits they deserve and expect from this government.

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[*English*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers are asking for us to do them a bit of a favour. Can somebody please put an APB out on the Minister of Agriculture?

First, India imposes debilitating tariffs on Canadian pea exports and now our durum wheat producers are being unfairly targeted by Italy's protectionist country-of-origin labelling. On both of these vital issues, the minister has been nowhere to be found. He is not even being included on a critical trade mission to India next month.

Why has the minister not tabled a formal complaint on the wheat issue with the WTO or CETA, and will he commit to do so today?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern. He is certainly fully aware of the issue in India and that we are very disappointed the Indian government decided to put a tariff on without any consultation, not only with Canada but worldwide. I have visited other countries and made sure that this type of practice is totally unfair. Our officials are dealing with the countries and with India and trying to resolve the issue.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, in town halls with my community throughout the break period, I heard, over and over again, concerns about the takeover of Aecon, proposed to be taken over by a state-owned enterprise of the People's Republic of China.

British Columbians are particularly concerned because Aecon now holds 30% of the contracts for the generating station at the disastrous Site C project. We are wondering, will investment Canada look closely at the extra risks posed due to the Harper-era investment treaty that gives China superior rights to Canadian companies if we should want to improve labour protections and environmental protections?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows full well that our government has been very clear about our desire to be open to trade, people, and investment. We are focused on growth and jobs.

With respect to the Investment Canada Act process, she knows that the Aecon acquisition is going to go through a robust and rigorous process. We evaluate each and every single acquisition on a case-by-case basis. This is a multi-step process.

I want to assure the member that we will do everything we can to make sure that the outcome will benefit Canadians. When it comes to national security, we never have and never will compromise on it.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Raimonds Bergmanis, Minister for Defence of the Republic of Latvia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1515)

[Translation]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 79.13 of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the parliamentary budget officer entitled, "Work Plan 2018-19".

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE

The Speaker: It is my great pleasure to table today, in both official languages, the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*.

[Translation]

This authoritative work has continued to evolve since the publication of the first edition in 2000 and the second in 2009. I am sure that the third edition will take its place as the authoritative source on Canadian parliamentary procedure.

[English]

Edited by the former acting clerk of the House, Marc Bosc, and the deputy clerk, procedure, André Gagnon, this impressive edition, in both official languages, of course, boasts some 1,500 pages and over 7,000 footnotes rich in content and in history. It also reflects changes to our rules and practices as recent as from just a few months ago, notably the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House last spring. This edition is again accessible online, and for the first time, it is also available as a bilingual e-book, which members will receive in addition to a print copy.

[Translation]

I want to thank the hundreds of dedicated people from all sectors of the administration of the House who contributed to writing and publishing this book. This collaborative work is a shining example of the devotion and expertise of those who support members of the House in their daily work.

[English]

I encourage all members to read and use the third edition. While I may be in the minority who would consider this book leisure reading, as one former Speaker Milliken might do, I assure members that they will find it to be useful and informative in the course of their parliamentary work. I invite all members to join me in room 216-N for a reception to mark this very special occasion.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the implementation report for the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement for the fiscal years 2011-12 and 2014-15. I request that this report be referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Further to that, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I also have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the implementation report for the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claim Agreement for fiscal years 2011-12 and 2013-14. I request that this report be referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

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● (1520)

[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, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the following treaties: the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting, concluded in Paris on November 24, 2016; the Agreement between Canada and the EU on Security Procedures for Exchanging and Protecting Classified Information, signed in Brussels on December 4, 2017; the Agreement Between Canada and Grenada for the Exchange of Information on Tax Matters, signed in Saint Georges on July 14, 2017; and the Agreement Between Canada and Antigua and Barbuda for the Exchange of Information on Tax Matters, signed in Saint John's on October 31, 2017. An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

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[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and related meetings in St. Petersburg, Russia, from October 14 to 18, 2017.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following four reports by the Canadian delegation to the OSCE PA.

The first is respecting its participation at the 16th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, in Vienna, Austria, from February 23 to 24, 2017.

The second concerns its participation at the OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference, in Vienna, Austria, from June 12 to 13, 2017.

The third concerns its participation at the 26th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Minsk, Belarus, from July 5 to 9, 2017.

The fourth is respecting the autumn meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Andorra la Vella, Principality of Andorra, from October 3 to 5, 2017.

Routine Proceedings

PHOENIX PAY SYSTEM

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-210, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill S-210, an act to amend an Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Senator Jaffer tabled this bill in the Senate because the use of the words “barbaric” and “cultural” together, in a short title, reframes the discussion of crimes such as forced marriage, polygamy, and female genital mutilation. Putting the words “barbaric” and “cultural” together in the same phrase is socially irresponsible, morally reprehensible, and frankly, repugnant. This phrasing removes responsibility for horrific actions from an individual and instead associates the crime with a culture or a community.

There is no place for phraseology such as “barbaric cultural practices” in today’s society. The bill would remove this archaic and misplaced terminology from being referenced in Canada’s statutes.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

ALGOMA PASSENGER TRAIN

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by people from Sault Ste. Marie, Batchawana Bay, Orillia, Coldwater, and Wawa. The petitioners remain concerned that the Algoma passenger train is not yet back in service. These individuals state that residents and businesses continue to experience great difficulties and that the economic impact is becoming more serious. They are calling on the Minister of Transport to get the Algoma passenger train moving again as it plays a very important role in northern Ontario.

• (1525)

[*English*]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition on behalf of constituents from places ranging from Manotick to Edmonton, Kingston, London, Kanata, and Markham. Petitioners are calling on the government to abandon its plans to raise taxes on farmers and small business owners.

Due in part to these petitions and to the advocacy of the official opposition, the government has begun to retreat and acknowledge its failed ways. I trust that when it sees the rest of these signatures, it will go further and abandon them altogether.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton knows that presenting petitions is not the time to engage in debate but to simply present the petition.

The hon. member for Yukon.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present my first electronic petition, originating in the Yukon, with 7,084 signatures. The petitioners outline that the Phoenix pay system is causing tens of thousands of federal government employees undue hardship, stress, and mental health issues; that many more have stopped reporting; and that many are unable even to review or understand, from the information they have, whether their pay is correct. They also explain that the number of cases has increased to 237,000 in recent months.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to take immediate and drastic measures to ensure that all federal government employees are paid as per their work contracts and collective agreements. Such measures could include hiring enough professional, fully trained compensation advisers to allow all employees to review their pay files one-on-one and be made whole again; giving these compensation advisers direct access to Phoenix and the ability to adjust incorrect data in the system as needed; getting rid of the 1-800 numbers and call centres from which no effective help can be given to employees; and providing employees with clear and easy-to-understand written statements of actions taken on their pay files.

[*Translation*]

MARIJUANA

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last August I received a call from a citizen of Laval, which is represented by a Liberal MP. Unfortunately, she had no confidence in her MP. She contacted me and asked that I present an e-petition, petition e-1270, which calls on the government to reject Bill C-45 respecting the legalization of cannabis.

I believe that young people have the right to be protected, but this legislation does not protect them. The petition calls on the government to reconsider. There is still time. Let us not destroy our young people with this law. We can use other means to protect our precious youth.

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the petition I present today is from residents of my constituency of Saanich—Gulf Islands from throughout the southern Gulf Islands. It deals with the issue of the carbon tax. The petitioners are very much in favour of a national price on carbon uniting all provinces and creating a standard fee across the country.

The purpose of the petition is to call on the government to do more and to focus on the post-2022 carbon fee, which has not yet been announced, and to ensure that it rises incrementally to at least \$150 a tonne by the year 2030.

Government Orders

TAXATION

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by over 50 constituents of mine in Alliance, Coronation, and Forestburg, Alberta. They are very concerned about this government's draconian tax changes for small businesses, farmers, and other private corporations. They call on the government to extend the consultation period, to not implement any changes until the law is passed, and to provide documentation that the Liberal government actually considered alternatives and amendments or to give a detailed explanation as to why not.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition today on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the health of Lake Winnipeg. Currently, the state of North Dakota is progressing with two water projects that raise concerns about dumping new water into the Lake Winnipeg basin, which presents the threat of invasive species as well as increased nutrient loading.

The recommendation in the petition is that the Minister of Foreign Affairs refer these two projects to the International Joint Commission. I wrote her a letter months ago and have yet to receive a response. We are hoping that she might respond now to the petition.

* * *

● (1530)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

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 be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STRENGTHENING MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY FOR CANADIANS ACT

The House resumed from January 30 consideration of the motion that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the bill. I commend my colleague, the member for Trois-Rivières, who has not only done an excellent job on the bill, but has also been very constructive in his approach to it.

Bill S-2 is an act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and make consequential amendments to another act. However, most important is that it is about providing auto recall for Canadians.

The problem we are faced with is the fact that the bill is so underwhelmingly negligent in fixing the problem. It is nothing short of breathtaking, given the tragedies that have taken place and the historic recalls in auto manufacturing. Right now, the Takata airbag scandal has affected many motor vehicles, and Canada has had to beg for inclusion. We have no rights whatsoever with regard to consumer safety protection and the bill is such a weak response to this. I am rather shocked about that.

The member for Trois-Rivières proposed 15 amendments at committee and none of those amendments were accepted by the Liberals, which is shocking. The previous Conservative government tabled a bill for auto manufacturing recall prior to the last election. I believe it was Bill C-62. The Conservatives only had two amendments to this legislation. Therefore, this is a tweaking of Conservative legislation. It is not surprising that there were only a couple of amendments from the Conservatives.

However, during the election campaign, consumers told me that they wanted more consumer safety and environmental protections. This bill is a slap in the face. It also becomes a wider problem, given Volkswagen has an offence against it for auto manipulation and recall. This is not only being criminally investigated in the United States but in other places in the world. There is also the Takata airbag scandal. These are prime examples of current standards, which Canada does not get and will not get with this legislation. This is ironic. The legislation will marginally improve the situation of auto recall.

The first and foremost thing to recognize is that this is a significant consumer and environmental protection issue and all of us should be concerned about this and Canada's competitiveness.

Government Orders

This is even more important because of our diminished capacity under the new auto revolution taking place for manufacturing. We are becoming more dependent than ever on foreigners to produce vehicles necessary for a modern economy and for transportation use. This affects the air we breathe, our safety, and the way we are able to compete in the world. Because of successive Conservative and Liberal governments and their inaction on the auto file and trade practices, Canada has gone from number two in the world for auto assembly to 10. That means we are increasingly dependent upon foreign vehicles coming into our country. That should point us in a direction of having more accountability because the corporate board rooms in Beijing, New York, in Washington, and other places in Europe are almost exclusively making decisions that affect us and our families when it comes to safety, consumer selection, and environmental degradation related to the use of automobiles and other manufactured vehicles.

It is astounding that we would not want to be at the forefront of that. One only needs to look at the issues related to software and the manipulation of it, the difficulty of defining what the problems are, and the consequences of that. This should be motivation enough for us to be more proactive on this issue.

As noted by the member for Trois-Rivières, the legislation would give the power to the minister to recall, but it allows the backroom corridors and the dark halls to make the decisions, which will never even come to Parliament. It becomes an exclusive decision by the Minister of Transport and he can do side deals in private about which we will never know. That is something to think about.

• (1535)

I was very active on public safety issues with respect to the Toyota Prius and Volkswagen files in particular.

Regarding the Prius, it was the denial by Toyota. It said that software was causing a braking problem with its vehicles. This was causing accidents, costing people their lives, and a series of different things. It received such heightened activity in the United States. Its safety was considerably more advanced than in Canada. Sadly, this bill will not really improve that situation in Canada. In fact, it is so modest that we will not even see the same reciprocity that U.S. consumers and public safety advocates received in regard to this.

The CEOs of Toyota went to Washington, and in front of Congress and the Senate, they apologized. They never did the same in Canada. They knowingly and wilfully misled the people, those who bought their products and drove them on our city streets, going to soccer games, to schools, and to work. The United States took it far more seriously. What did it get out of it? It has more research and development as a result of the decision with Toyota. Its consumers received better treatment than those in Canada. There also was a higher degree of accountability and conviction than there was here. This will be a problem of accountability for Canada as the current law stands.

If we look at the Takata airbag issue, we cannot recall them as things currently stand. If we do under this bill, the minister can cut a backroom deal with the company and there will be no consequences. We will not know. It will never be published. It will never be tabled, as the member for Trois-Rivières wanted to do, once annually in the Parliament of Canada.

Why would the Liberals oppose that? Why would they oppose the mere fact that taxpayers expect the Minister of Transport to protect them and their families, their safety, and ensure there is accountability for the products they buy, especially given the amount money these products cost. Why would they not want to table annual reports in Parliament, at least identify the problems, show how the minister dealt with them, and show how he or she worked on behalf of Canadians, for safety, consumer protection, and accountability of the many foreign companies?

I will add this caveat to it. My father, who recently passed away, was a CEO at Chrysler for many years. We witnessed first-hand the erosion of the Canadian corporate boardroom as more and more decision-makers were moved from Canada to the United States. We used to have a Canadian president of Chrysler. One of the biggest champions was Yves Landry. We had successive ones after him. Eventually, we became a surrogate training ground for American CEO company presidents. A successive wave of them came here.

Things have changed in the auto industry for a series of different reasons. However, we now have a slanting of foreign decisions that will take place, which can influence and affect Canadian consumers. If members are interested, they can look at Volkswagen. There was a corporate, accountable, organized crime attempt to mislead not only the public but also transportation agencies in their investigations of its vehicles, which had emission devices that were designed to create different results so it could claim “clean diesel”. There are many documentaries and court cases with respect to this.

• (1540)

However, an entire manipulative corporate-run culture, which is not short of organized crime, misled consumers, government departments and agencies about the products it was putting on the streets, which were affecting our air quality. That is a reality. It is happening right now, and continues to happen.

The scenario being presented to Parliament right now is that the Minister of Transport could do a one-off agreement with companies, if he or she wanted to, and we would never know why. We would never know the decisions. We would never know how far it went back. That is unacceptable. The Minister of Transport should be the person to shield Canadians from the organized attempts of an industry that has a history of some of these practices. There are many out there that do not have that culture or prescribe to those things. However, when we go through recall lists of companies that have been involved in the auto industry over the generations, this is an unfortunate part of what has taken place.

Government Orders

When we have five tonnes of steel and glass that needs to be safe all the time, we need to ensure there is accountability for people. For heaven's sake, we would at least think from a consumer protection and disposable income perspective, there would be a genuine interest to ensure vehicles are safe, people will get what they have paid for, and it will define the terms and conditions agreed upon. This is being paid for over several years. It is not a decision that is made in the moment where people just pay for it, then have buyers' remorse later on. These are income purchases for a vehicles, which people put their babies in, take their loved ones to work, or to play, or use for business. It is one of the most expensive things a person will ever purchase where instantaneously its market value will erode significantly. People say they are investing in cars, but they are not. It is a cost, but they will never get their value out of it, unless they are luxury vehicles they hold on to for generations to come. As soon as they drive that vehicles off the lot, the value goes down.

My point is that there is an onus on the government to ensure the sustainability of that investment in that product. I am proud of the New Democratic caucus, which has supported me for numerous years to get the right to repair passed. I have fought for this. This shows one of the reasons we need more transparency. The right to repair was finally passed as a voluntary agreement, and it was supported in the House of Commons. It is like getting a field goal instead of a touchdown when we get a voluntary agreement. At least it has some elements to it, and that is what the industry wanted.

However, what happened was that automotive companies were treating Canada differently, especially compared to the United States, when it came to vehicle repairs. Not only did it affect the safety of the vehicle, but also its environmental emissions and our choice as a consumer. In Windsor, I could get my vehicle fixed in Detroit, Michigan by driving two kilometres and crossing over, but I could not get it fixed in Windsor even though it was an electronic program that literally cost cents to transmit to the business in Windsor. It was prevented from coming into Canada. This is because in the United States its environmental protection act requires companies to provide on a program, or piece of equipment, or tool or training that to the after market.

• (1545)

For example, Canadian Tire, small garages, medium-sized mom-and-pop shops, all of those different places were denied even the access to purchase the proper training, equipment, and software. It is becoming an issue again. They have blocked that out.

What does that mean? It means that vehicles in Canada were on the road longer, without their safety being approved or improved, in terms of maintenance. Their emissions were higher, and their performance was lower. The complications for fixing those things were heightened. Consumers had to pay more to take it to a dealership.

It is not like there is not an organized element related to dealing with an industry which at times has been stubborn. Many of those organizations and companies finally came to the table. I congratulate them. We had General Motors at that time. We had Ford, and eventually, Chrysler. However, it took a long time. It took two years out of my life just to get that moving in Canada.

Now we have some more problems. That is a story for another time, but it is very much germane to this. I believe when people make a purchase of this magnitude and it has such an influence on them as individuals and for their families, and for the safety of Canadians, the best thing the Minister of Transport could do is be transparent for all of Canada.

We look at some of the specifics of this bill and we have to wonder why. What has the minister done? He has limited some of the amendments that we had on recall and cost. In the bill the maximum and minimum for fines and penalties are very much non-existent in many respects. They are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is unbelievable, given the cost of it, and having to repair it, and given the consequences of having improperly fixed vehicles, and the process and inconvenience of actually getting that done, that we actually fine at such a low amount.

Monetary penalties are capped at \$4,000 for a person and \$200,000 for a company. That is unbelievable. I would like to say it is like a slap on the hand, but it would not even be noticed. It would not be felt. We are talking about multi-billion dollar companies.

Again, there is a message being sent there. The message is that Canada is not serious about this. That is what we are telling them. The biggest issue related to that is the basic fact that an amendment was put forward on that by the member for Trois-Rivières. It was not only in line with the expectations of what consumers would want, but it was in line with what U.S. consumers get with regard to fines and penalties.

We talk about reciprocity in trade, elements related to that, and consumer goods going back and forth between Canada and the United States. I live near the border, and I can say that if we are going to be involved in a market system like this, the very least we should expect is what our neighbour gets. We always have to step up to American standards on many different products and services in the auto sector. It is excellent that we do so, because we have an integrated industry. The vehicles go back and forth across the border. However, at the very least we should expect that consumers would receive the same reciprocity. The sticker price is pretty well the same, if we are not paying a little more. However, we should be able to expect the same elements, the same bumper, the same terms and conditions for insurance, the same support for customers. That would be the reasonable approach if we are actually paying for it.

The minister has done none of that with regard to this bill. The minister has even put in the bill a limitation of two years for what he can do. He has unnecessarily handcuffed himself. We saw that with Volkswagen which became a decade of deceit with clean diesel. It is out there. It has been happening, and not only just for a short period of time but for a long period of time.

New Democrats are very concerned with the situation. It is not even a band-aid.

Government Orders

• (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat disappointed in the sense that we have before us today consumer-friendly legislation that would ultimately benefit car owners in every region of our country. This is a step forward, although one would never know it from listening to the member across the way.

Yes, there is always room for improvement. Amendments were brought forward at the committee stage and the member is right that no NDP amendments were accepted this time. On other pieces of legislation, there have been. Unlike the former government, if there are ways we can improve legislation, this government has demonstrated its willingness to accept amendments. Because the government did not accept the NDP amendments does not make the legislation bad. This is good legislation, and I am anticipating that all parties will support it, or at least I hope that is the case.

Would the member not, at the very least, recognize that the legislation we are debating today is a step forward? Maybe it is not as big a step as the member across the way would have liked, but at least we are moving forward on a very important issue for Canadians that deals with automobiles, which would make our roads safer, and would protect consumers that much more at the same time.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, this bill originated in the Senate, the unelected chamber. The member, his government, and the cabinet should want to take this seriously and do what the people of Canada democratically elected us to do. They expect consumers to be protected and that public safety is number one. When transparency and accountability are on the floor of the House of Commons at least annually, then we will have a serious discussion.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member's comments are valuable. He is the dean of the NDP caucus and has a lot of institutional knowledge. For example, in his speech, he referenced some incidents that occurred when I was not in the House.

To that end, the big question is whether we can do better. I think Canadians expected better. This was, as I understand it, a piece of legislation which the Conservatives, almost in their dying days, brought to the floor. The government is now moving it forward from the Senate to this House.

The NDP put forward 15 amendments and the Conservatives, from what I understand, put forward a number of amendments, too. None of them were adopted. Is there one in particular that is good for consumers and good for public safety that the government should have moved forward on in a bipartisan way to make this legislation better? That is the question before us. How can we make it better for Canadians?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I am frustrated with the government's legislation. The reason it went through the Senate, I suppose, is that it is Conservative legislation. They did not want to overtly wear it, but want to be seen as having done something. They got somebody in the Senate to move it and it went through there as the primary source. That is why it is Bill S-2. A new sticker has been slapped on it.

There were two amendments by the Conservatives and several by the NDP, but of the 15 amendments, the most glaring one was from the member for Trois-Rivières. He did this in a very constructive manner. Everybody on the Hill knows that he is a very constructive individual, not only in the NDP caucus, but on the Hill in general. One amendment was for an annual report to Parliament from the minister, so at least we would know a little more about the deals the minister is making behind closed doors. It is not even a compelling story for all of the things that we should know about, but at least we would know.

The interesting thing about this, which is my frustration, quite frankly, is that it has taken so long for us to even get out a recall. This bill would give us auto recall after all of these years, but once it has passed through both chambers, when will we see another amendment? It will probably not be until after all the renovations to this place are finished, after we come back to this chamber from West Block, and it is finally reopened to the public, and 20 years after that. That is when we are most likely going to see another change.

Meanwhile, not only is the auto age right now curious, in terms of its research, development, and change, but it is a revolution. It is significant. It is like the platinum age of auto development right now. It is not only the very unusual types of materials being used but it is also the technology. All of those things are in this global industry, which will be pumping in different brands, different vehicles, and different changes to our city streets and the way we move around in society.

One thing in the bill is that if a recall that has caused death, injury, collision, or damage, the minister, under a clause for new technologies, can give a waiver and carte blanche. That is astounding in this new age. We will have experimentation on our streets, experimentation with tonnes of steel and glass. It does not sound reasonable.

• (1555)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Windsor West for his tour de force explanation on an issue that most of us have some idea of, but unless we are faced with it directly, do not fully understand. I appreciate very much the explanation behind what is really at play here.

I would ask my colleague to expand a bit on the issue of safety recalls. Again, those of us who are not experts in the field like him do still see that whenever there is a safety issue, an auto recall, the Americans seem to move very fast. Before we know it, those corporate heads are brought in front of committees publicly and are demanded to account for themselves. Here in Canada, we either get a very light echo of that or nothing at all. I would ask the member to expand a little on the difference between how quickly the Americans move when their citizens are at risk versus what happens here in Canada.

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his advocacy for steel, because that is part of what we have seen in the struggling elements of our manufacturing society. Canadian steel was the backbone of the auto industry not only in Canada but also in North America. Interestingly enough, the Auto Pact that was signed in 1964 by Canada and the United States was primarily in response to developing a mature, sophisticated auto industry for both of our nations, which led us to be basically a very solid manufacturing area, including the Hamilton area.

With regard to the recall issue, what we are going to see now, and what we have seen in the past, is that we are very much on the defensive because of cuts. The member for Trois-Rivières actually had in his amendments the redoubling of some of the efforts, supports, and availability of government investigative resources for auto recall.

In the U.S., there is a much more robust system for that. In fact, there is congressional and Senate oversight. Here, there is a complete void. There is a system in place in the United States that is structural, and the EPA is much more solid. Over here, we are basically docile, and we wait to see what pops up on its website and decide later on if it is an issue over here in Canada.

Let us look at Volkswagen. There was stunned silence from the government here while criminal and other investigations took place there. Consumers are protected and the streets are looked at, and we basically get the leftovers. This is the philosophy that has taken place here with regard to the current bill.

Again, it is quite remarkable, after being in the auto sector for so many years and seeing the displacement and the changes happen, that we are outside of it. Canada does not have a say, for example, on electric modification or a battery strategy for all the new technology that is taking place. We are being left out of that. Think about the fact that we are going to become more dependent upon research and development that is done outside of this country. Until we get a national auto strategy and rebuild ourselves to being robustly involved more than ever before, we will be dependent upon others for consumer protection, the safety of our streets, the safety of the products we purchase. There is value and resources that we put into that product.

Most importantly, we will have taken a pass for any type of discussion about the minister's decisions and how they affect Canadian consumers and public safety by allowing ministerial decisions in basically a black ops behind-the-scenes type of approach.

● (1600)

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to Bill S-2, an act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act. This government pursues the continual improvement of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act as part of its commitment to the safety of the Canadian public.

The Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the regime itself include requirements that are to be followed. These can be detailed technical requirements, such as the regulatory standards for lighting systems. They can also be process requirements, such as how and when to notify the government of a newly discovered defect or the documentation standards around the importation of a vehicle. The

legislation also includes tools for the enforcement of these requirements.

This government considers safety to be of paramount importance, and this bill would help improve and ensure vehicle safety for Canadians by providing a new, less onerous process for addressing contraventions and promoting compliance with the act and its attendant regulations and standards.

Since the Motor Vehicle Safety Act came into effect in 1971, the only option available to Transport Canada to address contraventions of the act or its regulations was to pursue criminal charges. While the use of criminal charges is more appropriate for more serious contraventions, it can be too strong a response for many lesser offences. This situation has meant that many minor contraventions are difficult to enforce because the process was too severe for the offence. Using this mechanism for minor offences would redirect valuable court time for other key issues.

Accordingly, one of the proposed changes to the legislation is the introduction of an administrative monetary penalty regime as a tool to help elicit compliance from companies. This is an efficient, effective mechanism and a less costly alternative to criminal prosecution. Administrative monetary penalties, or AMPs, are similar to traffic tickets for car drivers. When a company or individual does not comply with the legislation or regulation, the department can impose a pre-established administrative monetary penalty or fine to help encourage compliance in the future.

Administrative monetary penalties are used in other Transport Canada acts as part of their safety and compliance regimes. Examples in other safety regimes include the Marine Transportation Security Act, the Aeronautics Act, and the Railway Safety Act. In addition, administrative monetary penalties are used in other federal acts, such as the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act.

The inclusion of administrative monetary penalties in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act would not only be consistent with other federal transportation safety frameworks, it would also result in greater alignment with the United States motor vehicle safety enforcement regime. The United States uses a system of civil penalties to encourage motor vehicle safety compliance.

The administrative monetary penalties regime proposed for the Motor Vehicle Safety Act includes maximum fine levels for violations. For individuals, the fine level would be \$4,000, and for companies, the fine level would be \$200,000. A violation that is committed or continues on more than one day is deemed to be a separate violation for each day it is committed or continued. In addition, a violation would apply separately for each implicated vehicle. Accordingly, depending on the scope and nature of the violation, companies could face significant cumulative fines if they are not in compliance with the safety regime.

Government Orders

The fine levels proposed in the bill represent maximum values. The level of penalty for each specific violation would be established using the Government of Canada regulatory process and the penalties for each violation would not exceed these levels. As the level of the penalties can accumulate, the proposed changes to the legislation include the ability to set a cap or overall maximum level for an accumulated penalty in regulations. It is interesting to note that in 2015 the United States raised the level of its cap from \$35 million to \$105 million.

Defining the specific penalty levels and caps in regulation provides the flexibility to modify the program as appropriate in an open, transparent, and agile manner.

With respect to the administrative monetary penalty process, Transport Canada enforcement officers would make decisions based on the nature of the infraction as to when the issuance of an administrative monetary penalty is warranted, and would notify the company or individual.

• (1605)

Companies and individuals will have the ability to appeal an administrative monetary penalty. The Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada will be the body responsible for reviewing the case. The bill also includes necessary changes to the Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada to provide it with the jurisdiction to take on this role. If the company or individual disagrees with a penalty within 30 days of being served a notice of violation, a person may file a request for a review with the tribunal. The review process will determine whether or not a violation has occurred. If it is determined that a violation has occurred, the tribunal will also have the authority to determine the amount of the penalty.

The first level of appeal will be before a single Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada adjudicator. Both the department and the offender will have the ability to present either written evidence or present a case in person. Following a decision from the first review process, there will be an option for an additional appeal process to which either the offender or the minister can apply. In this process, three different TATC adjudicators will hear evidence to assess the appeal and they will render a final judgment. As always, a final appeal may be made to the Federal Court as an option for the accused.

These review and appeal processes will ensure that when administrative monetary penalties are used to elicit compliance, the process is fair and public.

The addition of the administrative monetary penalty regime will allow for a tiered process of enforcement, ranging from a penalty process through to criminal charges. This tiered process has been designed to be an efficient, effective, and fair process to address issues of non-compliance with the Motor Vehicle Safety Act. This process will reduce the burden on all involved parties in terms of dealing with non-criminal non-compliance.

What has been introduced today is very substantial. It is a powerful suite of necessary changes to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act that will increase the tools, enforcement measures, and industry requirements that will help ensure the safety of Canadians.

These changes are not intended to be punitive to the industry but rather to help protect Canadians. For companies that continue to be good corporate citizens, that have the safety of their consumers and Canadians as part of their core interests, little will change. If companies falter in their responsibilities for their products, the tools will be available for the Minister of Transport to help ensure their accountability and to help protect Canadians.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend for his work on committee and in getting the bill to third reading.

We heard through his speech that the bill would provide a flexible regime and is a great bill for consumer protection. Could my colleague tell the House the type of expert evidence that he heard at committee, which showed how this bill would bring our regulations up to meet with those in other countries and would improve the health and safety of Canadians?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague mentioned, I do sit on the committee. We had a well-versed set of witnesses that came to committee, whether they represented the industry or represented consumers. A vast number of people came that had an interest in the legislation. I am quite confident that we heard a very holistic view and we were able to move forward.

• (1610)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are debating the issue of motor vehicle safety. I would like to think that we will be able to expand it given the horrific number of highway deaths that we are experiencing, particularly in the Ontario region. We need to look at addressing at a national level issues of infrastructure, driving, and overall safety, which brings us back to the issue of vehicles.

There are many things in the bill that are commendable. However, time and time again Canada waits before taking action until there is major legal action on recalls led out of the United States. We have never stood up for consumers or for vehicle safety until an issue comes up in the United States. I want to know how that operating culture within Parliament is going to change with this if we are not willing to make the follow-through as we see time and time again?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I want to backtrack a bit and discuss how we actually ended up in the situation we are in now. First, the legislation was introduced as Bill C-62. Then there was an election. Following that, the Auditor General's report was given to the committee in December of 2016. Subsequently, we have Bill S-2, which takes into account the safety of Canadians. In particular, it gives the minister the flexibility to actually initiate a recall. It is this flexibility that will help make sure we do not fall behind other jurisdictions or counterparts, whether in Europe or the United States.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, for his very educational speech about Bill S-2. I am also very pleased that we are moving to a regime of administrative penalties that would allow us the flexibility to not use criminal sanctions that clog up the courts with things that should be resolved administratively.

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The member just talked about the recall provisions. Are there any other improvements to the bill that he would like to address while he has the time?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question. I know he chairs the justice committee.

We have brought in a regime where we do not necessarily have to go through criminal charges, which might be a little too severe, but this also has the consequence of clearing up the court system, allowing for other things to be addressed. That is pretty imperative in the legislation as well, because we balance Canadians' protections, while not being overly punitive in our actions.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to acknowledge to motor vehicle users who are following this issue that, regardless of amendments being ignored, the NDP feels strongly about the fact that there has been a 59% decrease in the department's budget for crash worthiness. Therefore, I wonder if my hon. colleague could talk about the ways that would be addressed. If it is not through an actual return to the budget for that particular department, for the ministry of transportation, is there some other way this would be achieved?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned amendments. I want to say again that we sit on the committee and we do not act with any malice. We have always worked in collaboration, whether with Conservative or NDP members. At the end of the day, the heart of Bill S-2 is to protect Canadians. We will continue to work collaboratively with our fellow members.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not on the committee, so I am trying to understand why the committee would not, for example, support the recommendation to ensure that there is accountability and transparency in the name of safety for the public? After all, that is what the bill is about.

One of the amendments, specifically, called for standards to either meet or exceed for new developments in vehicle technology. Why would the committee not support that recommendation to the government?

• (1615)

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to any one specific amendment, because when we are at committee we take a balanced approach to adopting amendments. We did take amendments into account. Just because every single amendment was not added does not mean we did not work together. As I said, protecting Canadians is at the heart of Bill S-2.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have to apologize to my hon. colleague if he referenced this. I came in late because I was attending the release of our new parliamentary book of procedure.

Does the hon. member have the text of the amendment to this current version? We know that the current version of Bill S-2 is not the one that the government wants to see passed, because it wants to undo some of what was done in the other place as amendments to protect car dealerships. I know the government believes that it has an amendment that satisfies the concerns of dealers, but I would like to read it and study it. I wonder at what point the text of that amendment could be shared with members of this place.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, initially the idea behind this was actually to update Bill C-62 as we looked at the Auditor General's report, which found that Canada was lacking in implementing new technologies and falling behind its counterparts in the United States and Europe. The heart of Bill S-2 is to protect Canadians, and one of the ways to protect Canadians is giving the ministry and Transport Canada the flexibility to call a recall.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know this is good legislation in the sense that it is consumer friendly, makes our roads safer, and so forth. Within the Liberal caucus there is an automobile group of MPs who meet on a regular basis to advocate for the industry and for consumers. I am wondering if my colleague would express his thoughts in terms of how important the industry as a whole is to this government.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, we all know that the auto industry is very important, but beyond that, we take Canadians' safety as a main concern. It is a top priority. That is why we brought about Bill S-2, the heart of which is to protect Canadians. As I keep saying, one of those measures is allowing the minister to call a recall.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see you and all of my colleagues once again on this first week back, as Parliament resumes for 2018. I am delighted to be sharing my time with my colleague, the esteemed member for Lethbridge.

I am very pleased to rise today to speak to this bill, which essentially gives the Minister of Transport even more authority when it comes to the safety and quality of vehicles produced and sold primarily in Canada, since it directly relates to vehicle recalls. When a vehicle has a design problem, the auto manufacturer must issue a recall.

We will demonstrate that this is not a new situation, that the appropriate safeguards to ensure the quality of our vehicles already exist, to say nothing of Transport Canada's powers in this area, and lastly, that although the situation has worsened in one way, it has also improved in another. We will explain how a certain balance has been struck. We will also provide some background information, showing how far we have come since the tragic and notorious Pinto memo.

• (1620)

[*English*]

We are talking about cars and safety. At first glance, maybe we could say that this concerns only those who work in the auto industry. We are talking about so many Canadian workers in Mississauga, Windsor, Oshawa, all those strong places where we have produced cars here in Canada for so many years, thanks to the great deal we had with America in the sixties, with President Lyndon B. Johnson and Prime Minister Pearson at that time. Just before him, the right hon. John George Diefenbaker established a footprint to follow in the creation of the Auto Pact deal with America. However, this concerns more than those who work in this industry. It concerns each and every Canadian who owns a car.

[Translation]

One might think that this bill affects only automakers, the people who are directly employed in automobile manufacturing. As we know, Canada's automakers are primarily located in southern Ontario, in places like Windsor, Oshawa, and Mississauga. However, this bill actually affects every Canadian across the country who owns an automobile.

With all of the scandals in the industry in recent years and even in recent months, the major recalls and the tampering with some vehicles, people have the right to know the truth. It is a matter of quality and safety.

In my opening remarks, I talked about mixed signals. On one hand, vehicle recalls seem to be a problem, but on the other hand, the automotive industry seems to have done a lot of self-regulating. Here are the numbers. In 2015, five million vehicles were recalled in Canada. That is huge, particularly given that it is an increase of 74% as compared to 2010.

The complex nature of new vehicles is an important factor. Today's vehicles do not have same parts and are not built the same way as those built in the 1960s. In those days, all a car needed was a body, an engine, tires, and some steering capability and it would work. I am exaggerating, of course. However, there is no denying that today, with all of the computer systems in vehicles, with all of the highly sensitive and sophisticated components for suspension, steering, or what have you, vehicle assembly has become much more complicated. That is why the auto manufacturing plants in the southern Ontario communities I mentioned earlier have so many robots designed to assemble vehicles, and what good robots they are.

Although there has been a significant increase in the number of vehicles recalled in Canada, there have been no lawsuits involving recalls by manufacturers since 1993.

Similarly, between 2010 and 2016, automakers initiated 318 recalls before Transport Canada or other authorities issued warnings. What does that mean? It means that, yes, we are seeing more recalls because vehicles are more complex to manufacture and more difficult to design, so they have a harder time surviving in this environment. Nevertheless, it is clear that the industry is policing itself and doing its own rigorous analysis.

We believe the industry is doing its homework, but we are not against more powers for Transport Canada to make sure the industry is doing its homework properly.

We all remember the unfortunate chapter in history when the Pinto scandal rocked the auto industry forty years ago. The Pinto was a cheap little car that, sadly, performed poorly in accidents, leading to the infamous Pinto memo. The automaker had analyzed the cost of issuing a recall versus the cost of not doing so. Members may recall that the Pinto had a major design flaw. The gas tank was located too close to the back of the vehicle, so that in the unfortunate event of a rear-end collision, there was an explosion that resulted in tragic loss of life. That happened more than once.

Seeing this, the officials then in charge of the company that made the Pinto performed an analysis that would come to be known as the Pinto memo. They concluded that recalling all the defective vehicles

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for repairs would cost \$137 million, whereas doing nothing would cost society \$49.5 million, due to the deaths and everything else. When all this came to light in a famous trial in 1977, in the United States, every company in the auto industry was embarrassed, to say the least. This case was a wake-up call for car makers, who realized they needed to do things differently.

• (1625)

[English]

Based on the very sad experience of what we called the “Pinto memo” in the seventies, today the industry is very serious, even if we had some difficulty in the last years with the diesel scandal of some auto producers.

[Translation]

As I said earlier, the bill gives the Minister of Transport a little more authority to take action if, God forbid, there is a problem. He can order recalls and more thorough analyses than what are required under existing legislation.

It is important to understand that this in itself is not really new. Back when we formed the government of this country, when the member for Milton was our transport minister, she introduced legislation that would eventually come to steer this current initiative—no pun intended. It seeks to achieve the same thing, that is, to give Transport Canada greater authority and power and make it easier to detect problems, should any arise.

We therefore do not oppose the substance of the bill. We also recognize that some amendments were proposed, some of which were accepted and some rejected. In passing, I would like to commend the meticulous and very detailed work done by the member for Trois-Rivières. I do not mean that facetiously; on the contrary, that is why we are here. Going through this bill with a fine-tooth comb can only be a good thing. We believe that, fundamentally, this bill has a worthy objective, one that we support. Of course, we need to study the bill to know whether it is fair or whether it goes too far.

[English]

The last point I would like to make is that, if the bill passes, the power will be in the hands of the Minister of Transport. He or she is the one who would call the shots if there are any difficult times or difficulties to address. If that happens, we hope that the Minister of Transport will have the good judgment to make sure that we have the best protection for drivers and that all Canadians are safe with the new bill. Knowing the experience of the transport minister, I think we are in good hands.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague and friend across the way, I have confidence in our current minister, in terms of making sure that this is good, sound legislation, that our roads are safer as a result, and that consumers are well served by the legislation. It is important to recognize the great deal of fine work done at the committee stage.

Could my colleague across the way tell us what his thoughts are in regard to the need for this legislation? I understand that the idea of this legislation began in and was carried through in good part by the Senate, with the full support of the government, looking at ways to improve the legislation.

Could the hon. member provide his thoughts on how important it is that we have this debate today and see this type of legislation pass? At the end of the day, this is something that Canadians would want, value, and ultimately benefit from. Would the member agree?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see my colleague from Winnipeg North in the House again. I am sure we will have some great exchanges in the next few months.

Let me just remind the member that even though I have great confidence in the Minister of Transport on this subject, it is not a blank cheque. I recognize him as a great Canadian. I have said many times that he is one of my Canadian heroes, as the first Canadian in space on October 5, 1984. That was the first thing I said to him: "Minister, I am very proud to shake your hand, the first Canadian in space."

However, let us get back to this piece of legislation. It is time for me to get back on track.

When five million cars were recalled in 2015, it was a signal that we cannot ignore. On the other hand, we recognize that the auto industry itself is very serious about that and has done its homework. Between 2010 and 2016, it made 318 recalls without any concerns from the drivers or the transport administration. This is a good signal that the auto industry tries, as best as it can, to evaluate itself. On the other hand, with five million cars having been recalled in Canada in 2015, we must adopt a bill like this.

• (1630)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you so much for giving me the honour and privilege to stand in the House today. I am pleased to rise in support of Bill S-2, the strengthening motor vehicle safety for Canadians act. This legislation would better protect Canadian families from the risks of dangerous defects in their vehicles.

Of course, I am a little disappointed that the government chose not to accept two of our amendments that we put forward during committee stage. I will be talking about that a bit further. However, permit me to take the next few minutes to describe the purpose of this legislation, as well as how I believe those two amendments could have actually strengthened it, had they been received.

The bill would give the Minister of Transport the authority to order companies to correct a defect or a non-compliance, and it would create a tiered penalty structure for wrongdoings that are committed under this act, which is an excellent step in the right direction. Every single day our children, spouses, and other loved

ones are on the road going to sport practices, music lessons, school, work, or here, there and everywhere. At the end of the day, this legislation would help to better protect those who use our roadways.

The bill before us would give the Minister of Transport the power to issue a recall notice, even if the manufacturers of car parts do not want to take the issues before them seriously. In the rare event that a manufacturer is found to be non-compliant, the minister would have the power to issue fines to a manufacturer for up to \$200,000 per day until direct action and responsibility are taken. This gives the legislation teeth, which is good and necessary if we want to see change. Furthermore, this legislation would prevent manufacturers and dealerships from being able to sell new vehicles until the recalled part is fixed.

A similar bill was originally introduced in the House of Commons in 2015 under the previous government. The fact that the Liberals have now taken it and largely copied a portion of text from Bill C-62, as it was introduced previously, is a nod in the right direction and a nod to the excellent work that was completed by the deputy leader of the Conservative caucus, who was then the transport minister.

What were the two Conservative amendments that were put forward and unfortunately not included?

First, the Liberal committee members chose not to accept an amendment that required the minister to ask a vehicle manufacturer if it had internal tests or awareness of a defect before initiating federal tests on a vehicle. This is important because time matters. It is of the absolute essence when the safety of Canadians is at risk. Therefore, if a company already had this internal data on how to fix a problem or had data on the extent of the problem, we would not need to spend more time trying to duplicate those tests and take action.

Second, the Liberal committee members also shut down a different amendment that would have clarified the responsibility between the dealer and the manufacturer. Specifically, it would have dealt with who exactly is responsible to correct a defect before the sale of a vehicle. Details like this help to bring clarity to the bill and are very essential. They ensure that dealers and manufacturers understand who is responsible for ensuring the safety of the vehicle before it is sold. It would be a shame for a known defect to go uncorrected simply because a dealer thinks it is the manufacturer's responsibility and the manufacturer thinks it is the dealer's responsibility, so both go back and forth on it, or better yet, do not do anything at all.

It is important to make the point that while this piece of legislation is an excellent step to increase safety or at least the safety standards in Canada, as a whole our country's auto manufacturers do an excellent job at policing themselves and looking out for the safety and well-being of consumers. From 2010 to 2015, the number of safety-related recalls went down by 74%. Many companies have realized the risk of not issuing a recall and have stepped up to the plate and taken responsibility when necessary to do so.

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Nevertheless, though few, there are some examples of companies that have delayed issuing safety recalls in order to protect their image or bottom line. Therefore, this bill is of course an effort to deal with those situations. One such example would be the massive Takata airbag recall of 2015. Takata is a huge parts supplier to more than 19 different auto manufacturers. When defects were uncovered in its airbags, the first concern of some vehicle manufacturers was to put liability on Takata instead of fixing their vehicles that used Takata parts. Different manufacturers issued recalls at different times, sometimes prioritizing a recall in the United States before getting around to issuing a recall in Canada.

•(1635)

Here is a brief history. The first of the Takata airbags were actually recalled in 2008 here in Canada, but because Canada relied on voluntary action, few details were provided to Transport Canada. As a result, Canada failed to detect that airbag recalls from several different car manufacturers all originated from this central company. It was government regulators in the United States who finally connected the dots in 2014 and put a recall order out. Instead of being proactive like U.S. officials, Canadian officials could only be reactive in this instance. It took until 2015 for the majority of recalls to be issued for these airbags in our country. In fact, it was not until 2017 that these recalls were completely cleared up.

Why did it take nearly seven years for a car company to recall all these potentially deadly airbags? The answer is that Canada's laws have not kept pace with other industrial countries, thus putting us at a significant disadvantage. Let us look at the United States, for example. The United States is often lauded as a positive example in this area. It has much stronger laws that allow the government to enforce a recall.

Until Bill S-2 is passed, the Government of Canada is relying on voluntary compliance for recalls. Simply put, at the moment, our motor vehicle safety legislation just does not have teeth. It does not have an enforcement mechanism. As well, punitive damages in court are significantly lower here than they are in the United States of America. This adds up to less than an incentive for vehicle manufacturers to issue recall notices in Canada and to prioritize recalls in the United States first.

Going back to the Takata example, once the problem was understood, there was a global shortage of the replacement airbags, which meant it was further delayed until this problem was solved.

How can we ensure Canada is treated the same as the United States by larger multinational car manufacturers? First, we need better inspection and testing when the first signs of a potential defect come to light. The legislation before the House today would significantly increase the power of the minister to order tests and studies of potential defects. It also includes significant fines both against an individual and a company that gets in the way of a government inspector.

Second, we need to increase the power of the minister to force companies to take responsibility, even if they were not the manufacturer of the part. This legislation makes it very clear that car manufacturers are, in fact, responsible for their final product. If they picked a supplier with a defective part, it is still on the manufacturer to make it right for the consumer.

Third, we need to give the minister the ability to initiate a recall. This applies to manufacturers that have not identified a defect in the vehicles they sell, but could now be compelled to issue a recall if a sub-standard part is used in the vehicles they manufacture. Even in 2017, a decade after the first recalls, there were still new recalls being made for these Takata airbags. This legislation would have allowed the minister to issue a directive to all manufacturers in Canada to replace all Takata airbags, full stop. Instead, some Canadians found out years later they had been at risk all along.

In conclusion, this legislation is a very positive step in the right direction. The Conservative Party is very proud to stand behind this legislation and take it forward in order to benefit the lives of Canadians. We believe it will look after their safety and well-being, and that our loved ones will be protected.

* * *

•(1640)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my apologies for the interruption. There have been some discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House adjourns on Thursday, February 15, 2018, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, February 26, 2018, provided that, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, the House shall be deemed to have sat on Friday, February 16, 2018, and;

when the House adjourns on Thursday, April 19, 2018, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, April 23, 2018, provided that, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, the House shall be deemed to have sat on Friday, April 20, 2018.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

STRENGTHENING MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY FOR CANADIANS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to my colleague about the issues of enforcement mechanisms in auto safety because each one of us and our loved ones, when we go out after purchasing a vehicle, assume that the vehicle we will be travelling in at 100 kilometres an hour on a highway has everything checked for safety mechanisms, yet we find when there are problems the United States has been much quicker to move to protect its citizens than Canada has been.

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We look at the issue of Dany Dubuc-Marquis, who was in a fatal car accident that was believed to be an ignition failure. Transport Canada was aware of ignition switch problems on the Chevrolet Cobalt for at least eight months before the safety recall. Why is there this discrepancy with the United States, which has very clear rules, laws, enforcement mechanisms, and penalties to ensure that issues of potentially faulty manufacturing are dealt with so that we do not deal with unnecessary highway deaths and accidents?

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is stories exactly like that one that make this piece of legislation so important. The fact that the Minister of Transport would have the opportunity to enforce a recall on a part that she or he becomes aware of, and be able to take action on that, is key in terms of being able to look after the safety and well-being of Canadians.

There is no reason for an innocent person to die because of a part that malfunctions, particularly when that is known either to the manufacturer or to a different party who could take action and do something about it. Therefore, it is very important that the minister be able to respond quickly and that there be teeth. In this piece of legislation, there is exactly that, where the minister would be able to enforce \$200,000 a day in fines for manufacturers who are non-compliant. I believe that would go a long way.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before resuming debate, 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 Calgary Nose Hill, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the Environment; and the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, Taxation.

• (1645)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add my vote to Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

I am also pleased to see that the Liberal government is willing to take the good ideas of the previous Conservative government and carry them forward because they see the value in the content. Bill S-2 bears a striking resemblance to Bill C-62, which was sensible legislation designed to increase safety standards, which was introduced by the then minister of transport, the hon. member for Milton.

In my riding of Yorkton—Melville, where resource development is a key economic driver for many workers, who commute from an hour to three hours per day, this is important. Like the focus on safety on their work sites, the safety of their commute is extremely important to me, so I welcome strong safety standards for motor vehicles as a necessity.

Bill S-2 proposes to increase the involvement of the Minister of Transport in the area of vehicle recalls to bring Canada in line with the recall standards of other countries around the world. In Canada, the expectation is that the use of this power would rarely be used, due to the willingness of manufacturers to issue recalls quickly. However, an enforceable deterrent would act as a reminder and encouragement of appropriate corporate behaviour. The minister would have the power to issue fines to manufacturers of up to

\$200,000 per day for non-compliance. This would affirm that the legislation was to be taken very seriously and was both legitimate and enforceable.

An interesting idea in this legislation is to impose a non-monetary penalty on a company in lieu of, or in addition to, a monetary fine, such as a requirement for additional research and development. I doubt that these penalties would be imposed often, if at all, as companies would want to avoid any public embarrassment that such a fine would cause. That said, having this power would be useful for the minister should any conflict over safety concerns arise.

This act would also codify in law what the market has set as the standard for recalls, ensuring that manufacturers were the liable party for the cost of replacing any recalled parts. Again, this is the current market standard, but ensuring that the standard was clearly expressed in the law would be a positive step for the manufacturers, the dealerships, and of course, the consumers.

It is important to note that while it is indeed laudable to increase our safety standards, this bill is not a response to a significant issue within the industry in Canada. Canada does not have an excess of dangerous vehicles on our roads that the manufacturers are refusing to repair. In fact, it is quite the opposite. In 2015, manufacturers recalled over five million vehicles, of their own accord, for everything from bad hydraulics on a trunk to important engine repairs.

On a personal note, my husband and I have had three recalls on three different vehicles from three different manufacturers. In every case, they communicated in a timely manner, with specific details on what the recall pertained to, the possible safety concerns, if applicable, clear indications for how, where, and when to bring our vehicle in for the repair, and excellent follow-up to ensure that we were satisfied with the results.

Manufacturers voluntarily spend their time and money to ensure that their products are safe and that they meet the standards consumers expect. With the advent of social media and 24-hour news, manufacturers cannot afford the bad publicity that comes with widespread complaints and potentially dangerous faults. That is why, in 2016, there were at least 318 recalls issued without a complaint having been filed with Transport Canada.

Proposed section 15 of the act would give significant new powers to Transport Canada inspectors. Some of these powers are worth noting due to how they would change the current relationship between the manufacturer and Transport Canada. Considering the extent of these powers, I will read from the bill itself:

the inspector may enter on and pass through or over private property...without being liable for doing so and without any person having the right to object to that use of the property...

The inspector may...examine any vehicle, equipment or component that is in the place;...

examine any document that is in the place, make copies of it or take extracts from it;...

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●(1650)

use or cause to be used a computer or other device that is in the place to examine data that is contained in or available to a computer system or reproduce it or cause it to be reproduced...

remove any vehicle, equipment or component from the place for the purpose of examination or conducting tests.

Furthermore, the bill also states:

Any person who owns or has charge of a place entered by an inspector...and every person present there shall answer all of the inspector's reasonable questions related to the inspection, provide access to all electronic data that the inspector may...require,

It makes it somewhat clearer why I highlight the good record manufacturers have regarding the timely issuing of recalls.

These additional powers can seem somewhat disproportionate to any issues we currently experience with safety recalls. It would be very reasonable, and indeed a requirement, for Transport Canada inspectors to have increased powers that went along with their increased responsibilities under this bill, and I applaud that. However, it is simply not the case that manufacturers are hiding serious defects from both the public and Transport Canada. The reality is that the last time a minister of transport criminally prosecuted a manufacturer was nearly 25 years ago, in 1993, when Transport Canada took Chrysler Canada to court over defective tire winch cables, and the case was dismissed in 2000.

I believe that these numbers show that vehicle manufacturers are working with the public in good faith, and we ought to work with them in that same good faith. That is why my colleague, the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, who is on the transport committee, proposed an amendment to Bill S-2 that would have ensured that the minister acted in good faith while exercising the additional powers granted in the act. Her amendment stated:

The Minister may, by order, require any company that applies a national safety mark to any vehicle or equipment, sells any vehicle or equipment to which a national safety mark has been applied or imports any vehicle or equipment of a class for which standards are prescribed to if the Minister has evidence to suggest that there is a defect or non-compliance in the vehicle or equipment.

This amendment would have required that the minister have a suspicion of a defect or non-compliance prior to ordering tests or imposing on a manufacturer, whereas the original wording insinuates the ability of the minister to order tests to prove compliance. It is a subtle yet substantial difference in expressing goodwill in government-industry relationships when they are complying and have a good record.

While this is not an act that would be amending the Criminal Code, I believe that the presumption of innocence ought to be standard in any legislation that contains punitive enforcement options. There is a balance in that, as already stated, the minister could issue fines of up to \$200,000 per day, which is significant, and I applaud that.

In addition, my colleague's amendment would have required that the minister consult with the manufacturer before ordering tests to determine if the company had conducted or planned to conduct those tests. This is simply common sense. It would potentially save the manufacturers the cost of conducting tests again that have already been completed. Again, it is goodwill and recognizing the effort manufacturers are currently placing on safety testing, along with their excellent safety track records.

The proposed act, with its current wording, seemingly assumes that there is widespread and intentional non-compliance. This is simply not backed up by statistics. Remember, there has never been a case where the manufacturer refused outright to repair a defect in a vehicle that would lead to a dangerous situation. Manufacturers are placing significant emphasis on safety already. That being said, I certainly see the need for a legislative framework to ensure that high standards are maintained.

However, improvements could have been made to Bill S-2. Unfortunately, the Liberal members of the committee rejected my colleague's reasonable amendment. In fact, the Liberals rejected both of the Conservative amendments and all of the NDP amendments. It is a little confusing, when we are talking about working together on committee and all of us wanting, of course, to ensure the safety of all Canadians and those travelling on our roads.

●(1655)

I would like to take a moment now to speak about the larger framework into which Bill S-2 would fit. The Auditor General released a report in November 2016 entitled, "Oversight of Passenger Vehicle Safety—Transport Canada". The report was less than glowing in its review of the current state of Transport Canada. In particular, the report noted that Transport Canada is slow in responding to new risks, which poses a significant problem for a bill meant to increase the speed and clarity of recalls for Canadian vehicles. The report states:

We found that Transport Canada did not maintain an up-to-date regulatory framework for passenger vehicle safety. There were lengthy delays, sometimes of more than 10 years, from the time work began on an issue to the Department's implementation of new standards or changes to existing ones.

There were 10-year delays.

The report states that Transport Canada generally waited until the United States updated its motor vehicle safety standards. I do not understand the point of conducting our own research if the safety recommendations are not implemented until the United States leads the way. Canada has very different requirements than the United States. We expect more from our government agencies than simply mirroring the actions of our neighbour to the south.

We will need a nimble legislative and regulatory framework to ensure that consumers are protected, while recognizing that manufacturers do, indeed, have an excellent track record of ensuring safety. This is something that really concerns me. I am new in the House and am being exposed to how government works in a new way, but as an everyday Canadian, I quite often get frustrated with how it seems to take so long for any changes or improvements.

I now serve on the veterans affairs committee as deputy shadow minister. There have been 14 different reports over 10 years presented by the committee. Very few of those transition recommendations have been implemented, yet here we are again studying those same issues. In this circumstance, it is important that Canadians know that if their tax dollars are supposedly going toward making sure that we have a solid framework for the safety of vehicles on the roads in Canada, we are doing things within a reasonable time frame. This is something that concerns me. Perhaps bureaucracy needs a major transformation.

Government Orders

Bill S-2 would advance vehicle safety standards and would be a positive step in ensuring safety. However, the act is missing some key aspects that would have made its enforcement much more effective and fair for both manufacturers and consumers. We need to have accountability. There is no question about that. When there is a positive working relationship and support from our manufacturers and the work they do in building vehicles, that positive relationship is key. It was disappointing that the members of the government party did not work with the opposition to ensure that amendments were added to the bill, which I think would have improved that sense of working together.

However, overall, Bill S-2 is worthwhile, and I believe it would be helpful in increasing road safety, something that is very important to me as a driver and in response to the fact that so many Canadians, especially in rural ridings like mine, are on the roads a great deal of the time. We have a responsibility to assist in ensuring that safety is a priority for those who manufacture vehicles and for the way Transport Canada implements other issues in road safety. That is why I will be supporting this bill at third reading.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of members on the Conservative side have expressed concerns about amendments. It is somewhat ironic, I must say, because when I sat in opposition, the former government did not accept amendments to government legislation, unless they were government amendments, as a rule. Yes, a number of amendments were put forward on Bill S-2, and opposition amendments were not accepted or voted on by the committee. The details of that, I suspect, would probably be best found in the dialogue that took place in the standing committee.

In the concluding remarks of the member, she captured the essence of what I believe people should be encouraged by, and that is that the legislation would improve safety on our roads and provide more consumer protection. That, in itself, is a significant step forward. Would she not agree?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, as far as accepting amendments at committee, I find we can stand in the House, particularly as a new member, say a number of things and we really have no means of giving credibility to what we say. Therefore, the concern for me with this case was multiple amendments were put forward. Of course, everyone in the House is concerned about safety and the relationship with those we enforce. The fact that not a single amendment was considered of value speaks huge volumes.

I commend the basis of the legislation and doing what we can to improve oversight. However, another concern I mentioned is the fact that Transport Canada does not have a good record of responding in a timely fashion. That is the broader umbrella of the issue in putting forward good legislation, whether it would be effective because of delays within the bureaucracy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is surprising the number of vehicles, of all makes and models, that are recalled on an annual basis. It is hundreds of thousands. This is not new. It has been happening for many years now. Part of it is, especially if we compare ourselves to other countries in the world, we have been totally reliant on the goodwill of many of the manufacturers. On whole, there have

been some encouraging signs from the industry, but it has nowhere near met what public expectations are of responsible governments or corporations to ensure vehicles being sold are soundly built and safe. If something goes wrong, not because of the fault of the consumer but because of the manufactured part, or whatever it might be, there is a responsibility. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of vehicles being recalled. Would my colleague share her thoughts on the sheer numbers of vehicles recalled?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that there are far more recalls than ever before. We have to look at that and determine why. In my own circumstances, one of the three recalls was a situation where, quite honestly, safety was a significant concern for me and for the company involved with the recall. It did a very good job of informing us of where the issue was and of the potential risks to the point where it highly suggested we not park it indoors until we could get the vehicle in because of the potential for a fire. The company was very committed to ensuring the people who were purchasing its products were taken care of.

A lot of the issues around recalls now have to do things in the computer systems. Back in the day, my husband could fix our car on his own. Just looking at this and that and the other thing, he would get in there and tinker. Nowadays, with the way cars are set up, it is pretty hard to do. We have to take it in to get a diagnostic done. Computer systems are running our cars. That has made a huge difference to the number of recalls in these circumstances.

• (1705)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague indicated that she was fortunate enough to only have three recalls, and they were all successfully replaced. I have had a couple in my career of owning vehicles as well, and they were taken care of quickly. However, I have someone very close to me who has a situation where that individual has had an airbag recall and nothing has been done. It has been, effectively, a decade, and it has been indicated that nothing will happen out of this.

She indicated that the \$200,000 a day fine was significant and would probably alleviate this, but could she elaborate more on that?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, that is the truth of the scenario, that we can look at the broad picture of positive stories, but there are always some. That is why we have legislation. That is why we want legislation that has teeth.

The \$200,000 a day is significant. What the circumstances were around this timeframe, whether that was something the company was facing or not, I do not know.

At the same time, we need to have legislation that has teeth. There is no excuse, in my books, in Canadians' books, for that kind of thing happening, where individuals have to go to court, after having faced injury or whatever, and not had the care by the manufacturer in those circumstances.

Government Orders

The fact is that, today, everything that happens is visible. Safety is far more paramount to a lot of companies, because of the fact that negative responses from the public over Facebook or anything like that can hugely impact their businesses. In that way, I see this as a good thing when it needs to be done.

We want to have everything in place to deal with those circumstances when they take place. At the same time, we want to affirm manufacturing in Canada. Where industry is doing a good job, we need to applaud that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague across the way. When we take a look at it with respect to the magnitude of this and the potential that has, we are empowering the minister to ensure these repairs are in fact done and done in a timely basis.

It is really important for us to recognize the existing legislation and what will happen after the new legislation passes. We are moving from a system where we are saying to the manufacturing industry that is its responsibility and we are dependent on it to have recalls as much as possible. There is no other way than taking it to court. Under the new legislation, government would be empowered to force manufacturers to ensure that faulty equipment and merchandise would be dealt with.

At the end of the day, that is in the best interests of our consumers. I am anticipating being able to address this issue, but would my colleague across the way provide some of her thoughts in regard to whether this is good legislation from a consumer's point of view?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, yes.

● (1710)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that answer was really short and succinct, and I appreciate that.

The automobile industry is very important for the entire country. One of the things I respect about the minister responsible for the legislation is the fact that he has done an outstanding job in bringing forward legislation that would do two things, one being the protection of consumers on the purchase of a major item. There are very few things in life that Canadians will spend as much money on than buying a brand new vehicle.

I have had the opportunity in the last couple of years to purchase a new vehicle. Thousands of new vehicles in all areas of our country are being sold. These items do not cost between \$5,000 to \$15,000. We are talking about an expenditure in the range of \$20,000 to \$60,000 depending on the type of vehicle purchased. That is a significant commitment.

When we look at the average lifespan of a vehicle nowadays, we have seen significant advancements in technology that have allowed vehicles to last longer. The average life of a vehicle today is far greater than it was when I was pumping gas in the seventies. The complications of a vehicle through technology have changed. I remember the days of being able to pop the hood of a 1976 Mustang, with a 302 motor along with a fairly simplistic looking engine. I could do all sorts of wonders. Nowadays, it is all computerized. A gadget plugs in and it tells us what the problems are. The car I drive

today shows the air pressure of each tire. The technology and advancement in the automobile industry today is amazing.

One of my colleagues spoke earlier about Bill S-2. Within our Liberal caucus, a good number of MPs follow the automobile industry. We recognize how valuable that industry is to our country in providing those middle-class jobs and in providing consumers with good quality products. I suspect there is no shortage of members of Parliament who would articulate why they would like to see more automobile related jobs. It is not just the big factories. Endless parts stores and piecemeal work done throughout the country contribute to the construction of these modern vehicles.

Tens of thousands of people are employed directly through the automobile plants and many more are employed indirectly. It is important to highlight the industry as a whole and what it does for the Canadian economy.

Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, our government recognizes the valuable contributions of those who drive this industry and provide the type of good quality jobs that are important for us. I want to recognize that upfront.

The Minister of Transport has identified an issue that has been around for a long time. It did not just appear over the last year or two.

● (1715)

I can recall being in the opposition benches, and we would often hear about recall issues. This is something that has been going on for many years. Maybe it has escalated. I do not know the hard numbers, but I suspect we have seen an increase in the numbers because of complications and the technology within our cars today. However, there is a great deal of concern from new car buyers when they go out and spend the kind of money they are spending to purchase a vehicle. Not only are they hoping for a good warranty, but also that the vehicle itself is safe to drive.

I think most Canadians would be quite surprised to find out the actual numbers. I indicated that we were talking about hundreds of thousands every year. We are into the millions if we look at the overall number of recalls over the last decade, recalls of vehicles just here in Canada. We have a website through Transport Canada that was developed to provide Canadian consumers with information. It does not mean that it has to be a brand new 2018 or 2017 vehicle. It goes back a number of years. People can look up their vehicles on the website to find out whether something has been recalled. I suspect we have literally tens of thousands of vehicles on our roads today that have, in fact, been recalled for one thing or another, yet the driver of that particular vehicle is not even aware of it.

Government Orders

Often we talk about the importance of working with the different stakeholders, in particular our provinces. Our provinces are responsible for the registration of vehicles. If I look at my own province of Manitoba, when one goes to that local Manitoba Public Insurance outlet for insurance, it would be nice if there was some sort of an educational component passed on to the consumer. It could be as simple as a piece of paper with the website, saying that the website should be checked to see if there is any sort of recall on the vehicle. Given today's computer technology, in the future hopefully we will see different levels of government working together in terms of how we might be able to improve on that particular system.

The Prime Minister often says that we can always look to improve things, to make things better. There is something there to better educate Canadians as a whole in terms of the importance of watching for those recalls. The recalls really came to surface for me personally back in the seventies. I drive a Ford currently. This is not to dis Ford, but the first recall I can really remember offhand was the Ford Pinto. Some people from my generation might recall that particular issue, which was a very serious issue. I think that was one of the issues that ultimately brought to light, back in the seventies, the importance of safety in the purchasing of a new vehicle.

We make the assumption that when these beautiful vehicles come off the assembly line, their many components are all 100% sound and functional. I believe our Canadian manufacturers provide some of the best, if not the best, vehicles in the world. We can take a great deal of pride in that fact. However, we also need to recognize that at times there are things that break down. Some of the things that cause a great deal of concern are those of a high safety value.

● (1720)

For example, if for some reason an airbag is not working properly, that airbag or the mechanism that allows that airbag to be deployed needs to be replaced. It is questionable whether that mechanism will survive the first, second, or third year because it sits in a new vehicle and is not tested through an accident, which is a good thing. If there is a fault, it is important that it be replaced. Those are the types of recalls that are of the utmost priority. Those are the types of recalls that ultimately save lives in a very real and tangible way.

We need to look at how we can encourage and promote a better sense of education with respect to people ensuring that they are aware of the potential problems that can occur in the vehicles they are driving. Airbags are an easy one to go to. However, there are all sorts of engine components and wheel components, you name it, and there are all sorts of issues or breakdowns or manufacturing flaws that need to be addressed.

To start off my comments, I thought it would be good to encourage people to recognize the need to stay up to date with respect to the type of vehicle they are driving and ensure that it is safe at all times.

Bill S-2 would protect Canadian consumers and it would make our roads safer. That is really what the legislation is all about. How would it do that?

As I indicated, there are hundreds of thousands of recalls every year. Today, it is really up to the goodwill of the manufacturer or a potential court action to cause a recall to take place. This legislation

would empower the Minister of Transport with the authority to tell a manufacturer that there is an issue, that the manufacturer must deal with the issue and fix the problem, and that its vehicles will have to be recalled.

In addition to that, individuals will be compensated. They will not have to pay for something that is not their fault. When people buy their vehicles, they anticipate them to be fully functional. It is not their fault if an airbag will not deploy properly or there is a heating element that could potentially cause a fire because of a short or something of that nature. These things are not the consumer's fault. For the first time, Canadians will have a minister and a government with the ability to ensure that those manufacturing defects are being addressed. However, it is not only that they are addressed but also that the manufacturer will be covering the cost. That to me is a very positive thing.

If more vehicles are being recalled and fixed and the appropriate players are covering the costs, I suspect we will see our roads become safer because more vehicles will have had some of those flaws addressed and fixed.

There are six parts of the legislation that I would like to highlight. The first part I have already referenced and that is that the bill would give the Minister of Transport the power to order manufacturers and importers to repair a recalled vehicle at no cost to the consumer. That is an important point.

The bill would also give the Minister of Transport the power to order manufacturers and importers to repair safety defects in new vehicles before they are actually sold.

● (1725)

One of the things that has always amazed me is that there are brand new vehicles sold that have a known defect in them. Now through this legislation we would have in place the power to ensure that where there is an issue of safety, and even beyond that, it would be addressed. That is something I see as a very strong positive. Through this legislation, we would allow Transport Canada to use monetary penalties or fines to increase safety compliance and to enter into compliance agreements with manufacturers to take additional safety actions.

I see within this legislation so many positive attributes. I listened to what opposition members had to say about it. I understand and appreciate that we could always do better, but in two short years, we have a strong minister who, with the government, has brought forward legislation that would benefit our consumers and make our roads safer. I believe that all members should support this legislation because it is sound legislation and would be a good thing to see pass.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Winnipeg North's speech and there is something revealing in it. Of course, we all acknowledge that there are improvements in this bill, and we will be supporting it. The peculiar thing to me is that the member expressed his concern about the big car manufacturers and the consumers, but he left out the people stuck in the middle when it comes to defects. Those are the car dealers.

In the committee, the members actually took out the provision that would have indemnified car dealers and protected them against the losses they incur when they are forced to hold automobiles that are under recall, and it would have made the big car companies responsible for those costs. The Liberals deliberately took out that section of the bill in committee. I wonder what the hon. member has to say about that. Of course consumers should be protected. I am not so concerned about the big auto manufacturers as the member seems to be, but I am concerned about the car dealers in my riding who end up holding a stock of cars they cannot sell until those defects are fixed.

Why was that section taken out of the bill at committee?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the legislation is not to regulate commercial activity between dealerships and manufacturers. The dealerships would also benefit with the recall legislation and the powers that the minister would be given. At the end of the day, there was a great deal of debate and discussion about amendments and I suspect that a lot of the details and answers that the member might be looking for could probably be found in the discussions that took place at the committee stage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bill we are studying today seems like common sense to me. My constituents in Gatineau, like many Canadians, rely heavily on their vehicles, because they have to travel long distances in the Outaouais and in Canada.

I think that this bill proactively protects consumers and their interests, which seems to be what resonates with most people who have spoken to this bill.

Does my hon. colleague find the same thing when he speaks with his constituents? Do his constituents most like that the bill relies on common sense or that manufacturers will have to be proactive?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that my colleague's constituents in Gatineau, like my constituents in Winnipeg North, will be very happy with this legislation. As I said, consumers benefit and our roads will be safer. It is good legislation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Call in the members.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 436*)

YEAS

Members

Albas	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bossio
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Brown
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Chen
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCoursey	Deltell
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Diotte
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gerretsen

Private Members' Business

Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Gourde	Graham
Grewal	Hardcastle
Harder	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hoback	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Jeneroux	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kmiec
Kusie	Kwan
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leslie	Levitt
Liepert	Lightbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Malcolmson	Maloney
Marcel	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Moore	
Morneau	Morrissey
Motz	Mulcair
Nantel	Nassif
Nault	Nicholson
Obhrai	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
O'Toole	Paradis
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Plamondon
Poillievre	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansi	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Sangha
Sansoucy	Sarai
Saroya	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schmale
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sikand
Simms	Sopuck
Sorbara	Sorenson
Spengemann	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Thériault	Tilson
Trudel	Van Kesteren

Van Loan	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vecchio
Viersen	Virani
Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wong
Wrzesnewskij	Yip
Young	Yurdiga
Zahid	Zimmer— 296

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS**

The House resumed from January 29 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion.

● (1815)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 437)

YEAS

Members

Albas	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bossio
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Brosseau	Brown
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Chen
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCoursey	Deltell

Private Members' Business

Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Donnelly
Drouin
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garrison
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Goodale
Gourde
Grewal
Harder
Harvey
Hoback
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Kang
Kent
Khera
Kusie
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Liepert
Lloyd
Lockhart
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson
Marcil
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Mathysen
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Moore
Morneau
Motz
Nantel
Nault
Oblrai
Oliver
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Picard
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Reid
Richards
Robillard

Dhillon
Diotte
Dreeshen
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Eglinski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Garneau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Graham
Hardeastle
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kelly
Khalid
Kmiec
Kwan
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Levitt
Lightbound
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Morrissey
Mulcair
Nassif
Nicholson
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rayes
Rempel
Rioux
Rodriguez

Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sansoucy
Saroya
Scheer
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Simms
Sorbara
Spengemann
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Vaughan
Viersen
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Zahid

Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sikand
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Stetski
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Virani
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Wilkinson
Wong
Yip
Yurdiga
Zimmer — 296

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1820)

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACT

The House resumed from January 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-348, An Act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act (persons with disabilities), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-348 under private members' business.

● (1825)

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

(Division No. 438)

YEAS

Members

Albas
Anderson
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boudrias

Albrecht
Angus
Ashton
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Bergen
Berthold
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Boulerice

Private Members' Business

Boutin-Sweet	Brassard	Finnigan	Fisher
Brousseau	Brown	Fonseca	Fortier
Cannings	Caron	Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Carrie	Chong	Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Choquette	Christopherson	Fuhr	Gameau
Clarke	Clement	Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Cooper	Cullen	Goodale	Gould
Davies	Deltell	Graham	Grewal
Diotte	Donnelly	Hardie	Harvey
Dreeshen	Dubé	Hébert	Hogg
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseauit	Holland	Housefather
Duvall	Egliniski	Hussen	Hutchings
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Iacono	Joly
Fast	Fortin	Jones	Jordan
Garrison	Généreux	Jowhari	Kang
Genuis	Gill	Khalid	Khera
Gladu	Godin	Lambropoulos	Lametti
Gourde	Hardcastle	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Harder	Hoback	Lauson (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Hughes	Jeneroux	Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Johns	Kelly	Leslie	Levitt
Kent	Kmiec	Lightbound	Lockhart
Kusie	Kwan	Long	Longfield
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière	Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Liepert	Lloyd	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Lobb	Lukiwski	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
MacGregor	MacKenzie	May (Cambridge)	
Maguire	Malcolmson	McCrimmon	McDonald
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)	McGuinty	McKay
Mathysen	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Mendicino	Mihychuk
Moore	Motz	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Mulcair	Nantel	Morneau	
Nicholson	Obhrai	Morrissey	Nassif
O'Toole	Paul-Hus	Nault	Oliphant
Pauzé	Plamondon	Oliver	O'Regan
Poillievre	Quach	Paradis	Peschisolido
Ramsey	Rankin	Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Rayes	Reid	Philpott	Picard
Rempel	Richards	Poissant	Qualtrough
Sansoucy	Saroya	Ratansi	Rioux
Scheer	Schmale	Robillard	Rodriguez
Shields	Sopuck	Rogers	Romanado
Sorenson	Stanton	Rota	Rudd
Ste-Marie	Stetski	Ruimy	Rusnak
Strahl	Stubbs	Sahota	Saini
Sweet	Thériault	Sajjan	Sangha
Tilson	Trudel	Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Van Kesteren	Van Loan	Schulte	Serré
Vecchio	Viersen	Sgro	Shanahan
Wagantall	Warawa	Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Warkentin	Waugh	Sikand	Simms
Webber	Weir	Sorbara	Spengemann
Wong	Yurdiga	Tabbara	Tan
Zimmer— 133		Tassi	Vandenbeld
		Vaughan	Virani
		Whalen	Wilkinson
		Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
		Yip	Young
		Zahid— 163	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bittle	Blair
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easton
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:29 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

● (1830)

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from November 21, 2017, consideration of the motion that Bill C-365, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (firefighting equipment), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I had two minutes, a long time ago, on Bill C-365. We are now resuming debate on a very important bill, put forward by my colleague.

In the brief two minutes I had before the Christmas break, way back in 2017, I did a little reflection on the B.C. wildfire season. I also talked a little about how disappointed I was that from the initial signals from the government, it would not be supporting the bill. To be honest, I found that very concerning, distressing, and to be frank, a little shameful, because this is an important measure that, if put in place, would ultimately help to protect lives.

I think what I need to do is pick up by explaining what the bill is about and bring it back to why it is so important for our firefighters, our men and women who respond every day to very difficult situations. It is also important to note that the bill has massive support from the people who would be most impacted by it, and that is a number of our different associations. We have really positive support from across the country, but unfortunately, it does not appear the government is listening.

What does the bill propose to do? It proposes a new and specific offence for theft of firefighting equipment that causes danger to life. There is a reason this has been put forward. It is that there is a gap in our existing legislation, because the current code's provisions applicable to cases of mischief or theft of firefighting equipment, especially in cases where each mischief or theft causes danger to life, have not gotten the proper treatment they deserve.

The second thing the bill does is that it proposes to establish mischief related to firefighting equipment as an aggravating circumstance. That would add gravity to the offence.

The third component of Bill C-365 seeks to establish clarity on what the objectives of the sentence should be when a judge is determining a sentence for any theft of firefighting equipment, regardless of whether or not danger to life has been caused. If someone vandalizes someone's home, or there is mischief related to some activities that perhaps young adults undertake, that is a significantly different offence in terms of its possible implications than when there is mischief, damage, theft, or loss related to firefighting equipment.

I do not have the statistics in front of me, but I suspect that in our country our professional firefighter departments that are staffed 24-7 perhaps have a little less to worry about because they have significant checks and balances, and paid staff. They are always there, having a good eye on the equipment and providing security. However, in the riding I represent, we have volunteer firefighters and departments all over. These are men and women who give up their time. They might go to a fire practice on a Wednesday night. They practice and they are there to respond to community emergencies. Their equipment is perhaps not as secure. They do not have the ability, because it is volunteer, to check as often as perhaps other places can.

We talked about the wildfires of 2017 in the communities I represent. I can remember that in 2003 there was another horrific season in the area of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. We live in a small community. We have a volunteer firefighting department, and

both my son and my husband were part of that particular department. When the province declared a state of emergency, it all of a sudden gave the authority for the province to call all of the volunteer fire departments into action to deal with the crisis.

● (1835)

As one can imagine, this fire department trained on a Wednesday, had done some live fire training, but certainly did not have the ability to respond. Nor did it have the equipment. The equipment it had was critically important.

I remember a day when the firefighters were called out to a grass fire outside their normal boundaries because they were now under provincial control. They headed up the mountain with the equipment. Had there been any flaws in how that equipment worked, it would have put their lives in danger. They were not as experienced, had been called to action in a place outside their normal area of expertise, and did not have a lot of training around grass fires, which were quickly expanding through the mountains. Had anything been tampered with or stolen, it could have been significant and dangerous. Quite frankly, lives could have been lost.

When the government suggests that this is in an unnecessary bill and that the penalties are already quite fine, it needs to think about the reality of the situation. People who steal or tamper with firefighting equipment know exactly what they are doing. They know they impact equipment used for response to serious and significant issues.

I ask the Liberals to reconsider this and think about the volunteer firefighters, like in the case in 2003 where it was my husband and son. Had they headed up this mountain where the grasses were burning and the equipment had malfunctioned, think of what the repercussions could have been. How would they have felt if someone had tampered with or stolen necessary equipment? Should there not be significant and appropriate repercussions? The government needs to rethink its position.

I want to congratulate my colleague who put forward the bill.

As one further thought, talking about the B.C. wildfires, the government indicated it would do everything possible to help. This is one thing it could do that would be very helpful in moving forward and protecting public safety.

● (1840)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise today and to participate in the debate on Bill C-365, an act to amend the Criminal Code, firefighting equipment.

The bill seeks three Criminal Code amendments, including: the creation of a new offence of theft of firefighting equipment that actually endangers life; the requirement that courts that sentence an offender for mischief to consider, as an aggravating factor, that the property in relation to which the mischief occurred was firefighting equipment; and, finally, the requirement that courts give primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence in cases of theft of firefighting equipment.

Private Members' Business

At the outset, it is very important to acknowledge, and I would like to acknowledge, the laudable objective of the bill and sincerely thank the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap for giving the members of the House an opportunity to debate this issue. That being said, our government is unable to support this legislative initiative, for reasons which I will explain.

I would note the observations made by many of my colleagues during this and previous debates that there is no gap in the criminal law's ability to respond to, and effectively address, the theft of and mischief to firefighting equipment. As has been highlighted already, there is a robust set of offences in the Criminal Code that can address this conduct.

I would like therefore to spend my time today speaking about other equally important and related reasons why I cannot support these proposed legislative amendments.

As I understand, the Minister of Justice mandate letter has called upon her to concentrate her efforts on initiatives that get the most value for hard-earned taxpayer dollars. We must ensure that the criminal law reform initiatives that we bring forward are based on evidence and approaches that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system's response to crime. On this front, Bill C-365, though well intentioned, is not an initiative that would get Canadians value for their hard-earned tax dollars.

First, there is very little information available about the extent of the problem. While several media outlets reported in the summer of 2017 that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigated a number of thefts and acts of mischief related to firefighting equipment in British Columbia, none of these reports confirmed that any charges were in fact laid.

Second, upon closer examination of the issue, I could find no statistics related to the offences of theft or mischief of firefighting equipment.

Third, upon a cursory review of legal databases, we could find no reported cases where an offender was charged or convicted of theft or mischief to firefighting equipment. To be clear, this does not mean that no cases can exist. Certainly I am aware of media reports in other parts of the country also involving the theft of metal fittings.

However, without clear examples of how such matters have been dealt with under the existing law, much of the problems identified by the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap are speculative. In my opinion, more concrete evidence would be needed about the scope and nature of the issue before exploring whether legislative amendments would be necessary. I firmly believe it would be prudent to fully examine the prevalence of thefts and mischief to firefighting equipment before proposing Criminal Code amendments.

Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest any of the proposed legislative amendments in Bill C-365 would be more likely than the current criminal law to deter future thefts or mischief to firefighting equipment. To the contrary, there is an abundance of evidence, which suggests the exact opposite, namely, that harsh penalties do not act as a deterrent for those who commit crimes.

Studies demonstrate it is the certainty of being caught that is the best at deterring individuals from committing crime, not the fear of being punished or the severity of the punishment. This does not mean, however, that tough penalties are not warranted for persons who engage in criminal conduct that endangers the lives of others. For example, the offences of mischief to property endangering life under subsection 430(2) and criminal negligence causing death under section 220 are two current offences in the Criminal Code that could be applied to the most serious cases of theft and/or mischief to firefighting equipment, and both of these offences carry the highest maximum penalty provided under the criminal law, which is life imprisonment.

What is more, isolated legislative amendments that seek nothing other than to increase penalties and reduce judicial discretion to craft individualized sentences have a proven track record in Canada and abroad for not only failing to reduce the incidence of crime, but also creating a whole host of negative consequences, including but not limited to increasing cost, and contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the administration of justice. As I understand it, it is precisely these criminal justice policies of the past that have contributed to a lack of internal consistency in the Criminal Code.

● (1845)

If I may offer by way of example, the maximum penalty of life imprisonment for the new proposed offence is inappropriate considering that it would be significantly greater than the 14 year maximum penalty for the offence of criminal negligence causing bodily harm, which entails more of a direct risk of danger to life but also actually where bodily harm has occurred.

Similarly, the maximum penalty provided in this offence would be higher than what is currently provided in the Criminal Code for terrorist financing, facilitating terrorist activities, and leaving Canada to facilitate terrorist activity. Moreover, from a practical point of view, the new offence would create evidentiary problems that would complicate the prosecution of such conduct. In order to obtain a conviction under the new offence, the crown would be required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the theft of the firefighting equipment directly caused actual danger to life. However, it may be difficult and in some cases virtually impossible to prove that someone's life was endangered by the theft of firefighting equipment.

Moreover, the efficacy of this new proposed tool is further reduced by the absence in Bill C-365 of necessary amendments that would allow the police to investigate this offence. For instance, the bill does not propose the inclusion of the new offence in the part of the Criminal Code that governs the interception of communications, and fails to provide the police with the ability to seek a DNA warrant to investigate the offence. The inability of police to rely on these important investigatory tools would make it far less likely that the offence would be relied upon and charged.

As I understand it, addressing these much needed consequential amendments would likely be outside the scope of Bill C-365.

Private Members' Business

Another important consideration is that the creation of a specific offence that overlaps with offences of general application in the Criminal Code can lead to greater inconsistency in charging practices across Canada. Where a specific offence carries a significantly higher maximum penalty, prosecutors have proven more likely to accept pleas to the lesser and included offence. This can undermine the very rationale behind creating a specific offence. That is, while the offence is enacted to respond to a particular type of offending, in practice, the offence is rarely prosecuted and convictions are rarely obtained. In the end, such specific offences remain in the Criminal Code and rapidly become obsolete.

I have every confidence that our police, our prosecutors, and the judiciary have all the tools that are necessary to deal with this conduct. Moreover, absent any evidence to the contrary, it is entirely reasonable to assume that courts are likely to take conduct that is in the scope of the bill as being very serious.

In my opinion, Bill C-365 would not have an impact on improving public safety, the administration of justice, or the prevention of thefts and mischief to firefighting equipment. It is for these reasons that I cannot support Bill C-365. I therefore urge all members of the House to oppose this bill.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will start my speech on Bill C-365 by acknowledging its sponsor, the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap. I very much appreciate the reasons behind the bill and why it was introduced.

I am a fellow British Columbian. Everyone in B.C. is very well aware of the wildfire risk, particularly with what last year represented. We had an absolutely terrible fire season.

I have had previous career experience working in the bush. I had eight years serving as a tree planter. I have worked throughout the interior. My brother was a wildfire fighter for about three years. He had seen another difficult year in 2003. I also have many friends who serve as volunteer firefighters, so I very much understand the risk they put themselves in to protect us and that their equipment is vital to the job that they do.

The media has reported on several occasions some of the theft that has happened. In 2016, the *Vancouver Sun* published a story about a communication tower's equipment that had been intentionally vandalized, which caused between 80,000 and 100,000 dollars' worth of damage. In 2017, *CTV News* covered a story about a water pump and hoses that were stolen from the Harrop Creek wildfire northeast of Nelson. The theft of the pump and 10 hoses really impacted the effectiveness of the firefighting activities, and posed safety risks to the public and to the first responders working to contain the fires. I want to underline the seriousness of the crime when someone intentionally vandalizes or steals firefighting equipment.

I want to get three main points across as I talk about the bill.

First of all, I want to acknowledge that firefighting is extremely important work and that we support first responders, but I feel that giving the judiciary power for life in prison for theft and vandalism is extremely excessive.

The second point I want to make is that stronger penalties do not necessarily provide a deterrent. While this equipment is used in a life-saving situation, a 25-year prison sentence for a non-violent offence is unjustified and it is not in keeping with the current penalties for such an offence.

The third point I want to make is that, instead of focusing on increasingly harsher penalties, I think we should be committed to crime prevention. With reasonable, measured, and effective actions, we could shift the focus from crime and punishment into more collaborative ways to make our communities and those serving them safer.

Last year, 2017, I had the honour of serving as our party's justice critic and serving on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. One of the major pieces of government legislation that we reviewed on that committee was Bill C-51, a major Criminal Code cleanup. One of the things I learned last year is that when one becomes a student of the Criminal Code, one learns just how many redundancies and inoperative provisions exist within the code, and that, really, as an entire document, it is in need of a serious overhaul. Bill C-51 spent much of its effort trying to eliminate many of these redundant and obsolete sections, particularly the redundant sections. It tried to get those redundant sections that were otherwise covered in other sections of the Criminal Code and that, if left in there, would simply add to confusion for those who work in the judicial process.

If we look at what Bill C-365 provides for, a life in prison is very much an excessive penalty. I would draw hon. members' attention, as it has been mentioned in many of the speeches, to the many sections in the Criminal Code that can already be used to severely punish someone who is guilty of such a crime. One of the main sections I would draw hon. members to is section 718.1, which states quite clearly:

A sentence must be proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the offender.

If someone is before a court on a charge of vandalism or theft of firefighting equipment, and it can be properly determined that it caused injury to persons because the firefighters were unable to use that equipment, there is no doubt in my mind that a judge and/or jury would look at the gravity of the offence, the harm caused by the offence, and would lay down the appropriate sentence.

• (1850)

By no means do I want to say that such a crime should go unpunished. I am simply stating the fact that the Criminal Code already has provisions to allow for proper sentencing measures.

The other point I want to get across is that there is a wide body of evidence out there that shows that strong penalties do not necessarily provide a deterrent. We want to make sure that the crime in question is prevented in the first place. That is in everyone's interest.

I want to read a quote from the *The Economist*, which states:

A review by Steven Durlauf of the University of Wisconsin and Daniel Nagin at Carnegie Mellon University found little evidence that criminals responded to harsher sentencing, and much stronger evidence that increasing the certainty of punishment deterred crime. This matters for policy, as it suggests that locking vast numbers of people in jail is not only expensive, but useless as a deterrent.

Private Members' Business

Another quote I have comes from a study by professors Doob, Webster, and Gartner, which is titled “Issues Related to Harsh Sentences and Mandatory Minimum Sentences: General Deterrence and Incapacitation”. It states:

At this point, we think it is fair to say that we know of no reputable criminologist who has looked carefully at the overall body of research literature on “deterrence through sentencing” who believes that crime rates will be reduced, through deterrence, by raising the severity of sentences handed down in criminal courts.

If we all use our common sense, we know that most people who commit criminal acts are not pausing in the middle of the act thinking that if they break a certain section of the Criminal Code they are going to get such and such a sentence. Most people who commit crimes are not even aware of the sections of the Criminal Code they are breaking. Therefore, the suggestion that by adding this section we are actually going to deter the crime is not backed up by evidence. There are much better ways to safeguard equipment and the people who are using it.

What exactly do we want to achieve with this debate? We can have a more measured and effective approach to solving the problem. If we focus on prevention, we can solve the problem proactively. People should be made aware, through public awareness campaigns, of the impact that vandalizing or stealing equipment can have. We already know that public awareness campaigns for drinking and driving have led to a national decline in such instances. Therefore, there is evidence that such campaigns work.

We should consider other options to reduce the theft and vandalism of firefighting equipment. They could consist of educational materials or awareness campaigns, investing in better security and surveillance systems, and making sure that the equipment has proper lock-up procedures in place for firefighters to use.

I want to end by reiterating that my colleagues and I, and I am sure everyone in this House, not only the friends I have and the people I have known through my career as a tree planter, very much commit to supporting firefighters and all first responders. I want to work with all first responders to make sure that we have policies that find effective, measured solutions to problems of equipment theft and vandalism.

Fellow British Columbians lost homes in the B.C. wildfires. We have to acknowledge the terrible loss they went through. They very much need help in rebuilding their lives, and we should all work together to have that as a laudable goal.

I do not dispute the seriousness of the crime, but I feel very much that there are better measures we can employ to stop it from happening in the first place. I do not think Bill C-365 is that answer.

• (1855)

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Madam Speaker, the goal of parliamentarians is to bring forward legislation that is in the interest of society at large and the general protection of everyone in Canada. The ideal would be a situation in which the laws governing us are appreciated by and adhered to by all people equally. However, some in society arrive at the unfortunate conclusion that the law only applies to others. It is in that context that I speak to the specific need for the passage of Bill C-365, a private member's bill introduced by my colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap.

This important bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the protection of firefighters' equipment. These amendments are intended to address a need for better deterrence of some criminal activities we are seeing committed more frequently and which have the potential to place the safety, and even the lives, of Canadians at risk.

Increasingly, firefighters across the country are reporting a rise in thefts and incidents of mischief that target the equipment of these men and women employed to protect us when fire occurs. Alarming, firefighters are finding cases in which their equipment and gear has been stolen and vandalized, from the fittings on their vehicles being taken to fire suppression equipment in apartment complexes being ripped out. This trend came to light last year after my home province of Alberta and our neighbours to the west in British Columbia endured catastrophic wildfires.

In B.C. alone last year, wildfires burned well over a million hectares of land. Firefighters mobilizing to battle such blazes found their equipment vandalized or outright stolen. I recall a specific example from last year. In August, crews battling the wildfires that scorched B.C. discovered the theft of their firefighting equipment when returning to the site. The BC Wildfire Service reported a water pump and many fire hoses stolen from the Harrop Creek wildfire site. The agency said the theft of the pump and 10 hoses not only hampered the effectiveness of its firefighting activities but also posed a clear safety risk to the public, especially to the crews working to contain the fires. At a time when more than 100 wildfires were burning across B.C., someone thought this an appropriate occasion to rip off equipment our first responders needed to fight the blazes.

Ken McMullen of the Calgary Fire Department told me recently how the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs has identified theft and vandalism of equipment as one of the association's official concerns. This is not a theoretical problem. These crimes are happening. They are concerning for our firefighters and jeopardizing Canadians' safety, our properties, our landscapes, and our environment. At critical times when it is needed most, the equipment our firefighters depend on for their dangerous jobs is going missing or being compromised.

It seems a counterintuitive crime in which to engage, since the same people who are stealing this equipment or causing damage to it are often likely members of the same community that will depend on firefighters to protect them in the event of a crisis. However, since common sense or even self-preservation cannot be relied upon to deter such dangerous and foolish crimes, it becomes apparent that more is needed to do in law.

Private Members' Business

It concerns me that some of my colleagues across the way do not share this view. They are always careful to acknowledge the difficult work firefighters do, but still signal they will not support this bill, which, by the way, has the backing of every major organization representing the firefighting community in Canada. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, prevention officers, and professional and volunteer firefighters have all endorsed this bill.

I know one might say that there are already clauses in the Criminal Code to deal with such crimes as theft and mischief. Indeed, that was the stance the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice took during earlier debate on this bill when he said other avenues are available to address the problem. Yes, theft in general is, of course, already illegal and theft over \$5,000 is already punishable with possible jail time, but none of the code's theft offences specifically recognize how theft of property as vital as firefighting equipment can cause actual danger to life.

● (1900)

The potential hazards associated with stealing firefighting equipment go far beyond those of theft in general. Respectfully, I suggest that the parliamentary secretary is missing the point of the bill. The existing avenues he mentions have penalties once injury or death has been caused, but Bill C-365 seeks to prevent such needless injuries and deaths in the first place by subjecting the threat of injury or loss of life to a more stringent penalty. This would provide the deterrence needed to restrict the senseless theft and vandalism of such equipment that will inevitably lead to such injuries and fatalities.

In defending the status quo, the parliamentary secretary is not listening to the tens of thousands of Canadian firefighters who have already indicated their support for the provisions of this bill. He will acknowledge the difficulty of the firefighters' work, and rightly so, but he still stops short of giving them the support they are asking for to do their work.

Stealing firefighters' equipment should be dealt with in a much more serious manner. Stealing a piece of equipment one knows will be used to protect lives, and possibly endangering a person's life by doing so, is not the realistic, moral, or ethical equivalent of stealing something that has material value only, even if the monetary value of the items are equal.

Kevin Skrepnek, a chief fire information officer with the B.C. Wildfire Service, was quoted as saying, "Obviously in any situation the theft of equipment is reprehensible, but especially with what we're dealing with right now." I absolutely agree with the officer.

Such thefts are indeed especially reprehensible in light of the consequences they can have for innocent people, and acts of mischief related to fire equipment, including increasingly common incidents targeting local fire stations and vehicles, are just as hazardous. Current penalties for such crimes do not adequately reflect the serious consequences these offences could have for the safety of the people we send into action when fire threatens. Since these offences can ultimately cause danger to life, they must be treated in a much more serious manner. A more serious consequence for such crimes would go a long way toward preventing more people from committing such crimes in the first place and would therefore

increase the chances that firefighters responding to a blaze would have all they needed at hand to leap into action.

The NDP member for Victoria made the curious assertion during debate in November that penalties do not serve to deter crime. I disagree with this assertion. An individual's second thoughts about just how long he may have to cool his heels in jail go much further to prevent the commission of a crime than more government money to finance public education campaigns that the NDP always proposes in place of penalties. However, even if the member were correct and deterrence did not work in this instance, that does not mean that someone should not actually be punished for crimes he commits.

The summary of Bill C-365 spells out how the bill would offer deterrence value through penalties for the serious crimes of stealing or vandalizing firefighters' equipment. The bill would amend the Criminal Code to establish a new offence for theft of firefighting equipment that causes actual danger to life. It would also create an aggravating circumstance for sentencing if mischief involved firefighting equipment and would establish sentencing objectives in relation to the theft of such equipment.

As the sponsoring member has said, there is a gap in the code "when it comes the denunciation and deterrence of theft or damage to firefighting equipment."

To close, we must take action to stop these senseless acts of theft and vandalism, which are not petty crimes, based on their potentially deadly impact. These crimes pose threats to the ability of our firefighters to do their jobs and therefore present a real threat to persons and property.

● (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate. The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap has five minutes for right of reply.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in response to the debate of this private member's bill, Bill C-365. I thank all members from both sides of the House who have contributed to the debate of this bill. My time today is short so I will move on to my response to the debate that has occurred.

In the first hour of debate in November, we heard from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence. I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's endorsement in November that this bill was "well-intentioned proposal targeting serious conduct that can endanger the lives of our communities and fire response personnel."

Adjournment Proceedings

During the parliamentary secretary's speech, he stated that mischief or theft of firefighting equipment were already captured by the Criminal Code under a number of offences. Although I do not dispute this statement is partially correct, for the sake of this debate, the sake of public safety, and for the sake of Canada's firefighters whom the hon. member appropriately described as "heroes", I must clarify that while the Criminal Code does contain offences that capture the conduct in question, the code's existing provisions are inconsistent.

That is why I have brought this bill forward, to establish clear and consistent provisions in the Criminal Code for offences involving mischief or theft of firefighting equipment. As the Criminal Code stands today, mischief such as vandalism of firefighting equipment that causes actual danger to life may be subject to a maximum sentence of life if the presiding judge decides that such a maximum sentence is warranted. This is appropriate. This is not a mandatory minimum sentence that we currently see in the code for such mischief. It is an option that prosecutors and judges may pursue or apply if the facts of the case support it.

Currently, there are no such provisions for theft of firefighting equipment that causes actual danger to life. The parliamentary secretary has suggested that criminal negligence causing bodily harm or death are applicable. If criminal negligence causing bodily harm were applied to a case of theft of firefighting equipment, prosecutors and judges would be limited to seeking or applying a maximum sentence of 10 years. This exposes the very inconsistency of the existing Criminal Code that this bill seeks to correct.

Why should theft of firefighting equipment be treated differently from mischief of firefighting equipment, if and when these two offences can have the exact same effect of causing actual danger to human life? Why should theft of firefighting equipment require a death to occur before such theft can qualify for the same maximum sentence carried by mischief that causes actual danger to life? If we truly trust our judiciary to decide an appropriate sentence, why would we hesitate in providing it with consistent sentencing options for mischief and theft of firefighting equipment that cause actual danger to life?

The bill is an opportunity for Parliament to establish clear denunciations of the offence in question, in support of not just our judiciary, but also our firefighters, law enforcement personnel, and Canadian citizens. We know that mischief and theft of firefighting equipment are realities in our society. We know that these offences can cause actual danger to life. We know that law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges are provided inconsistent legal tools for treating these offences, even though the offences can have the exact same effect.

We know that the House has an essential role to play in supporting the continuous improvement and strengthening of the Criminal Code. Let us see and treat this bill for what it is: an opportunity to make the Criminal Code more consistent; an opportunity to clearly denounce mischief and theft of firefighting equipment that cause actual danger to life; an opportunity to provide our judiciary the flexibility to treat these offences consistently; an opportunity to support firefighters who put their lives on the line to protect ours, 365 days a year; and an opportunity to support public safety in every community across our nation for the benefit of every Canadian, the

people we all represent. Let us seize these opportunities and not let them pass us by.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 7, 2018, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1915)

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, tonight the Prime Minister is in Winnipeg. He is holding a town hall meeting.

There is somebody else who is in Winnipeg. He is a 13-year-old Yazidi boy who was held captive by ISIS for many years. He was only found out to be alive after his mother, who is in Winnipeg as a refugee, saw a picture of him on social media. He has asked for a meeting with the Prime Minister. I asked this week, on his behalf, if the Prime Minister would meet with him in Winnipeg tonight, and I do not believe that the Prime Minister has done that. I want to take a moment. My colleague, the member for Provencher, is here as well tonight to speak on why this is important.

He has asked for this meeting so that he can be a voice for other Yazidi children still in captivity. Why does he have to be a voice for these children? Why does somebody who has been through so much have to bear that burden on his shoulders? Why do the people from his community continually have to be revictimized for something as simple as asking for a meeting with the Prime Minister?

Adjournment Proceedings

Canada should be listening to these survivors. It should not be a question of whether or not this meeting should occur, especially since the Prime Minister is in Winnipeg tonight. The Prime Minister should have taken this meeting.

The context in which I asked the question earlier this week was that when the Prime Minister decided to take a meeting with Joshua Boyle, who now stands accused of multiple accounts of assault, he did not question taking that meeting. In fact, when he was asked why he took it, he said that he meets with people who have been freed after overseas ordeals, and that he defers to meeting with more people rather than fewer people, and that he thinks that is something that is important to do.

I actually had hoped the Prime Minister would meet with Emad. I actually thought that might happen. I do not understand. I am just going to appeal to my colleague to not read a prepared speech, and perhaps just go to the Prime Minister's Office and say that this is a very reasonable meeting to take.

When I first met with the Yazidi community almost two years ago, it was a moment that changed my life. It was a moment in which I realized that if we stand up on days of remembrance and say "never again", if we commit to preventing violence and genocide, we have to stand up for these people. This boy should not have to beg for a meeting to be a voice for all the children who are still in captivity.

I want to refer to Hadji Hesso, who is a member of the Yazidi community in Winnipeg. He talks about how a lot of these Yazidi children are coming back, but there is no parent and no family left. They have all been killed or massacred and nobody knows where the rest of their families are. These children have unique needs in that, for example, many of them are internally displaced and are having difficulty getting into our resettlement program. They are having difficulty getting into the family reunification program, as well.

I would implore my colleague and would just like to know why the Prime Minister did not take a meeting with Emad but chose to take a meeting with Joshua Boyle instead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all members of the House will agree with me on just how important the Yazidi refugees are. We want to help them have a better future in Canada. We will do everything in our power to achieve that.

As we know, millions of people have been displaced from their homes. They have been persecuted because of their ethnicity or sexual orientation, for example. Canadians and people around the world deplore these inhumane and heinous acts perpetrated by Daesh.

I would like to talk about the initiative to resettle Yazidi refugees in Canada. As of December 31, 2017, IRCC had delivered just over 1,200 visas to government-sponsored Daesh survivors. Of the survivors who have arrived in Canada, 80% are Yazidi. From the beginning, IRCC has worked closely with different partners, including the UN Refugee Agency, the International Organization for Migration, and other key partners in order to ensure the safe movement of all survivors.

The people who were resettled through this initiative were welcomed primarily in Toronto, London, Winnipeg, and Calgary. These cities were chosen following extensive consultations with stakeholders to determine which cities had established Yazidi communities and which were able to offer support services, such as medical, psychological, or interpretation services.

I must point out that, according to the settlement agencies, the Yazidi families who have been resettled in Canada continue to integrate well and are showing increasing independence in their daily lives. We need to give them a little time to adapt to their new life, as I have said from the beginning. They have been through an extremely difficult ordeal, and we will be there to support them every day, on an ongoing basis, with our various partners on the ground.

Some families who arrived earlier in the year are encouraging and supporting the families who arrived more recently.

I would add that many Daesh survivors have experienced serious psychological and physical trauma. These survivors will require a little time to adapt to their new reality.

Canada's resettlement program is designed to align with the resettlement initiative that is the subject of international consensus, including by focusing efforts on people who were forced to flee their country.

The government is proud to be part of a mission to rescue and resettle survivors of Daesh, mainly Yazidi women and girls, and provide them a safe place. We will continue to explore new options and work with our partners in the region to respond to these issues in order to determine the best way to provide protection to the most vulnerable, including Yazidis, and ensure that those who go through unimaginable atrocities can integrate into our society in Canada.

I call on all Canadians who know these people to help them integrate and have a better future here with us.

● (1920)

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, the question was very clear.

The Prime Minister is in Winnipeg tonight. The Yazidi boy Emad is in Winnipeg. He asked for a meeting with the Prime Minister a long time ago. He wanted to be a voice for his people. The Prime Minister did not even give him the courtesy of an answer.

The Prime Minister met with Joshua Boyle, and when pressed on that he said that he meets with people who have been freed from overseas ordeals. I think Emad qualifies as having gone through that. Then the Prime Minister said that he thinks he should meet with more people rather than less, and then he rejects this meeting. I do not understand why.

Why would the Prime Minister meet with Joshua Boyle and then, while he is in Winnipeg, cannot even take 15 minutes to meet with the survivor of a genocide who wants to speak on behalf of the children? Answer my question.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, as I said, our government is prepared to offer these people the protection they need and help them adapt to our society.

I do find it odd that the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill suddenly finds it so very important to be concerned about the Yazidi people when we know that she does not like these statistics, when we know that the government she belonged to and in which she served as minister welcomed only three Yazidi refugees.

Our government has welcomed almost 1,200 Yazidi refugees. Again, only three were welcomed when she was minister in the previous government. I think that we can see the difference between the two.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight at adjournment proceedings to review a question and a response I received on October 4, 2017. It relates to the challenge of climate change. My question was for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister did rise and provide a response, but it was not entirely to the point of the question. It was certainly positive, and he was very generous in praising my long-time personal work on the file.

I quoted from our colleague, the late Arnold Chan, who in his last words to the House in a speech that was read by the hon. member for Ajax, who said to all of us:

It is imperative that we stop treating climate change as solely an environmental issue, but recognize it as an all-encompassing priority that we as a society and a government must confront with the utmost urgency.

When I stood to ask that question October 4, the day before we had had the release of the report of the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, within the office of the Auditor General, Julie Gelfand, the commissioner, happened to have said this about how we were doing as a country and as a government to meet our climate change targets. She said:

Climate change is one of the defining issues of the 21st century. These audits show that when it comes to climate change action, Canada has a lot of work to do in order to reach the targets it has set.

As my colleague, the parliamentary secretary to minister of environment, will know, because I have made this point in the House in debate before, Canada showed leadership in 2015 in Paris. In the negotiations of the Paris accord, Canada was the first industrialized country to step up and agree with the developing world that we had to aim to hold global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5° C above what it was before the industrial revolution. These sound like trivial numbers, but in the context of survival for the low-lying island states, survival for people in the African continent, and survival for the Arctic ice to be present over our north pole, seasonally, year round, and into the future, we have to hold global average temperature to 1.5°.

However, the target that Canada chose domestically was the very one that our Minister of Environment and Climate Change criticized in Paris, pointing out that the target of the previous prime minister, Stephen Harper, was really, as the minister said at the time, the floor,

that we had to do better and aim higher. Certainly, the target of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, put in place by the previous government in May of 2015, is entirely insufficient to meet the goals of the Paris accord.

This inconsistency is troubling, but even more troubling is the observation that we do not yet have a plan. We have the promise of a global carbon price across all of Canada, and that is a step in the right direction. However, in the context of what needs to be done, as Arnold Chan said, we need to make this an all-encompassing priority. That means we do not approve one project that increases greenhouse gas emissions, like approving pipelines full of bitumen and diluent, and then claim we can somehow meet the targets even though we have not yet put in place energy efficiency measures, gotten rid of fossil fuel subsidies, nor delivered on a comprehensive plan to avoid going above 1.5°. We need more. We need action.

• (1925)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government very much agrees, and I personally agree, with the hon. member that this is an urgent and pressing issue that needs to be addressed in an all-encompassing way.

The Government of Canada has made taking action on climate change a very high priority. One of the first things the Minister of Environment and Climate Change did, once appointed, was to lead the Canadian delegation to the successful achievement of the Paris Agreement. Our government committed to an ambitious greenhouse gas emissions target. We then worked actively with our partners in the provinces, territories, and with indigenous leaders to develop the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. This is a detailed plan that provides a well-defined path through which we will achieve the target.

The previous Harper government set greenhouse gas reduction targets, but never developed a plan nor did the work required to meet them. That hurt Canada's credibility at home and around the world and was unhelpful in the context of developing an international consensus. Step one for us is to show that when we set a target, we mean it. Two years after Paris, we have a lot to show for our efforts. We are introducing new legislation and regulations to ensure that a price on carbon pollution will apply across the country. The government is accelerating the phase-out of traditional coal-fired electricity units. We are establishing a clean fuel standard to reduce our emissions by incentivizing the use of lower carbon fuels, energy sources, and technologies. We are developing increasingly stringent model building codes so that all new homes will be built to a standard that will allow them to generate as much energy as they use.

• (1930)

[Translation]

We have made significant investments to support clean growth and innovation. In December, we invested more than \$1 billion in the low-carbon economy fund, which will help the provinces in their fight against climate change.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

We are also investing over \$2.3 billion to support clean technology and innovation and to support the creation of good jobs in growing sectors of our economy. We are 100% committed to achieving our target and to working collaboratively with the international community. On December 9, 2017, we released the first annual progress report on the implementation of the pan-Canadian framework. This report highlights the strong progress that federal, provincial, and territorial governments have made in putting the pan-Canadian framework into action. We have made very significant progress, but we know we need to do more. That is part of the Paris Agreement. All countries will need to increase their level of ambition over time.

[Translation]

The pan-Canadian framework establishes a concrete plan to meet or even surpass our commitments under the Paris agreement. The measures we are taking today will have a real and lasting impact on the well-being and resilience of our communities and the environment.

[English]

This government will continue to work every day to turn Canada's clean growth and climate action into new laws, regulations, actions, investments, jobs, and economic opportunities for Canadians.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, here is the problem. The very same target that the hon. member just described as an ambitious target was the one that was put in place by the previous Harper government, which the hon. Minister of Environment described in Paris as the floor and that we could do better. The reality is that achieving our target—and there are large questions about whether we will—means achieving the weak target of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, which does not get us to what we promised to do in Paris.

This will become glaringly apparent in October of this year when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, as it was asked to do in Paris, on the pathway to 1.5°C. That moment of ratcheting up that the hon. member mentioned, the fact that we all have to do better, and I mean all countries on earth, could be led by Canada by going into the next Conference of the Parties prepared to say that we are stepping up and that we are going to move that 2030 deadline to 2025, because Canada wants to be a leader in reality, not just rhetoric.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, Canada has a history, under governments of all political stripes, of establishing targets and not meeting those targets because no clear and comprehensive plan was developed. This government took the very firm position that we would establish a target. We would work with our provincial and territorial counterparts and with indigenous leaders across the country to develop a detailed plan that would enable Canadians to have visibility about how we will achieve our targets. We will work very hard to ensure that those are achieved and to the extent that we can make progress more quickly, we are certainly willing to ratchet up our level of ambition.

This government cares very much about climate change and ensuring a good future for our children and grandchildren. It is something we are committed to and we look forward to working

with all parties in the House, including the hon. member, to ensure we actually play our part in this important international issue.

TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, similar to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, my question is also from October 4 of last year. It was regarding the controversial tax changes the finance minister proposed to bring in on corporations and small businesses. One might think that because that was last October, and the finance minister consulted with people and listened to people and then updated and made the final changes, this problem would have gone away and there would not be anything to talk about. However, that is not the case.

I used in my question an example of a family in my riding. Rita Felder is the CEO of a company called Field Farms Ltd. Basically, she immigrated to Canada and built up a company, with her entrepreneurial spirit, from nothing. She is in the business of selling organic grains, and she has grown that business. She sells now in multiple countries, has grown to employ 50 people, and has added buildings and equipment as time has gone on. Initially her concern was that she would not be able to pass on that farm and the company to her children, but I see that the finance minister made adjustments that would take care of that.

The other problem that has not yet been addressed is that when it comes to the money people accumulate in a corporation, the new proposal from the finance minister is going to allow the first \$50,000 to be fine, but after that, the tax rate, depending on the type of use, will be between 40% and 73%. People in businesses that buy capital equipment do that with the money they have stored up in the corporation, so the unintended consequence of the tax changes that were implemented are that people who have corporations and are saving up this money every year are going to be paying a lot of it to the government and will be unable to afford to buy additional silos and pieces of equipment they need to expand their businesses.

I have a doctor in my riding who specializes in laser surgery, cataract surgery, and implants. He has done the same thing. He has built up a business. He has more than 20 employees, many of them family members, and he is doing very innovative high-technology, latest-edge procedures, and he needs expensive equipment. He uses the money he accumulates in his corporation to buy the equipment. Now he is going to expand his business. He is moving to a location that is going to take a few million dollars to set up.

I think the government needs to revisit what it has done on its tax changes. They are hurting small businesses, especially when it comes to businesses that are able to grow and be just the kind of businesses we want them to be. They are exporting and they are employing more people.

The Prime Minister, in his response, mentioned tax fairness and wealth. He said, “This...measure...goes after a system that encourages wealthy Canadians to use private corporations to pay lower tax rates than hard-working middle-class Canadians.”

Adjournment Proceedings

Rita Felder said, “who are the wealthy Canadians the Prime Minister speaks of? Middle Class Canadians who run businesses need to incorporate savings for rainy days or future growth—yet the Prime Minister would seem to hold these savings for future investment over the businesses' heads—putting their future prosperity at risk.”

• (1935)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that growing the economy and supporting small businesses, such as those she mentioned in her speech, is a core priority of our government. It is a key part of our plan, in fact, to strengthen the middle class.

It has become clear that the investments our government has made in people, in communities, and in the economy are working. Canada has created 700,000 jobs since November 2015, and the unemployment rate is at its lowest level in over four years. In fact, since the beginning of 2016, Canada has had the fastest-growing economy in the G7. Canada has a highly competitive corporate tax system, one of the most competitive in the G7.

[Translation]

In last October's economic statement, our government took a major step to stimulate economic growth and specifically to help small businesses in Canada. We announced that we would be lowering the small business tax rate to 10% effective January 1, 2018, and to 9% effective January 1, 2019.

The combined average Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial tax rate for small business is already the lowest in the G7 and the fourth lowest across OECD countries. For the average small business, this tax cut will translate into savings of roughly \$1,600 a year in federal taxes.

Thanks to this small business tax cut, entrepreneurs will be able to save more of their earnings, which they can then reinvest and use to further develop their businesses while creating good, well-paying jobs for Canadians.

[English]

Canadians have engaged in an important discussion on proposed measures to address tax planning using private corporations. We listened and we made revisions to the initial proposals to address the use of income sprinkling by owners of private corporations. Those revised measures are designed to ensure that they do not affect family members who make meaningful contributions to a family business.

It is important to note that the vast majority of private corporations will not be impacted by these income sprinkling measures. Under the new simplified proposals, the number of family businesses that

would be affected annually is estimated to be fewer than 45,000, or less than 3% of Canada's 1.8 million Canadian-controlled private corporations.

• (1940)

[Translation]

With respect to passive investments held in private corporations, our government will be presenting a detailed plan in the 2018 budget. We need to ensure a level playing field, and we need Canadians to know that they will be compensated fairly for their hard work. That is exactly what we are going to do.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary needs to understand that the Liberals are hurting small businesses instead of helping them. They reduced the tax rate slightly, but then they increased the payroll taxes on them. Now there is a carbon tax coming on top of that.

When we talk about a competitive environment, we have to keep in mind that it is a dynamic situation. In the U.S., the government is lowering tax rates, and it does not have a carbon tax. Small businesses are really struggling.

I am encouraged to hear that in 2018 there is a possibility that the government might do more. I would encourage it to ensure it looks at corporations, especially small businesses that are investing in capital equipment, and change the tax code to allow the flexibility to grow income within the corporation, which can be used for those purposes.

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, regarding the approach on the tax planning using private corporations, we consulted Canadians broadly to ensure we got it right. We heard from many Canadians, including small business owners, farmers, and fishers. We are moving forward with an approach that reflects what we have heard from Canadians.

[Translation]

As part of our plan to promote economic growth, create jobs, and, most importantly, help the middle class succeed, we will continue to lower the small business tax rate as we make our tax system fairer.

As the Canadian economy continues to grow, we think it is important to ensure that all Canadians working hard to join the middle class have opportunities to benefit from that growth.

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 7:42 p.m.)

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