



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 3, 2019**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 3, 2019

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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would allow ingredients for use in foods and natural health products that would not be allowed in cosmetics.

[*English*]

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

### CRUELTY-FREE COSMETICS ACT

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)** moved that Bill S-214, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (cruelty-free cosmetics), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill S-214, a bill that was introduced in the Senate by Senator Stewart Olsen. The bill aims to ban cosmetic testing on animals in Canada. Bill S-214 would amend the Food and Drugs Act to prohibit cosmetic animal testing and the sale of cosmetic products developed or manufactured using animal testing. It would also ensure that no evidence from animal testing may be used to establish the safety of a cosmetic in Canada.

[*Translation*]

At present, there is long list of approved cosmetic ingredients. New scientific methods have been developed to test products on human tissue collected during surgical procedures, making animal testing obsolete.

Cosmetic animal testing has been banned since 2009 in 27 EU countries, and the sale of cosmetic products or ingredients subject to new animal testing has been illegal since March 2013. Israel imposed similar bans in 2007 and 2013, and similar policy change is also under consideration in India and South Korea.

In most other countries, cosmetic animal testing is neither expressly required nor prohibited, so cosmetics companies and ingredient suppliers decide whether they want to conduct such testing.

In a few countries, including China, cosmetic animal testing may still be a legal requirement for some ingredients and finished products.

Given the push by Health Canada to adopt a risk-based system for classifying food products, prescription drugs and cosmetics, this bill

This bill originated in the Senate, and it came out of the Senate at the end of the summer session last year. It was passed unanimously in the Senate. Therefore, members can imagine my surprise when various stakeholders began to approach me and the government to indicate they could not support the bill in its existing form and that amendments would be needed in order to drive it forward. That began the process of talking to each stakeholder group and finding out about the amendments that they wanted to the bill.

As can happen, not everyone wanted the same amendments, so negotiations were undertaken to come to a consensus on what amendments should be made. We have now all come to the place where we believe we could improve the bill, and I am going to take a few moments to go through the amendments we would like to see to the bill.

The first amendment, reference to a cosmetic for human use, is intended to provide clarity to the principle that the ban is not intended to apply to products that are included in the definition of cosmetics but are for non-human use, such as pet grooming products. For example, the ban should not prevent non-invasive and non-toxicological testing of a finished product, such as a dog shampoo, on a dog to ensure its effectiveness and likeability.

The second amendment refers to the party to be held responsible for ensuring that the cosmetic products comply with the ban. This should be consistent with the regulated entities that currently have legal responsibility under the Food and Drugs Act, which are the manufacturer or the importer. It is important that the people who are producing cosmetics, producing the ingredients for cosmetics, and those who are importing, have the responsibility of making sure that they have met the requirements in Canada. In the past, there have been people who have been distributors of the product, not the manufacturer or importer, and they do not always have the necessary information. Therefore, we would hold the manufacturers and importers legally responsible to ensure that they comply with that.

*Private Members' Business*

To be sold legally in Canada, the cosmetic product must be filed with Health Canada by the manufacturer or importer. The cosmetic notification system provides Health Canada with a list of all products on the market and the party that is responsible for the regulatory compliance. Retailers may be the responsible parties if they are also the manufacturer or importer of record. As to a ban on conducting animal testing on finished cosmetic products, this would apply, appropriately, to a person, as the ban would be on the act of doing the testing rather than on the ability to sell the product.

Amendment number three is that it is a principle that the ban should not apply to animal testing of any substance regulated as a food, drug or device in the context of those regulatory uses under the Food and Drugs Act and associated non-cosmetic regulations. As I mentioned earlier, the government is moving away from the separate approval process that existed for food, drugs, natural health products and cosmetics, and going to a risk-based approach, which puts additional burden of proof on those things that have higher risk.

Amendment number four is that the operational details of the sales ban as they relate to reliance on new animal test data for cosmetic purposes should fit within the Canadian regulatory context in order to operate officially, as well as to align with the European Union. One of the discussions was about aligning ourselves with the European Union and the State of California in terms of what they have established to make sure that would be applicable with all of the countries that have globally agreed to the ban.

It is understood that the Minister of Health has the ultimate responsibility for the protection of public health and safety with respect to consumer products. As such, the minister should have the power to issue an exemption to the ban if the minister determines it is necessary to address a serious or imminent risk of injury to health, for the protection of human health or the safety of the public, and that there is no acceptable non-animal approach available. This gives powers to the minister, and these are powers that the minister ought to have to make sure that public safety is protected.

The minister deciding to use the power to issue an exemption gives rise to the next amendment. Public transparency and accountability are key principles with respect to regulation. As such, the public and stakeholders should be able to expect that they will be made aware when there is either a violation of the ban or the minister has exercised the authority to provide an exemption as previously outlined. Public notification should consider due process, but also be transparent and easily accessible to interested parties.

Amendment seven has to do with the principle that the ban should be on a go-forward basis and not apply to any animal testing conducted, or the use of data arising from it, prior to the ban coming into force. It is recommended that the ban come into force two years after the date of its enactment, although it is understood that Health Canada must be in a position to effectively administer the changes. There is no point in having rules that cannot be enforced, so that would have to be put in place.

When we considered the bill, there was no Conservative Party policy in this area, so there was a bit of a polarity of views: some were in favour and some had concerns about the legislation. They were concerned that people may use this legislation as a wedge to

prevent other activities, like hunting, fishing, farming or going into other areas. That was a concern.

Another concern had to do with applying to countries that require animal testing in order to be approved. For example, if we want to sell in China, we have to do animal testing in order to sell the product there. We did not want to limit people from being able to participate in markets in other countries that have other requirements, so that, as well, was written into the bill.

Another question came up as to how this would impact jobs in Canada. What we typically talk about, for the purposes of this bill, are rats, mice, rabbits and some guinea pigs that have been predominantly used for the purpose of these tests in the past. There are a very small number of jobs in Canada associated with that. In fact, most of the larger cosmetic firms have already adopted this, because of its use in the other countries that I mentioned. We do not believe there will be a huge impact on jobs, but think it is something that should be looked at.

● (1110)

It was in December when we first came to agreement on all these different amendments and began to put them into the legalese of all the members' bills that come before the House. That activity has taken place.

Getting to this point and to the first hour of second reading has been a pleasure, but we are very close to the end of the session. It does not appear that this bill will actually be passed in this parliamentary session, because there is a polarity of views and there are some other discussions to be held. However, I feel that we have increased the amount of support on all sides of the aisle. I will be interested to hear the comments that other parties are going to make after I finish my speech, to see where they are on this bill and to see the potential to introduce this into the 43rd Parliament, which I hope to return for.

I would like to thank a lot of the stakeholders across Canada that participated in both bringing this legislation forward and with the amendments: the Animal Alliance of Canada, The Body Shop, Cosmetics Alliance Canada, Cruelty Free International, Humane Society International/Canada, and Lush fresh handmade cosmetics.

There were so many petitions from The Body Shop. That is how I became the sponsor of this bill. The Body Shop in Sarnia—Lambton approached me. They had stacks of petitions from people calling for us to support this legislation. I then found out that The Body Shops across the country were doing similar things. We have had hundreds of thousands of people sign petitions to show their support for the bill. In addition to that, the Humane Society ran a national TV campaign to raise awareness of it.

*Private Members' Business*

I have received emails, letters, petitions from every part of the country. There is an appetite to follow it along. Currently I believe there are 38 other countries that have now agreed to this ban. Canada would then become the 39th, if we can get this done, and it is well worth doing.

Some of the interesting things I have learned going through on this bill was about the new technology that exists that uses post-surgery human skin for testing. We do not need to do testing on animals anymore. The technology has now brought us to a place where it is time to change the legislation and catch up with the technology.

One of the members of our caucus, the very intelligent member from Kingston, asked the question on whether or not this legislation would apply in cases where animals are euthanized before the testing is done. The way the legislation is written currently, that would be okay. I am not sure whether everyone who is a stakeholder would be okay with that. There are further discussions to be held on some of those questions, and some of those things could be taken care of in the regulations.

That is my summary on Bill S-214, the bill to ban animal testing on cosmetics. I think it is a good step forward. It is a step that would align Canada to other countries in the world that are taking similar steps. There has been a significant amount of work that has gone into meeting with stakeholders, talking to Canadians, and addressing amendments and changes that are needed to make this legislation both consistent with the food, drug and cosmetic rules being changed and put in place by the government, and also to make it consistent with other places, like Europe, California and countries we do business with. That has brought us to the place where we are today, and it is a good place.

I am certainly interested to see this bill go forward. With that, I will end.

• (1115)

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the process she has gone through, and then acknowledged that there is not time to get this bill passed. That is really disappointing for stakeholders, not only the big ones she has mentioned, but everyone from high school students to constituents.

I am disappointed that it has been brought forward so late in the session. Could the hon. member elaborate a little more on that?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Madam Speaker, when I first received the bill, it was the end of the summer parliamentary session. I left the session early with pneumonia, and when I returned in the fall, I was surprised to find so much disagreement on the bill. There were amendments one group wanted that another group could not agree with, so discussions went on until December. Then we were supposed to draft it, but we did not receive the final draft from the stakeholders until February. At that point, there was an indication from the health minister's assistant that the government wanted to look at the amendments as well to be sure that it could be comfortable with them, and that it might want to make further amendments.

From there, we tried to get the bill on the approval process and get it to the House. We presented it in April, and then of course it went to the bottom of the Order Paper, another 30-day delay. I have been trying to trade the bill up, but here we are running into the end of the session and many members are at the first reading of their private members' bills, so it is their only opportunity to get that done, or people who are at the second hour of second reading and want their bill to go to committee still have a chance to get it through before the end of the session, so I have not had much luck there.

• (1120)

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a similar bill, Bill C-400, which requires the labelling of dog and cat fur on products that are imported into Canada. I would like the member's comments with regard to consumer rights. My bill calls for that as a basic requirement. The United States and many countries in the Europe have banned this practice. Millions of dogs and cats are slaughtered, often coming from Asian countries, and they are in children's toys, coats, and a whole series of products we see, from the dollar store to the higher-end stores.

I am arguing for consumer rights as a bare minimum. Would the member agree with that approach?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Madam Speaker, when it comes to aligning it with other countries, again there is a polarity of views. Within our own caucus, there were people who were strongly in favour and people who were strongly opposed. There seems to be a fear that this would creep and end up infringing on other people's individual rights to hunt and fish, and that it would also get into the area of animal welfare with respect to farming. We have seen a lot of progression in farming in Canada to allow for animal welfare and better conditions for chickens. I have toured barns and I know that is a concern as well.

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague answered most of my questions. As with other bills, sometimes I get a little concerned about the definition of what cruelty to animals may be. I am from an agricultural constituency. Other bills have taken certain ranch practices and have deemed some of that cruelty to animals.

As to the member's point about compliance with California and Europe, I have some concerns with anything using that as an argument. It may not be a very strong argument for me. Could she give more assurance on the definition of cruelty to animals? Is it by statute or is it going to creep, as she talked about?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Madam Speaker, the bill confines everything to the testing on animals for cosmetic products. It does not do anything to the definition of what is cruelty or what is not cruelty. It is just talking about the use of animals specifically in testing. Therefore, I do not believe it would progress as the member is concerned about.

*Private Members' Business*

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to discuss Bill S-214, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act with regard to cruelty-free cosmetics. I would like to start by commending Senator Stewart Olsen for spearheading this work in the other place, and the member for Sarnia—Lambton for introducing this bill in the House.

I am disappointed with how long it took Bill S-214 to get to where we are today, as it passed third reading in the Senate almost a year ago. However, I am happy to announce our government's support of this important legislation, with amendments to bring it in line with the approach taken by the European Union.

The humane treatment of animals is undoubtedly a matter that preoccupies many Canadians. Our government has heard directly from many Canadians who have expressed their heartfelt concerns through emails, social media and letters. I can honestly say that this legislation has been a top concern from my constituents. The Body Shop alone has collected over 630,000 signatures on its petition.

According to a 2013 poll commissioned by Humane Society International/Canada and the Animal Alliance of Canada, an overwhelming majority of Canadians, 81%, support a nationwide ban on cosmetic animal testing.

The government's view is that the decision to test anything on an animal should not be taken lightly or without due and careful consideration of the potential pain and suffering that may be caused. For years, the Government of Canada has been publicly committed to eliminating animal testing for cosmetics and to the responsible and ethical use of animals for human health research.

This commitment is reflected in the work that has been done to support and carry out the research, development and implementation of alternative, non-animal test methods, both in Canada and abroad. Health Canada officials have worked in close collaboration with domestic and international partners, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Co-operation on Cosmetics Regulation, and the International Cooperation on Alternative Test Methods.

In addition, our government has begun to explore potential opportunities with the newly established Canadian Centre for Alternatives to Animal Methods at the University of Windsor. My friend and colleague, the member for Beaches—East York, who is one of the most knowledgeable and passionate on issues of animal welfare, has spoken to me about this centre at the University of Windsor, and I understand it holds great promise.

The Canadian Centre for Alternatives to Animal Methods and its subsidiary, the Canadian Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods, aim to develop, validate and promote methodologies in biomedical research, education and chemical toxicity testing that do not require the use of animals. All of this work is of the utmost importance, because by joining forces, we can more quickly and effectively develop and implement alternative, non-animal test methods for a variety of purposes, not just cosmetic safety.

Thanks to these efforts, I am pleased to say that, in most cases, it is now possible to test for issues such as dermal penetration, skin irritation, harm to genetic material and eye irritation without using

animals. The presence of alternative test methods is dramatically decreasing the use of cosmetic animal testing around the globe.

However, it would be irresponsible for me to ignore certain situations where animal testing may still be required in order to protect the health and safety of Canadians. For example, in cases of determining carcinogenic effects of ingredients, reproductive toxicity and the way the body processes toxins, the inability to use animal testing could put Canadians at heightened risks of cancer, fertility issues and acute or chronic effects from repeated exposure.

Such concerns are especially pronounced when considering the rapid development of new, biologically active ingredients, not only in the area of cosmetics, but in many other products used by consumers every day, including drugs, vaccines and food additives. While I know that this may be upsetting for some, I emphasize that animal testing may be the only reliable way to protect the health of Canadians in these circumstances.

I would also point out that in many cases products share ingredients with cosmetics. In such situations, it only makes sense to allow evidence derived from animal testing to be submitted to support the safety of a cosmetic, given that it was not undertaken for the purpose of developing the cosmetic itself. Not permitting this would mean ignoring potentially crucial existing information that might enable us to better protect the health and safety of Canadians.

● (1125)

The European Union recognizes the importance of maintaining access to this evidence. While the EU imposes restrictions on testing on animals specifically for meeting the requirements of its cosmetics regulations, it does allow evidence generated for other, non-cosmetics-related regulatory frameworks to be submitted to demonstrate the safety of cosmetics. As it is currently written, Bill S-214 would not permit the use of such evidence. I highlight this to bring the attention of members to one important element of this well-intentioned bill to which we ought to give careful consideration.

I am pleased to inform the House that our government has identified a number of amendments to this bill that would be moved at committee and that would adequately mitigate the issues I have just mentioned. The bill, as amended, would continue to explicitly prohibit animal testing for cosmetics in Canada and the sale of any cosmetic that was developed or manufactured using cosmetic animal testing. However, the amendments would, among other things, allow government officials to rely on animal testing data for cosmetics when the health of Canadians is at risk and provide companies with the ability to submit animal testing data when required under another regulatory framework, consistent with the EU approach.

These amendments will also designate a four-year coming-into-force period for the entire bill to allow for an orderly transition. With the amendments I have briefly outlined, the bill would allow us to meet the expectations of many Canadians to put in place new measures supporting the goal of eliminating cosmetic animal testing, while ensuring that we continue to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

I look forward to further discussion of this bill, and I am pleased to tell the House that, with these amendments in mind, the government will support its referral to committee.

I want to close by thanking all Canadians who have been advocating for the passage of this bill for their passion and commitment to cruelty-free cosmetics. I applaud their efforts and want them to know that I share their concerns. In particular, I want to commend those in Oakville North—Burlington who contacted me, from students at Garth Webb Secondary School to those who have come to my office. Their voices are important and make a difference.

● (1130)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill S-214 in the House of Commons.

Like the previous speakers, I certainly would like to thank all those Canadians who have been actively engaged in putting the spotlight on this issue of cruelty in testing on animals, particularly in cosmetics, and who have also been urging members of Parliament to adopt the bill. I praise those members, and will come back to where the government should be going procedurally in a moment.

First, I would like to thank all the activists involved in Be Cruelty-Free, including the Canadian section of the Humane Society International and the Animal Alliance of Canada, who have been working to bring forward this legislation. This legislation is important, and many Canadians see its passage as absolutely vital.

We could say that the market has already evolved in a very real sense, since there are hundreds of cosmetic companies that are now banning animal testing, so in that sense it is important for government to provide the final impetus to eliminate cruelty to animals in cosmetic testing.

There are 39 countries around the world that have already passed laws to end or limit cosmetic animal testing, including, as has been mentioned, the 28 member companies of the European Union, India, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and Guatemala. There is no doubt that there is broad public acceptance for banning animal testing of cosmetics. In the most recent polling, over 80% of Canadians indicated that they support a national ban on animal testing of cosmetics and cosmetics ingredients, so with all of these things in place, it is clear to me that there is broad public support for this measure.

In the NDP's case, we will be supporting the bill. This support comes from a long history within the NDP of providing support for measures that diminish cruelty against animals. Isabelle Morin, a former NDP MP, offered Bill C-592 in the previous Parliament, which would have amended the Criminal Code. My colleague from Windsor West has been very determined in terms of producing a bill on the cruelty towards animals in the community. He has been very

### *Private Members' Business*

active in Windsor and in put forward legislation, such as his Bill C-400, that would have forced the labelling of all dog and cat fur in products that were imported into Canada. This ban on dog and cat fur did not pass Parliament, but his Bill C-400 would have ensured that Canadians knew if dog and cat fur was in a product they were looking at buying. These are the types of initiatives that the NDP has supported in the past, which is why we are supportive of Bill S-214.

My colleague from Sarnia—Lambton spoke very eloquently about the amendments that need to be brought forward. However, I heard the government representative say that it is too bad that we are running out of time and that we just cannot bring this bill forward, which is misleading to all the Canadians who are interested in the bill and all the Canadians who have approached members of Parliament on this bill. The government has given itself extreme tools that it is using to push through a variety of other legislation.

There are three weeks remaining in this session, and we have seen the government approve billions of dollars in corporate tax cuts and a whole range of initiatives that tend to benefit corporate CEOs, and it does that in a minute. We have three weeks remaining in the session, which provides the ability, given the Senate has already passed the bill, for the bill to come through committee, come back to the House and be adopted. There is no doubt about that. The government has the tools to do it.

The fact is that today the government is putting up speakers throughout the day to actually prolong and delay the consideration of the second hour of debate. If the government really was supportive of this legislation, instead of putting up speakers to delay passage of this legislation until after we rise for the summer, it could facilitate having the bill adopted and sent to committee.

● (1135)

Because there is a Liberal majority on every committee in this House of Commons, we have seen committees impose closure on consideration, and they have moved to extended hours, so they can adopt amendments that are brought forward to improve this legislation and then bring this bill back to the House.

As colleagues know, we are now sitting until midnight every single evening. Often we are doing that to adopt legislation that is only good for the Liberals. Some pieces of legislation, quite frankly, have an attractive title, but when we look beyond the attractive title, we see a whole range of things that could have been done but that the government has chosen not to bring forward. Those amendments or clauses are in not in the legislation. As a result, we are often talking about empty shells of legislation that do not do what they are purported to do.

Instead of pushing legislation through that is good for the Liberal government, the Liberals should be pushing legislation through that is good for Canada, and many Canadians have told us that Bill S-214, with the appropriate amendments, is something that they see as a priority.

Liberal members will probably come up and speak again over the next half hour or so to say they would really like to see this bill go through, and then not exercise any of the abundant tools that the government has given itself. I think that smells of rank hypocrisy.

*Private Members' Business*

This is a bill that over 80% of Canadians support, as I mentioned earlier, and it is certainly a bill that most members of Parliament support. The issue, then, is to get the amendments through, do the due diligence, get the work done and bring the bill back to the House for a final vote. If that does not happen in the next three weeks, it is because the government is refusing to do so. Although Liberal members stand up and say that they support the bill, they are going to have to walk the talk and make sure that this bill gets passage over the next three weeks.

[*Translation*]

I think that is why more than 80% of Canadians across the country support this bill. This is a common-sense bill that aims to eliminate something the vast majority of Canadians no longer want to see in our country. Animal cruelty is being used simply to test cosmetics and beauty products. The vast majority of Canadians oppose this and do not want to see any of these products on the Canadian market.

We have the ability and the opportunity to pass this legislation within the next three weeks. The government has all the tools at its disposal. Over the past four years, the government has been giving itself ever-increasing powers and procedural tools. Let there be no doubt that this bill could pass if the government really wanted it to.

The Liberals are standing up in their places today, one after the other, and delaying the study of the bill and the vote on the bill. This proves that they are not walking the talk. This legislation is supported by many Canadians across the country, including in my riding, New Westminster—Burnaby. Obviously, popular support is important. We must not allow the government to delay the study of this bill and stop us from studying all the amendments that are needed. We must pass this legislation within the next three weeks, specifically before this session of Parliament ends.

● (1140)

[*English*]

We have broad popular support and we have the support of very important organizations across the country. The government should simply get the job done, use the tools that they have and make sure that Bill S-214 is adopted before the end of the session.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my NDP colleague for his comments. He drew the excellent conclusion that the Liberals lack the will to move forward. Sad to say, as my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton said, we will not be able to pass the bill by the end of the 42nd Parliament.

I want to thank my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton for the great work she did on this file. I wish to acknowledge her talents as a parliamentarian. She is conscientious and very open-minded. I commend her for it, and I hope the people of Sarnia—Lambton will bear it in mind on October 21.

I rise today in the House to speak to Bill S-214, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act regarding cruelty-free cosmetics. I want to thank Conservative Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen for sponsoring this bill, which was introduced on December 10, 2015. I want to highlight the fact that it was introduced in 2015, because it bears out

what I said in my preamble about the Liberals lacking the will to get this bill passed.

Ms. Stewart Olsen has 20 years of experience as a nurse, including more than 10 years as an emergency room nurse in hospitals all over New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec. She knows first-hand that things have changed and that progress has been made in all fields, which obviously includes science, technology and research. In a speech she gave in February 2016 at second reading of Bill S-214, she said:

Many of the tests on animals conducted today were developed in the 1940s, an era when our understanding of how chemicals interact with the human body was very basic. Science and technology have advanced considerably since those days, but in the 21st century, nearly 200,000 animals still suffer and die every year in the name of cosmetics and beauty products.

Every year, 200,000 animals die needlessly. That is a huge number.

Something that used to be useful, necessary and commendable for protecting human health when these tests were first conceived 70 years ago has no relevance anymore.

I read in an article in *La Presse* on April 15 that a 3D print of a heart with human tissue was unveiled in Israel.

Israeli researchers announced on Monday that they 3D printed the first vascularized heart using a patient's own cells, calling it a major breakthrough in treating cardiovascular disease and preventing heart transplant rejection.

Researchers at Tel-Aviv University showed the media the inert, rabbit-sized heart encased in liquid.

Although many obstacles remain, scientists hope one day to be able to print 3D hearts that could be transplanted with minimal risk of rejection in patients who will no longer have to rely on a possible organ transplant.

If we have come this far, then tests created in 1940 can certainly be replaced, thanks to scientific advances. Tests can be done on 3D models made from human tissue taken post-surgery, for example. There is therefore no need to conduct animal testing for the cosmetics industry and beauty products. I believe we are capable of testing products without needlessly affecting animals' lives.

We, the Conservatives, support the cruelty-free treatment of animals. In the interest of Canadians' health, medical research must continue, but we strongly recommend that scientists develop other means of testing. We cannot oppose scientific research and jeopardize Canadians lives. That is the bottom line. However, we can do better.

Steps have been taken to eliminate cosmetic animal testing in close to 40 countries, including the European Union, India, Israel, Switzerland, Norway, New Zealand, South Korea and Guatemala, to name just a few.

● (1145)

Some countries have passed legislation prohibiting animal testing, while others have laws that ban the sale of products developed with animal testing. It is a societal choice. I believe that our bill affirms the position of Canadians.



*Private Members' Business*

In 2018, California was the first U.S. state to pass a law prohibiting the sale of animal-tested cosmetic products. The California Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Act was passed unanimously, 80 votes to none, by the California State Assembly on August 31, 2018. It comes into force in 2020. The assembly made decisions and worked to pass the bill, unlike the Liberals, who did nothing for three and a half years with a bill that was introduced in 2015.

All Canadian provinces and territories have laws, codes of conduct and standards regarding animal welfare. In her speech on February 3, 2016, Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen said:

Canada's legislative record on animal testing is more complicated than those of other countries. There's no clear statement on animal testing in Canada at the federal level other than permitting its use under the regulations attached to the Food and Drugs Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. However, part of the animal welfare aspect of the issue of animal testing is dealt with in the Criminal Code, and that is "causing unnecessary suffering to animals" and "causing damage or injury to animals by willful neglect," which are offences under sections 445.1 and 446 of the Criminal Code.

We have all heard about animals being injected with chemicals, having substances put in their eyes—or worse—during testing. This is 2019, and we can do things differently. We must be responsible and protect these little creatures that unfortunately become victims of the cosmetics industry.

Clause 5 of the cruelty-free cosmetics act addresses concerns raised by the cosmetics industry. It would add section 18.2 to the Food and Drugs Act to give the Minister of Health the power to authorize animal testing "when there is no alternative method to evaluate substantiated specific human health problems associated with a cosmetic or ingredient of a cosmetic". As I mentioned earlier, we will not jeopardize the lives of Canadians. The act seeks to protect animals and prevent them from being used to test cosmetics, which are not essential. Animals should not be killed for that reason. It is time the federal government showed some leadership in this regard.

I would like to assure the House that the Conservatives support research and scientific testing, as well as the humane treatment of animals. I therefore support Bill S-214, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act with regard to cruelty-free cosmetics.

I would now like to talk about something very important. It is important to understand that this bill does not go against recreational hunting and fishing. That is completely different. It is important to let hunters and fishers, who care about the preservation and conservation of nature and environmental protection, practise their sport. What we are saying is that the cosmetic industry's scientific testing on defenceless animals is unacceptable. I am a fisherman and I am not concerned about this bill.

I encourage members on the other side of the House to be constructive and to consider the 10 amendments proposed so that this bill can be quickly passed.

• (1150)

[English]

**Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise here today to speak to Bill S-214, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act.

I want to congratulate the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, not only for sponsoring the bill, which originated in the other place, but for the co-operative approach she has adopted in ensuring that the legislation would achieve its objectives in a way that could be supported by both the animal advocacy community and the industries being regulated. Too often, these initiatives, which most of us support, digress into combative false dichotomies that pit one group against the other, to the detriment of the overall objective. That may be a useful exercise in terms of attention and fundraising, but it does not serve the public interest well and it does not serve public policy goals well. In many cases, it actually makes the situation worse.

This brings me to the central question: What is the objective of Bill S-214? The legislation, as tabled in the House, purports to end the practice of testing cosmetics on animals in Canada, even going so far as to describe the outcome, in the bill's short title, as cruelty-free. What is particularly interesting about this communication strategy is that even the original sponsor of the bill admitted during debate that there was virtually no animal testing of cosmetics in Canada, and she went on to praise the advancements the cosmetics industry has made in the development and implementation of alternative testing methods here in Canada.

I would like to reference the factual comments by the sponsoring member in the other place made during the second reading debate on Bill S-214, on Wednesday, February 3, 2016:

Currently, more than 99 per cent of all safety evaluations related to cosmetics products or their ingredients are now being conducted without animal testing as the Canadian industry has adopted alternative testing methods....

Our cosmetics industry should be commended for moving forward towards eliminating this backward practice.

We can all agree that eliminating this practice is moving forward on the issue and that a narrative that vilifies the Canadian cosmetics industry under these circumstances is both irresponsible and fundamentally dishonest. In fact, this admission by the sponsoring senator resulted in one of her colleagues on the Senate committee studying the bill to question the need for the bill at all.

Although it may appear that what we have here is a piece of legislation in search of a problem, I feel that by reaching out to all the stakeholders, the member for Sarnia—Lambton, along with Health Canada, has used this opportunity to put together a potential bill that would bring some needed consistency and clarity to the application of this overall and global objective.

Mr. Darren Praznik, president and chief executive officer of Cosmetics Alliance Canada and a former minister of health in the province of Manitoba, in his testimony before the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, provided a solid rationale for moving ahead with this initiative in the absence of any pressing domestic need. He said:

*Private Members' Business*

If properly done, where we can all make this work...and we don't create some absurdities in regulation, I think it sends a very symbolic message to the world to get on with the work generally about eliminating animal testing and developing alternatives, scientifically, to eliminate animal testing. It also sends a message to regulatory authorities that when those [alternatives] are developed and validated by regulators that they should be used as the [primary] method of approving safety.

I would certainly agree with that sentiment and applaud the responsible manner in which the sector has engaged in this process. The cosmetics industry in Canada is made up of hundreds of individual companies and employs thousands of Canadians. Due to the intricate nature of globalization, the sector is both a major importer and exporter of products. Whenever we as legislators contemplate making regulations, especially ones that are questionable in the domestic context, we must ensure that we do not put Canadian industry and jobs unnecessarily at risk while we also look at the global good and the performance of public policy.

Today, as legislators, we must deal with the actual bill that is before us now. I quote from the bill as written:

cosmetic animal testing means the topical application or internal administration of any cosmetic or ingredient of any cosmetic to a live non-human vertebrate to evaluate its safety or efficacy for the purpose of developing or manufacturing a cosmetic.

Drawing on my own experience in regulated industry, when I look at this proposed bill through the lens of regulatory compliance, I have two specific questions that pertain to the actual implementation of this bill.

• (1155)

First, based on this definition of cosmetic animal testing, would testing a dog shampoo on a dog prior to putting the product on the market be considered cosmetic animal testing? Second, if the cosmetics industry wished to use an ingredient, let us say a chemical preservative that is currently being used in a health food product, which would require animal testing, based on Health Canada's approval process, would that subsequent cosmetic use be allowed under Bill S-214, even though no additional animal testing would occur?

I ask these questions to underscore the difference between a policy that is supported and the regulatory instruments chosen to implement it. If I understand correctly, and I realize that this chamber has a duty to deal responsibly with a public bill originating in the other place, we are being asked to vote on whether there is agreement in principle for a bill that requires at least seven amendments that we have yet to see and evaluate.

I am certainly heartened by the comments from the government that it plans to introduce the necessary amendments to the existing bill and that any new bill introduced in the next Parliament would incorporate this approach as well. I also wonder if the amendments being proposed would be considered outside the scope of the original bill, as passed by the other place, and whether the sponsoring member of the other place would agree to allow these changes.

As we all know, complex regulations are often used as non-tariff barriers, and as I stated earlier, bringing consistency and clarity to this issue is useful. In addition, we need to examine closely how our major trading partners in the European Union, one of the leading jurisdictions on this issue, have approached animal testing regula-

tions. Given that the EU has not only set the precedent in this area but has also had implementation time to make the necessary adjustments to the administrative and logistical details, it becomes clear that any initiative we undertake must align with what the EU is doing, albeit in a manner that is consistent with our domestic regulatory framework.

If we take note of where we are in the electoral calendar, clearly the clock will run out on this current initiative, but I feel that a new bill in the next Parliament, one that is based on stakeholder consensus reached through this process and based on the manner in which the member for Sarnia—Lambton has approached this bill, will serve Canadians very well.

In closing, I want to reiterate my praise for the member for Sarnia—Lambton and my support for the realistic and inclusive approach she has chosen for this initiative. I want to recognize as well the government and the ministry, for putting in the work to ensure that the end result will bring clarity and consistency to the issue, and the animal advocacy sector and the cosmetics industry, for recognizing the importance of working together collaboratively.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I know I have a couple of moments to touch on Bill S-214, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, cruelty-free cosmetics.

I want to thank Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen of the other place, who has put in months, if not years, of work on the bill. I also want to thank the sponsoring member in the House, the member for Sarnia—Lambton, for her work in bringing this forward.

We have heard from literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians. They are concerned about this issue. They have seen worldwide the changes that have been made in other countries and they want to follow that up in Canada.

This ban recognizes that science has come a long way in developing alternative methods by which we can test cosmetics without subjecting animals to cruel and needless testing

Furthermore, the ban would put us in line with many of our international trading partners, including the European Union, Israel, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand.

The bill proposes to ban the sale of cosmetics that are developed or even manufactured using cosmetic animal testing. In effect, it will ensure that the Canadian cosmetic market is completely free of any products derived from animal testing practices. I think Canadian consumers desperately want to see that.

In implementing the bill, we will ensure that Canada does not participate in testing cosmetics on animals in any shape or form. This prohibition recognizes that Canadians does not accept the cruelty of animal testing within the cosmetic industry. We must move forward in alternative methods of testing that do not require the use of live animals.

More cosmetic companies are testing their products these days using more innovative and effective means, such as three dimensional reconstructive human skin modules, which can be more accurately tested for the harmful side effects of certain cosmetic products.

It is time for Canada to fully embrace these alternative methods of testing the safety of cosmetics by banning the practice of animal testing within the cosmetic industry.

Given the existence of these alternative testing methods and given the cruelty that animals suffer for the sake of testing cosmetic products, it is unacceptable that animal testing for cosmetic purposes remains permitted in Canada in 2019.

Bill S-214 is truly a step forward because it would put Canadian policies toward animal testing of cosmetics in line with not only our international partners, as I mentioned previously, but with the views and the expectations of all Canadians as well.

In my constituency of Saskatoon—Grasswood, hundreds of people have signed petitions, calling on all of us in the chamber to support Bill S-214 to ban cosmetic cruelty in Canada.

It is also worth noting that the bill passed in the Senate almost one year ago without any opposition whatsoever. Now a year later, the responsibility clearly falls on all of us in the House to move in the right direction as a country toward ensuring a cruelty-free cosmetics industry in Canada.

I want to thank those people throughout my province of Saskatchewan who have signed petitions. I have read many of them into the record a number of times in the House. I looked at each and every one of those signatures. They came from people far and wide in my province. The sponsoring member of the bill mentioned all of Canada. I presented over 600 names from Saskatchewan, from those who took the time to go into places like The Body Shop and sign the petition, indicating where they were from, in an effort to have the bill go forward.

• (1200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member will have five minutes left for his speech should he wish to use them the next time this matter is before the House.

[*Translation*]

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC)** moved:

That the House:

- (a) take note of the importance of a free and independent press to a healthy democracy;
- (b) express its belief that it is inappropriate for partisan political actors to pick winners and losers in the media in an election year;
- (c) condemn the inclusion of Unifor, a group that has taken and continues to take partisan political positions, in the panel that will oversee the distribution of the \$600-million media bailout; and

### *Business of Supply*

(d) call on the government to immediately cease trying to stack the deck for the election with their media bailout and replace it with a proposal that does not allow government to pick winners and losers.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today. This subject is a personal one for me. I will disclose my conflict of interest right off the bat: I was a journalist for 20 years. That means I probably know what I am talking about. At issue here is the importance of ensuring the freedom and independence of the press.

[*English*]

I am very proud to say that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Thornhill, who is also former journalist. I am sure he will explain his experience. However, I have to remind him that he was there for the induction of Robert Stanfield and Pierre Elliott Trudeau as leaders. He was a correspondent during the Vietnam War. When I was a student in his class, I remember quite well the famous interview he had with Sir John A. Macdonald. It was a really important part of journalistic history. That is a joke; please do not quote me on that.

[*Translation*]

What we are talking about today is the freedom and independence of the press. The Liberal government came up with this proposal to give some \$600 million of taxpayers' money to its hand-picked media organizations mere months before the next election. We are looking at a clear case of unacceptable partisan political interference targeting one of the founding principles of our democracy, journalistic independence. As I said in my intro, I was a journalist for 20 years, so I know what I am talking about.

Having worked as a journalist for many years, I know that people sometimes try to influence journalists by presenting their ideas and explaining why they are right. I have no problem with that. However, that is not the same as people telling journalists they can probably give them a few million bucks to help their company.

Journalists are human beings. Expecting independence of them in response to such a proposal is totally unrealistic. That is why I think the Liberal government's approach is disrespectful of journalists and a serious threat to journalistic independence. Moreover, their \$600-million proposal will in no way resolve the underlying problem with the media.

What do the Liberals plan to do? They plan to take \$600 million of taxpayers' money to help the media industry, which is currently in crisis. We acknowledge that there is a crisis in this industry as a result of technological changes. I do not remember the last time I paid for news by buying a newspaper. I always have free, up-to-the-minute access to the news on my smart phone.

The industry is facing a new reality, and the Liberal government chose to take taxpayers' money and invest it in the media companies it chooses.

*Business of Supply*

We do not think this is the right thing to do. The government is choosing who will receive taxpayers' money, and on top of that, this will not even fix the underlying problem with traditional media, in particular print media, which is that people have access to massive amounts of news for free. That is how things worked at the time. I remember delivering the *Le Soleil* newspaper when I was a kid, about 40 years ago. The newspaper was thick on Wednesdays and even thicker on Saturdays. Now, *Le Soleil*, which is published in Quebec City, is much thinner than it was back then, and this has nothing to do with climate change.

We need to be careful here. We think the government is offering a band-aid solution that does not fix the real problem. This is indeed a problem, but it is nothing compared to the problem the Liberal government manufactured by appointing Unifor to the panel. Unifor is a politically partisan and engaged union whose avowed mission is to ferociously attack the opposition. The panel members must decide who is right and who is wrong, who will receive millions of dollars and who will not.

What is Unifor? It is a union that apparently represents over 12,000 people who work in the media. However, it is not the only union that represents media workers.

On November 14, 2018, at 4:40 p.m., those folks sent out a very evocative tweet that really gets to the root of the issue and shows the Liberal partisan political agenda hidden behind the media bailout. This bailout will be paid with hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

On November 14, 2018, at 4:40 p.m.—and the time matters—Unifor president Jerry Dias tweeted the following:

● (1210)

[*English*]

“Unifor’s National Executive Board started planning for the federal election today.”

[*Translation*]

I cannot show the photo that was posted, but it was a black and white photo of the five main Unifor leaders. It replicated exactly what Maclean's had posted just a few days earlier on the same platform.

[*English*]

It said, “The resistance: Welcome to [the opposition leader's] worst nightmare.”

[*Translation*]

Indeed, the opposition leader's name was mentioned, but I cannot say it in the House.

Unifor took a partisan political stance against the official opposition, and yet it represents journalists. They have been chosen by the Liberal government to sit on the panel that is going to decide who will get the hundreds of millions of dollars. Obviously, that makes no sense.

I said earlier that the time mattered. It was on November 14 at 4:40 p.m. that Jerry Dias sent out his tweet clearly indicating that he was campaigning against the official opposition. At 5:46 p.m., so

about an hour later, David Akin, an eminent journalist, reacted strongly by distancing himself from his union, Unifor.

[*English*]

“I am a member of [the] union as a condition of my employment and I cannot stress enough how stupid an idea this is for a union that represents journalists.”

● (1215)

[*Translation*]

That was the reaction of an honourable man, a dignified journalist of integrity who understands that his union representative should not meddle in the political debate, because he is a journalist. Journalists must be impartial and independent from political power of any kind and any party. In this case, Unifor has entered the political arena without even consulting its own members. That is also insulting.

That is why we are fiercely condemning this approach and, above all, the fact that, of the hundreds of Canadian unions that represent journalists, the Liberal government picked the one that has directly stated that it is the Leader of the Opposition's worst nightmare. One could not be any more partisan or compromise journalistic independence more seriously. That is exactly what the Liberals have done.

Fortunately, experienced people have distanced themselves from this. According to Chantal Hébert, who is well known in the worlds of politics and journalism, among the ranks of political columnists, many fear it is a poison pill that will eventually do the news industry more harm than good.

Others have also spoken out. According to Andrew Potter, an associate professor at McGill University and CBC correspondent, the reality is actually worse than anyone could have imagined. He said that an independent body staffed entirely by unions and industry lobbyists is a real disaster.

Andrew Coyne wrote that it is quite clear now, if it was not already, that this is the most serious threat to the independence of the press in this country in decades.

Will the Liberals' strategy really help the media? No. The Liberals are appointing Liberal Party friends and enemies of the opposition leader to the panel that will pick the winners and losers in the granting of the \$600 million that the government intends to give the media without actually resolving the fundamental problem it is facing. This strategy shows how loose the Liberals' ethics really are.

I would like to remind members that the Liberal Party has been in office for almost four years now, and this is the fifth time that this government has been investigated by the Ethics Commissioner. Never, in the history of our country, has a sitting prime minister been investigated and found guilty of breaking the ethics rules.

From my perspective, this attempt to distribute \$600 million to the media without truly helping them, while appointing Liberal partisans who are against us to the panel in charge of distributing this money, shows that the Liberals have flexible ethics.

The same goes for the infamous SNC-Lavalin scandal. When an honest, integral and clear decision was made by the justice system, as prescribed by law, the Liberals interfered in the justice system for partisan purposes because they were unhappy with the decision and because the Prime Minister said that he was an MP from Montreal and he had to be re-elected. That is what the Prime Minister and his henchmen actually said.

These unedifying examples show that this government has very flexible ethics. The example we are raising in today's motion only proves it, with the Liberals appointing an ultra-partisan group, Unifor, to a so-called independent panel. Unifor has avowed to destroy the leader of the official opposition, saying that it was the Conservatives' worst nightmare. That is totally unacceptable. That is why we are calling on hon. members to support this motion that seeks to safeguard journalistic independence.

[English]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I may share a profession with my hon. colleague across the way, but I certainly do not share his perspective.

When Unifor is identified as only representing journalists, it does not tell the story that Unifor also represents the caretaking staff, librarians, editors and camera operators. It also represents receptionists and all of the personnel who make up media organizations in this country.

To suggest that Unifor represents only journalists does not only elevate journalism in a way that is very telling from the other side, but it also completely misrepresents and under-represents, in fact I would say obscures the reality, that newspapers, radio stations and television stations across this country are so much more than just the journalism. They are the heart and soul of so many communities, and they are disappearing person by person, city by city, town by town every single day.

Anyone who has spent a lifetime in this industry knows the families who are affected, and to simply put this down to the defence of journalism so massively oversimplifies this problem that it is horrible.

The member said that he is afraid that journalists can be bought. That seems to be the implication of what he is saying. Could he perhaps tell us the journalists he thinks can be bought and list them by name?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, I would be very pleased to quote a journalist who talked about that. David Akin said, "I am a member of this union as a condition of my employment and I cannot stress enough how stupid an idea this is for a union that represents journalists."

I recognize that there are a lot of people who work to produce newscasts. I know this, because I was a journalist for 20 years. I have a lot of confidence with the camera, and it worked well for me. There are also editors, and people like Marie Josee, who worked so hard and so well in the newsroom. However, Unifor is not the only union to represent people who work in the media.

### *Business of Supply*

That is why I find this totally unacceptable. Many people and journalists think it is a shame that a guy who identifies himself as the worst nightmare of his political opponents is part of a so-called neutral panel that will give millions of dollars to the workers. This is unacceptable.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

In a past life, in my youth, I worked for two weekly newspapers in Rimouski, *Le Rimouskois* and *Progrès-Écho*, which are now defunct. There is only one weekly paper left, which was started later on. Diversity of information has really suffered these past few years.

When the Conservatives were in office, from 2011 to 2015, I was in Parliament, and the crisis had already been going on for quite some time. The Conservatives had no solutions to offer back then. I remember my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert's frequent interventions on this issue, but the Conservatives did not seem to see it as urgent.

Now the Liberals are proposing a plan, which does have many flaws, and the situation is growing ever more urgent. The Conservatives' position is rather confusing, since they have no ideas on how to address the crisis that the media is grappling with.

Could my colleague tell us what the Conservatives would suggest to the media, especially print media, in order to respond to the crisis it is facing today?

• (1220)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, I am happy to hear from my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, who always asks relevant, well-thought-out questions.

I too worked for regional media outlets before moving into the so-called national media, but I want to reassure the former parliamentary leader of the NDP, the second opposition party in the House, that our leader was very clear when he answered similar questions just a few weeks ago.

To us, the worst thing is for the government to be spending millions of dollars picking winners and losers. This is a solution that does not solve the long-term problem.

We are working on a proposal that would enable people like me, who have free, direct access to news through the Googles and Facebooks of the world, to participate and contribute to the tax base.

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated almost all but the opening remarks of my colleague from Quebec's speech.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had the good sense to stay out of the nation's bedrooms. His prime ministerial son does not have the wit, sagacity, acuity, percipience, sapience or clue of a newt to realize he has absolutely no business in the nation's newsrooms.

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We know that the Liberal Prime Minister can memorize and recite a clever explanation of quantum computing, but he has shown us that he has no knowledge of or respect for the absolutely essential independence of the fourth estate. I will offer a reminder for the record, for Hansard, if the PM or his acolytes are ever advised by its contents, as well as for the most recent heritage minister.

Historically, there were three original states of the British realm: the clergy, the nobility and the commoners. However, over time and the evolution of parliamentary democracy, society came to recognize the press, or print, and then, over time, radio and television news, as a fourth estate, or independent chroniclers, protectors and defenders of facts and truth, arbiters of public trust, and eventually independently expressed analysis and criticism of the other evolved estates: the Crown, the courts and government. Then suddenly, as we approached the turn of the last century, mainstream journalism, as we had come to consider it, hit the rocks.

These were the rocks of technology, of fragmented audiences, of equally fragmented advertising revenues, and generational abandonment of traditional newspapers and appointment television and radio newscasts. At the same time, there was an ever-escalating shift of audiences to digital information sources, digital opinion and unregulated social and anti-social media.

The Canadian news industry began to collapse. Newspapers were downsized. There were massive layoffs and failed consolidations. Scores of newspapers were abandoned. The same shrivelling of original news content generation, local, national and international, hollowed out and emptied radio and TV newsrooms.

The solution to this crisis in Canada's news industry is not after-the-fact mitigation, the Liberal government's misguided attempted election-year bailout of failing newspapers, which, despite the heritage minister's rhetorical flailing, are indeed the fossilizing dinosaurs of hard-copy print.

The solution will eventually be found, will come, in those print and broadcast newsrooms that can adapt and survive the transformation to profitable, sustainable digital news platforms. The transformation and survival of robust, independent, digital journalism platforms in Canada will require bold policy adjustments and political leadership to level the news industry playing field. However, how can any news organizations be truly independent if they become dependent on government subsidies, temporary slush-fund tax relief or direct cash bailouts?

It is important to remember that these hundreds of millions of dollars, almost \$600 million, will only go to Canadian journalistic organizations that must first apply to register for financial assistance and then be accepted as a QCJO. What is a QCJO? It is a typical, Liberal nanny state concept, a values-imposing concept, a confectioned panel bureaucratically designated as a qualified Canadian journalism organization. To be eligible, a newsroom must employ two or more journalists working a minimum of 26 hours a week and employed for at least 40 consecutive weeks. As well, the panel will also decide eligibility on the subjective measurement of acceptable news content generated by a newsroom.

The Liberal government is going to decide, through this commissioning panel, which struggling newspapers get money and

which ones do not. It is a terrible concept, an outrageous concept. It offends the fundamental principles of the independent craft of journalism. However, it gets worse. This motley panel was created without consultation. Its most blatant shortcoming, of course, is the inclusion of Unifor, a union which has repeatedly proclaimed its deeply partisan intent to become the worst nightmare of the Leader of the Opposition in the coming election.

● (1225)

We have heard protests in recent weeks from many of the 12,000 practising journalists that Unifor claims to represent, journalists forced to belong to Unifor and forced to pay dues to a union that compromises their independent craft. However, beyond Unifor, we have heard protests from journalists represented by other groups among the eight groups on the Liberals' panel. For example, the head of the Canadian Association of Journalists said that she learned of the CAJ's involvement in the panel not by consultation but by the government's proclamation, and that she was concerned to learn that decisions of the panel will not be transparent and final but subject to secret secondary screening by the Liberal cabinet.

Condemnation of the Liberals' misguided decision to pick winners and losers in the Canadian news industry is not limited to those journalists represented by panel organizations. The columnist Andrew Coyne, for example, in noting that the Liberal plan excludes anyone outside the existing Canadian newspaper industry, wrote that it is designed for "not the future of news but the past; not the scrappy startups who might save the business, but the lumbering dinosaurs who are taking it down."

The founder and editor of *The Logic*, one of those scrappy startups, David Skok, complains that the mandatory full-time status of journalists required for funding ignores the vital role that freelance journalists play in the news ecosystem. Mr. Skok noted in an editorial, "According to Statistics Canada, as of 2016, there are about 12,000 people who identify 'journalist' as their profession. Of those, it's safe to assume that the number of people not employed full-time with a newsroom is in the thousands".

Chantal Hébert, whose primary employer is the *Toronto Star*, will very likely be designated a qualified recipient of Liberal beneficence. She said, "The government's half-a-billion package will not resolve the crisis [that newsrooms face]. It may end up doing little more than delaying the inevitable." Ms. Hébert says that "among the ranks of the political columnists, many fear it is a poison pill that will eventually do the news industry more harm than good."

Here are a few more prominent voices. One is Andrew Potter, from McGill University, who wrote, "This is actually worse than anyone could have imagined. An 'independent body' staffed entirely by unions and industry lobbyists. What a disaster."

*Business of Supply*

Jen Gerson, a commentator on CBC and Maclean's, tweeted, "If any of these associations or unions could be trusted to manage this "independent" panel, they would be denouncing it already."

Aaron Wudrick from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation tweeted, "Mark my words, this isn't going to arrest the erosion of trust in media. It is going to make it worse. Indeed, it already has."

Global News Journalist David Akin, who sits above us on many occasions, sent an invitation to Unifor union boss Jerry Dias to visit with Unifor members who are also members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. David tweeted, "I'll set the meeting up. You will learn first-hand how much damage you are doing to the businesses that employ us, to our credibility and how terribly uninformed you are."

The finance minister cannot justify this \$600-million election year bailout because he has no idea at all what will happen after his subsidized transition period, and that is unacceptable. It is wasteful of Canadian tax dollars, because an intervention should have a goal of not only short-term survival of print but long-term sustainability of the evolving craft of digital journalism.

As I remarked earlier, the transformation and survival of robust, independent journalism platforms in Canada will require bold policy adjustments and political leadership, but how can any news organizations be truly independent if they become dependent on government subsidies, temporary slush fund tax relief or direct cash bailouts?

● (1230)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member opposite and I were colleagues in journalism before we were colleagues here in the House. In fact, he was so enraptured by my entry into politics that he actually donated to my first campaign. I do not think I have ever thanked him face to face before, but let me give him my thanks. It has been an interesting career change.

My hon. colleague described this industry as a "fossil". The word "fossil" was used a couple of times. I would love for the party opposite to turn this around and think of another industry that is based on fossils, such as fossil fuels, an industry that the Conservatives are only too happy to subsidize. They are only too happy to pick winners and losers and only too happy to provide support and public investment.

I am curious as to why that industry is worthy of such investment, including representation from those very workers and industries, and why the print industry and journalism is not.

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Madam Speaker, I do recall with a certain amount of fondness the days when we were both practising the craft of journalism in different newsrooms, and I do recognize and accept his point that I made occasional errors both as a journalist and in supporting a fledgling politician, who seems to have gone more than a little off the rails.

I understand and respect the fact that my hon. colleague is trying to deflect this debate from the motion at hand, but I would suggest that he look more closely and ask his Prime Minister and finance minister why, as I said, this motley panel is being asked to be sworn to confidentiality in their considerations and why the panel will not

be allowed to comment on those applicants whose applications will ultimately be denied by the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question.

The first point in their motion reads:

(a) take note of the importance of a free and independent press to a healthy democracy;

The Conservatives want a "free and independent" press. Do they also want a sustainable press or do they want a dying one? From what I know, things are not going well.

What are they proposing?

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

The reality that we face today is that the journalism of the last century, print newspapers, is collapsing. The transition to digital platforms has caught up and surpassed the old media. The newspapers that are asking and have celebrated the announcement of the \$600-million election-year attempted bailout are newspapers that are fossilizing. They are failing. They have not been able to establish the digital platforms that will eventually determine which media organizations and newsrooms survive and which fail.

I mentioned that this issue needs bold political leadership and policy adjustments. The government should be looking at the taxation of Canadian advertisers on American digital platforms under chapter 19. Just as print publications no longer allow advertising on outside platforms to be deducted, exactly the same should apply to digital advertising.

● (1235)

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, is it not true that the independence of journalism in this country is being placed at risk by this Liberal plan? It is not the journalists themselves; it is actually this plan that is placing the independence of those journalists at risk and in fact placing our democracy at risk.

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Madam Speaker, I would respond in much the same way I did when the heritage minister wagged his finger at me and said that Conservatives were accusing the government of attempting to buy journalists. I asked him if he would go up to the gallery where the journalists sit above us, some of them forced members of Unifor, and ask them whether they would give thumbs up or thumbs down to this outrageous government policy.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton Centre.

*Business of Supply*

I would like to take this opportunity to stand today and remind this chamber of the importance of a free and independent press to a healthy democracy. I cannot say it enough: A fundamental pillar of our democracy and all democracies around the world is a healthy, independent press. However, that is now at risk, and it is putting us all at risk.

Canada's news media industry and those around the world are fighting for their lives. They are being pushed to the limit by smaller and smaller advertising funding, and more recently by dramatic changes in how people are receiving their news. If we do not take our heads out of the sand, it will not be too long before these changes will erode our democratic process altogether.

I have seen first-hand in authoritarian countries what happens when the media are not able to speak up: minorities are ignored or, worse, punished for being who they are; criticism of the government is prevented or silenced; and people live in fear of what their government may do to them. This is not a world that I or Canadians want to live in.

This crisis faced by the Canadian news media has come to a pinnacle in recent years, with countless layoffs, once strong and vibrant newspapers closing one after another, and countless towns and cities finding themselves without local journalists or reporting of any kind. Since 2009, daily and community newspapers have seen a 48% decrease in advertising revenues alone, which is half their revenue gone just like that, in just 10 years. Any industry with that kind of loss would be struggling.

Just last week, The Hamilton Spectator announced that it will close its printing and mailroom operations and will likely sell its building. That is 73 full-time Canadian jobs and 105 part-time staff who will be laid off. Equally troubling is the loss of local content in a major media market.

The story does not stop there. Around the world, people have changed how they are getting their news. Social media and mobile phones have blown up the traditional markets. Canadians are not sitting at home any more just waiting for their curated and peer-reviewed morning paper to tell them about the news of the day. More and more, people are relying on social media, Facebook, Twitter, Google and others for their news. However, these platforms hold none of the same standards as the news media. Verification, research and sources have been thrown out the door for a quick click or negative motives. These platforms simply do not have the resources or expertise to undertake in-depth reporting that holds corporations, organizations or governments to account.

We know that the press gallery in Ottawa is shrinking and is a fraction of its former self. It does not have the resources to challenge the government or the opposition in the way it was once able to do.

With web giants offering news for free, Canadians are quick to cut their subscriptions. Not only have news organizations had a huge drop in advertising, which in itself is an important part of their revenue model, but these same organizations have also had to contend with new players in the industry who do not play by the same rules. Faced with so many challenges, there are only two options: try to adapt, or close shop altogether. Unfortunately, the second option is what appears to be happening.

This is not limited to daily newspapers: Community newspapers, the foundation of our neighbourhoods and a critical source of information for communities all across Canada, are facing the same challenges, and 32% of daily newspapers and 19% of community newspapers have had to close their doors since 2009. Those still standing have had to face the hard reality needed to adapt. Cutting staff, reducing printing and merging are just some of the choices staff have had to make to keep their newspapers alive.

All of these closures and reorganizations have had a massive impact on jobs in Canada. Since 2006, close to one-quarter of the newspaper workforce has been laid off, which means close to 10,000 jobs. In the last three years alone, more than 600 of these jobs have been cut, which means Canadians are no longer getting the news they need to make this country, province or town work. There is no more coverage of courtroom trials, no more news on current councillors or wards. People do not know what is going on in their neighbourhoods. The best they can hope for is sometimes seeing a small story in a major paper. This hurts all of us.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

With a 24-hour news cycle and an endless amount of information at people's fingertips, it seems strange that millions of Canadians cannot find out what is happening just down the street.

How can we, as Canadians, make the right choices regarding our governments when we do not even know what is happening? How can we solve a problem if we do not even know it exists?

[*English*]

With even less accurate reporting, fake news is able to spread even faster. We can add to that the fact that people and organizations are trying to take advantage of Canadians by bombarding them with fake news on a daily basis. We have all seen the rise of the anti-vaccine movement and flat-earthers because of fake news circles spreading uncriticized information. Many countries, including Canada, are under constant threat of fake news spreading uncontrollably, made even worse because of a lack of journalists able to hold people to account.

That is why our government saw the need to take action. Our \$595-million tax credit investment in Canadian news over the next five years will help restore the news industry in Canada. Our government has established a panel that comprises not only publishers but also reporters and other workers within the sector. This panel includes representation from both francophone media groups and ethnic media representatives.



*Business of Supply*

Canadians deserve to know the truth about what is going on in Canada and around the world, yet it seems that Conservative members across the way continue to have problems with journalists and the truth. I do not know about other members, but I have met many journalists and none of them can be influenced or bought by a government, yet the Conservatives keep trying to follow Doug Ford's lead and imply that journalists are the enemy. Their staff said that they would "go for the jugular" when it came to the media.

The opposition continues to be out of touch with real Canadians. Journalists and the media play a fundamental role in our country. Canadians know that, and so should the Conservatives. To call them fossils is disrespectful to both journalists and Canadians. Members of the party opposite continue to see enemies and conspiracy theories all around them. Next they will be telling us that we need to ground planes because of the chemtrails, or they will start saying how the scientists are out to get them again.

Two fundamental principles have guided us in developing these policies: First, a mechanism designed to support the news industry must be independent from the Government of Canada, and second, it must be based on the creation of original content.

In closing, there is no denying that the government has an important responsibility in ensuring the health of our democracy. I am proud to sit as a member of the party that believes in investing in people, unlike the party opposite, which wants to sit on its hands or, even worse, make cuts to our news industry.

Our government is taking action to address the issues faced by the Canadian news system. We believe in the need to invest in and support the industry so that Canadians can get the news they need. These initiatives recognize that strong and independent journalism is a key element of a healthy democracy, while protecting the independence of the press on any platform. In an age when fake news is being spread freely, these investments will ensure that Canadians have access to the reliable news coverage necessary to our country.

I am thankful for this opportunity and look forward to questions.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle, or rather, for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I visited the riding of Laurentides—Labelle and I met many people there who are ready to vote for our party in six months.

[*English*]

I would like to note the following statement: "I am the worst nightmare of the Liberal Prime Minister. Am I coming out against the Liberal Prime Minister? You're damn right I am. I'm probably going to make it worse. The Liberal Prime Minister has really been irritating me the last few days."

Does the hon. member consider that neutral or objective? No, not at all. That is exactly what Jerry Dias said against us, not against the Liberal Party. Can the member explain why he supports Jerry Dias

on the panel, which is supposed to be neutral and objective but is anything but that?

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, this panel involves eight different representatives of organizations. There is a wide-ranging spectrum of the industry that includes owners, publishers, reporters and workers.

I know the party opposite has a real problem with unions and makes no excuse for it. It is unfortunate that it has taken the position that having a member representing labour at the table is problematic. I think it is fundamental that, when we make decisions, all parties are consulted and are part of the decision-making process. That is why we have constituted the panel as it is.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I am beginning to feel like a parrot and it is getting tiresome. Why does another four years have to go by before something gets done?

He is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism. His minister's predecessor launched the ecosystem review process four years ago.

It was passed from committee to committee, then there was a committee report, and then it went back to committee. The election will be over and still nothing will have been done.

How is it that the Liberal government has not accomplished anything in this regard in four years?

[*English*]

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, what is important is that action is being taken, decisive action. This fund will allow our media to recalibrate over the next five years and be able to support initiatives that will ensure the long-term viability of the industry.

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member has talked about how the funding will be over five years. It seems that the government is trying to become part of the financial operations of the media.

Does the government plan to have this indefinitely? Is it going to provide stable funding, something each year or every five years, or is this just a one-shot event?

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that there is a dire crisis. As I stated in my speech, there are operations closing weekly. In Hamilton, just last week, The Hamilton Spectator closed its printing operations. That has affected many jobs in that local community.

This is essentially to ensure sustainability of the industry, both short-term and long-term.

**Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for drawing attention to the Hamilton situation, which is dramatic and drastic. A lot of us are feeling a kind of heartless response from the other side, which is ignoring the plight of so many people who are responsible for delivering the news.

I would like to have my friend comment on that.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments.

Newspapers are not just about journalists, although journalists play a very important role in producing newspapers. Many people are involved in delivering the news, from those working in the press room to those delivering the newspapers. At a young age, I used to deliver the newspaper. Right now, that is my daughter's first job.

I know that many Canadians have relied on this industry for a very long time, be it as a courier or even for part-time work while being a student. This is such a critical industry for all of us. I know that small towns like Hamilton are struggling, and we want to be able to support them.

• (1250)

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the opportunity to provide insight on how the government values a healthy democracy through a free and independent press is why I am here today. Voices must be heard in a democracy: diverse, dissenting and dynamic voices. Those of us who have a seat in this place must speak up for the voiceless, even when said voice sounds like it could use a little TLC.

No one will dispute that a healthy democracy requires a solid, independent news media industry, and we all agree that with today's technology Canadians now consume information differently and through various media forms. Many readers are changing their consumption habits and getting information online.

If we look at the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer, 65% of Canadians worry about false information or fake news being used as a weapon. These are the new realities we face here in the House and as a government, and the advent of fake news has prompted our government to act to ensure that our democracy remains well served by informed and reliable journalism.

The support measures we developed ensure that Canada will continue to have an active, professional, reliable and independent press, and that, through responsible journalism, Canadians remain informed of the events that shape our country. As stated by the hon. Minister of Finance, "Whether it's holding governments to account or getting involved in a local cause, Canadians rely on the journalism industry to shine a light on what's important—and these measures will help the industry continue to do exactly that."

Without these independent journalists, it is much easier for the opposition to peddle fake news stories, such as the ongoing attack ads using public funds, paid for by Doug Ford's government. That is why the Conservatives are vehemently disparaging journalists. However, unlike the Conservatives, our government is not afraid to be held to account by Canadians.

There was one scrum after budget 2019 where someone asked whether this fund would just make sure that the media says what the Liberals want it to say. The Minister of Finance was there, and I think his quip was "I would really like the media to say exactly what I want it to say, but that is not how an independent press works." That is at the core of what we are doing here.

To this end, we announced a series of measures that, together, would provide support to the Canadian news system, which is

crucial to our democracy. Two fundamental principles have guided us in developing these support measures. First, we choose to support the news in a way that is independent, because of all the principles that enshrine our democracy. In short, we fundamentally believe that journalists should not be afraid of their funding being cut simply because they disagree with us. Second, it must be based on the creation of original content.

The first of these measures was introduced in budget 2018, where the government emphasized its support of local news in communities presently underserved by Canadian news media organizations. In an era when fake news is ubiquitous, all Canadians deserve to have access to reliable information.

Let us take the issue of fake news head on. The Conservatives have been trying to sell a narrative recently that is completely false, related to recent government announcements. I want to take the time that I have to address these issues head on.

It is a fact that, on May 22, 2019, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism announced the launch of the local journalism initiative. This initiative, which allocates a total of \$50 million over five years, supports the creation of original civic journalism that covers the diverse needs of underserved communities across Canada.

It is a fact that, to protect the independence of the press, seven not-for-profit organizations representing different segments of the news industry will administer the initiative. These organizations will hire additional journalists or undertake projects to give their news greater visibility in underserved communities, thus addressing the need for local civic journalism in underserved communities. The content produced through this initiative will be made available to media organizations through a Creative Commons licence so that Canadians can be better informed regardless of the platform on which they consume their news.

Other support measures were announced in budget 2019, and the government proposed three new initiatives to support Canadian journalism: allowing not-for-profit news organizations to receive charitable donations and issue official donation receipts; creating a new, refundable labour tax credit for qualifying news organizations; and creating a temporary, non-refundable tax credit for subscriptions to Canadian digital news media.

It is a fact that an independent panel of experts will make recommendations on the eligibility criteria for the tax measures so that they are efficient, transparent and fair.

*Business of Supply*

•(1255)

Eight associations representing Canadian journalists were invited to submit the name of a candidate to take part in the work of the independent panel of experts. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have taken issue with one of these associations and have been sharing false information that these associations will somehow be deciding who will receive funding. Fortunately, our government does not believe in such a draconian way of either sharing information or organizing a system meant to protect the independence of the media.

It is a fact that these associations were chosen because they represented the majority of Canadian news media publishers and journalists. The independent panel of experts will be able to consider the views of third parties, including industry stakeholders.

We know for a fact that these key measures will provide Canadians with more access to informed and reliable journalism.

The fact that the Conservatives are threatened by an independent panel of news media publishers and journalists is indicative of the kind of government they had under Mr. Harper and what kind of government they could be. It is the same kind of fear they had with scientists. It is the same kind they had with people of any sort of difference who might actually hold their feet to the fire. Our feet can be held to the fire and because of that, better is always possible.

Over the past week, there has been intense Conservative opposition to the appointment of Unifor to the local journalism panel. Unifor is an independent union that represents 12,000 media workers across the country. It will bring much-needed expertise to the panel on the integrity of news media, freedom of information and workers' rights.

Our government is committed to raising and improving labour standards and working conditions for all journalists across the country, while promoting free press.

We recognize and value the importance of the independent press to a healthy democracy, and the addition of Unifor to the panel only strengthens that principle.

Let us make no mistake in assuming there is an easy fix after the deep cuts to media experienced under the Harper government, CBC alone, \$150 million in cuts. The leader of the official opposition is already on record as saying hundreds of millions of dollars of cuts will come to the CBC should the Conservatives form government.

The Harper government also allocated extensive resources to monitor independent media outlets. Monitoring them is contradictory to the very independence of those media outlets. The previous government was obsessed with message control and engaged in widespread media monitoring. In contrast, our government has built an open relationship with the press.

The Canadian news media ecosystem is under tremendous pressure and that is why we take this issue seriously.

Let us look at the change of the media ecosystem since 2019.

Twenty per cent of daily and community newspapers have ceased their operations. This means that a total of 276 Canadian communities rely on alternative sources of information to obtain

the news that is of concern to them. Also, we are not considering the many Canadian news media organizations that had to downsize and adapt their operations to remain in operation due to the drastic cuts of funding that has caused nearly irreversible damage.

In my time as a member of this place, the way the Edmonton media has covered stories has changed dramatically. I used to give an interview to the Edmonton Sun and an interview to the Edmonton Journal. Then about midway through their mandate, they said that I would just have to do one interview now. When I asked them why, they said that they have been consolidated. The Edmonton Sun and the Edmonton Journal are in the same offices now. Therefore, I just give quotes to one person and then the reporters take the different quotes they want to shape the story they want. That is the shape of things to come in the country, so it is time we acted.

Our government recognizes the vital and indispensable role that journalism plays in our country. That is why we will continue to protect the independence of journalists and why we are prepared to make the necessary investments and to take action to ensure Canadians continue to have access to informed and reliable news coverage that is necessary to ensure a democracy.

[*Translation*]

There used to be over 10,000 jobs in journalism, but most of them have been lost since 2007. Close to 250 daily newspapers have been affected. Some of them have had to close their doors and others have had to reduce the number of journalists that work for them. The government needs to act in this kind of situation and that is what we did.

[*English*]

That is exactly why we are taking these steps now.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, all of us in the House agree on the principle that the independence of our press is important. The difference I suppose is that on this side of the House we believe the best way to defend the independence of the press is for it to operate independent of government and not have a government-appointed committee that includes the most vocal of Liberal partisans determining who is a journalist and who is eligible for this funding.

It is quite Orwellian for the member to say that the best way we defend the independence of the press is to have somebody who is vocally campaigning for the re-election of his government responsible for deciding which members of the press get the money and which ones do not. Journalists realize that this makes it harder for them to demonstrate their credibility to their readers.

Will the member take a step back from this kind of Orwellian language and realize that independence requires real independence, not government control or control by a government committee?

•(1300)

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member's comments are double-plus bad. In the case of his messaging today, he is making a tempest out of a teapot.

*Business of Supply*

Let us look at the billions of dollars existing in the media industry. Revenues have gone down from \$5.5 billion in 2008 to \$3.2 billion in 2016, and the member on the other side is worried about a \$50 million fund that somehow will revolutionize the balance in the media.

He talked about this somehow favouring Liberal candidates in the next election. Right up to the last election, 74% of all Canadian dailies called for the Harper government to be re-elected, three times more than how it was polling. More than 50% of the population was interested in supporting it. That kind of imbalance is exactly what the member is accusing us of doing, and the Conservatives lived it. We are here to ensure that the independence of journalists is taken seriously.

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think we all agree there is a crisis here. What the government is sharing with us as a solution really misses the mark and is just a stopgap.

In Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Express, another local paper, just went under. I want to wish Cam Hutchinson and his staff well. It is a difficult time. It went under because there was no more advertising revenue.

What the government is proposing may help. However, the fact is that the tax system is unfair and large multinationals are making tax-free income from revenue from advertisers and small papers cannot make a go of it.

Would the hon. colleague not acknowledge that what the Liberals are offering today is just not enough and that it will not solve the problem of the loss of independent media in the country?

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the passion of the hon. colleague on this issue. I, too, and colleagues on this side, lament any time a daily or weekly goes under because of lack of revenues. One of the things we have learned and have heard loudly through committee work and through studies across the country is that ad revenue that used to go to these dailies and weeklies for a dollar apiece now goes to online providers for pennies on the dollar. One cannot sustain a business model that does this.

Therefore, I agree there is more we can do. This is a start. These actions will make a difference. They will help to ensure that independent journalists can protect that independence and ensure Canadians can access media content that has a significant editorial component to it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

I am happy that the masks are coming off today, because we are talking about something that the NDP has been concerned about for a long time. For around eight years, we have been standing up for Canadian news media and cultural content, and particularly in Quebec, where there is a great deal of provincial investment in businesses that offer such content. Furthermore, as a result of the changing paradigm, every investment the Government of Quebec makes involves greater risk.

Last night, the Québec Cinéma Gala celebrated the talents of director Ricardo Trogi, actor Debbie Lynch-White, actor Martin Dubreuil and Sara Mishara, who did the cinematography for the movie *The Great Darkened Days*. The Québec Cinéma team reminded us that Quebec is so good at telling its stories because of giants like Jean Beaudin and Jean-Claude Labrecque, who passed away last week.

A pioneer of filmmaking on nearly 100 Canadian films and keenly attuned to the evolution of Quebec society, Jean-Claude Labrecque, considered the filmmaker who captured the essence of Quebec, used to describe himself simply as the guy holding the camera. He did right by us, as the great man he was.

To pay tribute to Jean-Claude Labrecque is to pay tribute to the architect of what we inherited today. We inherited a system that allows us to tell our stories through fiction and documentaries, but also through the news media. It allows us to talk about our democracy and to monitor what our politicians do. That is precisely what is currently at stake, because of the partisan games and mediocrity we are seeing from Canada's two main parties.

Under the Conservatives we had 10 years of inaction. Ten years of acting like nothing happened. Then the Liberals came to power saying that something had to be done, that we absolutely needed to fix the problem. That was four years ago and they have done absolutely nothing since then. This government has done a poor job because it is afraid of the opposition. I am talking about the official opposition, of course, because the NDP has been fighting for this cause for at least four years, if not eight, since this issue was not as urgent at the time. This situation has truly deteriorated in no time at all.

It is unacceptable that 80% of Internet advertising revenue currently goes to the United States. All legislators in Canada should be ashamed. It is not unusual for a society that lives in the north, like ours, to import pineapples or bananas. However, we are now importing advertising signs. Is it not appalling that we are letting all our advertising investments go elsewhere? That is a pathetic trade record. Time and again I find myself having to face the fact that we have no backbone. We have to wake up and protect our industry. We have to stop being mesmerized by five different colour letters just because they represent the most beloved brand in the United States, by Republicans and Democrats alike. We need to wake up.

It is not Google's fault that we are slackers. It is not Netflix's fault that we have not asked it to collect the GST, our country's basic tax, which is a consumption tax. The Liberals will not do it for utterly embarrassing reasons. They are afraid that those opposite, the Conservatives, who only want to win the next election, will say that a Netflix tax will raise prices. Give me a break. All Canadians pay the GST on goods they purchase. That is normal. We pay for goods and services, but they will not charge the GST.

You should all be ashamed. I, for one, as a citizen of a country like Canada, am ashamed that we are not taking a stand and charging our consumption tax. That is just disgraceful. As we can see, this mainly concerns the GST.

*Business of Supply*

•(1305)

The government has been avoiding the issue and thinking pretty highly of itself for four years. For the past four years, it has been ignoring other people's advice. For four years, it has been afraid of being known as the government that taxed Netflix, but come on, Netflix raised its rate by about 33% a year ago and nobody said boo. The Liberals say they will not charge the GST for that kind of service. They know they do not have a leg to stand on, but they will not do it. There might be questions at the year-end review. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are literally lying to us when they say taxing an intangible online service is complicated. They talk about seeking advice from their G7 and G20 friends. Seriously, though, this is a sales tax. What is the deal here? You are lying to our faces. This kind of situation—

•(1310)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would ask the member to direct his comments to the Chair, not to the government.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Madam Speaker, the fact is, we are here in a Parliament where the opposition is supposed to be able to propose things and take a constructive approach. I have been fighting for the media for eight years now, and the NDP has been working tirelessly to protect our stories and our journalism, to ensure a level playing field for everyone. It is not happening. We are not the only ones. In January 2017, a report entitled "Shattered Mirror" recommended the following:

Recommendation No. 1: Enhance Section 19 and 19.1 of the Income Tax Act

We have talked about this. It is completely unacceptable that, in a wealthy, western democracy like ours, we are incapable of amending a section of an act that online advertisers are shamelessly exploiting. Basically, if a company pays to place an ad in an American magazine, it cannot include it as a deduction for its advertising expenses. It cannot put it in an American or Canadian magazine, because it is not an eligible expense. However, placing an ad on Google or Facebook is an eligible expense. It is completely ridiculous.

The Conservatives were no better. That loophole has been around for a long time but the Liberals let it be because they are afraid of being taxed. They have spent four years doing nothing even though this is such an important issue, an issue so crucial to our identity. Our stories are disappearing along with our journalism and possibly even our democracy. A number of us have pointed out that many of the weekly papers that cover local politics in every one of our ridings are closing. They are closing because advertisers can jump on that kind of outrageous advantage. That recommendation I just quoted was the first one in the January 2017 report. That was two years ago, and it came from an expert. The heritage minister requested the report. Two years have passed, and nothing has been done. The government has not done a thing about it even though that was the first recommendation.

Here is another recommendation from the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage's June 2017 report:

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the Minister of Canadian Heritage explore the existing structures to create a new funding model that is platform agnostic and would support Canadian journalistic content.

That was two years ago. Let me point out that both the heritage minister and the Prime Minister summarily dismissed the report.

Here is the second recommendation from the other report from January 2017:

Extend GST/HST to all digital news subscription and advertising revenue for companies not qualifying under new Section 19 criteria. Rebate GST/HST for those that do qualify

Nothing was done. That was in the January 2017 report published by Mr. Greenspon, a distinguished journalist and expert. The Liberals did nothing.

Now, a little like the huge boondoggle they made of the SNC-Lavalin affair, the government decided once again to improvise. It slipped a line somewhere in the omnibus bill, thinking no one would notice, but they were wrong. The government should have consulted everyone. It would have been nice if it had not tried to hide this in a huge bill the size of an Eaton's catalogue. What happened as a result? Many jobs were lost in Quebec. People might be in difficult situations, but it is not the government's problem. It is, however, a serious problem for Quebec.

Once again, a committee was thrown together at the last minute. It smacks of conflict and does not look good on the members opposite. They have always known just how much the unions hate them because they are always saying they do not care about the news or the situation facing our media here in Quebec and Canada.

[English]

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have to congratulate the member opposite for his performance. I think post-politics, the Canada Council for the Arts may be interested in funding his acting career.

It is important to recognize that our government is taking action. It has been taking action for the last three years. I find it quite difficult to accept the member opposite's position that the government has not moved on this.

Could the member identify aspects of the fund and the need to support journalists that he finds particularly important to him?

•(1315)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members that they should not be making personal attacks on individuals. They can talk about procedures and the things being said, but personal attacks on individuals are not accepted.

I think the parliamentary secretary may want to withdraw a bit of what he indicated to the member. Does he wish to withdraw his comment?

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, that was not my intention. I withdraw my comment if it was taken as offensive.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Madam Speaker, I will focus on the second part of the member's comment, so that my answer is as constructive as possible.

*Business of Supply*

In the second part of his comment, the member asked me what we would recommend. First, we would recommend that the government take things seriously and acknowledge that information promotes a better democracy. Such a fundamental issue should have been tackled much earlier. It would have been preferable not to wait until the last minute, as the government did with a number of very important bills. It also should have done some research and not thought it was so superior that it was above criticism.

Obviously, it is going to be a bit controversial when the government chooses a union that has very much taken a side in the debate and when it makes the announcement at the last second, right before the election. Nevertheless, the Conservatives should not be surprised. They are hated by almost everyone in the news and communications sector. The Conservatives hung us out to dry for 10, or even 14, years, because they were threatening the government.

As for the first part of your comment, you claim to have done things. The Canada Council for the Arts budget was doubled four years ago. Stop saying that; you have not done a thing since.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Again, I would remind the member that he must address his remarks to the Chair, not to the government directly.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I used to sit on the heritage committee with the hon. member from Quebec. I want him to know that my home province of Saskatchewan is the second jurisdiction in Canada to have a provincial sales tax on Netflix. Quebec was the first, and Saskatchewan followed up earlier this year with a 6% tax.

I will say a couple of things. I worked for Bell under the CTV brand. There was a lack of innovation from Bell, Rogers and other multimedia companies in this country. They were simply beaten by Netflix, which had been out for two or three years.

Instead of Unifor telling the government where the \$600 million should go, perhaps Unifor could use its membership dues to partner with these media giants it is the union for. That would be a far better use of union dues. Instead of using government tax money, Unifor could partner with Bell and Rogers and form a relationship, because they are in bed with each other right now. What the government has proposed is ridiculous.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert has less than a minute to respond.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** That will not be easy, Madam Speaker.

I thank my colleague. I know he means well, and I appreciate his province taking the lead.

He is absolutely right. This definitely demonstrates how pathetic it is that this government does not have the guts to do the obvious and just apply the GST to a service like this. He is right that we all need to work together. As a result of the government's inability to show federal leadership and persuade the telecom giants to join the comprehensive review, the stakeholders are left to watch as the

system falls to pieces. They are petrified of being swallowed up by Big Brother, Google, GAFA and others.

[*English*]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to today's motion, because it addresses something that I think is an important public policy issue. It is a matter that touches the public interest. At the very least, I think we all agree that having an independent and well-resourced media is an important part of any well-functioning democracy. That is why it has been concerning over the last number of years to see newsrooms closing down and journalists being put out of work because of the revenue challenges among more traditional media.

As much as news is circulating more than ever on social media, social media is not a content generator. It does not write the stories. Fewer and fewer journalists are writing the stories that are being circulated ever and ever wider, but that is not an increase in the amount of quality journalism that is happening; it is just a wider audience for the smaller amount of journalism that is happening.

The lack of funding, or the inability of news organizations to be able to hire journalists to do proper investigative reporting, is a serious problem. I think it is a public interest problem. That is where I disagree with the member for Thornhill, who has said on a number of occasions that, essentially, government should be blind to this problem and not engage with it or that there is no room for some kind of public policy fix. If we simply leave this to the market, what we have seen is that the market is failing to support good journalism. There is a need for a solution. If the market can provide one, so be it. It is just that we are not seeing that, and we are running out of time as more and more newsrooms close down and we have fewer people doing the good work journalists do in Canada.

We in the NDP agree that something needs to be done. We have been calling for that for a long time. Part of our frustration is that this is kind of an 11th-hour solution, if we can call it that. It is an 11th-hour proposal by the Liberal government to finally start, maybe, doing something about a problem that has existed for a long time and that has been allowed to get to a point where it is actually becoming quite serious. To drop it at the end of this Parliament is unfortunate.

We do not all agree on various components of this debate, but the fact that there is so much contention about the solution is evidence that we needed a longer timeline if we wanted to try to find some kind of consensus, or least a meeting of the minds, among the parties in this place. We needed more time to be able to do that. To have the proposal come out just recently, when the end of Parliament is only a few weeks away, really does not bode well for finding a solution that as many political actors as possible could sign on to. That is important.

The NDP has known for a long time that big corporate money has played a role in media, and we have often been on the receiving end of what that means in terms of editorial opinion, the kinds of stories that are covered and the angles of the stories that are covered. We on this side know all about what money means to the media and the frustration of finding people who are ideologically opposed to a point of view and do not want to see it succeed.

*Business of Supply*

We have had a lot of people in the media over the years. We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike this year. We have heard lots of stories about the coalition between business leaders and newspapers and what they did to demonize strikers and misrepresent their position. We have seen that carry on through the last 100 years, too.

There are great journalists doing independent work. There has always been the question of money in media. As long as we have a solution on offer, and the government is going to be providing subsidies, the NDP has no objection to workers being at the table. Unifor represents over 12,000 workers in the industry. We know, because we are not outside unions looking in, that Jerry Dias can have his opinion, and Unifor, as a larger union, can have its position when it comes to an election.

Brad Honywill is an established, retired journalist who worked for the Sun Media chain, which, incidentally, is not known for giving the Conservatives an unfair hearing. Members here who have read the work of the Sun Media chain will not feel, if they are giving an honest assessment, that the Sun Media chain does not fairly communicate the views of the Conservative movement of Canada.

● (1320)

That was his career. He can speak on that panel with a sense of independence, as a retired journalist, and that is fine. That is separate from the political activities of the union. It may be that there is some misunderstanding on the part of Conservatives as to how large democratic organizations work. However, to have somebody from Unifor, with a long history and experience in the industry, being named as one member of eight on the panel to make recommendations about what the rules will be, and to further nominate a second independent panel, is not the end of the world.

That does not mean that this is the best model. This has been coming like a slow train wreck for years and years, as my hon. colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert said very well, and I commend him for all the work he has done on this, over years. This has been coming for a long time. As my hon. NDP colleague from Saskatoon pointed out earlier, the reason this is happening is because of a kind of structural issue within the industry. It has to do with the fact that this is an industry that heretofore has been funded through ad revenue. The problem is that ad revenue for traditional media is drying up because it is going to new media. When businesses or any advertisers spend money on ads through Facebook, Google or another Internet company, they are not charged the same tax that they would be if they were advertising in Canadian media. They are not charged the sales tax, the GST. Therefore, these social media platforms already have a number of inherent advantages in terms of their reach and being able to target.

On top of that, government policy offers further incentive to advertise with those companies by helping to make it cheaper by not applying a sales tax. Those who advertise in Canadian print publications can write off their taxable revenue as a business, but they cannot do that if they are advertising in print in U.S. or international publications. However, when it comes to the Internet, even though Facebook and Google are American-based companies, they are treated as Canadian companies. Therefore, Canadian advertisers are able to get the same tax advantage for advertising

with Facebook and Google as they are in Canadian print publications.

Those are two taxation measures that incentivize advertising with foreign-based advertisers as opposed to Canadian publications. That is at the root of the crisis of revenue that is causing newsrooms to shut down or to lay off journalists and run on a skeleton crew. What is odd about this proposal is that it does not cut to the core of the structural incentives that government policies have created to advertise with non-Canadian advertisers online. Why would the government come up with a band-aid solution when there are clear structural issues? There are recommendations from a number of different parliamentary committees and other independent groups that name that problem, so why the Liberal government would not be concerned with addressing the structural issue rather than slapping a Band-Aid on it is anyone's guess.

I have not been here for as long as some, but it is coming up on four years. What I have seen, when it comes to pharmacare, for instance, is that there are clear proposals for how to move forward, such as expanding coverage for Canadians to save billions of dollars every year, and Liberals are not prepared to do it. Why is that? It is because that would hurt the corporate profits of their buddies.

When we look at climate change and some of the real things that need to happen to effectively combat climate change from the Canadian perspective, we run up against the Liberals' desire to protect the profits of the oil and gas industry. They continue to offer subsidies. They bought an old pipeline. They did not build a new one, but spent \$4.5 billion on an existing pipeline to pay out Kinder Morgan's shareholders, because that was consistent with protecting the profits of their corporate friends.

We again have a model where, instead of allowing new media start-ups to be eligible for this funding, because a lot of people are interested in that, this is a program that favours the established print industry. It did not have to be that way. That was a decision that the Liberals made, once again, no coincidence, and that benefits established corporate interest over everyone else. There is definitely a pattern. Unfortunately, it has had an influence on this. They waited too long to present a real solution, so we are finding it hard to find agreement before the next election. That is unfortunate if it causes Canadians to feel less trustful of journalism during an election.

● (1325)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I really wanted to ask a question of the previous speaker, but time did not permit.

However, I think it is important that the NDP gets a better understanding of the situation when it comes to our culture and arts. We have spent well over \$2 billion, which is a record investment in culture and arts. This government does not need to be lectured by the New Democrats on that issue when we have delivered historical amounts of money.

*Business of Supply*

In regard to the media, this is not the first time we have responded to the changes that have been taking place within our media. We have spent, likely in the neighbourhood of \$50 million in terms of assistance. This tax credit program is going to go a long way in providing for, in many ways, its survival. In other ways, it will be complementing, allowing for other forms of compensation to potentially take place in other sectors, whether it is private advertising or whatever else it might be.

This is something that I believe has been well received, and some of the strongest advocates for it were in fact union members. Would the member not agree that is a good thing?

● (1330)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I think a good thing would have been to have a plan that first of all addresses the structural issues that are causing this upheaval within the industry. It would not just be a one-year to a five-year funding fix on a model that is not working. I proposed some ways that the government could address that structural deficit.

The second thing good thing would have been for the Liberals, instead of sitting on their hands for four years, to have presented this plan much earlier in the Parliament. There would have been opportunities to make changes and tweaks, in light of criticism that is bound to come up, to try to get closer to something that more people from more sides of the political spectrum could wholeheartedly endorse. We could find a way to ensure that Canada continues to have quality independent journalism, which is important for our democracy, and to do it in a way that is the least politicized as possible, because that is an inherent part of that project.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I sat on the finance committee, and this bailout is embedded in an omnibus budget bill. I think it deserves mentioning, again, that this is something the government promised not to do.

This is also a kind of three-package deal. In it, there is a panel that is going to oversee a tax credit. I cannot find any other tax credit the government has which has a government-appointed panel that decides on it. Typically, we let the Canada Revenue Agency decide who meets the eligibility criteria that is set out in the law.

Does the member know of any other tax credit where the government basically appoints a panel to decide who is in or out? If he knows of any, I would love to hear it.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, the short answer is no, I do not. However, I thank the member for bringing up the fact that this is couched in an omnibus budget bill.

Whatever anyone thinks of this, whether they think it is the greatest thing since sliced bread or that this is a horrible end to Canadian democracy, and more likely it is somewhere in between, what people should be able to agree on is that it is significant to have this amount of government funding available to media organizations. It is the kind of thing that deserves a real debate.

However, the government said, for instance, that it was going to put the practice of omnibus budget bills in the past. It criticized the previous government for making unilateral changes to the Elections Act, which the current government subsequently did. It said it would

not move forward with unilateral changes to the rules of Parliament, but then tried to do exactly that.

This is another industry that touches on the very fundamentals of Canadian democracy. We should have had more of an effort by the government to bringing people on all sides of the political spectrum onboard, that this would be done in a way that people expect. Instead, the government has taken the same ham-fisted approach it has taken to changes to Parliament, changes to the Elections Act and to implementing its budget bills.

I would note that in that same budget bill, the government is adopting the Conservatives' misguided approach to immigration. That in itself deserves real and sustained debate. Instead the government is tucking it into the back of a budget bill. There certainly is not time to debate both of these significant changes that are under the auspices of a single bill, let alone the other content of the bill that we have not touched on in today's debate.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

The institution of freedom of the press is an underpinning of any democratic nation. It is the principle by which we understand that journalists or those in civil service investigate policy, politicians, and comings and goings, and shed light and perhaps different viewpoints on what is going on in our country. This is in order to ensure that we have the best public policy and work toward equality of economic opportunity. Regardless of political stripe, I hope we all agree that the institution of freedom of the press is very important.

I want to contrast the institution of freedom of the press with something that my colleague just said, which was on the industry of journalism. The institution is different from the industry. The institution of freedom of the press does not imply that somehow someone has to make a profit off of this. What we are talking about today is the state interfering in the industry of the press and whether or not that is appropriate in terms of the ability for the institution in Canada to survive.

In 2013, PwC's report, "Online Global entertainment and media outlook 2013-2017", predicted that newspaper revenue would drop by 20% by 2017. This was not attributed to a lack of consumer demand for journalism, but was attributed directly to a rise in advertising revenue being shifted from print media to online media. It will be no surprise to anyone in this room, or anyone listening at home, that it is because the way we consume information has changed dramatically in the last several years. Many of us consume information on our phones. We consume information with short video blogs. We consume information from content that it is pushed to our phones.



*Business of Supply*

The industry of journalism in Canada knew, through its own corporate forecasts and reports like this one, that its business model was failing. It begs the question of why the taxpayers of Canada should have to bail out a business model that was failing, which is print journalism. These organizations should have known, as any industry does, that they would have to adapt in order to survive. Anyone who owns a business knows that business models can change. For example, look at taxi companies when Uber came in. When something is disruptive to an industry, one has to adapt or one does not survive.

We are now debating whether the government should be bailing out a failed business model, or a failed industry. Unfortunately, what the government has chosen to do in answer to that question affects the institution of freedom of press. Anyone of any political stripe should be concerned about this. A partisan political actor should not be allocating tax dollars in such a way that it could harm the independence of the institution of free press in Canada.

How does that happen? What the Prime Minister has done is to allocate \$600 million, which is a lot of money that could be used for a lot of things, to a select group of industry actors in journalism, based on criteria that the government selects and doles the money out on. If those industry actors are not sympathetic to the government of the time, are they inherently credible in terms of actors in the institution of free press? That is what is at stake here.

• (1335)

Anybody who votes Liberal, Green or NDP should be as comfortable with a Conservative-led government selecting those criteria as they are their own. They would have a very hard time standing here arguing for, let us say, Stephen Harper having control over the Canadian media. If an argument does not work both ways from political strife, then we actually have a big problem. Somebody who votes NDP or Green should have a huge concern.

Let us park, for a second, whether Canadian taxpayers should bail out a failed industry that has failed to transition to digital online. This is really about the credibility of anybody at any journalistic institution who takes money out of this fund and for those who choose not to take funds or who are not eligible to take those funds, whether they will be able to compete with people who now have a partisan interest, and they do have a partisan interest.

The government has appointed Unifor to the panel of people who will select the criteria by which the government doles out the funds. Unifor has a publicly stated, publicly funded campaign against a political party in this place. This weekend on the political talk shows, the leader of Unifor said that he should be on that panel because he had a score to settle. He said that other industry and media had endorsed the Conservatives before and why should he not be able to settle the score.

What we are debating here is which partisan actor is better suited to influence the industry on which the institution of freedom of the press is based in Canada. That is disgusting.

We have had a lot of discussions in this place about foreign influence in our election and fake news. It is the individual responsibility of every Canadian to understand how to critically evaluate information presented as news. There is no way the

government can regulate that. Many of the existing actors in Canadian industry have responded to this drop in online content by trying to build their own media platforms and responding with clickbait. We do not have a lot of print journalism that I would constitute as journalism anymore. There is some, but a lot of it is editorialization on both the right and the left. Why would Canadian taxpayers perpetuate a failing industry that has such strong ramifications for Canadian democracy?

I know why the Liberal government is doing this and I know why the NDP supports it. When people control the press, they control people. That is what is happening here. Jerry Dias said that he had a score to settle. People cannot control the press through the state. Let us vigorously debate policy and let us even want to throttle each other over differences in public policy. However, to somehow argue with any sort of a fig leaf that this is anything other than the state controlling the press is shameful.

Columnists who have written about the fact that any journalist who works for an organization that takes money from this fund will have to work ten times harder to be credible are right, and they are brave for saying that.

At the end of the day, this bailout will not save print journalism in Canada. The only way that is saved is if these organizations figure out how to transition to the new digital reality, which many of them have failed to do.

In the strongest possible terms, I oppose any sort of interference in this regard. We need to have a conversation about what the state's role is in funding news writ large in Canada. We need to oppose partisan political actors being involved in the doling out of tax dollars to save an industry on which the institution of freedom of speech in our country is underpinned. I refuse to stand here, partisan hat off, and say as a Conservative that I would be excited about that level of control. No, we should have vigorous debate that challenges dogma, not that perpetuates a monopoly that is controlled by partisan actors. It is wrong and it needs to stop.

• (1340)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened very closely to the member opposite. I cannot help but think of the word hypocrisy. During the time of Stephen Harper, his government invested tens of millions of dollars annually in print or news magazines.

On the one hand, former Prime Minister Harper and his government recognized that they needed to support news magazines. Now that member has made it very clear that this is a bad idea, a dumb idea. I do not know if she represents the entire Conservative caucus when she says that. Stephen Harper recognized it.

It seems to me that the Conservative Party is even going further to the right, getting closer to the Doug Ford mentality with respect to policy. Is the position of the member opposite the same as the Conservative Party and Doug Ford?

*Business of Supply*

• (1345)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite has committed two logical fallacies.

One is *tu quoque*, we are doing it too. He is comparing himself to a Conservative government. The policy he talked about was perpetuated under a Liberal government. Frankly, yes, I disagree with it. I do not think we should be funding failed business models. I do not think we should be bailing these organizations out, and we should stop it.

The other logical fallacy that he committed was a red herring. As opposed to refuting any of my argument with regard to the fact that the government's motive was to control the press and undermine freedom of speech, he tried to divert the argument with crass partisan politics. This topic deserves more than that. It deserves real, intelligent debate. For anyone watching, I offer my condolences for having to watch that debate failure.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Madam Speaker, there is one element in my colleague's speech with which I agree. It is that this crisis was foreseeable. We knew that the media, especially the print media, was in trouble, but that trouble was compounded by the fact that social media such as Facebook, Twitter and so on, were using, for free, the content created by that media. That accelerated the crisis. That acceleration took place when the Conservatives were in power and they did nothing about it.

I am not saying that what the Liberals are proposing is perfect. I am not saying this it is what we would proposed. However, leaving that crisis for the private sector to solve would be extremely dangerous for the future of our democracy and the future of the independence of the press. There would be very little protection of its independence.

I remind my colleague that we are not only talking about the independence of the media, which I agree is critical, but we are also talking about the viability of the media. We need to find a way to help the media transition to a different model. I would like to ask my friend how this Parliament, the government and the House of Commons can help the media sector to do this.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Madam Speaker, my colleague is arguing that it is the role of the state to bail out a failed business model. It is not. His premise is flawed.

These organizations have failed to transition to a digital online model. He is talking about content being shared on Twitter. There are organizations in Canada that are profitable. Blacklock's is an example that uses a paywall. People will pay for the information they want to consume. Those platforms are not stealing that advertising. When people share content, they get driven to online platforms and absorb the advertising there.

The failure of industry to respond in an already highly regulated market to the demand of the consumer does not mean it is the role of the state to bail them out. Therefore, my colleague's premise is completely flawed. It should be the role of the private sector to figure this out. It is incumbent on every Canadian to determine how he or she will consume information and reward those who respond to that demand accordingly.

We could be using that \$600 million for any other purpose, but to use it and undermine the freedom of the press is an abdication of our fiduciary responsibility to Canadian taxpayers.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today we are discussing a proposal by the government that is transparently ridiculous. I think my six-year-old daughter could well understand why it is ridiculous and government members should as well. It is a \$600-million government bailout fund for some journalists and media organizations. The distribution of that fund is to be controlled by a committee that includes Jerry Dias and the leadership of Unifor. Unifor's leadership has made it clear that it will use workers' funds for electoral purposes. It will campaign to defeat the Conservatives in the next election and for the re-election of the Liberal government. It calls itself "The resistance" to the Conservatives.

Overtly partisan people are responsible for meting out dollars to journalists; that is for determining who is a journalist and who is not for the purpose of this funding and for determining who gets the money and who does not.

Our contention on this side of the House is that in defence of an independent press, we should not have overtly partisan individuals or entities responsible for meting out funds on the basis, supposedly, of supporting non-partisan journalism. This should be very clear. Having people who are actively involved in campaigning for one particular outcome in the election and also determining who is a journalist for the purposes of receiving funding is outrageous. It is beyond outrageous. I think members across the way would understand this very easily if the shoe were on the other foot.

That is why thus far in this debate members of the government are trying to avoid the real conversation about the real issue by all means necessary. They are making all sorts of other points that do not really address their decision to have partisan mechanisms handing out funding and deciding which journalists get funding.

Government members have talked about the important role that journalists play in our democracy. Of course we strongly agree with that. However, the most important tool that journalists have in their toolbox is a recognition of their credibility. Why do people choose to get their information from credible media organizations as opposed to blogs? Why do people go to nationalpost.com as opposed to liberal.ca to get their media? It is because of credibility. People understand. They hope that when they go to a media organization they trust, they can expect the information to be credible, accurate and non-partisan.

When the government intervenes by determining who gets funding and who does not, it is undermining the perception of credibility in the press by the public. Thus, it makes the job of independent professional journalists that much more difficult. The government is eroding public confidence in the fourth estate and it is doing so for its own interests.

If the government really cares about defending the vital work our independent press does, it should actually listen to what members of the press are saying about the proposal.

*Business of Supply*

Don Martin from CTV says, “The optics of journalism associations and unions deciding who picks the recipients of government aid for journalism are getting very queasy.”

Andrew Coyne says, “It is quite clear now, if it was not already: this is the most serious threat to the independence of the press in this country in decades.”

Jen Gerson from CBC says, “If any of these associations or unions could be trusted to manage this “independent” panel, they would be denouncing it already.”

David Akin says, “I am a Unifor member and had no choice about that when I joined @globalnews. Unifor never consulted its membership prior to this endorsement. Had I been asked, I would have argued it should make no partisan endorsements.” He says “Jerry: I invite you to visit with Unifor members who are also members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. I’ll set the meeting up. You will learn first-hand how much damage you are doing to the businesses that employ us, to our credibility and how terribly uninformed you are.”

Chris Selley, from the National Post, says, “Liberals’ media bailout puts foxes in charge of the chickens.”

Chantal Hébert says, “Among the ranks of the political columnists, many fear it is a poison pill that will eventually do the news industry more harm than good.”

That is quite a list of intelligent, thoughtful journalists who comment on a range of different issues and who are known and have recognized names in Canadian democracy.

• (1350)

If the government says that its goal is to defend independent journalists like Don Martin, Jen Gerson, Andrew Coyne, David Akin and Chantal Hébert, then maybe it should listen to those independent journalists, because they understand that when the government pursues policies that undermine their perceived credibility in the eyes of the public, it makes it more difficult—not easier, but more difficult—for independent journalists.

Members of the government talk about an independent press. They talk about how having Unifor on a panel that doles out government funds and determines which journalists get the money and which do not, how having overtly partisan mechanisms controlling which journalists get funding and which who do not, is somehow in defence of an independent press. That is very Orwellian. War is peace; freedom is slavery; ignorance is strength. It is Orwellian to say that government partisans doling out funding arbitrarily to media organizations of their choice is a way to maintain the independence of the press.

Canadians should be concerned about it because journalists are concerned about it. Not only is it a waste of taxpayers’ money and not only is the government trying to intervene to stack the deck in its favour for the next election, but it undermines the independence of the press and it creates greater challenges for the press as they try to do their job. It makes it harder for them to fight back against those who are challenging their credibility.

In response to this, Jerry Dias from Unifor said that he is entitled to his free speech. I agree that all Canadians are entitled to free speech, but he is not entitled to use Canadians’ tax dollars to promote those particular views.

Further, we expect certain positions in our democracy to be independent. We expect budgets not to be involved in overtly partisan politics. We expect the Clerk of the Privy Council not to be involved in overtly partisan politics—oops—and we expect some of these people to be outside of speaking about elections and parties. We certainly expect that the people responsible for doling out funding to journalists or deciding which organizations get the money would indeed be independent and would be separate from politics.

This is about preserving the independence of our institutions. We on this side of the House stand for preserving the independence of those institutions. It is not good enough to say it; we have to actually leave those institutions alone and not interfere with them. We should not interfere in the independence of our journalists, our public servants, or the functions of our judicial system, which is another problem. There are so many cases of the Liberals not respecting the independence of our institutions and interfering with them, and they are doing it again with respect to independent media.

The government’s argument is that Unifor should be represented because it represents journalists. Here are some important numbers: Unifor is a very large union, representing over 300,000 people. There are about 12,000 journalists in that number; less than 5% of the membership are journalists, so this is not an organization that speaks uniquely and exclusively for journalists. In fact, journalists represent a very small part of the overall membership of the organization, so claiming that Jerry Dias can speak particularly for journalists in the context of public policy and advocacy widely misses the mark, especially since we hear so many journalists speaking out against this situation.

This is part of a broader pattern. We see repeatedly by the Liberal government efforts to stack the deck in its favour to undermine the independence of our institutions. We saw this first with the electoral system, when the government wanted to change the electoral system to its advantage and wanted to do it without a referendum. When the consultations came back and were different from what the government wanted, it ordered another round of consultations, again trying to stack the deck. The government tried to change the electoral system to its advantage and it failed. We called the government out on it.

The government also tried to change the Standing Orders of this place. Without the agreement of all parties, it tried to bring in automatic closure, again undermining the role of the opposition in the House of Commons. The government has tried to do this multiple times, but we successfully stood against it.

We called on the government to clamp down on foreign interference in elections; it refused to act on that.

The government has unilaterally acted to control the structure of the leadership debate. It has pushed through other changes to the Canada Elections Act that allow third party groups to massively outspend political parties in the pre-election period. The government did that to stack the deck.

*Statements by Members*

Now again we see, in its efforts to undermine the independence of the media by having overtly partisan people controlling the handouts that are going to media, that the government is again trying to stack the deck in its favour.

The government does not respect the independence of the media. It does not respect the independence of Parliament. It does not respect the independence of the opposition, and that more than anything else is the reason that the Liberal government must be defeated.

• (1355)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member will have five minutes for questions and comments after question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Markham—Stouffville, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, today the government received the final report from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

I attended the closing ceremony and was moved by the powerful testimony of families, grandmothers and elders.

The report has 231 calls for justice. Let us highlight calls to which all Canadians are asked to respond.

One, read the report; two, speak out against racism, sexism and misogyny; three, hold governments to account; and four, decolonize ourselves—learn the true history of Canada.

Our response must be more than words. Governments must recognize the rights of indigenous peoples and must make investments in education, housing and restorative justice to bring about true reconciliation and stop the violence against indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited and trans people.

We all have a responsibility to act. I will be an ally—will you?

Please read the report.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

[Translation]

### ALFRED-PELLAN

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the parliamentary session winds down, I want to take a moment to look back on our fantastic term in office.

On top of our Liberal government's major accomplishments, like the Canada child benefit and the free trade agreements we signed, since 2015, Alfred-Pellan has seen a 186% increase in Canada summer jobs placements, more than \$184,000 for seniors through the new horizons for seniors program, nearly \$115,000 for accessibility upgrades, more than \$760,000 to support deaf

Canadians participating and competing in sporting events, and nearly \$3.5 million to support businesses in Alfred-Pellan.

I supported many organizations, including the Alzheimer Society Laval, the Fondation du Dr Julien, la Fondation Cité de la santé and all the local festivals, as well as about seven community clean-up and tree planting events.

[English]

I am proud of the results obtained since since October 2015 and I am determined to keep on defending the interests of my constituents.

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### LEON DOPKE

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to rise in the House today to pay tribute to my constituent, World War II hero Lieutenant Leon Dopke, who passed away on May 4 in Niagara.

Leon enlisted in the army at the age of 14 in response to German troops attacking and destroying the Polish Air Force. He went on to fight with the Allies in Britain, Poland, Italy, Sweden and France, culminating in the liberation of Bologna, Italy, and the capture of Mussolini.

When I was Minister of National Defence, often the topic of medals would come up. I remember bragging about Leon's array of medals. I said that if we spread them out across his chest, they would have stretched down to his elbow.

Freedom is not free, and no one knew that better than Leon Dopke. As we approach D-Day on June 6, in what may be my last S. 0. 31 in the House, I am privileged to pay homage to Leon Dopke.

I thank Leon for standing on guard for Canada. Democracy is indebted to him.

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### NEWMARKET FARMERS' MARKET

**Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to express my heartfelt congratulations to the Newmarket Farmers' Market, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this season.

The first market was actually held on June 1, 1871. Spurred on by this tradition, the market was revived, and the latest version began in May 1999. Every Saturday morning from May to October, a band of farmers, vendors and volunteers transforms the Riverwalk Commons into a bustling hive of activity reminiscent of the town's historic beginnings as a new market.

Thanks to the driving force of Marilyn Church, Joe Sponga and Jackie Pleyter, the market was revived 20 years ago. Many others, such as Margaret Koopmans, Julia Shipcott and Matt Haggerty helped ensure its early survival and later success.

Of course, a special thanks is owed to all the farmers who make the farmers' market what it is. As its motto goes, come for the freshness and stay for the fun. We'll see everyone at the market.

*Statements by Members***NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY**

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last year I attended a ceremony for the creation of the Missanabie Cree First Nation Reserve. This community joins 17 first nations that make up a significant part of the geography and culture of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

This June, as we mark National Indigenous History Month and the contributions of indigenous peoples, I encourage everyone to visit indigenous communities, meet their neighbours and join in celebrations such as those that will take place on National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21.

[Translation]

The powwow season begins in June and anyone who has ever participated in one knows how important they are.

[English]

For those interested in celebrating indigenous cultures and communities, there may be no better place than Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, where the opportunity to do so will take people from the shores of lakes Huron and Superior to the heart of the boreal forest.

I wish my indigenous friends the very best as they celebrate their incredible history, heritage and communities. Happy National Indigenous History Month.

\* \* \*

●(1405)

**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES DAY**

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the women and men of our Canadian Armed Forces are at the core of everything we do, and Canadians are deeply proud of them.

On Canadian Armed Forces Day, I rise to thank the members who are taking part in the national sentry program, standing guard and watching over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They honour the sacrifice and memory of members who fought for peace and security in Canada and around the world. I thank members French, Comeau, Renzelli, Barrett, Teminsky, Gagnon, Barnes, Bryan, Hira, Power, Alfallah, Ryu, Hill, Masseo, Cook, Booth, Fenton, Parker and Conquist.

Our government will support the Canadian Armed Forces as they support all Canadians. From their efforts to help fellow Canadians facing floods and wildfires to stabilizing regions abroad, their actions are selfless, noticed and appreciated.

I ask all members of this House to rise and join me in thanking our Canadian Armed Forces members for all they do.

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**AIR CADETS**

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, I had the honour to attend the 60th annual ceremonial review of the 699 Jasper Place Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, fondly known as the pink panther squadron. Where did the name come from? The cadets used to have white surplus RCAF flight

suits. Someone had the idea of dyeing them a bright orange just before the cadets left to volunteer at the Abbotsford air show, and the result, in true Canadian military procurement fashion, was not as intended. The overalls came out a bright pink. It being too late to address the issue, the 699 cadets proudly wore them. Thus, the pink panthers were born.

The panthers have a long history of producing community leaders, with many going on to serve our country proudly in our air force, navy and army. Their proud motto is “Never Settle”, and they do not.

Congratulations to the pink panthers on their 60th anniversary. I thank the many volunteers who help develop our cadets into our community's future leaders.

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**CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House that Prince Edward Islander Hannah MacLellan will be representing Canada at a UN conference on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York next week.

At 20, Hannah has already made her mark in P.E.I. politics. She was the driving force in the adoption of a bill known as Hannah's Bill, which passed through the P.E.I. legislature in 2016.

While working toward a degree in human rights and disability studies, Hannah has been an active member of the Carleton University Young Liberals and is a valuable employee in my office. She has been a fixture in the gallery of this place, especially during the debate on the government's bill to create a barrier-free Canada. Hannah most recently represented the riding of Cardigan in Parliament for Daughters of the Vote, where she gave an impassioned speech on Bill C-81.

I am proud to say that persons with disabilities have a formidable advocate in Ms. MacLellan. Today also happens to be her birthday. I wish Hannah a happy birthday.

\* \* \*

**PORTUGUESE HERITAGE MONTH**

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in June we celebrate Portuguese Heritage Month and the great contributions made by Canadians of Portuguese descent. The Luso community in Canada numbers over 480,000 members. We thank them for their contributions in shaping our communities from coast to coast to coast.

Just last year, we welcomed a special guest, Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa, whose first state visit to Canada was a testament to the continually growing co-operation between our two nations.

*Statements by Members*

Portugal Day, June 10, celebrated both in Portugal and around the world by Portuguese, honours the 16th century poet Luís Vaz de Camões, whose prose captured Portugal's age of discovery. It is a special day of pride for me, both as a Portuguese immigrant who came to Canada at the age of two with my family and as an MP who represents a riding in Mississauga, a city that 20,000 Portuguese Canadians call home.

I am proud to call June Portuguese Heritage Month.

*Viva Canada. Viva Portugal.*

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a lot of promises during the 2015 election to balance budgets and support the middle class. He has failed on his promise to lower the federal debt-to-GDP ratio every single year he has been in office. He has failed on his promise to run tiny \$10-billion deficits, outspending every government in Canadian history, outside of those that were fighting global wars or recessions. He broke his vow on a key pledge that the new 33% income tax bracket cuts and increases would be revenue neutral. He has not fulfilled his promise to provide a costing analysis for government bills. He broke his pledge to invest in better home care services for families struggling to support loved ones. He did not remove the GST, as promised, on new capital investments in affordable rental housing. He botched his promise to balance the budget by 2019.

Now he is making more promises for the election this fall. It is no wonder Canadians do not trust him anymore. He is simply not as advertised.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

**ALS**

**Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, June is ALS Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness and funds for research and support services for this devastating disease.

[*Translation*]

Approximately 3,000 Canadians are currently living with ALS, a disease that can strike anyone and that affects entire families.

[*English*]

We must continue to ensure that those with ALS feel supported, advocate for better awareness and promote research initiatives that will help us find a treatment.

[*Translation*]

ALS is a heartbreaking disease and we should all try to do more. This cause is very dear to me. It is important to continue to share this message.

[*English*]

In memory of my predecessor, the remarkable and inspiring MP Mauril Bélanger, I would like to recognize all those affected by ALS

across the country. Our hearts are with them this month and every month.

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**FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, late last fall, the House of Commons passed a resolution recognizing the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month. This will be the first national coast to coast to coast celebration of Filipino heritage.

In the next year and a half, the Filipino population will be one million here in Canada, so it is a great opportunity, no matter what region of the country one lives in, to make note that June is Filipino Heritage Month. People should go out, enjoy themselves and understand and appreciate how much the Filipino community has impacted every aspect of our society, whether socially or economically, everywhere.

It is a wonderful opportunity for us to show a little love and appreciate the valuable contributions the Filipino community has made to Canada.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**2019 GENERAL ELECTION**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, three and a half years ago, the Liberals were elected on all sorts of promises that they did not keep.

Let us not forget that they promised to run three small deficits and then balance the budget in 2019. Instead, they ran three big deficits and will have a \$20-billion deficit in what was supposed to be a zero-deficit year.

The Liberals solemnly promised that 2015 would be the last first-past-the-post election. In the end, the Prime Minister decided it suited his purposes to forget all about that promise, so that is what he did.

The Liberals promised that they would do away with omnibus bills, but they did not. The outcome was the terrible and unprecedented cabinet crisis arising from the Liberal SNC-Lavalin scandal. How did that crisis end? It ended with the Liberals ousting two senior female ministers from caucus.

The Liberals promised to make massive investments in infrastructure. At this point, they have spent less than one-third of what they promised. However, they took \$4.5 billion in taxpayers' money and sent it to Houston.

Quebeckers are no fools. On October 21, Quebeckers and Canadians are going to tell the Liberals that enough is enough and that it is time for them to go.

[English]

### WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 99% of all businesses in Canada are small and medium sized, yet only 16% are owned by women. When half of our population owns less than a quarter of our businesses, our economic potential is held back.

In Fredericton, Bethany Deshpande is an example of how, with support, women entrepreneurs drive the economic growth in Canada that has helped us create one million jobs.

[Translation]

In 2016, Bethany established SomaDetect to market technology that can measure all the key components of raw milk. Thanks to support from our government, this young innovative company now has 26 employees and works with farmers across North America.

[English]

Our investments helped SomaDetect grow its business, develop its technology, and trade across North America. Fredericton can be proud of SomaDetect. It is driving trade on our continent and creating jobs in our community.

Our government will always support women entrepreneurs like Bethany, because they will drive the economic growth that will create another million jobs in Canada.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

### LABOUR

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian workers should not have their well-being threatened by unclear and unfair workplace practices. Imagine being suspended from a job without pay, without a clear reason and without a clear path to reinstatement. This is what is happening to pre-boarding screening employees at Canadian airports.

In one recent example, a screening officer was observed taking a throat lozenge. This was deemed unprofessional conduct by the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. The employee's required CATSA authorization was revoked, and he was removed from the workplace. Retraining was ordered but was not available for a full two weeks. The employee was not paid for that time.

There are countless similar examples from airports right across the country. All these employees work for a third party, so while CATSA determines if employees are allowed to work, these same employees have no ability to appeal CATSA decisions or to negotiate a fair process for handling disputes.

Thousands of airport workers have signed a petition. It is time for the government to change the legislation and fix this workplace injustice.

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### CARBON PRICING

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has tried to deceive Canadians into believing that he cares about the environment by introducing his so-called tax on

### Oral Questions

pollution. What we really have, however, is a Prime Minister who is more concerned about keeping up appearances than about actually doing something that will make a difference.

There is not a single case study that shows that a carbon tax actually reduces emissions. B.C. has had one since 2008, and its emissions have not come down at all. In fact, its emissions have gone up.

The Prime Minister claims that this is about reducing carbon emissions, but he is letting the biggest emitters off the hook. How hypocritical is that? In what world does it make sense to make soccer moms, local business owners and seniors on a fixed income pay a carbon tax, but big concrete factories get to go free; it is no big deal. This does not make sense in any world except the Liberals'.

The Liberals' carbon tax is not an environmental plan; it is actually a tax plan, and the Prime Minister, well, is not as advertised.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### VETERANS

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of cuts by the Conservative government, our government came to power with the promise to change things, and that is exactly what we are doing for our veterans.

[English]

The Conservative Party balanced the budget on the backs of the veterans. In Nova Scotia, the Conservative Party was trying to close Camp Hill Hospital, but we refused. We stopped it from doing this, and we added beds to meet the needs of our modern day veterans.

We invested in Canadians. A million jobs have been created and 300,000 kids have been lifted out of poverty. That is even better than advertised.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women released its report, and of course our hearts go out to those who have lost family and loved ones.

This report calls attention to gaps in our Criminal Code that make it easier for vulnerable people to be exploited. Advocates have been calling for more action on human trafficking specifically, which also includes funding for survivor services and public awareness.

Will the Prime Minister agree that more action needs to be taken to combat human trafficking and to protect those most vulnerable?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ending the ongoing national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We thank the commission for its work in identifying systemic causes of violence against indigenous women and girls and for its substantive recommendations on a path forward.

Our job now is to develop a national action plan to implement the recommendations, in partnership with first nations, Inuit and Métis governments and organizations, survivors and families. We must all work together to end this ongoing national tragedy, and Canadians should expect no less.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a healthy democracy depends on an independent press free from political influence.

That independence is now at risk because of a half-billion-dollar media bailout. The Canadian Association of Journalists has expressed serious concerns with the process, the role of the advisory panel and the powers given to the minister.

When will the Prime Minister realize how much he is harming our free press by trying to rig the upcoming election in his favour?

• (1420)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the free press being attacked all around the world, and today the Conservatives are officially joining that movement.

The Conservatives decided to use their allotted day to attack the Canadian press and journalists. That is worrisome. The Conservatives are directly attacking our democracy. On this side of the House, we will always support a free, strong and independent press.

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are attacking the Liberal government for stacking the deck in its favour. We all agree that an independent press is important. It is the Liberals who are undermining that in this country.

Unifor boss and good Liberal friend, Jerry Dias, said last week, “Am I coming out against [the Conservatives]? You’re [darn] right I am.” When asked if he was going to tone down his anti-Conservative campaign now that his union is on the Prime Minister’s so-called independent media panel, he said, “I’m going to probably make it worse.”

There are lots of other organizations that represent journalists. Why did the government put such a biased organization on this panel?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we do not want just CEOs around the table. Yes, we want the CEOs, but we also want people who are representing the entire industry: the journalists, the workers, the people in the newsroom, small papers,

large papers in English and French. Why? Because it is the right thing to do.

Conservatives want to get rid of the free press, and we want to make it stronger.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Unifor is the largest union of journalists in Canada. Its boss, Jerry Dias, said that he would go after our leader and would be his worst nightmare. He also promised that it would be worse than anything we could have imagined.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: will he finally do what’s right and take Unifor off the panel, yes or no?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** That is another attack on workers, Mr. Speaker.

Why are the Conservatives so scared of middle-class workers? Under the Harper regime, they waged a war on workers’ rights. They made it more difficult for workers to organize freely, bargain collectively and work in safe environments.

Unlike the Conservatives, we know that unions are our partners, not the enemy.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after weeks of backlash from members of the media across Canada, the Canadian Association of Journalists has publicly denounced this manoeuvre and criticized the Liberals’ lack of transparency and this panel’s lack of independence. With four months to go, the Prime Minister is trying to sway the election using \$600 million of Canadians’ money.

I will repeat my question for the Prime Minister. Will he take Unifor off the panel, yes or no?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from the outset, we have stressed the importance of having everyone around the table, including newspaper owners, the people working in the newsroom, and unions representing journalists and workers.

What we on this side of the House want is a free press, a strong press, an independent press. Instead of attacking the press and journalists, we hope the members across the aisle will join forces with us to make the press stronger and more dynamic.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the final report of the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls talked about the roots of this violence, the misogyny, the racism and the social economic injustice. It calls on us to accept our history of a colonial past.



*Oral Questions*

Will the Prime Minister join me in acknowledging this injustice against indigenous women and girls and the 2SLGBTQIA community, and commit to working with the indigenous community in implementing these recommendations, including sweeping reforms to the justice system, health care, well-being and rural transit?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the survivors and family members who shared their painful memories and stories with the commission, often putting their own health at risk in order to do so.

In the coming weeks, we will be announcing our initial response to the final report as well as a process and further steps to formally develop a national action plan. This plan will build on the efforts that our government is already taking to address this ongoing national tragedy, including reforms to child and family services that recognizes the inherent rights of indigenous peoples, and investments in women's shelters, housing, education and safety on the Highway of Tears.

• (1425)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is utterly heartbreaking to think of the horrific violence that so many indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people have suffered. Violence is still a reality for too many of them. This report cannot be left to gather dust on a shelf. We need to read it carefully and implement its recommendations.

Working together with indigenous organizations and communities, will the government endeavour to answer the report's calls for justice by finding solutions that will advance social justice?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our detailed response to the commission's interim report involves taking immediate action to keep indigenous women safe through investments in women's shelters, housing, education, child welfare reforms and safety on the Highway of Tears.

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#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to dealing with the climate emergency, the Prime Minister is not putting his words into action.

We presented a plan to win the fight against climate change and create quality jobs. For the future of our children and our workers, we need to stop talking and take immediate action. The NDP has the courage to act.

Will the Prime Minister join us and cancel the fossil fuel subsidies in order to build a safe future for generations to come?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see the NDP announce that it wants to do what we are already doing to fight climate change but in a way that will jeopardize good jobs. We have already seen their about-face on LNG Canada, the largest investment in Canada's history that created 10,000 jobs and has the support of British Columbia's NDP government. Meanwhile, 400 days have already gone by and the Conservatives still do not have plan to fight climate change.

[English]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the Liberals' plan. Their plan is to spend over \$15 billion on a pipeline and sticking to Stephen Harper's emissions targets. They put a price on pollution but exempted the biggest polluters. While Liberals delay change, Conservatives deny that a problem even exists.

New Democrats have a better way: a plan to create new jobs, reduce energy costs, and adopt legally binding emissions targets. Will the Prime Minister finally agree to take on the big polluters and commit to our new deal for climate action and good jobs?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we welcome the New Democrats bringing forward a plan that includes most of the components that are already in the plan we have brought forward to fight climate change, which is the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change.

This government takes the fight against climate change very seriously. We have been implementing measures that are included in the 50 different measures in the pan-Canadian framework. We intend to not only protect the planet through fighting climate change but to grow the economy, which is something, clearly, that the NDP does not understand.

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#### NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' media funding plan needs to be sent back to the drawing board. By putting overtly anti-Conservative Unifor on the panel, the Prime Minister is not only threatening the media's independence, but he is threatening the credibility of the panel. Now, even the Canadian Association of Journalists has spoken out about the lack of transparency of the bailout.

Will the Prime Minister start respecting journalists and fix this mess that he has created?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a series of attacks across the world against the free press, and today the Conservative Party has officially joined the movement. The Conservatives have decided to take the entire day to attack Canadian media and Canadian journalists. It is very concerning: the Conservatives are directly attacking our democracy. On this side of the House, we will always support a strong, free and independent press.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are completely disrespecting journalists with this panel. The panel is being used by the Prime Minister for his own political gain. We have learned that members of the panel are going to be muzzled, and will not be allowed to discuss whom they may have rejected. Guess what? If the Prime Minister does not like the panel's decision, he is going to override it, so no worries. So much for accountability and transparency. There is no respect for journalists in this panel.

Why is the Prime Minister always trying to interfere in democratic processes for his own political gain?

• (1430)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we see another attack on unions. Why are the Conservatives so scared of middle-class workers? Under the Harper regime, they waged a war on workers' rights. They made it more difficult for workers to organize freely, bargain collectively and work in safe environments. Unlike the Conservatives, we understand that unions are our partners, not the enemy.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has introduced a plan to give \$600 million to the media right before the election.

The Prime Minister himself is going to choose the members of the panel that will decide how the money is distributed. He will not commit to following their recommendations. He will not allow the panel's deliberations to be public. He is actually asking the panel members to sign non-disclosure agreements.

The Canadian Association of Journalists is calling for greater transparency. They are goddamned right.

Why does the Prime Minister want to decide, behind closed doors, which media—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member used a word that is unparliamentary and I would like him to apologize.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for using that word.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is something deeply offensive in that, not towards me or the government, but towards journalists, the men and women who have built their careers on integrity, professionalism, independence and the freedom to think, act and write.

Today the Conservatives are saying that these individuals can be bought. That is insulting to journalists, to our media and even to our democracy.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Unifor is a huge union, by far the one that represents the largest number of journalists in Canada.

Unifor was invited by the Prime Minister to be part of the panel that will decide who gets a part of the media bailout. Many journalists and the Canadian public are shocked by this appointment. Jerry Dias, the president of Unifor and good friend of the Prime Minister, was clear: his union will be the Conservatives' worst nightmare in 2019.

When will the Prime Minister end this anti-democratic farce?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is another direct attack against workers. Why are the Conservatives so afraid of the middle class and our workers?

They waged war against workers under the Harper government. They tried to make it harder to organize freely, bargain collectively and work in safe environments.

We know that unions are not the enemy. When will the Conservatives understand that?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Association of Journalists is calling for transparency when it comes to the government's \$600-million media bailout, but that is not what these Liberals are offering. Instead, journalists on the panel will be muzzled with confidentiality agreements. We will not know whom the Liberals reject for funding. Decisions will be made behind closed doors, and the minister can arbitrarily overrule the panel.

The Liberals have no problem listening to anti-Conservative organizations like Unifor. Why do they not listen to the Canadian Association of Journalists and stop trying to stack the deck in their own favour?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** In very few words, that is totally false, Mr. Speaker.

Let me talk about this program for print media: millions of dollars in support for the news and media industry, helping Canadians get the information they need, supporting expensive costs for shipping, special funding for underserved communities.

Does that ring a bell? This is the 2010 program brought in by the Conservatives to support the media. The difference here is that the Conservatives did not want an independent panel to decide; they wanted to pick themselves.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are working overtime to try to stack the deck in the next election. They are allowing foreign-funded special interest groups to continue to pour millions of dollars into Canada. They are using unlimited tax dollars to promote themselves, while preventing political parties from spending their own money. They have even put anti-Conservative Unifor on a panel to determine which media outlets covering the next election will get \$600 million from the government.

Will the Liberals finally stop playing games with our democracy and stop trying to rig the next election?

*Oral Questions*

•(1435)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are hearing the same old lines from the same old Conservative Party. What it did when it was in government is that it limited the rights of Canadians to vote. It made it more difficult for our most vulnerable to vote, and it made it even more difficult for Elections Canada to talk to Canadians about voting.

We changed that with Bill C-76. It is unfortunate that the Conservatives keep attacking our democratic institutions. They have gone after the CEO of Elections Canada; they have gone after the commissioner, and they have gone after the debates commissioner. That is unacceptable.

Here on this side, we are standing up for democracy.

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[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by the recent tariffs imposed on Mexico, Donald Trump's actions are spontaneous and unpredictable.

Last week, Vice-President Mike Pence was in town to try to pressure the Liberal government to ratify the new NAFTA. This is a bad agreement for farmers and for workers.

The Liberal government has always said that it will not sign a bad deal. Why, then, are they in such a hurry to sign the new NAFTA, which is a bad deal?

[English]

**Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians saw how hard it was to negotiate this agreement and achieve the lifting of tariffs. This was a task all of our country was involved in.

During that time, many Canadian families had real worries about whether or not they would lose their jobs. Canada did its job. We have a new NAFTA deal, which is a win-win outcome. We have a full lift of tariffs.

It is astonishingly irresponsible that the NDP seems preoccupied and prepared to plunge our country into a new negotiation in a period of great economic uncertainty.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the USMCA is being undermined.

U.S. Congress members are working to fix the deal to ensure provisions for environmental protections and lower-cost medicines. In response, the Liberals are trying to cut Congress at the knees by fast-tracking the deal, undermining its progress.

Moments after the U.S. vice-president left Ottawa, President Trump imposed new tariffs on Mexico. Liberals made this concession-based deal with the trade-off being certainty from Trump. Now that Trump has undermined the only gain the Prime Minister could cling to, will the Liberals finally stop undermining Congress, which is trying to fix the deal for all of us?

**Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the U.S. share an incredibly important relationship. It is naive to pretend otherwise.

Last week's visit was an opportunity to discuss the new NAFTA, which provides economic security for our workers. It was an opportunity to discuss the situation facing our two Canadians detained in China. As a result of this meeting, Canada and the U.S. released a joint statement firmly rejecting those wrongful detentions and calling for the immediate release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor.

These are important conversations that we will always continue with the United States.

\* \* \*

**AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General is sounding the alarm.

For the first time in Canadian history, he will be unable to complete his audits because the Liberal government has refused to fund his important work, including audits on cybersecurity and Arctic sovereignty. The Liberals keep claiming that they support the Auditor General, but those are just empty words unless they give his office the funds he needs. We are running out of time.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his position of starving the Auditor General's office and give him the funds he needs to do his job?

**Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting the ongoing and important work of the Auditor General. Where an officer of Parliament, such as the AG, identifies a need for additional resources, we consider that very carefully.

I would like to mention to the member opposite that it was the Conservatives who cut 10% out of the Auditor General's budget, and it was the Liberals who reinstated that funding.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at no point in Canadian history has the Auditor General ever said that he could not do his job for lack of funding, until now.

Under the previous government, he never cancelled audits. However, the Liberals have a track record of rewarding their friends and attacking those who would try to hold them to account. Canadians depend on the Auditor General to provide transparency and to tell us the truth. This is completely unprecedented, and it goes right to the heart of Parliament's responsibility for accountability.

Why does the government hate accountability so much that it is willing to silence the Auditor General?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to accountability and transparency. That the member opposite believes that by cutting the Auditor General's budget by 10% when they were in government the Conservatives were enabling him to do his job is completely unbelievable.

We consider these requests. We will ensure that the office can continue to do its important work for Canadians efficiently and effectively.

• (1440)

**The Speaker:** Order. Members should understand, of course, that freedom of speech in this place depends on members allowing others to speak, even when they disagree, and not interrupting.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, ever since the Office of the Auditor General of Canada was created, the Auditor General has always had the means to conduct his audits. In the history of Canada, the Auditor General has never threatened not to complete an audit for lack of funding, and yet that is precisely what is happening.

Last week, the Auditor General sounded the alarm. He wants to continue studying cybersecurity and Canada's Arctic sovereignty, but he lacks the necessary funding.

Will the government give the Auditor General the funds he needs to do his job?

**Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting the Auditor General. When the Conservatives were in power, they slashed his budget by 10%.

Why did they do that? Why did they not reinstate the AG's funding, which is what we, the Liberals, have done?

We will continue to support the very important work of this officer of Parliament.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the minister on her French, but we cannot agree with her just because she spoke French.

Her remarks are out of touch with the facts. Here are the facts: last week, the Auditor General said he no longer had sufficient funds to complete two audits. That is a first in Canadian history.

The Auditor General is like a watchdog. His job is to tell the government it is spending too much or spending unwisely. This government is keeping him very busy.

Will the government agree to the Auditor General's request so he can do his job properly, yes or no?

**Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting the important work of the Auditor General.

The Conservatives have me perplexed. They are the ones who cut the RCMP's budget by \$500 million and the Canada Revenue Agency's by \$1 billion. They cut funding for officers of Parliament.

Why—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. and Mrs. Karki, age 66 and 69, missed their flight from Vancouver to Edmonton after being left in their wheelchairs without assistance for hours at the airport. They could not go to a washroom or even get a drink of water.

The Liberal government passed an accessibility act that exempts the Canadian Transportation Agency from enforcing it. How can we rely on airlines to include people with disabilities when Liberals failed to make it mandatory in Bill C-81?

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are focusing on making Canada more accessible, and we are sorry for the situation that happened to this couple. Our government takes accessibility and transportation in Canada very seriously, and we are standing up for Canadian air passengers to ensure they are treated with fairness and respect.

Through the accessible Canada act, we are taking concrete steps to move forward a barrier-free Canada for all Canadians. The Canadian Transportation Agency is an expert in passenger considerations and complaints, and I would very much recommend that these individuals approach that agency with any complaints they have.

\* \* \*

**AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA**

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is the first time in the history of Canada that the government of the day has failed to adequately fund the work plan of the Auditor General.

Given that one of the planned audits being killed is on cybersecurity, how can the government possibly justify this unprecedented attack on the work of the Auditor General and the work of oversight and accountability?

• (1445)

**Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting the important work of the Auditor General. When an officer of Parliament, such as the Auditor General, makes a request for additional budget, we take that request very seriously.

My question for the member of the NDP is this: Where was he when the Conservatives cut 10% out of the Auditor General's budget, as well as cutting half a billion dollars out of the RCMP, millions out of the CRA and so many other things that they did to undermine our democracy and accountability?

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Members have to let other members speak, even when they do not like what they are hearing.

The hon. member for Davenport.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thalidomide was used off-label in the 1950s and early 1960s to treat morning sickness in pregnant women. The drug had devastating consequences and led to miscarriages, birth defects such as missing organs and stunted limbs, and premature death.

Our national government has taken action in launching a new, more compassionate support program: the Canadian thalidomide survivors support program. Could the Minister of Health please give us an update on the status of this program and how it will help thalidomide survivors?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the member for Davenport for her advocacy on behalf of thalidomide survivors.

Our government believes that thalidomide survivors deserve to live the rest of their lives in comfort and dignity. We have held a dialogue with the community and listened to their concerns with respect to the original program, which is why the new Canadian thalidomide survivors support program will use a probability-based medical assessment process to determine eligibility. I am very pleased to announce that the applications were officially launched today.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Prime Minister a question about the safety and security of Canadians. Since I did not get an answer, I will try asking again.

About two weeks ago, two men were arrested in Richmond Hill in possession of explosive materials, and 24 hours after the arrest we heard nothing further. The Prime Minister said this was not a matter of national security, even though the FBI is involved.

When will they stop taking Canadians for fools and give us more information?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the charges laid in court amply show, the case being investigated by the York Regional Police relates to the illegal possession of explosives. The investigation is early and ongoing. There is no information available about motive or other factors. To date, the York police have not referred the matter to federal policing or to the national security unit of the RCMP.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Prime Minister last week, he answered that this was not related to matters of national security. Today the minister has given us a little more information.

We simply want to know whether the government thinks that the two individuals who had explosives were a potential threat to national security.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the case is being investigated by the police of local jurisdiction: the York Regional Police. If they believe they have some need for the federal policing services of the RCMP or the national security services of the RCMP, they will ask for them. The FBI was referred to in the hon. gentleman's question and in the heckling across the floor. The FBI investigates a tremendous number of federal offences in the United States: national security, but many, many more.

\* \* \*

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, "I felt it's unfair and it felt like a third world country, where things can be manipulated and deals can be reached on something which was a government process" are the words of a new Canadian upon finding out that the Liberals secretly awarded Canadian residency as a settlement or a prize to people who were suing them.

Is the government expecting further lawsuits as a result of the chaos it has created in Canada's immigration system?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the chaos that the member opposite refers to is the chaos that that party put parents and grandparents through. The Conservatives deleted the program for two years. They kept people waiting five to seven years. We are the ones who cleaned up their backlog of 167,000 cases, and we have quadrupled the number of spaces available to Canadians to sponsor their loved ones. They did not get the job done; we are getting the job done.

● (1450)

**The Speaker:** Order. I remind members that each sides gets its turn and each side should wait its turn.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is a flat out embarrassing answer. These are people's lives. These are people who are trying to come to this country legally.

"It seems to me that what our government has done with this settlement is just state that being able to pay a few hundred dollars for a lawsuit can actually get you a spot in the program." He is right. Between this and Roxham Road, there is no legitimacy in our system anymore.

When is the government going to stop creating chaos, injustice and unfairness in Canada's once proud immigration system?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the unfairness the member opposite speaks of is what Conservatives put Canadians through in their version of the immigration system.

They left a broken system. Spouses were kept apart for years under the Conservative Party. The Conservatives want to talk about the parents and grandparents program, but they deleted that program for two years.

The fact of the matter is that we have fixed the broken immigration system left by the Conservatives.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the IPCC report was clear: We must act now to deal with the climate emergency.

The NDP has an ambitious plan to deal with this emergency. The plan is focused on the jobs that support our workers and their families by providing training, helping them go back to school, helping them find good jobs and making life more affordable for them. The energy transition needs to happen quickly.

Can the Liberals assure workers that they will have easy access to EI so they can make this energy transition?

[English]

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect, I have had the opportunity to review the NDP's plan, and despite its good intentions, it is simply poorly thought through.

When it comes to supporting workers, I point to the \$185 million set aside to support training for those in the conventional energy sector in Canada under our just transition task force.

I would take the NDP plan more seriously if its leader would take a position on LNG Canada and stop flip-flopping. I note in particular that on its carbon pricing plan, Ecofiscal Commission chair Chris Ragan said that the NDP's carbon price "would hurt the Canadian economy and would not help global emissions."

Climate change is real, and moving forward takes a government that understands how to develop policy seriously.

[Translation]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to the latest IPCC report, we have less than 12 years left to reverse the results of global warming.

Last Friday, the Leader of the NDP announced a bold plan for energy transition that does not abandon workers, but helps them throughout the process. The success of this plan will rely mainly on developing green public transit.

If the government is serious, will it finally follow the NDP's lead and commit to implementing the high-frequency rail project?

[English]

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to investing in VIA Rail and our passenger rail services, we are doing it correctly. We are making it more green, we are making it more energy efficient and we are making it more accessible.

I am very happy that today I can provide an update to the member that we are also working with the infrastructure bank to put together the right structure to attract the appropriate partners.

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has failed on the environment. It imposed a carbon tax and we know that does not work in Canada. Just ask Quebec and British Columbia.

The Liberals paid more than \$4 billion to Americans for a pipeline. That did not solve anything. They are talking about an environmental emergency. Is that how they justify their lack of action? This government is now waking up, but Canada will not even meet its Paris targets. We must take action now.

When will this government present a real plan to meet the Paris targets?

[English]

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to take seriously criticism from a member of a party that promised to provide a plan over 400 days ago and has been sitting on its hands since.

Over that 400 days, we have put a price on pollution and finalized methane regulations to reduce the emissions in our gas sector. We have also established GHG standards for heavy-duty vehicles. We are protecting our oceans and investing in energy efficiency.

If the hon. member had been paying attention to debates in the House over the past three years, he would know our plan includes over 50 measures that are being implemented today and are bringing down our emissions and putting more money in the pockets of Canadian families.

● (1455)

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's climate plan has become a massive failure. We have more punishing taxes on Canadians, skyrocketing gas prices, a shutting down of Canada's energy industry and a \$12-million handout to Loblaw's, a billion-dollar company. How is that a climate plan?

Now the Liberals have fallen so far behind that they have no hope of meeting their emissions targets.

When will the Prime Minister finally admit that his plan is not as advertised and that he will not meet the Paris targets?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will meet our Paris targets. With respect, we are going to achieve our targets because failure is simply not an option. This is the greatest challenge of our time.

I would introduce the hon. member to a copy of our plan. I would be happy to provide it to him in both official languages after question period is over. He will see that it includes putting a price on pollution that will bring our emissions down and put more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families. He will see that by 2030, 90% of our electricity in Canada will be generated from non-emitting resources. He will see the largest single investment in the history of public transit and green infrastructure in Canada.

It is time for the Conservatives to get with the times instead of sitting on their hands.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will not meet the targets and they do not have an environmental plan. They just have a tax plan.

For months, businesses, municipal and provincial governments and indigenous communities have called on the Liberals to kill Bill C-69. The Senate energy committee made amendments in consultation with impacted industries, amendments supported by the provinces, to fix the worst of this bill to give some certainty to job creators.

Will the Liberals confirm today that they will accept 100% of those amendments in the House of Commons?

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-69 is to replace a broken system that we inherited from the Harper government. Bill C-69 will allow good projects to move forward. It will allow Canadians to participate in the regulatory process. It will allow us to protect other environments.

We have always said we are open to amendments that will strengthen and improve this legislation and we look forward to the work being done by the senators.

\* \* \*

**NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance has been very generous in the past to the north and the Arctic, with record increases in funding for northern allowance rates; northern infrastructure and trade corridors; child care; mental health; home care; addictions; indigenous languages, post-secondary education; sports, tourism and training; Arctic renewable energy; housing and homelessness; opioids; seniors and veterans services; doubling the summer student jobs; a 777-kilometre new Internet line; and the arts, but what has the minister done for us lately?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Yukon for his tireless advocacy on behalf of people in the Yukon and people broadly across the north. He does a fantastic job.

What can be seen in budget 2019 is that we put \$700 million in it over 10 years for the continued prosperity of Arctic and northern communities.

There are a couple of things for which the member for Yukon has personally advocated, such as extending the mineral exploration tax credit to five years and, importantly, providing funding for a science building at Yukon College so that we can have the first university north of 60. His advocacy was very important in these efforts.

\* \* \*

**INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has failed on free trade between provinces. As an example, he fought against the right of Canadians to buy wine from one province and bring it to another. He introduced a so-called “Canada free trade agreement” in which half of the agreement is a list of things that cannot be traded. Canadians are frustrated that it is easier to buy and sell to the Americans than between our own provinces.

When will the Liberals do what Canadians demand and allow them to buy and sell freely across our provinces?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that we had a meeting of ministers of trade from the provinces last week. It was an important meeting, at which we talked about how important it is to expand internal trade in our country. We see a huge opportunity, and progress was made. It builds on the effort of the federal government, because we took away all federal restrictions around, for example, the transfer of alcohol across our country.

We are working together with the provinces to make sure this can actually come true in our country to help our economy over the long term.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government has spent nearly \$2.3 million fighting a marine biologist and the Namgis first nation in court to avoid testing fish farms for the contagious PRV virus. Biologist Alexandra Morton is dedicated to protecting wild salmon. She has taken the federal government to court twice and won both times, but the Liberal government is dead set against diligently screening farmed salmon for this virus.

Can the minister explain why the Liberal government is prioritizing the profits of the fish farm industry over the health of B.C. wild salmon?

*Oral Questions*

•(1500)

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, protecting the health of wild Pacific salmon is a top priority for the government. Canadians want to be assured that aquaculture in Canada is conducted in a manner that emphasizes environmental sustainability and the protection of the environment.

I actually met last week with Ms. Morton and certainly heard her concerns. We are taking those into account as we develop policies going forward.

We announced in December a suite of initiatives to ensure the environmental sustainability of the sector. We announced last week an advisory committee on science that includes international participants. We will work to ensure the success of the industry while ensuring the environmental sustainability going forward.

\* \* \*

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week Canada is welcoming the world in Vancouver for Women Deliver, the world's largest gathering on gender equality, health, rights and well-being of women and girls.

Our government has been working hard to advance gender equality, and our plan is working. One million jobs have been created, and there are now more women working than ever before.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality tell this House how this conference can bring awareness on the imperative for action for women and girls in Canada and around the globe?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for her question and her advocacy.

Women Deliver is not just a conference; it is a movement to advance gender equality worldwide. It brings together thousands of people from across the globe to find solutions to the barriers still faced by women, girls and gender-diverse people everywhere.

While we celebrate the progress that has been achieved, we are reminded daily, even in Canada, that women's rights are at risk. Women Deliver will leave a legacy that will empower women and create lasting change that benefits everyone.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are angry that the Prime Minister is refusing to allow the sale of our clean energy. The National Energy Board has approved a hydro transmission line to Minnesota, but the Prime Minister is actively trying to kill that project. It is obvious the Prime Minister is lashing out at Manitoba in retaliation for standing up against him and his carbon tax.

When will the Prime Minister get out of the way and allow this project to be built?

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is completely wrong. In the review process of this project, we are ensuring that we are adequately discharging our duty to consult with indigenous communities on a number of outstanding issues that have arisen because of the actions of the Manitoba government as well as Manitoba Hydro in relation to this project.

We are working with our partners to ensure that we move forward on this project while fully discharging our duty to consult with indigenous communities.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on January 28, all the family reunification application spots for 2019 were taken between noon and 12:09 p.m. Too bad for people who work on Mondays. The only requirement for family reunification was being at the computer at noon sharp.

Family reunification should be a more equitable process than buying concert tickets.

Does the government realize that its first-come, first-served system does not work?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, they know that our government is the one fighting for family reunification.

[English]

We have cleaned up the system. We had over 167,000 cases and eight-year wait times for families to be reunited. We have listened to communities, which have asked us to increase the number of spaces from 5,000 to 10,000 and then ultimately to 20,000 spaces. We have cut the wait times to under two years and we will continue to work on this file, because for us on this side of the House, family reunification is a number one priority.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, family reunification is not a game. A lottery system might be a good way to sell tickets to the Rolling Stones, but it is not a good way to decide the fate of families.

All families should have an opportunity to apply. Applications must be assessed on the basis of the urgency of a particular situation and the contribution that potential immigrants can make.

The process is broken and unfair. Will the government change it? Will it transfer responsibility for immigration to Quebec?

•(1505)

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, they know that our government is the one fighting for family reunification.

[English]

At the end of the day, we will continue to consult with Canadians. We listen carefully to how we can continue to improve the system.



*Government Orders*

The fact is that we have four times more spaces available for Canadians and permanent residents to sponsor their parents or grandparents. We worked with the community to ensure that any tweaks needed in the system were considered. We have cut the wait times to below two years, and we will continue to work hard to reunite more families than ever before.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF):** Mr. Speaker, a dispute over border security and tariffs has raised questions about whether Mexico will ratify the new NAFTA. By contrast, Canada and the U. S. share a secure border, similar wage rates and balanced trade.

If Mexico does not ratify, will the Canadian government amend the replacement protocol so we can ratify the new NAFTA bilaterally with our largest trading partner?

**Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his hard work on this. I know he cares and thinks deeply about it.

The issue of the border between the United States and Mexico is a bilateral issue between the U.S. and Mexico. The Mexican president has confirmed that Mexico will continue with the ratification of the new NAFTA. The new NAFTA of course is important for certainty in the North American economy.

As we have always said, we will move in tandem with our partners to the greatest extent possible.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**WAYS AND MEANS**

## NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1) I wish to table a notice of ways and means motion respecting an act to amend the Customs Tariff and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2) I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hope and believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House reiterates that a strong and independent journalism is not a fossil but a living pillar of our democracy; recognizes the Canadian media needs to be supported to pass through the current crisis; and calls on the government and all parties to—

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. A couple of points about these requests for unanimous consent. Members may recall that I made a statement on the issue recently on requests for unanimous consent. When a member presents that, we expect in fact there will be consent

because the member consulted all the parties and has received that consent.

It is important that the House hear the request and what it is about, but it is also true that if it is clear there is no consent, then we may not hear the whole motion. That is not a brand new tradition here. It goes back to the practice before now. There was no unanimous consent for that.

\* \* \*

**CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT**

The House resumed from May 30 consideration of Bill C-93, An Act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:07 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 28, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the motions at report stage of Bill C-93.

Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

● (1510)

**The Speaker:** The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 2.

● (1515)

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

(Division No. 1328)

**YEAS**

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bernier	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Gerretsen	Gill
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hogg	Holland

*Government Orders*

Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Manly
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Morneau	
Morrissey	Murray
Nault	O'Connell
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Pauzé	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Plamondon	Poissant
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Thériault
Tootoo	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid— 167	

**NAYS**

## Members

Albas	Albrecht
Alleslev	Allison
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barrett
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boucher	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brosseau
Calkins	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cullen	Davidson
Deltell	Diotte
Dubé	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Finley	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Harder	Hoback
Hughes	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kmieci	Kwan

Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lukiwski
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Quach	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Sansoucy	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Singh
Stanton	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Van Kesteren	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong	Yurdiga— 100

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 1 carried. I therefore declare Motion No. 2 carried.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 3.

The hon. member for Ajax is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Hon. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find consent to apply the results from the last vote to this vote, with Liberals members voting against.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply, with Conservative members voting yes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau:** Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the result from the previous vote, with the NDP voting no.

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the result from the previous vote and we are voting in favour of the motion.

**Hon. Maxime Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, we are voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply, with the Green Party voting no.

**Hon. Jane Philpott:** Mr. Speaker, this member agrees to apply, voting no.

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould:** Mr. Speaker, this member agrees to apply and will be voting no.

**Hon. Hunter Tootoo:** Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to agree to apply, and I will be voting no.

**Mr. Darshan Singh Kang:** Mr. Speaker, I am voting no.

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Mr. Speaker, the CCF agrees to apply, and will be voting no.

**Hon. Tony Clement:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka agrees to apply, and is voting yes.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 1329*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Albas	Albrecht
Alleslev	Allison
Arnold	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Boucher
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Davidson	Deltell
Diotte	Eglinski
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Finley
Fortin	Gallant
Généreux	Genius
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kmiec
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lukiwski
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Stanton
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Tilson	Van Kesteren
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Wong	Yurdiga — 84

### NAYS

#### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boutin-Sweet
Bratina	Breton
Brosseau	Caron
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Choquette	Christopherson
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid

### Government Orders

Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Kwan	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Manly
Masse (Windsor West)	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Érables)
Soeurs	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nantel
Nault	O'Connell
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Quach	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sansoucy
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Singh
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Stetski
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tootoo
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid — 183	

### PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 3 defeated.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.)** moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote.

Liberal members are voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply and will be voting yes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau:** Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the result from the previous vote, with the NDP voting no.

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the result from the previous vote and is voting in favour of the motion.

**Hon. Maxime Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, the People's Party of Canada agrees to apply the vote and is voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Manly:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply and will be voting yes.

**Hon. Jane Philpott:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

**Mr. Darshan Singh Kang:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and I am voting yes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Mr. Speaker, the CCF agrees to apply the vote and is voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Clement:** Mr. Speaker, Parry Sound—Muskoka agrees to apply and is voting yes.

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

(*Division No. 1330*)

YEAS

Members

Albas

Albrecht

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Block
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boucher	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Calkins	Carr
Carrie	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davidson	DeCoursey
Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Finley	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Gourde
Graham	Hajdu
Harder	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hoback	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kmieciak
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Manly	Martel
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Morneau	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Nater	Nault
Nicholson	O'Connell
Oliver	O'Regan

*Routine Proceedings*

O'Toole  
Paradis  
Pauzé  
Peterson  
Philpott  
Plamondon  
Poissant  
Rayes  
Rempel  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Rota  
Ruimy  
Sahota  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scheer  
Schmale  
Serré  
Sheehan  
Shipley  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sorbara  
Stanton  
Stubbs  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Tilson  
Van Kesteren  
Vandenbeld  
Vecchio  
Virani  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Whalen  
Wilson-Raybould  
Yip  
Yurdiga

Ouellette  
Paul-Hus  
Peschisolido  
Petitpas Taylor  
Picard  
Poilievre  
Ratansi  
Reid  
Rioux  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Rudd  
Rusnak  
Saini  
Sangha  
Scarpaleggia  
Schieffe  
Schulte  
Shanahan  
Shields  
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
Sikand  
Sohi  
Spengemann  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Tan  
Thériault  
Tootoo  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Viensen  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Weir  
Wilkinson  
Wong  
Young  
Zahid— 244

## NAYS

## Members

Aubin  
Blaikie  
Boutin-Sweet  
Caron  
Christopherson  
Dubé  
Hardcastle  
Johns  
Kwan  
Nantel  
Sansoucy  
Stetski— 23

Benson  
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)  
Brosseau  
Choquette  
Cullen  
Duvall  
Hughes  
Julian  
Masse (Windsor West)  
Quach  
Singh

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 28, later this day.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1525)

[Translation]

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER**

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019.

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 26 petitions.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## HEALTH

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 24th report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled “Tackling the Problem Head-on: Sports-Related Concussions in Canada”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

The subcommittee held 13 meetings, received 20 briefs and heard from 42 witnesses over the course of the study. The subcommittee heard from some very high-profile witnesses, including Mr. Gary Bettman, the commissioner of the National Hockey League, and NHL hall of famers Eric Lindros and the Hon. Ken Dryden.

The subcommittee made 13 recommendations, which the standing committee has now approved.

I would like to thank the members of the subcommittee for its hard work over the past few months to make this historic report possible.

## INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, entitled “Statutory Review of the Copyright Act”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I would also like to thank all committee members, all those who appeared before the committee, those who took the time to meet with us on our five-city tour and those who took the time to submit online documents. The committee consulted a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that many perspectives would be considered. In all, we held 52 meetings, heard 263 witnesses, collected 192 briefs and received more than 6,000 emails and other correspondence.

I also want to thank our committee's clerk, analysts and all the supporting staff for doing such an amazing job keeping us on track to do such a lengthy and complex study.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank everyone who came before the committee and submitted briefs as well as the analysts who supported our work. This was a substantial report and one that I believe is full of largely positive recommendations to ensure that innovation can thrive and that Canadians can have access to the content they want.

*Routine Proceedings*

Copyright protections cannot be onerous. Creators deserve to be paid for their work, but those works also need to be widely available. That is the balance I hope we struck with this report.

There were two points of disagreement our caucus had within the report. Those are included in our dissenting opinion. The first relates to the artist's resale right. We feel that this refers to real tangible property and that such a measure should not be addressed in the context of copyright. An artist's resale right would be a provincial matter, and we feel that it should not be included in this report.

Second, we believe that Crown copyright should be completely abolished. That view was shared by many witnesses. Unfortunately, the recommendations in this report do not go far enough. Content created with taxpayers' money should belong to all Canadians, and the government should not be able to enforce copyright on those works.

I thank everyone who participated in this review. I encourage the government to review the report and ensure that Canadian copyright law works for our population in the modern world.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, entitled “Main Estimates 2019-20”.

[Translation]

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 24th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled “Main Estimates 2019-20: Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 under Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Votes 1 and 5 under Immigration and Refugee Board”.

• (1530)

[English]

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled “Main Estimates 2019-20: Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, L25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 under Department of Foreign Affairs and International Development, Vote 1 under International Development Research Centre and Vote 1 under International Joint Commission (Canadian Section)”.

[Translation]

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 95th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 95th report later this day.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Yukon is mistaken. I believe we are talking about the 96th report. This is

important because of the motion that follows. Can the member confirm whether it is indeed the 96th report?

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Well spotted, Mr. Speaker, but no, we changed the numbers. The 96th report will be presented soon, but not today.

\* \* \*

[English]

## BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-453, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act (property of bankrupt — registered education savings plan).

He said: Mr. Speaker, previously in this Parliament, I submitted a bill, Bill C-410, that would protect registered education savings plans and registered disability savings plans when someone declared bankruptcy. This was a good bill that was supported by many stakeholders. Clearly, the government agreed, because it took my idea of protecting RDSPs and put it into its last budget implementation act. Unfortunately, it did not afford RESPs the same protection, so I am happy today to table a bill to address this significant oversight.

RESPs deserve the same bankruptcy protection now afforded RDSPs. Parents deserve peace of mind that the money they set aside for their children will be protected if they experience financial difficulties. Entrepreneurs are often asked to put up their homes as collateral for a business loan. They should not have to sign up their children's RESPs as well.

As we continue to face a rapidly changing innovative and disruptive economy, we must ensure that laid off workers who have put their hard-earned money into their children's education savings plans are protected. I urge the government to feel free to steal this idea once again, as parents really do need help.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 95th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented in the House earlier today, be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

## JUSTICE

(Motion agreed to)

• (1535)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, to whom we want to offer congratulations for her recent nuptials.

\* \* \*

## PETITIONS

## EQUALIZATION

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will convey that to my new spouse.

I am here today to table a petition on behalf of my community. Many people have expressed their extreme displeasure, which I share, with the state of the equalization formula in Canada. Given that the government has tabled punitive legislation against Alberta's energy sector, many people feel the equalization formula is no longer justified in its current state.

The petitioners therefore ask the government to cancel Bill C-69 and to launch a study into the economic impact of the equalization formula.

[*Translation*]

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to the House that calls on the government to make access to employment insurance more universal.

I want to remind members that 35% of unemployed women and 52% of unemployed men who contribute to EI are not eligible for EI benefits.

The petition calls on the government to enhance the current EI system to ensure universal access by lowering the eligibility threshold to 350 hours or 13 weeks, establishing a minimum threshold of 35 weeks of benefits, and increasing the benefit rate to 70% of salary based on the best 12 weeks of salary.

These are just a few of the measures proposed in this petition, which has been signed by people from many regions of Quebec.

[*English*]

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by over 1,500 people from across the Kitchener-Waterloo region and from communities as far away as Vancouver and even Yellowknife.

The petitioners call upon the House to support Bill S-214 and ban the sale and manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada. They note that doing so would harmonize our cosmetic safety regulations with those of the EU and other nations that have already switched to using alternative safety tests, like India, Switzerland and New Zealand.

This petition has been duly certified and I am proud to affix my signature and endorse it.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present e-petition 2126 with almost 750 names on it. It is in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-266, the respecting families of brutalized persons act.

As members will recall, individuals convicted of abducting, sexually assaulting and murdering currently can get parole at year 23. The petitioners call on Canada to pass the bill to give the courts the power to increase parole ineligibility to 40 years to ensure that families of victims are not revictimized. The bill is fair, just and compassionate.

## POVERTY

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour today to present two petitions.

The first petition calls upon the House of Commons to adopt a national poverty elimination strategy, thereby ensuring Canadians a suitable quality of life and opportunity to succeed.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition comes from youth, asking for more to be done to avert disastrous climate change.

Young petitioners and those who care deeply about youth call upon the House of Commons to take meaningful steps to support the future of young Canadians and to fulfill Canada's obligation under the Paris agreement by adopting a detailed climate action strategy that includes science-based targets for greenhouse gas reduction, with a plan to meet them, including but not limited to eliminating fossil fuel subsidies; implementing a comprehensive and steadily rising national carbon price beyond 2022 that rises to \$150 a tonne by 2030; and redirecting investments into renewable energy systems, energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation and job training.

## PTSD TREATMENT

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to table a petition that calls upon the government to reverse its decision to change the medical questionnaire that has resulted in making it more difficult for veterans to access treatment for PTSD. This issue was brought to my attention by the Budd family, constituents of mine.

The petition is signed by a number of my constituents and people across the Calgary region.

• (1540)

## AGRICULTURE

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to table two petitions from people in Saskatchewan both from rural and urban centres. It is about recognizing the inherent rights of farmers.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners call upon Parliament to enshrine in legislation the inalienable rights of farmers and other Canadians to save, reuse, select, exchange and sell seeds. In addition, they call upon the Government of Canada to refrain from making any regulations under the Plant Breeders Rights Act that would further erode farmers' rights and/or add to farmers' costs by restricting or eliminating the farmers' privileges.

## SHOAL LAKE 40

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions today.

The first petition calls on governments to finally complete the building of a water treatment facility for Shoal Lake 40, a community that has waited over 100 years for road access. While Winnipeg enjoys the water and freedom, they are left stranded. Now they are looking for a water treatment plant.

The petitioners, mostly from my riding in Winnipeg, are calling for the water treatment plant to be built.

## INDIGENOUS ARTIFACTS

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions related to indigenous artifacts.

The petitioners ask that we try to retain these artifacts in Winnipeg. Residents from Kildonan—St. Paul and other Canadians call on us to find a home for these artifacts in Winnipeg.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF):** Mr. Speaker, today, Bill S-214, which would ban the sale and manufacture of cosmetics using animal testing, was debated in the House for the first time.

I am pleased to present more than 2,400 petition signatures, collected at The Body Shop in Regina's Southland Mall, in support of the legislation.

It is disappointing that the legislation was not brought forward in the House of Commons earlier, but I hope the next Parliament will take account of the strong public support for a ban on animal testing.

## SEX SELECTION

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf individuals from Prince George and Chilliwack; B.C.; Lloydminster, Alberta; and Churchbridge, Saskatchewan. They present the petition as a result of watching a CBC documentary, revealing that ultrasounds are being used in Canada to tell the sex of an unborn child so expectant parents can choose to terminate the pregnancy if the unborn child is a girl. An Environics poll found that 92% of Canadians believe sex-selected pregnancy termination should be illegal.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada and the Canadian Association of Radiologists strongly oppose the non-medical use of fetal ultrasound. There are over 200 million girls missing worldwide. This gendercide has created a global gender imbalance crisis, resulting in violence and human trafficking of girls. The three deadliest words in the world are "It's a girl".

The petitioners therefore call upon Canada's Parliament to support legislation that would make sex selection illegal.

[Translation]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States share many lakes and waterways. This includes two in my riding, Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog, and one in the riding of my colleague from Kenora, Lake of the Woods.

The petitioners want the Canada-U.S. Boundary Waters Treaty to be amended so as to include environmental standards. They are therefore calling on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to respond to this petition and begin the process of working with her American counterparts to amend the Boundary Waters Treaty to ensure it includes environmental standards.

● (1545)

[English]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, most particularly those located around Brentwood Bay and Pender Island.

Residents on the Saanich Inlet and surrounding it have been asking the federal government for some time to designate Saanich Inlet a zero sewage discharge zone. I note parenthetically that some know there has been an issue in Victoria, but this is totally different. There is no sewage discharge, but we have a problem with boats in the area of some local residents.

Again, a zero discharge zone is being requested from the Government of Canada.

[Translation]

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today. The first has to do with Bill S-240 on organ trafficking, which is currently before the Senate.

[English]

## AFGHAN MINORITY COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in support of the Sikh and Hindu minority in Afghanistan.

The petitioners call on the government to do more to provide support to them.

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition is also in support of Bill S-240 on the issue of organ trafficking, which is currently before the Senate.



## PLANT-BASED FOOD

**Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present petition e-2071 signed by thousands of Canadians who note that the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer recently classified processed meat as a class 1 carcinogen.

The petitioners note the science underscoring the Canada food guide and call on the Government of Canada to make healthy food affordable by redirecting subsidies to ensure that healthier, organic, plant-based food is affordable for everyone, in particular for indigenous and low-income communities; and to ensure that government assistance and subsidies are shifted to the industries in agriculture that form the basis of the science in our food guide.

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to bring forward today.

The first petition has to do with Bill S-240, which would combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting that takes place worldwide, but in particular in China. The bill was presented by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan as his private member's bill, and this petition is in support of it.

## AFGHAN MINORITY COMMUNITIES

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the other petition I am bringing forward is in support of Afghanistan's hard-pressed Sikh and Hindu minorities.

The petitioners call on the government to create a special program to allow these minorities to receive private sponsorship to come to Canada directly. This would give them the opportunity to call Canada home and therefore receive a place of safety and refuge.

\* \* \*

## 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 Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following: That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill S-214, an act to ban cosmetic testing on animals, be deemed read a second time and referred to committee.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

*Business of Supply*

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

## OPPOSITION MOTION—NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has five minutes remaining in questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Conservatives would choose this topic for debate today, especially given former prime minister Stephen Harper and his government gave tens of millions of dollars not once but every year to news magazines. Not only that, Stephen Harper and his government would determine which ones would receive the money. I am sure people following the debate sense a bit of hypocrisy in this.

Could my colleague across the way explain to Canadians why Stephen Harper chose to support news magazines to the degree of tens of millions of dollars every year? At the same time, could he provide some thoughts regarding the Conservative Party's most current position on providing a tax credit to the media industry as a whole? Do the Conservatives support that initiative today?

• (1550)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that the member for Winnipeg North thinks Stephen Harper was too close with, too generous to or too supportive of the media. That is not a criticism I have heard from Liberal members before, but we hear all sorts of criticisms from the Liberals that come from all sorts of different directions, and it is hard to keep track of what they are saying.

A bit of time has passed since I gave my speech before question period, but I will discuss what I talked about in my speech and I will explain the motion we are debating, and then maybe other Liberal members will have some questions.

The member did not address the fact that his government is giving \$600 million to a fund that is going to be controlled by a panel that includes Unifor. We will have explicitly partisan people, who are loud and proud in campaigning for the Liberals, involved in distributing money to journalists.

If the government is in favour of defending an independent press, then it should listen to what the press is saying because, as I quoted in my speech, many of the leading independent thought leaders in Canadian political journalism are sounding the alarm about the approach the government has taken.

*Business of Supply*

Let us take this partisan interference out of journalism. We can debate specific policies, such as government advertising. Obviously, every government advertises through the media in some form, which is not particularly novel, but the fact that the government has put partisan people in a position to dole out this money should be very concerning to those who care about preserving the independence of the press.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member and I all I can say is if Conservatives ever talk about the family farm the way they talk about media organizations, they would quickly change the talking points they used. They talked about not supporting an industry that is going through technological change, not supporting family-owned industries and not supporting small industries in small communities.

The media sector is not a bunch of journalists. The media sector is a bunch of small businesses, small businesses in communities right across this country, and it is not just journalists who work in those companies. There are receptionists, producers and editors. There is a whole network of supply chains that go all the way back to the resource sector and the pulp and paper mills in this country.

When we talk about providing support to a sector of the economy, none of which are direct supports for content and all of which are charitable donations, tax cuts and a series of other measures that help consumers access Canadian media that have nothing to do with a journalist's paycheque, why can Conservatives not support small businesses in local communities, why can they not support part of the supply chain that is tied to the resource sector and why can they not support small, independent family-owned businesses that sustain communities right across this country? Why is it journalists that catch their attention, when every other small business in this country seems to get their support?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way has a habit of debating things in the House that he clearly has not read about, because he is not aware of what this motion is about. The motion is about the inclusion of Unifor in the distribution of funds.

Yesterday he went after me on Twitter, saying that I had put Bill C-81 at risk of not passing because it might not have time to go through the Senate. Actually, he did not know that when we were debating Bill C-81, it had already passed the Senate, and we were debating Senate amendments. He has a habit, without reading or understanding the detail, whether it is Bill C-81 or this motion, of taking strong opinions and attacking people.

Let me be very clear for the benefit of the member: This party will always stand up for small businesses. We do not accuse small business owners of being tax cheats; we create a competitive environment that is beneficial for small businesses and entrepreneurs, which includes journalists. That does not include having Jerry Dias at Unifor involved in deciding who gets a government bailout. That is not something that we see as part of an agenda to advance and protect small business.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Toronto—Danforth.

I am very pleased to be here to speak to a subject that is extremely important to our rural and francophone communities, and I will be talking about today's motion from that perspective.

I agree that a free and independent press is important and even essential to a healthy democracy. That is why our government showed leadership by announcing measures that will enable Canadians to continue to have access to reliable newspapers. Later this year, Canadians will be called upon to choose their next government. As is the case with every election, they will count on a reliable, independent press to keep them informed of the major economic, social and environmental issues facing our country, so that they can make an informed decision.

Can members imagine an election campaign with no press coverage? Would that really be a step forward for democracy? The answer is obvious. Similarly, would Canadians really be better off if we did not have a strong and independent free press to keep an eye on what governments and public institutions are doing and to hold them more accountable? Once again, the answer is obvious.

We would have to search very hard to find a healthy democratic system that does not have a free and independent press. Conversely, it is unfortunately all too easy to compile a long list of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes to which the idea of a free press is a totally foreign concept. Those who criticize what our government is doing say that a laissez-faire approach is the best solution to guarantee the freedom and independence of the press. They are the same people who criticize CBC/Radio-Canada. They think journalists can be bought and corrupted. These conspiracy theories are insulting to Canadian journalists, who deserve better than these kinds of prejudices.

We on this side of the House obviously do not feel that way. We respect journalists and their work. We have faith in their integrity, and we know they are professionals. We also strongly believe that a bankrupt press is not a free press. That should be obvious. The print media industry is going through a serious crisis. Over the past decade, more than 200 community newspapers and about 40 daily newspapers have shuttered. According to Statistics Canada, over 10,000 journalism jobs disappeared during that period. This crisis is picking up speed. In the industry, cost-cutting and layoffs are not the exception, they are the norm, and that goes for both small media outlets and the bigger players.

*Business of Supply*

For instance, The Globe and Mail, the largest daily newspaper in the country, just recently announced cuts in order to reduce its operating costs, which amount to \$10 million a year. No one in the industry is immune. Since 2008, overall annual revenues in Canada's newspaper industry have decreased by 42%. This decrease is primarily due to the loss of more than 60% of advertising revenues. In 2017, Canadian newspapers were taking in \$1.7 billion less in annual ad revenues than they were 10 years earlier. This is a huge loss that is undermining the viability of the entire industry. More and more advertisers are moving away from the printed word and turning to the Internet to place their ads, but Canadian online media platforms are getting very little of this new windfall.

This transformation in the media environment is having a direct and significant impact on the quantity, quality and diversity of reliable journalistic content that Canadians have access to. Many communities across the country are seeing less journalistic coverage of matters of public interest. Access to local news has become especially compromised in many rural communities as a result of the many closures and job cuts.

On that issue, people talk about government responsibility, not only at the federal level, but also at the provincial level and, more importantly, at the local level. It is extremely important that we have a free press active in our communities because it is the sole guardian of the responsibility of local governments back home, in our small communities. I want to emphasize that point, because this is a serious threat to the health and sustainability of our democracy.

• (1555)

If we do nothing in the coming years, other newspapers will close their doors, the number of journalists covering public interest issues will continue to decline, and the health of our democracy will face a growing threat.

Our rural communities will be hit first. Our minority groups will be devastated, especially linguistic minorities such as the people of Prescott—Russell, most of whom are francophones living in a minority community in Ontario.

This is the worst possible time to throw in the towel. Unlike those on the other side, we will not surrender to market forces. We know that, in this day and age, Canadians tend to turn to the Internet for a variety of content, including news. We also know that the accuracy of the information available on many sites, typically those of foreign origin, is questionable, to say the least.

Everyone knows that social networks can be astonishingly effective at spreading fake news and launching misinformation campaigns designed to manipulate public opinion. Now, more than ever, we need trustworthy news sources to offset the misinformation and fake news articles proliferating across the country.

Our government promised that any action taken to support journalism would fully respect the independence of the press. We kept that promise and we will continue to do so. Many western democracies have had policies and programs in place for decades to support the print news media without interfering with the independence of the press. If others can do it, we can too.

Our government's approach involves setting up an independent panel of experts to identify and refine the eligibility criteria for the

tax measures to support journalism. We believe that it is important that the panel reflect the diversity of the industry and its various sectors by representing both employers and employees, and that it also reflect our society's linguistic and ethnic diversity.

This approach will make it possible to implement fair and effective measures to support journalism, while respecting the independence of the press. In my opinion, it is clear that the official opposition's motion must be rejected by the House. We believe in an independent press, but we need to support it in the coming years.

• (1600)

[*English*]

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated listening to my colleague's comments and one of the points he was making about the loss of revenue in the newspaper industry.

I wonder if the member might know the amount by which the federal government has decreased its advertising support for the newspaper industry in the last four years. I believe it has shifted a tremendous amount of its advertising to the Internet and has taken away that revenue source from the print media.

Does the member have any idea of the advertising dollars the federal government has removed from the print industry and put into social media in the last four years?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Mr. Speaker, the member would know, of course, having been here for more than one mandate, that this particular policy of moving advertising to the Internet started under his own government.

With respect to the issue at hand, we want to support an independent press, and bankruptcy is simply not an option for an independent press. That is what we are talking about here. That is what is important to keeping our democracy accountable.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important speech, particularly since, in his riding, the Franco-Ontarian fact is, of course, very vulnerable and must always be promoted and protected.

I would like to know where small newspapers and local weeklies stand. Did the people who run them feel reassured by the government's announcements? If the member has any time left, I would like him to tell me why the Liberals took so long to present solutions that were looked into two years ago in a number of reports submitted to the government.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

*Business of Supply*

Obviously, conditions have changed over the decades for newspapers. Journalists used to attend press conferences, for example. Earlier in my speech I mentioned the importance of having journalists hold local governments to account. Here in Ottawa we are lucky to have a national press, but local governments do not always have this platform. It is important to ensure that they have these platforms and this obligation to be accountable at the local level.

Indeed, local papers have managed to survive and yes, they will benefit from some of the announcements we made. However, we still have a long way to go to ensure that we have a reliable and independent press in Canada, especially in our official language minority communities.

• (1605)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in today's debate we are hearing people, especially on the Conservative side, talk and complain about the fact that a union has a voice at the table.

What does my friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell think about having employers, unions and companies at the discussion table so that we can get the whole picture of what we need to do?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Toronto—Danforth for her question.

It is important that all sectors be represented at the table, including employers, francophone journalists and Canada's ethnic media. It is important that these people be at the table.

It is also important to include unions that represent those working in the area. I think that all the criticism of the union that will represent one in eight voices is unfounded. It is important to have them at the table. We must not take away the unions' and the workers' right to have a voice at the table.

[*English*]

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Conservative opposition motion presently being debated.

The issue of how to properly support the media is something I have had the opportunity to work on and think about quite deeply over the past years while I have been here in Ottawa. I am a member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. When we started, one of our first studies was in fact on local media. It was an in-depth study where we really looked at what we should be doing. We heard from media across our country, from the unions, the employees and business owners. They all spoke to us about a need to ensure that we continue to have a vibrant local media across our country.

I would like to thank the chair of the committee at the time, the member for Vancouver Centre, as she led us through the study. We made 20 recommendations. Included in those recommendations were the very items we found in budget 2019 about making changes to the tax act to allow not-for-profit media foundations to have charitable status, and tax credits. It is nice to see work being done at committee and how that can translate into policy going forward.

As well, when we were doing that study, there was a report by the Public Policy Forum called the "Shattered Mirror". Interestingly, as a

part of that report, they also included a review entitled "the Copyright Act's fair-dealing rules to strengthen rights of news originators to control their intellectual property" as one of their recommendations, as well as some of the recommendations we had in the committee report on that. It is interesting that the "Shattered Mirror" report reflects future work that was done by the committee. I am now the chair of the committee. We have also studied copyright rules and made recommendations on that issue.

I have the newspaper delivered to my house every day. It is funny, but I was reading the newspaper and thinking about what we were going to say in the debate. It is not a fossil. Newspapers are not fossils. This is a way that Canadians get the news that we rely upon. It has an important role in raising civic awareness and keeping Canadians informed. No matter what the size of the communities that we live in, no matter our distances from larger population centres, we rely on important local news to make decisions, to see how we look at the world, planet and our local communities.

Canadians still rely on newspapers and other news outlets today. We have just changed a lot of the way that we do it. As I mentioned, I was reading a newspaper this morning in its physical form, but more and more people are scrolling from article to article rather than turning from one page to the other. In fact, Canadians are among the most engaged and best-informed citizens globally. We should be proud of that.

In international surveys, such as the well-respected Reuters Institute digital news report, Canada ranks highly in consumption and trust in news sources. For example, in 2018, Canada ranked fifth out of 37 countries that were surveyed for trust of the news that people read. More importantly, the numbers for Canada are rising. There was a 9% increase in trust from the previous year. The survey also showed that a majority of Canadians, 60% to be precise, are concerned about what is real and what is fake on the Internet when it comes to news. That is really important. Canadians are concerned about making sure they are getting news that is in fact true, with the whole issue of fake news having become something of a concern.

Another well-known measure of trust in the news is the international Edelman trust barometer. This annual survey confirms digital news survey results concerning trust. There was an increase of 8% in Canadians surveyed who declared trust in the news industry. Traditional news outlets, like newspapers, ranked the highest, at 71% level of trust, while news via social media was at the bottom, with 31% of trust from Canadians. Most importantly, 21% of Canadians consumed news regularly compared to the previous year. Clearly, the world is increasingly faced with misinformation and social media bots, and Canadians are relying more and more on trusted news outlets to deliver honest and independent reporting on the issues of the day.

*Business of Supply*

• (1610)

The challenge that these outlets are facing is not one of trust levels, but it is rather about how we are consuming our news. It is the economic model that has been radically altered, and we are hearing that from creators across industry. Today when we are talking about the news, we are talking about a massive shift towards online news consumption.

Today, only 9% of Canadians pay for online news, according to a writer survey. Canada ranks 27 out of 37 countries surveyed in that respect. Much needs to be done to encourage higher rates of online subscriptions, and that is what is so interesting about the steps being taken. The fall economic statement of 2018 included measures to specifically encourage Canadians to subscribe to digital news outlets. The statement addressed that shift directly.

With that type of model, providing measures to encourage Canadians to subscribe, the choice remains with individual Canadians as to whether or not to take a subscription with one outlet or the other. They still have the choice. Some outlets are more conservative and some have been endorsing the opposition party over the last four cycles, and then others are more progressive. It is up to Canadians to choose which one they want to subscribe to. That is the model that has been put out there.

We are also providing tax credits to these news outlets for the cost of employing professional journalists. That is important. We need to ensure that we have support for these journalists. These tax credits are available to all of the qualified journalistic organizations in the news industry, regardless of the scope or the lean of their reporting.

As has been said from the outset by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, any government action in support of news media will rest on the principle of ensuring respect for the independence of the press. That is why we are putting together an independent panel to advise on the criteria that should be applied to define these qualified journalistic organizations.

To ensure the independence of the panel from any influence of government, eight non-governmental organizations were each asked to provide the name of one individual they believe has the necessary qualifications and expertise to contribute to the work of the panel. All eight organizations represent part of the news industry.

Four of them represent the owners and publishers of news outlets: News Media Canada, representing daily and community newspapers and online news sources; the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada, representing the multicultural and multilingual press; the Quebec Community Newspapers Association, representing English-language newspapers in Quebec; and the Association de la presse francophone, representing French-language news sources in the other provinces and territories.

The other four represent journalists and employees, who also have an important stake and a vital role in the future of the news industry. They are the Canadian Association of Journalists, Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, Fédération nationale des communications, and Unifor, which represents more than 10,000 employees in the news media sector.

The objective is to hear the voices of all professionals involved in the sector: employers, publishers, official languages communities, ethnic media, big and small organizations, freelancers and bloggers. We do not just want CEOs around the table, but a diversity of voices.

It is clear that the Conservative opposition is merely playing politics with Canada's journalism and news sector, to the detriment of our democracy. They have a track record of doing so. In 2015, they made a special effort to have Postmedia newspapers across Canada endorse the Stephen Harper Conservatives, over the objections of staff and employees. The Conservative Party also bought the front page of these newspapers in the days before the 2015 election, deliberately misleading Canadians into thinking that the political advertisement was journalism. That is not how an independent press works.

It is clear that the Conservatives, regardless of the compelling human and democratic arguments in favour of supporting our struggling news sector, will continue to unabashedly play politics with the topic.

That is why I am opposing this motion. I will be focusing, with the House, on the important issues to Canadians. We have many issues that we should and could be debating. To be debating the composition of this committee is not the proper use of our time.

• (1615)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely wrong in how she characterizes this issue. Nobody on this side is saying that there should not be freedom of the press to print and write the articles and the opinion editorials it needs to. We simply think that the government should not be involved in the business of the free press.

At committee, finance officials said that no blogger will be eligible for this. They said that no owner-operated news outlet will be eligible for any of this. In fact, most start-ups will be automatically eliminated just by virtue of how start-ups begin.

One thing I also want to mention to the member is that this issue was brought in through an omnibus budget bill.

It is the first time, that I can find, that the Canada Revenue Agency will not be directly involved in the administration of a tax credit. The government is setting up a partisan panel, with Unifor on it. Does the member have another example of a tax credit that is not administered directly by the CRA?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that this partisan panel being referred to has eight different associations as part of it. I would be surprised if any of these eight members would like to see themselves characterized as partisan. In fact, these are the people responsible for our democratic news. Different organizations and newspapers may have leanings one way or the other, but if we are characterizing our newspaper sector as partisan, as represented by these eight organizations that represent all sides and all parts of our media, that is a problem.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech and excellent work at committee, where we discussed these issues at length.

*Business of Supply*

I will not ask her why we had to wait until the last minute because I have already asked that question many times today. A lot of people are wondering if they are going to pack up next weekend because the parliamentary session is almost over. It cannot believe that we are tackling this issue today, but the Conservatives wanted to raise it.

Is my colleague surprised by the Conservative belief that choosing a union such as Unifor to represent the views of workers and others is some kind of a game?

I find it appalling that they waited until the last minute, just before the election, to introduce such a highly debatable motion.

Is she surprised by the Conservative belief that unions do not look favourably on the Conservatives and do not believe them to be on their side?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is true that we work well together in committee. Our committee works very hard. We have talked extensively about what we should do about the media and many other issues. Various steps have been taken in the past three or four years.

• (1620)

[English]

The Canada Media Fund received stabilization funds several years ago, and the CBC, for local news production, also received a large investment. Therefore, there have been steps taken all along.

[Translation]

I apologize for switching to English, but sometimes it is easier for me. Unifor represents over 10,000 employees. How can anyone think they are all partisan? The truth is that journalists represent all points of view. Unifor is a big union that wants to do good work for employees. It would be crazy to say it is completely partisan, yet that is what we are hearing today.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak to this opposition motion today, because, as my colleagues know, I was a journalist for more than two decades. I spent the bulk of my time working for community newspapers across southern Alberta, so I think I can speak with a lot of insight into how journalists across the country feel, not necessarily about the media bailout but certainly about certain groups that have been added to this panel to decide who is going to be getting funding, who is going to be left out, and what the criteria will be for how these funds are going to be rolled out to various media groups.

From the beginning of my career as a journalist to near the end, I could see a stark difference in how Canadians viewed journalists across the country. There is no question, for various reasons, be it the growth of social media, cable news or other avenues, that there has been a very clear erosion of trust in journalists across this country, and certainly across North America.

Our motion today is not questioning Canadian journalists and the importance of the media in strengthening our democracy and holding government and politicians to account. That is not stated anywhere

in the motion we are putting forward. What we are questioning is the inclusion of a group like Unifor on this panel. Our motion clearly states that it is important that we have a free and independent press, which is an integral pillar of our democracy. That is the first comment in our motion. However, my argument today is that including a group like Unifor, which has been outwardly partisan, has called itself the resistance and is once again going to be actively campaigning against a specific political party in the upcoming election, erodes the integrity of this entire process. We have heard this from journalists across the country, not just members of the opposition.

Andrew Potter, a CBC contributor, said, “This is actually worse than anyone could have imagined. An ‘independent body’ staffed entirely by unions and industry lobbyists. What a disaster.”

Andrew Coyne, a columnist with the National Post, said, “It is quite clear now, if it was not already: this is the most serious threat to the independence of the press in this country in decades.”

These are trusted journalists who are speaking out against the decision made by the Liberal government to include a partisan group association as part of this panel. That is the essence of what our motion here speaks about today. In no way are we questioning the integrity and importance of journalists.

I was very proud last week, when the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association held its annual awards ceremony, to see that I had numerous community newspapers in my riding win awards. I would like to take this opportunity to read out some of the award winners.

The Claresholm Local Press, published by Roxanne Thompson and editor Rob Vogt, won best overall in Class B. The High River Times won third-best overall in Class D. The Rocky Mountain Outlook, published by Jason Lyon, won best overall in Class E. It won the Excellence in Education Writing award, the Best Habitat Conservation Story award and the Arts and Culture Writing award.

The Okotoks Western Wheel, where I worked for 17 years, I was very proud to see, won best overall in Class F, beating our rival, the St. Albert Gazette. My colleague will owe me a beer for that one. It also won the Best Local News Story award, the Best Habitat Conservative Story award and the Sports Writing award. I congratulate Bruce Campbell, the editor, and Remy Greer, Krista Conrad and Tammy Rollie, who are some of the reporters there.

However there are two that really stand out to me, and I think this goes to the misinformation from our colleagues across the floor in saying that this funding is going to be available for any journalist across Canada. One of the newspapers, which is an historic newspaper in Alberta, is owned and operated by Frank and Emily McTighe, who are certainly one of my mentors in the newspaper and print industry in Alberta.

*Business of Supply*

•(1625)

The Macleod Gazette is more than 100 years old. It won as the best overall newspaper in its class in Alberta. It won the Healthy Communities Journalism Award and the Best Feature Story by a Local Writer award, and editor and publisher Frank McTighe was honoured with the Gordon Scott Memorial Award for the best feature column. That is a very prestigious award in Alberta's newspaper industry. As well, Shootin' the Breeze, which is owned and operated by Shannon Robison, in Pincher Creek, won two writing awards, for environmental writing and best local editorial.

These two newspapers are among the most popular in my riding of Foothills in southwest Alberta, but neither of these newspapers will be eligible for any of the funding, because they are owner operated. These are not big conglomerates that have highly paid lobbyists who can lobby the Liberal government and this panel to ensure that they benefit from this program. These are small community newspapers, the lifeblood of these communities, that ensure that they are hyper-local and that their residents know everything that is going on in their communities.

Our Liberal colleagues across the floor are saying that the Conservatives are attacking journalism and that all media outlets across the country, which are so important to our democracy, are going to be eligible for these funds. Bloggers, online newspapers and some of these critical community newspapers are not going to be eligible for this funding. They are going to be struggling. I would argue that these newspapers are the most important ones we have. These are the ones that are tied tightly to their communities and do such important work, and I know that they do it with the most minimal of resources. I am sure that they would love to be eligible to access this media fund, but they are not going to be able to. This is going to be exclusively for the large corporations that have expensive lobbyists who will be lobbying the Liberal government to access these funds.

The Conservatives' argument on this motion today is not necessarily who is eligible and who is not. I want to take the opportunity to highlight the misinformation that is being rolled out by the Liberal government on who is going to be able to access these funds, because it is simply not the case.

I want to focus on the fact that making Unifor part of this panel is explicitly inappropriate. The Liberals' attack on us and this motion has been that we are fighting journalists and that we do not believe in a free press or the independence of journalists across Canada, and that is simply not the case. Conservatives understand as well as anyone, especially those of us who come from rural constituencies and represent rural ridings, how important community newspapers are to the success and health of communities. What we are questioning is how the Liberal government, by putting Unifor on the panel, which has campaigned, advertized and been very vocal, calling itself the resistance fighting against the Conservatives in the upcoming election, can possibly believe and claim that this is a non-partisan panel that will be making choices that are free from any influence from the Liberal government.

Jerry Dias might as well be a member of Parliament representing the Liberal Party and sitting in this House. He was a key part of the Liberals' negotiating team on NAFTA. He is now on the media

bailout panel. There is no question that this goes way too far. We are asking that the panel stay as it is but that Unifor be removed from that panel to ensure the integrity of this process and not further erode trust in Canadian journalism.

•(1630)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I respect the previous speaker for his experience in local media, which I have some experience with myself.

This reminds me of several years ago, about seven or eight years ago, when we were the third party at that time, or maybe even the opposition. I remember that there was an argument over the Canadian firearms advisory committee. One of the big beefs the Conservatives had at the time was that there was no representation from firearms owners. A lot of people on our side were saying no because, they said, those people were mostly Conservatives against the gun registry and so on and so forth. I remember a bunch of us on the other side saying, "No, that's not right. They should be involved. They are firearms owners." Then on the other side, they were saying that a lot of law enforcement should not be involved because they were more pro-Liberal or pro-NDP.

I find it kind of odd now that all a sudden there is this voluminous amount of self-righteousness coming from across the way. I will say this, without being too nasty or putting too fine a point on it, and perhaps it is too late: let us take Unifor out of this for just a moment.

Quite frankly, Unifor did not always agree with me. I had many fights with Unifor, especially as its predecessor, when it was known as the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union. However, it did a lot of work on behalf of journalist organizations.

If we take just Unifor out, and not the others, is it still a fundamentally sound program from which local media could truly benefit?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's very long question.

To answer his first statement, I was very clear in my comments that this program will not benefit most local media. Those operations that are owner-operated or are small start-ups or are independents will not be eligible for this program.

To the Liberals who continually ask why we are fighting against the ability of local journalism to benefit from this program, the answer is that they will not benefit from this program because they are not eligible. It just goes to show that the Liberals are not reading their own legislation and that they do not understand that these groups will not benefit from this program because they do not qualify.

However, the Liberals have no problem putting a very highly partisan union association at the top of the list when it comes to who is going to qualify for this program and who is not.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my colleague's speech on this particular matter, because his riding is very similar to mine in the sense that I have no daily newspapers.

*Business of Supply*

As I heard the minister in committee talking about this, going through the criteria that are already written, not one of my seven weekly papers will qualify under the criteria that the minister admitted were there. Not one of my weekly papers will qualify for the \$600 million, the \$75 million, the \$50 million. None of them qualify.

I know the member has that experience in his background. In his riding, I know there are weekly papers.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Bow River and I have neighbouring ridings, and they are very similar. I worked at several of the newspapers in his constituency.

The member is right: The papers or journalism or media outlets that we should be assisting are the ones that are not going to be able to access this program.

In essence, the argument today is not about this program; the argument today is that the Liberals have established a very partisan \$600-million media bailout program that is going to be directed, or at least partially built, by a union association that has come out publicly against opposition parties. I do not believe that this is in any way non-partisan.

Again, I fundamentally believe what I am hearing from journalists in our communities, which is that this further erodes the trust in Canadian journalism, which is already very precarious.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Order. 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 Windsor West, Automotive Industry; the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, Health.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of my constituents in Mégantic—L'Érable to speak to the motion moved by my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

I will read out the motion so that everyone can understand why I am speaking today. The motion states:

That the House:

- (a) take note of the importance of a free and independent press to a healthy democracy;
- (b) express its belief that it is inappropriate for partisan political actors to pick winners and losers in the media in an election year;
- (c) condemn the inclusion of Unifor, a group that has taken and continues to take partisan political positions, in the panel that will oversee the distribution of the \$600-million media bailout; and
- (d) call on the government to immediately cease trying to stack the deck for the election with their media bailout and replace it with a proposal that does not allow government to pick winners and losers.

There are not many days left in the 42nd Parliament, and today we are discussing one of the most important issues for our democracy. My colleagues and I have been called upon to speak on this issue since the Liberals were elected in 2015.

Let us not forget how the Liberals deceived Canadians during the election campaign. The promises they made were certainly ambitious, but they clearly had no intention of keeping them.

Here is one promise they made in the throne speech:

To make sure that every vote counts, the Government will undertake consultations on electoral reform, and will take action to ensure that 2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first-past-the-post voting system...the Government will promote more open debate and free votes...it will not resort to devices like...omnibus bills to avoid scrutiny.

Those statements were taken from the throne speech, which was read by the Governor General when this government first took office.

Let us also not forget the Liberals' promise to balance the budget in 2019. They promised to run small deficits and to balance the budget in 2019. Instead, they ran big deficits, and they are no longer even giving us any idea of when they will balance the budget. The Liberals have completely lost control of the public purse. Today, it is clear that their promise to be an open and transparent government was an empty one. They may have meant well, but things always seem to turn out the same way with the Liberals.

When Liberals are in power, all they care about is protecting their friends, holding on to power at all costs, breaking the rules they do not like, painting pretty pictures and saying all the right things to hide what they have done or failed to do, and constantly distracting Canadians from the issues that matter most to Canadians.

Not long ago, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change revealed the Liberal government's real strategy in a bar. She said that if you stay on message and repeat it louder and louder, people will totally believe it.

Here are some examples of things the Liberals tried to keep quiet: the Prime Minister's extravagant trip to India, his vacation on the Aga Khan's private island, the Prime Minister's ethical breaches, the Minister of Finance's French villa, political interference attempts in the SNC-Lavalin affair, and, more recently, the Mark Norman case.

It is also worth mentioning repeated attempts by the Leader of the Government in the House to change the rules governing members of Parliament. Whose interests would that serve? The Liberal government's, of course. Doing so would rob the opposition of the tools it uses to stand up to the government and fully engage in its essential role: holding the government to account for its actions.

This brings me to the first paragraph of today's motion:

That the House:

- (a) take note of the importance of a free and independent press to a healthy democracy;



*Business of Supply*

All the examples I just gave probably would not have come to our attention if not for the importance of a free and independent press. Trust between the public and the media is a direct result of the people's belief that the media is independent of their government. However, the Liberal Prime Minister has introduced a plan worth \$600 million that will be distributed to the Canadian media right before the upcoming election. The Prime Minister himself chose the members of the panel that will decide how to distribute the money. He will not commit to following their recommendations. He will not allow the panel's deliberations to be public. He is asking the panel members to sign non-disclosure agreements. The Canadian Association of Journalists is now wondering whether to take part in the process, and it is calling for greater transparency.

I would like to quote a press release issued by the Canadian Association of Journalists, not the Conservative Party.

• (1640)

The Canadian Association of Journalists, or CAJ, said that its paramount concern is transparency and that its ability to participate will hinge on having measures in place that ensure an open and transparent public process. The CAJ noted that, so far, much of the process appears to have taken place out of the public eye through closed-door meetings between governments, newspaper owners and lobby groups. It believes that, for journalists, whose legitimacy depends on public confidence and trust, the process must be open and debate must be rigorous, thorough and in view of the public.

Furthermore, the CAJ said that combining this with the requested confidentiality agreements could create a situation where a media outlet that is critical of a minister or his or her government is denied funding and the CAJ is barred from discussing this publicly. It said that, to ensure the panel has no appearance of partisanship, regardless of whether or not it does, the panel's full independence must be the rule.

We cannot be accused of attacking journalists when the journalists themselves are saying that the Liberals' scheme is jeopardizing their own independence. Why does the Prime Minister want to make a decision behind closed doors about which media outlets he will help? Is he hiding that he is trying to rig the election? Does he understand the harm he could do to Canadian journalists if he does not show them greater respect?

Now let us move on to paragraph (c) of this motion, which calls on the House to condemn the inclusion of Unifor, a group that has taken and continues to take partisan political positions, in this panel. Unifor is a big union, by far the union that represents the largest number of journalists in Canada. I am saying this for the benefit of people in Quebec who may not have heard of Unifor. The Prime Minister invited Unifor to sit on the panel that will oversee the media bailout. Many journalists and Canadians were shocked by this appointment. Jerry Dias, the president of Unifor and the Prime Minister's close friend, made it clear that his union will be the Conservatives' worst nightmare for the 2019 election. He had no qualms about posing for a picture with his cronies, billing them as the resistance working to stop a Conservative government from getting elected. When is the Prime Minister going to put an end to this anti-democratic charade?

That is not all. For people who want to know more about Mr. Dias and what he thinks about the Conservative Party, I will translate what he said in his tweets, which were reported by two media outlets. First, he said that he was indeed speaking out against the Conservative leader. Then Mr. Dias said he was not going to tone down his anti-Conservative campaign and that he would probably ramp it up, because the Conservative leader had irritated him over the past few days. Such is the attitude of the president of Unifor. He is the one being appointed to an independent panel to select which media will be entitled to receive funding from the Liberal government.

This is a union whose president is committed to openly campaigning against the Conservatives with money from its members. I could cite many journalists who are furious with this decision, who do not accept that their union is making such statements and who are against the government interfering in the granting process. This process has to be non-partisan, open and transparent. It has to be the opposite of what the Prime Minister has done so far.

The government is going down this dangerous path with Unifor and letting the fox guard the henhouse. It is in the fox's nature to want to eat the chickens, and Jerry Dias has clearly expressed his intention to eat Conservative in the next election. How can we trust Mr. Dias? We can still maintain the independence of our media. To start, the government must remove Unifor from this panel.

I was a journalist for many years. I worked at a local radio station. There is always a thin line between the influence of business partners and the influence one can have as a journalist. Fortunately, journalists have always maintained their independence. However, the government's actions are not going to protect journalists' jobs.

Unifor's president must be removed from the panel and the government must go about this in the right way, in an open and transparent manner, to protect the independence of journalists and Canada's democracy.

• (1645)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what comes to my mind is the fact that when Stephen Harper was prime minister, tens of millions of dollars were given out to newsmagazines every year, and it was the government that decided which magazines and news reporters would receive the money.

What is happening here is far more arm's-length than the principles Stephen Harper used, so I wonder if the very same principles that the member opposite was using would have applied for Stephen Harper.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, advertising is open and transparent. Anyone can see where the government places ads. With this process, people will not know how decisions were made, nor will they be able to find out who did not get a media fund contribution. That gives the government way more power to influence the media than it should have. That is the problem.

*Business of Supply*

If there is no list, if we have no way of knowing who applied and who was turned down, it will be very easy for the government to favour the most accommodating media organizations. Who will pay the price? Journalists, unfortunately. Because of this government's bad decisions, journalists will be under pressure. Public trust in journalists will be shaken. People behind closed doors will have made decisions that affect them, decisions they have absolutely no say in.

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his speech. I support part (a) of his motion, with which I fully agree. Unfortunately, when we get to part (b) things start to sour. I would like to draw attention to some of the terms used in the wording of the motion, which make it totally impossible for me to understand the purpose and to support it. It states:

express its belief that...partisan political actors.

They would have us believe that being politically engaged is wrong. In my 25 years of teaching, I used every platform I had to tell the young people I talked to about the need for political engagement. Of course, political engagement means taking a stand on an ideology. "Enlightenment comes when ideas collide", as the saying goes. If we have all political stripes in committee then we can settle on a course of action. To me that is definition of engaging in politics. Worse yet, the motion says:

it is inappropriate...to pick winners and losers in the media in an election year;

Does that mean that if this were not an election year, then it would be appropriate to get the friends of the party, either Conservative or Liberal, to pick and choose?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, with the election quickly approaching, I understand that my colleague is somewhat concerned about what the outcome will be. I understand that.

We also understand that the Liberals chose the timing of this contribution very carefully. It allows them to try to influence the media until the very last minute. Why did they not announce which media outlets would be getting funding sooner, making many others unhappy? The Liberals were probably concerned that the outlets that did not get any funding would be a bit miffed. That is the problem when the government tries to interfere in an independent process.

The Liberals are claiming that the panel will be independent when one of the stakeholders is openly against the Conservative Party and has indicated that it will officially oppose the Conservatives in the 2019 election.

The Liberals claimed that the panel was completely independent even though they appointed that stakeholder. That is not transparency. That is a complete lack of transparency and a sneaky way of rigging the upcoming election in their favour.

• (1650)

[English]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this particular day, I would like to pay a bit of respect to the commission on missing and murdered indigenous women and the important work it did in reporting out today, particularly in the area of housing and the way in

which we move people in Canada and public transportation. This issue is one that I am sure all members of the House are seized with. In my role working on the housing file, I understand the importance of making sure that this part of the recommendations gets fulfilled.

In terms of the missing and murdered indigenous women commission, it is also important to note that one of the reasons we know so much about this issue is the indigenous journalists in this country. If it were not for the voices of independent indigenous journalists screaming at us to pay attention, the voices of victims may never have reached Parliament Hill. For those brave journalists who stood by their sisters, mothers, aunts and cousins, I want to thank them for the role they played. That underscores why supporting independent journalism, community-based journalism, is so profoundly important.

We all live in a media environment where some of the loudest voices in Canada, and the names have been quoted today endlessly, are often heard in debate on the floor of the House of Commons. However, some of the most important journalism in the country is done by some of the smallest and most independent of journalistic voices. In fact, those are the ones most at risk in the current media environment. They are the ones who have come to us and asked for us to deliver the work we are now speaking about.

I emerged from that community of journalists. My first job as a journalist was at the community-based radio station CKLN in Toronto. If it had not been for the ability of that station to give someone who had no training a break, I would not have made my way from there to Citytv, from there to CBC and then back again to Citytv and CP24 as a journalist. I would never have worked for The Star and the Globe. I would never have made it into some of the other broadcast organizations that I have.

The survival of community-based journalism is at the heart of what I am speaking to today. My riding is home to CBC headquarters, CTV News in Toronto, Corus Entertainment and The Toronto Star. The city of Toronto has a GDP of \$330 million. To put that in context, Alberta has a GDP of \$331 million. In Toronto, digital media is the second-largest employer. In the cultural sector, that is a critical sector of workers who live in my riding, find work in my riding and are attached to those news organizations. I have a responsibility to those workers, not just as former colleagues or members of my own family. My sister is a journalist, and many other members of my family, including my father, were also journalists.

I grew up in the industry and watched it change over the last 30 years. Quite frankly, it scares me. The camera guys I used to work with, their shoulders are breaking down, and their backs as well. When I walk out into a scrum, I can see four or five former colleagues working for different stations on short-term contracts. Those are people whom I shared the birth of their first child with or went through the death of parents with. They are not just the writers whose names are being quoted here.

*Business of Supply*

Journalists and media corporations in this country hire people through the entire workplace, from the receptionist to the people who clean up the coffee cups when the newsroom has gone to bed. It is the editors, and it is the writers. Yes, it is the people whose names get put on the by-lines, but there are hundreds, thousands, in fact tens of thousands of people in this country whose jobs depend on having a strong and independent media. It is not just the large organizations in the large cities.

When a small newspaper is pulled out of a small town, so much disappears when that newspaper goes quiet. So much disappears when a radio station stops producing independent news or putting the voice of new journalists on the air. We have to be smart about this and sensitive to it, because this is not about the profession and the ethics of journalism; it is about the health of media in this country. The health of media in this country has never been more fragile and threatened by more forces, and we have never seen so many journals, radio stations and small TV stations disappear.

The other side referred to them as “fossils” and said to get with it and that technology is changing. So many of these independent newspapers are small family-run businesses. If we replaced media with the family farm, and if we were to establish an advisory panel in the federal government to decide which family farm sectors were to survive or not, and if we did not appoint family farmers to it, the Conservatives would be the first to scream at us, as they should. If we were to make oil policy in this country and not put oil workers on the panel, the Conservatives would be the first ones screaming at us.

•(1655)

Unifor represents 12,000 people, and most of them have ordinary jobs, doing good work for good pay with good benefits because of the union. That is whom Unifor represents, as much as any of the opinion leaders who have been quoted in the debate. Those people deserve a voice in this process, and I will stand here and defend those people, because my career would have disappeared without them.

From the day I started working in the media, my father took me aside and told me that I have to respect every single part of the production chain, because otherwise it will fail. I took that to heart, and I still take it to heart. When I walk through some of those newsrooms, I see faces of fear there, as the layoffs cascade through year after year, month after month.

We have a responsibility to all Canadian workers. A receptionist in a newsroom is no different from a receptionist at an oil company or a feedlot. Every single person deserves the support of the Canadian government to make sure livelihoods and communities are protected.

What have we done? I am listening to this debate as someone who has spent most of his life as a working journalist, and from what I hear, one would think the government is paying for content. That is just nonsense. Canadians need to know that no part of the measures we introduced would mean paying for content.

There are three major parts. First, we would allow small community foundations and news organizations to set themselves up as charities so that Canadians can choose for themselves whom to donate to. These charities could then protect and create a foundation

to protect independent journalism. We do not choose which charities get donations. That is for Canadians to decide. All we decide is which news organizations should qualify as charities.

That is important, because now there are fake news organizations parading as if they were news organizations, even though they have not come close to following the ethics of journalism once in their entire lifetime. This would allow the industry to enrol industry members that want to partake in this. If they want to sustain their independence and not partake in the program, that is their business. However, it is good to have a group of independent journalists look at an organization to see whether it is hiring journalists from the profession and has a footprint in the community it claims to represent.

Second, there would be a tax break for hiring. As with any industry that is in trouble, it is normal to provide tax breaks to organizations that are hiring working journalists. It is to ensure that we do not put money in the front door while some hedge fund in New York takes money out the back door. We saw this with the National Post. It came to the Hill and cried poor, laying off a bunch of people, and then all of its senior executives got massive bonuses while Canadians went unemployed.

We need to make sure that if we put money into this industry, we build employment and hard-working Canadians do not lose their jobs as money from the federal government simply gets filtered through to a hedge fund in New York. I think that is critically important.

The final piece is a tax break for subscriptions. Canadians would choose where to put their money, not us. They would be able to write off their subscriptions, especially e-subscriptions, so that the flow of money into the bank accounts of independent journalists is sustained. Again, Canadians would choose which newspapers get their donations and which newspapers they subscribe to. The federal government is simply setting up a mechanism to incentivize that process so that we can provide some stability to the industry.

As for Unifor, there is this notion that a Toronto Sun writer who will be representing Unifor is somehow going to be beholden to this government because that person gets to choose someone who chooses someone who chooses someone. It is so arm's length that it is perhaps an arm and a leg's length. The idea that a Toronto Sun writer could be bought is a joke.

Every journalist I have ever worked with would say that this is a joke. The mere fact that the Conservatives have quoted journalist after journalist saying, “We will not be bought” tells us exactly how protected that principle in the journalistic field is. No one is going to be bought because someone has made a donation to a charitable foundation. That is just ridiculous. In many ways, it casts a view or a perspective on journalists that would only come from a party that thinks, despite getting three-quarters of the recommendations from editorial boards last year, that there is still a Liberal bias in the media. It is absurd.

*Business of Supply*

The reality is that professional journalists are just that: professional journalists. I can assure members that they are skeptical of everybody, equally.

● (1700)

This is about workers and we need to keep that central in everything we talk about here. This is a sector of the economy, a very large sector in my riding and in different communities, that needs to be protected and needs support.

As I said, members should look at their speech, cross out media and put in the family farm and tell me if they would say anything like that about the family farms in their communities. They would not. They have no hesitation with the family farm and agricultural boards. They have no hesitation understanding there needs to be tax credits for the family farm. They have no worry about ensuring the family farm is represented inside trade agreements. We do not tell the family farm whether to raise chickens, or to ranch cattle or to produce eggs. Those choices will be made by the family farms in the same way the media will make its decisions about journalistic integrity. Journalists have integrity. It is bred into the profession.

I will end by telling a story of exactly how I came to experience the true face of the Conservative Party as it relates to journalistic independence.

I covered city hall mostly. I covered Queen's Park quite a bit. I was also sent to Ottawa quite often in the last six years of my being a political journalist, when Mr. Harper was just starting out as the prime minister. I used to cover the issues from the Toronto perspective, the same way I speak from the Toronto perspective as an MP.

I remember covering a nomination announcement in the riding of St. Paul's, at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. I made reference to the member for Thornhill earlier today when I thanked him for the donation he made to my campaign when I first started to run. He claimed that I went off the rails. I would say I ended up just where I needed to be, but will beg to differ on the outcome of his donation. My residents thank him for his support and clearly have sent me to Ottawa a couple of times now as a result of it.

I was at the nomination battle when that member first entered politics. He decided he would run for the Conservative Party in the riding of St. Paul's. The prime minister at the time, Stephen Harper, showed up to celebrate the acquisition of a star candidate for the Conservative Party. I was not happy that Stephen Harper refused to talk about housing every time he came to Toronto, despite the fact we were in the midst of a housing crisis then. Even then I was demanding the national government have a federal housing policy and even then that issue needed to be pressed much more forcefully in the House of Commons.

I interrupted the scrum that he was holding and asked the question. I was told that was a local matter and not to ask those sorts of questions. Then I tried to scrum him on his way out of the hall and to ask him why the federal Conservative Party did not have a national housing strategy. At that point, somebody grabbed me from behind, by the scruff of my neck, and literally yanked me out of the scrum almost to the floor. I almost turned around and clocked the individual with my microphone, but I did not. Who was it? It was

Harper's press secretary. This was quite an event. The cameraman had to hold me back. I was furious. I had never been dealt with physically in a scrum in my life, and I had been in scrums with everybody.

The most interesting thing was what happened the next day. Unbeknownst to the Conservatives, I was sent to Ottawa to cover a minority Parliament that was having trouble staying alive. I walked into the news bureau where I worked and lo and behold there was Harper's press secretary standing in the office in which I had a desk. I was the senior political correspondent with CHUM CityNews at the time. He was barking at my two colleagues, threatening they would never get another question again if a certain reporter in Toronto showed up and asked the leader of the Conservative Party a question. He was screaming that if they did not get rid of that reporter, they would never get a question, Citytv would never get a question and they would be ignored. He said that the party would do everything it could until it got rid of that reporter.

That is the Conservatives' attitude toward independent media. When they do not get an article they like or when they get asked a question they do not like, they do not just sit there and take it like adults. They go after people with everything they have. They threaten lawsuits, and I could talk to the House about Julian Fantino. They threaten one's job, and I could talk to the House about Paul Godfrey and Mel Lastman.

However, what the Conservatives really do not like is an independent journalist sticking up for the local community, asking the questions that members of that community need to have answered by a federal government. When journalists do that, the Conservatives do not just threaten them, they threaten their entire news organization.

That is the attitude of the Conservative Party when the lights are down and in the backrooms of the press gallery in Parliament. The Conservatives will go out of their way to silence the voice of independent journalists time and time again.

The Conservatives pretend to stand here on the Unifor file. What has them worried is that Unifor does not like them. What they do not understand is that Unifor has no more sway with journalists they represent in the editorial rooms and the papers, the television stations and the radio stations. Unifor never walks into those newsrooms or those story rooms and dictates what is going to happen anymore than the teacher's pension fund, which used to own the Toronto Sun, would tell Paul Godfrey, or Sue-Ann Levy, or David Aiken when he worked there, or Brian Lilley when he worked there, or Ezra Levant when he worked there or Faith Goldy when she worked there. None of them was ever dictated to by the teachers' pension fund and they certainly have not been endorsed by Unifor.

*Business of Supply*

● (1705)

Nonetheless, Unifor in participating in this process to ensure that all workers inside the media, not just journalists but everybody employed at all news organizations right across the country from coast to coast to coast, have a fair shake and a fair go of it. The bill is about that. Defending journalism is about that. It is about more than just talking about the writers. It is talking about every person who draws a paycheque, who supports a family and who spends dollars at the corner store, just like we do when we go to our home communities.

The bill is attempting to do that. That is why the bill is so critical. I am very proud to stand with a government that understands journalists cannot be bought, but media can be supported. We will support the media organizations across the country even when they criticize us. Unlike the Conservative Party, we are not afraid of them.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to address a couple of things in my colleague's intervention before asking a question. I guess the difference between Conservatives and Liberals is that when journalists do not support the Liberals, they either hire them or get stakeholders to phone them and threaten to sue them. I do not think there is a lot of integrity on that side on how they have treated journalists with whom they do not necessarily agree.

My colleague's presentation was all about protecting journalism and the integrity of journalists. Every journalist I have spoken with since this media bailout program was announced has said that having Unifor as a member of that panel and having a media bailout hurts the integrity of his or her profession. It further erodes the trust in journalists. This is not an attack from the Conservative side on journalists. This is voicing the concerns raised by journalists.

My colleague talked many times about the work of independent journalists, but independent newspapers, media, radio stations will not get funding from this because they will not qualify. Why is the Liberal Party not listening to the journalists who have raised concerns about this program. They do not believe it is fair and it will further erode trust in Canadian journalism?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, first, if the member does not think the Conservatives hired journalists to be media managers, he quite clearly has never been a journalist working in the political field. Journalists of all stripes are hired by parties of all stripes to do the work that spokespeople do. This happens in Ottawa, trust me. Where did the Conservatives find Mike Duffy?

The issue is that this is not about content and has never been about content. There is no reason to worry about the independent professionalism of journalists. They are professionals and have all the integrity they need to ensure they make the right call on news stories.

This is about an industry that employs tens of thousands of people across the country. They are not all writers or journalists. Some of them sweep the floor. Some of them greet people at the door, such as receptionists. Some of them are people who work in the libraries or do research for us. It is about supporting an industry and an economy in local communities to ensure it survives and is there for the next generations, especially as technological change overwhelms that industry.

With respect to independence, as I said, we are not funding journalists. We are funding an industry in a time of transition. I would hope that as technological change washes over the industry, as new digital platforms emerge and as people become more comfortable with providing good information, we can get an industry back that can speak truth to power, that has integrity and that is unafraid to criticize a government. Clearly we are not afraid to be criticized. We can take it. We are grown-ups.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Before I go to questions and comments, I want to remind hon. members that in the rule book it says that disrupting a member while he or she is answering or asking a question is not right. I want to remind both sides that those are the rules. While someone is talking, whether members like what he or she is saying, it is up to the person to wait and then ask the question or make comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

● (1710)

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the Conservatives condemn Unifor, which I find absolutely disappointing and absurd. Unifor is a union. I have heard personal attacks against Mr. Dias. There is some confusion that he will be sitting on this panel.

The Conservatives make personal attacks on Unifor or Mr. Dias and they are used to that. There are other unions, such as the United Steelworkers, CUPE, the machinists, a whole bunch of them. None of them like the Conservatives, they will always vote against them and they will say that publicly.

Does the member believe there is confusion about Mr. Dias being at the panel? An independent, retired reporter, who was a Unifor member, is sitting on the panel.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, the member in question worked with me when I was at city hall. In fact, he was part of the Toronto Sun news bureau that saw its chief correspondent fired by Paul Godfrey for criticizing Mel Lastman during a municipal campaign. This is the kind of behaviour that one would expect from really bad journalistic leadership.

However, it is interesting to note that Paul Godfrey came here and asked for these funds, these dollars. In fact, I remember the member, who is now the minister in charge of indigenous services, saying that his editorial policy and corporate ask did not match. Paul Godfrey replied that no one had to worry about that because they never would. He needed the money. I told him that he would be the first to criticize us if we gave it to him and he said that I probably had that right, which is exactly what is happening right here.

*Business of Supply*

I want to pay respect to The Hamilton Spectator print workers who were laid off this week. Those are the people whose jobs we are trying to save. Those are the very people who we should be talking about today. We can quote all the columnists we would like. The columnists are well paid and will probably survive with their book deals. However, those who work the printing press at The Hamilton Spectator are real people with real jobs in a town that was already struggling with the steel tariffs up until a couple of weeks ago. We do not hear the Conservatives talking about the printing presses and the loss of those good quality jobs, the loss of the benefits as they face retirement and the loss of the money as they try to send their kids to school.

That is who this party is defending, that is who Unifor defends and that is what this bill is all about. It is about ensuring that hard-working Canadians are not afraid to go home at night, thinking it is the last day they have worked on their jobs. If the Conservatives cannot get behind that, they should go to the Hamilton printing press and tell the workers that. I can guarantee you will never get another vote in Hamilton ever again.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to remind hon. members to direct their questions through the Speaker, not at the Speaker.

Questions and comment, the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

**Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, very few other members in the House can speak with the amount of experience and credibility on the subject of the importance of having an independent media and an independent source of journalism, which is a pillar of our democracy, than the member for Spadina—Fort York. I also want to commend him for being a pretty hard-hitting reporter, but at the same time, for showing some restraint when he was nearly tackled by a former staffer of the last Conservative prime minister, Stephen Harper.

I wonder if the member could explain why, in his view, the Conservatives of the day seem to have such a hard time recognizing the importance of having Unifor and, generally speaking, labour at the table when it comes to protecting the interests of having an independent media. As he has already explained, this is about saving jobs and about ensuring we have a healthy democracy. That is advanced by having an independent media.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, when I look at who is complaining about the bill, it is largely editors. From my experience, editors never liked having staff make decisions in the newsroom. They thought the journalistic independence was protected by the editorial board, not by hard-working journalists. I disagreed with them every day I worked. That is probably why I ended up in politics and not in journalism to this very day.

However, when we deal with this industry, we should stop thinking about the folks we meet in the hallway and the conversations we have with the pundits. We should go to our home towns, knock on the door of a radio station at seven o'clock on a Friday night or go to a television show that is being put to air at four o'clock in the afternoon and take a look at the people on the floor of the newsroom: folks who are watching technology change faster

than their paycheques are, folks who are watching editing technologies that are replacing editors, folks who are watching camera operators being replaced by reporters with videographers. The industry is shrinking as fast as the platform and the financial base on which they are standing. It is a very scary time in those places.

Those who have spent their entire lives in a newsroom the way I have, having spent close to 25 years largely in one news organization, have seen people come in as fresh-faced interns, become new hires, go on to become managers of the department and then watched the entire thing disappear overnight. They have mortgages to pay, kids' educations to take care of, needs in their families and aging parents to look after. When we watch that decimation roll through newsroom after newsroom, we need to give our heads a shake.

These measures, a charitable foundation, are to prevent the disappearance of some of these family-run businesses, to ensure they survive into the next decade; to ensure the subscriptions to these organizations are tax deductible so people making choices to support them get a bit of an incentive to do a little more a little more often and not run around the firewall; to ensure that when people are hired, they are hiring journalists, building the profession and ensuring young kids in school right now are not being trained for an industry that will not exist. We should think about them and what this bill would do for those people. Then they should get back to work protecting journalism independence by not going into newsrooms across the country and threatening journalists every day. I can tell everyone that I have experienced it from that party more than any other party in this place.

● (1715)

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have been enjoying some of the conversation I have heard this afternoon. Some of it, I am not quite so sure about.

My father owned a weekly newspaper. I remember many times, when he would write specific things in the newspapers, people would come in and say, "I disagree with what you wrote as the owner-editor of that paper." He would say, "It is my paper. I will print what I want, and I will say what I want. If you want to buy the paper, you can buy it. I will sell it to you, and you can say what you want." Now, that is an independent weekly newspaper.

In my riding, I have seven editor-owned newspapers. I have spoken to many of them in my community in the last few weeks.

I am going to be sharing my time with the hon. member for Calgary Shepard, who will be very intelligent as he follows me. I am the set-up guy here.

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On this particular issue, I heard a colleague on the other side saying that they do not want to support the news on social media because it is fake news. Then it was suggested that that is where the Liberals are putting their advertising dollars. They are supporting social media with fake news while they want to support print news with real news. They blamed the Conservatives for doing that. Where are the Liberal advertising dollars going?

If Liberals really believed that the print media was the real news, why did they not shift their dollars from social media to it? They are saying that social media is fake news. I found that really interesting.

The member said to talk to my constituents, and I did. I spoke to the editor-owners of these newspapers. They are not happy with this piece of legislation. It talks about a piece for subscriptions, but for rural, independently owned newspapers, their subscription base is small. They deliver widely to all the constituents who follow their newspapers; it is not by a subscription base. They tell me that the amount they would get out of that subscription piece would be negligible.

Again, my constituents have looked at all the pieces of this one. Liberals have said that I should talk to my constituents, and I have talked to the editor-owners of these papers.

I have talked to my constituents. What has happened recently has been the Liberal government compromising on SNC-Lavalin and Mark Norman, as just a couple of examples. My constituents say that they do not trust that the government will be any different; it is not trustworthy to give money to media.

When I have talked to a lot of constituents in the past, they, as well as many from Alberta, ask, "Where is the support for the hundreds of thousands of people who have lost their jobs in the oil and resource sector?" They are saying that the government wants to give hundreds of millions to the news media, which does not support any of my constituents, but where is the support for the oil and gas guys? I met a number of them on the weekend, and they do not have a job.

Where is the support from the Prime Minister who wants to get rid of the oil sector? He wants to support media, and my constituents do not believe he is anything but untrustworthy. The Prime Minister continues to build mistrust with constituents because of this program.

Long before Confederation, the free press was used to distribute government-friendly propaganda. Some people might remember the history of newsprint as it started. The industry was started in order to do that.

Now we have a free press that holds the government to account without patronage, but this gives them more patronage. It took a lot of determination and bravery to cultivate the truly free press that we have compared to what we had before Confederation. The legacy of these pioneering individuals who took great personal risk to develop a free media must not be squandered, and yet that is exactly what the government seems to be doing.

Like with SNC-Lavalin, the Prime Minister is operating in an ill-advised way, without regard for the integrity of our institutions. Again, simply put, it should not be up to the government to decide

which media outlets receive money and which do not. It is an obvious conflict of interest that strikes at the very principle of free press, picking winners and losers in the media. It is almost unbelievable that the government would proceed down this path. We have seen what the consequences will be. They are going to choose, picking winners and losers, with this unbiased panel.

• (1720)

The Minister of Canadian Heritage said that his independent panel will be free from any direct political influence. He told me in committee, "I'm not going to name the panel and I'm not going to tell them what to do." Canadians can be forgiven for wondering if the current government can really be trusted to avoid political interference. Even if it did, the events of the past week have proven that this whole scheme is inherently flawed.

Unifor is a panel member. Jerry Dias of Unifor referred to himself and his colleagues as the resistance against Conservative politicians. Unifor, which is poised to actively campaign against our party, will be involved in deciding who receives grant money in the media. Jerry Dias will be able to weigh in on who is a real journalist and who is not. He will be positioned to decide if the content that a journalist has been publishing merits government support. Do they see why people are a little concerned that this is not another trustworthy activity? We do not need to wonder what kind of content Unifor will prefer; we already know what Mr. Dias would prefer.

This scheme fell apart almost as soon as it was launched. The government, at a very minimum, must go back to the drawing board. This whole mess needs to be undone, and not just because it creates massive conflict of interest between the government and the free press that is supposed to be covering it. The large chains need to adapt their business model to a changing industry landscape.

We all know that a decline in traditional newspapers has been going on for a long time. It has been coming. It may not have any easy solutions. I remember talking to the editor of the Edmonton Journal 15 years ago and saying it was changing. The editor said it was not going to change, that social media will not have a place. Ten years ago, I talked to the editor, who said that it was not going to change. I wonder where that editor of the Edmonton Journal is now, as it has changed drastically.

We all know that the decline in traditional papers is coming, but one solution that certainly will not work is subsidizing the same old business model that has been failing for decades. The government is looking at something that obviously did not work and has decided to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on sustaining it. It defies logic. In my riding, it is another example of an untrustworthy use of taxpayer money.

As I mentioned to the minister in committee, the way that the criteria are designed is going to ruin local weekly papers. This is not going to support the independent editor-owned papers. There is no money to support them. What the independent editors asked for was the advertising dollars that the federal government has.

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They will be bought up by the chains, and this will ruin them. They will become chain newspapers that will not be covering local events. We have seen what chain weekly papers do in rural areas. The editors fill them with all sorts of standardized stories from across the country. There is no more coverage of the municipal government; it is gone. There is no more coverage of the high-school basketball team winning games. There is no more coverage of the independent non-profit charities working for things in the community. Those things will go. This is what happens when we have independent weekly newspapers. They are at risk.

As has been said a number of times by the other side, it is the independent newspapers that are at risk. I have met with the editors in my community. These are editor-owned papers, and they do not qualify under these criteria. They know they are the most at risk of losing their papers, and the communities will be the ones that lose the most. They are the lifeblood of the communities. They do not necessarily cover national news. They do not necessarily cover what the federal government is doing. However, they cover what is happening in their communities. This bailout will not help them.

I understand that a second panel has been named that will follow a similar process and attribute \$50 million to regional outlets. These are not regional papers; they are local papers. That is what the major chains do. This will not stop the major chains from flexing their muscles with their shiny new government subsidies. This bailout is not designed to foster an independent press. Plain and simple, it is meant to prop up big failing chains. Local media were an afterthought. There is no local news, no innovation, no common sense.

In conclusion, this is not right. It is a flawed process. It should be eliminated. If the government wants to look at subsidizing, this is not the way to do it. The local weekly papers in this country that are independent and editor-owned do not qualify for the subsidies. They will not get anything out of this. This is a flawed process. It needs to go.

• (1725)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his intervention and for providing the history of his family, because I think it is very pertinent to this particular debate.

The only thing I have a question about is a fundamental difference in philosophy. I would say to put aside for a moment the Unifor debate, as he and I will disagree about that. However, when he talks about picking winners and losers in this process, the process is similar to what has been going on for years. It is similar even to what his government supported in the last Parliament, such as the Canada Media Fund.

Looking back at the golden days of cable television, the CRTC picked channels on basic cable to reap in funds because of subscriptions. We could say that, too, was about winners and losers. There were fundamental choices that we made to support those particular channels. The CBC is the ultimate example; the government provides a billion dollars a year to help fund it, although not fully. It has a newsroom. It is not a state broadcaster. It is a public broadcaster, similar to what is around the globe.

Is it this particular scheme, as my colleague calls it, that bothers him, or is it the fundamental practice of picking winners and losers? I think that is probably the wrong path to go down.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Mr. Speaker, basically, when the government gets involved in free enterprise, it never ends well. As a person and taxpayer, like others in my riding, I do not trust the government. To add a little more about my history, my professional career was in a union. I was part of the union leadership. I negotiated contracts for unions. I have a long history in unions. I understand it well. If anyone wants to go there, they can ask me about that.

However, on this particular issue, in my riding, with taxpayers' money, I am very leery of the government making decisions. Leave the money in the taxpayer's pocket. You get involved in free enterprise and you are not supporting your oil and gas sector. That is tough on my constituency. Do not do it.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to remind the hon. members to place their questions through the Speaker, not directly at each other.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it does beg the question in terms of the CBC. There are a great number of Canadians who are very interested in the Conservative Party's approach in dealing with the CBC.

I wonder if the member could do two things: One, could he share his personal thoughts in regard to government assistance to the CBC; and, two, what does he believe is the Conservative Party's stand?

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Mr. Speaker, as people have mentioned from talking to constituents, with SNC-Lavalin and Norman, there is distrust in the government in the sense of what it does with tax dollars. It has been brought up to me many times that the government is wasting tax dollars. It should not be spending it on this. This is \$600 million. It should not happen. They do not trust the government's decision-making. They see this as another example of it.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague works with me on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, where we talked about this issue many times.

Does he not find it shameful that the Liberals once again waited until the last minute, when they could have been much more effective in helping our media outlets make more money? For example, the government could have amended the exemption in section 19 of the Income Tax Act so that Internet ads are considered expenses for income tax purposes just as magazine ads are.



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[English]

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Mr. Speaker, to my colleague, I enjoy the time that I have worked with him on the heritage committee. The members from the heritage committee have had a lot of good insights. It is an excellent committee.

One of the challenges that the government has is in getting pieces of legislation to the floor in time. We are now in the waning days of Parliament. There could have been many more things done ahead of time, but the Liberals have struggled to get these issues on the table in an orderly and timely manner.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joining the debate at this late hour. It has given me the chance to listen to everything other members have said on the matter and their contributions.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It's 5:30 p.m.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I hear the member for Kingston and the Islands chirping away at me. I know he will not like the rest of what I have to say about the government's media bailout. He will not appreciate it, but he can always ask me questions afterward.

This motion started with two former journalists on the Conservative side speaking to it, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent and the member for Thornhill. They are both exceptional journalists who have had long careers in the media and know what they are talking about. They are veterans of journalism. We always say within our caucus that the member for Thornhill has some of the most interesting life stories we will ever hear. I encourage any member in this House to ask him about the stories of his journalistic exploits and the situations he found himself in when he would follow them wherever they would go.

What we are talking about today is a media bailout the government is pushing through for large media organizations. There are three components to it: the labour tax credit, the digital new subscription tax credit and a qualified donee measure. Those three measures form this media bailout.

The media bailout is embedded within the omnibus budget bill. Other members have mentioned that the government promised not to present omnibus bills, and actually, in the throne speech, the government said it would never do it again. It could have brought this measure as a separate bill in order for it to have a full discussion and then go to the appropriate committees for a review.

I have read the bill. I remember the debate at the finance committee with officials and asking questions to the officials. When the member for Bow River said it would not apply to the weeklies and dailies in a community because they are owner-operated and the editor is heavily involved in the operations, that is exactly right. I asked that question of the officials. They meandered around it and said that for owners, this only applies to two-plus full-time journalists. That is how it works. The criterion is in section 43. It is written right into the law. Therefore, if owner-operators hire some students during the summer months as contractors, they are not eligible for this particular media bailout.

We asked the officials who this would apply to. We quickly found out it would exclude anybody who in previous tax years had applied

for the periodical fund. Therefore, Maclean's, Chatelaine and other magazines would be excluded.

Then we asked what would happen to an agricultural newspaper in my area if half of the newspaper was devoted to agriculture. Well, that would not qualify either, because as I found out from the officials at committee, it would have to cover current events. I asked what "current events" means within the law. They pointed me to subsection 248(1) of the act, which states it "must be primarily focused on matters of general interest or reports of current events, including coverage of democratic institutions and processes." Those are the criteria.

During the debate I heard members across the way say the decision has not been made. However, there are criteria already included, and if a journalistic organization does not qualify, it is excluded from all three measures. That is the way the law is written.

Maybe our Liberal government caucus members do not like that fact, but that is the way the law is written and how it will apply. Unless the publication is basically covering politicians in some way, it will not be eligible for any cash. Therefore, this broad dragnet that the officials initially said would be the case is not the case. It is a very small, select group of people who will be eligible for it.

The motion before the House today is one of the primary worries we have on the Conservative side. The Liberals, by appointing a Unifor representative to the board of this panel, have made it partisan. Unifor has openly said it will campaign against one of Canada's large registered political parties. It posted it on social media accounts. It is happy to do it. It calls itself the "resistance". There is no way around this.

The government has made everybody's participation on this board a partisan affair, because they are now participating actively in the electoral outcome of October 21. The government cannot say this panel is independent, as the panel is appointed by the government. It cannot say this Parliament is completely non-partisan, because Unifor is on the panel.

That simply cannot continue. We cannot have a situation of a national organization that represents some journalists as well as a great deal of other workers actively working against one of Canada's registered political parties as well as participating in deciding who will get access to these three measures I just talked about that form the media bailout.

● (1735)

We have repeatedly heard members on the Liberal side say things that were maybe partially correct in the best of light. I heard one member say that maybe bloggers could be eligible, and I actually asked the question, but bloggers are not eligible. I asked if The Post Millennial, which is a purely online web news site, would be eligible. They did not know whether it would be eligible.

There is a great Yiddish proverb that says "What you don't see with your eyes, don't say with your tongue." It is a fanciful way of saying that if it is not the truth that we read, do not say it.

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At the finance committee, I asked all of these questions because I wanted to better understand which organizations would actually be eligible for this tax credit. They were very quick to say that they did not have all answers, because some of the criteria are set in law and some of the criteria will be up to the panel to determine.

We now know that this panel would be tainted by the participation of Unifor. It is the perception that matters. It is the perception that journalists could be bent by the ownership or by the eligibility for certain criteria. We would be subsidizing journalists directly, because there is a labour tax credit of up to \$55,000 by which a salary could be offset. It works out to about \$13,750 at the end of the day for an employee. It is a direct subsidy for an employee.

The panel is going to decide who qualifies as a Canadian journalist. I can think of no worse thing for independent, autonomous journalism in this country than to have the perception that perhaps their reporting will be tainted one way or another on the type of content they choose to report.

I do not have a problem with journalists writing tough stories. I do not have a problem with them misquoting me. I do not have a problem with them not coming to me or not following a lead I think is worth following. I do not have a problem with it. They are independent and autonomous and can do whatever they want. That is up to them. Hopefully they will find a readership who is willing to read what they have to offer. I like to read the National Observer. It is kind of left-leaning, one could say, but it provides a lot of content that I actually like using, and so I am fine with it. However, I do not know if the National Observer would be eligible for this measure. Everything outside of current events would be excluded. If a publication covers too much sport or too much entertainment news, it would be excluded. All of those decisions the panel would get to decide.

This is the only tax credit measure I can find that the CRA does not administer directly. It will be administered indirectly by this panel. I hear all these Liberal government caucus members say that it will be the panel that will decide. As soon as one qualifies, it would be eligible for these other things.

Why not just let the CRA do it? It does the disability tax credit. It decides at the end of the day who is eligible for it. It decides for the child expenses. Why is the CRA not going to be administering the law? There is a lot of leeway provided in the law as well, but I am just wondering why the CRA is not deciding, from A to Z, the whole thing. Would that not be the more transparent, non-partisan, completely opaque, arm's-length but within arm's reach way of doing this, as opposed to having a panel with Unifor on it after Unifor has explicitly said that it is going to be devoted from now until October 21 to the defeat of one of Canada's registered political parties?

For Unifor to participate in the determination of who qualifies as a journalistic organization and qualifies through those three measures I mentioned is ridiculous. There is no way we can claim that this will be a complete non-partisan exercise. We cannot. The government has basically put on the committee an organization that is going to be helping it directly. That is what I heard at the finance committee. Nothing I have heard during the debate today changes my mind on the fact that the government is trying to push the scales again on one

side, just as it did with the justice system. It is pushing on the scales here and trying to ensure it gets the best possible coverage, because a lot of the money does not flow out immediately. It is the potential of future cash that would ensure that large media organizations are on side.

Therefore, I will be voting for this motion, because it is very important that every single member stand on this issue and be heard on where they stand on behalf of their constituents for a free press without any direct government involvement. We should not be in the business of subsidizing the business of the press. We want a free press, yes, but not press subsidized with government and taxpayer dollars.

● (1740)

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

Mr. Speaker, surely the member sees the hypocrisy when Stephen Harper, as prime minister, subsidized the news media through magazines and millions of dollars of grants on an annual basis. The Conservative Party first voted against tax breaks for Canada's middle class, which is not the first time it has done so, and now it will be voting against this tax credit.

This is a tax credit. It is unlike Stephen Harper's approach to the news media. He gave direct grants, and his government chose which outlets were going to receive the money. Under this system, credits would be given. Criteria will be established, and all media outlets that meet the criteria would then be eligible for those tax credits. I would have thought that the Conservative Party supported that.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, so far in this debate, several government caucus members have said how worried they are about fake news on social media. They could just listen to their member here spread misinformation all day long; it is pretty much the same thing.

That so-called middle-class income tax credit gave that member a bigger tax cut than every Canadian who earns \$45,000 or less. We have litigated this several times because of the way the progressive tax system works.

On the issue of what previous governments have done, we are not talking about that; we are talking about what the current government is doing. It is being held to account for its decisions. It is not about past governments and what has happened before, but it is what the current government is doing, and what it is proposing to do is to put a representative of a large union on a panel that will decide how a tax credit is given to large media organizations. Instead of the CRA directly administering this tax credit, the government would have a panel that includes one very partisan organization devoted to the defeat of one of Canada's registered political parties on October 21. It is wrong to be tipping the scales in its favour in this way.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to remind hon. members that shouting across the aisle is one thing, but when they are sitting next to the microphone of the member who is speaking, it echoes out to everyone. I want to make sure people understand that when they are sitting next to the person speaking and they speak out, it is picked up by the microphone.

*Business of Supply*

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I agree with him. There is a lot wrong with this situation. A few days from the end of this Parliament, it is very awkward and negligent of this government to be making so many proposals and appointments that could cause confusion, when we do not have the means to do an analysis. Our news industry and our media are not doing well.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about the information I found indicating that Canada subsidizes the media to the tune of \$2 per capita. In Quebec, with its current formula, it is about \$3 per capita. Compare that to \$5.83 in the United States, \$18.17 in the United Kingdom and \$30 in France. Of course, Sweden, Norway and Finland, which are fantastic countries, provide significantly more help to the media, with support ranging from \$57 to \$90 per capita. That is a huge amount compared to Canada's \$2 per capita.

Does my colleague agree with the idea that the state must provide better support for newspapers, in a non-partisan manner of course?

• (1745)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I agree that the government introduced this legislation at the last minute, not to mention the fact that the government slipped it into the omnibus budget bill. We will be debating this matter in the final weeks of this Parliament, while the public has been debating it for several years. Nevertheless, this is nothing new and there is no rush.

Time is running out for the government, and we know why. It is trying to win the election coming up on October 21.

In terms of the figures for each country my colleague mentioned I would be interested to know how the data were collected. What came from the public sector and what came from the private sector, for example? I subscribe to American newspapers and magazines, such as the National Review and other newspapers, online and in print.

I would be curious to know whether the member is talking only about spending from Canada, or whether that includes spending from other countries, including the United States.

**Mr. Richard Hébert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for South Surrey—White Rock.

I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to an issue that is very important to me, namely the media. The media and local newspapers play a crucial role all across Canada. I am particularly proud of the media in my riding, Lac-Saint-Jean, including our Trium Media newspapers, L'Étoile du lac, Le Lac-Saint-Jean and Le Nouvelles Hebdo, which provide quality content to the people of Lac-Saint-Jean.

Whether we want to know about politics, general news, culture or sports, we can count on the professionalism of our journalists to keep us up to date on local news. Unfortunately, access to trustworthy and professional journalism is becoming increasingly rare. Canadians do not have the access they once did to reliable local news because of the drastic changes besetting our media.

Right now, in this era of fake news, people should not rely on Facebook as their only news source. On my Facebook page recently, I learned that a Second World War submarine had been discovered in Lac-Saint-Jean. What the heck, how did it get there?

Newspapers in particular are struggling to fulfill their civic duties at the local level, hence the importance of having local news. I am not going to find local news stories or the ice-out forecast for the local lake in *La Presse* or *Le Devoir*. I am and will always be in favour of a strong, free local press. Our local newspapers are the backbone of information in our communities. In the era of the information explosion and platform proliferation, our local newspapers offer a regional view of the issues and are vital to local debate.

A recent study on local media coverage entitled “Mind the Gaps: Quantifying the Decline of News Coverage in Canada” noted that over the past 10 years, the number of local newspaper articles fell by half. Fifty percent of articles disappeared.

Since 2008, 41 daily newspapers have closed down, along with 235 weeklies. During the same period, the sector shed over 10,000 jobs. This is a real crisis that is hitting Canada's print media.

Sadly, the Conservatives would rather bury their heads in the sand while the news industry crumbles around them. The challenges that the media has encountered are significant. As we say back home, even a blind person could see this.

It is important to remember that for a democracy to work properly, it is vital that we have a strong, independent news media. It is the very foundation of democracy. An independent press must have the financial means to keep our citizens informed. A press that is near bankruptcy is not a free press.

That is why our government is getting to the heart of the problem and implementing concrete measure to support Canadian newspapers, big and small. Budget 2019 proposes three new tax measures to support Canadian journalism: first, allowing journalistic organizations to register as qualified donees; second, creating a refundable labour tax credit for eligible journalistic organizations; and third, creating a non-refundable tax credit for subscriptions to Canadian digital media platforms.

Together these concrete measures will do a lot to help support the production of professional journalistic content.

*Business of Supply*

• (1750)

Canadians should have access to a vast array of independent, trustworthy news sources. The government must ensure that these tax measures are implemented at arm's length from the government with the help of people who have practical experience in the sector, the people who are part of the print journalism chain of production in Canada. That is exactly why, on May 22, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism announced the creation of an advisory panel to recommend eligibility criteria for the tax measures. All that is integral to implementing these measures: looking to experts to ensure that the criteria published in the latest federal budget are precise and meet the industry's needs.

The minister mentioned that eight organizations would be invited to submit the name of a candidate for the advisory panel. They include four associations representing publishers: News Media Canada, which represents over 750 Canadian newspapers across the country; the Association de la presse francophone, which represents francophone newspapers in minority communities; the Quebec Community Newspapers Association, which represents newspapers in Quebec's anglophone communities; and the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada, which represents over 450 ethnic newspapers. Also included are two unions representing newsroom employees, the Fédération nationale des communications and Unifor, and two associations representing journalists, the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec and the Canadian Association of Journalists.

These are all well-known groups, most of them with a national profile, and they represent the majority of the workers involved in the production of print news in Canada. They are in the best position to provide informed advice to ensure the fair and optimal implementation and operation of these tax measures. The Conservatives would rather have just CEOs at the table making the decisions. They think they understand the situation on the ground better than the workers. By attacking the independence of the media, the Conservatives are implying that journalists can be bought. Their conspiracy theories are insulting. When multiple MPs, some of them respected former journalists themselves, say that the press can be bought, it is frankly insulting and proves that even back then, they were in the pocket of powerful interests.

The Conservatives have a problem with journalists and the truth. Just last week, the Leader of the Opposition demonstrated a lack of respect for journalistic independence. He tried to dictate what Radio-Canada can and cannot say or do, despite the fact that 80% of Canadians support increasing funding to the public broadcaster. It certainly has to be done. We on this side of the House will always stand up for journalistic independence. It is a pillar of democracy. The media provides citizens with the information they need to make informed decisions on important issues and helps keep institutions accountable, including governments.

In closing, Canadians are entitled to consult a wide range of independent, reliable information sources, and the government has a responsibility to ensure that they have access to those sources.

• (1755)

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who serves with me on the Standing

Committee on Canadian Heritage. Clearly, we cannot oppose a good thing, even if it being proposed late in the game. When a union that represents thousands of workers is disparaged, there may be some comments that people would like to take back.

However, as everyone has said today, it is obvious that this is a temporary measure while we wait for something better. That is the issue. Why did we wait all this time to solve the fundamental problem afflicting our media, namely the loss of advertising revenue? What is the cause of these losses? I wonder if my colleague can answer that. Section 19 is overused with respect to online advertising, as though the ads were being placed in Canadian media.

Why has this loophole not been closed? Why is GST not charged on ads purchased on these platforms? If the reason is that these are U.S. platforms, it is not a good reason.

**Mr. Richard Hébert:** Mr. Speaker, the newspaper industry was hard hit by the 2008 economic crisis. The combined operating revenue of all newspaper publishers went from \$5.5 billion in 2008 to \$3.2 billion in 2016. During that time, 41 daily newspapers closed their doors, as did 235 weekly papers, and more than 10,000 jobs were cut.

Our government is getting at the root of the problem. That is why we are taking meaningful measures to help media outlets, both big and small.

We must also protect journalistic independence. That is why an independent panel of experts was formed. Journalism, as my colleague across the way knows, is at the foundation of our democracy, but the Conservatives never miss an opportunity to attack its independence. It is very unfortunate, especially coming from MPs who were once journalists.

A Conservative MP and former journalist said last week that the Conservative Party was pleased to see struggling old newspapers closing down, describing them as fossils. What an insult.

Last week, The Hamilton Spectator announced that it was closing its presses, eliminating 73 full-time jobs and 105 part-time jobs. This local newspaper is not an isolated example. Far from being fossils, these local institutions are essential sources of community news and information. The Conservatives should stop with their conspiracy theory and do something to protect journalism, a pillar of our democracy.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear that. I will ask the member to slow down a bit and to find an answer to my question. Why is the government not closing the section 19 loophole?

Allow me to explain. Under section 19, a Canadian advertiser can advertise in an American magazine, but this expense will not count as an operating expense for advertising come tax time. This expense is not allowed because the advertiser is not advertising in Canadian media. However, section 19 does not currently specify that these ads must be bought on Canadian online media in order to be considered an eligible expense.

Why is the government not doing this?

*Business of Supply*

Everyone knows that this is a big problem. Everyone also knows that if the government closed this loophole, Canadian advertisers would probably spend less on American platforms and more on Canadian ones. It is not complicated. This would obviously bring in more money for the government.

● (1800)

**Mr. Richard Hébert:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is likely forthcoming.

When we wake up in the morning, we do not know what to expect. In politics, one never knows what could happen. I therefore encourage my hon. colleague to be patient. One never knows, there may be good news one of these days. What we hope is that we will be able to provide money for advertising. My hon. colleague knows full well that change takes time.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean for sharing his time with me. It has been a delight to sit here this afternoon and listen to the debate and the profound, sometimes heated, disagreements about values and the same heated disagreements about the process. It has been interesting to follow.

As I reflect on the small newspapers in my community, three of them have not survived over the past number of years. The one that has survived has survived with layoffs, with the volume inserts increasing. They are about an inch thick in some cases, with advertisements from places like Walmart and Home Depot and a myriad of others. They still report on local issues, service clubs, community events, local sports, cultural events and fundraisers, and they connect and inform the community in an important way. I think we all agree that they are an important part of our communities. That is something we share throughout the House.

How did we get to the point we are at today? I was interested to find that in the United States, in 1949, they introduced something called the fairness doctrine. It had two basic elements. It required people to devote some of their air time and some of their print time to controversial matters of public interest and to ensure that contrasting views regarding those matters were evident. It required those to be present in each instance.

The main agenda of the doctrine was to ensure that viewers and readers were exposed to a diversity of viewpoints, consistent with the things we talk about in the House and that we talk about in democracies. As John Stuart Mill said, one may understand one's position perfectly well, but unless one understands the opposite position equally well, one is not informed enough to make a decision between the two. That is important to look at with respect to the doctrine. That doctrine was taken out of the U.S. in 2011, but the principles are still looked at by a number of media outlets.

Here we have had a number of reports done. The Public Policy Forum, on January 2017, published "The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age". It looks at the digital age, the type of change that is taking place and its impact, particularly in small communities across our country. Subsequent to that, the heritage committee, in June 2017, issued a report entitled "Disruption: Change and Churning in Canada's Media Landscape".

All these reports have obliquely, if not directly, called on government to take action to protect the connection of local communities and to protect the notion of what we need to see. We do not want to see one newspaper for the world. We do not want to see Sirius radio reporting on the whole world. We want the focus on our communities, where we live and where we connect.

Reference has been made to the fact that 41 dailies and 235 weeklies have closed over the past few years. Some 10,000 positions have been lost. That is 31% of jobs in the field.

I was interested to read recently a report by the Canadian Media Concentration Research Project. It found that 95% of newspaper endorsements in the 2011 election were for Harper. That was every daily in Canada that endorsed a party, except the Toronto Star, which endorsed the NDP that year. That was roughly three times Harper's standing in the opinion polls at the time, Carleton University Professor Dwayne Winseck wrote in his report.

In the 2015 election, things were not quite as monolithic, but 71% of all newspaper endorsements still went to Harper, and 17 of 23 newspapers that endorsed a candidate endorsed the Tories.

As we look at the debate today, it almost seems that there is identity-based decision-making taking place. We are in agreement that we want there to be no biases or favouritism and that we want total transparency on the issues coming from government and presented by the media. I agree that it is essential that our democracy rely upon the respect and independence of journalists.

● (1805)

I have no doubt that a proper balance of perspectives would be achieved with the composition of the panel. As I have said, there are biases on both sides and assumptions on both sides. Each of us has our biases and ways of proving that what we believe to be true is true.

The organizations that will appoint the members of the panel are operating at arm's length from government. All three reports I referred to have called upon government to act, and we are doing it in that fashion.

We are talking about professionals. We are talking about their expertise and their knowledge for the benefit of the news industry. The best thing government can do is leave the panel to do its work and report back in due time, and that is what is going to happen.

The motion before us suggests that journalists may be able to be bought. It assumes that workers should not be involved in their own decisions, which is contrary to everything we say in terms of the policy development we are working with in government. I disagree with that. A bankrupt press, which is entirely possible if we do not do this, is not a free press. It is no press at all.

I encourage members of the House to stand up for a free press and for a well functioning democracy and to stand up against the motion we have before us.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the question that my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert asked.

*Business of Supply*

It is clear that one of the reasons why the media industry is having so much trouble right now is that institutions such as Facebook and other social media are using the content of media outlets without paying for it and taking their advertising revenue. That is what led to the current crisis.

However, when we raise the question in the House, as my colleague did several times in this Parliament and in the previous Parliament, the Liberals refuse to acknowledge that this is urgent and that these businesses need to pay taxes and royalties just like Canadian businesses.

Their financial involvement could allow these media outlets to turn things around and make the necessary transition to survive and offer a variety of high-quality information.

Could my colleague tell me why he and his party are opposed to treating these web giants the same way they treat Canadian businesses in the media sector and all other sectors of the economy?

[English]

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** Mr. Speaker, the heritage committee has been discussing this exact issue, and there may well be recommendations with respect to that.

We understand, depending on what metrics one chooses to believe, that the numbers for things like YouTube and Facebook advertising are in the billions of dollars, if we were to introduce ways of capturing some of that revenue by taxing them rather than allowing them to function independently.

That is clearly something we are looking at and something we will be bringing forward at the appropriate time.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the phrases members opposite have enjoyed using throughout this debate is that they believe in an independent and free media. They believe in its protection so much that they need to give \$600 million to it.

Liberal logic would say that the \$600 million being put towards the media is their believing in its independence and freedom and being arm's length from the state. I do not follow the logic.

Maybe the hon. member across the aisle could help me understand. How is the government giving \$600 million to the press helping to further its freedom and independence from government and government money?

• (1810)

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** Mr. Speaker, if the option is that we are not going to have a press at all, I think that is our fear. We need the local press to be there so that we have that voice.

There are certainly lots of things that are subsidized across democracies to ensure that they do not become totalitarian. We need to ensure that and have an arm's-length process to put that in place. That is exactly what we are doing.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** If the hon. members know that they are going to speak, if they do not mind standing as I am speaking. I have been caught before where I pre-empt what was supposed to happen, and games are played in this

House, not that anyone here would play games like that. I just wanted to point that out.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lethbridge.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a Prime Minister who is more concerned with pursuing his own interests, his own advantage and his own agenda and painting his own image and maintaining that image, than he is with serving the well-being of Canadians and looking after their needs, looking after their desires and looking after what Canada as a whole requires to stay a strong, free nation.

We see one example of this before the House today, and that is that the government has actually taken \$600 million to give to the so-called free and independent press. Let me clarify. I believe in the free and independent press, and those of us on this side of the House very much respect that. The media should stay free and independent from being impacted or manipulated by the government of the day. That is a fact. That is what we rely on in this country. We are not Turkey. We are not China. We are not Russia. We are Canada, and I am proud of being Canadian, as are all the members on this side of the House and as are the vast majority of Canadians.

In fact, so many people are proud of being Canadian that those who are not want to be. Many, many people want to come into our country and call this place home. One of the reasons they want to call this place home is because of the freedom we enjoy in this country and because of the protection of our individual rights and liberties. Part of this whole picture of what it is to be Canadian is the principle that the media or the press stay independent of the government. Therefore, the fact that \$600 million has been gifted to the media from the current government is a huge problem.

Canadians are, of course, rightly concerned about this. I have heard from many of them in my riding of Lethbridge, Alberta. As I have travelled across Canada and gone into other ridings, I have heard from individuals there too. However, they are not the only ones who are concerned about this. It is not just individual constituents. In fact, it is journalists as well. Numerous veteran journalists have come forward and shared that they too are very concerned about what is going on.

I want to talk about that in just a moment, but first I will outline the motion before the House today. Those who are a part of the Conservative caucus put forward the following motion:

That the House:

- (a) take note of the importance of a free and independent press to a healthy democracy;
- (b) express its belief that it is inappropriate for partisan political actors to pick winners and losers in the media in an election year;
- (c) condemn the inclusion of Unifor, a group that has taken and continues to take partisan political positions, in the panel that will oversee the distribution of the \$600-million media bailout;

and (d) call on the government to immediately cease trying to stack the deck for the election with their media bailout and replace it with a proposal that does not allow government to pick winners and losers.

*Business of Supply*

This is the motion before the House. It is called an opposition day motion. Those in the opposition, my Conservative colleagues and I, can put forward an idea that represents what we are hearing from many Canadians across this country and plead with the current government that it should be accepted. This motion is open to all parties and members in this House to vote in favour of or against.

The Liberals have already determined that the \$600-million media bailout is a good idea and that interfering with a free and independent press in Canada is something they do not have a problem with. They plan to go in that direction, but for those of us on this side, I reiterate that we would like to defend the independence of our media.

The Liberals would say that they have maintained independence, that a panel of eight individuals has been put together and that the eight individuals will be the ones who determine where the money goes and how it is divvied up. The interesting thing is that on this panel of eight individuals, there is partisanship.

● (1815)

The most obvious one that is staring us in the face is the fact that Unifor, a union, has been put on this panel that will make these decisions. The head of Unifor has actually come out and said that he would be, to use his words, “Andrew Scheer's worst nightmare”. That he would say he is going to be “Andrew Scheer's worst nightmare” means—

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member should know that she cannot use the names of individuals, either directly or indirectly. I believe once is one thing, but twice is another. It seemed that she was on track to possibly continue using it.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to clarify that members cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly, even within a quote. If they can modify it to make it apply, that would be fine. I am sure the hon. member will modify the rest of her quotes for the evening.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Mr. Speaker, I think the point is clear that the Leader of the Opposition has been told that Unifor will be his worst nightmare going into the next election.

The point is that this is clearly a very partisan organization. This is an organization that very much is against the Conservative Party of Canada and very much campaigning on behalf of the Liberal government, which means that now this whole exercise just became very political in nature.

I do not think we can argue with that point. It is very clear what has been said and what the motive of this union is. Therefore, \$600 million are on the line and where they go will be determined by this partisan group of individuals. It is not only that. The majority of the money is being withheld and is going to only be given to these media outlets post-election. This means there will be an awful lot of motivation given to them, through the withholding of money and the promise of funds after the election, to cover the 2019 election in a very particular way. It does not take a great deal of intelligence to determine what that way is.

Of course media outlets will be encouraged, if not manipulated, to cover the election of 2019 from a Liberal vantage point rather than

from a fair one that is non-partisan in nature. Why is that? It is because there are \$600 million on the line and they want a piece of the pie.

I have clearly outlined that there is problem with regard to the independence, but it is not just me who says that. There is far more being said by journalists throughout the country.

Andrew Coyne said, “It is quite clear now, if it was not already: this is the most serious threat to the independence of the press in this country in decades.”

Don Martin said, “The optics of journalism associations and unions deciding who picks the recipients of government aid for journalism are getting very queasy.”

Jen Gerson, CBC and Maclean's, said, “If any of these associations or unions”, so the eight individuals who have been selected, “could be trusted to manage this 'independent' panel, they would be denouncing it already.”

Those are quite the statements.

Chris Selley, the National Post, said, “Liberals' media bailout puts foxes in charge of the chickens.”

I and my Conservatives are not the only ones pointing out significant concerns with the decision to give out \$600 million of government money to media outlets across the country. Clearly, this is an attack on the independence and the freedom of our press.

In addition to that, it is a matter of protecting democracy and of ensuring media outlets actually cover the story of the day without being pressured by the government to do it one way or the other. As soon as the government offers money to media outlets, all of a sudden the press feels the pressure to cover stories in a way that would perhaps paint the government in a positive light. That is not okay; that is not the Canada we belong to.

We see the lack of independence and the lack of freedom in places like Turkey, Russia and China, where it is dictated how any sort of news will be covered and granted to the people in those countries. In Canada, we very much depend on the government staying out of the way and allowing press to cover a story from whatever angle that media outlet should choose.

The other problem with this is that there is no transparency in the application and review process. This concern has been brought up by the CAJ within the last couple of days. It has pointed out that there needs to be a more transparent process in moving forward with this, that those who apply for this funding should be listed online and that the process for applications for this funding should be made transparent. This should be put online and made available to the Canadian public. After all, the Liberals are taking Canadian taxpayer dollars and using them to help media outlets. That process needs to have greater transparency to it.

*Business of Supply*

• (1820)

In addition to that, there should also be some transparency with regard to not only those who apply, but also who is rejected and why. Why are they rejected? It is fair that many Canadians, many journalists and many of those on this side of the House have a concern that the government will be quite biased in the way that it selects people. I say the government because, make no mistake, that while there are eight individuals on the panel, I have my suspicions that they are nothing more than eight puppets with the current government pulling the strings.

The entire independence and freedom of the press is being called into question with this \$600 million bailout. In addition to that, our democracy is being put in jeopardy, as well as just a lack of overall transparency and good governance. It is absolutely terrible.

Furthermore, with regard to credibility, one journalist wrote, “The minute the union starts helping a government divvy up taxpayers’ cash for the benefit of news outlets, there is quite rightly a perception that reporters’ coverage is being bought off.” Whether that is the case or not, there is that perception. He goes on to explain that the credibility of a journalist is of utmost importance, that our journalists work hard to maintain the credibility and trust of the Canadian public. By the government giving \$600 million to the free press, it calls into question that credibility. There is a problem there.

This is not the first time the Prime Minister has put his interests above those of Canadians. He does this quite often. In the NAFTA agreement, he said that he would get a good deal for Canada. He said he would not allow ink to go on paper until tariffs were removed. However, he put ink to paper. Meanwhile, we still had tariffs on steel. We still had tariffs on aluminum. We had tariffs on softwood lumber. We allowed the U.S. to take a good chunk of our market with regard to dairy. We allowed it to take a good chunk of our market with regard to auto and implement quotas. At the end of the day again, we saw where he put his image before the needs of the Canadian people.

Further to that was the students summer jobs program. We watched again as the government put itself first. It imposed a requirement on organizations that they would need to sign off on a value statement, that they would need to sign off on a set of beliefs and values in order to receive dollars from taxpayers. If organizations were not willing to sign this value statement, or this attestation, then they could not have any of that money. Again, the government was not acting in the best interests of Canadians. Instead it was acting in the best interests of the Prime Minister and the image he wanted to portray.

The problem with this was that many faith-based organizations could not sign the Prime Minister's value statements. Those organizations do tremendous work. They look after the homeless. They look after those who live in poverty. They help refugees come to Canada and settle here. They run summer camp for kids, many who are underprivileged kids. The Prime Minister actually refused to give them a dollar because they would not sign his value statement. That is wrong.

With the carbon tax, again, the Prime Minister is wanting to put forward this image of himself as someone who cares for the

environment. He gets this great idea about putting a tax on pollution. Then all of a sudden people will no longer need to drive their cars to work, put clothes on their back, food on their tables or heat their homes in -30°C. That is not the case at all. That is ridiculous. It lacks any sort of logic.

What have we watched over the last four years? We have watched as emissions in the country have gone up. We have watched as the government is further away from meeting its targets than we have ever been as a country.

• (1825)

The current Prime Minister has the audacity to say he is standing up for Canadians, but he is standing up for no one other than himself. He wants to maintain his image, propagate his ideals and manipulate Canadians along the way, when it is all based on a foundation of deception.

With Bill C-71, the Prime Minister said he wanted to look after the safety and well-being of Canadians, and in order to do that he would go after those who legally acquired their firearms, who were properly vetted to have a firearm and who legally used their firearms, because that would take all criminals and gangs off the street. He thinks he will help make this place a safer country if he shuts down the sports shooters and the hunters. That is the Liberal logic. It is terrible. It is more about image than it is about serving the well-being of this country and the Canadian public.

Meanwhile, the same government put another bill in place, Bill C-75. Do members know what that bill did? It rewarded terrorists. It rewarded those who force marriage. It rewarded those who engage in genocide.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I feel like we have ventured very far from the topic of today, and I would ask that we return to it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I would ask for a bit of order here. There is one minute remaining for the hon. member for Lethbridge. We will ask her to finish her last minute.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

• (1830)

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals cannot handle the truth, but that is okay.

Again we have an example where the Prime Minister and the current government want to put forward this particular image. They want to tell Canadians they are offering this particular thing, when in fact that is not the case. They are not keeping Canada safer, because they are not putting the money on the front lines to our responders. They are not putting the money on the front lines to secure our borders. They are not putting the money toward our military. They are not doing anything to further the safety and well-being of Canadians. However, they are doing everything to shut down those who are law-abiding citizens.

My final point in all of this is that we currently have a government led by a Prime Minister who is more interested in his own image, his own well-being and furthering himself, rather than furthering the Canadian people and making sure this country thrives. That is wrong.



*Government Orders*

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6:30 p.m., pursuant to an order made Tuesday, May 28, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*Translation*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

[*English*]

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the vote be deferred until Tuesday, June 4, at 11:25 p.m.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, June 4, at 11:25 p.m.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### **FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

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

[*English*]

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.)** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Deputy Speaker:** When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

Today has been a powerful and emotional day for indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians alike. With the release of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we took another step in identifying the unacceptable gaps that exist between first nations, Inuit and Métis people and the rest of Canada.

Our government is working to end the ongoing national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The commissioners of the national inquiry did important work, and now it is up to us as the federal government and up to us individually as Canadians to develop a national action plan and to implement those recommendations in partnership with first nations, Inuit and Métis people.

The bill before us addresses an important part of the work we need to do to advance reconciliation, and that is to address gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, thereby improving the quality of life for indigenous peoples right across the country.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

Protecting and promoting the well-being of indigenous children and families should be the top priority of the federal government and all governments across the country. That has obviously not always been the case. Members of the House are aware of the pain and suffering that continue to be inflicted on indigenous children and families in this country.

[*English*]

Separating indigenous children from their families is not just something that happened in the past. This is something that occurs every day, to this very day. In fact, it is a worsening problem. More indigenous children are in care now than at the height of the operation of residential schools.

In terms of hard numbers, more than 52% of children in foster care in Canada are indigenous, yet they represent less than 8% of the population. Studies show that the average indigenous child in foster care may live with anywhere between three and 13 different families before turning 19 years old. This is unacceptable and it has to stop.

I think we can all agree that the current system needs to change. As parliamentarians, we must act. We believe in a system where indigenous peoples are in charge of their own child and family services, something we recognize should have been the case all along. Indigenous families are currently bound by rules and systems that are not their own and do not reflect their cultures, their identities, their traditions, their communities or their ways. No wonder they have not worked. This bill sets out to change that.

First and foremost, Bill C-92 sets out principles that would apply across the country to guide the provision of child and family services involving indigenous children and families. These principles are informed by extensive engagement with indigenous people all over the country. The principles in the bill, which are the best interests of the child, substantive equality and cultural continuity, are aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

*Government Orders*

If no agreement is reached within 12 months, but reasonable efforts were made to do so, the indigenous law would also have force of law as federal law. In other words, should a government not act in good faith after 12 months of negotiations of a coordination agreement, indigenous child and family services law would have precedence as a federal law. To be clear, as a federal statute, the indigenous law would stand on its own; it would not be subject to the whims of a federal or provincial government. It would be equal to, not lesser than.

To promote a smooth transition and implementation of Bill C-92, Canada will explore the creation of distinctions-based transition governance structures. The co-developed governance structures would identify tools and processes to increase the capacity of communities as they assume responsibility of child and family services. During this phase, we would continue our work with first nations, Inuit and Métis partners, as well as with the provinces and territories, to set out the details about how to support communities to exercise their jurisdiction. The bill also provides a clear affirmation of the inherent right of first nations, Inuit and Métis to exercise their own jurisdiction in relation to child and family services.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Bill C-92, if an indigenous group or community wishes to exercise its authority in relation to child and family services and have its own laws take precedence over federal, provincial or territorial laws, the Minister of Indigenous Services and the provincial or territorial government shall enter into trilateral discussions to develop a coordination agreement.

[*English*]

If a coordination agreement is reached within 12 months following the request, the laws of the indigenous group or community would have force of law as federal law and would prevail over federal, provincial and territorial child and family services laws.

Gone are the days of top-down colonial solutions. It is contrary to the spirit of reconciliation, goes against the principle of codevelopment that has guided this proposed legislation, and they just do not work.

This legislation is an accumulation of intensive engagement, including nearly 2,000 participants across 65 sessions, from elders, youth, women, grandmothers, aunts and from those with lived experience in a broken child and family services system. We heard what needed to be included in the bill to make successful the exercise of jurisdiction that is already an inherent right of first nations, Inuit and Métis people.

What we heard included values and cultural practices, lived experience and academic research, as well as recommendations of a reference group that was comprised of representatives from national indigenous organizations.

First nations, Inuit and Métis people have asked time and again for codeveloped legislation, from resolutions passed by the Assembly of First Nations in May and December 2018, to hearing that Inuit leadership wanted a distinctions-based approach, and that the Métis

wanted jurisdiction over child and family services to be recognized through legislation.

Since the emergency meeting convened by my predecessor in January 2018, there have been extensive meetings and consultations across the country in an effort to get this right.

Even in weeks preceding the introduction of this legislation, we were incorporating the suggestions of indigenous groups, provincial and territorial partners. Those suggestions made the bill that I was fortunate enough to inherit much stronger.

We did not stop there. There are no closed doors to our indigenous partners or to the provinces and the territories. This legislation and the children it aims to protect are only served if we collaborate and ensure their best interests.

Many came forward and offered suggestions on how to improve the bill, and I am pleased to support the changes made by the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. These amendments reflect what was heard from a number of witnesses, especially around funding, around balancing physical and cultural security in the best interest of an indigenous child and around ensuring implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples as a purpose of the bill.

With regard to funding, we cannot presume that the funding models that have supported the current broken system will be what indigenous groups want to use while exercising their jurisdiction. Those models and levels should be discussed and designed through the coordination agreement process to ensure they reflect the unique needs of each community and are not a one-size-fits-all approach.

We pledge to work with partners to identify long-term needs and funding gaps. The amendment supported at committee guarantees that funding will be sustainable, needs-based and consistent with the principle of substantive equality, so that long-term, positive results for indigenous children, families and communities are secured.

Both the House committee and the aboriginal peoples committee in the other place heard that there needed to be a better balance between the physical well-being of a child and the preservation of cultural identity, language and connection to the community. We completely agree, and we fully support the amendment that will see primary consideration given to a child's physical, emotional and psychological safety, security and well-being, as well as to the importance of that child having an ongoing relationship with his or her family, indigenous group or community.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

In committee, members of the official opposition and the NDP also presented important amendments to strengthen the bill. I thank them for their efforts. Bill C-92 establishes a legislative framework and will ensure that solid guiding principles are in place to protect the needs of indigenous children and families for generations to come.

*Government Orders*

[English]

Now is the time to follow through on our promises to indigenous children, families and communities. Our promise is that the same old broken system that needlessly separates so many children from their families, that removes them from their culture, that cuts them off from their land and their language, not be allowed to continue and that we affirm and recognize that indigenous families know what is best for indigenous children.

Ours is a historic opportunity to make a real, meaningful change to address centuries of harm and improve the lives of first nations, Inuit and Métis people. I hope everyone will join me in supporting this bill.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the minister knows, there has been a recognition by all parliamentarians of the importance of this legislation and the fact that what is currently happening is not good enough. Of course, there are problems when a bill is rushed through the system. In this case, perhaps the biggest flaw is the lack of conversation with the provinces and territories that have been responsible for delivering the services and that will have something imposed on them. For those who know the Nunavut territory, the legislatures are predominantly Inuit. They have expressed great concern that the systems and processes they have developed will perhaps arbitrarily move to a different organization.

I would like the minister to explain what he intends to do in the future. We know that this bill will be passed. What is he going to do to continue that conversation to make sure this works for everyone?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan:** Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to working with the provinces and territories, and we have built in the notion of a coordination agreement to ensure there is a buffer between an indigenous group requesting that it be able to exercise its inherent right over this jurisdiction and the actual inheritance of that right. There are issues with capacity, and we need to ensure that capacity is built up, so we have put 12 months in place. The issue in some provinces and with some of the people I have spoken to is that 12 months is too long. They want to assume that responsibility right away.

There is a push and a pull, and we will attempt to find the compromise. However, most certainly this is not going to work unless we work with provinces and territories, and we certainly have every intention of doing so.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest concerns that the committee heard was the issue of jurisdiction, with the much-needed resources to make sure that jurisdiction is implemented fully. We have repeatedly heard about the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in this place, and the fact that it has sent seven non-compliance orders to the government. There were a lot of witnesses at committee who expressed repeatedly that without the comprehensive resources to do this work, the work cannot be done in a fulsome way.

Now there is another jurisdictional issue. If the provinces are not part of this, and they partly fund care right now, will the federal government take that over and make sure that resources are there for those committees?

I represent over 20 indigenous communities. I grew up in an indigenous community, lived many years of my life in indigenous communities and watched children taken. I have also been a foster parent on reserve, keeping children in the communities so they would be connected to their families and culture. The challenges are real, and the finances need to be there. There was a small component added in an amendment, but it does not quite reach the responsibility and accountability that I would like to see in this legislation.

I would like to hear from the minister on how the government is going to make sure that the resources are there to do this meaningfully, with a history that includes non-compliance orders from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

• (1850)

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time, once again, to thank the committee for its very thoughtful work on this matter.

Most certainly, we heard them and we did make amendments, particularly, as the member mentioned, on the issue of funding. We gave assurances to all parties to make sure they knew that wording around sustainable funding and the needs-based approach were included. Most certainly, this government has proven, in its actions and with the sum total of the amounts it has considered for child and family services, that we are committed. However, we understand the need for an amendment to give assurance to all parties involved and invested that we heard them and that we understand the need for a sustainable needs-based approach.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude to the minister for doing an outstanding job in bringing forward this legislation. I say that with all sincerity because of the area I represent. In fact, just prior to leaving the Manitoba legislature, it was declared in the province that there was a child care crisis. I know the minister is very much aware that there are over 10,000 in foster care, a vast majority of them of indigenous background. There has been a desperate need to see something take place.

I wonder if the minister could provide his thoughts as to how important it was that we bring forward legislation. We owe it to the children. This has been going on for far too long. It at least provides a sense of hope going forward that they finally have a national government that is prepared to address this very complicated and critically important issue.

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his kind words.

Today was a weighty day for anyone who was present for the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the presentation made to the Government of Canada. This is an essential part of what will be our very fulsome response to that report.

*Government Orders*

I grew up in the north, next to indigenous communities. There is a principle for anyone who grows up in a small town. The people in those towns usually know what is best for those towns. When this is extrapolated to a much more substantive and real level, indigenous peoples have had this right. They have always had this right, and now we are recognizing and affirming it. We are making it a reality and allowing them the opportunity to come up with effective, local, grassroots solutions to those problems. We know that they will be more effective. They have to be more effective.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, there remains a challenge with the government's commitment. It has committed to the UN Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples and articulated support for the concept of free, prior and informed consent. The grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs essentially stated that he did not like this bill. He did not want it to go forward, and he objected to it.

Article 19 of the UN Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples talks about the concept of free, prior and informed consent. How does the minister align those concepts when he has heard very clearly from a leader representing a large group of indigenous first nations in Manitoba that he does not support the legislation going forward?

• (1855)

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I would answer the question quite frankly by saying, sometimes with difficulty. I made a point of speaking to the chiefs of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs directly. This was codeveloped legislation, which is something that indigenous groups have been requesting for some time. We developed this side by side with, among others, the Assembly of First Nations, but also the ITK and the Métis. In doing so, we came to some very real conclusions.

One of them was that we had to ensure that solutions and local laws that were engineered by first nations would receive the protection under federal law that they deserved. I know that particularly the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs was worried about some very good legislation that it passed locally itself, which is the bringing our children home act. What I emphasized is that all the solutions they are talking about with BOCHA, as we call it, can not only be taken in with this legislation, but protected by this legislation. In other words, this legislation would allow the AMC and bands within it to come up with very local solutions, very grassroots-based solutions, that will then receive federal protection.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure tonight to speak to Bill C-92.

Before I get into it, I would like to say a few comments about this morning when I attended, along with our shadow minister, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report release.

I think we all agree in the House that it is a national tragedy. I was reminded of that this morning when I struck up a conversation with the woman seated next to me. I did not know her, but when we sat down, I noticed that she was holding a 5" x 7" picture of a young girl. I was inquisitive and asked her if she would share her story with me.

The woman was an auntie from Six Nations, and she immediately filled me in on the story. The picture she was holding was of 14-year-old Patricia "Trish" Carpenter from Alderville First Nation. It was 27 years ago, in 1992, when Ms. Carpenter's body was found at a construction site by Yonge Street in Toronto face down. Going further, I found out that Trish Carpenter was a mother of a two-month-old baby boy. The coroner's investigation said that she died of asphyxiation. An inquest later concluded that Trish's death was indeed suspicious.

The national inquiry report stated that indigenous persons, especially first nations, Inuit and Métis women, are overrepresented as victims of this violence. The tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women is one that the Liberal government has failed to adequately address over its three and half years in office. As with that important issue, the Liberals have left the introduction of this important bill, the indigenous child welfare legislation, to the very last minute, which brings me to the topic tonight of Bill C-92.

I started talking about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls because it is directly related to the legislation before us. Many of the victims were part of the failed welfare system, maybe even the woman I was talking to this morning during the release of the report. However, Bill C-92, an act respecting first nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, is a bill that would bring forth important national principles applicable to the provision of child and family services in relation to indigenous children. These principles in relation to the administration of child and family services with respect to indigenous children are in the best interest of the child, would have cultural continuity and certainly substantive equality in this country. These principles are very important. They are pieces of our country's long road towards reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

However, as important as these principles in the bill are, I should point out that the current Liberal government has introduced the bill at such a late stage in the parliamentary agenda that Parliament will barely have any time to study it at any length at all. We have seen that in committee. It was all crammed, and we had a couple of weeks at the very most to talk about this crucial bill.

We want to make sure that the principles described in the bill are actually reflected in practice, but that task is made more difficult when important bills such as this one, Bill C-92, are tabled so late in the parliamentary calendar with no excuse at all.

• (1900)

The history of the Canadian government's treatment of indigenous child welfare, we all know, is dark and tragic. Through the use of its residential schools, the Canadian government separated generation after generation of indigenous children from their families, their communities, their culture and their way of life. During the sixties scoop, countless numbers of indigenous children were taken away from their families of birth and placed into non-indigenous homes, where they were simply cut off from their cultural background and their ties to their communities. I know several people in Saskatchewan that this happened to. These are just some of the tragedies that have been inflicted on indigenous children in this country.

*Government Orders*

As Canada moves forward on a path toward reconciliation, it must do so in a way that represents and respects the rights of indigenous peoples and respects their unique cultural heritage. We support the principles that this bill seeks out in relation to the administration of child and family services with respect to indigenous children. As my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has pointed out many times in this House, in moving forward with the principles of this bill, we are not denying the hard work of social workers, nor are we not acknowledging the families that have adopted children in the past; we are simply pressing on to do better when it comes to this very important issue.

However, in committee, the Minister of Indigenous Services referred to child welfare workers as being participants in “abduction”. Yes, he said that in committee. This kind of language is both inflammatory and very unhelpful. It divides us rather than bringing us together. In this respect, the minister owes the social welfare agencies, including those run by first nations, an apology. Insulting and inflammatory language has no place in any discussions of this important principle that we are putting forth here tonight.

The first of the principles laid out in this bill is the best interest of the child. That is first and foremost. This principle dictates that among other factors, an indigenous child's cultural, linguistic, religious and spiritual upbringing and heritage must be considered in the context of decision-making by child and family services. This principle is crucially important, as child and family services around this country are moving toward a focus on preventive care in order to keep indigenous children in their communities where they can maintain their valuable cultural ties.

According to Indigenous Services Canada, 52.2% of children aged 14 and under who are living under foster care in private homes are indigenous. This statistic shows that indigenous children are extremely overrepresented in child and family services systems across Canada, especially considering that indigenous children make up only 7.7% of the general population of children 14 years of age and under in this country. It is clear that more work needs to be done so that indigenous children can stay in their communities and build everlasting relationships with the members of their community. This bill highlights the need for the administration of child and family services to have a focus on preventive care so that fewer indigenous children end up in foster homes and away from their culture and their community.

Our former Conservative government also recognized the need to focus on preventive care when it came to the provision of child and family services for indigenous children. Among the different concrete steps that we took to develop a prevention-based orientation was the creation of the enhanced prevention-focused approach, better known as EPFA. The start of it was in 2007. This was a reform of the funding model that had been formerly used by the first nations child and family services program.

• (1905)

It took effect immediately in Alberta. Then a year later Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia adopted it. It was subsequently adopted in Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba.

Funding was specifically redirected towards a prevention-based approach in order to keep indigenous children in their communities

and to support the self-sufficiency of these communities in a culturally appropriate manner.

The prevention-oriented focus that was put in place by our former Conservative government refocused child welfare services to a family-centred practice with children-centred outcomes. This approach delivered real and positive results towards turning back the trend of increasingly larger numbers of indigenous children being placed in foster care in this country.

During the length of our former Conservative government, the percentage of first nations children on reserve placed in foster care decreased from 89.67% in the first year, which was 2006-07, to 76.08% in the year 2014-15. I think we could all agree we would like it to be zero, but this was a major reduction of over 13%, according to stats gathered by the first nations child and family services program. Over that same time period, the percentages of first nations children placed in kinship care increased from no recorded amount to 17.83% in 2014-15.

Our former Conservative government also increased first nations child and family services national expenditures by about 50%. These results represent concrete progress achieved by our former Conservative government towards improving child and family services for indigenous children, both in quality of service and, maybe most importantly, the prevention-based outcomes.

Another key aspect of this bill is that it would affirm the rights and jurisdiction of indigenous peoples in relation to child and family services. It would allow indigenous governing bodies to pass their own laws, consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in relation to child and family services, and these laws would have the same force as the federal law. On this issue, however, there are still some outstanding questions that need to be answered.

One such question regards situations in which more than one indigenous governing body claims jurisdiction over a particular child. Today there are many indigenous children who identify as being part of multiple indigenous backgrounds. It is not hard to imagine a child who may have a first nations father and a Métis mother, or vice versa. In these kinds of situations, it is conceivable that two different indigenous governing bodies may each claim full jurisdiction over the provision of child and family services in relation to that child.

While the bill addresses jurisdictional disputes between a province and an indigenous governing body, it does not properly address jurisdictional disputes that may arise between indigenous governing bodies that both have equally strong ties and connections to the indigenous child in question.

This jurisdictional question is one of the concerns that was directly raised in committee while we were studying Bill C-92. One of the committee's witnesses was Raven McCallum, a well-spoken young person who is a youth adviser on the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development Youth Advisory Council. She is of British and Haida descent on her mother's side, and of Métis descent on her father's side. In her testimony, while talking about Bill C-92, she stated:

I do not see any reference about how to approach situations when a child belongs to more than one nation.

*Government Orders*

She goes on to say:

I think it's something that is important to acknowledge. We need to know all aspects of our identity.

● (1910)

Time and time again, we heard in committee that indigenous identity is complex and multi-layered. However, this bill still has not adequately addressed these complexities as they relate to jurisdictional issues in the provision of child and family services for indigenous children.

We also want to make sure that this bill would not negatively impact the existing self-government agreements that exist between indigenous governing bodies and the provincial and federal levels of government in relation to child and family services. These kinds of agreements include the three which were recently concluded this past March in my province of Saskatchewan between the provincial government and the Saskatoon Tribal Council.

One of these agreements was a delegation agreement which re-established the Saskatoon Tribal Council's child and family services agency, which will provide services to the on-reserve communities covered by this governing body. Another agreement is the reconciliation partnership agreement, which strives to ensure that indigenous children maintain connections to their culture and communities. These sorts of agreements further the important principle of cultural continuity, which recognizes that one of the crucial interests of indigenous children is to live and grow within their unique cultural and linguistic communities.

As Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Mark Arcand noted about the agreements in committee, "all of this work is about prevention". In committee, he stressed the importance of the work once again, stating, "Our opinion is we have to build partnerships and relationships, as we've done with the federal and provincial governments. To us, it's meaningful because it's building bridges. We have to work together."

As we move forward in our consideration of Bill C-92, we need to study how this bill will impact agreement such as these, in order to be sure we are upholding the principles which are stated within the bill itself.

Delegation agreements, such as those made between the Province of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Tribal Council are incredibly important. They are about returning the jurisdiction of care for the indigenous child to the indigenous communities themselves, so that these children are no longer cut off and separated from their culture and heritage.

Cultural continuity is one of the key principles of this bill. It is clear from the testimony of many witnesses that agreements made between the provinces and indigenous governing bodies often play a large role toward ensuring that child and family services are provided in a way that ensures indigenous children maintain strong relationships to their culture and community.

Another issue that arose in committee was the discovery that some major stakeholders who would be immediately impacted by this legislation were not consulted. When Grand Chief Arlen Dumas of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs came to testify at our committee, he said that his governing body was not consulted at all. The AMC

had already crafted its own legislation with respect to child and family services, which was uniquely tailored to the experiences of that governing body's work in the province of Manitoba.

Given that all the groundwork had already been laid, the grand chief told us that Bill C-92 was thrust upon the AMC. He said, "It was quite a surprise when Bill C-92 was presented to us. It was almost [like] a slap in the face, because we had invested so much of our time in bringing forward a solution that everybody could build upon."

How could the Liberal government introduce a bill that brings such dramatic changes to indigenous child welfare without consulting one of the largest indigenous governing bodies in a province with one of the highest numbers of indigenous children in foster care?

I am running out of time. In general, we support the principles laid out in this bill, and we want this bill to progress. However, the Liberals have put this piece of legislation at the back of their list of priorities. As a result, the Liberal government has left us with hardly any time to peel back the onion and have a great conversation about this bill.

● (1915)

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his fine work at committee.

This legislation was codeveloped, and I am very proud that the minister and his staff went to those on the ground, from coast to coast to coast, and consulted before the bill was written. Over 2,000 people were consulted. They were not only chiefs, but people working in the child welfare area. Over 65 meetings were held across the country to make sure we had this right. In fact, Senator Murray Sinclair called the bill a model for codeveloping bills into the future.

Could the hon. member speak to the importance of consultation before this sort of legislation is introduced? How did consulting at the front end perhaps save us some time at the back end?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital has been a great contributor to the indigenous affairs committee.

Recently, maybe 10 days ago, I spoke at the FSIN spring assembly in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. There are 74 bands there, and not all of them agree with Bill C-92.

As I have talked about, consultation with Manitoba was not done, and the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario both have issues with the bill. However, I guess one cannot get everything right, and we have to move forward.

We heard some great testimony from the Peter Ballantyne Child and Family Services when they came to committee. It was all about children. We want to make things better for everyone's family situation. I talked about this in my passionate speech. It is most important that these kids stay connected to their communities for good.

● (1920)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his passion on this file.

*Government Orders*

As 55% of those in foster care are indigenous, it is the bill's intent to return the governance of family services to indigenous people. However, I noted that there was no funding associated with this in the bill.

Were there conversations about what kind of structures would be put in place in order for that governance to transfer?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Mr. Speaker, I think the most talked about subject in our committee was funding, and there was nothing in the bill that brought it forward. It is great to have grandiose ideas in how to improve a situation which I think we all agree needs to be improved, but capacity is the biggest issue here.

Some in this country are ready right now to move forth and be leaders in indigenous family services. Others are five years or 15 years away. With the bill, we would have a discrepancy, as some bands are ready to take a lead role today, and others could be as much as a decade or two behind, which is unfortunate.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate working with the member at the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

One thing that concerned me a lot during this process was the reality that some communities are very rural and remote. Multiple witnesses from those types of indigenous communities talked about the challenges of having no housing, where children are going to stay if they are put into care and of making sure that children are not so far away that they cannot be connected to those communities.

The legislation before us speaks to the particular issue of indigenous children in care. However, what ensures that is delivered appropriately is adequate housing, drinking water and resources at a community level.

Could the member talk about the challenges that those communities will face, and make suggestions regarding what the government should look at moving forward?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for North Island—Powell River for her contribution to our committee.

Remote areas have a major concern. There are very few opportunities for foster homes in northern Canada. We are taking a child out of that area, out of the territories and putting them in southern Canada where they really do not fit.

That is one of the issues that the government is going to have to look at, because we want these children in welfare situations to be connected with their communities. For some of these areas, especially in the far north, there are little or no opportunities for foster homes.

It is part and parcel with housing, but also with indigenous, Inuit and Métis in remote areas. I certainly agree with the member that we have a huge concern in this country.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know the history surrounding the child welfare system. It is related to the residential school era. Before we would take children in order to assimilate them into the majority culture. We moved into the sixties scoop where there were a lot of adoptions.

There were good examples. People were trying to build relationships and build love in families and tried to look after children.

However, we moved into this foster era with our children. In Manitoba, there are 11,000 kids in care, and 90% are first nations. I think the Canadian state, including the provinces and the federal government, have completely failed these families and children.

The bill is very interesting. On one side, it has the child at the centre, but it also has issues of jurisdiction, which are two components that come together.

I would like to point out to the hon. member that governments can never legislate love. Love can never be legislated by any law in Parliament. That is what should be at the centre of our action for these children. We want to produce children who are fully contributing members, who reach their full potential and are able to be successful in life. In order to do that, as human beings, they need good loving relationships.

If the Canadian state has failed so much, if we have failed collectively as a society, then it is time to let indigenous peoples make those choices. It is time to let them make decisions for themselves, to give them the opportunity of making mistakes, but also to have the chance for success of enabling their children to experience love and to be fully contributing members of our society.

● (1925)

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Mr. Speaker, love is the big word in the best interests of the child. It is not in the best interests of the child to remove that child from one area of the country to another area. We have seen it with residential schools and the sixties scoop.

I recently saw the movie *The Grizzlies*. It talked about the Inuit situation up north, where people have no hope, no love. It is a fabulous documentary, which was released in this country about five weeks ago. It talks about suicide. It talks about hope and love. When we reach out to communities, it is surprising what we get. I hope Bill C-92 addresses that, because we have seen in the past that we have failed. I hope the indigenous, Inuit and Métis take the ball and run with this, as they know what is best for their communities.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are two things that are happening. One was the final report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls this morning. We are also talking about some very important child welfare legislation.

My colleague alluded to it in his speech, but in many ways they are very intertwined, because those who end up in care are often some of the victims, the murdered and missing. I wonder if the member could talk more about that connection.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that we are bringing Bill C-92 to the House tonight after what we experienced this morning with the report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. It was a tough day in Gatineau as we heard the stories from the commission.

*Government Orders*

The issues are intertwined. I talked to a lady who, 27 years later, is still dealing with this. How we deal with child welfare going forward in this country, with 37 million of us today, is so important. It is so important to get this right, and we all want to see it go correctly. It is in the best interests of the child, and that is what we are here to deal with.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here to speak to Bill C-92, which deals with the important issue, especially to my riding of North Island—Powell River, of indigenous children in care.

I want to take a moment to thank all the local indigenous communities and organizations that represent first nations, Inuit and Métis groups and communities in my riding for the hard work they do every day for the children they represent.

In indigenous communities, children are sacred. I think of some of the communities I represent. I think of the elder Elsie Paul. She talked to me about how children were seen as a gift from the Creator, that they were given to the community to raise and when that child was taken, what that meant to the community.

I think about Alberta Billy, elder in another indigenous community that I represent. She talked to me about the impact of colonization and residential schools on the community. She told me to imagine my community right now. She said remove every child from the age of four to 16 from the community and see how the community would react and respond. I think of those elders who have watched their communities struggle through the challenges of colonization, residential school, the sixties scoop and many more and how hard that has been on them.

We also need to look at the numbers, and I have some of them today.

One hundred and twelve years ago Dr. Bryce, a medical health officer, linked federal health funding inequities to preventable deaths of first nations children.

Seventy-three years ago child welfare experts called for increasing family support to reduce the number of first nations children in state care. This speaks to something important and something we still have not done, which is prevention and support for those communities.

Thirty-eight years ago experts called on then INAC to resolve jurisdictional disputes resulting in service denials to first nations children.

Twelve years ago the Assembly of First Nations and Caring Society filed the human rights case against Canada.

Two Auditor General reports confirmed child welfare funding inequity since 2008.

There are 165,000-plus first nations children affected by Canada's discriminatory services.

Twenty-five million is the approximate number of nights that first nations children spent in foster care since 2007.

These numbers are startling and they tell us a story about which all of us should be concerned.

Since 2016, seven Human Rights Tribunal orders have required in Canada to cease its discrimination. How many of these Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders has Canada fully complied with? Zero.

Whenever we stand in this place and speak about indigenous children, we must always remember and acknowledge Jordan River Anderson, a Cree child from Norway House Cree Nation. He died in Manitoba in 2005 at the age of five after the Manitoba and federal governments spent years fighting over who would pay for his home care. This speaks to the very core of this issue. It is about valuing indigenous children and the communities that love them. This young boy died as a result of discussions between two levels of government on who would fork over the money.

Nobody wants to know that this is the truth of how their children will be treated, so I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge that precious, sacred child, a gift from the Creator who should have been supported and looked after by the whole community, which also includes the country of Canada, and the family that worked so hard to support him and had to meet that terrible end. We cannot forget.

Today, there are three times as many indigenous children in government care as during the peak of the time of residential schools. The conditions and outcomes for kids in care today are often tragic and many experts say that the modern fallout of the child and family services program will now be called “the millennium scoop”. That is devastating. It shows that the history of the country is repeating itself, and this is unacceptable.

• (1930)

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many indigenous artists out there who have spoken, be it through art, poetry or music. We cannot begin to recognize what this has done to the indigenous culture of the Métis, the first nations and Inuit people across the country.

I would like to take this opportunity to share some quotes from members of the Haisla Nation.

One is “I can't remember my name.”

Another is this:

500 years my people have been humble  
500 years we have dealt with the struggle  
500 more years for all of my youngins  
For 500 years we have been drumming and drumming.

We are in this important place, where important decisions are made that will have long-term impacts on people. It is too bad the government waited so long to introduce the bill. Now we are rushing it through.

That is hard for me. I take this really seriously. I have spoken about this in the House and in committee, in my role as vice-chair, about being a foster parent on a reserve, about the hard work we did in the community to try to keep the children at home, connected to their culture. I think of my husband who has taken foster children, young men, out to the river when their voices are changing. We want to keep them connected to the tradition that when they have that change of age, they do the hard work, go out and get the support of the community to do the sacred baths.



*Government Orders*

Here we are rushing and trying to get it done. Indigenous children need action. However, in the rushing process, I am a little afraid that we will not get it right. We will get it done, but we will not get it right. Indigenous children deserve much better.

Earlier I mentioned the two Auditor General's reports on the failure of the Canadian governments on first nations children in care. In 2008, the Auditor General report found that since 1990, when the child and family service program was created, INAC had given money "to First Nations, their child welfare agencies, and provinces to cover the operating costs of child welfare services on reserves and the costs related to children brought into care."

The Auditor General also concluded that as of 2008:

The funding INAC provides...is not based on the actual cost of delivering those services. It is based on a funding formula that the Department applies nationwide. The formula dates from 1988. It has not been changed to reflect variations in legislation and in child welfare services from province to province, or the actual number of children in care.

This really speaks to a systemic issue. It speaks to the reality that indigenous children have been left behind and not valued. Not only have they been left behind, but the value and the preventative support that families and communities desperately need are not a priority.

This country knows its history. We know the colonial history. We know the devaluation of indigenous members of the country. We know the history of trying to destroy, in multiple ways, those communities. If we break it, we have to pay for it.

One of the things that concerns me greatly about the legislation is that the principles for funding are not in it. There is a small mention about funding, but it is nothing that will be strong enough. This is framework legislation. It is supposed to create something that is strong enough to hold that legislation indigenous communities bring forward. If the resources are not there, this will be another failure. Another Auditor General's report will tell us that this still has not been addressed.

In 2011, again, the Auditor General reported this:

Despite the federal government's many efforts to implement our recommendations and improve its First Nations programs, we have seen a lack of progress in improving the lives and well-being of people living on reserves. Services available on reserves are often not comparable to those provided off reserves by provinces and municipalities. Conditions on reserves have remained poor. Change is needed if First Nations are to experience more meaningful outcomes from the services they receive.

● (1935)

Years have gone by. We are now sitting in a Parliament after a Human Rights Tribunal decision was made in 2016. The government of the day received seven non-compliance orders. We are here tonight talking about this legislation. I am concerned, because the proof is in the action, and I do not see that action. What I am most concerned about is the resources required to deal with this systemic issue, to realize that the racism and discrimination is built right into the system. To pull that out takes a lot of work and a lot of resources. If we want to make a difference for indigenous communities, if we want to honour first nations, Inuit and Métis communities, we have to see those resources finally there.

The Human Rights Tribunal in Canada concluded that the then INAC's delivery of services and funding of services was inferior to

comparable provincial services and discriminatory on the basis of race. It ordered the government to make up the funding gap and implement Jordan's Principle. As of June 2017, the government has spent \$707,000 fighting against this decision, and that is really sad.

When we look at Bill C-92, it is like history is repeating itself. I will support the legislation. I will trust that indigenous communities across the country will do their hard work.

I want to recognize as well that indigenous communities, like the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, have been very clear that they do not support the legislation. I have asked the committee to recognize that and ensure that indigenous communities have the right to opt out, but that they still would get the resources they desperately need to make a difference. However, that is still not addressed in the legislation and it needs to be. It is time for substantive change. It is good to speak about it, but it is important that we act on it as well.

The bill would set national standards, but it has numerous question marks and gaps that are outstanding, including accountability, jurisdiction, data collection and reporting and, most critical, funding. The bill leaves funding to negotiations between Canada, indigenous groups and the provinces, meaning it could vary widely.

As the member for North Island—Powell River, I represent small indigenous communities. Often they are very remote and have a lot of challenges they specifically face. I do not know if the legislation before us will do it, but I will watch and continue to propose solutions. Those small communities have very big challenges and the capacity can be very hard for them to gather. We want to ensure those communities have a voice at the table. We want to ensure they have a process they can move forward with and have faith in. However, there is some concern that those resources will not be there.

A lot of people came to committee and talked about a lot of issues. The vast majority of the witnesses expressed concern. They wanted to see funding principles in the legislation. We were not successful in getting that amendment passed. Therefore, we will all be watching this very closely.

The government was given an opportunity to support funding provisions with which nearly every witness at committee agreed. What we saw were half measures. I am concerned about that and I will be watching for this. We will be talking to communities and ensuring they see the progress that the government has assured us will happen. We need to see that progress. Enough is enough.

These children deserve the right to be children. When they do not have the resources or the home they desperately need, their right to be a child is taken away.

*Government Orders*

Ms. Natasha Reimer, the founder of Foster Up, spoke to the committee. She said:

Yes. I think funding is a key component. Without adequate funding, services and resources, we are failing these children and youth in care. We leave them unsupported, and unable to thrive and reach their full potential. I think it's crucial that we have legislation ensuring that there is funding allocated for this and that these resources are given the utmost that we could possibly give, because these are children's lives we're talking about. They deserve an opportunity. They are kids, at the end of the day.

● (1940)

I think it is sad how many children in this country have a history of not being allowed to be children. We heard some of that testimony from children who had spent great portions of their childhood in care, and they talked about the challenges. They talked about how hard it was to go home, how they did not know who they were, how hard it was to figure out who to connect with and when to connect with them. We had witnesses who were from multiple nations who did not know which one to go to or who to go to first, or how.

When we look at the system, we can see how broken it is. We heard it from those witnesses who came and talked about their addiction issues. One person gave testimony about the challenges he faced and how hard he had to work to become a parent because he did not know how to be one. I think it is important that we in this place recognize that this falls on our shoulders, because decisions were made here. This decision has to be made and has to be made respectfully, because those children deserve it.

Naiomi Metallic from the Yellowhead Institute stated:

This [funding] is intertwined with jurisdiction because, really, if there is no funding and accountability built into this act, what this bill will do is merely provide indigenous people with the jurisdiction to legislate over their own poverty.

Another issue that came up was the number of children who are taken away from their community because the community does not have the resources, the basic necessities, to provide for their children, which should never happen. That does not mean we should leave children in substandard housing; it means this place has to take responsibility and look at how it can become an ally. This is still an issue. We still do not know where the indigenous plan is for housing. I think that is devastating in this day and age.

Another thing that really concerned me was the best interests of the child. That has been defined by court systems across Canada, both provincially and federally. In the community I married into, the Homalco First Nation, when I had my children with my husband, I was told the relationship between the parent and the child is deemed completely sacred and that nothing should ever interfere with that loving relationship. In that community, the historic practice was that aunts and uncles were in charge of disciplining the child, because they did not want that to interfere, ever, with the parents' ability to love that kid up. There are ways that certain things are done, and making sure that this is recognized is important.

I want to thank the national chief from the Assembly of First Nations, who stated:

...the best interests of the child sections should be amended to clarify that first nations governing bodies that pass laws prescribing the factors for determining the best interests of the children will add to the factors in the bill, creating recognition and support for our ways of caring for our children and families. This is important, because for some of our people we do not remove a child. We remove the person harming the child and keep the family intact. We believe that this is in

the best interests of the child. Our laws must be affirmed and our practices supported to preserve family unity.

Therefore, we must understand in this place that indigenous communities do it differently. Quite frankly, I think we have a lot to learn from that. What concerns me is that this legislation is not clear enough to make sure that the definition is defined in those communities. It has been defined already in the court systems in this country, which could be a serious concern. I do not think that was addressed as clearly as it could be.

I know my time is ending, so I want to take this opportunity to recognize the first peoples of this place—the indigenous communities, the first nations, the Inuit and Métis—and say that it is with great sorrow that we are here today debating this. This should not be what is happening. The history of Canada is a shameful one.

As my granny said, we have to make it right, so I will support this bill and I look forward to continuing to work hard in the future to make it right.

● (1945)

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this bill is so important. There was discussion about the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The bill they proposed presents an entirely different world view. Bill C-92 is going to allow a lot more leeway for that world view to shine forth. The bill from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs talks about ceremony. It is about the interconnected, holistic nature of the indigenous philosophy, which perhaps we will not find in federal legislation but which is extremely important in how indigenous peoples seriously view the world.

I hope, as the bill moves to its final stages through the Senate, that when the Governor General gives royal assent to the bill, ceremony plays an important role. I know that the bill that was developed by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs was developed in ceremony, through prayer and through the use of the pipe, with a great amount of spirituality and the use of the drums.

This might sound strange in this place with respect to how we deal with legislation here, but it was extremely important to the people of Manitoba and the people who developed that bill and the way they wanted to move forward. I hope the government will be able to find an additional accommodation at the royal assent stage to know that this bill is imbued with the spirit of all Canadians in coming together in the belief that our children really do matter.

● (1950)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I represent over 20 indigenous communities, with varying cultures and practices. It has been an honour for me to spend some time with those communities and learn. I think of Hilmas Henderson, who is an elder in the northern part of Vancouver Island. He always talks about the children, the care of the children and the importance of the children knowing where they come from and the history of where they come from.

I think about my husband. When we go to his territory, he can point out a mountain and say that this is where we harvested something, and that is where his family went. My children know that. They know where they come from, so they are not confused.

*Government Orders*

Ceremony is very important. Both my sons bathed in the river every day for a year when their voices changed. It changed who they are. They know who they are. They have become firm in themselves, because they challenged themselves and found themselves connected to the planet in the area where they come from. It would be beautiful in this place if we started to look at some of those rationales.

I think about the 'Namgis Nation and how it deals with conflicts. In the big house, they do let people out. They stay in that place, and the elders support them to work out those conflicts, and they leave together. I would love to see a place where we left together and talked to each other in a more honourable way. I look forward to that in this place one day.

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in my riding, I have seven first nations, and one of them is Cowessess First Nation. Chief Cadmus Delorme was here last week. Cowessess First Nation has done tremendous work. They have built windmills that are producing megawatts to the SaskPower system. They have put in big solar panels as well.

In the past week, they have brought forward a youth transition home for 10 girls between the ages of 14 and 17 to allow these 10 girls to come back to the first nation to live and be cared for.

I am wondering if the member can tell us how she sees that Bill C-92 will be a benefit.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize the hard work that the community in the member's riding is doing to move forward. We do not hear those stories enough, to be quite honest. I think of the North Island Métis Association in my riding, a small but mighty group of people who just keep working hard to connect their Métis children to their traditions, which is really important work.

When I look at this legislation, I am hopeful. I am just cautious and I think most indigenous communities in this country are cautious, because there is a history that is not very positive.

I hope that this legislation will provide the supports. What is most important is that the resources be there to make sure that the processes can be carried out and that there is room for that innovation. The resources need to be there. It is great that the transition house is going up to bring 10 young women back home, but if the resources are not available to pay for basic housing needs, it is really hard to take the next step. This is what needs to be looked at.

I will come back to what I said in my speech. If we break it—and Canada did break it, and all of us in this place have to understand that—then we need to pay for it. I think about all of the different nations that I have spoken to and their traditions and how they used to do it and how they are working really hard to bring that back. They are facing monumental challenges because of the trauma that has been passed on, generation to generation to generation. That preventive resource needs to be there too.

It would be great to see children not leaving because we are supporting the nations and supporting the families to do a better job in parenting, because it is all there. It is all there. We just need to finally pay for what we broke.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Before I go to questions and comments, I want to make a comment. If any of you have a phone or an electronic gadget, just check it to make sure it is on mute. I do not know what it is today, but I have heard a few of them while I have been sitting here. I am not pointing fingers at anybody. It happens to the best of us. Just check it out and make sure it is on mute.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

• (1955)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as I stand in this place I think of the Lyackson, the Halalt, Penelakut, the Malahat, the Pacheedaht, Ditidaht and of course the Cowichan tribes and what a great honour it is for me to stand in this place and be their voice. I represent many communities on Vancouver Island. They are a bit further south than my colleague's communities, but they are going through the same kind of pain. It is well past time for us to address this issue.

I find that the memory of members of this place can be short sometimes and I am glad that my colleague raised the issue of Jordan's principle in the course of her speech. It was in 2007 that my former boss, Jean Crowder, who represented the riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan at the time, brought forward Motion No. 296, which was passed unanimously by the House. That motion confirmed Jordan's principle.

The point I am trying to get across is that the House of Commons has already had opportunities in the past to voice its opinion on the issue. It is not as though these are new issues. I share my colleague's concerns that we are stuck in this place where we want to see the bill move forward, but we do have concerns that it may be rushed. Just looking at the timeline of the Liberal government reminds me that it is too bad that with three weeks left, we are just getting to this stage now.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague from North Island—Powell River could talk about how the House in the past has had lots of opportunities to address these issues, and not just in this Parliament. It is a shame that with children being our most precious resources and with all the power that we command in this place, again we seem to be asking first nations communities to wait a bit longer for what is certainly very overdue and long-deserved attention to the issues that matter most to them.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I know from the teachings of the family I married into is that when we name something, we are giving it power. We have Jordan's principle. This is not just a name to recognize this precious child; it is an obligation. When we name something like that, we are not only giving the name to recognize; we are also giving the name so that when people hear that name, they remember the obligation and the commitment. It is a way of witnessing, remembering and always bringing that back. I want to thank the people who have gone before who have worked so hard on this. It finally came with Jean Crowder's amazing work to bring that forward.

*Government Orders*

The history is a painful one, and we have to rebuild trust. I was listening to a podcast with Brené Brown, about how trust is built on the small things repetitively done, faithfully and honestly. I think about that. If we look at the history of this country, it has not been so. There has not been a government in this place yet where the commitments have been cumulative and they keep going and the action is taken now, not asking indigenous communities to wait.

I look forward to this legislation. I hope it brings the best, because that is what I want to see. I want to see the best for our children. They certainly are worth it. The concern is whether it will happen. Will the funding and resources be there? Will the court system understand that the “best interest of the child” definition is something that has been redefined, and will it actually use that when making decisions? These are the things we will be watching for, and these are the things that must happen for the trust to be built.

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say from the get-go what a privilege it is to sit with the member on the indigenous committee. I have a deep respect for her passion and she has a beautiful heart when it comes to indigenous issues. I just wanted to state that first.

The members know my position on the bill. I find that the elegance of this bill is that it is a framework and a starting place, the ending place being that indigenous communities will establish their own legislation when it comes to child and family services. What I find the most powerful thing about this bill is that their own legislation will have paramountcy over federal and provincial governments. Would the member agree that this is a very powerful part of the bill itself?

• (2000)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I also enjoy working with the member on the indigenous and northern affairs committee. I find him attentive and I appreciate that dedication.

This is a step in the right direction. I do not know if it goes as far as I would hope it would go. One thing that is important when we are discussing this legislation is the details. In one of the communities that I represent, the members made a decision many years ago that the community would come together, they would raise the funds and they would build in their community a church and a school. That meant they had to give up their culture. They had to give up a lot of their practices because they were inviting the church and the school right into their community. They had the last potlatch right before the church had the nuns and the priest come, and also the teachers in the school. They did their last potlatch, and they knew they were giving away their culture, but they did that so their children would stay in their care until grade six, and then they would go to residential school. It gave that community a few more years with its children.

When we look at that community and its development, figuring out how its culture is going to move forward is a challenge. The people in the community are having to relearn their culture because they gave it up for their children. When we look at building this legislation, that community needs the resources to do that part of the work, because if these people are going to build legislation that is going to allow them to do that, they need to go back. That costs money. It is resources. If we are going to do this right, if we are going to honour that process, if we are going to acknowledge that a decision was made in that community to give up its culture so it

could have its children, we need to honour that with the resources to do the work.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for North Island—Powell River for, as always, an excellent and thoughtful speech.

When I listen to the debate, it appears to me that there are different first nations and indigenous places that are ready to take over the governance of the children, and there are places that are far from that.

There appears to be no funding and no plan. To introduce this legislation in the dying days of the government is sort of like virtue signalling, if the Liberals cannot really execute it.

I wonder if the member could comment on whether she believes that the legislation, as it is written, could actually be put in place.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, that is a really important question. I have to say that a lot of indigenous communities have come forward and are encouraging all of us in this place to make sure that this legislation moves quickly. They want to see that progress happen. They want to see the discussions happen.

I will be frank with the member. I respect her and I hope she does not take this the wrong way, but a lot of concern I have heard from communities, not only in my riding but across Canada, is that if the Conservatives get in, there will be a concern about it actually being negotiated. I think that is sad. It is something for all of us to address in this House at some point.

My concern, and I share it with the member, is how this is going to happen rapidly enough. We are going into an election. We need to see this happen. Indigenous children deserve the best, because for generations, they have been given the very least.

I will be working hard in whatever role I play in this country to make sure that this is done and that it is done well, because the children of this country deserve it. There are challenges with capacity, and we need to see that acknowledged. Again, whether we see it actually addressed meaningfully will depend on how the implementation of this bill happens.

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

I am pleased to rise today during third reading debate on Bill C-92, an act respecting first nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families.

Let me first recognize that we are gathered on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

Bill C-92 seeks to establish a framework for indigenous communities to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services. This is in keeping with the inherent right of self-government of indigenous peoples. The bill also sets out principles, applicable on a national level, for the provision of child and family services in relation to indigenous children and families. These principles intend to help ensure that indigenous children and their families will be treated with dignity and that their rights will be preserved.

*Government Orders*

To be specific, the bill before us provides clear affirmation of the inherent right of first nations, Inuit and the Métis to exercise jurisdiction in relation to child and family services. This would strengthen the mandate of indigenous governing bodies to administer prevention and protection programs and services for child and family services in a way that reflects their customs, practices and traditions. The bill would also empower them to enact laws in this area if they choose to do so.

One size does not fit all. Indigenous peoples would be free to assume partial or full jurisdiction over child and family services at their own pace. This would enable indigenous people to tailor the exercise of their jurisdiction to their needs.

I want to emphasize that this bill is not about imposing solutions; rather, it is about opening the door and beginning a new era in which indigenous peoples can pursue their own solutions for their children and families.

In fact, this proposed legislation has been co-developed with the first nation, Inuit and Métis peoples whose child and family services it will affect. We introduced it only after careful engagement. We held over 65 different meetings and heard from nearly 2,000 people from across the country. However, just as the bill was co-developed with first nations, Inuit and Métis, so will be its implementation, and we will continue to engage with indigenous partners, provinces and territories throughout the implementation, should the bill receive royal assent.

All too often, past decisions affecting children and families have been made without putting the best interests of the child first. This bill changes that and has the best interests of the child as its central objective. Bill C-92 establishes principles that help to identify factors to be considered in determining the best interests of the child. These principles would have to be observed by provincial and territorial courts as well as by providers of child and family services.

Nothing would preclude provinces and territories or the indigenous governing bodies from offering more protection than that which is set out here. This bill represents the floor, not the ceiling, of the provisions to protect the best interests of an indigenous child. The end result would be to have the cultural, linguistic, religious and spiritual upbringing and heritage of the child given more priority in determining his or her best interests.

A number of amendments that strengthen the bill were adopted by the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs during the clause-by-clause consideration. One of these amendments would ensure that when determining the best interests of an indigenous child, primary consideration would be given to the child's physical, emotional and psychological safety, security, and well-being, as well as to preserving the child's connection to his or her family, community and culture.

● (2005)

Clause 10 was also amended to clarify that the best interests of the child are to be interpreted, to the extent it is possible, in a manner that is compatible with a provision of an indigenous law.

Another amendment deals with fiscal arrangements. It outlines the importance of fiscal arrangements to help ensure that the indigenous

governing bodies can provide services that are sustainable, needs-based and consistent with the principle of substantive equality.

A third element was added to the bill, stating more clearly that it will align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to which the government declared unqualified support in 2016. Taken overall, the bill before us seeks to ensure that indigenous child and family services are aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Bill C-92 is the product of broad engagement and the result of a codevelopment process with indigenous partners. It represents a historic opportunity to break from the past and protect indigenous children and their families for generations to come.

It was such a privilege to be on the committee that studied the bill and to hear the many witnesses who came before the committee to express their support for it. I feel the reason they expressed support for the bill is that, as mentioned earlier, it is a framework. It is a starting point for indigenous communities and peoples to take control of indigenous family and child services and put in place their own laws that they feel will benefit their communities, their families and, most importantly, their children.

As has been noted many times in debate, that is what this is all about. It is about children and their best interests. For too long, our country has not had the best interests of indigenous children in mind. I am so proud that Bill C-92 is going to change that and provide the opportunity for indigenous communities to enact their own laws that will be in the best interests of their communities and in the best interests of their children.

We heard from so many about the importance of the paramountcy of indigenous law over federal and provincial law. That is such an important component because it helps indigenous communities, once again, to have the certainty that they know what is best for their own children and what laws best reflect their communities, their culture and the best interests of their children.

I was very happy to see the collegial atmosphere that existed at committee with my NDP and Conservative colleagues and counterparts as we made sure that the bill moved through committee as quickly and efficiently as possible. One message rang true at committee. It was the overwhelming desire, from every person and witness who came to committee, to make the legislation a reality as quickly as possible so that indigenous communities can make the determination of what is in the best interests of their children.

I urge all hon. members to join me in supporting the bill to move it through the House as quickly as possible.

● (2010)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that, as the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington said, there was goodwill on the committee in terms of moving forward. However, one thing did disturb me, and perhaps he could articulate better what he meant.



*Government Orders*

The child welfare system has a significant impact on real people. For example, let us look at Dwayne Gladu, who is from my riding, and his daughter Lisa.

Dwayne was placed in a foster family as a child. So was his daughter, but his daughter was placed in a foster family because her father had a mark in his file that said that he had been in foster care, which meant that he was not going to be a good parent. He was indigenous, so he was going to have problems, even though Dwayne is a man who follows what we call the “red road”. He is a good man, whom I have met many times on the powwow trail. While he may be poor, by nature he is a very good and kind person.

Lisa, Dwayne's daughter, also had a birth alert against her, and when she gave birth only a few years ago, her child was seized immediately, without giving her the opportunity of proving that she would be a good parent. She fell into despair. She no longer had access to her child. She had to prove that she would be a good parent and take parenting classes when no one else had to do that. Her only crime was having been in a foster family herself.

In her despair, she became depressed. She fell in with the wrong crowd because she was poor and living in downtown Winnipeg. She started using drugs, and eventually she died from an overdose on the streets of Winnipeg.

Dwayne still goes to visit his grandson at every opportunity. Every week he is there with his grandson, enjoying their time together. He is trying to be a good grandfather and pass along his culture.

I think about Lisa because today is also when the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its report.

• (2025)

I am wearing a jacket that was given to me by the women of Winnipeg Centre. I am not sure if the cameras can come closer for a close-up of this jacket, but two women have been beaded onto the lapel. It was given to me to remind me why I am here. It is to remind me of Lisa, to never forget her name, to never forget her hopes and dreams and her desire to hold her child in her arms every day when she wakes up and to put that child to sleep. She never had that opportunity. It was taken from her by this system. That is what this legislation is supposed to change. That is what this legislation is about. That is why it is so important.

When I gave my maiden speech in this House, over 300,000 people viewed that speech by a backbencher on Facebook. That says that people were hungry for something different.

I am very proud of the work everyone on that committee did, whether it was the Conservatives, the NDP, or even the Green Party and the independents. They came together on the committee to study this legislation, because it will make a significant difference in the future. We will be able to look back at this moment in 30 or 40 years and say that this was perhaps the finest piece of legislation in this chamber. Even though it is coming at the end of this session, it does not reduce its importance or its significance.

There is also the question of jurisdiction. The Indian Act from 1876 granulated indigenous peoples and their nations into small component parts. It took what were large groupings of people from

Treaty 1 territory, Treaty 3 territory and Treaty 7 territory, where hundreds of indigenous groups, tribes and nations were living in a communal way and coming together at certain times of the year, and granulated them down into these small communities that were isolated from each other. They had no agency in their lives. This is about allowing those indigenous nations to reform themselves and in one area have full supremacy. Their laws would take precedence over federal or provincial law. That is significant.

The member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital is applauding right now, because he knows how important this is in Manitoba.

I recently spoke, in a few of the questions and comments periods, about how governments cannot legislate love. Governments can never legislate love. A government cannot love people. Sir John A. Macdonald and his ghost will never be able to love our children. People, Canadians, have to do that.

Another member in this debate said that our children are a resource. Unfortunately, yes, they are a resource in the sense that we receive funds to look after them. It is easier to pay someone else to look after the children than to help a family become successful and ensure that the children remain with their parents, where they have a connection to the culture and who they are and a connection to family members and those who love them most dearly. Maybe they are going to have an imperfect love, but it will be a strong love nonetheless.

I am very proud of the work that each and every one of us has done. I see the House leader. I do not mean to mention that she is here, but I hope that when we pass this legislation and it receives royal assent, it will be done in a way that includes a ceremony with the Governor General and that indigenous people will be included. Even though Parliament is supreme in its matters, its decisions and how it legislates, we can also decide to include others. It is very important to include the indigenous world view in this legislation and to make sure that the indigenous world view is paramount.

I am now ready for questions. I would like to thank each and every member. I am so proud of all the work we have done. I will be able to look my children in the eyes and look at myself in the mirror when I go to bed at night. No matter the outcome of this election, no matter who will be in office, members can rest assured that indigenous people and all Canadians will fight for proper financing, the administration of child welfare and allowing indigenous people to do it on their own without others telling them what to do.

• (2030)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Before I go to questions and comments, I want to remind hon. members that we cannot do indirectly what we should not do directly, like referring to someone's presence in the chamber. I just thought I would point that out in case someone has forgotten the rules.

Questions and comments.

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for his words tonight and his heartfelt comments on this matter. He referenced the final report of the missing and murdered indigenous women's commission being tabled today. It is a historic day.

*Government Orders*

I wonder if the member might agree with the opposition that we could further make history and pass this bill with unanimous consent, here tonight, and adjourn for the night having accomplished something today.

Would the member agree that we should pass this bill tonight and adjourn the House with that agreement?

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, that is an incredible offer. Obviously, I would love to see that happen. It is time to move this forward and on to the Senate, so that it has time to finish this work. Time is running short. It is time to give indigenous peoples the opportunity to make their own decisions.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that was interesting to hear.

I have another question for my colleague. Since the negotiations surrounding child and family services will be conducted on an individual basis with each community, the outcomes will be different and the services will also be different from one community to the next.

How can we fix the inequality that already exists in terms of access to services? What can we do to ensure that there will be no inequality in the services available in different communities?

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, I think “equality” and “equity” are two very important words. Every indigenous community will be doing things a little differently. Every one will have specific needs. People who live up north have different needs from those who live near urban centres.

Equity is a very important ideal. It is one where we ensure that people have the full potential to be successful in life. How to achieve that is a very good question. We have a number of cases that have gone before tribunals, which have established that indigenous child welfare should be funded at an equitable and equal level with all Canadians, that they should receive equal funding no matter where they are. How that is administered is a different thing. It is based on culture and needs within local communities.

If a government decides not to fund this legislation in the future, I suspect it will end up before the courts. I suspect that government will lose again and again. I am sure that no government wants to be on the wrong side of history, fighting children, fighting against children. It is certainly nothing that people on any side in this House want to be doing.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member for Winnipeg Centre for standing in this House and raising a point of privilege to ensure that when it came to indigenous languages, they would be able to be interpreted and heard in this House. When the government took action, he was the first member to stand and share a speech. I was pleased to be able to hear the interpretation and understand what he was saying. I commend the member for knowing the language of his roots and of his foundation.

When it comes to Bill C-91 and Bill C-92, this is legislation that I have had to give notice of time allocation on. When it came to this

piece of legislation tonight, it is the first time that I will not have to move time allocation, because the opposition has finally realized it is the right thing to do.

I would like to hear directly from the member what this legislation means to him, and for his roots and for future generations, and why he is pleased that we are moving ahead.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, before the government House leader sat down, I was going to call attention to the fact that she can discuss her issues with her caucus at any point in time. There are questions and comments that some of the rest of us would like to ask the member as well.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I believe it is called questions or comments. It is open, and we are making a rotation. I will take that under advisement, but I thought I would point out the procedure.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, I hope we always remain on good terms with each other as we end this debate, hopefully very soon.

I talked a little bit about love in a previous comment that I made. Love is extremely important.

My mother was extremely poor and my father was a residential school survivor and an alcoholic. He was not one of the most stellar individuals.

I was homeless as a child as well. We called it camping, but we used to live on the streets in a little pop-up tent from Canadian Tire. My mother would keep her feet against the tent door as we were sleeping at night. I think about that and about when most kids are taken. My mother never stopped loving my brother and me. That is perhaps the most important thing.

We just had Mother's Day, and Father's Day is coming up. I think about my mother and the role she played, being both a mother and a father. Even though she is not here with us, she is in the spirit world and she is in my heart because she always showed me love. That is the most important thing we have, because if we do not have love, it is very hard to be a successful human being.

I hope that this legislation will go a long way toward allowing our children—all Canadian children, whether they are indigenous or non-indigenous—to feel that love from someone, no matter who they are.

● (2035)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before I start my comments, I hope that you will find unanimous consent for the following. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order or usual practices of the House, at the conclusion of the speeches of the members for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and Abitibi—Témiscamingue, Bill C-92, an act respecting first nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, be deemed read a third time and passed; and that the House proceed to adjournment proceedings.

**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.



*Government Orders*

[Translation]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, because of that motion, I have to cut my speech down by 10 minutes and share my time with the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, which I do with great pleasure. I will highlight some of what I originally intended to talk about.

Today is a particularly important day and I truly am glad we came to an agreement to move this forward.

Having been at the ceremony for the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and knowing how much the child welfare system played a role in some very tragic outcomes for many of the people we have heard about today, to pass this child welfare legislation on to the Senate is absolutely significant and very appropriate. It also shows significant good will in the House.

We have always expressed concern about how late in the day we received the legislation. The Senate has only about two and a half weeks. However, on the House side, there is a recognition and good will to get the legislation passed.

When we think about the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and the child welfare legislation, many cases come to people's minds. However, the tragedy of Tina Fontaine stands out in all our minds. Her body was found in the river on October 17, 2014, wrapped in a duvet. No one was ever convicted. The authorities had someone whom they questioned, but no one has ever been convicted.

Tina Fontaine represents so many things that have gone wrong, that have been wrong for too many years and that we all need to work together to address: colonialism, intergenerational trauma, the sixties scoop and the residential schools.

In honour of Tina's memory and the significance of the day, I want to share a few details from the report that was done on Tina Fontaine. This is a bit of the executive summary and some other parts of the report. It says:

Tina Fontaine might always be known for the tragic way in which she died, but it is her life that is an important story worth knowing. It was on August 17, 2014, when most people would learn her name, but Tina's story began long before that day. It began even before Tina was born on New Year's Day in 1999. To know Tina's story, to really understand how she came to symbolize a churning anger of a nation enraged, each of us can look as far back as the arrival of European settlers, and as close to home as the depth of our own involvement or indifference in the lives and experiences of indigenous youth.

It is a certain challenge to conduct a child death investigation. To gather files and evidence, to sort through boxes of information, to speak with an ever-growing list of people who knew the child, and then to create an accurate and thoughtful story about the life of that child. This is a process of honouring legacy and uncovering truths. To understand the complexities of any child and to truly understand their life within the broader context of a family...

It goes on to say:

Tina's story was her own, and yet, it mirrors the stories of many others. The losses she experienced, the fracturing of her family, the inability to access necessary

support, the promises of services that were never delivered, these are the echoes of so many other children and their families. These barriers that are experienced much more often and pervasively by Indigenous families is the story of Tina and the one that we have the opportunity to change.

One of the things the report talks about is the areas on which we need to reflect:

What were Tina's needs and those of her family?

What interventions and supports were offered and when?

What is the family perspective on the services they received?

What needs to be improved?

What do the experts say needs to happen?

What do the Elders say we need to remember?

What do youth say they need to feel supported? And,

How can tragedies like Tina's death be prevented in the future?

● (2040)

This morning, the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its report, which is 1,200 pages with 231 recommendations. I do not think anyone has had the opportunity to really digest that report and the different recommendations. As I read through them, certainly there are some that jump out right away and make a lot of sense, around policing and our processes around protocols. Then there are other recommendations that one questions and wonders how they will work.

However, it is incumbent upon us all to have a look at that report, look at the recommendations and consider what we need to do. The recommendations are for all levels of government. It is federal, provincial and municipal, but also indigenous levels of government, as well as indigenous and non-indigenous communities. There is a role for everyone to play.

I will go back to the report:

While I know that the child and family services (CFS) system has long been blamed for Tina's death, this is short-sighted and serves only to reinforce the existing structures and beliefs. In fact, Tina did not spend much time inside the CFS system... While she was in care for a few short periods when she was very young, Tina had a family who were a significant protective force—especially her grandma and grandpa—who loved her and raised her from the time she was five years old....

It is a long story, but it is a very compelling and important one to read. Some relatives of Tina's decided that they had to do something, and I understand the Bear Clan evolved from the legacy of Tina. Her uncle was part of getting that initiative going. There are hundreds of people who volunteer and travel the streets, and they are really making a difference in that community. Out of a tragedy, there is a reflection, changes in the community and the inquiry.

In terms of Bill C-92, we had very interesting testimony from many leaders. The most compelling testimony was from the youth in care. There were three youth who came to us and shared their experiences. They talked about who they were, what they were and what the challenges were in terms of the system: how it either helped them or, in too many cases, let them down. We all owe them a great gratitude for their ability to come and share their stories so that when we looked at Bill C-92, we did not look at it as a lot of words on a piece of paper; we looked at it and reflected on their stories and how that legislation needed to change their stories.

*Government Orders*

One thing that is not in the legislation, and perhaps there needs to be better discussion about it sometime, is the whole issue of youth aging out of care. I do not know how many parents would send their children at 18 or 19 years of age out the door, wish them the best of luck and say that they have done what they needed to do. There was discussion that we would not do that to our own children. The province, the first nation community or the federal government is the parent of a child in care, and we need to think about how we can support them better. These days, someone who is 18 or 19 years old truly is not ready.

On that note, I give a big shout-out to Kamloops and the White Buffalo society. It has a home for youth aging out of care. They are bringing elders who need affordable housing into their structure, and they are going to have youth aging out of care. It is a really positive cultural experience.

• (2045)

My final shout-out is that Bill C-92 is a step. It is not a perfect step, and we have many other things we need to think about.

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her commitment and contributions at committee on this very difficult and important issue.

This really is a bill about jurisdiction. For the longest time, since the beginning of Canada, indigenous child welfare was under federal jurisdiction. Provinces have been involved for a long time, and many people respect provincial jurisdiction. The nub of the issue is really the inherent jurisdiction of indigenous nations to make their own laws and take care of their own children.

I wonder if the member would offer her comments on just that, the inherent jurisdiction of indigenous nations to make their own laws.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, through the committee process, we absolutely supported the inherent rights of children and the way the language was worded in the legislation. Where we expressed some concern and thought it might get a little complicated was where a first nation community or nation had not drawn down responsibility and perhaps had a child living off reserve who remained under provincial jurisdiction.

There will be some challenges. I have stated a few times that I wish the provinces had been a bit more engaged so we could have worked out those hurdles ahead of time and would not have to deal with them after the fact, which I am sure we are going to have to.

• (2050)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for her hard work on the file.

She mentioned that this is not a perfect step. If there was one item the member would recommend to the government in addition to this legislation, what would it be?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, that is part of the answer to the last question. There should have been a more thoughtful conversation with the provinces, especially the territories. For example, the territorial Government of Nunavut had some particular concerns. That work is still going to have to happen. I know that the

bill is not perfect, but it must move forward, and it is an important step.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and all members in this place for speeding up the passage of Bill C-92. I would have had a chance to make a speech tonight, and I stopped myself, because it is more important that we get this bill through.

I have some of the same misgivings as my friend. I put forward 28 amendments in clause by clause in an attempt to take up some of the recommendations of Dr. Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, the Carrier Sekani Family Services and others who testified at committee, but it is important that we pass it.

I was present this morning for the very moving presentation of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Tina Fontaine's grandmother was there. I am sure that my friend from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo recalls that Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said that she could feel that her granddaughter's spirit was with us. One of the key recommendations from the inquiry is that safe shelter for indigenous young people must be available 24 hours a day, because Tina sought help, and the doors were closed.

I know it is a 1,200-page report. We cannot have read all of it. I know I have not, but I hope everyone in this place, in Tina's memory, will commit at least that no first nation child, no child in this country, should go without protection, regardless of the time of night.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I spoke at the end of my speech about the pride I had in terms of the new facility that is going to house youth and elders together. It also speaks to communities making decisions and community capacity. Sometimes the government provides resources, but the solutions truly are at the community level.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to speak to this bill because I believe that the health and well-being of indigenous children is one of the most important issues before us as federally elected representatives. We are responsible for them and, sadly, we have made too many mistakes that affect them. As elected representatives, it is our duty to fix those mistakes. That is why this bill was crafted following court rulings stating that indigenous children were victims of a discriminatory funding system and identifying our obligation to remedy that. It took five court rulings for a bill to be introduced.

It would have been really nice if the committee had agreed to amendments to the bill, regardless of who proposed them. I believe that all the committee members sincerely wanted to improve the lives of indigenous children, but I think many more amendments would have been agreed to if the members truly wanted to set aside partisanship in order to improve the lives of these children, even though this parliamentary session is almost over. I am sad that the vast majority of the amendments put forward in committee were rejected.

*Government Orders*

I myself wanted the chance to speak to this bill at second reading, but I chose not to do so because I did not want to unduly delay adoption at second reading, so the bill could be sent to committee. Now I am fortunate to be the last member to speak to this bill before it goes to the Senate. I really wanted to emphasize the importance of making quite a few of these amendments because children's well-being is at stake. We do not want to have to start all over again. This I humbly submit to the senators who will study the bill and who may choose to revisit some of the amendments.

When I leave Ottawa to head home, I drive north for at least six hours. Each time, I pass through Kitigan Zibi, a reserve just outside of Maniwaki. As an aside, Parliament is located on their ancestral land. Every time I make this drive, sometimes twice a week, I see the photos of Maisy Odjick and Shannon Alexander, two teen girls who have gone missing since 2008 and have not been heard from since. Community members are still worried about them.

This is why I am particularly pleased to speak today. We must recognize that many indigenous children have had some very difficult experiences. For example, some children were placed with foster families who do not understand their traditions or language. A huge proportion of these children are placed in foster care every day, and, unfortunately, not all of them are lucky enough to live with people who understand their culture and their identity.

Many of these children are placed with foster families who do not understand their realities, while others still are raised by parents who did not have the chance to be raised by their own parents, who were forced to send their children to a residential school. This generation must now raise teenagers without having learned from their own parents.

I believe that members of indigenous communities deserve our admiration, because they are doing the best they can to pass on all aspects of their culture to their children, to show them who they are and where they come from, even though they themselves were unable to learn these things from their own parents.

● (2055)

As an MP, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of schools in indigenous communities and to see young people learning the Algonquin language, using charts with Algonquin words written on them. Young people are starting to learn the basics of Algonquin. When I was a young adult, I shared an apartment with a young Algonquin girl who had never had the opportunity to learn the language. She had a workbook that her mother had found for her. She was 18 or 19 years old and had never had the chance to learn the language.

This generation is trying to catch up. To do so, they need to be involved with child services on a daily basis. Indigenous peoples have a very different way of raising children. Over time, working as a nurse, I realized that everything related to pregnancy is very different for them. Too often, we tend to judge based on our own perspectives.

In indigenous communities, it is not unusual for teenagers or 18-year-old girls to already have two or three children. That often does not make any sense to us, and we think it must be a problem situation. However, when we talk to those girls, we realize that they

do not have the same view as we do of getting pregnant at 15 or 16 years old. If we continue to judge these sorts of situations from our own perspective, unfortunately, it could result in child placement services being called in, even though the girls see the situation completely differently.

Children are placed in care when there is a concern for their safety and their development is at risk. However, we are somewhat responsible for some of those risks, because no new housing has been built on reserves in 30 years and we are failing to provide clean drinking water and schools that are not falling apart. All we have to offer these children is mould-infested schools.

When children have absolutely nowhere to play and community infrastructure is in a pitiful state, child development may well be compromised. How much of this is the parents' responsibility? At what point should there be consequences? In fact, most of that responsibility falls to the system the children are forced into. It is up to us as elected officials to change the system and give power back to the communities, so that they can invest, build housing and make sure that pregnant teens can continue their education while also looking after their children. It is up to us to make sure that schools full of mould quickly become a thing of the past.

I was lucky enough to see a beautiful school built in my riding, in Long Point First Nation. It has made such a difference. Kids used to have to go to a mould-infested school that was eventually shut down by the school board. Since the school was located in the next town, the kids had to take a bus. That building was in really bad shape. Teenagers went to school in their own community, but they had to take classes in the gymnasium, where there were no windows, because there was mould everywhere else. The young people were self-harming. It was a disaster. It took years for them to finally get their school.

The design of this school is quite unique. It is well lit, a lot of wood was used, and it is in the shape of a hive. The children are put in a circle so that they can see each other and communicate with one another. We can see on their faces that these children are doing better. The community knew that the children needed a nice school that they could be proud of in order to be happy.

Today I am calling on the House to pass Bill C-92, for it to be referred to the Senate, but also that we not forget that the indigenous communities need to be allocated a significant amount of funding to ensure that the children are happy. It is the responsibility of elected members to ensure that indigenous communities can benefit from funding to fully develop and that children can stop being exposed to discrimination.

● (2100)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was years ago, when I was in opposition as a Liberal member, that I personally called for a public inquiry in regard to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. It was very frustrating, as we seemed to be going against a wall.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

One of the things that I really appreciate is that the Prime Minister has talked about reconciliation and how important it is to have a priority relationship with indigenous people. Today is a significant day, because we are going to pass historical legislation that will provide a great deal of hope for a lot of people.

The report of the public inquiry on the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was released today. I see this as part of a commitment that the Prime Minister made to Canadians, and it speaks volumes in terms of how much we want that relationship to continue to grow. There are other initiatives, such as the calls for action and so forth.

Would the member opposite not agree that today is a significant day for all Canadians, with both the report from the public inquiry being released today and the passing of this legislation this evening?

• (2105)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, the important thing is that there were a number of meaningful days for indigenous peoples over the past few years.

I acknowledge that all parties worked on improving the life of indigenous peoples, including some members who are no longer here. That being said, a number of files have been dragging on for years and it is important that we not try to take credit for this issue. We have to acknowledge that people from all over wanted to improve the living conditions of indigenous peoples, even though it is true that some could have moved more quickly.

The important thing is that there were several other meaningful days for indigenous peoples. We must not stop now. This is a long process and we must not stop working for indigenous peoples as long as they are being treated differently.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member worked very hard on this file and studied it. I know that she has some very cute and smart kids.

What, in her opinion, is the most important thing? I know we have a lot of work to do, but what does she think is the one thing that would improve our relationship with indigenous communities and the children who are our present and future leaders?

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, one of the most important things is communication.

In Abitibi-Témiscamingue, we have put a lot of effort into integrating the reserves. Some thought we would not be welcome at powwows. Today, powwows are promoted through the regional tourism association, and many people, including me, have chosen to attend. The members of the indigenous communities in my riding have a lot to share.

I was lucky enough to go to a powwow and be invited to a dance when I was pregnant. My daughter was introduced to the drums and the music before she was even born. Now every time Daphnée goes to a powwow and sees the dancing, she is enthralled. She gets to see the traditional garments that the men and women wear, and she loves the colours. To her, this tradition is part of the history of the land she is on. It is no longer something that belongs only to other people.

Now it belongs to her, as a resident of the Abitibiwiinni territory. She knows that it is part of her history too, not something that is completely separate.

I am grateful to the people of Pikogan and Abitibiwiinni for sharing this with us all these years.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Pursuant to order made earlier today, Bill C-92, an act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, is deemed read a third time and passed.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Windsor West is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

HEALTH

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to rise in the House and revisit an issue that I brought forward during question period some months ago with regard to a national pharmacare plan.

During the course of that question, I brought up the case of Mr. Lorenzen in my riding, who has paid over \$25,000 for prescription medication following a surgery he went through. I am sure if we canvass the House, we would find that most members could relate exactly the same kind of story. Constituents all across this great land are having to pay out of pocket for prescription medications that in some cases are very much life-saving and alter their quality of life.

I think that when we are talking about national pharmacare, it is very helpful for us to go back in time a little. I want to take a moment to go back to the year 1997. In 1997, the election platform document from the Liberal Party of Canada included the following:

Our current system provides full coverage for institutional care, including all drugs administered during a hospital stay. Once patients go home, however, they are not guaranteed public coverage for medically necessary drugs.

This situation is plainly inconsistent with the values upon which Canadian medicare is based. It is both unfair and illogical to guarantee access to medical diagnosis but not to the associated treatment. Neither does it make economic sense. Those who cannot afford to fill their prescriptions tend only to get sicker and require more costly treatment later from the public system. The Liberal government is committed to maintaining a universal health care system, in which Canadians are assured equal access to appropriate, quality care as needed.

The Liberal Party held majority governments in 1993, 1997 and 2000. In 2004 it was reduced to a minority status, and then, of course, after the Conservatives' 10 years, it was returned with a majority in the current term.

What that underlines is that the Liberals have had a majority government for 17 of the last 26 years, and it is only just now that we are getting to the study phase of a panel of experts to revisit this issue, when we know there are Canadians who are suffering in their quality of life across this country.

I believe I was given a flippant answer back in the day when I asked this question: The Liberals said that they do not write their plans on the back of a napkin.

However, I am just simply asking the Liberals to honour their commitment to address a problem that has existed in this country since we adopted universal medicare. This was always the unfinished business. It does not make sense that once someone is released from hospital, they are left on their own. They might be lucky to have their own care plan through their employer, but it does not make sense to let them loose like that without any kind of follow-up.

My question again to the parliamentary secretary who is handling this question tonight is this: When are they going to commit to finally implementing a fully public, national, universal and comprehensive pharmacare plan that covers every single Canadian?

• (2110)

[Translation]

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his commitment to defending and supporting his constituents and for raising this question in the House this evening.

[English]

I am pleased to be here today to participate in this important discussion on implementing national pharmacare.

Our government is committed to strengthening health care systems across the country and supporting the health of Canadians. We know Canadians are proud of their publicly funded health care system, which is based on need and not the ability to pay. We also recognize that almost a million Canadians give up food or heat to afford the prescription drugs they need. In other cases, they do not take prescribed drugs due to high prices.

[Translation]

That is why our government is taking steps to make prescription drugs more affordable and accessible, but we know that we can still do more.

In budget 2018 we announced the creation of the advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare. This council, chaired by Dr. Eric Hoskins, will work closely with experts and provincial, territorial and indigenous leaders. In addition to assessing the options and exploring national and international models, the council will deliver, in spring 2019, independent advice to government on how to best implement affordable national pharmacare for Canadians and their families, employers and governments.

Over the course of the summer and into the fall, the council has been engaged with a broad range of stakeholders and Canadians. Through its consultations, the advisory council received over 150 written submissions and over 15,000 responses to its online

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

questionnaire. The council also heard from many Canadians through its online discussion forums, public community dialogue sessions and regional stakeholder round tables.

• (2115)

[English]

On March 6, 2019, the council delivered an interim report which provided an overview of what it had learned in the past eight months. The report also identified three initial recommendations for the implementation of national pharmacare. First is creating a national drug agency that would oversee national pharmacare. The proposed agency could bring together key functions of health technology assessments of prescription drugs to evaluate their effectiveness and value for money and negotiations. Second is developing a national formulary that would harmonize drug coverage across Canada. This evidence-based list of prescribed drugs would be accessible to all Canadians. Finally, the council recommended that the government invest in a robust and coordinated information technology system that would be the technological foundation for national pharmacare.

Guided by the council's initial recommendations outlined above, our government announced key investments as part of budget 2019 toward the implementation of national pharmacare, including the creation of a new Canadian drug agency, the development of a national formulary for prescription drugs and a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases.

Our government awaits the council's final report. In the meantime, we will continue moving forward with other important initiatives to make medication more affordable for all Canadians.

Our government is modernizing the way that the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board works, through amendments to the patented medicines regulations. These changes will better protect Canadian consumers, governments and private insurers from excessive drug prices.

Our government remains committed to modernizing the way that patented drug prices are regulated. The feedback from—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, this issue is quite personal for me. For seven years, I spent time as a constituency assistant. I was across the table from many members of my community who were making hard choices between paying the cost of prescription drugs and putting quality food on the table or paying rent. This is very personal to me.

The Liberals have had so much time to get something in. Again, it has to be said in this House that the first promise was made back in 1997 when the Liberals also had the command of a majority government.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

There is one party in this House that has made a commitment to a universal, public, comprehensive national pharmacare system, and that is the NDP. I have not yet heard the Liberals make that promise. I am sure that this is going to be an election issue, as I know it is for many members of my community. Vancouver Island attracts a lot of retirees. It is a big issue there and in many parts of Canada.

I would like to hear from the parliamentary secretary as to whether he is prepared, here, now, to make that promise for a comprehensive universal pharmacare plan.

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to provide a full answer to my colleague. Unfortunately, I did not realize that I only had four minutes.

Let me tell my colleague about a few elements of our strategy. I think it is important. Canada's spending on prescription drugs is unsustainable. As I mentioned, Canadians pay among the highest prices for prescription drugs in the world. Many Canadians cannot afford the drugs they need and face real barriers to accessing them.

National pharmacare can help address this, and the Government of Canada is firmly committed to working with its partners to make improvements. As outlined here today, and as I said a few minutes ago, our government is taking clear action.

*[Translation]*

In conclusion, I simply want to say that a national pharmacare program cannot be implemented overnight. We will have to work closely with experts from all of the relevant areas, as well as with the provinces, territories and indigenous people.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

*[English]*

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to order adopted on Tuesday, May 28 and pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 9:19 p.m.)

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