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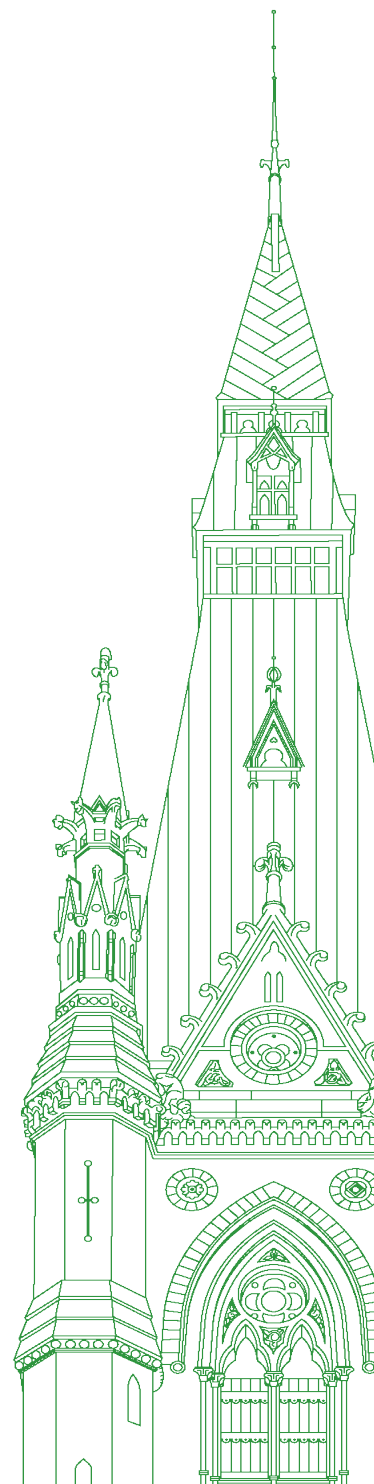
House of Commons Debates

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Monday, December 9, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 9, 2019

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)

[Translation]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to table a notice of a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act and associated regulations.

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

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from December 6 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, at the end of debate today on the sub-amendment to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, the question be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, December 10, 2019, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House for the first time.

Before I get into what will be a list of people I want to thank, I would like to reflect for a moment on when my wife and I flew here for the first time after the election for one of the orientation days. Although I had been to this chamber and to the chamber in Centre Block many times, it was an incredible experience to walk onto the floor of this House, the very epicentre of Canadian democracy, to see that so clearly demonstrated through the traditions represented, the desks, the very carpet, and all that these mean. It truly is a humbling experience, the burden that all 338 of us have as we sit here representing people from across this country.

Danielle and I took a few moments and reflected on the significance of what that means in our nation's more than 150-year history. The phrase that kept coming to mind, which I repeated often throughout the election, was the short statement in section 91 of the Constitution Act, 1867, regarding the House of Commons and making laws "for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Canada".

Although it talks primarily about delegated authority, over these last seven to eight months I spent a lot of time campaigning and talking with Canadians, the people of Battle River—Crowfoot. I thought time and time again the prime reason we are here is to ensure that we have peace, order and good governance. Each and every one of us has that responsibility in representing our many constituents in the diverse regions that make up this country and that we all work toward that in the midst of what often will be differences, sometimes passionate differences, on policy items. As we work in a unique minority Parliament there has to be a level of working together to some degree, while we all strive for peace, order and good government.

I would be remiss if I did not list a few of the people I wish to thank. I will get to the people of Battle River—Crowfoot in a minute, but I first I need to thank my family.

My wife Danielle is an amazing life partner. I thank her for the support she has given over these last eight months in the adventure of a nomination campaign and now during the early months as a member of Parliament. I thank Danielle so much. I am also very proud of my two boys, Matthew and Emerson, who are excited that dad gets to now work in a castle. They are a little young to understand the dynamics of it, but they like the fact that I work in a castle.

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I thank my dad, siblings, aunts and uncles. When one comes from a farming family, one has a real understanding of the significance of what family is in a situation like this, and I thank my family.

I want to especially mention my late grandfathers, Jim Hutchings and Felix Kurek, who, throughout their lives, were such an encouragement to me. They were both very different people, but they demonstrated so well what it is to be Canadian and all that it represents. My grandfather Felix had a career in the energy industry. My grandfather Jim was a career farmer and demonstrated well what it is to be Canadian.

I thank my campaign team. By the end of the campaign, we had more than 200 people who participated in the nomination and election campaigns. It was incredible to have all of these people involved in the democratic process, and I thank my campaign team.

● (1110)

I would also like to thank my office staff, some of whom I have worked with before and some of whom are new, for their hard work, support and effort, especially over these last weeks as I have been learning the ropes as a member of Parliament.

I want to also thank my predecessor Kevin Sorenson. Kevin demonstrated well what it is to be a strong representative with a principled voice for east central Alberta. He is a principled, good guy. I appreciate Kevin's friendship and his mentorship. I am glad that he is still quick to offer me advice, even though I am now the one sitting in the chamber and he is farming and taking some well-deserved rest.

I want to talk about the people of Battle River—Crowfoot, and my response to the throne speech and the amendment that our Conservative caucus has brought forward. They go hand in hand.

I am a fifth-generation farmer from the constituency of Battle River—Crowfoot. Over the last seven or eight months I have spoken to over 10,000 people who are faced with the reality of the country in which we live. I need to first thank them for the honour of representing them with a strong mandate in this House. I will be their voice in Parliament, making sure that the concerns, the issues and all that makes up Battle River—Crowfoot, that 52,000 square kilometres of east central Alberta, get represented in our capital. I take that seriously. I thank them again for this honour.

As I have travelled over these last eight months, and as I have continued connecting with the people in Battle River—Crowfoot since the election, I have heard a consistent message. They are frustrated and they are not content with our country's status. As a proud Canadian, that is difficult to hear.

We have heard a number of speeches from some of my colleagues that have touched on this, but the level of alienation that we are hearing about is real. I would urge members opposite to take seriously the fact that there are lifelong proud Canadians who feel their country is not serving them. That is a problem and something that needs to be acknowledged. Unfortunately, it was not acknowledged in the throne speech.

I have spoken with energy workers, people who have made a career in the oil and gas sector, who have given up hope. These peo-

ple are proud of the work they do, including the world-class environmental standards that they work hard to preserve each and every day. They were not recognized. They need champions, yet unfortunately, the throne speech does not even acknowledge them.

I have spoken with the agricultural industry. As a fifth-generation farmer, I am proud of that legacy. Farmers are stewards of the land in Alberta's special areas, yet producers have faced devastating consequences. Let me outline what that might look like for a producer, a farmer. Farmers are facing a drop in the price of canola from \$13 a bushel to \$9 a bushel. That has a devastating impact on a farmer's bottom line in an industry that already has very slim margins. We did not see those issues addressed in the throne speech. However, the government seems to brag about its relationship on the international stage when it is literally being laughed at on late night television.

I talked to other business owners and people within my constituency. They are all so close to giving up hope. That is devastating for a proud Canadian, whether it be workers in manufacturing, or whether it be those teachers, nurses, doctors in our small communities. If they do not have strong communities, those institutions cannot thrive.

My speaking time is nearly done and I look forward to answering questions. I would simply conclude by saying once again that I am so honoured to be the member of Parliament for Battle River—Crowfoot. I thank God for this country. It is such an honour to be able to participate in this democratic process and all that it means for the future of Battle River—Crowfoot and this nation.

● (1115)

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot and welcome him to the House.

I heard him speak about energy workers, and certainly in my riding of Burnaby North—Seymour, I have talked about the plight of energy workers in Alberta. In fact, since my riding is at the end of the Trans Mountain pipeline that is starting construction, we can hear the pile-driving happening from my house. It is happening right now.

We have had over 500 days of protest in my riding over the last four years that I have been a member of Parliament. Now that TMX is under construction, will the member support meeting our climate change targets and support the other underlying issues that my constituents are concerned about? Will he support the oceans protection plan and support making sure we have a world-class oil spill response?

Most importantly, will the member support the residents of Burnaby Mountain, which is getting an expanded tank farm 600 metres from an elementary school, next to tens of thousands of students at SFU and a growing community at university?

As well, will the member support the Burnaby firefighters to make sure that the investments are made so that we have world-class facilities to keep those people safe?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to being able to answer the question, but I would premise it by saying this: I have constituents who are developing world-class spill response technology, yet they can't even get a meeting with the minister from the other side.

The Liberals talk about wanting to care about the environment when we have energy industries and energy investment fleeing this country each and every day. Canada is a world leader in sustainable, environmentally friendly energy production. I see it every day. The people within my constituency are proud that they are on the cutting edge of that, yet the government has all but abandoned them.

I hope that pipeline gets built. Its terminus, I understand, is in the constituency of the member who asked the question. However, it needs to be understood that this pipeline is among the others that the Liberals have either abandoned or cancelled, or whatever the case may be. We even saw this morning an announcement that more energy investment, at first slated for Canada, is being used in the Gulf of Mexico. That is an abandonment of Canadian energy.

We need to make sure that we support the world-class industry that we have here in this country, including the environmental industry. I hope that pipeline gets built, but quite frankly, with the record of the members opposite, until oil starts flowing through it, I do not believe it for a second.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is talking about the problems farmers are having, such as poor harvests and falling prices. Our regions are experiencing these problems mainly because of the rather early snow this year. The first snowfall was about three weeks earlier than usual, which may be attributable to climate change.

Can my colleague recognize that an increase in the production of oil leads to an increase in greenhouse gases, which contributes to climate change? Can he admit that his party's demands, which involve giving priority to both oil transportation and production and to farmers, may be contradictory?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to being able to answer the question. In the member's constituency there are producers who are facing unpredictable weather patterns and whatnot that are affecting their yields, and the case is the same in many places across the country. We need to make sure that there are strong supports for our agricultural sectors.

Let me take a moment to describe how producers in this country are on the cutting edge of making sure that we have the most sustainable crop production in the world. That includes things like zero-till technology and genetics research that will ensure that our crops can grow in a variety of climates.

We are a country filled with innovators. Instead of being like, I think, all the other parties in this House, which support a carbon tax

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that punishes Canadians, let us support innovations that empower Canadians to find solutions that not only benefit us but truly change the world.

I would encourage the member opposite to be a part of literally helping to change the world and finding solutions that make a difference here in our country and around the world that will have a real environmental impact.

● (1120)

The Speaker: Before we go to the next presentation, I just want to compliment the hon. members for starting off well. I know that last week we had some questions that went a little long and I know that there is a lot to be said, but those who asked questions and those who answered stayed within about a minute and a half. It allows more people to get their questions and answers in, so I just want to start off with complimenting you for a good start.

Now we will resume debate. The hon. member for Don Valley North.

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Oakville North—Burlington.

It is my pleasure to rise today to deliver my maiden speech in this hon. House as the member of Parliament for Don Valley North and to speak in support of the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to begin by thanking the people of Don Valley North for placing their trust in me to be their voice in Ottawa. I am incredibly humbled by this great responsibility, and I will strive every day to ensure that the perspectives, concerns and diverse opinions and beliefs of my community are thoughtfully and comprehensively represented in this House.

Throughout this fall's campaign, just like all of my hon. colleagues, I had the chance to speak to residents through the breadth and width of my riding about issues they cared most about, from traffic congestion and community safety to housing affordability and providing more support for our seniors.

The residents of Don Valley North and Canadians from coast to coast to coast have made it very clear. They asked all of us in this House to work together to address the issues that matter most to them and their families, and they expect us to deliver results not soon, not down the road, but now. That is why I am proud of the ambitious agenda this government has presented to the House in the Speech from the Throne.

This government has set forward a plan to address the most pressing issues faced by us as a society today. These include fighting climate change, strengthening the middle class, walking the road of reconciliation, keeping Canadians safe and healthy and positioning our country for success on the international stage. Canadians have chosen to keep our country moving forward, and that is exactly what this government's plan will do.

The Address

While I stand in this House speaking of the mandate handed to us by the Canadian people, my mind turns immediately to an encounter I had on the campaign trail in Don Valley North. While knocking on doors on Van Horne Avenue, I met a young mother completing her final year of post-secondary studies. Although beaming with pride as she told me about her daughter and how much she has accomplished over the years in the face of adversity and challenges, I could see her eyes slowly begin to fill with tears. She told me about her anxieties with regard to the possibility of not being able to complete her studies because of recent cuts to the new OSAP funding by the current provincial government. She spoke about the skyrocketing costs of living and child care and her fears about the type of planet her children will inherit.

It is encounters like this that have brought me to public life, and indeed to this House.

My hon. colleagues will know that the fears and anxieties expressed by this young mother are not unique to my riding. Indeed, they are not unique to the people of Toronto, nor to Ontario, for that matter. They are concerns shared by many Canadians in every riding across this country.

Therefore, as we debate this ambitious plan set forward by the government, which directly addresses the concerns, hopes and aspirations of Canadians from across our country, I ask this hon. House to think about the people who sent us here.

As parliamentarians, we are presented with unique opportunities. We have been sent to Ottawa by our communities with the expectation that we will not only govern, but, more importantly, we will lead, and lead for them.

Future generations of Canadians will judge us not on the words delivered in this House today or tomorrow, but on how we addressed the defining challenges facing our generation.

As members of this hon. House, we have a clear mandate from the people, and that mandate demands action now.

On climate change, Canadians have demanded that we take immediate action to tackle the crisis head-on. That is why our government is committed to protecting the environment by setting a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, putting a price on pollution everywhere, protecting and conserving nature and reducing plastic pollution.

• (1125)

To address affordability and strengthen our middle class, we are taking action to invest in affordable housing and make it easier for more people to achieve the goal of home ownership.

We know that raising a family is expensive and saving for retirement is a challenge, and that is why we will make before-school and after-school programs and child care more affordable and accessible while also strengthening pensions for our seniors.

To keep Canadians safe and healthy, our government is taking direct action to crack down on gun crime, banning military-style assault weapons and helping municipalities to ban handguns, should they choose to, while also ensuring that all Canadians have access to high-quality, affordable health care by working with the

provinces, territories, professionals and academia to ensure all Canadians have access to a good primary care doctor.

We know that as a government and as parliamentarians, we are not alone in taking leadership to provide a better future for Canadians. Across the country, countless community organizations are working tirelessly in helping Canadians who need and deserve our support.

In my riding of Don Valley North, organizations like the Armenian Community Centre, the Iranian Women's Organization of Ontario, the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, Working Women Community Centre, Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership and Flemingdon Health are offering crucial services to new Canadians.

ACCES Employment, The Centre for Education and Training, and Springboard Employment Services are providing help to Canadians in search of employment and new skills.

Willowdale Community Legal Services, Adventure Place, Community Information Fairview, North York Harvest Food Bank and religious and cultural organizations are providing professional and social services to our country.

I am incredibly proud of the work those organizations and so many more in Don Valley North are doing. I am honoured to work alongside them as their member of Parliament to ensure all members of our community have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Our constituents are looking to us to lead. They are looking to us to take decisive action to create a better Canada where everyone, regardless of race, religion, sex, age or country of origin, can and will succeed. I am proud to say that the ambitious plan put forward by this government does just that.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague across the aisle for his first speech.

He called for decisive action, and it is important that we have decisive action, but I was disheartened by the throne speech because it was a lot of words salad without a lot of action.

If we want to talk about climate change, it is clear that the current government's plan will not even meet its existing Paris targets, let alone the 2050 goals. We also know that the carbon tax is not an effective way of getting there. Europe has had one for 19 years and has only reduced its footprint by 8%.

Knowing that the government declared a climate emergency in June and that by now it ought to have some idea of what specific actions it will take, I would like to hear what those are.

• (1130)

Mr. Han Dong: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that in our platform and again in the throne speech, we heard that this government is committed to making a better future for our next generation, planting more trees and reducing emissions. We are the only party that put forward a very decisive action plan during the campaign to meet the 2050 goal.

We are on the right track, and I look across the floor for support from opposition parties. Together we can bring down emissions in this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since this is the first time I rise in the House of Commons, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my constituents in Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for placing their trust in me. I hope that I will be able to live up to that trust in the coming years, the next one and a half or two and a half years, or the time that this parliament lasts.

Oil is the elephant in the room when it comes to everything that has happened and the throne speech. The word “oil” is never mentioned in the throne speech.

Over the past four years, the Liberal government invested \$19 billion in various forms of assistance to the fossil fuel industry. Canada represents 0.5% of the world's population and produces 2% of the world's greenhouse gases.

On September 27, 2019, 500,000 people took to the streets of Montreal to call on the government to take clear, decisive action on climate change. I was there.

What practical measures does the Liberal government intend to take to deal with this issue in the coming years?

[English]

Mr. Han Dong: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that bringing down emissions and having a good green energy sector is a good economic case. Our track record has demonstrated that we can make this work.

Again, I look to those across the floor and to all parliamentarians. We need to stick together and implement actions right away to bring down emissions and improve our environment.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing we find very vague in the throne speech is around the strengthening of pensions and support for seniors. The member mentioned this twice in his speech, which I find very encouraging. However, last week, the Minister of Seniors stated in the House that increases in OAS payments would be for people aged 75 and over. What is the reasoning for eliminating increases for people aged between 65 and 74 who need them just as much as other Canadians?

Mr. Han Dong: Mr. Speaker, specifically, we have set out a plan to increase old age security for most Canadians in this country. Our government has also done quite a bit of work in the last four years to increase the GIS. Again, I look for support from all members when it comes to providing more help for seniors and making their living more affordable. We are on the right track to doing that.

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Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since this is my first opportunity to speak in this 43rd Parliament, I would like to start by congratulating you on your election as Speaker.

I would also like to thank the residents of Oakville North—Burlington for the confidence they have placed in me to represent them once again in this place. I would like to thank my son Fraser and his wife Taylor for their love and support, and my family, Jill, Rob and their son Bayley, as well as my incredible staff and campaign team, without whom I would not be here. I am incredibly proud of the work done over the last four years, and I am excited to continue that work in this new Parliament.

During the campaign, I had many conversations with constituents about their expectations for this new Parliament. They, along with all Canadians, expect us to work together as parliamentarians to make sure that we build an economy that leaves no one behind, take decisive action on climate change, make life more affordable, continue down the road to reconciliation and ensure that the health and safety of Canadians remains our number one priority through action on gun control and universal national pharmacare. The throne speech affirmed our commitment to delivering on those priorities.

The residents of Oakville North—Burlington are passionate about green space, the environment and fighting climate change. During the campaign, I met with the group Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet and others who want to see us take urgent action to save the planet. Two weeks ago, I attended a climate strike in Burlington organized by Caleb Smolenaars, a student in my riding.

Climate change is the defining challenge of our time, which is why we are taking bold, decisive action. In my riding, we have made investments in Oakville Transit, Burlington Transit and GO Transit so that service can be improved and people can get home faster. We have also invested in the Crosstown Trail and other walking and cycling infrastructure. We are offering incentives to get more people to use zero-emission vehicles. I have long advocated for better cycling infrastructure. Cycling is the ultimate zero-emission vehicle, and I will continue to work with the government and stakeholders to further advance cycling.

While we have taken action by introducing a price on pollution, there is much more work to be done. We are setting a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, protecting and conserving nature and reducing plastic pollution. Not long ago I challenged local restaurants to stop using plastic straws, and today I am pleased that most restaurants have stopped serving plastic straws automatically. Halton has some of the safest drinking water in Canada, so there is no need for plastic water bottles, yet we still have much work to do to reduce our plastic use in our everyday lives.

The Address

In our last mandate, we took steps to foster a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples and deliver a better life for families and communities, but there remains much work to be done. We will take action to co-develop and introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We will continue our work on eliminating long-term drinking water advisories on reserve by 2021 and will co-develop legislation to ensure that indigenous peoples have access to high-quality and culturally relevant health care.

In 2012, I visited the hospital in Sioux Lookout, a partnership between federal, provincial, municipal and first nation governments. This hospital provides culturally appropriate treatment and care, hospice and long-term stay care and a wraparound continuum of care that ensures better health outcomes.

We must also address the recommendations of the report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and continue to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations. I am happy to see that in my community we are working with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, indigenous knowledge keepers like Stephen Paquette and Sherry Saevil, and the Sheridan College Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support and Elijah Williams to advance reconciliation. Today, the Mississaugas of the Credit flag flies permanently at Oakville Town Hall. The Oakville Community Foundation and Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre are working with indigenous leaders to move us forward on the path to reconciliation.

As a government, the health and safety of Canadians is our number one priority. Thoughts and prayers are not enough when it comes to gun violence. In my role on the public safety committee during the last Parliament, I worked with my colleagues as well as stakeholders like PolySeSouvient, the Coalition for Gun Control, Dr. Alan Drummond and emergency room physicians, and many others to strengthen our firearms legislation. I am proud of my work on Bill C-71 last year to introduce amendments to protect those subjected to intimate partner violence.

• (1135)

During the election campaign, I was proud to run on our record of responsible firearms legislation and investments in law enforcement, border services, and programs that prevent young people from getting involved in guns and gangs. The action proposed in the throne speech to ban military-style assault weapons, like the one used at Polytechnique 30 years ago, is long overdue.

We are the only country that has universal health care that does not have pharmacare as part of it. As former parliamentary secretary to the minister of health, I was able to work with the minister to make significant changes that will see the cost of drugs reduced for Canadians. No one should have to decide between putting food on the table and taking medication.

We know that women are disproportionately impacted by the high cost of drugs because of the precarious nature of their work. I have heard stories of women who stopped taking beta blockers after a heart attack because they could not afford them and women who stay with an abusive partner simply for the drug plan that covers the expensive medications they need. This is unacceptable. That is why

our move to a universal national pharmacare program is welcome news for Canadians.

Too many Canadians have been touched by cancer. Certainly one of the highlights of my first term was the \$150-million investment the Canadian government will be making in the Terry Fox Research Institute to create the marathon of hope cancer centres with its partners. Through my volunteer work with the Terry Fox Foundation, I have had the pleasure of getting to know Dr. David Malkin and his work at SickKids with Terry Fox PROFYLE.

Cancer remains the number one disease killer of children. During this term, I will honour children like Carson, Ayverie and Teagan, who were taken far too young by this horrible disease, and support the work of Helena's Hope to ensure that our platform commitment to fund childhood cancer research is honoured.

Oakville North—Burlington is an affluent community, but that does not mean there are not those who struggle to make ends meet or who live in poverty. We must make sure we have an economy that works for all Canadians, including the most marginalized.

Affordability is an issue in my community. I have had the pleasure of working with Habitat for Humanity Halton-Mississauga, which has said that our national housing strategy has been transformative for its work. Recently, Affordable Housing Halton held an event where Andrew Balahura from the Halton region talked about the work it is doing, with the help of our federal government, to support those who need a safe, affordable place to live. We must also ensure that young people can buy their first home. That is why the proposed changes to the first-time home buyer program will make a difference in my riding.

Ford Motor Company of Canada's assembly plant and head office in Oakville are of vital importance to Oakville and the surrounding area. It will be critical to ensure its success, not just today but in the future. Small and medium-sized businesses are the drivers of our Canadian economy and we will continue to provide an environment for them to grow and create well-paying middle-class jobs.

Gender equality and ending gender-based violence remain a top priority for me personally and for our government. I have had the privilege of working with some incredible local and national organizations, like Halton Women's Place, SAVIS, CAGIS, Actua and many more. I look forward to continuing our work. I am pleased to be launching the young women in leadership program shortly, which my team and I developed three years ago to give young women career mentors in Halton. The number-one obstacle to the full participation of women in the workplace is the lack of affordable quality child care. Ensuring that women have access to child care continues to be a priority for our government.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Nairobi Summit, reaffirming Canada's commitment to the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development. I heard time and again that other countries look to Canada's leadership when it comes to empowering women, ending gender-based violence and poverty, realizing gender equality and taking urgent and sustained action to realize sexual and reproductive health and rights for all women at home and abroad.

Canadians are expecting us to listen and collaborate on the many issues where there is common ground between us. It is a rare privilege to take a seat in this place, and one that I do not take for granted. I look forward to getting to work and I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

• (1140)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to be back in the House of Commons regrouped and ready to go for another session.

The hon. member opposite just talked about the throne speech. Part of the throne speech was about “gun control”. The hon. member mentioned that it is time for stricter legislation and to move forward with putting in place greater gun control mechanisms. She said this was with the end goal of protecting Canadians and creating safe communities. I would agree with this end, but I fail to see legislative points that actually provide for it.

We know that firearms are being smuggled across the U.S. border illegally. We know that straw exchanges are being made, when firearms purchased by one individual are then illegally transferred to another. We know that gang violence and organized crime are out of control in places like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. I see nothing in the throne speech with regard to these elements, with regard to looking after our border and the safety and security of Canadians, with regard to making sure that straw purchases are not being made and with regard to reinforcing front-line policing and ensuring that gangs are taken off the streets. I see nothing with regard to harsher penalties, and I see nothing with regard to accountability.

Could the hon. member opposite comment on these observations?

• (1145)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for coming back to this place.

The Address

During the last four years we invested \$500 million into Canadian border services, money that had been cut by the previous government, so we can ensure there is strict enforcement at the border.

We are also investing in law enforcement and in programs to prevent young people from joining gangs in the first place. It is money that is well received by municipalities like Toronto, which had asked for additional support.

The vast majority of Canadians supports our efforts to improve firearms legislation and ban handguns in municipalities, as well as ban military-style assault rifles.

I find it quite troubling when members opposite hold fundraisers that combine alcohol and guns. They do not look at the fact that women are being killed by their partners with firearms. In my riding of Oakville—North Burlington, there was a woman killed by her partner with a firearm not too long ago. We know that women are more at risk if there is a firearm in the home. We know that 80% of women in Atlantic Canada have said they would be less likely to come forward to report abuse if there were a firearm in the home.

I look forward to continuing our work on this important issue for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on being chosen for the prestigious and thankless position you now occupy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for choosing me to represent them.

I will keep this very brief. People toss the expression “climate emergency” around gratuitously, but to me, the climate emergency is very important and a very big deal. People have used the expression and will use it over and over in the House. I truly and sincerely hope that decisions about the environment are examined through the “climate emergency” lens to ensure the government walks the talk.

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the member on the climate change emergency, because it is an emergency. In my riding, both the communities of Oakville and Burlington have declared a climate emergency. I think young people are pushing governments at all levels to take action on this, because we do not have a lot of time left. Our government will be planting two billion trees, because we know that planting trees is an important component of reducing the emissions in the air. It is so critical. I look at my son and think about what kind of world I want all of us to leave for him. Certainly, action on climate change is important.

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I look forward to working with the hon. member and members of his party in the House to make sure we are taking the action we need on climate change.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to share my time with the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Though I rose briefly during Routine Proceedings last Friday, this is my first speech in the 43rd Parliament and I would like to take this occasion to give some additional words of thanks. As a temporary custodian of this seat in Parliament, I am deeply honoured to have the enormous responsibility of representing some 140,000 residents as part of a centuries-old tradition of protecting citizens by checking the otherwise unlimited power of the Crown. Parliaments exist in order to ensure that the Crown and its agent, the government, cannot impose itself on citizens without their consent. That consent is granted through votes in this incredible institution.

Once again, I thank the voters of Calgary Rocky Ridge for electing me to be their servant in the House. I also wish to thank the 270-odd volunteers who assisted my election campaign. I thank them for their support, for their commitment to their community and for their love of their country. I could not have done it without them. I would like to thank the other candidates who contested the election in Calgary Rocky Ridge for giving the voters choice, without which there is no democracy.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. My three daughters, it seems I began the last Parliament with three young girls who are now three young women. My loving wife, Kimberley, I thank for her love, her understanding, her patience, her unwavering support and for always keeping it real in the Kelly house. To my parents, Marnie and Duane Kelly, I thank them for their constant love and encouragement.

Today we are debating last Thursday's Speech from the Throne. My response to the Speech from the Throne is coloured by the recent experience of having knocked on a little under 30,000 doors with my re-election team. What I heard on the doorsteps is what informs my remarks and my impressions of the Speech from the Throne.

To be blunt, the government has virtually no support in my riding. That is simply a fact and it is supported by the election results. I knocked on doors in the communities of Calgary Rocky Ridge in every provincial and federal election over the last 30 years as an activist and in 2015 and 2019 as a candidate, and I have never experienced anything quite like it.

It was never easier. People have never been more forthright in coming forward and identifying themselves as Conservative supporters. However, at the same time, I have never had more difficult conversations on doorsteps than I did in this election with people who suggested that they intended to support me, my party and my leader.

For most candidates in most elections, conversations with our own supporters are the easy ones, but not in 2019 in Calgary Rocky Ridge. Some of the conversations I had with supporters were downright heartbreaking. I spoke with people who had not worked in years. I heard from people who told me that they were on the verge

of losing their homes. I talked with people whose spouses were working in Texas and coming home for a couple of weekends a month or were working in the Middle East or other parts of the world and only coming home a few times over the course of a year.

I talked with a man who has lived in his neighbourhood for 20 years and he said that since 2015, seven previously stable families on his block had come apart in divorce. Economic stress and anxiety from unemployment and failing businesses have taken their toll on families, tearing apart the very fabric of our communities.

I spoke with people who openly and candidly expressed their despair, anger and incredulity over what they see as a failure of their country to respect their province. For decades, Alberta has welcomed Canadians from across Canada and indeed people from around the world to be a part of Alberta's economic opportunities. It has transferred much of that wealth back to other provinces and continues to do so despite a recession that has been going on for five years.

My constituents are demanding action. They cannot wait. They made it abundantly clear to me that regardless of which party was to form a government after the election, they would expect me to speak clearly and without ambiguity about just how devastating these past four years have been.

They expect me to be candid about just how upset they are with their federal government. They told me that they wanted the no-more-pipelines bill reversed. They told me they were stunned that a tanker ban on Alberta exports was brought in while tankers continued to bring in oil to eastern refineries from Saudi Arabia.

● (1150)

They told me that they could not understand why a government was running such large deficits at a time of economic expansion. They told me that they were appalled by the constant parade of ministers to the Ethics Commissioner, by a Prime Minister prepared to bully his own cabinet and break the law just to get his own way, and by the way the Prime Minister's personal conduct never matches his moral preening.

They told me, at door after door, that the Prime Minister is a constant source of embarrassment on the world stage, and that they do not believe that he is up to the diplomatic challenges of our times, because they believe that he is fundamentally an unserious person.

With the campaign behind us, with the country's divisions laid bare in a minority Parliament, last week the Prime Minister had an opportunity to acknowledge the failings of the last Parliament, which cost him seats and votes in every region of the country.

He had an opportunity to chart a new course to address the concerns of Canadians who rejected his government's track record. Instead, he delivered a speech full of the same flowery language and grand aspirations that we heard throughout the last Parliament with only a few inadequate words for my constituents in a partial sentence, kind of as an afterthought, where he claimed that the government would "also work just as hard to get Canadian resources to new markets and offer unwavering support to the hard-working men and women in Canada's natural resources sectors, many of whom have faced tough times recently."

Really? "Unwavering support" and "have faced tough times recently", is that it? Since 2015, hundreds of thousands of energy workers have lost their jobs. Over 100,000 of them are out of work in Alberta right now. There is \$100 billion in energy investment that has left Canada since the Liberal government took office.

Encana, which was once Canada's largest company, and TransCanada PipeLines are changing their names to remove "Canada" from their business names and relocating to the United States because that is where the work is. However, all the Prime Minister had to say in his Speech from the Throne was "unwavering support" and "tough times recently"?

The Prime Minister has been unwavering in his stated desire to phase out the natural resources sector, and he is succeeding. One incredibly insulting sentence that contained a flagrant untruth was all the Prime Minister had to say about this in his entire speech.

If the Prime Minister meant what he said about getting Canadian resources to market, it would require him to undo much of the work of the last Parliament. It would require him to repeal Bill C-69 or implement every single one of the Senate amendments that were rejected last spring.

It would require him to repeal Bill C-48. It would require him to champion Canada as a reliable source of ethically extracted resources and to disown his own prior anti-Canadian-energy rhetoric. It would require him to actually take concrete steps to ensure Trans Mountain could be completed. It would require him to apologize for chasing its private sector proponent out of Canada and for having to send \$4.5 billion to Texas so they could compete with us by building pipelines elsewhere.

The Liberals think they deserve some kind of credit for buying a pipeline that should never have been for sale in the first place. I can assure them that not one single person I met in my riding, where pipelines are a huge issue, thought that buying it was anything other than a last-ditch solution to a problem 100% of the Liberals' own making.

To sum up, the throne speech contains nothing for my constituents. I received a strong mandate from the people of Calgary Rocky Ridge, and I expect them to hold me to a high standard. My constituents expect nothing less.

• (1155)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would love to sit with the member and contrast the response I got from the constituents I represent versus the response from the constituents he represents.

The Address

However, I do know that Canadians want to see opposition parties and the government working together more than they did in the previous four years. That means looking for policies that will further advance Canadians as a whole. For example, today we talked about the TMX, which is actually moving forward. Would the member not agree that is a positive thing? It is something, I must remind the member opposite, that the Conservatives were not able to do.

Even though the member has been very critical, and often the Conservatives like to make personal attacks on the Prime Minister, let me assure Canadians and those following the debate that this government will continue to focus on strengthening Canada's middle class and has a strong willingness to work with all members of this chamber to make a positive difference for all Canadians in all regions.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Winnipeg North on his re-election.

He talked about his constituents, and I have no doubt he has support in his riding. I note that he lost some colleagues, whereas we gained some. I would be surprised if there was widespread support for his government at the doors in both cities.

On the member's point about co-operation in this Parliament, if the government proposes measures that will be helpful to my constituents and to Canadians more broadly, I will be more than happy to offer my co-operation and support. We are here to support Canadians and to represent our ridings. I will co-operate fully with any measures the government proposes that will help my constituents. I saw none in the Speech from the Throne.

I invite the member to knock on doors in my riding of Calgary Rocky Ridge and see what kind of response he gets to that Speech from the Throne.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the people of Laurentides—Labelle and thank them for placing their trust in me.

We have been hearing about prosperity for the last little while, but let us not forget those who are vulnerable. Earlier, members talked about community organizations and the labour shortage. In Laurentides—Labelle, one in six people lives below the low-income threshold. That is alarming. These people have a hard time finding work. Members have also talked about social housing. These people even have a hard time finding a place to live.

How are we going to help all the people who are suffering and who are unable to contribute to the prosperity we all seek? What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

*The Address**[English]*

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member to the chamber.

I have some simple and concrete steps that would benefit the well-being of all Canadians, and that is for the government to become a champion of our resource sector. It supplies jobs to Canadians all across the country. Thousands of workers in Quebec used to work in Alberta. They had good, high-paying jobs that contributed to the prosperity of the province of Quebec, not only from the income they earned in Alberta but also through the enormous transfers that have taken place over the years.

The economic opportunities that have been lost under the Liberal government represent billions of dollars that could have been used for all manner of social programs. Investment has left Canada and gone to the United States. We are literally exporting hospitals, schools and social services to the United States. The lost tax revenue and income revenue has been appalling under the government.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have risen in this 43rd Parliament, so I would like to take a short moment to thank the voters of North Okanagan—Shuswap for placing me in their seat in the House to serve as their representative. I am scheduled to have an opportunity to speak later today and will wait until then to expand on how grateful I am for the opportunity to be here.

At this time, I am rising to speak to the Speech from the Throne, so I will use this valuable time to do so. We are expected to use this time to respond to the Speech from the Throne and express our position with respect to the mandate given to us by the voters in our ridings and in relation to the portfolios to which we have been assigned.

I honour that opportunity and intend to capture what I heard on the doorsteps of constituents of North Okanagan—Shuswap, at 15 all-candidates forums and at countless meetings across the riding over the past four years.

I also plan to address issues relating to the ministry of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, for which I am honoured to be shadow minister.

One of the key issues I heard regarding North Okanagan—Shuswap was about affordability, that life had become less affordable under the previous Liberal government. I heard continuously that people were concerned about the debt load that was being passed on to future generations, children and grandchildren, who would be forced to pay for the short-sightedness of a tax-and-spend government.

Unfortunately, little has changed. The suggestion to cut taxes for the middle class, a class that has never been defined, with no plan to equivalently reduce government spending is once again a reckless one. It is even more reckless when there is no real mention in the speech of how the Prime Minister plans to rebuild the confidence in Canada's business sector for Canadian and foreign investors, whose confidence is needed to build our economy, an area that should be foremost if we are truly concerned about keeping life affordable for Canadians.

Business owners in the North Okanagan—Shuswap have told me they are not willing to invest in expansion or capital projects under the current government's direction, sectors like the forest industry. In March of 2016, we were told that within 100 days there would be a framework for a softwood lumber agreement. Three and a half years later, there is still no deal and no mention of forestry in the throne speech. Sectors like agriculture have suffered from strained international relationships and lacklustre trade negotiations. Agriculture is another economic driver that is not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne.

If the government is truly responsive to the message the electors gave at the polls, it should recognize these sectors. They are an important and large component of life in the regions of the country where the Liberals lost seats. They should recognize that actions are needed, more than words of platitude, to bring a sense of Canadian unity back to those regions, regions that have been a source of relative wealth for all of Canada.

I also want to take part of my time today to address issues related to fisheries, which is my portfolio in the official opposition shadow cabinet. Fishermen and indigenous and non-indigenous groups across the country have grave concerns about Canada's fish stocks, their livelihood and the future of their communities. The fishers, processors and communities that rely on stability of access and markets to make investments in their boats, plants and infrastructure are all looking for certainty. Unfortunately, what we are seeing are more signs of uncertainty, signals of closures of access to the fishing grounds, conflict over who has access and when access may be granted and whether they will be consulted before decisions are made that will affect their work, their business, their communities and their future.

● (1205)

Canada already has some of the strongest protection measures for its waterways and marine areas through fishing and operational regulation and legislation. These factors must be taken into account when negotiating with global forces set upon locking up Canada as the world's park.

The commitment to protect 25% of our oceans by 2025 cannot be done without abandoning meaningful consultation processes with affected communities and current operators.

I often refer to the difference I see between conservation and preservation, with conservation being the wise and conservative use of resources so there is a benefit or revenue attained from that use, allowing for a portion of those benefits to be turned back into the health and growth of that resource, whether it be forestry, land use, fish and wildlife or other natural resources. On the other hand, to me preservation means locking up those resources so there is no benefit or revenue coming back in to use or divide up and put back into maintaining that resource, requiring funding from other resources to be tapped into so it can be used to support that resource that is now locked up.

I will always defend the value of conservation over preservation.

There must also be action on the ground and in the streams if Canada is to rebuild its salmon stocks to the abundance that is possible. We have seen little in the past four years that made a difference in any place other than meeting rooms. Limited resources have actually hit the ground, and now we have seen nothing in the throne speech to even recognize Canada's fisheries and the people who rely on them.

It is a pleasant dream to live in a world where nothing is taken and nothing is used, but it is not sustainable in a world where everyone wants more than we had yesterday.

In speaking today, I respect the viewpoint that criticism should not be given directly without offering an alternative or solution, so I offer that instead of implementing legislation and policies that will only make life more difficult and expensive for Canadians and make them more dependent on government, let us look for ways to promote our Canadian ingenuity and technology in Canada and abroad to tackle things like climate change and ocean pollution in areas of the world where it is the worst. Let us consult with resource users and developers on how we can do things better and continue to grow and prosper. Let us work with our remote and coastal communities, listen to them and their willingness to protect our lands and oceans, while still deriving a living from the resources available to us.

In the spirit of working together and co-operation, I offer these alternatives to the way things have been laid out. While holding the government to account during the coming term, I also offer to work together toward solutions that are best for all Canadians.

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think of Bill C-55, which is the oceans protection act. There is legislation, but there have also been budgetary measures, close to hundreds of millions of dollars, put in over the last number of years. I think there is common ground we can both agree on with regard to just how important these issues are.

The member talked about other areas of the world. If we take a look at Canada's population overall and contrast it to other populations around the world, we will find that the amount of political clout that Canada has is fairly significant given its population base. Does the member agree that taking progressive measures allows Canada to have a greater influence on the things that take place around the world and that is why it is important we bring forward

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legislation like Bill C-55 and others to ensure we continue to have that clout?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member for Winnipeg North brought up Bill C-55, because that is exactly what I was alluding to in my speech this morning.

I was heavily involved in the debate in the committee study of Bill C-55. In fact, before that bill even came to the committee for study, I had put forward a motion at the fisheries committee that we study how marine protected areas are implemented in Canada and the consultation process that was there previous to Bill C-55. Now we see areas of interest being closed to access without consultation; those local fishing communities have been ignored. The fishermen have been ignored.

Even though this member says the government has put funding and resources in place, it has cut out consultation process that I see as so important.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the voters in the riding of Montcalm who have once again placed their trust in me. I will do everything I can to meet their expectations.

While the old parties are stuck in a revolving door—sometimes in government, sometimes in opposition—there is one thing that remains constant when it comes to the climate emergency: both parties are all talk and no action. The day after the Marrakech climate change conference, COP22, the Parliamentary Budget Officer told the Liberal government that Canada would need to change course dramatically in order to meet the targets set by the previous Harper government for the environment. What did the Liberals do? They purchased an old pipeline that nobody wanted and invested \$19 billion in the oil industry. Still, that was not enough for the Conservatives.

Since the Conservatives claim they have a plan for the environment, could my colleague tell us how they would drastically change course to address the climate emergency?

• (1215)

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, this is what we talked about in our election platform. We recognize that Canada can make a difference in our emissions, but we have to work on a global scale. When China emits over 25% of global emissions, why should we punish Canadians with a carbon tax, when we could use Canadian technology and ingenuity, market that worldwide and make a bigger difference in places where the pollution is the worst?

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for my colleague with regard to single-event sports betting, as we start to reach areas of common interest.

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I have tabled my private member's legislation that would allow each province to allow single-event sports betting. Currently in Canada about \$10 billion goes to organized crime or to offshore betting. That money could be redirected to priorities and accountable sports betting could take place. The United States is moving toward this, and the rest of the world has.

Does the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap support this legislation as a unifying thing among parties and ourselves? It would make sure we move this money from organized crime and the black market in basements and back rooms to accountable, taxable and, more importantly, safe single-event sports betting, and modernize our act.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question. I look forward to seeing the member's private member's bill coming forward. I am certainly not going to say how I am going to vote on a bill that I have not even seen yet, but I do agree with him that we need to deal with corruption. We need to deal with organized crime. We need to deal with criminals who are preying on the most vulnerable here in Canada. That is what we have not seen from the previous Liberal government, and I do not expect we are going to see it from this one, unless it can understand what this side of the House sees as making a larger difference.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in this chamber and I want to start by thanking my constituents in Parkdale—High Park for returning me for the second time to this chamber. It is an honour and a privilege to serve them, one I do not take lightly.

I also thank the most important people in my life in terms of getting me to where I am today, the people who gave me guidance as a young child and then as a young man: my parents, Lou and Sul Virani. My dad just celebrated his 78th birthday this past Saturday. I thank my sister Shakufe. My immediate family has been a rock of support through all of this.

I will confess that it has been a little more troubling and difficult for my youngest son this go-round. In 2015, he was one year old and did not have much conscious memory of what transpired then. This go-round, he was five and missed his dad a great deal during the election, as did my eight-year-old son. However, it is for them that I do this work and for children around the country that we all do this work. It is important to keep them in mind. I love Zakir and Nitin very much. I am not wearing a shirt with cufflinks today, but I have the cufflinks with their initials on them in my pocket, as I always do on important occasions.

The most important person is obviously my significant other, my wife Suchita, who has been a rock of support. We do not come from a political family, but she has, nevertheless, been steadfast and by my side constantly throughout this entire endeavour, even to the point of pulling the vote on election day this past year, which was a first for her. I thank my wife Suchita. I love her dearly. I thank her for allowing me to do what I do, serving this country and my riding.

We have just had the Speech from the Throne, which contains a series of initiatives the government is pursuing. I want to highlight six of them. Members will recollect from the previous Parliament

that I remain a litigator who likes to stay organized in his prepared comments.

My first point is climate action. We know that climate action is urgent. The country heard about it during the course of the campaign and prior to it. We know we need to take bold action, and we have taken the steps toward that bold action. However, I am going to highlight one important thing because it dovetails with the message sent to us by constituents right around the country: what they are looking for in returning a minority Parliament is more co-operation, and there is no monopoly on a good idea. We need to take best practices from across the aisle, across the country and around the world and implement them as best practices here in Canada.

I will point to one. We have taken some very bold action with our carbon price in our plan to phase out coal and our initiatives in the just transition. One thing we need to do was not contained in our platform but the platform of a party opposite, the NDP. It talked about a climate accountability mechanism that government would report to. That is exactly the kind of mechanism that is worth studying. I was at COP24 last year in Katowice, and that is the model that is used in Britain that was championed at COP24. I brought that idea back to Parliament and immediately started talking about it. I am glad to see it in the platforms of other parties. It is the kind of idea that we need to take up, because there is nothing more pressing than addressing climate change as an initiative.

My second point from the throne speech is that affordability rang true throughout the country. This is not only germane to my riding, or the city of Toronto or urban centres; this rings true regardless of where one is, from region to region, rural to urban. I would point to a very important commitment in the throne speech that was reiterated when the throne speech was read, which is that the very first act we will be taking as a government is to reduce the taxation burden on low- and middle-income Canadians. How are we doing that? We are increasing the basic personal exemption.

Again, it is not a partisan issue, but I will point out a subtle difference that lays bare the difference between the two major parties in this chamber. Conservatives presented the same idea and would have had it universally applicable. Liberals said it is a great idea, but we are going to make it applicable to everyone, except for the top 1%. Why? It is because we fundamentally believe in targeting our measures toward those who need it the most.

We were criticized in the past, perhaps fairly, for having a middle-class tax cut that applied to people earning between \$42,000 and \$85,000 roughly, if I remember correctly from the last Parliament. People said, rightfully, that low-income people need taxation relief as much as anyone else. We are delivering that in this campaign platform and with this first initiative. That subtle difference, by ensuring that the benefit goes to those who need it the most and not those who do not need it, is what definitely identifies us as a centrist Liberal Party attempting to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

The third point I want to touch on is housing. Housing is critical. The issue I heard time and time again when I knocked on doors during the last campaign was housing. Whether it was support for housing, affordable rental housing or the ability for people to buy their first homes, people are feeling the pinch. They are feeling squeezed out of the housing market.

● (1220)

It is incumbent upon all of us to address that pinch clearly and vigorously. We are doing just that with a \$55-billion plan that is 12 years deep to address housing.

The campaign is over. It is time to implement those policies, starting with the Canada housing benefit, which will be a portable benefit so that a person is not attached to a particular apartment or unit. People take that benefit with them wherever they move in a riding, in a city or around the country.

The fourth important theme is critical. It is gun control. I want to talk about this a little bit, because when we speak about gun control, we are speaking about the needs of all Canadians. This need not be a rural/urban issue.

I was so excited to get going on the throne speech that I neglected to mention that I would be splitting my time with the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge. I congratulate him on his return to the House.

With respect to gun control, this past Friday was a noted anniversary. It was the 30th anniversary of the Montreal massacre.

[Translation]

I remember that time 30 years ago very clearly, because my sister was a young student at McGill University. Since she was in Montreal at the time, many people called to make sure Shakufe was okay, that she was safe. We knew she was okay, because she had let us know. We were lucky; our family was lucky.

[English]

There are 14 families who were changed forever that evening. What troubles me is that sometimes people think that while Jacinda Ardern has done really well on gun control, hot on the heels of a brutal massacre in New Zealand, we do not need to wait for another massacre to act. We have had our share of troubles. We continue to have our share of troubles, such as 30 years ago in Montreal and on January 29, 2017, in Quebec City.

We have had incidents of people being slaughtered through guns that are used only for the purposes of mass killing. Those are not hunting rifles; those are not legitimately pursued weapons; those

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are weapons that have no place in Canadian society. We made a bold commitment to get rid of military-style assault weapons. That was reiterated in the throne speech and I am determined to ensure that we see that through its course, and see it through quickly.

However, it does not just stop there. As a Toronto member of Parliament, I believe firmly in the need for gun control. Yes, there are many facets that contribute to the gun problem and to violence in cities like mine. There are gang problems and there are border control problems, but part of the problem is also the availability of readily accessible handguns that serve no place in a city like Toronto, or in many of our urban centres and centres otherwise.

This issue impacts our communities, including our racialized communities. It affects mental health and those who pass on by suicide. It dovetails with domestic violence, particularly violence perpetrated against women. We will address all of those issues by addressing the nub of the issue, which is gun control.

The fifth theme that I want to touch on is indigenous reconciliation. I was very proud to see that reiterated again in the speech, as it needs to be. This will take seven generations to resolve. We made gigantic progress in the last Parliament, in terms of addressing monetary needs, boil water advisories, child welfare legislation and the Indigenous Languages Act, which I was very privileged to work on as the parliamentary secretary to the then minister of heritage. What I learned on that file is that, notwithstanding my own background on equity issues and on fighting discrimination, we will get nowhere in this country in rectifying all sorts of other issues that deal with inequality unless we address the core and foundational issue, which is 400 years of colonialism and racism fomented against indigenous people.

The sixth theme I wanted to talk about is pharmacare. In an effort to reach across the aisle, we have heard about this from many different parties in this House. The time is now to address the lacuna in our current situation of policy. In the entire OECD, we stand alone as the only country that supports medical care and not medicine with publicly financed support. That is a minority of one that I personally do not want to be in and I know the colleagues opposite share that view.

Exploring dental care is another fine suggestion that was brought forward in the NDP campaign platform. It was mentioned in the throne speech and I believe it is worth exploring.

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Mr. Speaker, you know that I came to this chamber as a human rights and constitutional lawyer. You know, because we served together, that I came here as a refugee from Uganda and that I have taken advantage of the opportunities that were provided to me in this fine country and I have worked to make it better. We have made great strides over the last four years, but there is so much more work to be done.

I just want to finish on this note and say four things that I thought about after getting re-elected, which I would commit to myself, my constituents and this chamber.

The first is to continue to speak out about what I have always believed in: fighting discrimination, promoting equality and making Canada more inclusive for all.

The second is to continue to champion human rights, both here and abroad, at every opportunity that presents itself.

The third is to ensure that housing is not a fanciful ideal, but is something that manifests for people in my community.

Finally, the fourth is to ensure that we will always work harder, faster and more ambitiously on climate change because climate change is the most pressing issue of our time.

In a spirit of co-operation and collegiality, I offer congratulations to all the new members and returning members to this House. I hope to work with all members collaboratively to better this nation and this Parliament.

• (1225)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member on the opposite side. We do share one thing in common and that is we are the only two members in the House of Commons who participated in the Canadian parliamentary internship program.

My question is straightforward. In his remarks today, the member mentioned targeting measures for those who need it the most. Does he believe it is appropriate for the Government of Canada to provide incentives or to subsidize the purchase of electric cars for those he has termed the wealthiest 1%?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to receive my first question in the chamber in this new Parliament from a former parliamentary intern. I congratulate the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. We are now a group of three. Judy Wasylycia-Leis, whose name I can mention in this chamber as she is no longer here, was the first intern to be elected.

In terms of the member's question, it is a delicate one. We provided a universal incentive for people to purchase zero-emission vehicles, but the member should note that we have targeted it to lower-priced zero-emission vehicles, so \$50,000 or less.

There are Tesla vehicles and other types of vehicles out there that are in the \$80,000 and \$90,000 range. We specifically excluded them because those vehicles are in the reach of a certain part of the population but are not in the reach of low-income and middle-income individuals. It is low-income and middle-income individuals we are targeting, which is why the ZEV tax credit was targeted at that price threshold and not beyond it.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak once again in the House of Commons as the representative of St. John's East.

I want to reflect on the member's comments about co-operation. That is what Canadians want and they have spoken in that regard.

I do not like to be cynical when we are talking about co-operation, but with respect to the issue of pharmacare, our party called for a universal comprehensive system and the throne speech talks about taking certain steps along the way. On dental care, we talked about a specific, practical, doable program that could be implemented immediately and the throne speech merely talked about a universal program being studied. To me, that seems to be a cynical approach to these two important issues.

I would ask the member to comment on that and try to reconcile that with co-operation.

• (1230)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for St. John's East on his return to the House. He is an experienced member who had a brief involuntary interregnum and I welcome him back to the chamber.

On both of those points, it is in absolute good faith that we are engaging with pharmacare and starting a dialogue on dental care.

I will address them in reverse order. With respect to dental care, I heard about this a great deal from people in my riding during the campaign. Specifically, and I am not sure if this is germane only to Ontario, but there is a lacuna that exists for people who are on what is called the Ontario disabilities support program. They receive dental coverage but as soon as an individual hits 65 years of age and access to CPPD, all of a sudden, dental coverage stops. That is a problem. That is a problem for people who live to be about 80 or 90 years old. We need to address that. We need to study it.

On the issue about timing, these are massive structural changes of the same scope of what we did in the sixties with medicare or in the fifties with pensions, if I remember correctly.

We need to do it methodically and make sure we get it right. That is the reason for the study and the Hoskins report and that is how we will be proceeding.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the people of Lac-Saint-Jean for choosing to put their trust in me. This is very special opportunity for me, since my father sat here for 20 years. I am very pleased about that.

Everyone is talking about climate change. Obviously, it is very important. However, in 2015, the Liberals promised to end oil subsidies. I question the wisdom of subsidizing the oil industry if we want to move towards the other end of the spectrum and transition to a green economy.

Do my hon. Liberal colleagues believe that they should not break this promise again and that they should stop subsidizing the oil industry?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and I congratulate him on his election and his family history. I want to note two things.

First, the oil subsidies are not as simple as they appear. The oil subsidies also include subsidies to indigenous communities, specifically those in Canada's north. They are the ones who told us during the last Parliament that if we eliminated those subsidies, we would be eliminating the connection that gives them access to an economical source of energy.

Second, we promised to get rid of the oil subsidies by 2025, and we will meet that target.

[English]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through you, I wish to congratulate the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming on his election as Speaker. I am very happy for the member and I know he will do a wonderful job for everyone in the House.

[Translation]

I am pleased to speak during the opening days of the 43rd Parliament to respond to the government's Speech from the Throne.

I would like to begin this speech with a big thank you.

[English]

I thank the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge for placing their faith and trust in me for a second term. The citizens in my riding humbled me with a strong vote of confidence in my ability to represent them, tripling the margin of victory and achieving over 50% of the votes cast that evening. It is a wonderful vote of confidence and I wish to thank them.

The results speak to a lot of hard work and an unwavering commitment to my constituents that I always will represent them to the best of my capability and will always be their strong voice in Ottawa. Whether it is through visiting residents in their homes and listening to their concerns and issues, or always being available to our wonderful seniors, whom I love dearly, or listening to the opinions of the dynamic, entrepreneurial and very successful business community, which over the last five years has created over 60,000 new full-time jobs in the city of Vaughan, I will ensure their voices are always heard.

My team of volunteers, those individuals who canvassed, put up signs, sent positive vibes and made the phone calls that count are an inspiration to me. I say a gracious thanks, *merci beaucoup, grazie mille*.

The Address

My wife, Rose, and my children, Natalia and Eliana, are watching today. I love them so much and thank them every day for much patience and love while I do this remarkable job here in Ottawa.

The Speech from the Throne, in my view, is analogous to a blueprint, a blueprint for a more prosperous and inclusive Canada for all Canadians, a blueprint to move the country forward and ensure that we are facing not only the challenges today, but as important, preparing for the ones that may come tomorrow to this beautiful country we call home.

As MPs we have many duties and fiscal responsibilities to fulfill. I believe the most important responsibility we have as members of Parliament is to advocate for policies to provide Canadians with what I call equality of opportunity. Let me elaborate.

It is the utmost responsibility for every single MP to ensure that every Canadian, every citizen, has the opportunity to fulfill their capacity as individuals. That can only be achieved through one thing and one thing only. We ourselves need to demonstrate leadership, but leadership only comes from when we serve. Every single member of Parliament is a servant. As noted by Martin Luther King, Jr., life's most important question is: What are we doing for others? Writer and businessman Max De Pree said:

The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor.

It is time for all 338 MPs in this wonderful House in the 43rd session of Parliament to be servants, to listen, to act with humility and to ensure that we build a stronger, more inclusive country for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, one that leaves a healthy environment as well as a prosperous and optimistic future for our children and all the children across this wonderful country.

The throne speech laid out a number of themes that our government will focus on together working with all parties. These include fighting climate change, reconciliation, making life more affordable while we continue to strengthen the middle class, all much important work. I would like to focus my remaining time on the last theme, about the middle class and strengthening our economy.

Capitalism in the 20th and 21st centuries created enormous wealth across this world. It lifted billions of people out of poverty across this globe and allowed innovation, an exponential increase in agricultural yields, advances in technology, medicine and social innovation to occur. The world is more connected than we ever knew it and who knows what will happen in the years to come, but it is a very exciting future.

We as a government will continue to ensure that our policies are based on the values that we fundamentally believe in and care about in this country and are in place to grow the Canadian economy and create good jobs and an optimistic future for Canadians.

The Address

Continuing from our first mandate, we will encourage competition, encourage risk-taking and investment by entrepreneurs. We will give Canadians the skills to respond and adapt to an ever-changing global marketplace. We will provide for tax fairness to put more money in the pockets of Canadian families with that goal that we as a government continue to strengthen the middle class, create a more optimistic future and remain the envy of the world.

We saw the results over the first four years with over one million jobs created, primarily full time in where I like to see them, the private sector. Over 800,000 Canadians were lifted out of poverty including over 200,000 to 300,000 children. Those are real stories across Canada. We can pick a province or pick a city and we will see there are Canadians who benefited directly from the policies that we put in place in our first session.

● (1235)

As we did in 2015, our government will again provide tax relief for millions of Canadians. We did it once and we are going to do it again. A promise made will be a promise kept, with a tax cut aimed at those Canadians who need it the most. All Canadians who earn income, whether it is income earned at work, pension income or even investment income, will see a rise in the basic personal exemption amount. This is something that I argued be put in our platform and it is great to see it there. The amount we earn before paying federal taxes will be increased quicker than would happen naturally, from \$12,000 to \$15,000, while remaining to be indexed. For taxpayers in Canada who earn approximately \$15,000, that will mean \$300 more in their pockets to spend on the things they deem to be important. Whether they are saving for their kids' future or paying for everyday necessities, it is their money and we are going to give it back to them. This tax cut will provide over \$5 billion annually in tax relief to Canadians.

I am proud to be part of a government that is focused on lowering taxes for middle-class Canadians. I am proud to be part of a government that will provide tax relief to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. The first time, nine million Canadians benefited from our tax reduction of approximately \$20 billion over five years. Over the next two to three years, we will see \$15 billion to \$20 billion of tax relief dedicated to those families who need it the most, not the wealthiest 1%, not those earning over \$200,000 or \$300,000. Average middle-class families in Canada earning \$70,000 or \$75,000 will see over \$600 more in their pockets. That to me is great news.

I am blessed to represent a riding that is defined by dynamic entrepreneurial spirit and a can-do attitude. It is an attitude I see every day in the nearly 12,000 small businesses that are located in the city of Vaughan and the approximately 4,000 that are located in my riding. It is a spirit of asking what they can do for this country rather than the opposite. It is a spirit of hiring and growing our economy, a spirit of getting to work and making things happen. These business owners and entrepreneurs have my utmost respect. Their success is not due to luck but due to hard work and perseverance.

Some of the most successful entrepreneurs and private enterprises in this country are in my riding. I know first-hand that we must focus on policies that encourage investment, but also provide for

what I call inclusive growth, which is when growth occurs, all Canadians benefit.

That has been the focus of our government from the beginning. It is a focus on returning money to Canadians through our middle-class tax cuts, a focus on the Canada child benefit, where eight or nine out of 10 families in Canada were made better off. In my riding, every month, \$5 million arrives tax-free to the families in my riding, helping almost 18,000 children and over 10,000 families. That is real change. That is the change that Canadians elected us on in our first mandate.

In this session, I am glad to see in our platform further adjustments to the Canada child benefit that will help families not just in my riding but, more importantly, from coast to coast to coast. We will continue lifting children out of poverty. We will continue creating those good, full-time jobs in the private sector that we saw in our first four years. In fact, for the last 12 months, starting in November 2018 to today, almost 300,000 new full-time jobs have been created in Canada. We still have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world, depending on how we want to use the measurements. However, if we compare apples to apples, we are among the lowest.

I spent over two decades working in global financial markets. I grew up in a small town and worked at a pulp mill, a grain elevator and McDonald's, which was one of my first jobs. I know the value of hard work. Hard work is what defines this country. It is what defines the constituents in my riding. That is why we as a government will continue to listen to the hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We will continue to put in place policies that grow our economy.

I see some of my colleagues from the opposition parties who reside in the beautiful province of Alberta. We will make sure the TMX pipeline gets built. It is being built. This will bring our resources to new markets and make sure we are capturing that full price and lower the differential between oil prices that has hampered the economy of Alberta for the last several years. We need to make sure we get full price for our products and our resources.

I look forward to working with all my colleagues from all parties, in the 43rd Parliament.

One of my hallmarks of the 42nd Parliament was to reach out to individuals from other parties, to say hi, to become friends with them and get to know them. If many of us in this House do that, we will see a much more congenial place and a nicer attitude. I see some smiles across the aisle.

The Address

Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to say good morning and *bonjour à tous*. I would also like to say a special good morning to my kids, and tell them to stay strong, that daddy loves them and he will see them soon.

With that, I look forward to questions and comments.

• (1240)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, the words of the member opposite are good, as is his intent. I am concerned though that the rosy picture he has painted of the situation in our country does not reflect what we are hearing. We know that 71,000 jobs were lost this month. We know that \$80 billion of investment has left Canada and that foreign investment has been reduced 50%. We know that the economy is supposed to be flat and not growing over the next one- to two-year term.

If we really are to help the middle class, we need to admit where we are at and that this is the result of disastrous policies in the Liberal government. We have seen a lack of action most recently with the CN strike and propane backlogs that impacted farmers. Again, three slaughterhouses shut down and 60,000 cows are in the backlog. Therefore, there was a total lack of action there.

What specific actions will the government take to cure the state of the nation?

• (1245)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as an economist and someone who follows the numbers in Canada quite closely, what is behind those numbers are stories of Canadians from coast to coast. We have seen net full-time employment rise in the country by over 1.1 million, if not more, in the last five years. We have seen our government take action with the accelerated investment incentive put in place in the prior budget to encourage manufacturers to invest, which is what they are doing. We have seen a resilient economy, and that is backed by resilient Canadians investing in our country.

I would love to sit with the member for Sarnia—Lambton to explain some of the nuances with our foreign direct investment numbers. We are actually seeing an increase in our FDI numbers, especially in the province of Ontario, which has become a leader in financial technology and innovation. Montreal and Waterloo have become leaders in artificial intelligence. Canada has a lot of good things happening.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his comments.

What stood out for me in particular was what he said about connecting Canadians to the Internet, the issue of connectivity and digital development more broadly.

The throne speech mentions that “regional needs and differences really matter. Today’s regional economic concerns are both justified and important.” I am from a rural area and these are very important elements.

My concern is that we must not end up with two categories of Canadians: Canadians who are connected and live an “urban” lifestyle and have not just reliable cell service, but also broadband access to the Internet, and those living in rural areas who have no such access. I believe that the prosperity of our towns depends on it.

How can we hope to attract young families to Abitibi-Témiscamingue if parents are unable to help their children do their homework or stream television series, for example? How can we attract SMEs and economic development if we cannot make our towns appealing to investors?

My question is the following: Can the government ensure that all Canadians are connected, no matter where they live?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

I am in full agreement with the member from Quebec. In my comments on the throne speech, I said that I fundamentally believed in equality of opportunity for all Canadians to succeed. We need to ensure that Canadians living in rural Canada, in the beautiful parts of our country, are connected to the Internet. The Internet is very equivalent to the telephone of 20 or 30 years ago. Every person in Canada needs to be connected to the Internet to undertake the actions he or she needs to succeed. We need to ensure that. In the prior session, the government invested hundreds of millions of dollars into this and formed partnerships with telecom companies across Canada. We need to ensure that rural Canada is as connected as urban Canada. There cannot be two standards; there has to be just one.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to provide further comment as to why it is so important that the government continue to invest and support Canada's middle class and the positive impact that has on the overall economy. A healthy middle class is a healthier economy.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, our economy can only grow and only benefit all Canadians with what is called inclusive growth. We need to target policies that benefit middle-class Canadians. We did it with the first tax cut, benefiting nine million Canadians.

This tax cut would actually take 700,000 people from our tax rolls. That would be 700,000 people across Canada not paying federal tax anymore. That is real change, but it is also giving money back to Canadians who will spend it. What we call in economics the marginal propensity to consume and spend is actually very high. It will benefit those Canadians and benefit the economy the most.

The Address

We can only move forward as a country if all Canadians benefit from economic growth, and Canadians benefit from tax reductions.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to indicate that I will be splitting my time with the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London. I look forward to those remarks as well.

I cannot begin without thanking the constituents of Calgary Midnapore for sending me here again. I am so very overjoyed to be back in the House representing them. I am truly grateful.

My parents are my constituents, so my mom is probably watching. I promise to be extra good in the House at this time.

• (1250)

[Translation]

I am very sad for my family today. My mother is from Quebec and my father is from Saskatchewan. It is not uncommon for Canadian families to have one parent from the west and the other from the east. We heard a similar story on the other side of the House last week. Families becoming divided has become a Canadian story, and that is very sad. We are divided because the other side of the House spent the past four years playing all kinds of political games. The government split us right in half. It pit regions against one another. That is truly sad.

My region, the west, and more specifically Alberta, where the energy sector has no support, obviously comes to mind. Also coming to mind are several bills, such as Bill C-69, which makes it practically impossible to start new projects. There is Bill C-48, which makes it practically impossible to build a pipeline and transport oil. That is very sad. The carbon tax is another example. Bills that impede the energy sector have serious consequences on families and individuals. Bills like these are completely destroying families and people's lives. The government claims to want to eliminate poverty, but it is actually creating poverty with these kinds of bills.

On more than one occasion, the Prime Minister has said one thing to one part of the country and the opposite to another. The President of the United States called that behaviour “two-faced”. The President of the United States and Canadians have seen those two faces.

With the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister had an opportunity to put the country on a new path. Sadly, he let that opportunity pass him by. However, he had previously taken certain steps in that direction. He specifically appointed a minister of provincial relations. He held numerous meetings with various provincial premiers. The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister promised to listen carefully to what the premiers had to say. The Speech from the Throne would have been the perfect opportunity to prove that they had listened. Unfortunately, the speech shows nothing of the kind. The situation is different from what it was before the election.

[English]

There were words, but not much was said. There were platitudes, like talking about the good of our community and clichés such as “no challenges are too big.” There were also false attempts to show empathy and understanding for regions. There were parts of the speech that said that as much as Canadians had instructed us to

work together, they had also spoken clearly about the importance of their regions and their local needs.

What did Canadians say when they spoke? Did they say how their father had not been able to find a job in three years because the corporation he was working for left because of instability due to political regulations? Did they say how their neighbours could not get out of a deep depression because they had spent their entire retirement savings on just surviving? Did they say that they sent a suicide note to their member of Parliament because they had absolutely given up hope of ever finding a job?

We do not know, and we will never know, because it was not in the Speech from the Throne.

The speech said that regional needs and differences really mattered. Today's regional economic concerns are both justified and important. However, in what year on the planetary spacecraft will Canada's energy workers get an apology from the Prime Minister; when he sheds a tear for those who have committed suicide because they are completely destitute or for the women and children who have been beaten because, after years of not having a job, dad finally snapped? What year on this spaceship is that? Is that when we will know that regional differences really matter? For now, we do not, because the speech does not say so.

This was the opportunity to demonstrate action, and if not action, true understanding, and if not true understanding, at least respect. It would not have taken much: a timeline for the TMX pipeline or a promise to look into the national energy corridor. However, it was not there.

• (1255)

[Translation]

We can pretend that the world is simple and that the solutions to Canada's problems need not be complex or detailed, but that is not true. We can pretend that we do not need one another and that we are not dependent on one another, but that is not true either. Anyone who denies those facts will suffer for it eventually, even if they refuse to acknowledge it today.

[English]

This is not the way of Albertans.

What a great day to be in the House, the day when my predecessor and now premier, the incomparable, the Hon. Jason Kenney, is here to get a fair deal for Alberta. He brings with him my counterpart, minister of children's services and MLA for Calgary-Shaw, Rebecca Schulz. Together Minister Schulz and I will work tirelessly for the children of this nation.

We Albertans love Canada. We have always been proud to work hard and to share the fruits of our labour with the nation, to do our part for Confederation. We have never told others how to live their lives or that their way of life is not welcome in our country.

We will not let the Prime Minister divide us and we will not let the government push us out of Confederation. We will not allow that to happen. The government had an opportunity to do something profound, to say something profound and to unify, and it did not.

[Translation]

That is why I am sad today. I am a woman from Alberta. My mother is from Quebec and my father is from Saskatchewan. I am here for unity. I am here for Canada. Unfortunately, the throne speech is not.

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a native Albertan and when I was a young fellow, the Turner Valley southwest of Calgary was pumping more oil than any other place in the Commonwealth. However, Turner Valley is dry now. The oil is gone. There should have been a lesson there for Alberta to diversify, but here it is, all these years later, and perhaps not enough has been done.

We also see, and this gets to my question for the hon. member, that in spite of the obvious difficulties that Alberta and many families are having there, Albertans' mean family income after taxes is still the highest in Canada.

While I agree as an Albertan that we need as a country to do more for our province, would the member not agree that diversification also has to be a priority and that income inequity in Alberta is also a major problem, which her predecessor and now Premier of Alberta should also invest time into solving?

• (1300)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from across the aisle for the question and congratulate him on his re-election. It is great to see him back here.

I think we only need to look at the world economy. We have the natural resources, perhaps sadly not in Turner Valley anymore, but in a lot of other places. The world needs these resources. Our own nation needs these resources. There is no need for us to bring these resources in from other nations that do not honour the rule of law and do not honour democracy. We have all of these resources within our backyard still. We need them and we need to use them.

I look forward to the path where we explore new energy sources and when we bring these new energy sources to market. However, we must evaluate the reality as it stands right now, which is that we have resources and the world needs these resources. The government has not allowed us to use these resources for our benefit, the world's benefit or Canada's benefit, but with that we would definitely see a continuation in the quality of life for all Canadians as we have for many years as a result of these resources.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for our Conservative Party friends.

The Address

This morning, various members spoke about the problems the agricultural industry is having, which are caused in part by climate change. All members of the House agree that there is a climate emergency.

Is the Conservative Party open to developing an energy transition plan that everyone can agree on?

There has been a lot of talk about oil sands development and about equalization. Those should be two separate conversations. I could talk for half an hour about equalization, which is no tremendous benefit to the state of Quebec in this federation. Over \$4 billion of Quebec's money was invested in the oil sands over the past year, so no one is getting a raw deal.

My question is this: Is the Conservative Party open to start thinking about making the transition to clean, renewable energy? We need to start doing research and development now.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his recent election and welcome him warmly to the House.

I would also like to thank my colleague for mentioning the agricultural sector. My position, and my party's, is that farmers have received next to nothing from the government. The government has completely ignored this group, so I would like to thank my colleague for raising the subject.

Of course we are open to all the options when it comes to the future and the environment. In turn, I would ask my colleague to be open to energy from Alberta. Maybe it is worth highlighting the fact that Alberta energy is among the cleanest in the world. I am very proud of that. Maybe we could have a debate about Alberta energy and talk about how we can move things forward together.

• (1305)

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute delight to present my first speech in the 43rd Parliament. To begin, I have to thank the people of Elgin—Middlesex—London for re-electing me.

Just to take a moment, I would like to thank my incredible campaign team. They were out there knocking on doors, putting up signs and having a great time spreading the word of what we can do here. I know I got back here because I have the most incredible office staff. They know about my constituents, they know what their needs are and they are always there to serve them, so a special thanks to Cathy, Jena, Scott, Jill and Charli.

I would like to thank my family. Without the support I have from my family, my mom, dad, sisters, brother and of course my husband Mike, I would not be here. We know this job, especially for any of the newer parliamentarians, is not a job. It is a life. When members take this role on, it is not just a career choice. We live and breathe being a member of Parliament trying to always work for our constituents, and making sure what we are doing is in the best interests of our community and the country.

The Address

Following the election, I lost two dear friends. One was my former campaign manager, Brian Clements. May Brian rest in peace. He was my uncle, my dad and everything under the sky and I will miss him forever. The second was Dave Dillon, our regional coordinator, who I worked with as part of the Conservative Party for over the last 16 years. I thank Dave for always having that smile and crazy giggle.

It is because of people like them that I am here today and have the courage and strength to talk about what the throne speech mentioned and listen to the debate on how Canada needs to move forward.

It is very simple: We have returned to a minority government. Within Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces we saw huge changes. However, we also saw the wiping out of the Liberal Party in the west. When we talk about Saskatchewan and Alberta, we are all Canadians, so it does not matter where my friends are living. It is my job to worry about them as well.

One thing I have to say is that, throughout this debate, I see division is so strong. It is very hard to listen to my colleagues from the Calgary area talk about job losses and suicides and the fact that no one is taking those issues seriously because they need to diversify. Yes, that is fine, but let us please have compassion for those people in the west being impacted by some of these laws and regulations being made by the government. It is great to say that, but we are not losing friends and neighbours like people from Alberta and Saskatchewan are. I ask for a bit of compassion.

For the last number of weeks, I have been fortunate to work on many files. One of the big files I worked on was the CN Rail strike. The reason I am mentioning this is that one of the big things that the Liberals have said is that they are going to work with people. I wanted to bring up the CN Rail strike because it impacted Ontario a great deal, especially southwestern Ontario.

I received a call from Dowler-Karn CFO Dan Kelly, who is also the chair of the board for the Canadian Propane Association. He let me know that they were going to stop delivering all propane to any farmers who were going to be drying their crops. Last year in Ontario, we had bad mould on our crops and this year we have grain that cannot be dried. Whether it is soybeans, wheat or corn, they cannot be dried. With that, farmers are going to have a lot of damage and financial loss.

I received the call on a Thursday night, and by Friday morning we were working with our team and the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington. We sat down with about 50 farmers and stakeholders and pushed this issue.

The next thing I did was reach out to my Liberal counterparts, and I would like to say a very special thanks to the member for London West, who actually picked up the phone and told me that the Liberal government was going to pick up the phone, call people and find out from stakeholders what was going on.

She did not know until she had that conversation with propane stakeholders what the impact was to our farmers and what the impact was to people who did not have natural gas flowing down their pipelines because they live in rural parts of Ontario. She was willing to take that phone call.

She was one member of Parliament from the Liberals who took my call. No other members returned my call and others sent messages saying they were not getting involved.

If we are going to work together, my stakeholders are everyone's stakeholders. That is why I am telling people that when I want to do something, I am going to make that phone call and I want my stakeholders to be heard. If I am wrong on something, please have the Liberal stakeholders contact me too. I want to know the whole picture. Instead of slamming the door and saying this issue is not important, please remember it is important.

● (1310)

The reason I bring this up goes back to what I am hearing from Calgary. It went viral on Facebook, and we saw a lot of comments on this. People from Alberta and out west were saying, "We do not care about Quebec. Who cares if they get propane?" People from Quebec were saying a different thing, recognizing that propane is heating their homes. We heard about nursing homes that were one day away from not having propane.

The reason I bring this forward is because I did not hear a single word from the government. We knew that our grain producers were going to lose money, and we knew that people were having problems with home heating but that the government would not stand up for them. If not for Conservatives, we do not know what would have happened when it came to some of the grain farmers because their voices were not heard.

One of the other things I hear a lot about is climate change, and of course that is going to be a theme throughout the current government. I do not think there is a person in this room who does not talk about climate change with his or her constituents. For me, it is one of those things that, as we are moving forward and talking about it, we all have different ways of looking at climate change.

I was talking about the carbon tax in Elgin—Middlesex—London. If people are talking about the carbon tax in downtown Toronto, they are not going to talk about what my farmers are talking about in Elgin—Middlesex—London. They are not going to talk about the carbon tax that was put on their propane bills or put on their energy bills.

People had a \$400 carbon tax when they were trying to dry their tobacco. How are they going to go forward if they have a new \$400 tax that is already put on that? Those are the things we are seeing all the time, and they are extremely concerning to me.

People in cities do not understand the impact. I should not say that, but people who are in downtown ridings may not understand as well as those people who receive the bills what a carbon tax looks like when trying to dry grain, when loading up kids and going to a grocery store that is 20 minutes away, when people are buying grocery items and know a carbon tax has been applied to them because the cost of transportation has been increased. All of these things impact us.

A carbon tax is the decision that the Liberals have gone with, though there are many other ways we can look at this and other technologies that we need to address. I am asking the current government to please be listening.

I ask the Liberals to listen to our farmers, listen to our agricultural producers and the agricultural businesses that are wrapped around that. I ask that they make sure they understand, when the farmers are drying corn, how much it actually costs and what the carbon tax adds to that. There are lots of things that farmers are doing throughout this country to make farming work. We know that when the cost of inputs becomes higher, at the end of the day farmers are not going to be able to succeed. I ask the government to work very closely on that.

Yesterday, I was fortunate enough to be in Aylmer at an event with about 700 people from the Bradley Street Church of God, and I can say that when we speak to Canadians there is a lot that we agree on. In this church assembly there were 700 people, families who were gathering for the Christmas season. Their issues were the top three for many of us here. It is about seniors. It is about veterans. It is about our drug epidemic. Those are some of the social issues that we need to address as well.

We know our seniors are having a tough time. We know that with interest rates not being as high as they used to be, seniors are relying on their old age security and on their Canada pension plan, and some of the savings they have are drying up. We have to be cognizant of that. We have to ensure housing and make sure seniors have a good way of life. We need to be there as a government.

For our veterans, I applaud the government on the fact that we are looking at veterans' homelessness. That is something that we all need to do. We need to do that together, so I appreciate that.

Also, I am asking about the drug epidemic. We have had over 10,000 people die in this country and we could be doing better. It is not just the fentanyl that we are talking about. It is the crystal meth and it is all of those drugs. We need to work with all levels of government. Therefore, I ask the government to learn how to work with all levels of government, learn how to work with the Conservative Party, learn how to work with the provincial Premier of Ontario, unlike what it has done over the last months, and to please work with our municipalities. If the Liberals really want to get something done, I ask them to please work with us.

• (1315)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke at great length about the CN Rail strike. At the end of the day, our government listened. I am from Kings—Hants. I have a lot of agricultural producers in my riding. I heard those concerns. While the member opposite suggests that Liberal members were not paying attention to these issues, we were.

Would the member opposite have asked the government to step in and take away the legislative rights and the collective bargaining that were available to those CN workers? Is that what she would propose that this government should have done?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, let us not get tied up in the weeds on the CN Rail strike. Let us talk about the agricultural issue.

The Address

What I am talking about is the fact that we returned to Parliament about a week and a half after we had to. If this issue had continued, there would be farmers who could still not dry their corn. All of these things would be happening. It is fine to say that we are listening, but listening goes both ways. It is not just about hearing the words; it is about what we are going to do. A little compassion would be nice as well.

This is not about the CN strike. It is about the fact that we did not have a plan B ready. We were waiting for plan A, and if plan A had not worked out, we would still have crops in our fields right now falling apart, and we would be losing billions of dollars.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take my first opportunity to speak to also thank the voters of my riding, who have given me the distinct honour of representing them here. As everyone knows, Drummond is the most beautiful and most vibrant of the 338 ridings we each proudly represent in this distinguished place.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I hear some members expressing doubts, but I invite all my colleagues to come and see for themselves. Everyone is welcome. However, I would advise them not to stay too long, for they may never want to leave.

It is with both humility and pride that I am pleased to bring my constituents' concerns to the House. One such concern is high-speed Internet access and cellular service in all rural areas. I am sure that many of my colleagues are also concerned about that. Internet access is inadequate. In some ridings, farmers, businesses and self-employed people cannot keep pace and cannot adapt to the realities of their markets. As a result, they are really losing out and often have to move to urban areas, which is not necessarily what they want to do, obviously.

Worse still, there are regions, particularly in Quebec, but probably elsewhere in the country as well, where emergency services are at risk. The problem is so acute in the municipality of Amherst, Quebec, that people's safety is in jeopardy. We are not fearmongering, but this is something the government should really pay attention to.

When the safety of our constituents is at risk, I think it is time to act quickly. I am asking the government whether it intends to ensure that the process for providing high-speed Internet in the regions keeps moving forward and whether it could speed up—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. Unfortunately, we only have enough time for one more question. The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

*The Address**[English]*

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, there are many small providers, but in my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, there are pockets of people who do not receive high-speed service. We know this hurts farmers, small businesses, our students and families. We will continue to work to achieve this, and I think it should be an important mandate for all Canadians.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London on her return to the House. It is always a pleasure to work with her.

In the member's beautiful speech, she mentioned seniors. The throne speech said the government wants to strengthen our pensions, as the member mentioned, and make sure that our seniors have a healthy living. However, we were told last week in the House by the Minister of Seniors that old age security would be strengthened, but only at the age of 75.

Does the member support what is in the throne speech or does she believe that this increase should start at age 65 for all pensioners on old age security?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, to be honest, if I have a right answer, it is not yes or no. However, we do need to look at this, because we have to understand that many people's RRIFs are drying up when they get to the age of 75 and still have time to live.

The government is supposed to be a backstop for many of these programs, like the guaranteed income supplement, but we have many seniors in need. We need to do an overall review of this. Because of the rise in taxes, because of the carbon tax, because of all these things that seniors did not have at one time, what they used to have is not enough. I believe we need to do a full study on that.

• (1320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and address those in this beautiful chamber. I would first like to thank the constituents of Winnipeg North for once again affording me the opportunity to be here representing what I believe is the best and most diverse riding in our country. I suspect there might be 337 other people who might challenge that thought, but it is an absolute privilege to be representing the residents of Winnipeg North.

That said, I want to reflect on a number of the issues I heard from constituents. Another member gave his perspective earlier on what people were saying. We often hear about the middle class. When I sat in opposition in the Stephen Harper era, it was very rare to hear about Canada's middle class. If one were to perform a word search, one would find that to be the case. We would hear it periodically, but this would come from the Liberal Party, the third party at the time, and particularly its leader.

Nothing has really changed with respect to this government's priority. Whether as the third party or as we are now, having received a second mandate, we talk about the importance of Canada's middle class. We understand and appreciate how important the middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it are to our society, economy and the social fabric that we call Canada today.

In terms of some of the actions that have already taken place, the Minister of Finance today talked about another tax break coming to Canada's middle class. One of the very first actions we took after the 2015 election was a tax break to Canada's middle class. We have seen consistency from this government with regard to Canada's middle class, which I believe is the reason we have seen, with the help of Canadians in all regions of our country, the generation of a lot of good, positive news. This is highlighted by the fact that over one million jobs were created in the last four years.

I know there are significant portions of the country that have not done as well as others. If we look at the history of Canada, we find that at different points in time some areas have been more challenged than others and that at times it is necessary for the government to be more involved. We have seen this in the Prairies, specifically with the province of Alberta and the federal government. When one region has been suffering more economically than others, the government has listened very carefully and supported regional interests where it could.

I suggest that members take a look at issues surrounding western diversification funds and their allocation or at the percentage of infrastructure dollars that have been committed or in many ways spent in some of those areas. This federal government has worked more with municipalities than Stephen Harper ever did, because we recognize that in many ways it is the municipalities that deliver so many of those services, particularly in relation to infrastructure services.

For Canada's middle class, Liberals have made huge strides in the area of international trade. We have seen a government that has not only had discussions but has also signed off on some very important trade agreements around the world. In fact, this government has signed off on more trade agreements with other countries than any other government. We even did more than Stephen Harper did, because we understand and appreciate the value of those trade agreements.

• (1325)

No matter what the Conservative Party attempts to say about trade, it cannot rewrite history on the facts. What I just stated was factual.

There are many things we have done over the last four and a half years that have had a profound and positive impact on all regions of our country. Thinking about the years ahead and reflecting on the mandate, and based on discussions I have had with my constituents, I believe Canadians want us to continue moving forward on the many progressive policies that we have brought in over the last four years and to lobby and advocate for those progressive policies. A vast majority of them would want me to say that. I am committed to doing that, and I believe the government will continue to do that as well.

I also recognize that Canadians want to see a higher sense of cooperation, a higher sense of responsibility from members on all sides of the House, not just from the government side.

The biggest disappointment I had at people's doors was a negative attitude toward politics. Many people did not vote because they were discouraged by the negative attitude that too many politicians have, and we see it virtually every day when the House is sitting.

In my previous speeches in the House, I often talked about the character assassination by the official opposition of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance or other selected individuals, whether justified or not. Conservatives put politics before people. It is that sense of negativity, the "Prince of Darkness" negativity or whatever we want to call it.

At the end of the day, Canadians want to see a higher standard in the House. I would suggest it could start right on the floor of the House. We do not need to make things as personal as we have witnessed over the last four years. It is not warranted. As my colleague would say, park the politics as much as possible. Personal character assassination does not do well to build a consensus.

There are many areas we could agree to support. The previous speaker talked about the importance of our children and that she is going to work with the minister in Alberta regarding them. This government has done a great deal for Canadian children. We have lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty through the Canada child benefit program. This has helped children in every region of our country. Over \$9 million a month goes into Winnipeg North alone through the Canada child benefit program. That has an incredible impact on disposable income to support our children. It helps to lift children out of poverty.

I have good news for members opposite. This government is going to continue to support our children in all regions of Canada. As the Conservative member opposite just alluded to, when we have positive measures, and there are a lot of positive measures, members can support what the government is doing.

There has been some criticism of the throne speech. I have been a parliamentarian for 30 years and I have been in opposition for most of those years. I hope to tie it up at the government level at some point. It was 20-plus years in opposition and five or six in government. I am an optimistic person.

• (1330)

I am suggesting that, at the end of the day, throne speeches are very much general documents. We are always going to find things, whether it is in this throne speech, Harper's throne speech or the 10-plus provincial and territorial throne speeches that come out. It is very rare that one will get into the real nitty-gritty specifics. We are always going to find things that we would like to have seen incorporated into a throne speech.

However, if we take a look at the important issues that we are highlighting, such as Canada's middle class, the environment and reconciliation, these are all ideas that I believe should generate support from both sides of the House. One does not need to vote against it because it is a government throne speech. There are many things within this throne speech that I suspect everyone will, in fact, support. I would suggest the vast majority of things stated in this throne speech are things members on both sides of the House should get behind and support.

The Address

I have heard members across the way talk about seniors. We did a great deal in the previous four years. I ask members to remember that one of the very first initiatives we did was to reverse the Conservatives' decision to increase the age of retirement for OAS. When I was first elected a person had to be 65 in order to collect OAS, old age security. The former Stephen Harper government increased the age to 67, but one of the very first things we did was to put it back to 65.

In addition to doing that, we recognize that there is always a limited amount of finances to be put into any given envelope. We wanted to help the poorest of our seniors, so we substantially increased the guaranteed income supplement, which lifted hundreds plus thousands of seniors in all regions of our country out of poverty. In Winnipeg North alone, hundreds of Canada's poorest seniors were actually lifted out of poverty because of that particular initiative.

However, it does not stop there. We talk about moving forward with our seniors, and there are a couple of other items, one of which is highlighted quite well in the throne speech.

My New Democratic friends talk about the guaranteed income supplement increasing at age 75 and ask why not have it increase at age 65. That is a good question. It is a very good question. I raised this issue at the doors of my constituents. If there are x number of dollars to put into supporting seniors and trying to assist seniors in the best way possible, there is a big difference between a senior who is 65 years old and one who is 75 years old. I am going to be 65 pretty soon myself. I am 57, turning 58.

If we have the choice of giving a greater increase to those people who are 75 as opposed to those at the younger age of 65, I suggest that there is a greater benefit to society if we can give a larger percentage increase to those who are 75 and over. As a direct result of targeting it that way, we are going to be able to assist them more. My colleagues will find that there are many 65-year-olds who choose to continue to work. It does not mean that we have to stop there.

At the end of the day, one of the good things we did was to bring forward a seniors directorate. This is a government that genuinely and truly cares about the future of our seniors. That is one of the reasons we have been very selective and effective at getting more money into the pockets of the seniors who need it the most. That is what we should be striving to do, and we have been very effective at doing that.

I ask members to stop and think about this. We are giving a bigger increase to those who are 75 and older. We are giving another tax break to Canada's middle class. These are things that reinforce the tax cuts and the increases that we gave to the Canada child benefit and the GIS in the previous Parliament.

The Address

• (1335)

All of those money breaks are going to put money into the pockets of Canadians in every region of this country. By doing that, we are increasing overall disposable income, and by doing that, we are allowing Canada's economy to do that much better. With an increase in disposable income, we see more expenditures in our communities. That is one of the reasons that this government has been so successful. By investing in people, we have had an economy that has done relatively well.

I was a bit discouraged when one member tried to point out that because of job losses there have been people committing suicide, and that somehow the government should feel guilty. When hundreds of thousands of people were finding themselves out of work in the manufacturing industry, in particular in Ontario and so forth, the Liberal Party cared. We were compassionate toward that. Equally, we care about and are compassionate toward those who have been losing jobs in our natural resources sector.

Sadly, when a person loses a job, and it does not matter in what region of the country, it can be a very trying time. To say it is one person's fault or the government's fault is somewhat irresponsible. Let us look at the bottom line and the way the economy and policies have been presented in the last four years. If we listen to what is being said in the throne speech and what is being said by the Prime Minister in the many speeches he delivers, and the speeches of ministers and many of my colleagues, we will see that we are on the right course.

That is why a major theme for us going into the election was that we want to continue to move forward on what is important to Canadians. We know it is important to Canadians because we have a Prime Minister who has continually said to members of Parliament, in particular Liberal members of Parliament, that here in Ottawa we represent the constituents first. We do not represent Ottawa or our constituents. It is the constituents and their interests that we represent first, here in Ottawa, and that is why we have the relationships that we have built within our caucus.

We have a great caucus that is committed to the long-term viability and strength of building Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. We have a caucus that understands the importance of the economy and social programs. One of those social programs that has to be highlighted is Canada's pharmacare program.

Prior to this Prime Minister, I very rarely heard the word "pharmacare". It is only because of this Prime Minister and this government, and through the members of Parliament and their constituents that we have raised that whole issue to where it is today, a point where I feel very confident that we will have a national pharmacare program.

I would like to see all members of this chamber, whether they are New Democrat, Bloc, Conservative, Green or independent, get behind a national pharmacare program. This has taken a great deal of time to put together.

We have a government that is prepared to work with all the different stakeholders and listen to what they have to say. However, if the need is there to make that decision, we should make that decision for the betterment of all Canadians. This is a government that

understands that every day is an opportunity to work hard and provide better results for all Canadians in all regions.

• (1340)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my friend on his nail-biting return to this House.

He said that the government cares about the middle class and that the evidence is just to do a word search in Hansard to see how many times that word appears. I took him up on the challenge and went to openparliament.ca. There is a feature on there where one can find a member's favourite word, the word a member uses most frequently in the House of Commons. Do members know what the favourite word of the member for Winnipeg North is? It is "Conservatives". When he speaks in the House, the thing he talks about most is not the middle class or pharmacare. It is the Conservatives. That is revealing in many ways about his speech.

In the last four years, taxes went up for the middle class. The government did everything it could to increase taxes for the middle class. It took away income splitting and brought in the carbon tax. Why is the member so much more interested in the Conservatives than he is in the middle class?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to that is that I am constantly trying to compel the Conservative Party to do the right thing. When one compels a party to do something, it is much better to say "the Conservative Party" than "Hey, you over there on the other side." Conservatives will find that if they look beyond my favourite word, they will likely find me asking when the Conservatives will do this or that, or why the Conservatives complain about this or that. That is likely why that is my favourite word.

I can say that one of the issues I raise more and more is the benefit of the tax cut that the Conservative Party voted against in the last Parliament. However, the Conservatives are going to get another chance and they will hopefully vote in favour of it this time.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House for the first time in the 43rd Parliament and take the opportunity to thank the great people of Vancouver Kingsway for once again placing their trust in me. It is a privilege and an honour to represent them in this Parliament.

I am glad my hon. colleague raised the very critical issue of pharmacare. The throne speech talked about his government's desire to take steps toward national pharmacare. Those are the words in the throne speech. We know that the Liberal Party has been promising universal pharmacare and a timeline to accomplish it since 1997. The New Democrats campaigned on this issue in 2015 and worked hard to put this issue on the national stage. I am glad his government is paying attention to it.

Will Canadians see his Liberal government introduce legislation in this Parliament to establish universal, comprehensive and publicly delivered pharmacare through the single-payer system?

The Address

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it would be wonderful if all we had to do was make that decision internally in the House of Commons, on the floor of the chamber, but that is not possible. There is a need for us to work with the provinces.

I was an MLA for many years and the health care critic. The provinces have a very important role, ultimately, on health care. If we are going to have a truly national health care program in every region for all Canadians, we need to work with the provinces. That is why I said at the end of my comments that we will potentially have to make some very tough decisions, but right now there are many different stakeholders.

I am a very optimistic person on the national pharmacare plan and have been talking about it for many years. I hope to see it in place and the sooner it happens, the better.

• (1345)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I gather that my colleague really liked using the term “Conservative”. I wonder if he could use the term “Quebec” once or twice.

I would really like him to tell me when the current government plans to increase the health transfers, so that Quebec—which manages hospitals, whereas the federal government does not—can improve the care provided by hospitals. When will Quebec see investments in green technologies? When will we be able to invest in electric vehicles rather than oil, pipelines, Trans Mountain and so forth? We want to hear the term “Conservative” a little less and the term “Quebec” a little more.

What will they give Quebec?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will not disappoint the member. If he does a word search, he will find that I have also often said “Quebec” in the past. In fact, in the last budget, I gave Quebec credit as a province, because one of the initiatives it had in dealing with the environment was to have a rebate for electric cars. That is an initiative that we have adopted as a national government. Many wonderful, positive policy initiatives originate in the province of Quebec. Because of that, we have been able to ensure in some cases that it becomes a national policy.

As a confederation, we need to recognize that there are many things that happen in the different regions, and Ottawa can play a role in ensuring that some of those wonderful things, such as the electric car rebate that was brought in by Quebec, can be carried forward to other jurisdictions. Today we have the opportunity to get a national rebate and a provincial rebate in the province of Quebec, and I believe that might even have been extended to one or two other provinces.

Quebec is always a part of my thinking. After all, my historical roots ultimately go back to the province of Quebec.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech by my hon. colleague, and it seems he subscribes to the former minister of the environment's rule that if we speak loudly enough, people will believe us.

Let me say this. My province of British Columbia is the largest producer of softwood. Over 140 communities are dependent on forestry. Just two weeks ago, in one fell swoop, we saw Mosaic Forest Management go out of business. That is 2,000 jobs. The next day Canfor, the largest producer of forestry products in our country, announced curtailments all across our province. This is on top of the thousands of jobs lost over the summer and the last year, yet there was not one mention in the Speech from the Throne—not this time, not the previous time. It seems like we are going back in time.

The Liberals talk about it being the Prime Minister's job to stand up for Canadian jobs. It seems the only jobs the Liberals are standing up for are their own or SNC's. Why?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what the member is saying is not necessarily true. Does the throne speech make reference to the word “forest”? I do not believe so. Does it make reference to our industries and the importance of working hard for our industries? Yes, it does.

We have all sorts of industries. Relatively speaking, some have done better than others. Some have challenges that others might not have. When I think of forestry and industry as a whole, over the years we have had some very lively debates not only here on the floor of the House of Commons, but also within our caucus.

We have very progressive ministers. One is our Deputy Prime Minister, who is very much familiar with the issue and has a good history with respect to it, and who I believe will take the interests of that particular industry to heart and ensure, as many of my colleagues have, particularly those from B.C., the province of Quebec and others, that we continue to move forward on a very important issue that provides tens of thousands of jobs throughout the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague about the fight against tax havens.

The throne speech references this and mentions their illegal use. In my opinion, the main problem is the legal use of tax havens, especially by the banks on Bay Street.

Is it not time to make illegal that which is immoral?

The government said it is open to co-operating. Is that an avenue for collaboration?

• (1350)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as the member points out, there is a reference in the throne speech. I would remind the member across the way, as he was here in the last few years, that this government has invested close to a billion dollars in going after individuals who tried to avoid paying literally hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes to ensure that those individuals are paying their fair share. This is something the government is committed to doing and has made reference to it. I can appreciate that the member across the way raised the issue.

*The Address**[Translation]*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before I give the hon. member for La Prairie the floor for his comments, I have to let him know that he will have about 10 minutes but that I will have to interrupt him at 2 p.m. He will get the rest of his time when we resume debate.

The hon. member for La Prairie.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this being my first formal speech in the House, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my campaign volunteers, who worked so hard to get one more Bloc Québécois MP in this place. I am so grateful to them.

I am also very pleased to thank the members of my hard-working election committee, without whom it would have been hard to win this election, because the Liberal candidate was a tough opponent, I have to say.

I also want to thank my friends, who have always been there for me and who nudged me into politics and political life in the first place. It feels so good to know I have their support, and I am grateful to them for that.

Obviously, I also want to thank my family, namely my wife, without whom nothing would be possible, and my children, who were willing to share their father with Quebec politics. I am very happy that they support what I am doing, and I really appreciate it.

Lastly, I want to thank the people of La Prairie for their trust, though I have no illusions that it was just about me. The reason people put their trust in me is that they trust the Bloc Québécois and my leader. They voted for Alain Therrien, for the leader and for the party. I will work hard to represent them.

When the people in my riding do great things, that is worth celebrating. I want to salute the two hockey teams in my region. Over the weekend, they put up an amazing showing at a tournament. Since hockey is a national sport, I could not let these achievements pass without a mention.

The Étoiles du Richelieu Atom BB team won the provincial tournament in Blainville with an overtime goal. This was tough for the people of Candiac. I want to congratulate these hard-working kids, who were masterfully led by coaches Nicolas Leclerc and Martin Tétrault. There are no words to describe the parents' joy as they watched these boys hoist the cup.

I also want to congratulate the Étoiles du St-Laurent Atom AA team for making it to the finals. The team's ranking cannot overshadow its exceptional talent, energy and journey.

To wrap up my tribute to these kids, I just want to say, "Go Étoiles!"

My father always told me that if I wanted to understand reality, politics or the economy, I had to know my history. It is from history that we are able to understand and even predict future events. I would say that the throne speech is no exception to my father's advice.

The creation of Canada dates back to 1867. We need to understand why and how Canada was created to understand how it works today. Canada was not created by a mass movement or a revolution. It was not created by people taking to the streets and saying that they wanted to come together as one nation. The reason Canada was created is simple. It was a matter of economics.

In 1840, our main trading partner was Great Britain, which decided in the early 1840s to start looking to Europe to do trade. In a way, Great Britain abandoned Canada.

Discouraged at not being able to export to what some of us here would consider the motherland, Canada decided to turn to the United States. In 1854, it signed a reciprocity treaty that made it possible for Montrealers and local producers from Canada, which had not yet become Canada, to export to the United States, achieve some economies of scale and make a lot of profit.

The reciprocity treaty they signed was in place from 1854 to 1864. This treaty would not be renewed because the American Civil War broke out and Great Britain made the regrettable decision to support the South. In retaliation, the Americans told their neighbours to the north that all trade between them was at an end.

● (1355)

Seized with panic, the Fathers of Confederation decided the most important thing was to protect the wealthy and provide a market where they could sell their goods. These people created that market artificially. That is what Canada is today. It was created to make rich people happy back in 1867. That was the Fathers of Confederation's only motivation.

The new Canadian federation needed a strong central government. I can already hear the NDP and Liberal Party members clapping. They are descended directly from those founding fathers. To establish a strong government and avoid a civil war like the one to the south, which was a bad experiment if ever there was one, it was decided that all of the powers would be given to the federal government and the provinces would get the crumbs. That is what these people did.

With regard to spending, the government held on to marine transportation, customs and borders, and rail transportation. The provinces were left with a pittance: health and education. It was a pittance at the time because the clergy took care of those things. The state was not yet secular. Maybe my colleagues will infer something from that.

To ensure a strong central government, customs and excise duties were given to the federal government. The provinces were given income tax revenues, which were not very significant at the time. It was almost nothing.

Those are the foundations of Canada, our country, or rather that of my colleagues opposite. How we operate is based on those foundations. The fundamental problem is that the Fathers of Confederation could not have foreseen what was to come.

In the 1960s, health and education became the primary expenses in Canada. It is what was most important at the time. Today, half of all of Quebec's spending goes to health. The federal government is not there. The same goes for education. What was thought to be negligible at first became extremely significant. The only reason the federal government can intervene is because during Confederation in 1867, the federal government put the Canadian provinces in a position where they had to beg. Their revenues were so weak that they depended on federal transfers. They were under the control of the federal government.

In 1954, following successive attacks by the federal government to control provincial income tax, the provinces finally caved. Only one province decided to take back control because it felt it was important for its people to have a financial tool to allow it to achieve its dreams and objectives. Only Maurice Duplessis, in 1954, said he wanted to keep that system. That is another reality.

What does this mean? The throne speech mentions health, but that is not the government's concern. Health expenditures are the responsibility of the provincial governments and of Quebec. When the government starts saying that it would like to have this and that, it is not their business. What is important is for it to give the provinces and Quebec the money they need to fund their services and serve the people, who keep saying that health is their absolute priority. The government must respond to this appropriately and not in the way it did in the throne speech. That is important.

According to the Thomson report tabled in 2014, maintaining health services for Canadians in light of inflation, aging and the increase in the population, as well as progress in health technologies, required a 5.6% annual increase. However, Harper and his gang started capping the increase at 3%. That is scandalous. The provinces are asking the government for an increase of at least 5.6%. That is what it needs to give them to maintain provincial health systems. That is why it is important to increase provincial transfers and to listen to Quebec and the provinces.

• (1400)

The Speaker: The hon. member will have 10 minutes to finish his speech when we resume debate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau's government signed an agreement—

The Speaker: Order, please. I know there are a lot of new members in the House and we get carried away, but I want to remind the hon. members that when they refer to someone else in the House, they refer to he or she by riding or by title, not by proper name.

The hon. member for Fredericton.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

In 2017, the government signed an agreement with the Province of New Brunswick to invest \$299.9 million in housing for the homeless and housing security for New Brunswickers, which began

on April 1 of this year. Unfortunately, the funding seems to be trickling into the province too slowly to help the people who are desperately in need of affordable and secure housing today.

According to a CBC story from last Wednesday, 500 New Brunswickers are currently homeless and 5,000 New Brunswickers' households are waiting for an affordable housing unit to become available.

I see that the supplementary estimates are increasing funding to the CMHC by \$9 million. It is my hope that some of this funding will be spent to help those facing homelessness as we enter the coldest season of the year.

* * *

GURU NANAK

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, Sikhs across Canada and around the globe are celebrating the 550th gurburab of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji walked over 25,000 kilometres across the globe to promote social equality, fight against discrimination and help the less fortunate. He delivered his message through action and verse, treated everyone as one and believed in the equality of all.

Since 1947, millions of Sikhs were unable to visit his final home in Kartarpur, only to stare at it from across the border. However, their prayers did not go unanswered. This year Pakistan and India agreed to build a corridor from the India side of Punjab to the Pakistan side of Punjab for pilgrims to visit Guru Nanak's final home in Kartarpur, Pakistan. This corridor has now become a symbol of global co-operation and peace.

Canada has the second-largest community of Sikhs in the world, and it is truly an honour for me to rise in the House to speak on this very special event.

* * *

NORTH OKANAGAN—SHUSWAP

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour to be once again entrusted by the voters of the North Okanagan—Shuswap to be their voice in the 43rd Parliament.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition stated:

None of the seats in this chamber belong to any of us, including the Prime Minister's seat. Instead, these seats all belong to the people who sent us here, and they sent us here to get to work. Canadians sent us here to make sure the country works for them.

We all share a duty to work for a Canada that works for all Canadians, and I pledge to assist every constituent equally, regardless of partisan orientation.

Statements by Members

There are so many to thank for this honour, for it is their work and their support that made this possible: campaign teams, volunteers, staff, donors, friends, family and voters who stand with us as we strive to do our best to serve all Canadians. We take our seats for them. I am truly honoured to be here.

* * *

• (1405)

HOLODOMOR

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 86th anniversary of the Holodomor, the famine genocide in Ukraine in 1932-1933. Nineteen people per minute, 1,200 per hour and 28,000 per day were dying of famine at the height of the Holodomor. The world was silent, and millions died as a result.

My grandmother Olena was a survivor of the Holodomor, and she once told me that she hoped that the victims of the Holodomor would not only be remembered but that they would be honoured. Honouring them, she said, meant not just remembering them but learning the mistakes of the Holodomor and taking steps to make sure a crime like this would never happen again.

Unfortunately, recently a University of Alberta lecturer, Dougal MacDonald, did just the opposite. He denied the existence of the Holodomor and he called it a “lie” and a “myth”. I join the calls of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union and thousands of Canadians who have called on the university to take significant and meaningful action against this genocide denial.

Let us do as my grandmother would have asked if she were here today. Let us remember the victims, let us commemorate the victims and let us honour them.

Vichna yim pamyat.

* * *

[Translation]

UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE IN SAINT-HYACINTHE

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from this morning until December 12, the Université de Montréal faculty of veterinary medicine in Saint-Hyacinthe will be hosting a team of evaluators from the American Veterinary Medical Association as part of the process for renewing its accreditation.

This institution is the only French-language veterinary college in America. It is training 400 students for a Ph.D. in veterinary medicine and is renowned as a unique research centre and unparalleled medical complex. It makes all of Quebec proud.

The faculty lost its accreditation in 1999. It was clear that the faculty was underfunded compared with the other three veterinary colleges in the rest of Canada. My Bloc Québécois predecessor, Yvan Loubier, fought tirelessly against Ottawa's refusal to contribute its share to fund the necessary adjustments. By contrast, the great Bernard Landry's government wasted no time making significant investments.

Thanks to the Bloc's sustained efforts, the funding was granted, resulting in the faculty receiving full accreditation in 2012.

We are proud—

The Speaker: The member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

* * *

PROPANE SHORTAGE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the people of Châteauguay—Lacolle for renewing their trust in me. I would also like to thank my team of volunteers and my family, who supported me throughout the election campaign.

The propane shortage caused by the CN strike was a major blow for farmers, particularly grain farmers. People in my region and across Quebec were hard hit. I met with about a hundred of them, who had gathered outside my office on November 22 for a UPA Montréal demonstration. I want to thank the leaders of that organization for explaining both the economic and human impacts of this situation so that I could share that information with our government ministers.

We are relieved that the strike was over quickly and that the supply was restored.

I thank UPA Montréal for this peaceful visit. I look forward to continuing to work together.

* * *

[English]

CANNABIS

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying how grateful I am to the constituents of Niagara West for putting their trust in me once again. They gave me their support and confidence, and I will work hard every day to ensure their interests are brought to Parliament.

Our beautiful community of Pelham, Lincoln West, Lincoln, Grimsby, Wainfleet and part of West St. Catharines offers terrific attractions from our warm, welcoming residents. There are, however, common challenges in my riding.

First is the odour and light pollution created and produced by cannabis greenhouses. Second are the issues presented by cannabis co-ops. I heard my constituents loud and clear prior to and during the campaign. They asked me to take further action on these two issues, and I will continue to do exactly that.

I will be exploring all avenues to tackle odour and light pollution created by cannabis greenhouses, as well as ways that we can address the issues of cannabis co-ops.

I want to again thank my constituents for sending me to Ottawa to represent them and I look forward to serving them in this new 43rd Parliament.

CHANCELLOR OF DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the former member for Kings—Hants, the Hon. Scott Brison, for being named Chancellor of Dalhousie University. The graduate of Hants West Rural High succeeds the former deputy prime minister, the Hon. Anne McLellan, who was a graduate of Hants North Rural High, in the role.

It is worth noting that Mr. Brison becomes the third resident of Kings—Hants to be named chancellor at Dalhousie, after Sir Graham Day of Hantsport served in the role during the 1990s.

Education and innovation play an important role of shaping a future Canada and ensuring we remain competitive in a global economy. Scott will be an asset for Dalhousie, and I have no doubt that Scott will serve the university, Nova Scotia and Canada well in the role moving forward.

I would ask all members of the House to join me in wishing him well.

* * *

• (1410)

[Translation]

COMMUNITY OF VERNER

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in recognition of the community of Verner's 125th anniversary in 2020.

It is important to me to recognize my francophone heritage in Ontario. I would like to pay tribute to all the individuals who have played key roles in French-speaking Ontario and to our francophiles. There are those whose actions have had a detrimental effect on the growth and development of francophone communities outside Quebec.

I am proud of my Nickel Belt ancestors: my Aubin and Serré great-grandparents, who immigrated to Field and Sturgeon Falls in 1870, and my Racine and Éthier great-grandparents, who came to Verner and Cache Bay in 1880. I am proud of my grandmother, Victoire Aubin-Trudel, a descendant of the Mattawa/North Bay Algonquin First Nation.

Ontario's francophonie is deeply rooted and very much alive. I am grateful to the leaders, communities and volunteers for their dedication.

Congratulations to Verner on 125 years!

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your election.

As I rise in the House for the first time, I express my gratitude to the constituents of Yellowhead for placing their trust and confidence in me to be their representative in Ottawa.

Statements by Members

To build unity across this country, we must support each other. I want to remind the Prime Minister that he said that we all needed to work together.

I recommend that we eliminate the use of foreign oil in Canada. The majority of countries we are importing from have low environmental standards and a record of violating human rights. Instead, we should rely solely on Canadian oil to fulfill our energy needs.

Also, we need to produce more direct consumer products from all our industries, particularly agricultural and forestry. If we want to build a strong economy, we need to start at home by supporting each other.

The time for words is long past. Now is the time for action.

* * *

CAPE BRETON—CANSO

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise for the very first time in this House to address this special place as the member of Parliament for Cape Breton—Canso.

First, I would like to thank the people of Cape Breton—Canso for putting their trust in me as their voice in Ottawa. I would also like to thank the extremely dedicated group of volunteers who helped me to get here. Of course, I would like to recognize the long-serving member before me, who I know is very familiar to the House, Mr. Rodger Cuzner. I know that not only his poetry and sharp wit, but his collegiality as well, will be missed.

The past six months have been a truly remarkable experience, getting to know so many community members and leaders, knocking on thousands of doors, and making thousands and thousands of calls. I am inspired by the level of dedication and commitment I witnessed at every level within my riding.

I am ready to get to work with our Prime Minister and this government to take serious action on climate change, investing in infrastructure and jobs, implementing a universal pharmacare plan, advancing reconciliation for indigenous people and making life more affordable for Canadians. I am ready and I know everyone here is ready to move this country forward.

* * *

SIMCOE—GREY

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Simcoe—Grey for putting their trust in me as their member of Parliament. It is an amazing honour. I also want to thank my wife Colleen and my daughters, Lexi and Sarah. Their love and support have been so valuable throughout this whole time.

Statements by Members

Simcoe—Grey is one of the largest and greatest ridings in the country. We are blessed with a diverse economy, from the Honda Canada manufacturing plant in Alliston to productive farms and orchards throughout. We are a year-round tourist destination, from skiing at Blue Mountain to Canada's longest freshwater beach at Wasaga Beach. We are also home to Canadian Forces Base Borden, the largest military training base in Canada. As such, one of my top priorities will be ensuring that current armed forces members get the right equipment and that they and all of our veterans get the treatment they rightly deserve.

* * *

● (1415)

NIAGARA FALLS

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a tremendous honour it is for me to be standing in my place making my first remarks as the newly elected member of Parliament for the riding of Niagara Falls.

First, I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your recent election. I look forward to working with you and all hon. members of the House as we work to serve the needs and interests of all Canadians across this great country.

On the day of my swearing in, I was honoured to have the Clerk of the House conduct my ceremony. His words of advice that day were to enjoy the moment and realize what an honour, privilege and responsibility it is to serve. They resonate with me still.

I would like to thank the good people of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake for sending me here to represent them. I stand here today humbled by their decision and for the trust they have placed in me. For a young man who always dreamed this day could one day be possible, I will never forget this moment and the tremendous responsibility they have now placed on me to represent them.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, solving the national housing crisis is one of the most important issues that we face. I have long advocated access to safe, secure, affordable housing as a basic human right.

In 1993, the federal Liberals cancelled the national social housing program. That one action caused Canada to lose more than half a million units of social and co-op housing that would otherwise have been built in communities all across the country. Having those units would have put Canada's housing affordability in a dramatically different position than where we are today. In East Vancouver, the situation is so severe that we have had a tent city in Oppenheimer Park for more than a year.

Solving the homelessness crisis is entirely possible. If people can go to the moon, surely we can actually get housing built. During the election, the NDP called for half a million units of affordable housing to be built and for those funds to flow now. I believe that the federal government must step up and do its part. We need to work

with the cities, the province and non-profits to get the housing built. Together, we can end homelessness.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging the people of Thérèse-De Blainville and thanking them for putting their trust in me. I especially want to acknowledge Émilie Sansfaçon, who is here with us and who received two cancer diagnoses in the same year.

Two cancers is too much for anyone. Apparently, it is too much for the employment insurance system as well. Employment insurance sickness benefits max out at 15 weeks. If treatments last longer, then that is too bad for the sick person. If, for those like Émilie, cancer strikes twice, then they have to make do without EI assistance, even though they have contributed to it their entire adult life. Émilie had to remortgage her home and got into debt; she had to rely on her family for help because she cannot count on us.

When we face adversity, we can give up or we can fight. Émilie Sansfaçon chose to fight, as did Marie-Hélène Dubé, who has been fighting for 10 years. We can fix this problem once and for all. We just need to extend—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

* * *

[*English*]

MISSION—MATSQUI—FRASER CANYON

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I stand for the first time as the member of Parliament for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

During the election I asked voters to consider the following, which bears repeating:

Was I open, transparent and accessible? Did I do my honest part to build positive relationships with indigenous communities? Did I fight for key sectors of our economy, such as the struggling forestry sector? Did I advocate for needed infrastructure such as the Mission sewage pipeline? Did I fight for a cleaner environment to protect the Fraser River for future generations? Did I fight for a more accountable federal government? Was I there when people really needed my help?

I ask the entire electorate of my riding to hold me to these standards. I stand here to serve them. I thank them for this honour.

* * *

HULL—AYLMER

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we begin this 43rd Parliament, where 338 women and men take their place to better represent Canadians across the country, I would like to make a modest proposal.

• (1420)

[Translation]

To all of my parliamentary colleagues: we need to listen more carefully to one another. Too often in the House, we cut each other off and bicker, when we should be taking the time to listen to each other more.

Being an MP is one of the greatest privileges one can have. We all worked very hard to earn our place here in the House of Commons, where legendary figures have stood before us.

[English]

Let us honour the choices made by our constituents and respect each other more. Let us listen to each other. It is only by doing so that we will all build a better Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that the economy is doing well, but that is not true. Last month, 71,000 Canadians lost their jobs, and personal bankruptcies were at an all-time high. Half of Canadians are less than \$200 away from insolvency.

Will the economic statement include tax cuts for small businesses, reductions in red tape and a plan to balance the budget?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize just how much families have suffered and how many people have lost jobs in recent years.

This is why we will continue to invest in helping these families. We realize that even though the economy is doing well and we have created more than one million jobs over the past four years, not everyone has benefited.

This is why we have chosen to invest in families, invest in communities and cut taxes. This is the first thing we did when we came to power in 2015, and it is the first thing we are going to do now. We will cut taxes for the Canadians who need it most.

[English]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last time the Prime Minister promised to lower taxes, he actually raised them for the majority of the population.

The failed economic policies of the Prime Minister have left Canadians with an economy that is not working for anyone. Businesses are leaving Canada and foreign direct investment has dropped by 56% under the government. Government spending is out of control. Canada's debt is ballooning and we are on the edge of a recession.

Will the Prime Minister act and provide a fall economic update that includes a plan to balance the budget so that businesses will stay in Canada?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, instead of talking down the Canadian economy, on this side of the aisle we are focused on investing in it. The very first thing we did in 2015, and the member opposite remembers it well, was to lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%.

Today, we are doing exactly the same thing. We are lowering taxes for tens of millions of Canadians to lift tens of thousands of Canadians out of poverty and let hundreds of thousands more no longer pay any income taxes. We know that supporting Canadians, investing in the economy and lowering taxes for people who need it is the way to continue serving this great country into the future.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister who is actively working to constrain Canada's economy and this approach has left Canada on the brink of a recession. Canada's productivity and competitiveness continue to decline. Wages have barely increased, the U.S. economy has outgrown Canada's in three of the last four years, five of the G8 countries have lower unemployment rates than Canada and we lost 71,000 jobs last month.

When will the Prime Minister open his eyes, stop doubling down on failed policies and just change course?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision we made four years ago and the decision we continue to make is to invest in Canadians who need support, invest in our communities and invest in a brighter future for all. That is exactly what we have been doing. It is what we will continue to do.

The next step of that and the very first thing we are doing today is announcing that we will be lowering taxes, as promised, for tens of millions of Canadians, lifting 40,000 people out of poverty, making sure that hundreds of thousands of Canadians no longer have to pay any income taxes. This is help for Canadians at a time when they need it.

* * *

• (1425)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are mindful that this could be the second Christmas that Canadian citizens Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig spend in a Chinese prison. All Canadians stand in solidarity with their families and friends and we must send a signal that such conduct by the Chinese is unacceptable.

What steps will the Prime Minister take to show that diplomatic hostage-taking is unacceptable for a world power?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our heart goes out to the two Canadians detained in China unjustly. Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor have spent a long time in detention in China. We think of their families, we think of their communities. We think of their loved ones, but we also stay focused on them, as we have over the past year.

We have continued to engage directly, including myself directly with President Xi, to highlight how important it is to bring these Canadians home. We will continue to work very hard, as I know all Canadians will, to send that clear message that those Canadians must be returned home.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members that the hon. member for Durham is asking questions and is trying to hear the answers. I do not want him to be disrupted, so I do not want anybody to shout from either side while the question is being asked or the answer is coming forward.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago this week, thousands of Canadians were fighting to defend Hong Kong in the Battle of Hong Kong during the Second World War. In the last few months, millions of Hong Kongers have taken to the streets to protest the erosion of their rights under the one country, two systems agreement with mainland China. Canadians value liberty. We have 300,000 Canadian citizens in Hong Kong and we have spilled blood there as a nation. Will the Prime Minister stand in this House today to show his support for the civil liberties of Hong Kongers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear over the past months in our support for the people of Hong Kong in defence of their human rights. We have been long-standing supporters of the one country, two systems principle and the rule of law. We have been calling consistently for a de-escalation of violence and hostilities and have asked the authorities to engage in a respectful and non-violent manner with the citizens of Hong Kong, including those 300,000 Canadians for whom we are very concerned.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope you have a great week.

Let us imagine that I have a cousin named Marcel who works in a plant. The plant closes down. Marcel has paid into EI and is entitled to up to 50 weeks of benefits, assuming he paid the necessary premiums.

Émilie is with us today. She is sick. She has cancer. She is entitled to 15 weeks of benefits, even though she too paid into EI. There is some talk of making it 26 weeks, but that would still be unfair, because fairness would mean 50.

Does the Prime Minister agree that this situation raises serious issues of compassion and fairness?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that far too many Canadians are grappling with serious illnesses and are worried about being able to get the treatment they need and relying on family. We know that it is important to increase EI benefits for the sick. We know that many, many families are suffering because of this. We are going to work to increase EI sickness benefits, as we promised.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given the time that could be allocated to us, we may end up doing something that might not be sufficient. I am asking the Prime Minister clearly whether he will consider 50 weeks in order to be fair.

Talking about 35 million people does not prove that a person is compassionate, but talking to one person can. I therefore invite the Prime Minister to meet with Émilie this afternoon. She has travelled to Ottawa to meet the Prime Minister. Will he meet with her?

The Speaker: Before I recognize the Prime Minister, I would like to remind members, many of whom are new, that they are not to make reference to people in the gallery.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all doing our job here in the House of Commons to properly represent and especially serve millions of Canadians, who all have their own challenges. I am always very happy to meet with people we can serve better, to listen to their priorities and to learn from their stories.

I will do everything I can not only to meet with her, but also to help her with the problems that she and many other Canadians are currently experiencing.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal tax plan will not help 47% of Canadians, but we have a plan that will help them.

[English]

By targeting the measure to help only those who need it most, we can free up \$1.6 billion to fund a national dental care program. This would help 4.3 million Canadians and save our health care system millions of dollars.

[Translation]

Will the Prime Minister do what is necessary to help those most in need?

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the middle-class tax cut we are putting forward today will not only lift tens of thousands of people out of poverty, it will allow hundreds of thousands more to not have to pay income taxes at all. We know that by lowering taxes for around 20 million Canadians, we will make an appreciable difference in the lives of many people. This is the focus we are taking. This is the commitment we made to Canadians during the election campaign. We certainly hope to see support from all sides of the House on this measure.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, fine words cannot hide the facts.

[English]

In opposition, the Prime Minister condemned Stephen Harper's cuts to health care.

[Translation]

Now he is making the same cuts to health care, and he has given \$14 billion to the richest corporations.

[English]

We are in a health care crisis right now. Will the Prime Minister commit today to increase health care funding to help out people, or is he too busy helping out his corporate friends?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last mandate we were pleased to work out health transfers with the provinces. We signed agreements with all 10 provinces and three territories to move forward on funding for health care on things like home care, mental health services and others.

We know there is more to do, which is why we allocated \$6 billion in our electoral platform for investments in our health care system, including things like universal pharmacare. We will continue to work with the provinces and invest. This year, we are spending \$40 billion in health care transfers to the provinces.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families in western Canada are desperate. Jobs are being lost and people are feeling completely hopeless. The throne speech was a chance for the Prime Minister to show western Canadians that he understands the struggles they are going through, that he cares and that he was prepared to act, but that did not happen. Not only is the Prime Minister ignoring the crisis, but he is moving ahead with destructive policies like his no-more-pipelines bill.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the path he is on when it comes to addressing the concerns of western Canadians is taking all of us in this country in the wrong direction?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to assure the members opposite and all Canadians that our government takes very seriously the economic challenges that the Canadian Prairies are facing. If I may, I would like to quote Premier Kenney, who said at lunchtime today that he believes a strong Alberta is essential for a strong Canada, and I would add a strong Manitoba and a strong Saskatchewan.

We will achieve that if all of us in this House—

The Speaker: The hon. opposition House leader.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the crisis that is being ignored is not only in Alberta and Saskatchewan. There is a crisis going on with forestry workers in British Columbia. Mills are shutting down and people are out of work, but there is no mention of a softwood lumber deal in the Speech from the Throne. At every turn, and we just saw it, these Liberals are turning a blind eye to half of this country. This is no way to lead this great nation.

When will the Prime Minister start acting in the interests of all Canadians, not just those he is trying to get votes from?

• (1435)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, our government made over \$1.49 billion in funding and financing available to the forest sector, we launched our softwood lumber action plan to support workers and communities and we introduced funding through the strategic innovation fund specifically for forestry.

Building on our work to date, we will be including additional investments to help this sector innovate, diversify and grow.

The Speaker: I just want to say that some members have wonderful voices that carry very well. They just do not realize how strong their voices are. I am sure they are just whispering to the person next to them, so I just want to remind them to whisper even lower.

[Translation]

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech clearly shows that the Liberals are only spouting rhetoric and not taking concrete action to meet Quebec's specific demands.

Even more surprising, the Bloc Québécois has agreed to fully support this throne speech, even though it pushed hard for Quebec's demands during the election campaign.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what he plans to do to specifically address the Quebec government's demands?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we work very well with the Government of Quebec, whether on culture, infrastructure or the environment.

There are 25 Quebec members in this place who love Quebec and stand up for Quebec.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, there were calls for a single tax return for Quebecers, a third link for the greater Quebec City area, and a solution to the problem of illegal border crossings.

On Friday, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities suggested that there is no third link project in the greater Quebec City area. However, the Quebec government earmarked \$350 million for that project in its last budget.

The people of Quebec need to know where they stand, so can the Prime Minister tell us whether he supports the third link project for the greater Quebec City area, yes or no?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being in Quebec City last week, along with the Deputy Prime Minister. We had some excellent discussions on a wide range of topics with Mayor Labeaume and ministers from the Quebec government.

The day after our visit, I felt that the press reports properly reflected the Canadian government's willingness to work collaboratively with both the City of Quebec and the Government of Quebec for the well-being of all Quebecers.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund produced real results for the lake by improving water quality and restoring wildlife, but with more still to do, the Liberals cancelled the fund in 2017. After Canada's Conservatives committed to bringing it back, the Liberals finally followed suit. At least they know what a good idea is when they see one.

However, it looks like just another example of all talk and no action. There was no response to my letter to the Prime Minister and no mention in the throne speech.

Will the Liberal government restore the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has invested significant dollars in water, in cleaning up water in the Great Lakes, in Lake Winnipeg and in lakes and rivers across the country.

We will continue to move forward to ensure that we are ensuring that water quality is safe and is effective on a go-forward basis.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, canola farmers in my riding and across the country have had a difficult year under the Liberals. They are in a desperate position because of lost access to markets in China, a railway strike and the higher cost of drying their oilseeds and grain because of the carbon tax. There are also three million acres of canola still buried by snow, yet last week's throne speech made no mention whatsoever of addressing this crisis.

Why do the Liberals not have a plan to help these struggling canola farmers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government always stood shoulder to shoulder with our farmers and ranchers from the very beginning. We have reopened the market in China for beef and pork and we are working very hard to reopen the market for canola.

We are also making improvements to the business risk management programs because we know that the risks that our farmers are facing are different regarding commercial disruption as well, and we are working on that.

* * *

● (1440)

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, surveys ask the same question every election and always get the same answer. Health is Quebecers' number one priority. Quebec and every province heard the will of their residents. Last week, they all demanded a 5.2% increase in health transfers.

Will the government respect the priority of Quebec, the provinces, and above all, the people?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our health care system is a symbol of pride, and we are making the necessary investments to keep it that way.

This year, more than \$40 billion will go to the provinces and territories to support our health care system. We continue to work with the provinces and territories to ensure that our system meets the needs of people across the country.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a 5.2% increase in health transfers is the bare minimum needed to care for Quebecers. We need money to hire much-needed nurses and doctors. We need money to improve quality of life for our seniors. We need money for home care.

Will the government listen to Quebecers and increase health transfers to 5.2%?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that our health care system is a symbol of who we are as Canadians, and we have been making significant investments to keep it strong. This year, for example, we will provide over \$40 billion to the provinces and territories to support the system, over \$6 billion more than the Harper Conservatives' last year in office. This is accompanied by our \$11 billion investment in mental health and home care services, the largest in Canadian history.

We are going to continue to work hard together to make sure that our health care system delivers for all Canadians so they have equal access to quality care close to home.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we will not get an answer on the 5.2%.

Quebeckers are demanding an increase in health transfers. This is why the Bloc Québécois moved an amendment to the amendment to the throne speech to include an increase. We also added a clause about imposing royalties on web giants. We specified that trade agreements must not breach the supply management system anymore. In addition, our amendment to the amendment states that the government must respect Quebec's environmental protection and land use planning laws. These are all priorities for Quebec.

Will the government vote in favour of our amendment to the amendment to include these priorities in the throne speech, yes or no?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very aware of the demands of the Government of Quebec. We are good at working with others.

Earlier, I responded to my colleague's question on several files, including culture, infrastructure and the environment. It is clear to this government that the whole cultural issue and the importance of investing in our creators, artists and artisans are fundamental to what we do.

The government has invested more in culture than any other government in the history of Canada. In discussions, as I told my colleague, we are always prepared to look at others' ideas.

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Huawei and other Chinese telecommunications firms have been deemed a risk by Canadian national security experts. China is known to have hacked Canadian companies and governments and spread disinformation in our own country. China is not acting like a friend or a partner. We know that Huawei is a real threat that could compromise our Internet communications.

When will the Liberal government finally make the decision to ban Huawei?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while it is entirely inappropriate to speak of a particular company, a very thorough examination of the associated security and economic considerations in the 5G decision is well under way. We want to make sure that Canadians have access to the most beneficial 5G technology and, at the same time, we will make sure that Canadians are safe and that their systems will not be compromised.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, it is entirely appropriate to speak of Huawei. Our four Five Eyes allies banned the Chinese giant from the rollout because they perceive Huawei as a threat to national security and privacy.

Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States banned Huawei. The Americans even warned us that Huawei could be a problem and would be required to give personal information to the Chinese government.

When will the Liberals ban Huawei? Would they rather see Canadians' personal information in the hands of the Chinese?

• (1445)

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government takes the security of Canada's telecommunication networks very seriously. Since 2013, the Canadian security review program has worked to mitigate the cybersecurity risks that stem from designated equipment and services, including the companies mentioned.

We will continue to work with telecommunication service providers and the vendors through this collaborative program to mitigate the security concerns. We will examine all security, economic and global considerations when making this determination.

The Speaker: When the hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis asked a question, I was having a hard time hearing the answer. I want to remind everyone not to shout across the floor when someone is answering a question. Again, as I said when we first started, what if members' children are watching? We do not want to be embarrassed.

The hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the voters of Cloverdale—Langley City for the honour of serving them in the House as their member of Parliament.

The recently defeated former minister of public safety, Ralph Goodale, had promised a decision on whether to ban Huawei before the recent election. Then he flip-flopped and said it would come immediately after. Here we are: Canada's allies have found serious security concerns about Huawei.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals do the right thing to protect Canadians from Chinese espionage and immediately ban Huawei from Canada's 5G network?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite and every member of the House that our national security agencies work tirelessly to identify all security threats and to protect Canadian interests. Our government respects scientific integrity, but we will continue to listen carefully to the advice of our public security officials as we make this important decision for Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a very proud Albertan, and my family has been among the proud workers who have helped build our province and our country for generations. Now these same workers are struggling, but the government is not listening. The government needs to commit to working with Albertans to diversify our economy and to help create new jobs. The federal government can help people who have lost their jobs, before they lose hope.

When will Albertans finally get the support they deserve?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have invested more than \$500 million in our western diversification agency, but we know that we have to do more and we know that we have to be there for the workers of western Canada.

It will be a pleasure to work with my colleague on this file.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, workers in Alberta need new jobs in a new economy. It is time to take action.

Speaking of inaction, the Liberals dragged their heels for years, refusing to go after web giants that do not pay their fair share and believe they are above the law. This is hurting our artists. It is hurting our creators, our businesses and our regional media.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage is just getting to know his new portfolio, but can he provide any assurance right now that, come January, he will have a clear plan for keeping his promise and taxing web giants?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I would like to take a moment to thank the voters of Laurier—Sainte-Marie who did me the great honour of choosing me to represent them in the House. I also want to congratulate you on your election, Mr. Speaker.

I want to reassure my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. Our position is clear: anyone who profits from the system must contribute to it. We must protect our culture online, like everywhere

else. Our laws predate the Internet, and we made a commitment to update them. That is what we will do. We made a commitment to do so in the first year of our term.

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FINANCE

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the people of Vimy for doing me the honour of letting me be their member of Parliament.

[English]

This morning, the finance minister tabled a notice of ways and means motion that proposes to lower taxes for the middle class and people working hard to join it by increasing the basic personal amount to \$15,000 by 2023.

● (1450)

[Translation]

Can the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity tell the House what this change means for middle-class families?

[English]

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as our first order of business, we are lowering taxes for the middle class and people working hard to join it, in the member's riding of Vimy and all across the country.

[Translation]

Starting in 2020, this change will put more money in the pockets of Canadians by increasing the amount of money they can earn before paying federal income tax. Once this measure is fully implemented in 2023, it should allow nearly 20 million Canadians to save hundreds of dollars in taxes every year.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the Prime Minister's time in office, Canada's status on the world stage has taken more hits than one could imagine. Whether he is dancing his way through India or suggesting that he admires China's basic dictatorship, the Prime Minister has embarrassed Canada every step of the way.

Last week, the Prime Minister was caught mocking the leader of our closest ally and biggest trading partner behind his back like a high school gossip. The Prime Minister is being parodied on network television.

When will the Prime Minister grow up and start taking his role seriously?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member and all Canadians that, thanks very much to the Prime Minister's work, we have an excellent working relationship with our American neighbours. Let me say that in the lives of ordinary Canadians, there is perhaps no issue in our relationship with the United States that matters more than trade.

The Prime Minister raised the ratification of the new NAFTA and other trade issues in his meeting last week with the President and we have been working intensively, including having many conversations over the weekend and this morning with our American partners, on getting the deal finalized.

* * *

[Translation]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seeing as this is my first time speaking in the House, I want to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for re-electing me. It is a privilege to represent them.

The Prime Minister went to another international summit and, as usual, there was another diplomatic incident. Meanwhile, our trade agreements and relations are paying the price, and our industries are suffering. While we wait for an agreement on softwood lumber to be signed, our forestry industry hangs in the balance.

How does the Prime Minister think his latest blunder will help our already struggling forestry industry?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure my hon. colleague and all Canadians that our relations with our neighbours to the south are excellent, especially with regard to international trade.

I want to make it clear to all my colleagues and all Canadians that Canada has better access to the American market than any other country in the world today. This gives Canadians a major advantage, and we need to continue this important work.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister says liquefied natural gas is a long way off from helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions. LNG can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by replacing coal-generated electricity's 60 to 90 megatonnes annually, the equivalent of 10% of Canada's annual greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention all the jobs it is going to create.

Why is the minister looking down on LNG when the minister should be trying to promote it?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what my hon. colleague refers to is the discussions under article 6 that are going on at the Conference of the Parties in Madrid, which I and members of all the other parties in the House are attending for the rest of this week.

Oral Questions

The focus of the discussions on article 6 is to set in place a framework to allow us to establish the basis for trade between parties. It is important that those are transparent, that there is no double-counting and that there is integrity to the system.

We are focused on ensuring that the architecture is in place to enable us to look at an emissions trading system, but the first step is to ensure that it is real.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, liquefied natural gas represents a great opportunity for Canada to be a world leader in clean energy, job creation and the global fight against climate change. However, the environment minister now says we have to be very careful with LNG.

Last month, 18,000 British Columbians lost their jobs. LNG is an amazing opportunity to help people get back to work.

Instead of the minister thumbing his nose at new jobs, why will he not stand up and defend LNG?

• (1455)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the first step in this process is to ensure that we have in place rules that are real. Climate change is real. If we are going to allow for emissions trading in this world, it needs to be under a system that has integrity, so that there is no double-counting and that there is transparency in the system.

At the end of the day, the focus for all of us coming out of the election should be fighting climate change and ensuring we are doing our part from a domestic perspective to meet the targets to which we committed to our international partners. That is exactly what this government is going to do.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were all moved by Friday's ceremony to commemorate the anti-feminist attack at the École Polytechnique.

Thirty years ago, the lives of 14 women were cut short simply because they were women. However, 30 years later, the weapon used against them is still available. It is not even a restricted weapon. The Prime Minister said that these weapons have no place in our communities.

Will the government intervene to prohibit the weapon that was used to kill 14 women at the École Polytechnique?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has worked tirelessly over the past four years to better keep illegal guns off our streets by passing Bill C-71.

Oral Questions

Much more needs to be done. In particular, we have spoken about the presence of military-style assault weapons that have no place in Canadian society. They are designed for the battlefield and not for our communities. For more than four decades, police chiefs across the country have been calling for the banning of these weapons. We heard the most compelling and heartfelt testimony from the victims of the terrible crime at École Polytechnique just on Friday.

We will continue to listen to Canadians and we will have more to say about the next steps in the very near future.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, someone needs to stop listening and do his job.

We have been talking about this for 30 years. It is time to take action. The government can do it. We support the government in its desire to ban assault weapons, but the weapon used to kill 14 young women in a school in 1989 must be added to the list of prohibited weapons.

Will the government commit to prohibiting the Ruger Mini-14 and implement a buyback program for those who own such a weapon?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope that in the coming days everyone in the House will have an opportunity to do his or her job and to keep Canadians safe.

We are compiling a list of those weapons that will meet the definition of military-style assault weapons and it will be published at the appropriate time.

I would simply remind the member opposite that would we release the names of those weapons prior to the publication of that order in council, it would merely precipitate a surge of sales in the market, which is something no one wants to see happen.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families across western Canada are hurting. People in my riding tell me their stories about losing their jobs and being forced to sell their homes. In the last two years, over \$100 billion worth of investments in the energy sector have been cancelled.

Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines bill, is going to make that even worse. Hundreds of thousands Canadians are out of work because of failed Liberal policies. Many premiers are united against Bill C-69.

When will the Liberals listen and amend their job-killing legislation?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly all Canadians are worried about the economic issues that are faced by the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Impact Assessment Act, which is now in force, was intended to enable projects to move speedily

through the environmental assessment program so good projects could be built. It is far superior legislation to what was put into place in 2012, which has resulted in numerous project delays.

It is important for us that we have a process that will protect the environment, that will enable strong, robust economies across the country, and that is exactly what the Impact Assessment Act does.

• (1500)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after four years of this Liberal government, Canada has never been so divided. The problem is that the provinces have been pitted against one another and what was just local and quaint at the time, that is “Wexit”, has now become a compelling political reality.

The government is doing absolutely nothing to resolve this situation. Even worse, 200,000 Canadians have lost their jobs in the energy sector. One way to get these people back to work would be to scrap Bill C-69.

Why does the government not do that? The bill was condemned by the Government of Quebec.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Impact Assessment Act kept an important promise that we made to Canadians, and that is to reform a broken system and restore public confidence in how decisions are made about major projects.

The best rules that we put in place to review major projects will cut assessment times in half, increase transparency, protect the environment and encourage investment.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Prime Minister said he was open to “making improvements if necessary” to his anti-energy, anti-business Bill C-69. We assure him that it is necessary, because more than 200,000 Canadians have already lost their oil and gas jobs, over \$100 billion in major projects are gone and those losses hurt all sectors in all provinces.

However, last spring, the Liberals rejected 80% of amendments to fix the bill. Today, every single premier still wants major changes.

When will the Liberals finally overhaul their Bill C-69?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Impact Assessment Act has been put in place to ensure that good projects can move ahead, that we can ensure that the environment is protected, that good projects proceed and that investments proceed. It is a far superior process to what was put in place when Stephen Harper gutted the environmental assessment process in 2012. It will ensure that good projects proceed.

This morning I had the opportunity to meet with the minister of environment for Alberta. We discussed this issue. We have been consistent in saying that we are open to how we actually implement that. We will work together with all provinces and territories from coast to coast to coast.

* * *

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, “Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy” is the single most important change in national homelessness agenda for over 20 years, and we are seeing the positive results across Canada. Although we have made great progress, we know there is still work to be done.

Could the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development please explain to the House how we will achieve our goal of reducing the number of chronically homeless people in Canada by 50%?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his hard work in the fight against homelessness. When any member of our society ends up on the street, we are all diminished. That is why our redesign strategy has doubled funding in the fight against homelessness by 2021, and we are making more communities eligible for this important funding.

While there is still work to do, “Reaching Home”, Canada’s first-ever national housing strategy, will enable us to not only meet but hopefully exceed our already ambitious homelessness reduction targets.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 17, the Liberals broke faith with our friends in Israel and the Jewish community and took part in the annual Israel bashing at the UN.

The foreign affairs minister is quoted as saying that everyone knows why Canada voted the way it did on Israel at the UN. However, the Jewish community and our friends in Israel cannot figure it out. They obviously did not get the memo.

Could the minister please explain why he decided to vote against the only democracy in the Middle East and our friends?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I am rising in the House this session, I would like to thank the people of Burlington for re-electing me.

I am incredibly proud that Canada is one of Israel’s strongest allies at the UN and many other international organizations. We are opposed to efforts that unfairly single out Israel for criticism and seek to isolate it internationally. We agree that there are too many resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have called on the international community to channel its efforts toward helping both sides to resume direct negotiations and work toward achieving a lasting peace for both peoples.

• (1505)

Oral Questions

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Grassy Narrows First Nation in my riding of Kenora have been suffering with the effects of mercury contamination for decades. In 2017, the government promised a treatment centre to support the community. It is now nearly 2020 and we have still seen no action.

Could the Minister of Indigenous Services please tell the House when the government will finally deliver on its promise and deliver support for this community?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to congratulate the member opposite on his election and, importantly, his advocacy in this matter.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to have met with Chief Turtle last week. We had a good, productive conversation. In the meeting, I reiterated my commitment and that of the Prime Minister’s to building a mercury treatment facility, and that funding is not an obstacle.

We share a will to move forward, and I look forward to working with Chief Turtle and the community to get this facility built. I will have an update for the House in short order.

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TAXATION

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since this is the first time I am rising in the House, I would like to thank the constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country and to have earned their trust.

Small business is the backbone of our economy, and it certainly is in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country. I have personally spoken to thousands of business owners who have been affected by the Liberals’ failed tax policies.

Families are paying more in taxes and are struggling just to get by. In B.C. alone, my province, 18,000 jobs were lost last month. Businesses are paying more taxes to invest due to the passive investment changes.

Will the Liberals’ economic update include tax cuts for small business?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the member to the House and let her know that in the last Parliament we did reduce taxes on middle-class Canadians. We also reduced taxes on small businesses.

Oral Questions

We were so pleased today to move forward with the next tax break for 20 million Canadians, which we know is important. People are dealing with economic anxieties and we are trying to ensure they have more money to raise their families and to lead their lives.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Many veterans in my riding have told me how disappointed they were when the previous government cancelled the veterans service card. The card is a way to recognize our brave men and women for their sacrifices and their service to our country.

[English]

Thanks to their advocacy, our government reintroduced the veteran's service card last year. Could the minister please update the House on the status of the card?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the people of Cardigan for electing me for the 10th consecutive time. It is a great honour indeed to serve the people of Cardigan. I also want to congratulate my colleague for Orléans for being elected.

I can assure the member that the veterans card is now available for every Canadian Forces member who has been honourably released and to anyone who has completed basic training.

I encourage all veterans to apply for theirs today so they continue to link with veteran communities and be recognized for their valuable service.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding and across B.C., the forestry industry supports over 140,000 jobs. However, this year, sawmill shutdowns have created uncertainty for many families. Now thousands more workers will be without work over Christmas, and the federal government is missing in action.

At the very least, will the minister commit to come to B.C. and meet with local leaders? Will he work with us to ensure greater flexibility in the EI system so we can bring support and certainty to B.C. families?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, I already have had the pleasure of sitting down just last week with the B.C. minister of forestry. We will continue to work together on programs like the indigenous forestry initiative, which supported 15 indigenous forest-based economic developments just last year. These investments are supporting diversification and innovation, while boosting the long-term competitiveness of the industry. Most important, they are creating and maintaining jobs for hard-working Canadians in our forestry sector and the families that rely on those jobs.

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, in a recent speech to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities said that infrastructure must be more resilient to climate change.

• (1510)

[English]

I was glad to hear this. At home, in my riding of Fredericton, we have faced the dreadful consequences of some of the worst flooding of the Wolastoq river, known as the Saint John, in recent memory. We have certainly not seen the last of this seasonal flooding. We need to effectively adapt to the effects of the climate crisis.

My question for the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities is this. How is she planning to use the green municipal fund in New Brunswick to ensure that my constituents will stop suffering from the effects of these now recurring and predictable floods?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really important, as we build infrastructure for the next 50 to 100 years, that we consider the impacts of climate change. We know what the science is. We need resilient infrastructure. We need to be protecting communities. We need to also build in a way that reduces emissions.

I look forward to working with the member opposite. Through the green infrastructure fund, there is also the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund to help support efforts to keep the residents of Fredericton safe.

[Translation]

The Speaker: That brings us to the end of question period.

The hon. member for Mirabel on a point of order.

Mr. Simon Marcil: Mr. Speaker, I do not want there to be any confusion. I respect your position. I even put on a tie for you today.

When I asked a question earlier, I was talking about the government not doing its job, not you.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Mirabel for the apology. I appreciate it. I know that members can get emotional in the House and directly address someone. This was a good lesson for everyone in the House, and we all learned something.

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Ranj Pillai, Deputy Premier for Yukon, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Minister of Economic Development, and Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker: Following my election as Speaker, I have consulted with the leaders of the recognized parties regarding the nomination of the other Chair occupants. I am prepared to propose, for the ratification of the House, a candidate for the position of Deputy Speaker and chair of committee of the whole.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 7, I propose Mr. Stanton for the position of Deputy Speaker and chair of committee of the whole.

Motion deemed moved and seconded.

[English]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

JUDICIAL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS COMMISSION

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, “Report and recommendations” from the Judicial Compensation and Benefits Commission.

* * *

[English]

FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2017-18 annual report of the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.

Routine Proceedings

• (1515)

PETITIONS

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have an opportunity today to table four petitions. The first petition is in support of bills that were in the last Parliament, Bills C-350 and S-240. These bills deal with the scourge of forced organ trafficking. The petitioners are no doubt disappointed that those bills did not pass in the last Parliament, despite having a lot of support, and are hopeful that similar bills will be able to move forward and finally become law in this Parliament.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from those who are concerned about the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. It asks Parliament and the government to establish measures to stop the regime's mass murder of innocent people for their organs. It also calls for the government to use every opportunity to raise the issue of the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

AFGHAN MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition draws the attention of the House to the challenges being faced by Afghanistan's religious minorities, particularly in this case the Sikh and Hindu communities in Afghanistan. It calls for the foreign affairs minister to continually raise this issue with his Afghan counterparts. It also calls for the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to use the powers granted to him to create a special program to help persecuted minorities in Afghanistan be sponsored directly to Canada.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition is to highlight the plight of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers in Thailand. It asks the Government of Canada to raise this matter with the government of Thailand. It also seeks to address how the issue of refugee status conferred by the UNHCR can be a particular challenge for refugees in this situation, because the conferral of that status is dependent on the good graces of the country in which the application is made.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first time being recognized in the House, I want to thank the good people of Peace River—Westlock for putting their faith in me to represent them in Ottawa once again. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election as Speaker. I know this will be a prosperous Parliament because of that.

I too would like to present a petition today, calling for the passage of Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. These bills were introduced in the last Parliament. They passed unanimously through the last Parliament, but were unable to be declared into law. We look forward to reintroducing them and having them pass swiftly through this Parliament.

The Address

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this being my first time standing in this House, I want to thank the electors of West Nova for the honour that they have bestowed upon me. I look forward to addressing them more appropriately in a speech or reply.

Forced organ harvesting and trafficking is a growing global problem that requires urgent action. I am pleased to table a petition from Canadians who are looking for this Parliament to finally take action on forced organ harvesting and to make it a criminal offence to go abroad and receive an organ taken without consent.

JUSTICE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present an electronic petition that was signed by over 1,100 Canadians from coast to coast, from British Columbia right through to Newfoundland and Labrador and up to the territories. I would like to thank Lesslie Askin, a local constituent, who is the instigator behind this petition.

The petitioners, as residents and citizens of Canada, call upon the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons to completely waive all solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidentiality so that the member for Vancouver Granville may speak openly about the SNC-Lavalin matter, and to launch a public inquiry under Canada's Inquiries Act into whether the Prime Minister's Office or the Prime Minister politically interfered in the court case against SNC-Lavalin.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition to support Bill C-350 and Bill S-240 from the 42nd Parliament. Petitioners want the 43rd Parliament to be one that finally takes action on forced organ harvesting and passes these bills.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition in support of Bill C-350 and Bill S-240 from the previous Parliament. These bills received unanimous consent in both Houses, but did not pass in identical form and thus the law was not changed.

Petitioners hope to see this Parliament be the one that finally takes action on forced organ harvesting.

• (1520)

WILD SALMON

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today to save the wild salmon, and specifically, to act on the precautionary principle and immediately implement all 75 recommendations made by Justice Cohen to save the Pacific salmon by removing Fisheries and Oceans Canada's mandate to promote salmon farming, to remove salmon farming from migratory routes and to look at prohibiting net-pen farming in British Columbia.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also would take the opportunity, this being my first time to rise in this House, to thank the good people of Saskatoon—University. I have a speech later this week that will dive into thanking a number of people, but I do appreciate the support.

I also would like to join my colleagues in presenting a petition on the forced organ harvesting taking place around the world. This petition seeks to combat global organ trafficking. The petitioners want the government to make it a criminal offence to receive an organ without their consent.

* * *

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was talking about health transfer payments. I explained in detail that the provinces are dependent on funds from Ottawa, and they have been since the beginning of Confederation. Federal government transfers flow to the provinces so that they can do their job. Over time, however, transfers have continued to diminish so that the government can download the deficits to the provinces, as we saw in the nineties, or overload them with standards and conditions to go back to the basic notion that centralizing power was what the Fathers of Confederation intended and that the goal of federal spending is precisely to accomplish that almost-solemn mission.

There was no mention of the single income tax return in the Speech from the Throne. On May 15, 2018, the National Assembly unanimously voted in favour of a single income tax return that the Quebec government alone would oversee and administer. I know the motion was passed unanimously because I moved it myself. At the time, the Prime Minister quipped that the National Assembly rarely agrees unanimously on anything, but we saw it happen with the single income tax return. Was that mentioned? No, it was not.

There is some hope, however, since our Conservative colleagues believe in the same cause. If the NDP or the Liberals were to help us, we could create a single tax return administered by Quebec, much to the delight of the Quebec National Assembly and Quebecers. A recent survey shows that 65% of Quebecers support a single tax return administered by Quebec. The only study that has been done estimates annual savings of \$425 million. Not only will this save money, but it will also save time, since Quebecers will be able to do their taxes faster.

The Liberal government and the NDP always use the argument of job losses in the Jonquière and Shawinigan regions, and they say those losses would be drastic. Yes, jobs would be lost. Is that an argument for axing the plan? No. According to the Minister of National Revenue, 5,300 jobs in Quebec involve administering Quebecers' income taxes for the federal government. Transferring those responsibilities to the Quebec government would create 2,332 jobs doing the same work for the Quebec government. The Quebec government could easily ensure that those jobs remain in Shawinigan and Jonquière. The other employees could work on tackling tax evasion or managing web giants like GAFA. Those jobs would pay for themselves.

As there is a shortage of workers in the federal public service, those people could easily go work for the federal government. Given that 4% of public servants retire every year and that it will take four years to transfer the federal government's responsibilities to the Quebec government, there will be more than 800 jobs to be filled. Clearly, there will be no job losses.

Which Liberal or NDP members will join the Quebec consensus that there will be no jobs lost?

Our consensus is that the public service will save \$287 million and that Quebecers who file a single tax return will save time. Who can argue with that?

The Bloc Québécois is expecting a positive response. We are ready to have discussions to promote this great idea.

We know that Quebec is not responsible for managing its representation abroad.

• (1525)

We would have liked the document to make a clear statement on ending the loopholes in supply management. We would like Quebec farmers to no longer be used as a bargaining chip to promote the auto industry in Ontario, or the beef industry in the west. We would like these people to be respected and to never again be directly attacked or have money taken out of their pockets, because they work very hard and deserve to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

I would reiterate in closing that I began my speech with a bit of history. Something has changed since the creation of the Canadian Confederation. At the time, Canada's motto was "from sea to sea". Unfortunately, now it is "drill, baby, drill".

Sadly, in western Canada, the economy today is concentrated on a single sector. It is not diversified enough. We have to help the west diversify. What people need to realize is that oil dependency is not just an issue for western Canada. It is an issue for the banks as well. Around the world, five of the 12 banks that are currently in-

vesting the most in oil are Canadian. The Canadian economy is heavily involved in oil.

There is one party here that says we need to produce more oil. It has the advantage of being honest and saying what it really thinks. There is another party that plays around with definitions and contradictions in an attempt to put us to sleep. It says it supports this, but not too much. It does not mention oil, the "elephant in the room", as my colleague put it earlier, in the throne speech. It talks about climate change, whereas the oil issue goes in the complete opposite direction.

We need a clear-eyed understanding. If we want to undertake an energy transition, we simply cannot promote oil. Some people are saying that we should change the Constitution, that it is an old model that does not work well and is of no use to us anymore. I explained the problems with that earlier.

I want the House to know that the Bloc Québécois and Quebecers do not want to play this game anymore. To paraphrase Jean Garon, changing a comma in the Canadian Constitution would be about as easy as scratching my forehead with my front teeth. We quit.

What will the Bloc do? The Bloc is here to stand up for farmers, to defend Quebec's territory so that no pipelines are built on it without our permission. The Bloc is here to stand up for our cultural community, which is being attacked by web giants. It will stand up for the Davie shipyard and its extraordinary workers, who have demonstrated the quality of their work time and time again. We will defend the energy transition to ensure that our young people have a healthy future in an extraordinary environment.

That is the mission of the Bloc Québécois. We will do that work on behalf of Quebec. We will work hard until, one day, Quebec becomes a country.

• (1530)

[English]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the member opposite's comment on supply management, I am from King—Hants. We have the largest agricultural concentration east of Montreal with many dairy farmers and poultry farmers in our area.

I want the member opposite to know that I support farmers and I support our supply-managed farmers as well. As for the assumption that our government is somehow betraying farmers, I want them to remember that our government was forced into the deal with NAFTA. We maintained the integrity of a supply-managed system and we have also compensated farmers.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his fine words because he is saying good things about farmers. We will always agree on that.

The Address

He said that he is prepared to work together. I have no problem with that, on the contrary. The Bloc Québécois is prepared to collaborate. This could be the beginning of a healthy co-operation. We will eventually introduce a bill that will stop the undermining of the quota system once and for all and make sure that the government respects our agricultural identity in the future.

If that is what you want, then know that the Bloc Québécois will stand by your side and ensure that the mistakes of the past, which cost farmers dearly, do not happen again.

The Speaker: Before we continue, I would like to remind members that they must address their comments to the Chair and not directly to their colleagues. I recommend that they speak in the third person rather than using “you”.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise with a question for my colleague. In years past, I had the pleasure of serving with him in the National Assembly.

In response to the governing party's question, my colleague talked about Quebec's dairy industry. I would like to remind him that, four and a half years ago, when the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership was finalized, the Conservative government included over \$4 billion in the agreement to compensate farmers. We did not wait four and a half years until negotiations were complete. We promised to compensate them, we did it, and we budgeted for it. We recognize that supply management took a hit, but there would not have been an agreement without that. Also, we attached the funding when we made the announcement.

I have a question for my Bloc Québécois colleague from La Prairie, if I am not mistaken. I do not want to mix up the ridings because, in the past, I would have called him the member for Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alain Therrien: I was the member for Sanguinet.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I beg my colleague's pardon. My memory failed me. This white hair is here for a reason. I might miss a few things, but it will not take me long to get back on track.

Could the member tell us whether he supported the Conservative government's approach, which was to immediately enshrine the necessary compensation in any agreements we signed? That is what we did.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your comment. I apologize for breaking the rules of the House.

Indeed, I have crossed paths with my colleague in other circles. He said that the Conservatives attached a sum of money to the trade agreement. I hope he does a better job attaching his toque to his head when it is windy outside, because if not, he will surely lose it. If they had attached a sum, the other party would not have removed it. We would not be talking about it today.

What I am saying is that the best way to prevent money that has been put in from being taken out is simply to stop putting farmers' necks on the line in international trade negotiations, even when act-

ing in good faith. I do not mean to say my colleagues were not acting in good faith, but that is what happened to farmers, and it must never happen again.

• (1535)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, the Bloc Québécois House leader, on his first speech in the House. It was a great, eloquent speech. I appreciated his comments. We agree on a number of points.

One point is the transition to clean energy. These changes are necessary in British Columbia, much like in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. We also agree on supply management. I am very happy to learn that the Bloc Québécois will continue the work started by Ruth Ellen Brosseau, Guy Caron, Karine Trudel, Robert Aubin and Brigitte Sansoucy, who fought to protect supply management. This is truly needed in Quebec and in the rest of Canada.

My question for him has to do with the single tax return. Naturally, we meet with federal public servants. I met some in Jonquière and in Shawinigan, and many of them are worried about their future, their jobs and the impact on the system. There are benefits, but of course, there are also drawbacks.

My question is very simple. Did the Bloc Québécois House leader ever meet with federal public servants in Jonquière and Shawinigan to talk about what would happen next with this file?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the leader of the NDP, for the question.

I will tell him the truth. I just started sitting in the House. I have worked on the single tax return file, and I am quite familiar with it. Did I talk to those people? At the time, it was not my responsibility, because it was not my job. However, if the hon. member met with people who work in Shawinigan or Jonquière and are concerned, I propose that we meet with them together and work on finding solutions with them. I am sure that the Government of Quebec only expects us to find smart solutions and make the single tax return a reality.

I am sure these people can understand that this will not result in any job losses. If we act in good faith, there is a way to resolve this matter without punishing anyone. If my colleague reaches out to me, I will return the favour and propose that we go together to visit the people who are directly affected by this file.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have definitely heard a lot about the province of Quebec, but all the other parties are here to unite the country. It is very important that we have a united country. We also heard a lot of criticism of the oil sector.

Before I ask my colleague a question, I would first like to welcome him and congratulate him on his election.

What will he do for Canada's unity during his time in the House?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and congratulations.

What will I do for Canadian unity? That is a good question. I will not answer it, but instead, I will tell her what I will do for Quebec. Quebecers elected 32 Bloc Québécois members. From the outset, we made it clear that our job is to serve Quebec alone. That does not mean that we will disagree with our colleagues from the other parties. It means that we will sit down with them. I have no ill will towards anyone here. If there are ways to improve the lot of westerners and we can contribute in some way, we will do so.

That said, we are representatives of the people of Quebec. We are not bad boys and girls. We want to sit down with our colleagues to find solutions, and if they want to sit down with us to improve Quebec's lot, they are welcome to join the discussion.

● (1540)

[English]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

I want to start by congratulating all members elected to the 43rd Parliament, and you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment as the Deputy Speaker. I want to thank the residents of Surrey—Newton for once again putting their faith in me to represent them as their member of Parliament. I am honoured to be back and to be able to work hard on their behalf. I am proud to represent one of the most diverse ridings in Canada.

That said, I would like to take a moment to extend my heartfelt greetings to all who recently celebrated the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Milad un Nabi, which is celebrated to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him. I also want to wish all those who are celebrating a very merry Christmas and happy holidays.

Voters across Canada have given us a responsibility to work together to grow our economy and better support their families so that it is easier for them to save, get an education, buy their first home and have a good retirement. This is the mandate Canadians have given us, and the throne speech we heard from the Governor General last week lays out a road map to help get this done.

In the previous Parliament, this Liberal government laid a foundation that has made the lives of Canadians better. With over one million new jobs created and record investments in programs and services that Canadians need, such as health care, the CPP and infrastructure, we have made progress. While the other side did nothing but oppose, our government delivered results.

This Parliament is an opportunity for all members to support the needs of Canadians and support the programs and services Canadians want. We will provide better health care and more affordable housing. We will lower taxes for those who need it the most and continue our record investments in infrastructure and public transit. We will address climate change while creating good-paying jobs.

Most importantly for residents in my constituency of Surrey—Newton, our government will take steps to ban assault weapons and give cities the power to ban handguns. My constituents have said loud and clear that these types of weapons do not belong in our neighbourhoods.

The Address

On this note, I want to acknowledge the hard work of my friend and former minister, Ralph Goodale. Ralph worked hard to make sure Canada remained a safe and welcoming country. Every time I went to him with an issue or concern, he listened intently and worked with me to find solutions. Two years ago, when I spoke with Ralph about the policing needs for Surrey, he was clear that this government would support the wishes of the municipal government, whether it was delivering 100 new police officers, as the previous government failed to do, or offering its support to the City of Surrey as it looked at transitioning to a local police force.

I am confident that the member for Scarborough Southwest, the recently appointed Minister of Public Safety, will take on this role with just as much passion and focus as our friend Ralph Goodale.

● (1545)

I know all members on this side are passionate about doing what is best for Canadians. The actions laid out in last week's throne speech will make a real difference in the lives of Canadians. Canada's economy is growing, and we continue to have a low unemployment rate. We are going to further cut taxes so that Canadians and those most in need can keep more of their hard-earned money.

We need to make sure that our young people can turn their dreams of owning a home into a reality. That is why we will work hard to address affordability and invest in affordable housing so it will be easier for families to buy their first homes.

Parents want to give their children every opportunity for a good education and a chance at making their dreams come true. This government shares that same desire. That is why we are going to make before-school and after-school care more affordable and accessible.

To help seniors retire with the dignity they deserve, we are going to strengthen pensions so they can live with confidence, not fear.

The health of every Canadian is paramount. We are going to work with provinces and territories to make sure all Canadians can access a family doctor. We will introduce mental health standards in the workplace and make sure workers can get mental health care when they need it.

Finally, we will take steps to introduce and implement national pharmacare so that Canadians have the drug coverage they need. These are the steps we are going to take to make sure families have the support they need.

The Address

However, as I mentioned earlier, families in Surrey—Newton want tougher gun laws in order to reduce gun-related violence on our streets. It is time we took bold action to do that. That is why we will ban military-style assault weapons and introduce a buyback program. This is the action we need to take to tackle guns and gangs and keep Canadians safe.

All these steps combined make a path that will lead Canada to a brighter future where everyone will have a fair chance at getting ahead. This is what Canadians wanted and this is what we will do.

I am proud to stand in support of this plan and I request each member of this House to support it so that we can be a force for good in Canadians' lives and make their lives better.

I want to congratulate each member who was elected to the 43rd Parliament. I wish them all the best.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

• (1550)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. I look forward to working with you once again.

To the hon. member, Alberta has been kicked in the shins, its lunch money has been stolen and its tires have been slashed. I did not see anything in the Speech from the Throne that says that we will get our tires pumped back up, we will get our lunch money back and we will be able to get back to work.

Did the member opposite see anything in there to restore the confidence of Albertans that tomorrow will be a better day?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I first landed in Canada in 1984 in Alberta. I went to the University of Calgary to get my engineering degree. I lived there for eight years and had two beautiful daughters born there. I am a very proud Canadian.

I can tell members that all the work that we are doing, whether reducing taxes for ordinary working-class families, providing first-time home buyer incentives or investing in the pipeline, is going to help Albertans. I am certain that in the coming days and months that the hon. member will be proud of the work that our government will do.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, specifically on the member's comments about pharmacare, discounting the fact that the Liberals have been talking about pharmacare since 1997 but have never done anything, if they did want to do something, they would need the co-operation of the provinces.

We have heard clearly from Quebec today that it has no interest, because it already has a program, as do B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In fact, 98% of Canadians already have coverage, and the ones who do not exist in Ontario, Newfoundland and some of the Atlantic provinces. Therefore, it is actually cheaper to put everyone onto the existing provincial plans for \$2.2 billion than to spend \$15 billion to \$40 billion on a program nationally that nobody wants. Would the member agree?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member, a fellow professional engineer.

When it comes to pharmacare, it is what people want. We have the report and a plan ready to go to implement universal pharmacare by 2027.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in housing and homelessness. In the last four budgets there has been money put into solving the crisis of homelessness in Canada. As in the member's riding and my riding, it is an issue that is facing Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Could the hon. member talk about the importance of continuing our programs in national housing and investing in housing for the homeless in Canada?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Guelph and thank him for the great work that he does and for the conversations that we have.

I am happy to tell the hon. member that the national housing strategy is working. In my own riding of Surrey—Newton, we have built 173 new spaces. We have reduced homelessness by 25%. I am looking forward to working together with the member to keep on fighting to make sure that one day we will eliminate homelessness.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and to be back. Congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on just moments ago being affirmed as our Deputy Speaker of the House. I look forward to your great and very capable ability to sit in that chair as you demonstrated over the past four years. It is a real honour to be standing again in this House.

I want to start, this being my first opportunity to do so, by thanking the constituents in my riding of Kingston and the Islands for putting their faith in me to come back here and represent them in this new Parliament. There is nothing quite like the feeling of knowing that one has the support of one's community to represent its residents and to make sure that their voices are heard in Ottawa. It is an incredible honour for me to have that.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the tremendous number of volunteers, just like all of the members in this House. We all have dedicated volunteers in our ridings who make our elections a reality and are able to bring us through the finish line.

There is no doubt that I have that great amount of support in my riding as well. In particular, I want to thank the Queen's University Liberal Association members, who have spent hours and hours donating their time and volunteering. It gives me the sense that the younger generation is keenly interested in politics, and I have a great sense of optimism when I see these young people getting involved in politics.

I also want to thank my staff in Kingston. I have Ann, Nicole, Kaitlin and Parth, who do amazing work representing me and interacting daily with my constituents. In Ottawa, I have Jeanna, who does great work to keep me on schedule and make sure I am here when it is my turn to speak and whatnot.

Most important, I thank my family, my wife Vanessa and my children Mason, Frankie and Vivian. It is not easy, as most members in this House would know, to leave the riding behind and go for several days at a time without seeing the family. Even with the advancements of technology, it is still not the same as being there in person. I am incredibly grateful for their love and support, as it is required in a job like this.

I also want to congratulate all of my colleagues, the 337 other members who are in this House for this session of Parliament. We all come from different parts of the country. We have been duly elected by our constituents.

This time around, our constituents throughout the country have decided to bring the Liberal Party back in government but in a minority situation. Canadians have mandated us to work together in a collaborative way so that we can build legislation and present it to Canadians. That truly reflects the form of this Parliament.

It is worth pointing out that some pretty incredible legislation has actually come along in minority parliaments from this chamber, for example the creation of the CPP. Even our Canadian flag was created during a minority government. Health care was created during a minority government. There are tremendous examples of how we can work together, and I look forward to working with all members of the House to bring forward meaningful legislation that reflects the will and demands of Canadians.

I would like to talk about three things in particular that resonated with me in the throne speech, one being the desire to improve the security and strengthen the economic position of so many Canadians. I also want to talk a bit about the government's commitment to health care, and pharmacare in particular. Of course, I also want to address a topic that I have spoken about many times in this House: climate change.

First, when we talk about more security for Canadians and strengthening the middle class, I was extremely proud to be part of a government the last time whose very first opportunity to present legislation in this House was to give a tax cut to the middle class and ask those making significantly more, the one per cent, as we might coin them, to pay a bit more.

One of the other things we did very early on, probably the second or third piece of legislation that came forward, was the Canada child benefit. Through the data that came out of Statistics Canada a few years later, we saw the impact that had of lifting just under a million, or by this point probably a million, Canadians out of poverty, and in particular almost 300,000 children out of poverty. This is the impact that these policies are having on Canadians.

• (1555)

That is why I was extremely pleased to see in this throne speech similar talk. It is important to mention that a throne speech is a guiding document. It is a principled document that sets the overall agenda for a government during the time it will be governing. To see the commitment and the dedication to continuing to build on that was extremely rewarding.

The Address

In particular, looking forward, raising the basic income exemption to \$15,000 so that the Canadians who require it the most will not be burdened with any tax up to that \$15,000.

Also, affordable housing is mentioned in the throne speech. My riding in particular has an extreme shortage of housing right now. Our vacancy rate is at 0.6%. For those who do not know, a healthy vacancy rate is around 3% or 4%. That means that housing costs are being driven up, whether to buy or rent. It is putting people in some very difficult situations.

Knowing that we will continue to build on our infrastructure, and not just the bricks and mortar but also the social infrastructure that goes into the housing family unit and our support for them pleases me very much.

Regarding increases to the CCB, that signature program that lifted hundreds of thousands of people and children out of poverty, we will now extend it to assist children under the age of one to provide more assistance to them.

I have two very young children in my family, one just over three years old and another just over one year old. I know the challenges that can be put on families who have a child under the age of one, a newborn.

Knowing that people who are already struggling will have the opportunity to tap into more of the resources available to them, and to be taken care of and to be looked after more in that very precious time of the first year, is extremely encouraging. I also know it will give the opportunity to see even more children and families being lifted out of poverty.

On the second topic of health care, in particular pharmacare, I am very encouraged by two things that were talked about. The first is pharmacare, developing a plan that will address the prescribed medication needs of all Canadians. There are many people in our communities, mine in particular, who have to choose daily between taking their full prescription or paying for rent or food.

The reality of the situation is, when they live in a country as rich as Canada with the advancements we have, I do not believe people should be making those decisions between medications and taking care of other necessities in life. It is important for us to bring forward this plan on pharmacare and I look forward to it.

The other issue is access to a family doctor. I am so glad to see that our government is talking about making sure that every Canadian has access to a doctor. In Kingston, we had a huge shortage of doctors a number of years ago and we set out a plan as a city council to bring more doctors in.

The only problem was that we ended up stealing them from neighbouring communities and creating problems for them as we were attracting them to our community. Having a nationalized plan to attract and retain doctors in Canada so that everyone has access to a family doctor is incredibly encouraging to see.

Finally, when it comes to climate change there is no issue more pressing for future generations than the action that we take with respect to climate change and the action that we take now.

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As the previous minister of the environment said, we are the first generation to feel the effects of climate change and we will be the last to be able to do anything about it. We need to accomplish some of these extremely ambitious goals of reaching net zero by 2050. We need to reduce our plastic consumption right now by reducing our single-use plastics, and we need to continue to grow that green economy and invest in technologies that will drive us into the future both economically and sustainably from an environmental perspective.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House over the next months and years as we make sure that we continue to bring forward legislation in a meaningful and positive way for all Canadians.

• (1600)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite for being back. I was a Queen's grad and he knows I am in his riding from time to time.

Certainly I think the member would agree that I am one of those in the last Parliament who tried to work with the government to align its priorities to opportunities to create jobs in Sarnia—Lambton and we were very successful. As a result, now we have two other problems. One is affordable housing and one is the availability of skilled trades. We are short maybe 1,500 skilled trades and that is projected to go on into the future since we have a lot of expansions.

I would be interested to hear what the member could tell me about the government's plans to offer actual dollars for affordable housing that I could take advantage of and skilled training for the trades.

• (1605)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I could take 10 minutes answering this question on each subject.

I do want to welcome the member for Sarnia—Lambton back, too. I regret that she was not able to come to her homecoming this year as it fell on the weekend before the election, but we look forward to seeing her in future years.

When it comes to affordable housing specifically, we have the national housing strategy that is in place right now. There is \$40 billion over a 10-year period that, through working with CMHC, housing providers in her riding and all ridings throughout the country can have access to, in order to build affordable housing for people in their communities.

The other thing the member spoke of was skilled trades. It is an incredible topic that we really need to focus on. Although I do not have any answers for her right now, it is something that I would love to work with her on.

The reality of the situation is that the average mason in Canada right now is 58 years old. We need to do something about increasing the number of people, young people in particular, going into skilled trades because that is where all the money is right now. If any of my kids want to go into skilled trades, I would be the happiest dad in the world because they would be rich.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question with regard to the member's party and its history with single-event sports betting and tourism in the member's region, my region and others, and also about the \$10 billion going toward organized crime from illegal offshore and backroom-based types of betting.

Will the member's government support the unification of Canada, similar to the United States, which is moving toward that right now, as well as Europe, and allow single-event sports betting amongst the provinces?

This just allows them to do that if they want to. Right now, it is a free-for-all for organized crime, versus having a regulated market that is important for tourism destinations in areas like his own constituency.

Will the member support that, and why did his government oppose it the last time? Perhaps it will change it this time.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, although single-sport betting is not huge in my riding, tourism definitely is. The member might be confusing me with one of my colleagues from St. Catharines, who is very passionate on this issue.

I will say that I do not have an answer to the member's question. It is a very direct question. I would love to see the research into this, whether it comes through a private member's bill or from government legislation, and listen to somebody like him who is heavily impacted by this in his riding, so that we could put together legislation if it is warranted, reduce the amount of organized crime and ensure that, if there are opportunities there, they are seized.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time rising in this House ever, and I would like to congratulate you.

The hon. member mentioned how he liked that the throne speech referred to strengthening the economy. The reality is that in Canada we are actually facing a productivity challenge. Currently in the U.S., every hour of GDP generates about \$60. In Switzerland it is \$65, while in Canada it is \$50. Wages in Switzerland are \$33 on average. In the U.S. they are \$23, and in Canada they are only \$19.

The most affluent and highest contribution to GDP per hour is in the oil and gas sector. Bill C-69 had a huge impact on that and it is hammering our oil and gas industry. Currently, the oil and gas industry contributes \$644 per hour.

What concrete steps will the member's government take to improve productivity in Canada?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I think that one of the most important things to do is to make sure that we are working in a diversified market. Just like we do not want to always be trading partners with only the United States, we want to diversify our trade relationships throughout the world.

In particular, when it comes to the products and services that we sell, I think it is important that we make sure that there are many different products we are working on and that our economy is diversified in the sense that we are not only relying on one or two different sectors in different parts of the country.

When we talk about oil and gas, specifically in Alberta, I was really surprised to see recently that Suncor, an oil-producing company, announced that it is investing \$300 million in Alberta into a wind farm. I think that just the idea that we can have multiple forms of activity in our economy is the best thing to do.

Let us not just rely on renewable. Let us not just rely on oil. Let us not just rely on one part of the economy or another. Let us diversify so that we can make sure that we are insulated against peaks and valleys in the economic system.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see you here in the House. Of course, I am also pleased to see all of my colleagues.

I would have preferred it if the results of the election had been different, but the people have spoken, even though a majority of them voted for the official opposition party.

I would like to echo what my colleague said earlier and congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker of the House. You are currently acting as Speaker. I think everyone recognizes your good judgment and your keen understanding of human nature. You are a man that we are pleased to work with here in the House.

[English]

I want to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with a brand new MP, the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley. One day I will table a motion to cancel each and every riding name that is too long to say in the House. I am sure it will get unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: I am very pleased to be back in the House. I sincerely thank the people of Louis-Saint-Laurent who placed their trust in me for a second time. People can say what they will, but it always warms my heart to see the number of people who voted for me increasing from one minute to the next when the ballots are counted. A person also cannot help but feel a little pang when that number drops a bit. I would like to thank the people who put their trust in me to represent them in the House of Commons a second time.

I was born and raised in Louis-Saint-Laurent and that is also where I raised my family and where I still live today. In the heart of that riding is the indigenous community of Wendake. I represent

The Address

that community with pride, honour and enthusiasm. I think it is an inspiration to first nations people and others when it comes to living together in harmony. Wendake is a model, an example, an inspiration to Canada and the entire world.

Every year in the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent, people are closely involved in charity work. I was with Guy Boutin last weekend, a businessman who works with the Fondation Le Petit Blanchon, an organization that helps children from families that are struggling. Once again, I saw how generous the people of Quebec and Louis-Saint-Laurent are.

This is my second time running in a federal election, but it is the fifth mandate I have been given by my fellow citizens. I was elected three times in the riding of Chauveau. In fact, I want to acknowledge the people who gave me the immense privilege of representing them in the Quebec National Assembly exactly 11 years and one day ago, on December 8, 2008. I served in that role for seven years. A few of my former colleagues from the Quebec National Assembly now sit in the House of Commons. It is not that I do not like them, but I thought they were doing a good job in the National Assembly. They should have stayed there. However, the voters decided otherwise.

Now let me speak from the heart about my family. A political career is simply not possible without a supportive and understanding family. Let me start with my partner, Pascale. I am going to make the same joke I make every time: that's Pascale with an *e*. The first time I said that, 11 years ago, everyone burst out laughing. Now, no one bats an eyelash. My partner Pascale has been with me every step of this magnificent adventure. In politics, there are highs and super-highs, but there are no lows. Basically, either things are going well or they are going very well.

Of course, I also have two children, Béatrice and Jean-Philippe, who are now accomplished adults. They are so dear to me, and I love them so much. They are doing very well for themselves. I am lucky. It is a privilege to have such generous and caring children.

Lastly, I would like to talk about my parents, who are 95 and 96 years old and who have been my unwavering supporters for the past 55 years. This year was the first time they were not able to be there when I cast my ballot. It was a tradition. They were not able to attend the swearing-in either. Everyone who was at the swearing-in, including the hard-working volunteers without whom I would not be in this place, could see how much I care for my parents. Even now, in their later golden years, they regularly watch the debates of the House of Commons on television. I must say they sometimes have some pretty harsh things to say about the government, but I am not here to talk about that.

• (1615)

[English]

It is with great honour and privilege that I welcome the new mandate I received from the people, a mandate I will serve in the House of Commons.

The Address

As I said, the night of the election, I did a live interview on Radio-Canada with Patrice Roy.

[Translation]

I was clear: We must work together.

[English]

This is the clear message we received, because although the government was elected with the most seats, the official opposition received more votes. We have to keep that in mind. The government lost nearly one million votes. We had 600,000 more votes in this election. We now have representation in each and every area of this country. We are the true national party in the House of Commons and are proud of it. This was accomplished a month ago under the strong and proud leadership of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. We are proud of that and have to keep it in mind in our debates.

I hope the government will keep in mind that although it is in office, it has to look around closely because more people voted against it than for it. It is the first time in Canadian history that a government has had such low approval in getting into office. We should keep that in mind.

[Translation]

During the previous Parliament, I had the great privilege of serving under our current leader and also under the Hon. Rona Ambrose, as leader of the official opposition, who entrusted me with some big responsibilities. I was the critic for employment, Treasury Board and finance.

[English]

Now I can say that I was so nervous to be the critic of the finance minister. Who could say that? I remember my mathematics teacher in grade 5 in high school, who would have said that if I became the finance critic for the official opposition in the House of Commons, I would finally have done something right with respect to calculation. It was a real honour and privilege to serve during the last mandate.

[Translation]

I had the privilege of covering the finance portfolio. In politics, you never ask your leader for anything, but in conversation, I indicated that I had done the rounds and that if, by chance, I could do something else, I would be happy. I am honoured to be the shadow minister for intergovernmental affairs. This portfolio is of utmost importance to the future of this country, especially in this Parliament.

National unity in this country has unfortunately never been worse off. I must say that although members are making their maiden speeches and everyone has nice things to say about everyone else, the unity problems are the fault of the current government. The government's four years of bad decisions, pointless provocations and combative discussions with provincial governments have pitted the provinces against each other. The Bloc Québécois ended up making a resurgence. Even just a few months ago, the idea of Wexit was lore, a joke.

[English]

It is no longer funny. When we talk about Wexit, it is no longer a folkloric issue; it is a true reality of the political agenda in Canada, thanks to the government. That is not good for this country.

[Translation]

To us, national unity is a major issue that we have to address head on.

I must say—and I am very pleased to do so—that the Prime Minister giving this mandate to the Deputy Prime Minister is a good sign. Observers all agree that the Deputy Prime Minister, an MP from Toronto, has been given more authority, taken on more responsibility, to say the least. After the Prime Minister, she quite likely has the most authority in this cabinet. She has been entrusted with the responsibility of intergovernmental relations. That is a good thing, a good sign.

We expected to see in the Speech from the Throne a clear statement on the Prime Minister's intention to give this trustworthy person that mandate. That did not happen. The Speech from the Throne has nothing but rhetoric about Canadian unity, how we need to work together and be good neighbours. That is not exactly what we expected. We expected more.

That is why I have a message for this government, which keeps saying that it is reaching out to the opposition and wants to hear its suggestions. Our country is the global champion of free trade. Canada has 50 agreements with 50 different countries. That is fantastic for Canada's economy. What is incomprehensible is that our provinces cannot do business with one another. That is preposterous.

Our political party, under the leadership of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, the leader of the official opposition, has proposed that there be a federal-provincial conference on January 6 to lay the foundation for interprovincial free trade agreements. The one thing I want to ask of this government during this mandate is that it inspire us. It should run with our idea to make Canada the global leader of free trade and the country of interprovincial free trade for the good of all Canadians.

● (1620)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always listen attentively to my colleague across the way, but I beg to differ on a couple of his points.

First and foremost, the government of the day has representation in all regions of the country. I am from the Prairies myself and am very proud of that fact. We do share some things in common. The national government does not have any seats in two provincial areas and the Conservatives do not have any seats in two provincial areas: Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, for example.

On the issue of working with the provinces, this government has achieved a great deal through consultations with them, such as on the Canada pension plan, which will greatly enhance retirement benefits for future workers. It is a positive thing. In working with the provinces and territories, we were also able to achieve the health care accord.

Does the member not believe there is room for many other things, such as putting a pharmacare plan in place and possibly even freer trade among the provinces, especially given that the Deputy Prime Minister played such an important role—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am going to try to keep the interventions to about a minute or so, because there is usually lots of interest in posing questions to hon. members.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to get back because it gives me the privilege of answering the question by my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North. He is back, even though we worked hard to get him out. The next time we will.

The hon. member is right: his boss, the Prime Minister, talks a lot about the provinces. He talks against Doug Ford, Jason Kenney and Premier Moe. He talks against people elected by Canadians. That is not the way to run this country. We have to work together instead of making political arguments against provincially elected people. That is the first point.

Second, when we talk about national unity, the first thing to keep in mind is respect for the Constitution. The federal government's role is not to enter provincial jurisdiction on issues like pharmacare. We have pharmacare in Quebec, and decisions on it belong to the province, not at the federal level.

[Translation]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have had the privilege of rising to speak in the House. Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Speaker of the House.

As my colleagues have done for their ridings, I want to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Trois-Rivières and all the volunteers who worked on my campaign. As we know, volunteers are at the heart of political activity in our ridings. I am extremely grateful to each and every one of them.

Trois-Rivières is home to many seniors who count on federal programs in order to have a decent quality of life so they can meet their basic needs. Will the provisions outlined in the throne speech really meet their needs? What is being offered to people between the ages of 65 and 75?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague from Trois-Rivières on her election. Obviously, in keeping with tradition, we would also like to acknowledge the person who represented us in the most recent election campaign, Mayor Yves Lévesque. As everyone knows, he worked very hard and we all hold him in high esteem. The people have spoken and they elected the member for Trois-Rivières. I recognize and welcome her.

The Address

We all care about seniors for two reasons. First, this issue falls 100% under federal jurisdiction. That is why I was saying earlier that it is important for Canadian unity that the government respect jurisdictions.

Second, seniors are the most vulnerable members of our society. When people get to a certain age, they can no longer go back to school to learn a new occupation. They can no longer work 45 hours a week. When people reach a certain age, they want to focus on other things and, most of all, they want to enjoy what previous generations have built for us.

We therefore echo what the member said about being very attentive to the needs of seniors in Canada, Quebec, the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent and, of course, the riding of Trois-Rivières.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this place today to give my first speech. I want to thank my fellow Manitobans from the riding of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley for placing their trust in me to be their voice in this great place. I want to thank my family and my campaign team, and also offer you my humblest congratulations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As members of Parliament it is our duty to be the voice of every Canadian, make his or her life easier and build a future for our country that is prosperous and filled with opportunity. The Speech from the Throne just does not do this. With no plan or even mention of a balanced budget, we are passing our bill to the next generation to pay. This is unfair and frankly reckless.

Right now, Canada is starting to see an economic storm coming our way. Instead of making plans to weather the storm, the government seems intent on reckless spending that leaves our cupboards bare and puts Canada's economic future into question.

In the run-up to the 2015 federal election, the Prime Minister made a big promise. It was not a small one. It was not something that was buried in his campaign platform. He said, "We will balance that budget in 2019."

I think when Canadians hear the Prime Minister make a promise like that, they expect it to be kept. Particularly when there is a majority government, one would think that would be very attainable. However, not only did the Prime Minister break this important promise, but the budgetary deficits under the Liberal government have been high and onerous for Canadians. In fact, the Prime Minister missed the mark in 2019, despite his promise, by \$14 billion.

The Address

While reading over the throne speech, I thought I would find the word “balanced” somewhere in there, but no, that word does not appear anywhere in the speech. Then I continued to look for the word “budget”, but there was no mention of the word “budget” either. How could the government leave the word “budget” out of the blueprint for its parliamentary agenda?

To contrast this, in the Conservative government's 2013 throne speech, there was an entire section entitled, “Balanced Budgets and Reducing the Cost of Government”. The Conservatives recognized that in Canada balanced budgets were important because they would leave us prepared in the event of an economic downturn.

What is worse is that in 2015 the Liberal government inherited a balanced budget. Since then, Canada's federal debt has increased by roughly \$73 billion. This additional debt has caused taxpayers to pay even more interest. If this trend were to continue, it would be safe to say Canada would have a structural operating deficit, which, considering what the Liberals inherited during a period of economic prosperity, is completely irresponsible.

It is the government's duty to look out for Canada's future. It is ridiculous that there is not one mention of how the government will budget its promises. I know the Liberal government is used to writing blank cheques, but that is not how Canada and Canadians operate. Canadians spend a lot of time at the kitchen table, finding ways to balance their own budgets and stretching every dollar so they can make it to the end of every month, and save for a rainy day.

The government should also be working on finding ways to balance the budget and leave more money in the pockets of Canadians. Canadians know that their hard-earned tax dollars go to pay interest on all this debt. In fact, the interest Canadians paid in 2019 on our massive federal debt was \$23.3 billion. This is money that could have been spent on programs that would help Canadians, but rather went to bondholders and bankers.

I know the finance minister is very fond of bragging about our declining debt-to-GDP ratio. It is far easier to talk about something debt related as declining rather than increasing. However, Canadians understand that our national debt is increasing. Our debt-to-GDP ratio will only decline as long as our economy is growing at a pace faster than our debt is rising.

Given the economic storm on the horizon, and as our economy slows, soon the declining debt-to-GDP ratio that the minister likes to brag about may no longer be in his very weak arsenal of debate.

• (1630)

I also wish to highlight that Statistics Canada reported last week that our job market had lost 71,200 jobs in November, while the unemployment rate rose to 5.9%, the highest in more than a year. This is the largest drop in Canadian employment in a single month in 10 years. These are real people who have to come home and tell their families that they no longer have a job. While the U.S. economy is on the upswing, ours is on the downswing.

As the members opposite scratch their heads, wondering what went wrong, I would suggest a trip out west might help them understand. Alberta's unemployment rate is 7.2%. The housing market is

in a downward spiral. People are losing their homes and many of Calgary's downtown office towers sit empty.

The Liberal government could continue to look west for an example of how to be financially responsible. As a Manitoban, I understand personally what happens to a government when it does not take financial responsibility seriously. Manitobans toiled under an NDP government for 17 years; a provincial NDP government that taxed and spent, much like the current federal government is doing right now. There were 17 years of debt, decline and decay. The Liberal government appears to be taking Canada on a similar path of financial mismanagement and reckless disregard for the hard-earned tax dollars of all Canadians, and it is very concerning.

However, Premier Pallister and his PC government in my home province of Manitoba brought the province back on track. They are balancing their budget, while continuing to make record investments in health care and education. They continue to do this all while lowering the sales tax to make life easier for all Manitobans. This is what all Canadians should expect from their government.

Back in 2018, when all this was transpiring, I held out hope and thought that there must be a plan to get the federal budget back to balance. Surely, if anyone was on top of this, it would be the Liberal Minister of Finance. However, then I happened to watch a finance committee meeting in which the finance minister was asked over and over again by my esteemed colleague from Carleton about when the budget would be balanced. It seemed like a softball question for our erudite Minister of Finance, yet he could not answer. In fact, by the end, it was apparent he was not interested in the subject at all. Much like last week's throne speech, the minister could not even say the words “balanced budget”.

The finance minister is supposed to be the guardian of the treasury. He is supposed to have his hands on the financial steering wheel of the country, a steady hand. There is no attention being paid to the continued piling on of debt on millennials and future generations of Canadians, and that must stop.

As I begin to close, I would remind members of the House, particularly those on the Liberal side, that it is our duty to serve every Canadian, create opportunity and ensure that the next generation has a brighter future, not led by the debt we leave behind. To do this, the Prime Minister and his Liberal team must change course. They must put some serious thought into ending this reckless spending and putting forward a serious plan to put Canada's financial and economic future at the forefront.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his first speech, and I welcome him into the House.

However, perhaps the member is not familiar with the history of previous Conservative governments and their ability to balance budgets, but I will fill him in a little.

In the last 18 budgets that were introduced by Conservative governments in this very House under Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper, 16 of them ran deficits. Of the two that ran surpluses, one came on the heels of Paul Martin's \$13-billion surplus and the other came in 2015 when the Conservatives slashed veteran services and sold off shares of GM at bargain prices so they could balance the budget in time for the election.

As the member spent a lot of his time today talking about balancing budgets, I am curious as to why he thinks the Conservatives are in a position to be lecturing on balancing budgets when their track record speaks absolutely nothing to their ability to do it.

• (1635)

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, over here we take no lessons from the Liberal government when it comes to fiscal responsibility. The fact is that when the Liberals took office in 2015, millions of Canadians voted for a prime minister who said that the budget would be balanced in 2019. When one votes based on a promise and that promise is broken, it is a very serious thing, and we all have to recognize that. I do not think anyone on this side of the House will forget about that, because we speak for our constituents. At the doors of my riding, I heard this over and over again.

The fact is that in 2015 when the Liberal government took office, it had a balanced budget and it squandered it. The Liberals said that they were lowering taxes for the middle class, but they raised them. Frankly, I do not know how we can take any solace from the comments of the member opposite.

I would add, just as an aside, that I could get into the litany of problems we are having now economically, but I will just say that 71,000 Canadians lost their job last month and we are not hearing anything from that side of the House about how they are going to fix it.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his first speech in the House and welcome him to this august chamber.

During the last federal campaign, I heard from many people, particularly from young people and those who were particularly concerned about the climate emergency facing our planet. We know that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has issued some extremely serious and dire warnings that we have 11 years to take serious action now in order to avoid raising global temperatures above 1.5°. If we do not, we risk planetary catastrophe, melting polar ice caps, disappearing coral reefs and mass extinction.

What are my hon. colleague's thoughts on this subject? Does he agree with the New Democrats that we need to take urgent, pressing action on climate change now and start making the transition to a sustainable economy that not only is the economy of the future but also is necessary to save our planet?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that for countries like Canada to transition to a low-emissions green economy, we need to have the revenue to do it. Countries with smaller GDPs

have a harder time converting to green economies because they just do not have the ability to invest in sustainable technologies.

We had one of the most comprehensive environmental platforms ever tabled by a political party in the history of this country. It was not just a tax on soccer parents; it was a very comprehensive plan. It had some very good things in it. For example, it talked about the green home tax credit, which would affect millions of Canadians and incentivize them to make our homes more fuel efficient. It talked about taking the climate change globally, that a molecule of carbon does not know borders.

What I am saying is that balanced budgets, growing our economy and getting harsh bills like Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines bill, and Bill C-48 out of the way so we can get our products to market will provide our economy with the strength it needs to make that conversion.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that I will be splitting my time with the member for St. Catharines.

What a privilege it is to be here today at the centre of democracy in our country as the elected representative of the great people of Kings—Hants. Located on the shores of the Bay of Fundy and Minas Basin, Kings—Hants is home to the highest tides in the world; to Acadia University, one of Canada's top-ranked undergraduate institutions; the birthplace of hockey, in Windsor; a wine industry that is gaining international recognition; and a dynamic and diverse agricultural sector that is the backbone of our economy and a key piece of our identity.

I would invite all members of the House, and indeed all Canadians, to come and visit us in Nova Scotia where diverse cultures co-exist, extraordinary seafood abounds, breathtaking vistas await and exceptionally friendly people will serve as their host. They will not be disappointed.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate you on being elected. I am glad we will be able to rely on you to hold us accountable for ensuring the highest possible degree of decorum in the House.

[English]

I would like to thank the people of Kings—Hants for the support and confidence they have placed in me. I recognize both the privilege and the responsibility that accompany this role. I will be putting all my energy into serving them and all Canadians in the days ahead.

The Address

All parliamentarians can attest to the importance of families and having their support as we take on this important role as lawmakers in this chamber. I am so fortunate to have the love of a supportive family and friends in Nova Scotia, especially my fiancée Kimberly and my mother Shelley. Without them, I would not be the one standing in the House. I know they are back home in Nova Scotia, watching proudly today.

I would also like to recognize my volunteers. All of us have volunteers who help us get to this place, to be privileged. I want to thank all my volunteers at home who are watching today.

Finally, I have two special people looking over me today in the chamber. My father, Gordon, passed away when I was 14 years old and I recently lost my grandfather, Leroy, in January. Both were incredible supporters. They never missed a hockey game or softball game. I know they are watching from above today and I hope they are proud.

[Translation]

Canadians sent us here to work on the issues that matter most to them. I am proud to be a member of the Liberal Party, and I am eager to work with all MPs under the leadership of the Prime Minister as we strive to improve the lives of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[English]

I want to talk about the importance of continuing the good work our government has done to support the middle class and those working to join it. I grew up in a working-class family. My father was a truck driver and my mother is an administrative assistant at the local school. I saw first-hand how hard they worked to ensure I had a better future. In fact, there were times when we did not even have enough money to pay for the groceries. Therefore, I am proud to be a member of the governing party that is focused on supporting people who need help the most.

I want to tell a story of a single mother I met during the campaign. Her name is Sarah and she is working two jobs to support her two girls. Sarah was in tears on the doorstep when explaining to me how the Canada child benefit was allowing her to buy healthier groceries and to put her two girls in soccer.

Our government's policies have lifted 250,000 seniors out of poverty. Child poverty in Canada is at an all-time low. At the same time, we have created over one million jobs and unemployment is near an all-time low. We know there is more work to be done, but when we invest in people and put money in the pockets of those who need the help, they spend it and drive our economy forward.

I am 28 years old. I am one of the youngest members of this House and I am proud to be a member of a party that is taking concrete measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change. I want my children and grandchildren to have a future and an environment we are all proud of. In the same breath, we need to be mindful of ensuring that no one is left behind, and that our rural communities and residents can afford our necessary transition. This will not be an easy balance, but it is necessary to ensure we can all move forward united together.

Health care is on the minds of Canadians across the country. This was a prominent issue on the doorsteps in Kings—Hants. Recruitment and retention of family physicians in rural areas of our country is a top priority for many. As we know, health care is a challenge not only in Canada but across the western world. While the provinces administer health care, it is vital that the federal government be a willing partner to support their efforts, and I am proud to say that our government has been, and will continue to be, a strong partner with the provinces.

For example, in Nova Scotia, since the Canada health accord was signed in 2016, there has been more money than ever before transferred to the province to support health care. I say this knowing that there is more work to be done. Between our commitment to launch a national pharmacare plan and to provide more money to support the recruitment of rural doctors, I know our efforts will improve health care in this country.

● (1645)

[Translation]

My riding, Kings—Hants, is home to three indigenous communities, namely the Sipekne'katik, Glooscap and Annapolis Valley nations. I believe that all members, not just the Government of Canada, have a duty to forge strong relationships with indigenous communities because of the special constitutional relationship we share.

[English]

No other Prime Minister or government in Canadian history has done more to support indigenous communities and work toward true reconciliation. Our critics will say not enough has been done, but the legacy of neglect and the impact of the residential school system cannot be turned around in four years. Our government will continue the hard work needed to bring meaningful change and long-lasting opportunities to these communities, which represent the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population.

As part of our government's efforts to make life better for all Canadians, we committed to make historic investments in infrastructure. I am proud to see that work is well under way on significant infrastructure projects in Kings—Hants. The twinning of Highway 101 at Windsor will save lives. The new Lantz interchange will ease traffic congestion. The new recreation complex in Windsor-West Hants and the new aquatic centre in East Hants will increase opportunities for people to lead healthier lives. Completed major projects, like the new interchange in New Minas, the renovated science facility at Acadia University and the rebuilt wharf in Halls Harbour have all led to increased economic prospects.

Finally, I want to speak about agriculture. Kings—Hants has the largest concentration of agricultural producers east of Montreal. It is the backbone of our economy and a key piece of our identity. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Kentville Research and Development Centre has been providing vital support to Nova Scotia's agricultural sector for over 100 years. The facility has developed 60% of the strawberry varieties grown in Canada and identified the Honeycrisp apple, a high-value apple well suited to the maritime climate.

Importantly, our government recently opened a research winery at the facility to support Nova Scotia's burgeoning wine sector. I look forward to working with the Minister of Agriculture, and indeed all members of this House, on the issues that matter to farmers and on the initiatives that will support and continue to grow the agricultural sector.

Yes, there are and will be challenges for Canadians to face every day, but with those challenges come opportunities. That is why it is important that we all work collaboratively in this House to make a positive difference for all the people we represent.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your election as our Deputy Speaker.

Since this is the first time I rise to speak in this 43rd Parliament, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my campaign team and all the volunteers. I thank the Richmond Centre voters for sending me back here for the fourth time; I am going into my 12th year of serving them.

There are a lot of issues that have not been dealt with in the throne speech. First of all, when I looked at the word count, the word “seniors” only came up once. Of course pensions were mentioned, but those areas are probably very complicated and not all seniors are looking at that.

The first issue is about affordability for our seniors. When they go to the grocery store, all the prices have gone up because of the carbon tax. Also, the Liberal government took away their transit credit and there is no protection against fraud to seniors. Some seniors become lost physically and mentally, and the government has done nothing to help them so far.

There is also nothing for family caregivers who have to look after their kids, their grandparents and often their own parents. This is something we should look at.

Why are the Liberals forsaking seniors?

● (1650)

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite on her fourth election to this House and of course her 12 years in service. That certainly speaks for itself in terms of her ability to provide for her constituents.

The question was on seniors, and Liberals have committed to increasing old age security by 10% for those who are 75 years and over. Over the last four years, we have invested in the guaranteed income supplement to make life easier for all seniors. This is an issue that resonates for me because there are many senior residents in Kings—Hants and this is an issue I heard about on people's doorsteps.

The Address

I ask the member opposite to look at the government's record. Some 250,000 seniors were helped across this country in the last four years. We will continue that work, and we will continue to fight for seniors and to make sure they have a sustainable living.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, in the excitement of giving my first speech, I forgot to thank the people of Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. I will take the time to do so today. I thank them for trusting me and for electing me.

Like my colleague, I am 26. I am also one of the youngest elected members of this Parliament. Like him, I worry about the state of the planet we are leaving for future generations.

In its Speech from the Throne, the government shared its ambitions of fighting climate change, but it failed to offer any substantive policies to go with its good intentions.

I want to know what tangible actions the government plans to take to fight climate change.

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, over the last four years this government has done more than any other government in the history of this country to work on the issues related to climate change. We are on pace to be able to beat our climate accord by 2030.

As it relates to the Speech from the Throne, I would remind the member opposite that it is a general document that outlines the principles and the work that will continue in the next four years. I would refer the member opposite to our platform during the election, which highlighted a lot of the work we will continue to do in the next four years.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned seniors and how the Liberal government is helping them. He was boasting about helping the people on old age security who are 75 years and older.

When I was campaigning and door knocking, many of the seniors who are 65 years and over were crying for help because of the high costs of living, rent increases and the amount of money being taken up by inflation. Why is it that the government has taken the approach of raising the pension, which is good news, but only for people who are 75 years and older and not for people who are 65 years old and over?

The Address

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind Canadians that it was our government that brought the retirement age in this country from 67 back down to 65. It had been raised by our Conservative colleagues. I would like to point to the fact that we are going to be raising the personal exemption to \$15,000. That will provide a family, on average, upwards of \$500 a year in savings. We are also going to invest in a national pharmacare plan, hopefully with the support of the House, because it is important for all Canadians, and it will be very beneficial for seniors.

We look forward to working collaboratively in this House to make sure that we focus on issues that matter. I take a vested interest, as does this government.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to congratulate you on your reappointment as Deputy Speaker. I know in the last Parliament there was a great deal of respect on both sides of the House for the work that you did in the chair. Thank you so much.

Since this is my first time speaking in this Parliament, I would like to thank the people of St. Catharines who put their trust in me. It is an incredible honour to represent such an amazing city in this place. Going door to door and hearing from the residents, it was a much different feeling this time around than the last, when we were running on adrenalin in 2015. However, hearing the concerns, addressing what we have done as a government, going to the polls and coming back with an increased margin really speaks to a lot of what our government has done. As the Prime Minister says, for all 338 of us, our time in this place is temporary. I want to thank the people of St. Catharines for the opportunity to represent them here again.

I also want to thank my wife, Charlene, and my children, Ethan and Hanna. This is not the most family-friendly job and it is difficult on all of our loved ones, on our friends and family. My three-year-old son is old enough now to tell me that he does not like his dad going to work. It is difficult to walk out the door for a week, but it is oftentimes the families that make the greatest sacrifice as we are doing what we love in this place.

I would also like to thank my team, Cass, Zach, Sam and Kelly, and all of my supporters and volunteers. We all know it is not a team of one that gets people elected. Members of Parliament are not always the easiest people to work with. To have members of a team behind us who have our back is an incredible honour. They do outstanding work for the people of St. Catharines. All across this country the people behind the scenes are the unsung heroes of what is going on.

Four years ago, I ran because I saw a great deal of poverty in my riding. I saw a great deal of concern. I did not like what I was seeing, and that is why I put my name on the ballot. Too many politicians in Niagara were saying that everything was all right, and I did not see it that way. We knocked on a lot of doors. We were elected, and the first thing we did was a middle-class tax cut, lowering taxes on the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%. That had an impact on people's lives. We coupled that with the Canada child benefit, increases to the guaranteed income supplement for those who need it most and, as my hon. colleague mentioned, lowering the age of eligibility to receive old age security and the guar-

anteed income supplement back to age 65 after the increase by the previous government. Those policies prevented hundreds of thousands of people from falling into poverty. It had an impact.

I was happy to see announced today action on increasing the basic personal amount. It is something that we promised in the campaign to bring in as our first act in this Parliament. It will remove 700,000 people from the tax roll. It will help 20 million people save money. It will reduce poverty for tens of thousands of people and could save families \$600 a year. We will make sure that it does not go to the highest income earners in this country. This is real action. This is continued action on poverty to help those who need it the most.

Too often we hear politicians say we need to give tax breaks to the wealthiest and the wealthiest corporations and eventually that will trickle down to the rest of us, to those who need it the most, but we have never seen that. What we have seen over the past four years is that giving money to those who need it most, either through tax breaks or the Canada child benefit, allows those people to spend the money in our economy. Those are people who are going to invest in Canada.

● (1655)

They are going to spend it right back, as opposed to saving it for perhaps a vacation or a rainy day. They are going to help stimulate the economy. This is an opportunity to do that again. I am happy to see the finance minister moving forward on that step. I am sure there will be support across the House for this.

Some members have indicated that there was no mention of seniors in the throne speech or no mention of action on seniors. This is going to have a direct benefit on those seniors who are making less than the 1%. For those seniors who do need assistance, it will be money right in their pockets, coupled with pharmacare, which my friend talked about as well. I am sure hon. members of the Conservative Party will take immediate action.

What I heard on the streets and at the doors of St. Catharines was that seniors are worried about pharmaceutical prices. They are worried about paying the rent or paying for pharmaceutical drugs. Action on pharmacare is a must. It will have a disproportionate impact on seniors, alleviating many of the costs that they face and many of the costs that they are concerned about.

I did mention my kids. What I would like to talk about in terms of the focus of my speech is climate change. It was just my wife and me in 2015, but climate change was always an important issue to me. Looking ahead and after the birth of my son and daughter, I look at this issue through their eyes. Everyone in the House will probably be fine, will probably be okay, but what are we going to give to the next generation? What are we going to give to the generation after that? I talked to a lot of seniors in my riding who agreed with that sentiment. Their time may not be long, but they wanted to know what I was going to do for their grandkids. How are we going to make this a better planet?

I challenged my opponents during the election to name a government that has done more in four years on the environment than our government. No one could provide me with an answer. I will challenge my colleagues on the other side as well.

We are moving forward on an ambitious plan. Does it mean our plan is perfect? Absolutely not. Does it mean there is more to be done? Absolutely. We are committed to doing that.

The residents of St. Catharines do not have to look far to see the impacts of climate change. In the last three years, we have seen two years of floods and one year of drought. We used to refer to 50-year storms, 100-year storms, but they are happening annually. We need to take action. It worries me.

I hear some of the language from members on the other side who believe climate change is man-made, but then they will use the language of denial. I just heard a member say CO₂ has no borders. Does that not mean we need to take action right away? This is the type of language that stalls progress. This is the type of language that hurts our kids and our grandkids. This is the greatest crisis facing Canada. People may throw up their hands and say that is just a bunch of Liberal nonsense. When the chief of the defence staff was asked what the greatest security threat facing Canada was, he answered that it was extreme weather.

Small business organizations and the insurance industry all say we need to take action. Bond and rating agencies are reducing the credit ratings of governments that refuse to take action on climate change. The time is now. I saw in St. Catharines that this was the first election on climate change and the residents of St. Catharines spoke loudly that they want to see action, and we are here to deliver. I hope we are able to work across the aisle to deliver on progress that Canadians demand and deserve and that our children and grandchildren deserve.

• (1700)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to acknowledge the fact that you have again been appointed Deputy Speaker. You have won the respect of everyone in the House in the past and I am sure you will going forward.

I did note in the member's speech that there was scarcely a mention of trade and how much trade contributes to Canada's prosperity. However, what we have seen under the current Liberal government over the last four years effectively is a dismantlement of Canada's trade agenda.

Originally, the Prime Minister appointed a minister of international trade. Then he changed that to a minister of trade diversifica-

tion. The most recent minister appointed is the minister of small business. Basically, trade was appended as an adjunct, sort of an afterthought to the appointment of that minister.

Quite frankly, I despair, because we have seen a complete decline in the agenda that Canada has moving forward to use trade as a driver of prosperity in our country. Beyond the renegotiation of NAFTA, we have seen virtually nothing from the Liberal government.

I would ask the member to comment on why it is that the responsibilities attributed to the various ministers over the last four years have declined in importance.

• (1705)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked why I did not talk about trade, but I only had 10 minutes to talk about the great things the government was doing. If I had a few hours more, we would get to all of the great things, including trade. I thank him for pointing that out.

Canada is the only G7 country that has free trade agreements with all of the other G7 countries, and that is because of this government. This government got the CPTPP across the line. This government got CETA across the line. They were signed under this government's watch. This government is committed to free trade. The member can ask the previous leader of his party how well the NAFTA negotiations went and how strong Canada's trade policy is.

We have a strong free trade policy. We have done outstanding work, and I look forward to seeing what the next few years bring.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that one of the things not mentioned in the throne speech was the arts and culture community. In Vancouver East, we have a very vibrant community. In fact, we are one of the highest per capita in terms of artists in our community, and we are very proud of that.

However, one of the issues that we are faced with in our community, of course, is the space in which artists can thrive, and we are losing that space at a rapid rate. Therefore, in the spirit of a minority government, in the spirit of co-operation, I wonder if the member would be amenable to working with NDP members across the aisle to ensure that the government provides infrastructure dollars to secure those much-needed artist spaces so that the artists can continue to thrive and contribute to our economy as well.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, we are always happy to work across the aisle.

The Address

In the previous government, we made historic investments in the arts, and refunded the CBC. There were projects for the arts that I can speak to in my riding of St. Catharines that were funded. I have no doubt that we will continue that great work, and we will build upon the progress of the last Parliament.

[Translation]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne proposes making it easier to pay down student debt. That is very good news. It also contains proposals to deal with climate change.

However, what will the Liberals do for the scientific researchers who are working on alternatives that will have a real impact on the environment, in a time of climate emergency?

At Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, our researchers are about to unveil a forest biomass-based product that will replace plastic. These biodegradable products will limit the excessive waste that is hurting our environment.

Can our scientific researchers, who are working directly on reducing the impact of climate change, get some support? The planet will benefit directly from their research.

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, we ended the war on science in the last Parliament.

We have invested \$4 billion into the granting councils. I have seen the incredible work being done by researchers at Brock University. I have no doubt that at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, they are experiencing the same type of increased funding that will fund the projects to help us out into the future and meet our commitments on climate change.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the people of Vancouver East for returning me to this House with a strong mandate.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate all members of this House for being here today. I look forward to working with the new and returning members, because I do believe that a better Canada is possible.

It is a privilege and an honour for me to bring the voices of Vancouver East to Ottawa as their representative. Vancouver East is one of Canada's most diverse and progressive communities in the country. I am so very proud of our record here in Vancouver East. We fight hard for what we believe in. Whether it is with respect to a call for a national affordable housing program, climate action to tackle the climate emergency, justice for indigenous peoples, calling out the government for taking indigenous kids to court, demanding action on the calls for justice for the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, or electoral reform so that every vote would count, we speak with a united and strong voice in Vancouver East on these issues.

I have no doubt that my colleague, the member for Courtenay—Alberni, would join with me on this call as well, and I will be splitting my time with him today.

Before I get too deep into the throne speech, I would like to give a shout-out to the Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall. Just last month, it was formally designated as a national historic site. People who had been displaced and interned were at the ceremony that day. It was incredibly moving. This recognition is so important on so many levels. It is a piece of history that all Canadians should learn about.

On a similar note, I hope the government will also work with the community to get the city's application for Vancouver's Chinatown to be designated as a UNESCO historic site. That would be something that we would all be proud of. It would showcase this diverse and multicultural community and the Canadians who helped contribute in building this great nation of ours.

Today, we are in a minority government situation. The people of Canada have sent a clear message to the current government: business as usual is not good enough. We all listened intently to the throne speech that was delivered last week. Unfortunately, like me, the people of Vancouver East were left wanting after this throne speech. Over the last four years, we have heard lots of pretty words and big talk. Sadly, there were no actions to match those words.

For example, the throne speech talks about the need for reconciliation. In the last four years, we heard over and over again that the new nation-to-nation relationship is the most important relationship for the Liberal government, yet over and over again we saw the government fail to take action to match those words. If reconciliation is the most important thing for the current government, then why on earth is it continuing to take indigenous children to court? How does that make sense? How does it justify that kind of action? Why is it the people in Grassy Narrows, who are suffering from mercury poisoning, are not getting immediate action from the government so they can have clean drinking water? I do not mean a bottle of water; I mean a permanent solution.

Why are indigenous people continuing to live in poverty and in mouldy housing? Canada is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. In Vancouver alone, this year's homeless count identified more than 2,000 homeless people and more than 600 who are living on the streets, 40% of whom are indigenous. With indigenous women and girls getting murdered and going missing, reconciliation means that indigenous people must have access to safe housing. All Canadians across the board are being hit by the housing crisis. High rents and low vacancy rates mean that even working professionals have precarious housing. Never mind saving for ownership, many people are one paycheque away from being homeless themselves.

● (1710)

Almost one in four homeless in Vancouver are actually seniors. Imagine that: seniors today are finding themselves in the streets without a home, and the number is growing. To address the crisis today, we need robust funding for the whole spectrum of housing, from social housing to co-op housing to purpose-built rentals, and real paths to home ownership for Canadians.

We want no more delaying of funding flow and no more rhetorical advantages, double-counting or word games. It is not good enough that the Liberals choose to spend 19% less than the Harper government on affordable housing and that much of this decline was in programs that are targeted to low-income households. It is not good enough that we saw a \$325-million, 14% reduction in funding for assistance for housing needs programs.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, it is clear that the vast majority of the remaining national housing strategy funding will not flow until after 2024. That is another election cycle away. Funding in 2024 will not help anyone in my community struggling to find affordable housing today, tomorrow, next week, next year or the year after. They cannot wait years. They need action now.

We need emergency funding so that we can build modular housing for the people in Oppenheimer Park. These are people who have been living in tents for more than a year now, and the cold and wet weather is here. Imagine that.

The 58 West Hastings project has been waiting for federal funding for years now. We have funding commitment from the city and we have funding commitment from the province, but the federal government is missing in action. It is nowhere to be found. We need the federal government at the table, working with the city, the province and the non-profits to deliver housing.

UNYA, the Urban Native Youth Association, is a fantastic organization in my riding that has been working diligently to support urban indigenous at-risk youth. Its space is oversubscribed and it needs a new centre. Youth need safe housing as well. The city and the province are in support of its work, and again we need the federal government at the table.

In Vancouver East there are some 47 co-ops, with a total of over 1,600 units. All but five were constructed before the Liberals cancelled the national affordable housing program in 1993. The Liberals also promised in 2015 to renew operating agreements with Canada's co-op housing providers. Unfortunately, they only signed short-term agreements, and now we are back to where we started. Real action is needed. We need long-term agreements and stable funding with subsidies so that we can ensure that the existing units remain affordable.

In short, homelessness is systemic and structural, caused by a failure of government to meet the needs of the people it serves.

I hope we can work together in the minority government in order to better address the housing crisis across the country.

On the opioid crisis, we need the government to get on with it. We need to declare a national health emergency, and it would be so good if, at a minimum, the government got on with a pilot program on safe supply so that we can start the work to save lives. It would

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be so good for the government to support the front-line workers who are burning out there right now by providing resources to them so that they can continue with this critical work.

Let us not judge people for who they are. Let us get on with saving lives. Let us look at each other with humanity and say that we can do better.

On pharmacare, I challenge any member in this House to tell me that they did not come across someone at a doorstep who said that they needed affordable medication. The government can do this. It has been promising this for decades. The New Democrats have been pushing this hard. Our critic for health has been pushing this hard. I urge the government to utilize this minority government to make that happen: single-payer, universal pharmacare for all.

Today we also put forward a suggestion on dental care. Instead of giving a tax reduction for people earning over \$140,000 on their annual income, let us reduce that to \$90,000, and let us redirect those dollars so that we can bring forward a dental care program that will support some 4.3 million people in Canada. Would that not be something, if we could get to work on all of this?

● (1715)

We are putting forward these suggestions in the spirit of co-operation and saying to the government that it is a minority government and New Democrats are here to work with it. Let us work for the people and make the changes.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really encouraged when the member says we should work with Canadians and for Canadians. There are many wonderful things in the throne speech, and I would encourage members of the New Democratic Party give serious consideration to those positive things.

The member spoke about the pharmacare program, and yes, it has been on the books for decades, but it is only in the last four years that we have seen any significant movement from a leader of a political party on that issue. For the first time since we had universal health care and the Canada Health Act, we are finally looking to see it become a reality. A vast majority of Canadians support it.

Whether it is that or the income tax cuts, or tax breaks for low-income Canadians, are these not good, solid progressive initiatives that the member could support?

The Address

• (1720)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I know the member wants to brag about what a great job the government is doing, but the reality is this. I met seniors who are in need of pharmacare because they cannot afford their medication. The government says it has been moving on this issue. The Liberals have talked about moving on it, but we have yet to see real action.

New Democrats want to see the government bring forward a universal single-payer pharmacare program so that people can afford the medication they need. Let us stop the big talk and let us match those words with real action. New Democrats will be there with the action.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver East for all the work she has been doing. I know that there are many challenges in that area, one of them being the drug epidemic. When I was in that area, I could see it, and we are seeing it across Canada.

Could she share with me what she has seen over the last four years in Insite, what is happening in her own community and how the government has failed?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the member's question would mean that all members of the House would support innovative ideas.

One of the things our community wants to see is safe supply. That means dealing with the drug addiction issue as a health care issue and not as a criminal justice issue.

For example, if someone is struggling with an addiction, they would go to see their doctor, and the doctor would prescribe something to address the addiction issues. For whatever drug they would prescribe, individuals would be able to access that medication through pharmacare to manage their addiction. That is what we are talking about in order to save lives.

Insite is a tremendous program that has been working in our community. It is saving lives and it is reducing the spread of diseases, but that alone is not enough. We have the fentanyl crisis, and some 12,000 people have died across this country. It is not just in the Downtown Eastside. It is in all of our communities.

I call on the government to announce a pilot program, at the very minimum. Let us do it in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with a safe supply program to save lives. Let us show the rest of the country how this could be done without judgment.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Vancouver East for her intervention, in particular noting dental care and pharmacare. I know that the cost reductions from businesses also create employment. It is one of the areas where we have been able to compete with the United States and other jurisdictions. When people know that companies have basic services and coverage for employees, productivity goes up as well.

I would like the member to add to her discussion with regard to dental care. I represent a riding where we have some of the highest child poverty in Canada. How wrong is it for a country like Canada to let kids be in pain because we do not have a dental care program?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his return as the dean of the NDP caucus.

Children are suffering in our communities today. There are children in my community, for example, who need food at the table, and we need the government to bring a national food program into schools. That is one item.

On the issue around dental care and how people deal with a dental issue, it will make a difference in their lives, and not just at that moment. Dental care can build up their confidence, and it has life-long implications. If we address dental issues now, it can prevent other illness down the road, which will save money in the health care system. As well, I have people in my community today who, because of their dental issues and the lack of dental services, are unable to apply for employment. They are embarrassed about their teeth and do not have the confidence to apply for employment.

I think that by doing this, we will actually save money down the road. It is the right thing to do. The formula that the NDP has put forward is one that would work. Let us cap the tax changes at \$90,000. Then that money, the \$1.6 billion that would be saved from that change, could be invested into a dental care program that would support some 4.3 million Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

• (1725)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge pleasure and honour to rise today on behalf of the people of Courtenay—Alberni. I would like to extend my thanks to all of the people in Courtenay—Alberni for giving me such a strong mandate to return here. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your new appointment.

I would like to point out my thanks especially to the Nuuchah-nulth leadership, the Ha'wiih, which is the hereditary chiefs of the Nuuchah-nulth, who bestowed a name on me this fall, *ciqh=sii*, which is the speaker of the hereditary chiefs of the 14 Nuuchah-nulth nations. I am deeply humbled and honoured to deliver their voice here in the House of Commons.

I would like to also honour my family, because we do not get here without our family. Most notably, we lost my grandma at 94 years old just last month. She was the daughter of the late Chief Solomon Mallett from Fisher River. She was the last Cree speaker in our family.

I pledged to her and to all of my family to fight for indigenous languages to ensure that we do not lose native speakers like my grandma Mabel Lazar and lose their language. We must do everything we can to support indigenous languages.

We are here today to talk about the Speech from the Throne. We are hearing from everyday Canadians who need help right now. If this throne speech is all the Liberals are willing to offer, then it is simply not good enough for the people in our communities.

The Liberals had a real chance with this throne speech to make a commitment to help Canadians deal with the challenges that they are facing right now. Instead, they completely ignored the message that they heard from Canadians during the election. These are broken promises again in the early going. We cannot have these pretty words without concrete actions. Canadians expect more.

Almost half of Canadians in every part of this country are \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills.

We see the effects and the urgency of the climate crisis all around us. Young people are taking to the streets. They are worried about their future. In downtown Courtenay just last week, Youth Environmental Action was calling for the government to take urgent action. Instead what we received in the government's platform was a date of 2050.

What this group was expecting, and what we were all hoping for, was to see the sense of urgency, to see what has been recommended by the IPCC in terms of reducing emissions by 45% by 2030. We did not hear anything about that. Instead of working with us to help make Canadians' lives better, the Liberals offered more empty words and no indication of any real action.

We hear Liberal members talk about their pharmacare plan but there really is no language about any universal, comprehensive or public pharmacare plan. There is no funding amount and no timeline.

I hear from people in my riding. I heard from a young mother who has a child with cystic fibrosis. She simply cannot afford the medicine. When children cannot afford to get the medicine they need in a country as wealthy as Canada, we are failing miserably.

In terms of the environment, the Liberals have given billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies instead of investing in renewable energy and job creation. There is nothing on stronger emissions around 2030 and nothing to confront the urgency of the problem that is facing us right now. Instead, the Liberals continue to give massive subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

The Liberals failed to work with us to make sure that the ultra-rich pay a little more. Instead, the Liberals continue to throw away and write off billions in corporate debt that is owed to Canadians. They could have worked with us to stop profiting off Canadians who struggle continually to pay off their own debts.

In terms of reconciliation, the Liberals continue to cite that their most important relationship is with indigenous people. The Liberals are refusing to stop dragging indigenous children to court. They refuse to commit to dropping the appeal against fairness for indigenous children. They are also failing by refusing to fix the problem with the child welfare system.

Members have heard me talking in the House about the government spending \$19 million on lawyers alone to fight the Nuuchahnulth on their right to catch and sell fish. They won this case twice in the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Address

Instead of choosing to honour the courts, the government continues to fight them and spend taxpayers' money. The Nuuchahnulth want to share. They want to walk together. They want to be out on the water fishing, where they belong.

● (1730)

In terms of housing, the Liberals failed to deliver a real, concrete plan. We need 500,000 housing units right now to make up for the last 25 years. We need co-op housing. I am a product of co-op housing, and we desperately need it.

In Courtenay, there is a conversation right now about the need for co-op housing and federal help. The government made a promise to end veteran homelessness. There is nothing in the throne speech about veteran homelessness. We also know a lot of indigenous people are living in terrible housing conditions.

I heard my friend from Vancouver East talk about the opioid crisis and seeking a pilot project on a clean source of supply. Over 12,000 Canadians have lost their lives unnecessarily to a poisoned drug supply.

We also need therapeutic recovery communities like there are in Italy and Portugal, where they have been able to reduce the number of overdose deaths. In Canada, especially in British Columbia, people are 79 times more likely to die of an overdose. Seven times means we got it wrong, but 79 times means we need to ask who is accountable. We need to take urgent action.

I have to highlight the biggest thing that is missing for the west coast in this Speech from the Throne. There is no mention of the salmon emergency, none. The member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country yesterday talked for 20 minutes and did not mention the salmon emergency taking place.

I had the privilege today to sit down with the new Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I called on her to take action. This is as big as a forest fire taking place in northern Alberta or flooding in eastern Canada. There is a billion-dollar salmon economy in British Columbia. It is not just our economy. It is our food security, our culture and our way of life. Everything is interconnected in our ecosystem.

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There was the lowest return in the Fraser this year in recorded history. It was not just the lowest return. It was half the lowest return. In the Skeena, there were record lows. In the Alouette River, 60,000 chum were expected and 450 came back. There was the Big Bar slide, and now we are hearing most of the fish did not make it.

This is a catastrophic time. The government does not want to be the government that watched the west coast and the Pacific salmon go the way of the Atlantic cod. We need the government to act with the sense of urgency that is taking place on the west coast right now. I am appealing to the Liberals. This is not about blame or shame. This is about doing the right thing right now. We need action.

The government announced its salmon restoration funds, whether it be the B.C. salmon restoration fund or the coastal restoration fund. That money simply is not flowing. There are tons of volunteers out there trying to do the good work and they are not seeing that money.

There were over 60 people in Ucluelet with the Central West-coast Forest Society in Clayoquot and Barkley out on Saturday. They removed 23,000 tonnes of plastic and debris from the streams so the fish would return. A simple \$102 million from the federal government is not enough. We need \$500 million right now, just in restoration.

The enhancement groups have not seen a raise in over 29 years while there is an urgent situation. The catching and retention of marked fish is not allowed. It does not make sense. We should mark every fish from every hatchery and make sure that the fish are allowed to be kept by our sports fishers. That will help in conservation.

The government made a commitment that it would remove salmon farms by 2025. There is nothing in the Speech from the Throne on that, despite the fact that we are seeing a record number of sea lice.

The government still allows the transfer of fish that are infected with PRV, a disease. We have seen massive die-offs with algal bloom. This is happening along migratory routes of juvenile salmon and the government is acting as a double agent. It is acting as an agent for the industry, yet it says it is there to protect our wild stocks. It was recommended by the Cohen commission that the government cannot play that double role.

The government is allowing the herring fishery to open right now, unless we hear different. This is fundamental because everything is interconnected. It is the bedrock species for salmon and southern resident killer whales. It is a reduction fishery and it does not make sense. New Democrats are calling on the government to listen to local and indigenous knowledge.

We need the government to highlight that there is a salmon emergency going on in British Columbia and it needs to announce that right away. The government is needed on the ground.

• (1735)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as this is the first time I am speaking in the 43rd Parliament, I would like to thank the citizens of Longueuil—

Charles-LeMoine for their support again in this election, and of course my family, friends and volunteers.

I listened to the member opposite's speech. I had the great pleasure of working with him in the 42nd Parliament on veteran affairs. I noticed in his speech that he said there was absolutely nothing in the throne speech for veterans. I would like to correct the record. In fact, at the bottom of page 12 of the Speech from the Throne he can see very clearly our commitment.

In addition to the \$10 billion of investments over the last four years for veterans, the Canadian Armed Forces, the military and their families, we have also committed, working through partners such as VETS Canada and others, to ending veterans' homelessness.

I ask the member opposite if he will support the throne speech with respect to our support for our men and women in uniform and those who have supported them.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague who sat on the veterans' committee with me. We did hear clearly that the government put forward a motion in June to end homelessness for veterans. Veteran homelessness was not in the throne speech. Veterans are mentioned vaguely in the speech. The government put forward a motion to end homelessness for veterans. Where is the plan? It wants to do it by 2025. We want to hear the plan.

Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition supported our motion last November to end lapsed spending. We hope the Liberals are going to honour that when they go to supplementary estimates, because we know there is money left over that they did not spend. They made a commitment they were going to end lapsed spending for veterans, so we are expecting that to take place.

The government is still only meeting six of the 24 service standards. While it is taking pride in its track record on veterans, maybe it could do something about it. It could take the money from the end of last year and apply it to meeting the 18 of the 24 service standards it is not meeting. That is what the Liberals promised to do when they voted for that motion, including that member.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on a powerful speech that reflects some of the most profoundly important issues facing his riding and British Columbians.

Two weeks ago, I was visited by a large group of citizens who are very concerned about the continued use of open-net fish farms in British Columbia and the devastating impact it is having on our wild salmon. They were urging us to raise, at the first opportunity in the House, the need to go to in-ground closed containment as soon as possible.

My question really is about housing, because that is literally the number one issue that I heard on the campaign trail. In my riding we have very many successful co-ops that were built with federal funds in the 1970s and 1980s and provided thousands of affordable units for families of all types.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague agrees with me when I call on the current government to bring back federal funding for a national co-op housing program so that we can build the hundreds of thousands of co-op units that are so desperately needed by so many people in this country.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for bringing that question forward. I am someone who was fortunate enough to live in co-op housing. It provided safe, secure housing.

Back in the seventies and eighties, when he was talking about that era, over 10% of our housing stock was non-market housing. Most of it was co-op housing. Today, we are at 3%. In Europe, they are at 30%. Europe sees housing as something that is a right, that everybody deserves safe, secure and affordable housing.

Making sure we have non-market co-op housing ensures that people will have a safe, secure place to live. It works because we can have all different types of income levels living in a housing co-op, all different types of needs in a housing co-op. We can build them right across the country, like we did in the seventies and eighties.

Of the many people who I talked to who are privileged to live in co-op housing today, a lot of them graduated into the free market, and a lot of those who could not are still living there today. Therefore, we need to do everything we can to make sure that we provide safe, secure and affordable housing. The co-op model makes sense.

One thing I did not mention in my speech is that we desperately need the government to come to British Columbia and listen to people about the housing issue.

• (1740)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House.

I want to begin by thanking my constituents for sending me back here. I received one of the strongest results in Canada. I want to thank all of them for showing me that support and for helping me out on the campaign trail. I thank my volunteers and my supporters and of course my family, without whom I would not be able to stand here in the House. This is the second term that I will be serving in the House of Commons.

I want also to take the time to thank all Calgarians and all Albertans for sending back a strong Conservative team of 33 out of 34 members of Parliament. They have chosen very wisely in this Parliament to make sure that their voice is heard on the floor of the House of Commons in the Parliament of Canada. Albertans will no longer be taken advantage of.

Before I continue, Madam Speaker, I want to say that I am splitting my time with the member for Durham. I am sure he will have many important contributions to make to this debate, and also no doubt will provide the perspective of Ontarians on what their expectations are in the Parliament of Canada.

The Speech from the Throne was a very deep disappointment, a slap in the face to Albertans. We have faced some of the hardest economic times our province has faced in multiple generations. Albertans are used to downturns in the oil and gas sector. They are

The Address

used to downturns in the energy sector. That is nothing new. When I moved to Alberta in 2005, it was something that every single energy worker would tell me. I remember in the last downturn, they would say to save for the next downturn, to put aside some money to weather it. It would come and go and the boom would come back. Projects would get built. We would have new opportunities to grow the economy to create well-paying middle-class jobs in the energy sector.

We have seen a government in the past four years that has failed to do that. We have seen a government that has made it its intention to phase out the energy sector, despite the fact that oil and gas companies invest in renewable energy and invest in their people. We will find no other companies as interested in maximizing the knowledge, the abilities and the type of work that people will be doing. I always tell people back home and all those whom I visit all across Canada that we spent a generation convincing young men and women that it was worth their while to pursue a degree in science, technology, engineering and mathematics because there would be well-paying jobs waiting for them when they finished. When they went into the private sector, they had co-operative jobs and internships ready to go. Some of them did not even finish their degrees and they already had six-figure salaries in engineering jobs waiting for them in oil and gas at the Suncors of the world.

Now we have heard terrible news. Haliburton announced that it was shutting down its cement operations in Alberta. We have news from companies like Suncor Energy. Encana has renamed itself and is moving to the United States. It has already moved most of its board of directors down there. Decisions are being made there for a Canadian company. It was once what we would say in French *le fleuron*, the main natural gas company in Canada and now those decisions are being made in Denver. Trans Canada dumped "Canada" from its name because it no longer has faith in doing business in Canada. Now it is called TC Energy to hide the fact to American investors that it is a Canadian-based company. That is a lost opportunity. I have come here to make sure that opportunity rings out again in these hallways and that there is opportunity for Albertans within Confederation, within a united Canada.

On every single street I was on and at most of the doors I went to, people would talk about it. People are fed up with being taken advantage of. I have said on the floor of the House of Commons before that people in Alberta are tired of being treated like colonials. We are not colonials. We have made an immense contribution to Canada. Over \$600 billion has been transferred out of our province. Albertans do complain about it; it is just something that we do. It is true. We want to be able to create the wealth and then we are okay to share a slice of that wealth with the rest of Canada to make a contribution to Confederation. We contribute more than our fair share right now and all we are asking is that the government listen. Premier Kenney, who is here today in Ottawa, is making five simple requests, none of which happened to be in the throne speech. The federal government has listened to none of them. These are not new things. These are things that the premier has repeatedly asked for.

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One request is to remove the cap on the stabilization fund. The Government of Alberta at the moment is forced into deficit spending as it is closing its deficit, which is something the current federal government is incapable of doing. Removing the cap on the stabilization fund would allow the province to get that money back, the “over-contribution”, I would call it, into Confederation, so that we can stabilize our health care system, our education system and the social services that Albertans depend on.

● (1745)

These are extremely important things that must be done. The premier has asked for a major significant amendment to Bill C-69 to ensure that certain major projects will not fall under the Bill C-69 rules. The “no pipelines” bill, as it is called in Alberta, ensures that there are no new projects being proposed. When I go into downtown Calgary and I talk to managers, directors and people making the decisions on whether to pursue a project in Canada, they say that there is no thought about any new projects being suggested for the Canadian market.

Most of the well-paying jobs in the oil and gas sector are in construction. Brand new projects that come online cost tens of thousands so that people can be hired for the length of the construction season to build it. For the past four years, all the government has to show for it is that it has expropriated one pipeline company and taken over Kinder Morgan's TMX contract. After dithering for years and trying to block the pipeline from being built, suddenly, the Liberal Party had a deathbed conversion. Suddenly the government is now in favour of building a pipeline, but only one pipeline. It cancelled energy east. It cancelled Enbridge's northern gateway. It cancelled more kilometres of pipeline than it actually had built. The only one that is kind of pitter-pattering away on getting built is really the last major energy infrastructure project in Canada. The same thing happened with LNG with well-paying jobs.

For a generation we have been convincing people to go into the STEMs. We also spent a heck of a lot of time convincing people to move from other parts of Canada and from parts of the United States to Alberta and earn a living there. We do not have the advantage of beautiful provinces like British Columbia which has the mountains and the ocean. Alberta is just rolling foothills, and they are pretty flat on the east side. However, what we did have was an excellent quality of life, an excellent opportunity to work in a sector that was always trying to do its best, on the cutting edge of everything. There are wildlife biologists and people interested in environmental remediation. Those are the people I met at the doors, people who worked for oil and gas companies trying to remediate the land. They were proud of the work they were doing and the contributions they were making to ensure that with every single project that came online, at some point the land would be remediated and returned as close as possible to its original state.

Suncor was one of those great companies that managed to do that and earned an environmental certificate two provincial governments ago. Now there are wild bison on the territory, something we had not seen for an extremely long time. It is a bison population, by the way, that is healthier than in the wilds of Wood Buffalo National Park.

This throne speech has very, very little for Albertans, so we will be looking for the government to actually reach out to Albertans and make an effort, a true effort, at bridging the gap between what Albertans are feeling and seeing on the ground, the experiences they have had over the past four years, and what we expect from the minority Parliament. There is an entire province right now that is feeling neglected. We are not asking for a handout. We are asking for the federal government to get out of our way and let us create the wealth. Let us create the jobs, well-paying private sector jobs that we have been known for over the past two decades.

It has been amazing to see how fast Calgary has grown even since I moved there. I represent the deep southeast suburbs of Calgary. There are entire communities that did not exist when I moved there. There is a hospital that was built in my riding. It did not exist back in 2005. Some 30,000 to 40,000 people have moved into my area. Cranston, Mahogany, Auburn Bay, Seton, Rangeview and Copperfield are communities that did not exist before.

Tens of thousands of people chose Calgary. They chose Alberta for those well-paying jobs in the energy sector. We have diversified our economy much more than people could ever believe.

● (1750)

The oil and gas sector is a much smaller proportion of Alberta's economy than it was back in 1997. We have diversified our economy. We were moving in the right direction, and we have a federal government that has impeded our ability to continue to create that wealth.

This throne speech is just not good enough. There is not enough concrete action in it that would actually provide any certainty or comfort for the people back home who have lost their jobs and whose severances have run out. They are finding no opportunities to work in the sector where they have spent 20 years, between their education and their early career opportunities, to actually make something of themselves and contribute to their families.

I will be proudly voting against the throne speech, because it has nothing in it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the member for Calgary Shepard back to the House.

He talked about ensuring that there was a sense of opportunity for Albertans and coming to this House for that purpose. However, he seemed to focus his entire speech on assuming that opportunity is built purely in the oil and gas sector. He also talked a lot about Suncor, which I find very interesting because Suncor on December 5, just a few days ago, announced that it was building a \$300-million wind farm in southern Alberta.

Notwithstanding the fact that the member is extremely passionate about the oil and gas sector, which I can appreciate, does he agree that this sense of opportunity that he talked about can come in other sectors and not just the oil and gas sector?

The Address

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member points out that Suncor has indeed started this one project. The problem with the member's thinking is that oil and gas companies are just as interested in renewable energy and have been making investments for the last 20 years in it. It is nothing new.

What he should be doing is noticing the fact that he has no colleagues from Alberta. Albertans have spoken. They reject the Liberal government's four years of failure. On every single street, I heard the same thing. Whether it is renewable energy or fossil fuel energy, people just want to get back to work with the federal government out of their way.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind members that when someone has the floor and is answering a question, I would hope that the member who asked the question would take the time to listen and that there not be any going back and forth between the parties.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for Calgary Shepard on returning to the House.

The climate emergency is not going to address itself. That is something we all know. It is our reality. We also know that the Liberal schedule to address the climate emergency is not going to do it. We are not even on pace to meet the target that has been set by the Paris Agreement. At this rate, we will be 175 million tonnes away from our emissions reduction target in 2030.

Having said that, what we need is bold action to avert a climate catastrophe. We can begin with real investments. Investment in transit is an example. We can stop the subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. That is something the Liberals promised in 2015. We can actually put in a real just transition plan for the workers.

The member talked about the workers and the need to ensure that their families are taken care of. What about the government putting forward a real just transition plan for those workers, so that they do not have to worry about the future? What about saying to them that their future can exist in the reality of us tackling the climate emergency?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I am first going to take exception to the use of language like "climate emergency" to describe the real problems of climate change. Often I get emails and they are usually from people who have good-hearted concerns about the environment. They are worried about climate change. I believe, in their hearts, they really are worried, but the language of "emergency" and "crisis" is often used to suggest massive government interference in the economy and the government dictating to provinces and companies what they will and will not do. I reject the whole premise underlying the notion that this is the only way we can address climate change as an issue.

I also want to reject the notion that it is up to the government to provide what is called a "just transition", which I think is a very subjective term in the first place. We have people who are looking to international markets and the International Energy Agency says that for the foreseeable future, the demand for both natural gas and oil is going up, not down.

The expectation all across the world is that the world will need more energy, not less. Why not just make more of all of it, whether it is renewable energy through wind and solar or fossil fuels? We can do those at the same time and manage those different expectations people have, while trying to do our best to meet our Paris accord goals.

• (1755)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the residents of Durham, my constituents, for giving me the honour to rise again in this House in the 43rd Parliament. It is a profound honour for me to represent my hometown in Parliament.

As someone who attended the Churchill Society award dinner honouring David Crombie last week in Toronto, and as the former director of that committee, I am very happy to start my first speech of this session with a quote by Winston Churchill.

It is self-deprecating, because Churchill once said, "It is a good thing for an uneducated man to read books of quotations." I have read many books of quotations, not just by Churchill but also by the government and the Prime Minister.

I am going to seize upon one of the quotes from the throne speech, which I actually took away in a positive sense. The throne speech ended with a remarkable passage by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's speech at the opening of the Centennial Flame, just beside us in West Block, which read:

Tonight we begin a new chapter in our country's story. Let the record of that chapter be one of co-operation and not conflict; of dedication and not division; of service, not self...

The irony is that the speech was kicking off our centennial year, lighting a centennial flame using natural gas from Canada. I am not sure that irony was found by the Prime Minister's Office when it chose that aspirational quote, but that was how people celebrated. The Centennial Flame has all of our provinces and territories, now including Nunavut, around it and is burning Canadian natural gas, allowing that fountain to burn throughout the coldest winters in Ottawa.

Earlier in that speech, Pearson complimented our industrial capacity and our resourcefulness as a country. Sometimes we have to ask what was said before the quote that the government used for its throne speech. In the same speech, kicking off the celebration of Canadian natural gas in many ways, Pearson said:

Economically, we have become a rich society and a great industrial power. We have built new dimensions of progress and welfare into the Canadian way of life. The boundaries of freedom and opportunity have been expanded for every Canadian.

That was Lester B. Pearson's remark, speaking about the balance that Canada had been able to have by being resourceful, tapping our natural resources and being industrial, celebrating our industrial sectors, in order to provide for the welfare of the country.

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One thing people on this side of the House have been saying, both through the first term of the Prime Minister and this one, and what is missing in the throne speech, is recognizing the economic diversity of this country. There is no mention of the serious national unity issues we are facing as a result of the Prime Minister and the Liberal government's opposition to our resource sector in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and beyond. There is not one mention of it. This is unlike Pearson who actually understood that resourcefulness, industry and celebrating it, the hard work of Canadians allowing us to have new dimensions of progress for the welfare of our people.

The Premier of Alberta is in Ottawa today. Alberta has been very proud to share not just that wealth with the rest of the country as part of the resourcefulness of its industry, but at times, when the auto industry was struggling in my province, more manufacturing jobs in Ontario were attributable to our western resource industry than into auto assembly. When our national economy was struggling, the global recession, it was actually our resource economy that allowed us to lead the G7. That is allowing new dimensions of progress, embracing that.

The Prime Minister and his whole cabinet should read the entire Pearson speech, not just cherry-pick some aspirational sections. We need a Prime Minister who does not divide the country.

• (1800)

The disappointment and the frustration we see in many parts of the country are the direct result of the Prime Minister hindering the progress of provinces already struggling with global resource prices, a range of issues, pipeline challenges. They have seen a government that has had policy decision after policy decision holding them back. That is how the Prime Minister started.

I spoke about this in my speech four years ago, in January 2016. I spoke about how disappointed I was that the Prime Minister talked about diversity except for recognizing the economic diversity that our country had. In the Prime Minister's first speech abroad as the Canadian prime minister, at Davos in January 2016, he said, "My predecessor wanted you to know Canada for its resources. I want you to know Canadians for our resourcefulness."

What was disturbing was that only a few minutes after he went to an international forum, he essentially attacked his predecessor. What made it worse was afterward the Prime Minister's Office changed the speech to take out the reference the Prime Minister made to his predecessor and to just put "Canada" in the quote in the official record. We know press releases often will say "check against delivery". The Prime Minister delivered something that he should not have delivered. More important than the slight against the previous prime minister was the fact that he mocked the resource industry in Canada in his first remark at Davos. That is division.

I said at the outset that I was going to look to quotations for guidance much like the throne speech used in the Pearson speech. Here is a quote I used four years ago, which rings even more true today, from Robert Stanfield in March 1969. He said, "Let us be quite clear that national unity does not mean uniting most of Canada against part of it." What wise words when the division in the coun-

try at that time was caused by a Trudeau, Pierre Trudeau, and I can say that safely in the House.

We see that in practice from the present Prime Minister from his first speech at Davos, playing off resourcefulness and the resource sector as if steam-assisted gravity drainage and the ability of our oil sands to minimize the mining operations, minimize water usage and minimize greenhouse gas, those innovations somehow did not count to the Prime Minister.

The resourcefulness of our resource sector and the capital markets that developed in Canada as a result of our resources have given us the new dimensions of welfare that Lester Pearson talked about on the eve of Canada's centennial.

What has the Prime Minister done in four years to cause this national unity crisis?

After the Davos speech, there was the cancellation, unilaterally, of northern gateway; no consultations with the one-third owners, indigenous communities; and zero consultations before taking that opportunity away from them. There was the cancellation of energy east as a result of Bill C-69, which is still being brought up in question period today. Why? Because the majority of the country opposed that legislation, including my premier. With respect to Trans Mountain, the company withdrew because of a lack of confidence in Canada. We had Bill C-48, the tanker moratorium, and the 2016 Arctic ban where unilaterally the Prime Minister took away 17% of the landmass from Inuit and northerners to develop.

In fact, previous Liberal Senator Charlie Watt said this about the Prime Minister's unilateral action in Washington:

There have never been clear consultations. As a matter of fact, when the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada made that decision, we were not too happy. Without even coming to us, they just turned around and said, "This is what's going to happen."

That is not exactly reconciliation.

We can see why Canadians are upset. What is missing from the Throne Speech is a recognition that Canada can and must balance our economic diversity. This means getting our resources to market. It means prioritizing pipelines. It means ending the divisive Bill C-69. That is what we want to see from the Prime Minister.

• (1805)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague back to the House. I know we will have fun over the next months and years to come.

It is interesting that in his speech he accused the government of cherry-picking a quote used in the throne speech, but then went on to try to split a hair between the phrases “using our resources” and “the resourcefulness of our people.” I found that to be quite interesting in a description about unity, of all things.

Could the member point to some examples of what the Conservative Party has done to help the unity within our country? How have the Conservatives contributed as parliamentarians and as a party to actually improve upon that unity as opposed to what many, quite frankly, would look at as driving the wedge even further into the issue?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for such an easy question for me to answer.

The fact that the Prime Minister's Office had to change the speech that he gave at Davos, to take out the reference to his predecessor, was because previously Prime Minister Harper had used the Davos platform to talk about Canada as an energy superpower: liquefied natural gas from British Columbia and western Canada offsetting coal-generating electricity in Asia. That is good for climate change and the fight against greenhouse gas emissions and it is good for our sector.

We are world leaders in nuclear energy, small modular reactors, oil and gas, traditional forms of resource energy. We are an energy superpower, but we have a Prime Minister that will not even mention it in his speech. That is what is shameful. I am not cherry-picking. He had to doctor his own press release to take out his little dig. We should recognize that our country is diverse. Whether it is a fisherman in Atlantic Canada or someone in the north in the resource industry, we should be proud that they are contributing to our country, like Lester Pearson was.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for talking about resources and jobs, especially fishers. We have the perfect storm going on right now in British Columbia. There is a downturn in the forest sector, especially for coastal communities. We have the collapse of our salmon sector, as everyone heard me say earlier. We have a salmon emergency taking place. The fishers, the people trying to make a living, have had no help from Ottawa. EI was not extended. The commercial fishing season was extended to August 20 and they did not get any support. Fishers are losing their boats and homes, and the government is completely absent.

We need an emergency package for those fishers and their families, to get people back to work and restoration. We need to take concrete action, fix the mismanagement that took place over decades by both Liberal and Conservative governments, take a whole-of-ecosystem approach and protect the bedrock species on which salmon rely. We need urgent action.

Does my colleague and the Conservative caucus join me in calling on the federal government to come up with an emergency package in light of the fact that we have had half of the lowest return in recorded history in the Fraser, which is the world's largest salmon river? I hope my colleague will join me in the call to action.

The Address

• (1810)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, my colleague from British Columbia mentioned the importance of fishing and our offshore resources. These are types of resources of which we should be proud. We should manage them effectively and give predictability to families that rely on that industry. That is our economic diversity.

He also mentioned softwood lumber and the lumber industry. This is a government that when renegotiating the most important economic agreement upon which Canada relies, the NAFTA agreement, it did not mention softwood lumber as a priority. It did not mention the auto industry as a priority. It did not mention the resource industry as a priority or agriculture for that matter. It put in the progressive agenda that was more about the Prime Minister's own brand and political opportunity than anything else. We have seen that same approach fail in China and India. It is about time the Liberals put Canadian jobs and opportunity ahead of their own political fortunes.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Sherbrooke has just five minutes for her speech. I will then have to interrupt her.

The member for Sherbrooke.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate you and the Speaker on your appointments. I know that you will uphold law and order in this most sacred temple of democracy.

I am honoured to rise today for the first time in the House to represent my constituents in Sherbrooke, who are engaged, dynamic people. I want to take a moment to congratulate Kim Boutin of Sherbrooke, who won several medals this weekend at the short track speed skating World Cup in Shanghai. She is a model of strength, discipline and determination.

Now I want to thank some people without whom I could never have aspired to represent the people of Sherbrooke. First I want to thank my family, who have given me support and unconditional love throughout my journey into politics. I also want to thank all of the volunteers, as well as my campaign team, who worked non-stop to share our vision of Sherbrooke and Canada. Thanks to their excellent work, we were able to convince the people of Sherbrooke that we were the best team to represent them.

My team and I have been on the job since October 22. I plan to be very active and present in my riding, to listen to people's concerns and to advocate for their projects and issues.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

I want to do my part to build a better future for my community, for Sherbrooke, for Quebec, for our country, for our planet and first and foremost for the next generations. This is why I chose to enter politics.

[Translation]

I have a clear plan and vision for Sherbrooke. I will use my term to propose several initiatives. Without a doubt, the main issue that pushed me to run for office is the environment. I love nature and outdoor activities, so the issue of climate change really resonates with me. I wanted to be part of the team put together by our Prime Minister, who has a real plan for Canada and who is leading the fight against climate change. Every action counts, no matter how small or large.

We must continue the electrification of public transit in Sherbrooke, particularly with hybrid buses, ban single-use plastics, and promote and support the development of green technologies by getting behind our university and college researchers. Above all, we must continue engaging with Canadians to make them aware of the challenges involved in the fight against climate change.

The status of women is also a key issue for me. I am proud to be part of a political party that is not afraid to introduce feminist policies. Consider, for example, Canada's feminist international assistance policy, brought forward by my colleague, the member for Compton—Stanstead. The presence of women in the public arena, and particularly in politics, is a very important issue. I want to work with my colleagues to improve how we do things, so that young women and young mothers can become MPs without neglecting their families. We need to continue to encourage women to run for office, and I want to serve as a positive role model for anyone who wishes to do so.

Another important challenge relates to the labour shortage and immigration. We must continue to welcome newcomers with generosity and support the harmonious integration of immigrants into our society. Throughout my campaign I had the opportunity to meet business people, and many of them talked about the labour shortage. They all expressed an openness towards welcoming immigrant workers.

Lastly, there is also economic development. We need to make Sherbrooke a centre of innovation and research and development for green technology industries. We also need to support economic development by supporting innovative start-ups. The strategic innovation fund is already helping many businesses in the region, and our government will build on that.

Our Prime Minister's throne speech was unifying. Our government's priorities, including the fight against climate change and lower taxes for the middle class, reflect the priorities of the people of Sherbrooke, and that is why I am going to support it.

● (1815)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to the order made earlier today, the question on the amendment to the amendment is deemed to have been put and the recorded division

requested and deferred to Tuesday, December 10, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30 p.m. so we can move to the next item on the agenda.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), the House will now resolve itself into committee of the whole to study all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

[Translation]

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

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[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2019-20

(The House in committee of the whole, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair)

The Chair: Order. Today's debate is a general one on all votes tabled before the House on Thursday, December 5, 2019.

Pursuant to the provisions in the motion adopted on Thursday, December 5, 2019, the total length of time for debate will not exceed four hours. The first round will begin with the official opposition, followed by the government, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party. After that, we will follow the usual rotation.

[Translation]

Each member will be allocated 15 minutes at a time, which may be used both for debate and for posing questions. Members wishing to use this time to make a speech have a maximum of 10 minutes, leaving at least five minutes for questions to the minister.

When a member is recognized, he or she should indicate to the Chair how the 15-minute period will be used, meaning how much time will be spent on the speech and how much time will be used for questions and answers.

Members should also note that they will need unanimous consent if they wish to split their 15 minutes with other members.

When the time is to be used for questions and comments, the minister's response should reflect approximately the time taken to pose the question, as that time counts toward the member's allotted time.

• (1820)

[English]

I also wish to indicate that in committee of the whole, comments should be addressed to the Chair, much as in debate in the usual House. I ask for everyone's co-operation in holding all established standards of decorum, parliamentary language and behaviour.

Just as another note to hon. members, as we are in committee of the whole, members will in fact be recognized from the seat in the chamber they choose.

We will now begin tonight's session. The House is in committee of the whole, pursuant to the provisional Standing Order 81(5), consideration in committee of the whole of all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

Debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be using my time for questions and answers.

The people of Alberta are going through an economic crisis right now. Over 150,000 jobs have been lost in the energy sector and billions of dollars of investment has left Alberta. While the supplementary estimates outline an additional \$5 billion in spending, they only mention the province of Alberta once: the cost of implementing the carbon tax of \$17 million, which will only make things worse for Alberta. Why is the government not addressing the job crisis in Alberta?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am delighted to be part of this committee of the whole and very pleased to hear this very important question on how we will grow the economy in Canada in the 21st century. That involves working with all Canadians and investing in middle-class Canadians, as we are doing again today, in order to grow the economy while protecting the environment. We will be extremely pleased to work with our colleagues on the other side to make sure this happens across Canada, including Alberta.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, again, there is no specific plan for Alberta. There is a plan to spend \$265 million for wealthy Canadians to buy foreign-made cars, but there is nothing in it for Alberta. Why is the government giving subsidies to create jobs in other countries while Canadian communities suffer?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, as I said, I am delighted to be part of this evening's committee of the whole. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House that, over the past four years, by investing in infrastructure, the middle class and environmental protection while growing the economy, we were able to deliver better results across the board.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, \$99.7 million is allocated for electric vehicles in the government's contingency vote, vote 5. Why is the government using the contingency vote, which is supposed to be for emergencies, for electric vehicle subsidies? What is the emergency?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, this is a procedure that has been followed since the start of Confederation to protect the integri-

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ty of the government and its ability to invest in Canadians at a time when all information is not yet available. This is the usual practice of the government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, that is not usual practice. Contingency funds are for emergencies.

The government emphasizes making energy-efficient homes more affordable for the average Canadian, yet the government has \$200 million for wealthy electric-vehicle owners and \$300 million to fight climate change in foreign countries. Where are the benefits for the average Canadian homeowner?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, this is another example of the importance of investing in workers and middle-class families and helping more Canadians join the middle class. It is the best way in the 21st century to grow the economy. Unlike other philosophical foundations in economics, we have learned in the last years that this is the best way, not only from an economic efficiency perspective but also from a fairness perspective.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, the tax cuts the Liberals announced today would mean a savings of only 38¢ a day for taxpayers and 76¢ a day for families. Meanwhile, the government is handing out \$265 million for cars that the middle class cannot even afford. Why the hypocrisy?

• (1825)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, it is a perfect opportunity to remind members that the government did exactly the same thing in 2015. The first thing we did was reduce taxes for middle-class Canadians, which helped reduce the tax burden on nine million Canadians. Again this year, with the promises we made in the campaign, we are able to reduce taxes for middle-class Canadians and those aspiring to be members of the middle class, some 20 million Canadians. This is something we are proud of.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, I am not sure how spending \$265 million on electric cars is going to bring people into the middle class.

However, does the President of the Treasury Board agree that parliamentarians must have all information before voting on important measures like spending plans?

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Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, our colleague makes a very important point. It is not only the privilege but the responsibility of members to do all they can to support an open, transparent and accountable government. We have strived to do this in the last four years, but there is always more to do and we are counting on members of the other parties to help us do that.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, does the President of the Treasury Board agree that incomplete plans should not be put to a vote, as the parameters of the plans may change significantly?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, as I explained earlier, there are certain elements that, for reasons of transparency, as well as integrity and governmental prudence, have been appearing a certain way in the public accounts and estimates since the start of Confederation.

I would be very pleased to explain to the member in greater detail why this is.

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, it is the custom in committee of the whole that the government be given the same length of time to answer a question as given to a member asking one. I understand that when it is a difficult question, a member can have a bit more time, but regarding a member's time on a simple yes or no question, I would ask, Mr. Chair, that you follow the rules we generally follow in committee of the whole and allow the government the same time to answer a question as allowed when the question was asked.

The Chair: I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I do watch the time intervals closely. I can say that through the course of all of this exchange, it is within about a five-to-10 second difference. However, we will keep an eye on that.

I will say, as the member raised the point, that if a member poses a question in seven or eight seconds that requires a more extensive response, then, obviously, the minister has to have a little time to be able to answer accordingly. However, we will be diligent to make sure that it is even. I thank the hon. member for raising the point of order.

The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, we are still seeing updates to the 2018 vote 40 slush fund. Will the President of the Treasury Board admit that this attempt at this alignment is a farce and commit to removing this unaccountable mechanism for future estimates?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, I will do my best to respond as clearly and concisely as possible to these important questions from the opposition members.

In response to the question I was just asked, I can use precise, technical language. The Treasury Board uses "Vote 5—Government Contingencies" to help organizations when the amounts initially approved for them in the main estimates are insufficient.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, I was asking about vote 40, not vote 5.

The pilot for the budget implementation vote, formally the vote 40 slush fund, has clearly failed. The government is not approving funding any faster than before. In fact, the current PBO and the two previous PBOs have said that it is a failure. Will he commit to transparency and end this failed practice?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, once again, I am very pleased to answer this important question.

As the member said himself, there was a pilot project in recent years that tried, with some success, to increase not only transparency in government spending, but also opposition members' ability to help the government do the important work of investing in people and infrastructure.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, three PBOs have said that it was not successful.

In the 2018-19 supplementary estimates, there was a central vote allocation for \$90 million to LNG Canada, and no officials knew what it was for. Now, Industry and Western Economic Diversification have \$72 million in central vote money for LNG Canada support measures in these supplementary estimates. The department has known about this project for over a year. Why are these funds circumventing the normal process?

• (1830)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, once again, this is an important question about the need to invest in both people and infrastructure.

In Canada, we are fortunate to have considerable natural resources that we absolutely must be able to deliver to foreign markets. By working with opposition members, we will find even better measures that will allow us to benefit from these natural resources, grow the economy and grow the middle class.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, the question was not about the importance of LNG. Actually, it was about why the funding is circumventing the normal process.

In addition to the \$99.7 million allocated through the Treasury Board central vote, the Department of Transport is asking for \$165 million in additional funding for electrical vehicle subsidies. Why is the funding being split?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, of course, transportation is responsible for a quarter of all greenhouse gases and out of that, 50% comes from motor vehicles, which is why we put in place an incentive for people to buy ZEVs. The take-up on this has been exceedingly good in the past five months, and we want to continue to make sure that those who decide to invest in electric vehicles are going to be able to get their rebate from the federal government.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, from the historical average of zero use, the current government has pumped hundreds of millions out through the Treasury Board central vote 10, which is subject to less transparency. Why are these programs subject to special treatment?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, I am very pleased with the questions being asked.

I am also very pleased to be able to count on the collaboration of opposition members to tell us how they would like to make these accounts more transparent. We have made significant progress in recent years, and we are counting on this Parliament to make further progress.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, the government contingencies vote has historically been used for unforeseen expenditures such as natural disasters or emergencies. Over a 10-year period, the current government is the only one using it for grants and contributions. Why are these grants so urgent that they require emergency funds?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, as I said earlier, there are established procedures that maintain not only the integrity but also the ability of the government in making investments that may not be initially perfectly forecast or for which the information is at some point imperfect. They are procedures that maintain, as I mentioned, the integrity and the ability of opposition members to comment on such integrity.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, in 2018, the Liberal government stripped seniority rights for veterans working in the CBSA. Will the minister stand now and tell veterans working in the public service that he will reverse this decision?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, when it comes to our veterans, there are a number of transition programs that we put into place to make sure we support our veterans getting different employment, especially when it comes to retraining.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, we are not getting an answer to why the government stripped seniority rights and whether it will stop doing that.

Also, will the minister confirm that he will never again use veterans' rights in the public service as a bargaining chip?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, as I stated, when it comes to supporting our veterans, we have put many programs in place. Our government is committed to supporting and honouring veterans and their families. We are steadfast in committing to making sure veterans receive the proper support. Since 2016, the government has made new investments totalling over \$10 billion. The transition

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piece and making sure that retraining is done is extremely important for the veterans.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, this is actually a Treasury Board issue, where the Liberal government stripped seniority rights for veterans in the CBSA. Will the minister please confirm that the government will not do this again?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, we not only have the highest respect for veterans, but we have demonstrated this over the last few years. Not only do we need to recognize their important contribution to our country, but we also need to make sure that after their service they receive the right treatment from the government.

● (1835)

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, DND has \$47.8 million for funding to expand what it is calling the "defence team". What is the defence team?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, with our very ambitious defence policy program, which has been fully funded with the 333 projects we have, as well as the massive procurement projects, we need to make sure that we have the appropriate people to manage them. Having additional personnel is extremely important when it comes to procurement, so that we can spend taxpayers' money effectively.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, I still do not think it was very clear what the defence team is, which the Liberals are spending \$47.8 million on.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, when we did the analysis, we spoke to Canadians across the country to look at the Canadian Armed Forces that is needed. We also increased the number of regular force personnel, including reserves. Included with that is civilian personnel needed to make sure that the Canadian Armed Forces is supported. Procurement is a very important piece to making sure we have the right number of personnel to be able to handle the procurement projects.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, as I was saying earlier, it is a pleasure to be here with you today. I want to congratulate you, as well as the Speaker, on your nominations.

I am pleased to be here to discuss the recently tabled supplementary estimates (A) with members of the House in committee of the whole. As members probably know, the supplementary estimates set out the financial needs that were not fleshed out enough to be in the main estimates tabled in the spring. The supplementary estimates may also include spending estimates that were included in the main estimates but that were adjusted to account for some programs and services that have evolved.

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I will provide a bit of context for the new members in the House. The first supplementary estimates used to be tabled in Parliament in the spring. That changed when Parliament approved a two-year pilot project to create new opportunities for parliamentarians to review the government's spending plans. One of the benefits of the pilot project was that the budget items could be included in the main estimates, which would allow parliamentarians from all parties and Canadians to see how the spending estimates were linked to the overview included in the estimates of the Minister of Finance's budget.

In fact, this year's main estimates included the entire \$5.6 billion in spending measures announced in the 2019 spring budget. Currently, the departments have received the necessary authority from the Treasury Board to implement 83% of the funding announced in the budget.

[English]

With the main estimates following the budget, the tabling of the first supplementary estimates would occur later in the year and those are the supplementary estimates we are here to discuss tonight. We will review with opposition parties the results of the pilot project as we continue to work toward improving how we report to parliamentarians and Canadians and how we can be even more transparent on government spending.

Turning to the estimates themselves, as tabled in Parliament, the supplementary estimates (A), 2019-20, include a summary of the government's incremental financial requirements as well as an overview of major funding requests and horizontal initiatives. The document also outlines new authority requirements and structural changes, funding details by organizations and a proposed schedule for the appropriation bill to be introduced in this chamber in the coming days.

[Translation]

In accordance with the government's commitment to greater transparency, more information about the supplementary estimates will be available online, including a detailed list of payments made under the act and set out in the supplementary estimates as well as a complete breakdown of planned expenditures per spending cycle, such as staffing, professional services and transfer payments.

I am sure committee members know that transparency is about more than just making information available and that steps must be taken to ensure that information is meaningful to Canadians. Our online information tools reflect our pledge to help all Canadians understand where public money is going and how it is being spent.

• (1840)

[English]

In that regard, the supplementary estimates make it clear that the government is investing in addressing key priorities identified by Canadians themselves, including strengthening and enhancing prosperity for middle-class Canadians and thereby growing the economy, supporting our veterans and continuing to take meaningful action on climate change.

We expect the estimates to be the first of two supplementary estimates this fiscal year before we introduce the main estimates for 2020-21 by March 1.

[Translation]

Statutory spending is different because it does not require parliamentary approval. It is authorized by virtue of Parliament's approval of the act that specifies payment amounts and periods.

They are included in order to provide Parliament with details on planned federal government spending. The amount of \$4.9 billion in planned expenses will therefore be allocated to 39 organizations.

A significant portion of my time will go to Veterans Affairs Canada, an investment of \$67 million to ensure that our veterans have access to demand-driven programs and services that they deserve and need. A total of \$101 million will be used for class action settlements related to the Toth case on disability pensions. A total of \$116 million will be used to compensate RCMP members who were injured in the line of duty.

Moreover, \$296 million will be allocated to Global Affairs Canada to help developing countries deal with climate change and \$165 million will go to Transport Canada for the incentives for zero-emission vehicles program. In addition, \$177 million will go to National Defence for the fleet of armoured combat support vehicles. A total of \$176 million will go to Global Affairs Canada for the crisis pool quick release mechanism in order to strengthen Canada's capacity to respond to international humanitarian crises.

For the Treasury Board Secretariat, we are investing \$467 million for recently concluded collective bargaining agreements across the government.

I will close by emphasizing the importance of a thorough review, by all parliamentarians in the House, of how Canadian taxpayers' money is spent. If members have any questions, I will be pleased to answer with my colleagues and the excellent officials working with us here.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his remarks.

The minister mentioned earlier that the supplementary estimates include funding for public service compensation. Can he provide us with an update on the ongoing collective bargaining with the unions?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague, whom I am very pleased to see back in the House. She and I both know that working respectfully and efficiently with the public service is the best way to guarantee services to Canadians. Canadians expect services from their government, and that is exactly what we are doing with the unions as we negotiate respectfully and efficiently. Negotiations are going well. There is still a lot of work to be done.

[English]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, the first-time home buyer program incentive is key in Surrey—Newton. Today I noticed that Employment and Social Development Canada is requesting funds for the first-time home buyer incentive program. Could the minister explain how these funds would be used?

• (1845)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chairman, this is a wonderful question, a wonderful opportunity to speak about the importance of helping the middle class, and especially younger middle-class Canadians, access their first-time home.

We were so pleased in September 2019 to introduce the first-ever first-time homebuyer initiative in an incentive that gives younger middle-class Canadians the ability to buy their first-time home, to invest in their families, to invest in their children and their communities and their workplace, and therefore to grow the economy in a manner that is so helpful, both socially and economically.

[Translation]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Chair, earlier today, the government announced a tax cut for Canadians. I want to give the minister the opportunity to elaborate on this tax cut.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my new colleague, who we are very pleased to have with us. Unfortunately, she was not with us in 2016. She would have seen that our first order of business in 2016 was cutting taxes for the middle class in order to grow the economy. It worked between 2016 and 2019, and will continue to work since a tax cut for the middle class and for those working hard to join it was announced by the Minister of Finance today. Twenty million Canadians will get a tax cut and 40,000 Canadians will be lifted out of poverty thanks to this one measure.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chair, in his previous capacity the minister did seniors a great service, particularly with the guaranteed income supplement, which he substantially increased. We now see tax breaks again for Canada's middle class. He can reflect on the increases to the Canada child benefit, something he played a critical role in.

I wonder if he could provide his thoughts, when all of these are taken together, as to why that is so important for Canada.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, I will express my gratitude in seeing my colleague back in the House. He is an informed and experienced colleague who has witnessed in the past four years the key phrase of investing in middle-class Canadians in order to grow the economy. We have demonstrated it in the last four years with

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investment in the Canada child benefit, in seniors, in child care, in housing, in public infrastructure and public transit and in protecting the environment. We have demonstrated that when we do this in a manner that is not only historically strong but also very co-operative with provinces, territories and municipalities, we achieve great results in Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: I want to again thank my colleague for his speech earlier, but also for his work over the past four years. We have seen the results: Over one million Canadians were lifted out of poverty.

Could the minister explain, once again, why it is important to keep giving all Canadians tax cuts?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, yes and no because a general tax cut would not be such a good idea. Fortunately, the Liberal Party knows that we need to target our tax cuts to help those who need it most: the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Nearly a million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty. Over a million new jobs have been created. In 2019, the average middle-class family had \$2,000 more in its pocket than it did in 2015. The unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in the history of Canada and we have one of the best financial and economic records in the G7. There are therefore many reasons to celebrate the significant investments we look forward to continuing to make.

[English]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Chair, in the supplementary estimates, the minister talked about investment in veterans. Veterans have contributed a lot to our country. We have done a study on veterans and their reintegration into society, so I would ask the minister to explain how this money will help veterans move along.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is extremely important to support our veterans at their time of need when it comes to transition. It is a very difficult time when members of the Canadian Armed Forces transition into civilian life. We need to bring forward the right resources and investments to make sure we can provide the right type of education benefits and trades training. In that adjustment period when they take off the uniform, we need to make sure they are going to be reintegrated into civilian life as effectively as possible.

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• (1850)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Chair, in his previous capacity, the minister was present for the groundbreaking for 173 affordable housing units in Surrey—Newton, 73 of which are completed and people have moved in. I would ask the minister if that strategy is going to continue and how it is going to help homelessness.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, I will first commend the member for Surrey—Newton for having worked so hard for his community to benefit from the first-ever strategy that Canada has ever had on housing. It makes a big and very important impact in his riding. I would encourage all members of the House to follow his model and work closely with the government in investing not only in housing but, most importantly, in making sure that every Canadian has the ability to live safely and affordably.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Chair, I will be using my 15 minutes to pose a series of questions to the ministerial team.

First, I would like to recognize the presence of public servants for what I would describe as an unusual exercise. To my knowledge, this is the first time that all of the votes are being debated before a single House committee.

I will begin with the Office of Infrastructure of Canada. As we see in the document, there is no supplementary funding to vote on.

Why is that? It is because the money that we voted in previous budgets is not going out. It is not being spent.

In that regard, I would like to ask the government to make a commitment. One way to accelerate infrastructure spending would be to send an unconditional, automatic transfer to Quebec, similar to the model used for the gas tax transfer before new conditions came into effect on January 1, 2019.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his question, and I congratulate him on getting re-elected.

As everyone knows, the provinces receive infrastructure allocations in accordance with population-based formulas. The provinces decide how they want to spend those allocations, be it on public transit, green infrastructure or social infrastructure. The federal government expects the provinces to tell us how they want to spend the money. They are the ones that speak with the municipalities and decide what the priorities will be. They then tell us where they want to spend the money. We cannot give them any money until we know why the money is needed and what infrastructure projects it will be used for.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, on the contrary, I believe the money could be transferred as a lump sum. It would be up to Quebec to work with the municipalities to decide which infrastructure projects to launch and when, just like with the gas tax, which works well. Actually, during the 2015 campaign, the Liberal Party promised to transfer those amounts as a lump sum.

Now I would like to turn to infrastructure for first nations. Funds are not flowing there either. How can the government expedite the process and show greater respect for first nations governance?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's question. It is a good one.

We believe it is very important that all of Canada's first nations have safe, healthy infrastructure. The Minister of Indigenous Services' priority is to keep the promises set out in our platform by implementing a strategy by 2030 to build all the necessary infrastructure. Before going forward, there will be conversations with first nations about their needs, of course.

• (1855)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for her answer, and I commend her for giving her answer in French.

Let us hope that the funds voted are indeed spent on first nations and that their governance is properly respected.

I will now move on to a question about the Canada Revenue Agency's budget. The document shows that its budget has not increased over the past two years. However, during the last parliamentary session, the Minister of Revenue kept telling us over and over again in the House that the CRA had invested \$1 billion to combat tax evasion and that the net was tightening.

Where is the \$1 billion that we kept hearing about?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague. I am very happy to see him back in the House.

He is quite right to emphasize the importance of the CRA having the resources it needs to combat fraud and cheating, so that the Canadian tax system can recover the money from where it is hidden and so that Canadians may have confidence in the federal government's ability to do this very important fiscal work.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, the importance of this work is not in dispute, but when it comes to the \$1 billion, to use the words of the Minister of Revenue, the net is still open.

The issue of tax havens, the fight against tax evasion and the illegal use of tax havens is very important. We see that some progress has been made on this issue.

The other problem tied to the use of tax havens is legal use. For example, the big Bay Street banks save billions every year through this loophole.

Is the government open to making this immoral practice illegal?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, to go back to what I was saying earlier, the CRA has the means to do so. It has an additional \$1 billion to do this work.

Not to engage in partisanship, but I should also note that during our last term, the CRA carried out twice as many foreign investigations as the previous government did in 10 years. Twice as many investigations in four years is rather significant. The CRA will continue to do this very important work to boost both integrity and trust in the system.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, the billion dollars would then be an expenditure, but I cannot find it in the votes.

With respect to tax evasion, tax avoidance and tax havens, there are the web giants, which are often referred to as the GAFAM. The government is committed to collecting taxes. Today, during question period, the Minister of Canadian Heritage spoke about next year. I would like the government to confirm that it will move forward and that these monies will be reserved for culture and the media, including 40% for French-language media and culture.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, this is actually a threat that web giants pose not only to our economy and small businesses, but also to the cultural sector, which is so important to Canadians and to Quebecers in particular.

The objectives were clearly laid out during the election campaign and we are sticking to them. We will start by celebrating Christmas and the New Year, but when we resume sitting in early 2020, the government will work on finding the right way to ensure that everyone pays their fair share to fund our culture and other activities that are important to Canadians.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, that is very good news.

I have a question about the government's intentions. Sometimes, the federal government implements a program that encroaches on provincial jurisdictions. One such example is the pharmacare plan, when Quebec already has its own program.

Is the government open to allowing provinces, or at least Quebec, to opt out with full compensation if a similar program already exists?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, that is a good question. Once again, Quebec has led the way with respect to critical drugs for pharmacare, and it is very important to have meetings and discussions with the Government of Quebec. We want to ensure that all Quebecers have the same level of subsidies for their medications as that provided under the federal program. That is fundamental.

• (1900)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, I humbly suggest again to the government that when it implement programs that encroach on provincial jurisdictions, it should allow Quebec to opt out with automatic full compensation. This will certainly make it easier for us to work together in the House.

Now, I want to talk more specifically about funding for health care. Over the years, Quebecers have prioritized access to quality health care. This has been the priority since the 1990s, when the federal government cut health transfers to the provinces, because these services are underfunded.

I would like to ask the government whether it plans to increase health transfers, and also transfers for education and social services. The Council of the Federation has asked for an annual escalator of

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5.2% to close the gap and account for costs that are increasing faster than the cost of living.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, this year, we are providing over \$40 billion to the provinces and territories to fund our system, which is over \$6 billion more than what the Harper Conservatives invested in their last year in government.

What is more, we will make an \$11-billion investment in mental health care and home care.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, we have already heard that answer several times, even though the House has just begun sitting. We will therefore continue to ask the government for an increase in health care funding. When they tell us the numbers, the absolute value amounts, it seems like a lot, but a great deal of funding is needed. Almost half of the Quebec government's budget goes to health. The provinces are asking for an increase of 5.2%.

Help for seniors is one area where our electoral commitments overlap. Our seniors have felt abandoned over the past few years. Support from the government has failed to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living. Think of the cost of housing in seniors' residences. The government promised to increase old age security payments.

I humbly ask him why not as of age 65?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, the member is absolutely right: our seniors took care of younger generations and shaped this nation as we know it, so we must take care of them. By investing in seniors, we are investing in everyone's well-being, in the well-being of their children and grandchildren.

I would just like to take a moment to go over what we have done in recent years. We brought the federal pension eligibility age back down to 65. If we had not done that, 100,000 seniors would be living in poverty. We also increased the guaranteed income supplement by nearly \$1,000, which is helping 900,000 seniors.

We also invested in the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan, which will put a significant dent in seniors' post-retirement vulnerability. We also invested \$55 billion over 10 years in housing. Lastly, we invested \$11 billion in health care, along with the \$6 billion promised during the campaign. We have done a lot.

I see that my time is up, but I would be happy to answer more questions about this.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, I cannot ask all the questions I would have liked to ask the government, but the Bloc Québécois will have another chance. For now, I would like to ask a few quick questions regarding agriculture.

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I would like to hear the government confirm that our dairy farmers will in fact receive compensation for the breaches in supply management, as the Liberals have often announced. I cannot find the exact line where it is indicated in the supplementary estimates. I would like someone to show me where to find the amount announced or the vote under which it is listed.

Lastly, I would also like to be assured that egg and poultry producers will also be compensated, and I would like an idea as to when that will happen.

• (1905)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, the good news is that payments to farmers are already under way. Some farmers have already received theirs.

Recognizing their essential work is crucial, not only in macro-economic terms, but also at the local level. Many of our rural communities need farmers to continue to survive and thrive. The good news is that these investments for our farmers are under way.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Chair, I misunderstood. I thought my time had expired.

If the officials could tell me which line of the document indicates where the money came from or what mechanism was used to get the funds to compensate the farmers, that would be much appreciated.

My last question has to do with immigration. The budget for the Immigration and Refugee Board has nearly doubled over the past two years, but wait times are not going down.

What is behind this inefficiency?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, the budgets have indeed increased, and we are able to more quickly process claims filed by immigrants and asylum seekers.

Our goal is to be able to process 50,000 cases a year at the Immigration and Refugee Board. That requires a lot of resources. We are putting them in place to ensure that we can act more quickly, since the number of asylum seekers and immigrants keeps increasing in Canada.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Chair, it is always a great honour to rise in this place. I am very honoured to have the opportunity to talk with my friend, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. I will keep my remarks fairly short so we can make the most of this.

The Prime Minister said his most important relationship is with first nations people. When I talk to first nations families, they tell me their most important relationship is with their children. Tonight we are talking about the policies of the government that have systematically discriminated without caution, and been found to be reckless discrimination against children who have died.

These have consequences. I think of Azraya Ackabee-Kokope-nance, from Grassy Narrows; Amy Owen, Chantell Fox, Jolynn Winter, Jenera Roundsky and Kanina Sue Turtle from Wapekeka; Tammy Keeash, who was found in a brutal condition in the McIn-

tyre River; and Courtney Scott from Fort Albany First Nation, who died a horrific death.

When I read the latest ruling against the government, they said no amount of compensation could ever recover what these children have lost. This case of racial discrimination is one of the worst and it warrants maximum awards.

I have named a few of the children that I am aware of and whose families I have spoken to. APTN says that while the government was fighting the Human Rights Tribunal, 103 children died in care in Ontario.

Could the minister tell us how many children died in care across this country while her government fought the Human Rights Tribunal?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his ongoing advocacy.

Any child who dies in care is one child too many. This has been a national tragedy and is a key part of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. It is a key part of how failed government policies for generations have resulted in this terrible tragedy.

Our government has decided, with the families, to do everything we can to not separate families and not have children in care. Bill C-92 will mean that communities will have the resources necessary to keep those families together, to get that child to the healthy auntie or healthy grandparents and to bring their children home.

The children in care who are in unsafe circumstances in the cities of this country are leading to this tragedy. I also want to assure the member that we have to compensate the people who were harmed by this failed policy.

• (1910)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, the question is this: How many children died while the government fought the Human Rights Tribunal?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, the member opposite knows very well that the numbers we have on so many issues, including missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, are not good numbers. Whatever number he would give me, it is probably way higher, and it has to stop.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I appreciate that from the minister, but the legal brief of the federal government says the opposite. It says in paragraph 31 in the latest filing that “There was insufficient evidence before the Tribunal to demonstrate that any particular children were improperly removed from their home.”

Does the minister agree with her government's lawyers?

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Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, we know from the apprehension of children, whether it is through all of the class actions that we have settled on the sixties scoop and on all of these things, that children are safest when they are with their family or extended family or in their communities. I do believe that we need to find alternate ways to keep these children safe.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, the minister's government has gone to Federal Court to quash a ruling that has found the government guilty of discrimination, and the government said that no evidence was produced that there was harm to children. Is that the government's position, yes or no?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, I think we all know that children apprehended from their families do not do well. Children aging out of care do not do well. We need to keep these families together, which has been the focus as opposed to the money going to lawyers to apprehend children, agencies and non-indigenous foster families. We need these children supported at home in their communities.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, how much money has the government spent on its lawyers to fight the Human Rights Tribunal?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, I think the most important number would be that from \$600 million that used to go to children and families, it is now \$1.6 billion going to children. We have no intention of fighting children in court. We want to get to the table and get them what they deserve.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I believe the minister in the House has to tell the truth. Therefore, either she is not telling the truth or her lawyers in Federal Court are not, because the lawyers in Federal Court have taken the position that the Liberal government is going to quash a finding of systemic discrimination, because they said that there is no evidence with regard to adverse outcomes that flowed from being denied services.

The minister has told us again and again that she knows that services denied to children have hurt them, but her lawyers are saying the opposite. Who is not telling the truth here?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, the approach of our government is to make sure that all children who were harmed by these terrible colonial policies will be compensated.

However, we have also learned from the Indian residential schools and the sixties scoop that the children who had greater harm or who were in care longer want to be able to tell their stories, and like the class action on 1991 forward, we want to get to the table and get them what they deserve.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I want to let the people know that what the minister's lawyers are saying is completely opposite to what she is telling the House. She is obliged to tell the truth in the House. The lawyers are saying that these children, who are represented by the AFN, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, do not warrant compensation because they have not been tested by the government to the "precise nature and extent of harm suffered by each individual".

What is the minister going to do, put four-year-old children before her lawyers like the government did to the St. Anne's Residential School survivors? How is the government going to test these children for the precise harms so it does not have to pay?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, I think the member opposite understands that the class action now being certified on the 1991 post-sixties scoop up to the present day tends to be the way we sort these things out with respect to what the appropriate care is for the amount of time people were harmed and the degree of the harm. It is very important that families have a voice, that children have a voice and that there is some assessment of fair and equitable treatment and compensation.

● (1915)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I am quite shocked because her lawyers are in court saying that there is no evidence any children were improperly taken. How can she stand and misrepresent her lawyers? Then the lawyers said that there was no reason for compensation. They have said that in the hearings.

Now the government wants to quash a legal finding that the tribunal spent 12 years adjudicating, and the minister's lawyers say there was no evidence to prove what was found, which they said was reckless and willful discrimination. How can minister tell us that it is better to have that ruling thrown out so the government can fight children in court and make each of them testify? That is what the government wants to do. How can she justify that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, with respect to the CHRT and the good work of Dr. Blackstock, I believe many good things have come out of this. With Jordan's principle, thousands of cases are settled all the time, when zero cases had been settled in the past. This is very important.

However, in the case of appropriate compensation, the appropriate place for that is with the class action, where there are representatives of the victims and the survivors who can determine what is fair. I do not think there is a way for fair and equitable compensation to be done without the voices of the people who were harmed.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I am really glad she raised Jordan's principle, which brings us back maybe four non-compliance orders ago. For the minister's lawyers to say that there is no proof that any child was harmed is a falsehood, because the ruling on Jordan's principle was about the deaths of Jolynn Winter and Chantel Fox. Her government decided that it was not going to bother to fund those children and at the Human Rights Tribunal was forced to implement Jordan's principle. Every single time the minister's government said that it was in compliance and children died because of that.

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The government says good things have been done, but let us now throw out the Human Rights Tribunal ruling. How can the minister claim that the government went along with Jordan's principle when the filings show that it fought it every step of the way and children died?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, the member opposite knows that we worked very hard to put in place Jordan's principle. At the beginning, the motion that we passed in the House was only for children on reserve with multiple disabilities and where there was a squabble between the federal and the provincial government. We are now getting the kind of care that the kids need on and off reserve, particularly when there is only one disability such as a mental health or addiction problem, but also there does not have to be a squabble. We have moved way beyond what was passed in the House and children are better for it and—

The Chair: Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I agree with the minister that children are certainly better for it. However, children are better for it because Cindy Blackstock, the AFN and Nishnawbe Aski Nation fought the government at the Human Rights Tribunal, while it was refusing and children died. It has met Jordan's principle because it has been forced to meet it.

I want to refer to the latest human rights ruling, which says that there is sufficient evidence that Canada was aware of the discriminatory practices of its child welfare program and that it did this devoid of caution and without regard for the consequences on children and their families. That is the finding after 12 years, and the government spent \$3 million trying to block them every step of the way.

How can we say to crush that ruling, throw that finding out, fight it out in court and trust that the government actually cares about children? The minister's lawyers say that children have not been harmed and to prove that they have, those individual children of four and five years old should be brought in and tested. The tribunal found that the government acted with devoid of caution over the lives of children. That is the finding of the Human Rights Tribunal. Is the Human Rights Tribunal lying or is it the government, which has misled the people of Canada on this?

• (1920)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, I think the hon. member knows that our government has a very good track record on settling the childhood litigation, such as Anderson, the sixties scoop, day schools. We are doing what is right.

With the compliance orders, as I explained to the member, from what was Jordan's principle and on multiple disabilities, only on-reserve where there is a squabble, we have gone way beyond what that original vote in the House of Commons was, for which I voted.

Therefore, it is hugely important that we go forward, understanding we have to do the best possible thing for these children. The lawyers have agreed that we want to compensate and the Prime Minister wants to compensate, but we have to do it in a fair and equitable way that also covers the children from 1991 to this day.

Mr. Charlie Angus: The Liberals want to quash the ruling, Mr. Chair. That is what the government is in Federal Court to say. If we look at the Human Rights Tribunal ruling, there is point after point about how to make compensation work, and the government says that it will not compensate; it will litigate. That is the government's position.

I am astounded that the minister is in here telling us that the government cares about the children when the finding says there is willful and reckless discrimination against children who died. The children who died had to be named. When it said there was no evidence unless we brought individual children's names forward, individual children's names were brought forward. That was the policy. Those children died, and children are continuing to die. They will continue to die as long as the government refuses to do the basic funding.

The minister tells us the discrimination has ended. That is not what the Human Rights Tribunal found and that is not what any first nation family in the country will believe.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Chair, the first nations, Inuit and Métis across the country are very grateful for Bill C-92. With respect to asserting jurisdiction, we have to allow that the people can assert the jurisdiction to look after its own families with the adequate funding to do that. We know that in terms of how we determine fair and equitable funding, our government did not think we would be able to get that done throughout an election and by this week. Therefore, it is really important. The January 29 date is coming up, but I am hearing from families. They want this to be fair and they feel there has to be a negotiation at a table to actually determine what is fair.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am pleased to rise in committee of the whole to discuss the supplementary estimates (A). I will speak to the spending connected to my files.

[English]

Canadians need a transportation system that allows them to safely and efficiently reach their destinations and receive goods for their daily lives. Businesses and customers expect a transportation system they can trust to deliver resources and products to market and for the jobs on which they depend.

[Translation]

The transport file includes other significant challenges, such as air and ocean pollution, public safety and security, and economic opportunities for all Canadians. In all, transport activities account for around 10% of Canada's GDP. The federal transport file includes Transport Canada and various Crown corporations, agencies and administrative tribunals, all of which do important work to serve Canadians. These important federal organizations strive to keep making Canada's transportation network safer, greener, more secure and more efficient.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Transport Canada, which includes the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, or CATSA, and Marine Atlantic, both of which are Crown corporations, is seeking additional financing resources through the 2019-20 supplementary estimates (A). Transport Canada is seeking an increase of \$227.1 million in the supplementary estimates. This includes \$223.9 million in voted appropriations for 12 different items.

At this time, I will focus my remarks on the department's three largest items. These are \$165.5 million for the incentives for zero-emission vehicles program; \$31.5 million to address indigenous people's marine and environmental priorities regarding the Trans Mountain expansion project; and, finally, \$10.5 million for the rail safety improvement program.

- (1925)

[Translation]

The Government of Canada's incentives for zero-emission vehicles program helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to an environmentally responsible transportation network by promoting the adoption of this type of vehicle. Between May 1, when the program was launched, and November 24, 30,000 Canadian individuals and businesses received the point-of-sale incentive. Canada made a commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. The incentives for zero-emission vehicles program will help us meet that target.

[English]

To meet the demand for incentives, Transport Canada has had to advance funding from future years. Canadians understand that protecting the environment and growing the economy go hand in hand. The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project has the potential to create thousands of good middle-class jobs and generate billions of dollars to help fund clean energy solutions.

To address marine safety and environmental concerns raised about the Trans Mountain expansion project by indigenous groups, Transport Canada is leading on three measures: providing indigenous coastal communities with access to web-based maritime information; funding for marine safety equipment and training; and, finally, supporting a demonstration to advance low-noise and low-emission crude oil tankers servicing the Trans Mountain expansion. This includes up to \$30 million to support the crude oil tanker technology demonstration program, which will support the construction of next-generation quiet vessel tankers powered by liquefied natural gas.

Reducing underwater noise and air emissions from those tankers will help mitigate the impacts of marine shipping on the environment, including vulnerable marine mammals such as the southern resident killer whale. Another \$1.5 million will support the enhanced maritime situational awareness initiative, allowing three more indigenous communities to become pilot host communities. These funds will allow the department to continue to develop meaningful relationships with indigenous communities through the project.

[Translation]

I am proud to point out that Canada has one of the safest rail networks in the world, due in part to initiatives like the rail safety improvement program, which provides funding to improve rail safety security and reduce injuries and fatalities related to rail transportation. The program funds various activities, including roadway and intersection improvements, such as adding sidewalks, diversion roads, flashing lights, bells, gates and even full pedestrian overpasses, the adoption of innovative safety technologies for detection, data recording and communication, and research or studies related to enhancing the safety of rail lines. In the supplementary estimates, Transport Canada is seeking to defer nearly \$10.5 million to reimburse funding recipients for eligible expenses that they incurred but have not yet submitted for reimbursement.

[English]

Other important measures include \$1.5 million to help Transport Canada continue its work to protect and recover southern resident killer whales. This funding for the whales initiative would reduce the economic impacts on the shipping industry of an expanded voluntary vessel slowdown off the coast of British Columbia. Through a contribution agreement, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority would administer funds to eligible vessel operators to offset the additional pilotage costs from participating in the slowdown.

[Translation]

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority is also seeking approval to defer \$26.1 million. The deferred funds would be used for a bomb detection system and other projects to streamline and increase screening activities. In budget 2019 and Budget Implementation Act, 2019, No. 1, the Government of Canada committed to ensure the transition of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority from an agent Crown corporation to an independent, not-for-profit screening authority that would be responsible for providing air safety screening services.

- (1930)

[English]

Marine Atlantic provides a constitutionally mandated ferry service to and from Newfoundland. This is a vital service for travellers as well as for the companies that do business in that region. It brings more than one-quarter of all visitors to Newfoundland as well as two-thirds of all freight, including 90% of perishables and time-sensitive goods.

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Through these supplementary estimates, Marine Atlantic is seeking \$3 million in 2019-20 for fleet renewal to procure a new ferry. I am proud to be resuming my role as Minister of Transport in no small part because I am proud of the ongoing achievements of Transport Canada and other federal organizations in this important portfolio.

[Translation]

Our roads, our railways, our ports, our ferry services and our airports must be integrated and sustainable. They must enable Canadians and businesses to access world markets.

[English]

Our transportation system is vital for our economy and for our quality of life. I am looking forward to continuing the work we did during my first four years in this role.

[Translation]

There is no doubt that the financial resources requested under these supplementary estimates will enable us to continue this work.

I am ready to take questions.

[English]

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is certainly a pleasure to stand in this House for the first time.

Millions of Canadians use Canada's roads every day, and safety on those roads is of prime importance to everyone. Could the government update the House on how it contributes to improving the safety of roadways, road users and motor vehicles in Canada to create a consistent national safety code framework across all jurisdictions?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate the member on being elected in the election.

Road safety is a very complex matter with federal, provincial and other levels of responsibility that are assigned to different groups. From a federal point of view, we are responsible for the safety of vehicles, of course, but provinces and territories have responsibilities with respect to the road safety code. However, we all work together and we all work with the CCMTA as well to ensure that overall we have a strong national safety code with respect to the use of our roads for transportation.

That is why we have a transfer program in place. It allots funding to provinces and territories because of the work that we all do in an integrated fashion to ensure a strong regulatory framework for road transportation in this country. In this particular case in the supplementary estimates, we are asking for funding because we had not been able to complete an agreement on funding for two provinces, Quebec and Alberta, which are now complete and we would like to provide that funding to them.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Chair, under vote 35 in the supplementary estimates, the Department of Transport is asking for \$1,035,350 to deliver better service for air travellers. Could the minister please expand on what these services are going to be?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, yes, there is no question that the enhanced passenger protection program is there in this particu-

lar case to ensure that when passengers go through an airport and get on an airplane they are, from a security point of view, going to be well protected. That is something that Canadians expect and it is something that we need to provide.

The program currently works with air carriers, of course, to screen passengers to and from and within Canada. This is in respect to the Secure Air Travel Act list and it is also managed by Public Safety Canada. The two of us work together. The member has heard of the no-fly list. These are measures we are improving at the moment with funding to ensure there will be fewer cases of rejected passengers in the future. All of this is aimed at ensuring that when people go to the airport, go through security and get on board an airplane, it is a secure airplane with no threats to that airplane and to that flight.

● (1935)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the minister has heard from one of my constituents, former Côte Saint-Luc councillor Glenn Nashen, and many others who have advocated for the idea of seat belts on school buses. I was wondering if the minister could update this House on his progress on that file.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, it would be my pleasure to do so because it is an issue that is important to a very large number of Canadians. I will remind all of us here that after the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of transport met last January, we decided to create a task force to look specifically at ways we could improve safety in school buses. This included looking at a whole number of factors, some of which are outside the bus and some of which are inside the bus, such as safety belts.

These are things that we have been working on. We have now produced a report with recommendations that will be discussed early next year at the next gathering of the ministers from the provinces and territories. We want to look at ways that we can improve this.

Having said that, going to school in a school bus is the safest way for a child to get to school. Statistically, it is far superior to any other method, but if there are ways for us to improve the safety of children in school buses, then we, as ministers of transport, must look at those, and that is what we are doing.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is an honour to rise today in the 43rd Parliament.

In the last four years the government has made good progress on family reunification and reducing the processing time for immigration applications, specifically with regard to spousal applications, the parents and grandparents category, and the caregiver program. Can the minister please expand on the important work that has been done in this regard?

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Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, with respect to the caregiver program, there is a high demand for caregivers in this country, and one of the things we want to do is process the applications for caregivers as quickly as possible. We have some challenges bringing caregivers into this country because in some cases it means a separation from their families who are living abroad. One thing we have looked into is finding a way to bring their families with them and to give them work and student permits so that they can be unified with the caregiver who has come to Canada to work.

We think this is a good approach to attracting more caregivers and potentially, in the case of caregivers who may eventually become permanent residents, bring new Canadians into the country and provide strong caregiver capability across the country.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Chair, it is a pleasure to rise tonight to debate supplementary estimates (A). I will ask questions.

Under the Department of National Defence, vote 1a, regarding operating expenditures, is where we pay for the care and well-being of the Canadian Armed Forces. We recently learned that the Minister of National Defence callously cut health care funding for our troops if they require more care than what we can provide on a military base and need to go to public hospitals that are funded through the provinces. This cut was made without consultation with the provinces or with us as parliamentarians.

My question for the Minister of National Defence is this: When was this decision made to change the way hospitals are paid for the care of our troops?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, we had a discussion on this outside the House. I explained that all Canadian Armed Forces members will get the appropriate support and, importantly, they do not pay for that support. That comes from the Canadian Armed Forces. However, at the same time, all Canadians should be paying for the same type of health care. They should not be charged more just because they wear a uniform. We are making sure there is a thorough and equitable discussion with the provinces as we move forward so that Canadian Armed Forces members can get the appropriate care.

• (1940)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, this is a long-standing social contract that exists between the Canadian Armed Forces and our provincial governments in the delivery of health care across this country. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces are paid for out of the national defence budget. The cost of taking care of people who are not within the public health insurance programs that we have across this country is the cost that it is. That is how hospitals reach the decision of how much they pay for visitors who are not Canadian and do not pay into our health insurance programs. However, neither do those under national defence, because they often require greater care. We try to take care of them as best we can within the military hospitals on base, but when they require extra services, special attention and specialists, it is in the military's best interest to get those from the public hospital system.

What date was this decision made and when was it implemented? Will there be any opportunity to see savings that come out of this

go back to our troops or is this just another way to get cheap on the backs of our soldiers?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, the member opposite knows in the discussion I had with him outside of the House, I explained the details, which he is also using as part of his question.

First of all, I stated that every Canadian Forces member who requires medical support at a civilian hospital will get top-quality support. More importantly, they will not pay the costs themselves. This is paid for through the Canadian Armed Forces. However, as of right now, depending on the province, a Canadian Armed Forces member is charged three to 10 times more than a Canadian civilian.

We have started a discussion with the provinces so that we can come up with a fair and equitable solution, and then the funds for this will be used further in looking after our Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, Manitoba is saying that it is already out \$1 million from the lack of funding from the Department of National Defence in taking care of our troops. The Province of Ontario is out over \$10 million, and we have heard some concerns that some hospitals may deny service to members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Has the minister secured an agreement with the provinces to ensure that none of our troops fall through the cracks while he is going through this negotiation process?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I can assure the member opposite and all Canadians that every Canadian Armed Forces member who requires support will get it. We are having a discussion so that we can come up with a fair and equitable solution on this. Canadians can also look at the fact that Canadian Armed Forces members should not be charged, depending on the province, three to 10 times more. We will have these discussions and make sure that Canadian Armed Forces members are looked after, and that hospitals are as well.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, I will change gears here a bit.

Yesterday Vice-Admiral Aleksandr Moiseev, who is head of the Russian northern fleet, said in the Daily Mail, "In the near future, we should expect a further increase in the military presence of the combined armed forces and, as a result, an increase in the likelihood of conflict," and that Russia "considers building up its military potential in the Arctic zone as a necessary measure to counter possible threats and create favourable conditions for protecting national interests."

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Our adversaries are definitely challenging our sovereignty in the Arctic. It is more disturbing now than ever before, and we need to make sure that there is a plan to defend our Arctic. First and foremost, one of the things we have to do in defending the Arctic, Canada and North America, is the north warning system. Does the minister have plans to upgrade and replace the current detection system that we have in the Arctic?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I am glad the member opposite raised a very important topic when it comes to our Arctic sovereignty.

This is something we looked at very closely when we did our defence policy consultations, along with what is going to be needed to be strong in Canada and to work with our closest partner, the U.S. This is one of the reasons we made sure that the entire defence policy is now fully funded. This now allows us, when it comes to our naval shipbuilding strategy, to purchase five offshore patrol ships, plus we are now able to purchase a sixth one as well. Just last year the government announced that the Coast Guard will also be getting an additional ship. We have put three additional satellites up that will operate in the north Nanisivik refuelling station.

When it comes to looking at further aspects of the north warning system, work is being done on this. However, we are going to be looking at threats not only from all the way up in the air, but also from space, surface water and underwater.

● (1945)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, the question was when, and we do not have a date or a time. Meanwhile, we have adversaries like Russia building up their military presence.

First, we have the detection north warning system that has to be replaced. Second is interception, and we do that with our Canadian CF-18s. When are we going to replace the current fleet of CF-18s? Does the minister have a firm date on that?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, replacing the CF-18s is a top priority for the government, and I am actually very happy to hear that the member opposite and his party have agreed that the competition is important for replacing our CF-18s.

The competition is going extremely well. In fact, when we did the analysis and talked about our Arctic sovereignty, we realized we actually need more aircraft, hence the reason we have decided on 88, which is fully funded.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, the minister always talks about a capability gap, which does not exist. If the whole idea is we want to fly NORAD and NATO missions simultaneously, the question that comes to the minister is when can we, as a nation, actually fly NORAD and NATO missions simultaneously, and do we have enough pilots to do so?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, absolutely. This is a very important topic, making sure that we live up to our obligations as a nation when it comes to our NORAD commitments and NATO as well. This is one of the reasons the competition for this project is extremely important. It is also the reason we are flying interim jets as well.

We need to be very clear. Our obligations are very important. Our reliability as a partner on the world stage matters as well. We

are putting investments into the right places to make sure that we live up to those obligations.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, the minister mentioned earlier the Arctic offshore patrol ships. Commissioning of the *Harry DeWolf* is way behind schedule already. We do not know when the entire fleet is going to be ready to go and be combat-ready. We have these on-going delays.

How are the minister and the current government going to finally get things back on track so that we can get the Arctic offshore patrol ships built, protecting us in the north, and get on with the surface combatants, because that program is way behind schedule as well?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I am glad the member asked a question about our AOPS. In fact, I was on the *Harry DeWolf* as it was conducting sea trials. It has a tremendous capability. There is a second AOPS in the water, and third and fourth ones are being built at the moment.

This project is moving extremely well. As we build the first ones, those lessons are being transferred into the other builds, which is creating a much greater efficiency.

When it comes to our Arctic defence, it is far more than just ships. We have to look at our satellites. Three new satellites under the control of the Canadian Space Agency were put up last year. Putting the right research and development money into those key areas for surveillance is equally important.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, we know that the RADARSAT constellation was originally supposed to be six satellites, but we only got three.

It is no wonder Canadians are a bit cynical with everything the Liberals have been saying about defence spending. We know that in the first two years, they allowed \$12 billion to lapse or go unspent, and now we have just learned that another \$7.79 billion in capital investment into our military has not been spent. Why is the current government always falling short when it is buying the kit that our troops need?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I am very proud to stand up to say that for the last two years no money has been left on the table. In fact, one of the things that was very important when we talked to Canadians, the Canadian defence industry and parliamentarians was making sure that we continually improve our procurement system. That allows us to now move some projects faster, and we are able to move projects sooner. For example, the LAV support projects have moved forward.

In some cases we need to spend a bit more time on projects. We have the flexibility to move that money around, but that money stays within defence to make sure that every project in the defence policy gets completed because it is fully funded.

• (1950)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, I can say that Canadians are still somewhat skeptical whether or not the money will ever get out the door. The Liberals say it is there, but it has not been spent. If it is not spent, then it has lapsed. If they get to the point that they want to make cuts for other reasons, like a downturn in the economy, it will be the first money to go, because it has not been allocated and used.

NATO said that we are supposed to be spending more, yet we just went to the NATO conference and the summit in London and heard the Prime Minister tell the NATO leaders in a press conference that Canada was spending 1.4% on GDP. I ask the minister this: Was that truthful?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, when we launched our defence policy, to make sure it was robust, we made a commitment that it was going to be fully costed and fully funded. That is exactly what this policy does. It is a plan with 333 procurement projects in place for capabilities. With the right investments, we are making sure we provide the right financial support for our defence and investing in the right capabilities and making the right contributions. Our defence spending will be going up to 1.48% by 2024.

Our contributions to NATO are equally important. We are back in Europe. In Latvia, we have a policing task force right now, and a naval task force that we are commanding. We are also commanding the NATO training mission in Iraq for the second year.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, the correct number of spending this year is not 1.4% or 1.48%. It is 1.31% of GDP. Of course, as the economy grows and if money is not rolling out the door, that means that those percentages are going to continue to drop. Right now we are fifth from the bottom in NATO for the amount of spending that we are doing as a percentage of GDP. We are not making investments in our capital infrastructure, according to NATO as well, so there is much work for us to do.

Is it any wonder that President Trump called the Prime Minister “delinquent” when it comes to investing in our military and that ultimately what we are saying is “two-faced”?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I was in that meeting and our defence relationship with the U.S. could not be stronger. I am glad the hon. member mentioned that there is more work to be done, absolutely. We also have to look at where we started, with the significant cuts that were made with the strategic review and the deficit reduction action plan when the member was in government previously.

When we started, our defence spending with NATO was around 1%, so we have substantial increases that we have made. Yes, there is a lot more work to be done, but we want to do it in a smart manner so that we can get the right capabilities for our Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, as we know, in the last Parliament, we learned about Vice-Admiral Mark Norman getting treated very horribly by the Liberal government. Of course, it had to make a settlement and apologize for the way that it treated the vice-admiral. Under Vote 1A, there is a program called “Funding to better transition Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans and their families

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to post-military life”. Is that where the money to settle out of court with Mark Norman came from?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, supporting the families of our Canadian Armed Forces members is extremely important. That is one of the reasons we put the families of our members in our defence policies, so that they can actually get support. That policy allows us to give the right support and this is something that is extremely important because we ask our Canadian Armed Forces members to do very difficult things on our behalf, even when it comes to training. Therefore, we want to make sure that their family life is well looked after.

Seamless Canada is another initiative, as is making sure that when members deploy overseas they are tax-free, regardless of the international operation.

We are very proud of the work and we look forward to working with all members and all provinces in support of our Canadian Armed Forces members' families.

The Chair: The minister might as well stay on his feet because we are resuming debate.

The hon. Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Congratulations once again, Mr. Chair. I think this is our fourth time in committee of the whole together.

It has been an absolute privilege and an honour to be reappointed as the Minister of National Defence to serve our women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces. As I stated to many members, I welcome input from all members of Parliament in the House when it comes to serving our Canadian Armed Forces members.

I am eager to continue to implement Canada's defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged.

Strong, Secure, Engaged is a rigorously costed and funded transparent vision for the next 20 years of our Canadian Armed Forces. We are increasing our spending by 70% to ensure that our women and men in uniform have what they need to do the important job that we ask of them.

Our work is not just about defence. It is about positioning Canada for success in an uncertain world. Canadians know that we cannot be an island of stability in an ocean of turmoil. Eventually those negative ripples of conflict will reach our shores. It is about promoting the values and interests that are core to Canada's prosperity and security. It is about standing with our partners and allies as we put Canada's expertise to work on a global scale.

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Today, through our supplementary estimates, I am requesting \$463.6 million for national defence so the Canadian Armed Forces can continue their work. I make this request confident in the benefits and flexibility of the defence funding model. We only ask for funds when we need them. We make adjustments as requirements evolve. Savings are reallocated and earmarked funding is protected until we are ready to spend it. We do not leave money on the table. These supplementary funds will allow us to continue implementing Canada's defence policy, directly supporting our people and their families, expanding our capabilities and equipping our defence team to address the threats of the modern security environment.

First, we must invest in our people and their families. A resilient, inclusive and diverse defence team is critical to Canada's security and we are proud of our progress to support our people.

Just this summer, Bill C-77 received royal assent, marking a historic evolution of the military justice system and enshrining rights for victims into that system. We are working to right past wrongs as well.

The Canada pride citations are a tangible way to recognize the contributions of former LGBTQ2 members whose service careers were cut short due to discriminatory policies.

Two weeks ago, the Federal Court approved the final settlement agreement of the Canadian Armed Forces DND sexual misconduct class action lawsuit. We hope this settlement will bring closure, healing and acknowledgement to our members who were harmed by sexual misconduct in the workplace.

These are just a few of our efforts to ensure a safe, welcoming and inclusive workplace.

We also recognize the critical jobs our reservists play, which is why we restructured reserve pay to better align with the regular force, ensuring the same pay for the same day's work.

Last year, we reintroduced the veteran's service card and set up the Canadian Armed Forces transition group to better support armed forces members and their families alongside their journey.

We will be building on these initiatives. We are requesting just over \$179 million in voting and statutory appropriations to fund recruitment, retention and other initiatives to support our people and their families, including competitive salaries and benefits, training and expanded transition resources. Investing in our people is not only the right thing to do, but it is necessary to grow our defence team to the size it needs to be to face the challenges of tomorrow, something we promised in SSE.

Taking care of people also means equipping them to do their jobs. This summer I was pleased to announce \$250 million to upgrade reserve infrastructures across Canada over the next five years.

So far in 2019-20, we have invested over \$440 million in major construction and maintenance and repair projects. All infrastructure projects are done with an eye toward greening defence.

While some parties continue to ignore the science on climate change and offer no plan to tackle this global challenge, our gov-

ernment is taking action against climate change. Our innovative energy performance contracts at wings and bases across the country are helping us to meet our climate objectives, while producing economic benefits for communities and creating significant long-term cost savings for Canadians.

● (1955)

Our efforts to minimize our carbon footprint have put us on track to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030. These estimates also include \$27.7 million for our ongoing project to replace the jetties at CFB Esquimalt so that our navy's infrastructure will be ready to accommodate existing and future ships.

As climate change contributes to a more accessible Arctic, we are also investing in the north, and that is why we are helping upgrade the Inuvik airport runway and why we have built the Nanisivik refuelling facility. These investments do more than help us defend our sovereignty and contribute to continental defence. These investments build relationships with our indigenous peoples who live in the north. They help us create jobs and economic opportunities and maintain access for all Canadians who live and work in those communities.

Our new Arctic and offshore patrol ships and projects like over-the-horizon radar technology will enhance our operating and surveillance capabilities in that vast and challenging environment. These estimates include \$8.3 million for remotely piloted aircraft systems to further enable long-range intelligence and surveillance in Canada and on deployments. We are requesting \$26.4 million to ensure that our CF-18s remain operational and interoperable with our allies until our new fighter fleet is ready. We are requesting \$3.2 million to advance the Canadian surface combatant project, along with \$177 million to support and upgrade the armoured combat support vehicle fleet.

The latter highlights the flexibility of the defence policy's funding model, which would allow us to begin this project five years sooner than anticipated. This would save us money that would have been spent maintaining an aging fleet. The project would benefit Canadians, supporting over 10,000 well-paying middle-class jobs across Canada.

Even with all the right people and all the right resources, Canada cannot tackle modern defence challenges alone. Global instability is heightened by the effects of climate change and scarcity. Rapid advances in technology bring both opportunity and risk. We face threats to democracy and challenges to the rules-based international order. In this environment, we must be innovative and collaborative, working across departments, across disciplines and across borders. That is why we are committed to being a reliable partner and a responsible global citizen.

These estimates include roughly \$42 million as Canada's contribution to support the NATO common services, like military equipment and infrastructure. Our current contributions to NATO are significant. Commodore Kurtz is currently leading the Standing NATO Maritime Group Two. Major-General Jennie Carignan is leading the training mission in Iraq. Our contributions to NATO will be leading a battle group in Latvia and supporting our air policing in Romania. We are rejoining the NATO AWACS program that the previous government pulled out of.

This summer, we completed our United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali and began providing tactical airlift support to other United Nations missions as part of Operation Presence in Uganda. We continue to advance the Vancouver principles and the women, peace and security agenda. As part of the Elsie initiative, Canadian Armed Forces has partnered with Ghana Armed Forces to find innovative solutions to overcome barriers to women's participation in peace operations.

To grow representation of women in peacekeeping, it means increasing the number of women who serve in our armed forces. That is why we will focus on growing the representation of women in the Canadian military to at least 25% of the total force by 2026.

I have barely scratched the surface of all the great work and collaboration happening across the security defence community as part of our SSE implementation. There is much more work to be done. The security challenges we face today are diverse, complex and far-reaching. They pose serious threats to our collective security and prosperity, so it is imperative that we invest in the right equipment, capabilities and initiatives to enable our women and men in uniform to do the difficult jobs that we ask of them. The additional \$463.6 million is necessary to deliver on our commitment to support our people so they can continue to protect Canadians and advance peace and security at home and abroad.

● (2000)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for his speech. I would also like to thank all the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces for the excellent work they do. Some of my family members are in the Canadian Armed Forces, so I see the extraordinary work they do every day.

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I know the minister was at the meeting with NATO leaders last week. I would like to give him an opportunity to tell us what we are doing with NATO, to talk about the excellent work being done by our allies and what Canada is prepared to do. We are working with our partners and everybody benefits.

Can the minister tell us what we are working on with our NATO allies?

● (2005)

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for Acadie—Bathurst for his tireless support and advocacy for the Canadian Armed Forces.

The 70% increase in our defence spending has allowed us to invest in the right capabilities. The appropriate capabilities allow us to make the appropriate contributions, because multilateralism is very important to our government, along with supporting NATO, which is part of my mandate also.

We are leading a battle group in Latvia, currently commanding a naval task group and leading the training mission in Iraq. There are three substantial NATO missions that we are currently leading. We have air policing right now in Romania plus the investments that we are making into the AWACS program, which is also extremely vital.

Taking a leadership role is extremely important. We set a great example for our allies. They see not only our contributions, but also an actual plan that will take us well into the future.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I also want to thank the minister for his excellent speech and for his leadership on national defence.

We know that Canada is a world leader in terms of the proportion of women in its military and the areas in which they serve. Can the minister please inform this House as to what the forces are doing to promote women as an integral part of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for Davenport for her tireless work in supporting the Canadian Armed Forces.

Supporting and increasing the number of women in the Canadian Armed Forces is extremely important. To increase the number of women on further operations, we need to increase our numbers. More importantly, we are making sure that we create an inclusive environment to allow everybody to succeed, and I am very proud.

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Currently, we have Commodore Kurtz who is commanding the naval task force in the Mediterranean for NATO and Major-General Carignan who is commanding a NATO training mission, and we have a lot more leadership roles. It is something we want to be able to foster, because research has shown that when we have more women participating in conflict, we also reduce conflict.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Chair, as this is my first opportunity to rise in this place, I want to thank all the residents of Brampton West for placing their trust in me once again.

As we know, the reserve force plays a vital role in enabling the Canadian Armed Forces to be a flexible and reliable military. Can the minister tell us how he ensures that we are taking good care of our reservists who are waiting to be called upon at a moment's notice?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, reservists play a vital role in the Canadian Armed Forces. As we are going to be increasing the size of the armed forces, I was extremely proud to announce that the reserve pay will be equal to that of the regular force.

Reservists have played a vital role in the increased demand on domestic operations when it comes to tackling some of the challenges, such as floods and fires due to climate change. We also made an announcement to invest \$250 million over the next five years for reserve infrastructure, which is absolutely necessary. Some of the buildings desperately need repair, and we owe it our reserve force members that when they do come to train, they have top-notch facilities.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will direct my questions to the Minister of Transport.

Can the minister confirm that all ministers have set up conflict of interest screens?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I can speak for myself, but I will have to get back to my colleague on that one.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, is Marine Atlantic an independent Crown corporation?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, Marine Atlantic is independent. It assures the service between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, is the minister responsible for ferry acquisition?

• (2010)

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, there are a number of ferries that are federal. We are responsible for overseeing that and funding the acquisition of those ferries.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, is the minister going offshore to purchase ferries for Marine Atlantic?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, Marine Atlantic has the latitude to make its own decisions with respect to where it will get its ferries. However, I would add that ferries for the Magdalen Islands to P.E.I. as well as between P.E.I. and Nova Scotia, the Holiday Island, are being replaced in Canada at Davie shipbuilding.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, did the minister sign off on an offshore deal for Marine Atlantic?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, I have not.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, is the minister aware of a national shipbuilding strategy that was set up to revitalize the Canadian industry?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, yes, and I would say that this government has done more than the previous government to make that happen.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, one more time. Is the minister aware of Marine Atlantic going offshore for the purchase of a ferry?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, we are in the early stages. In fact, in the supplementary estimates (A), we are allocating \$3 million for that process to begin.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, with regard to the testing of the Boeing 737 Max aircraft, we understand that reports are informing Canadians that the 737 Max will be into the Canadian market in Q1 of next year, 2020. Will Transport Canada be conducting its own recertification?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, there were a number of false starts on that particular program. I will say to Canadians that I can assure them that the MAX 8 will not fly from, to or over Canada until it is certified to be safe by Transport Canada.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, will Transport Canada be relying on testing by foreign nations or the relevant agencies to recertify the aircraft?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, we will do our own work and if we have to put in different procedures or training we will do so, but we are working with other regulatory bodies such as the FAA and EASA, which is the European equivalent, and also the Brazilian regulator.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, where are the funds allocated for this recertification?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, through regular A-base spending.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, the disaster, which killed 157 people on board including 18 Canadians, was the second Max crash in less than five months. U.K., EU, Australia, India, South Korea and Mongolia all grounded that aircraft prior to Canada. Why?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, my colleague will have to ask them.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, what kind of an answer is that? That is the Minister of Transport, who is responsible for grounding that aircraft here in Canada and the safety of Canadians. There was an outcry at that time.

I will ask again, why did it take the minister so long to ground that aircraft?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, that is a clearer question. We made our decision based on satellite evidence that indicated the performance of that aircraft resembled that of the Lion Air crash that occurred five months before. I cannot speak for why other countries made their decision and whether they based on them on any evidence.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, the fact remains that the minister took more time than other carriers to ground that aircraft, potentially putting Canadians further at risk.

The train derailment in Saskatchewan last night emphasizes the need to do more. How much has his government put aside for crossing safety?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, as I have been fond of saying, rail safety is my number one priority and now that I am in a new mandate, I am glad to say again that rail safety will continue to be my number one priority.

We are currently looking at the derailment that occurred in Lanigan, Saskatchewan. It is too early at this point to say what has happened. If my hon. colleague wants a list of the things that we have done since the 2013 Lac-Mégantic rail tragedy, I would be happy to provide it to him.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, we know, through the supplementary estimates (A), that the minister has put aside \$165 million for green vehicles. How much has he put aside for rail safety?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, we are continuously improving rail safety in this country. In the supplementaries, which is what we are here to discuss, we mentioned \$10.1 million for the railway safety improvement program, RSIP, which is specifically focused on crossings and improving safety at those crossings.

• (2015)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, the minister's department has remained firmly in study mode regarding rail safety. When can we expect the minister and his department to take firm action?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, if I have the opportunity to speak at length, I can begin to tell my colleague what we have done in terms of improving safety in this country. I will start by saying we have new standards with respect to the safety of tanker cars. We have implemented key routes limitations for those transporting dangerous goods. We have implemented the installation of locomotive video and voice recorders, LVVRs, inside.

I am presently looking at the issue of fatigue among engineers and conductors on our trains. We have also started other initiatives with respect to trying to improve rail safety. We have increased the number of inspectors who inspect the 41,000 kilometres of rail lines that operate in this country. I can provide an exhaustive list to my colleague who just said we have been asleep at the switch.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, will the minister table those documents with the House?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, those documents are actually available online. I was just going to do him a favour by printing them and giving them to him.

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Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, if the minister is willing to do that, we will take him up on his offer.

Some railways in Europe and the U.S. have train controls that sound an alarm or even stop the train if the crew is not paying attention. However, similar technology has not been implemented under the minister's watch. Why?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, I am glad to tell my colleague that we are looking very seriously at what is called "enhanced train control". We think this is the new way to use technology to make train operations safer, and we are working with both the class I main railways, CN and CP, to try to develop the technologies that will be used in the future to ensure greater levels of safety.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, one of the biggest concerns for the railway crews who were on strike just recently was railway safety and their own safety. The TSB has directed 16 rail safety advisories and information letters to the minister resulting from employee concerns about fatigue, and he has not responded once. Why?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I responded, Mr. Chair.

Of course we did a big initiative with respect to pilots and pilot fatigue, which came into force last year. I said at the time that I would turn my attention toward rail operators. I am talking about those he is talking about, as well as the marine industry, because fatigue is recognized as a contributing factor to some of the accidents. The TSB has been quite rightly pointing this out to us, and we are acting on it. We have begun acting on it now for close to a year.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, the tenth railway worker fatality in less than 24 months took place in my province of British Columbia just last week. What is the minister doing to rectify this issue?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, my heart goes out to that tenth CP worker who lost his life in a rail yard. We are currently investigating what the cause was. When we determine what the cause of that was, if there is action to be taken, we will take that action.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, with regard to runway incursions, Nav Canada recorded an average of 445 runway incursions each year from 2013 to 2017. There were 21 high-severity events in each of the past two years, any of which could have led to a loss of life.

The minister is spending \$165 million on green vehicles. Why does the government not care about airline safety?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, the government does care about airline safety. In fact, Canada has one of the best safety records in the world. However, there is always more that we can do, including on runway incursions and other issues, such as runway and safety areas. We are working on all of these to try to increase safety in the airline business even more.

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Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, if the minister's government does not step up, it is only a matter of time before a catastrophic accident occurs. What are the Liberals doing to implement a more aggressive hazard identification regime?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, I ask my colleague to define to me what he means by "hazard identification regime".

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, there are all kinds of improvements that can be implemented for pilots, such as runway status lights or direct-to-pilot warnings. These things exist in 23 other countries, yet the minister has yet to implement them here in our country. Why?

● (2020)

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, we are doing a great deal in the airline business. I am very proud of the fact, and this was a long haul, of the pilot crew duty day and fatigue regulations that we put in after a great deal of interaction with the airlines.

We also are very proud of ACAP, which is the airports capital assistance program. It has been in existence for many years, including under the previous government, which also supported it. The program is specifically focused on safety at airports and includes lights, runway conditions and equipment to make sure ice is removed and sometimes fences put up to prevent animals from going in. I know my colleague knows quite a bit about airports and will know about ACAP. Some of it was funded in Prince George, which happens to be where he lives.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, that is still not on par with what the previous government invested in that airport, but maybe we will get there.

Will the government consider in-cockpit electronic awareness aids?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, I will not answer that specifically, but I will say in a generic way that we look at all ways of improving the safety of flying operations, including what is in the cockpit and what is available to pilots to do their jobs safely.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, will the minister commit to providing federal funds to expand Highway 1 from Langley to Chilliwack, which is one of the most crowded major highways in Canada with one of the highest number of accidents?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, for the clarification of all listeners, the federal government is responsible for highways that go through national parks. Other than that, it is a provincial or territorial responsibility to take care of the roads.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, will the minister commit to partnering with the Province of British Columbia on the expansion of Highway 1?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, as I said, we respect jurisdictions and areas of responsibility. I am always ready to speak with my counterpart, who in this particular case is Minister Trevena, on ways that will help to improve safety. Although that is a provincial responsibility, I am certainly ready to make her aware of concerns that have been expressed to me.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, how much money has been allocated to alleviating the concerns and challenges with the no-fly list?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, I do not have the precise amount, but it is in the tens of millions of dollars. A great deal has been put into this to ensure that we will not be in a situation in the future where certain people with certain names are not allowed to fly. At the same time, we must of course make sure to keep a no-fly list that has people we definitely do not want to see flying.

The investments we are making in public safety are leading that, but we are working with Transport Canada to find a better way to avoid refusing an air ticket to somebody who happens to have the same name as somebody else on the no-fly list. That has been happening for too long and we have committed the funds to correct that problem.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, will that fix the challenges with no-fly list or will it alleviate them?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Chair, the decisions will be in the hands of the government, and I am confident that this will solve that problem.

The Chair: That concludes this round.

[Translation]

I commend the members and the ministers for their excellent management of the speeches and responses. The exchanges are extraordinary.

The hon. Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

● (2025)

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will begin by acknowledging that we come together this evening on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

This evening I would like to talk about the government's commitments to reconciliation with indigenous peoples and how items included in the supplementary estimates (A), 2019-20, support our shared journey of healing and accelerate self-determination for first nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada.

As we begin this new session of Parliament, I would like to reiterate that our government's commitment to reconciliation with indigenous people is as strong as ever. This government continues to place the utmost importance on the relationship between the Crown and indigenous peoples. Reconciliation is too important to be a partisan issue, and I look forward to working with all parliamentarians across party lines to make significant and tangible progress on this journey.

A significant demonstration of our commitment is the fact that I address the committee today as the federal government's principal interlocutor with first nations, Inuit and Métis people, and not as the minister of Indian affairs. I am delighted to say that I was the very last minister to carry that title, and this past July the order in council was finalized to dissolve the archaic department known as INAC and establish new ministerial responsibilities for the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Indigenous Services.

[Translation]

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, was a vestige of colonial times. It was created to enforce the Indian Act and was in no way able to support indigenous peoples or establish partnerships in connection with their history, their situation and their particular aspirations.

[English]

I am very proud of what we have been able to accomplish working in true partnership with indigenous peoples. Together we have made significant progress but we still have much work to do. We must keep moving forward with a new level of commitment, determination and partnership. Above all, we must continue to build trust through stronger, more collaborative relationships with indigenous peoples, relationships founded on respect, co-operation, partnership and, above all, the affirmation of indigenous peoples' inherent and treaty rights.

The government's commitment to renewed relationships means working to support indigenous capacity building and indigenous peoples' vision of self-determination, including in the areas of fisheries, oceans, aquatic habitat and marine waterways.

These supplementary estimates provide \$171 million to three organizations to advance the government's reconciliation strategy. The first item is \$132 million to Fisheries and Oceans Canada to implement agreements signed in August 2019 with Elsipogtog and Esgegoôpetitj first nations in New Brunswick and the Maliseet of Viger in Quebec to advance reconciliation of fisheries and to continue engaging with indigenous communities and stakeholders on fisheries policies. The 10-year interim fisheries implementation agreements reaffirm our shared commitment to advance the recognition and exercise of these first nations' fishing and harvesting rights, a meaningful step towards self-determination.

[Translation]

These agreements were concluded in a spirit of collaboration and were built on the long and hard work of first nations to ensure that all members of the communities have job opportunities in the fishery.

[English]

The second item is \$37 million to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to implement the Haïcístut Incremental House Post Agreement.

In July I signed this reconciliation agreement with Heiltsuk Chief Marilyn Slett in Bella Bella on British Columbia's central coast. The reconciliation agreement addresses the priorities that are the most important to Heiltsuk self-government, housing and infras-

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tructure, economic development, and language revitalization and preservation.

I was interested to learn that Haïcístut is a Heiltsuk word that means to turn something around and make it right again. It is the perfect word for this reconciliation agreement. The road that Canada and the Heiltsuk nation have travelled has not always been easy. Canada put up many roadblocks along the way. What is changed is that now Canada is listening and we are taking our lead from the first nation.

The third item is \$2 million to Parks Canada to support the negotiation of three components of the rights and reconciliation agreement with the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Wolastoqey and Peskotomuhkati, or Passamaquoddy, first nations: the stewardship of cultural and natural resources, the co-management of areas of mutual interest and the pursuit of a moderate livelihood.

At Parks Canada, natural and cultural heritage places established before 1982, the removal of indigenous peoples from traditionally used lands and the cessation of harvesting and cultural practices have resulted in profound cultural, spiritual and economic impact to individuals and communities.

The rights reconciliation agreements would include elements of harvesting and resource conservation and support capacity-building initiatives for the management of cultural resources. These resources support changes to existing monitoring resource conservation and planning processes, and the move towards the co-operative management of ecological and cultural resources.

● (2030)

[Translation]

Each one of us should ask what reconciliation means to us and how we can contribute to advancing it in our own way. Reconciliation is a path that must begin with listening, followed by action based on what we learned.

[English]

For much of the past century and a half, Canada was not listening. Instead, it put up barriers to true partnership with indigenous people and look where it has gotten us. We have to make the relationship right again. We need to embody the Haïcístut, a word of the Heiltsuk peoples which means to turn things around and make things right again, for all first nations, Métis, Inuit and indeed a better future for all Canadians. This will only happen if we accelerate the process to self-determination and self-government for all indigenous peoples based on how they want to define and govern themselves and how they want the relationship with the Crown to be.

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We are determined to get this right, to work with indigenous peoples to break from the unacceptable status quo and build the Canada of tomorrow, a better Canada for everyone.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Chair, we understand that in the indigenous community across Canada, the youth population is the fastest-growing population. I would like the minister to help us understand where the money for supporting indigenous post-secondary education is going to go, because a lack of educational opportunities is creating a problem for the communities.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, it is so important to all first nations, Inuit and Métis. As Murray Sinclair has said, education got us into this mess and education is going to get us out of this mess.

The people on the Prairies talk about education as their buffalo, that this is the way that they will move forward. Again, as we have increased the funding for post-secondary education, it is going to be increasingly viewed as an indigenous right. We have had processes where the continuing students have had first dibs, and then the high school leavers. However, we all know we have to do more because it is sometimes the young moms who want to go back to school to become social workers or nurses. We know we have to do better at this.

We also know that tuition and housing are not the only issues for indigenous students. There needs to be child care. There needs to be transportation back and forth to their communities. We want to work with first nations, Inuit and Métis and make sure that happens.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, I appreciate many of the things that the minister has done on the indigenous file. Winnipeg North, the area that I represent, has somewhere in the neighbourhood of 18% to 20% indigenous people. There are many issues. The minister has made reference to one of the greatest challenges in terms of the importance of education. I think of the Children of the Earth High School and other high schools like R.B. Russell Vocational School that are putting in fantastic programs to try to get more young indigenous people to graduate.

From the minister's perspective, how important is it that we recognize indigenous leaders, school divisions and different stakeholders getting behind and showing the support that is so absolutely critical to indigenous leadership in making sure that young people are getting the type of education that is so critically important to their future?

• (2035)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, the situation in Winnipeg is very critical as the example of how we go forward. Even in Winnipeg it is going to be important for indigenous children and youth to see themselves in the programming to be able to speak their language and have a secure personal cultural identity. We know that is a key to success.

We also worry about people leaving high school. In some of the schools there are graduation coaches or consultants where, if they start by assuming every child will finish high school, they can actu-

ally turn around what had been the expectation previously. We are also hearing from the leaders that on-the-land and immersion programming, which may be in the summer, are ways that we can make first nations, Inuit and Métis students proud. That is the way we go forward as we build the role models and the other examples, so they can see themselves in these people who are now scientists and doctors and lawyers, but also guides on the land and all kinds of things as they walk in both worlds.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Chair, I appreciate what the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations was talking about, that INAC was the last bastion of colonialism and that the indigenous communities want to take charge of their lives. Under vote 40, "improving assisted living and long-term care", how will that money help the indigenous communities have culturally sensitive long-term care?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, as we have gone to communities coast to coast to coast, we have seen way too many elders who had to leave their communities in order to get the kind of care they wanted.

We have begun to build accessible homes and seniors' homes with the idea of assisted living, so that elders can stay in their communities and be those knowledge keepers that young people look up to. It is just heartbreaking to be in some of the northern Ontario communities and realize that, when people see their loved ones in a hospital bed in Thunder Bay, it just breaks their hearts.

Even though that was not a line item that INAC used to pay for, in listening to communities, we have moved forward on this.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I would like to follow up with a couple of the initiatives that we had passed in the last session dealing with indigenous languages. A very positive piece of legislation passed through. We also did the child welfare reforms for foster care.

I wonder if the minister could comment on the latter one, but also, if time permits, on the importance of the language.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. minister has 20 seconds.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, these are the first two pieces of legislation that actually incorporate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It really is about that asserting of the jurisdiction, and about Canada's responsibility to help protect those languages that are all at risk.

Also, as we heard from the member for Timmins—James Bay, the present system has not worked. It will only be when first nations, Inuit and Métis have control over their child and family services that get them out from under the Indian Act that these—

• (2040)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I have to cut off the minister.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Chair, I look forward to working with the minister. Maybe we can start with a bit of clarification here. The online sources and uses table for the 2019 budget stated that the \$66 million for boil water advisories was allocated, but the line item in the authorities to date in the supplementary estimates (A) was empty.

Can the minister tell us whether it was allocated?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Chair, I will certainly get back to the member on that. I did not see that.

To the member opposite, we are on track to get all long-term boil water advisories lifted by March of 2021. We had a significant investment in the 2016 budget. We have had to top up every year, but that money is getting out the door and these—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, the minister's department and the Parliamentary Budget Officer are at odds over the true cost to get water and wastewater in indigenous communities up to the same standards as the rest of Canada. Why is that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, to the member opposite, there is a lag from the design phase to the implementation phase and the feasibility studies. In the past, things did not work because they only had the budget for two years at a time. As soon as we were able to give a five-year budget, then the communities were able to plan properly and we have been able to do the kind of system that they have asked for.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, I would ask the minister how many other contingency plans are in place if the current plan fails.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, the water system is in the A-base funding. That is not why it is not in the supplementaries today. A real focus on the promise and our commitment to get all the long-term boil water advisories lifted by March 2021 means that in successive budgets, if we have to put in more money to be able to get to that target, we will do that.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the minister to ensure that she looks at the Chair so she knows how much time I am allowing.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, speaking of money, according to the Ontario First Nation Technical Services Corporation, the plan in place will not scratch the surface of the issues facing these Ontario indigenous communities. Minister, why are your numbers so far out of line with the ones being presented?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I do not quite know what the member is referring to as out of line. Thankfully, in this plat-

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form commitment to get all infrastructure needs up to what communities need by 2030, the needs assessment will begin and we will get that done.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will remind the hon. member as well to address his questions through the Chair and not to the minister.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, with respect to Grassy Narrows, the minister has committed to building a care home. When will that happen?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, as members know, the expansion of the current health centre has already happened. I think the minister has been in conversation with the community, and that care home will be built.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, there are estimates that indicate that if the standard for the Ontario water regulations were applied to first nations people in the province of Ontario, it would double the number of boil water advisories overnight. Can you explain why there are lower standards for those communities?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind the member to address his questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, for the member opposite, the standards are with the provincial regulations. That is what all communities have to abide by. Our circuit rider program trains people to get to that standard. I would say that if we were in any community, we would see that those water plant operators are so proud of the work they are doing. There is not any lower standard that I am aware of.

• (2045)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, how many first nation communities are suing the government for an inadequate water supply?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, that is a very interesting question. I believe that we as a department have a very good relationship with the communities and are working very well with them to get them the kind of water treatment plants and long-term solutions they require.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, does the minister have a number for that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I do not. I think we are trying to get out of court and to the negotiating table. We would like to work with those communities.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, can the minister explain why, of the 85 long-term advisories that have been lifted, nearly 40% have been placed back as short-term advisories within weeks or months?

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Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I need to explain to the member that a long-term drinking water advisory is one that lasts more than a year. That means we are always working with communities, from power outages to all of the other things that happen in all of our communities, to temporarily have a boil water advisory. We have also prevented 131 more—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, can the minister confirm or at least explain if short- and medium-term boil water advisories are tracked and recorded at the same standard as the long-term boil water advisories?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I will have to check with Health Canada, which tests these systems. As members know, we absorb the ones that are also at gas stations and other things that are a direct responsibility of the federal government. However, we are always looking, because we want to prevent long-term drinking water advisories.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, leaders from five Dene first nation communities in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan are slamming the federal government for suddenly backing away from a land resource deal after concerns were raised with indigenous groups in the Northwest Territories. This is known as the north of 60 agreement. The information we have from the Dene people is that they were told at the 11th hour that negotiations were off, even though they were on their way to sign the agreement. Why was that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, as we look toward going forward, in order to stay out of court, we have an obligation with section 35 consultations to ensure that neighbours and other governments are comfortable, and I think we are back on track. I think there will be good news shortly.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, this is a process that has been going on for 18 years. Why were these concerns not addressed beforehand?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, the member needs to understand that until there is a conversation to get to a temporary agreement, then we consult on what that agreement has been with the neighbours and the section 35 rights holders as well as the other jurisdictions.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, will the minister consider working with indigenous nations such as the Sts'ailes and the Sto:lo people and construct the regional health centre in Harrison Mills, which is in the riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I am sure that the Minister of Indigenous Services and the B.C. region would be more than willing to entertain a conversation about whatever the people need.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, I am going to move to the Fond-du-Lac Airport. The minister might remember December 13, 2017, when there was a serious crash. With 22 passengers and three crew members on board, a West Wind Aviation flight crashed shortly after takeoff. Infrastructure Canada and the indigenous community have been working to secure funding to upgrade that airport, but that funding has not yet started to flow. Could you tell us why?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes):

Again, I would ask the member to address his questions to the Chair.

The hon. minister has 25 seconds to respond.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, that was indeed a terrible tragedy. I certainly remember meeting with the leadership. We will continue to work to get that airport fixed.

• (2050)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, Bill C-92, an act respecting first nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families is something that has received a lot of support in the House. The throne speech has articulated that the government plans to move forward with indigenous communities.

How can indigenous communities move forward on Bill C-92 by making their own decisions regarding child welfare when there is no plan for transition?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I would have to disagree with the hon. member in that it is very clear on how it is laid out. Any community that would like to assert its jurisdiction on its children and families will begin the process of writing its child well-being law. The Anishinabek Nation is doing so many. As it writes its laws, the jurisdiction will be transferred and the negotiation will happen in terms of the funding.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, can the minister clarify how a community can “control their own destiny” when many communities that we have spoken to do not see a plan?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, it was very interesting last week at the first ministers' meeting on the status of women to see the brilliant presentation from B.C. As communities develop their comprehensive community plans, so many of them now are starting to move that plan into self-determination. It really is inspiring as they come together as a community to write their own destiny.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, what type of advocacy body would be put in place to deal with such things as injuries, death and that type of thing for indigenous governing bodies under this?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I do not quite understand the question with respect to a body. I must say that it did not make any sense.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, it was a question given to us by the Alberta minister of child services.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: You did not say it was from the Alberta child services.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Yes I did. Would you care to answer that question?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the member and the minister as well to address the Chair. No questions are to go directly to each other.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I think the question speaks to the fact that having agencies and bodies looking after families has not worked. What we are seeing is that communities, whether it is a treaty nation or individual nations, write their own laws and they will look after their own children and youth.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, a number of the first nations communities, and provincial governments, have expressed concern that they do not see a plan coming forward. Many first nations communities that we have spoken with do not see an idea of how they can move forward.

This is three weeks away from coming into place. Are you not done the consultation yet?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I ask the member to address the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, the whole excitement about this new approach is that it will not be designed top-down, and that the plans will be built bottom-up by communities, for communities and in the best interests of their children and youth, to keep families together and to bring their children home.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, can the minister explain, under the UNDRIP legislation, if there is a definition of free, prior and informed consent?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, yes. I think that everything that we understand about free, prior and informed consent is that indigenous people and the rights holders have to be at the very first idea of a project and be able to give their best advice, their indigenous knowledge, in order to move projects through.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Chair, there is \$171 million for funding to encourage indigenous participation in the fisheries and oceans sector, yet the only indigenous company bidding on tugboats as part of the oceans protection plan has been shut out of the bid to benefit a non-compliant bid from Irving. Why is this?

• (2055)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, I believe that the situation has evolved with respect to the contract to Irving. I believe the Heiltsuk first nation, which was involved in this particular case, has taken action that has changed the situation and that it is before the courts at this time.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Madam Chair, I appreciate this opportunity to talk about an issue of great importance to all MPs and to all Canadians: the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence. I would like to thank the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces for the excellent work they do every day for this country.

Today I would like to talk about how our government is taking care of Canadian Armed Forces members and their families. As I said before, the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families are a priority for our government. Our people in uniform are the forces' most valuable asset. Our troops keep Canada

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safe and contribute to multilateral efforts to make the world safer, more prosperous and more sustainable.

We can have the most modern equipment in the world, work in the greenest facilities, offer the best possible services and have the best possible policies, but none of that matters as much as taking good care of our women and men in uniform. That is why our government and the Minister of National Defence built Canada's defence policy around our people, our troops, our civilian employees and our military families.

Our “Strong, Secure, Engaged” defence policy guarantees that the Canadian Armed Forces will employ more people, that they will be properly prepared to tackle the task at hand and to encourage them to stay on once they have enlisted. In addition, giving our military personnel our full support guarantees that they will have the tools needed to answer the call of duty anytime and anywhere to the best of their ability, so that they may continue to properly defend our country and preserve our values, helping keep Canadians safe. That is why our government promptly introduced initiatives to improve the care provided to our military personnel and their families.

I would like to outline some of those initiatives. Let me begin with those intended for military family members, since they are the strength behind the uniform. Military family members provide ongoing support and step up when their loved ones have to be elsewhere. We recognize the immense contribution they make and we are extremely grateful to them for that. That is why the defence team updated the military family services program. We are providing an additional \$6 million a year to military family resource centres.

Through the seamless Canada initiative, we are working with the provinces and territories to facilitate relocation. We also put in place virtual mental health consultation services for the families and deployed support staff abroad to support soldiers anywhere, at any time. We also launched the military spousal employment network to give military spouses access to jobs offered by employers across the country in the public or private sectors.

Another aspect is transition support. Sometimes, as we know, military families continue to deal with some unique challenges when they leave the forces. That is why our commitment to their well-being goes beyond their years of active service. A year ago, we officially established the Canadian Armed Forces transition group. This group, as promised in our policy, provides support to sick and injured members of the Canadian Forces and facilitates the transition for all members, veterans and their families. This is an important first step in improving the care provided to our troops when they transition to a new post or life outside the forces.

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A third very important aspect is compensation and benefits. To ensure that members of the Canadian Armed Forces feel supported throughout their career, the government is also ensuring that they receive adequate compensation. We have launched several initiatives to ensure that our military members are well compensated. For example, we have enhanced tax breaks for members who participate in international missions. We have also altered the compensation structure for the reserves so that reservists are paid the same as members of the regular forces for equal work.

A very important issue that we are also tackling is changing the culture of the defence team. We are doing nothing less than changing the way in which we support our troops and their families. Just as important is the fact that we are focusing on changing the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces. That is why we are striving to implement the recommendations concerning the equal treatment of the sexes in all of our programs and policies.

● (2100)

According to “Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy”, diversity and inclusion must be prioritized for effective operations and decision-making in the Canadian Armed Forces. We know that diverse and inclusive armed forces are more agile and more effective. This is why we are committed to increasing the proportion of women in the Canadian Armed Forces to 25% by 2026.

We know that the Canadian Armed Forces have not always been welcoming to members from all backgrounds, in particular to LGBTQ2 and visible minority members. We are committed to correcting these mistakes.

In November 2017, the Prime Minister formally apologized to Canadians who had endured discrimination based on their sexual orientation. It never should have happened, and we are committed to eradicating intolerance within the Canadian Armed Forces.

We are currently working with other government partners to follow through on the results of the class action lawsuit over the LGBT purge. Up to \$110 million will be set aside to compensate all those who were subjected to these discriminatory practices, including federal public servants, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and members of the RCMP.

We have also implemented reconciliation and commemoration measures. There is the Canada pride citation, which will be awarded to eligible applicants in recognition of their service to Canada and the hardships they endured.

We have learned from the past. Our government will continue to make every effort to ensure that the workplace is welcoming and free from harassment and discrimination. Hateful behaviour, in any form, will not be tolerated. Furthermore, tougher sentences for crimes motivated by prejudice or hate were proposed in our Bill C-77, which received Royal Assent this summer.

This was a defining moment for the military justice system, giving more rights to victims of service offences.

We will also continue to move forward with Operation Honour, the mission of which is to eliminate sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Two weeks ago, the Federal Court approved a \$900-million settlement agreement in the class action lawsuit over sexual misconduct in the CAF and DND. We hope this settlement will serve as recognition of the harm done to victims of sexual misconduct and enable them to turn the page and begin the healing process.

We are proud of the care we provide to members of our Canadian Armed Forces. From the time they first don the uniform to the day they hang it up for good and beyond, we will be there for them and their families. They deserve to be taken care of, and they deserve to be respected. Our government will make sure it does both.

Once again, I commend the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces for the work they do for us every day.

In my speech I talked about the services we are offering to families. The minister and I had an opportunity to visit the base in Gagetown when I was the parliamentary secretary. I would like to ask him a question about family resource centres and the transition that some men and women have to make when moving from one base to another.

How can those programs make the journey or transition within the Canadian Armed Forces a little easier for members?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the hon. member for his tremendous support of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Families are the backbone of our members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Supporting them is extremely important. We have made investments into military family resource centres that provide that direct support. When families get posted province to province, sometimes base to base, they will get the appropriate support.

I have had the privilege of also going to Gagetown on a number of occasions to see the great work that is being done, especially when it comes to day care and providing direct support when it comes to mental health. We want to allow for the military family resource centres to cater to the various regions and bases they serve. We will ensure our support to them evolves as things change.

● (2105)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Chair, earlier I heard the minister talk about an additional investment of \$250 million for our reserve units.

One such unit is the North Shore Regiment, which is in my riding. It has an incredible history, including service during the Second World War. I want to ask the minister how the additional \$250 million will help our reserve units across the country.

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, I thank the member for his advocacy for reserve members and regiments.

Reserve units have a tremendous history that stems from World War I and World War II. The infrastructure that they use did not get the appropriate investments in the past. One of the things our government is doing is reversing that. A \$250-million investment into reserve infrastructure over the next five years allows us to provide the direct support when it comes to immediate maintenance work that needs to be done. We are taking a long-term approach as well. In our defence policy, reserves are going to be needed more in domestic operations. Therefore, as we do the analysis, we are going to make sure that we take a long-term approach and make the appropriate investments in the various regions where it is needed most.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Chair, something else members of the Canadian Armed Forces have been telling me about is post-traumatic stress disorder, which is becoming more common in the Canadian Armed Forces. I know that our government has made it a priority in Canada's defence policy and the various programs it offers.

I would like to ask the minister about these programs. What are we doing to help members of the Canadian Armed Forces obtain help or appropriate care when they feel they are affected by this condition?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, supporting our members when it comes to dealing with the challenge of PTSD is to be immediate. In budget 2017, our government invested \$17.5 million over four years into a centre of excellence focused on the prevention, assessment and treatment of PTSD to make sure we provide the right support.

What we are also doing with our defence policy in looking after people is building resiliency from the time that somebody joins, making sure that people get the right support, making sure their families are looked after, looking after them all the way through, especially to when the time comes for them to retire. That transition piece is going to be very important, and then we have to make sure that the services are also available afterward.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Chair, in my speech on Canada's defence policy, I spoke about another aspect, the equipment for our men and women.

I would like the minister to provide a little more information or an update on the procurement of new Arctic and offshore patrol ships. We have committed to providing the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces with the equipment they need to do their job. I would like the minister to tell us about the status of these ships. Is their construction well under way?

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[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, our AOPS are going to provide us tremendous capability. The *Harry DeWolf* currently is under sea trials. I was able to visit that ship before it went off on sea trials. A second ship is currently in the water and a third and fourth are already being built.

What is really important is that we are taking the lessons from the first ship and making sure they are applied. This is providing significant improvements as they move forward. These ships are going to be extremely important for the support they provide and, more importantly, how this is going to connect with some of the other procurements we are putting in, making sure they support the communities in the north. The Nanisivik refuelling station is also going to be critically important in supporting our ships.

• (2110)

[Translation]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are 38 seconds remaining. Does the member for Acadie—Bathurst have a quick question?

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Chair, I have one last question. This one is about changing the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces.

Can the minister tell us what he is doing to change the culture and to make the Canadian Armed Forces more diverse? What are we doing to ensure we no longer tolerate hate against different groups?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, we have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to any type of inappropriate behaviour. We are going to strive extremely hard to make sure that we create an inclusive environment inside the Canadian Armed Forces for all Canadians to succeed.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Chair, since this is the first time I have had the opportunity to rise in the House since the October 21 federal election, I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères for once again placing their trust in me.

Before I talk in-depth about the issues, I first want to speak more generally about the supplementary estimates. There are things missing there that should normally be included. First, there is the compensation for our supply managed farmers. We have been talking about it for several months. A few days before a by-election, the Prime Minister went to Lac-Saint-Jean to tell our farmers that he would not open breaches in supply management. A few weeks after the election, we learned that more concessions would be made.

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In fact, every international trade agreement, whether we are talking about the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, or the new NAFTA, included breaches in supply management. For a government that claims to protect supply management, this is not a strong showing. Compensation has always been promised, but it is still difficult to obtain. We were told it was in the budget, but there was no funding. Now, we are being told that the money will be here by the end of the year, but when we look at the votes, we see that there is still no money for supply-managed producers.

Could the minister explain why there is no money in the supplementary estimates to compensate farmers?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, I congratulate the member on his re-election. We are very happy to see him back here. We are also very happy he agrees that it is important to invest in our farms and farmers so they can continue to do the vital work we need them to do. They provide an invaluable service.

As the member knows, since I answered this question earlier, we have already started making compensation payments, and in some cases the payments have already been received. I would be happy to give him specifics later on how the government is processing these payments.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, I would be interested in hearing the specifics, since technically, the government is not allowed to take money from one budget and use it for another purpose without going through the House. I would like to know what mechanism the Liberals are using to compensate our farmers. I do not understand what the government is doing.

I have another question. This one is about health transfers. We want to see new money. The budget includes about \$100 million in additional funding for Health Canada. That extra money could go to the provinces. We actually need billions, but that would be a start.

This government is always trying to come up with new federal programs. Today, it is health care, but we could be talking about any other federal program or initiative. These initiatives always sound great, but the problem is that they do not mesh well with the programs we have in Quebec. Quebec has exclusive jurisdiction over health.

The problem is that federal transfers do not keep up with inflation. The Government of Quebec's costs go up by 5% or 6% every year, but the federal government refuses to boost transfers by more than 1% or 2% per year. Sometimes it goes as high as 3%, but there is always a deficit. The upshot is that we are losing money. Health care is costing us more each year because the federal government is not paying its share.

Why not transfer more money to the provinces?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am pleased to answer my colleague's question.

As the member may know, starting in 2015, the Canadian government committed to substantially increasing health transfers over

the baseline set by the previous government. This meant an additional \$11 billion for home care and mental health.

Furthermore, during the election campaign, we promised to invest an additional \$6 billion in health transfers to help all of the provinces, including Quebec, invest in the crucial health care services needed by everyone, especially seniors in Quebec and across the country.

• (2115)

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, I am a bit disappointed by the minister's answer because, although we recognize that there has been an increase—we are talking about big numbers, billions of dollars—in reality, if we take into account increased costs and real percentages, we see that this increase is not enough to meet the needs.

There is a reason why the great federalist minister Gaétan Barrette, who was a member of the Quebec government not too long ago, called this predatory federalism. It was not a separatist who said that but a federalist so that is not very impressive.

Next, still on the subject of new spending, of the \$4.9 billion requested, approximately \$427 million were requested by the Department of National Defence and just over \$355 million by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. That is close to a billion dollars in new money for those two departments. It just so happens that the same departments in Quebec had major demands. We have a shipyard, the Davie shipyard, that needs more contracts. I would like to know how much of that \$800 million is expected to go to the Davie shipyard.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, those are excellent questions, and I thank my colleague for the opportunity to respond.

With respect to the Davie shipyard, when we came to power in 2015, things were extremely difficult. The Canadian government had essentially severed ties with the Davie shipyard. We invested in a supply ship, two ferries that are soon to be built, and three ice-breakers, the first ones the Canadian government has acquired since 1993. We also invested in rehabilitating, renovating and updating 12 frigates. The Davie shipyard will be doing some of that work over the next 20 years. This is the biggest contract the Canadian government has ever awarded to the Davie shipyard.

There is still a lot to do, but we are very proud of the Davie shipyard workers. We will keep working very hard with them to make sure they have the opportunity to meet the Canadian government's substantial shipbuilding and investment needs.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, I am disappointed to hear a minister from Quebec's national capital region—since our national capital is in Quebec—which is not very far from the Davie shipyard, say that everything is fine at Davie and that his government is doing everything necessary to help the shipyard, when we know very well that the Davie shipyard has not been given its fair share.

We are talking about the shipyard with the largest capacity in North America. Still, the government will not even give it 2%, 3% or 4% of its contracts. That is unacceptable. The government is lagging behind when it comes to its shipyards and their needs. It cannot do the work needed to be done, yet the shipyard builds ships at a lower price than other shipyards and delivers ahead of schedule.

We are waiting for news of the *Obelix* supply ship and the *Diefenbaker* icebreaker. When will that come?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am indeed very proud of the Davie shipyard and especially its workers. I can see Davie from my riding in Quebec, in the middle of the national capital, and I admire and respect the shipyard, which is just across the river.

Not only are we proud of what those workers are doing now, but we are very proud of what they will continue to do in the years to come. There is still other work to be assigned, so they may continue to showcase the quality of their work and the importance of the Canadian government's needs that they will want to meet.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, I am not sure if the minister is aware, but the contracts at the Davie shipyard are wrapping up. Several hundred employees could be laid off in a few months.

Will the minister do something before these employees lose their job or will he instead watch these Quebecers of whom he is so proud, but for whom he does next to nothing, from his office in the national capital?

Will he watch them lose their job without lifting a finger, while hundreds of millions of dollars are spent at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Department of National Defence?

Our workers from Quebec need that money. I would like some assurances as to the government's intentions.

● (2120)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I wish to clarify something. Some people watching us may get the impression that we are doing the Davie shipyard a favour by awarding it such important contracts. We are not doing it a favour. We are awarding these contracts based on the quality of work done by its workers, but also because of the quality of the suppliers. In Quebec alone, there are 900 suppliers who help Davie meet the Canadian government's shipbuilding and renovation needs, which are very real and quite significant.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, I could not have said it better myself, and I certainly agree with the President of the Treasury Board. The government did not do Davie any favours. Quite the opposite. If the government did any favours, it was for Irving, which had no shortage of contracts. Meanwhile, Quebec's shipyards continue to starve.

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The document indicates that the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development also needs new money. Interestingly, I noted that \$296 million of this new money will be used to fight climate change. During this government's previous term, I happened to discover that \$50 million from the sustainable development technology fund set aside for clean technologies had not been invested in sustainable development technology, but rather in the oil industry. Surprise, surprise.

Can the minister assure us that this \$296 million will not go to oil companies again?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his question.

In 2015, when we attended the Paris climate change conference, the Prime Minister promised that Canada would allocate \$2.65 billion to help certain developing countries address the challenges of climate change. The \$296 million that the member just mentioned is earmarked for this very program and will be used to help developing countries make progress.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, what I want to know is whether this money will go to the oil industry. I want to know whether the money will be invested in the oil sands. The government claims to be fighting climate change, but investing more money in oil does not fix the problem, it only makes it worse. Unfortunately, this is nothing new in Canada.

Would the Minister of Transport give me a clear answer?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Madam Chair, as I said, this money is earmarked for other developing countries facing challenges. Climate change is a global problem that affects every country, and we must all participate in fighting it. Developing countries have fewer resources to combat climate change. Canada is setting this money aside to help these countries better fight climate change.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, it seems that, in Canada, it is quite the challenge not to invest in oil. It seems this country is always burning oil and cannot help but invest in oil. However, it would be easy enough to impose conditions. We are sending \$296 million abroad, but what is to stop the countries that receive that aid from investing the money in something other than oil? I did not get an answer to my question.

In 2019 alone, the federal government promised \$19 billion to oil companies. However, those companies are rolling in money. When will we have a government in Ottawa that will stop investing in oil? Perhaps Quebec has to become a country so that we can finally stop our taxes from being used to fund oil and make the situation worse.

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Hon. Marc Garneau: Madam Chair, I am shocked. I would like to ask my colleague where he is getting the information that the money we are sending to help third world countries fight climate change is ending up in the hands of oil companies. Does he have proof of what he claimed in his last three questions?

• (2125)

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Chair, it is hard to show proof because the money has not been disbursed yet. Once it is, we will be able to confirm that. What I want is some assurance that the money will not be used for that. I think that should be easier.

I will move on to other questions about spending.

I see \$23 million for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. I am glad the Minister of Transport is with us this evening, because, during his previous term in office, he authorized travellers to carry knives aboard airplanes. Is this extra \$23 million related to that authorization?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The minister may reply, but time is up.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Madam Chair, the requested increase is not related to knives being allowed. It is for explosive detection equipment.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Chair, as this is the first time I am formally addressing the House, I would like to thank the residents of Davenport for placing their trust in me once again and electing me for the second time.

I am pleased to rise in the House this evening to speak about the ways National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are partnering with Canadians to enhance our national security. Together they are developing innovative tools and strategies and facilitating economic opportunity, while ensuring that our military can remain agile and adapt to a constantly changing and often unpredictable security environment.

It is no secret that Canada is facing threats in new and emerging domains. Global instability is heightened by the effects of climate change and scarcity, while rapid advances in technologies bring both opportunity and risk. Unlike the Conservatives, who cut billions of dollars in defence spending and mismanaged procurement projects, our defence policy, entitled “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, invests in our women and men in uniform and looks to tackle the challenges that a modern world faces.

Canada is looking at historically non-military threats through a military lens. Let us take cyber-domain as an example. As cyber-technologies continue to become a part of our everyday lives, Canada's responses must become increasingly nimble and nuanced to ensure we meet the new challenges they create. As a result of these and other emerging factors, National Defence is increasingly looking beyond the traditional defence and security sphere for input and for solutions, a whole-of-Canada approach to conducting defence.

Two years ago, the Minister of National Defence committed that the Department of National Defence would strengthen our relationship with the academic and expert community. We are doing exact-

ly that through our new mobilizing insights in defence and security program, also known as MINDS. This program allows National Defence to reach out and mobilize the defence and security academic and expert community across Canada to gain expert insight on global security policy and to generate knowledge in the public policy realm. These measures also allow us to better anticipate and understand threats, opportunities and challenges that Canada will face. The MINDS program has recently launched three collaborative networks, bringing together multidisciplinary experts to address key defence and security challenges.

The department is reaching out even further with the innovation for defence excellence and security program, also known as IDEaS. Through this program, National Defence is supporting defence innovation across Canada, because we know that the federal government does not have a monopoly on good ideas. That is why, through IDEaS, we are reaching out to Canadian companies and innovators so they can put forward their best solutions to help us solve defence and security challenges. The IDEaS program was launched in April 2018 and, through it, challenges have been posted for the Canadian innovation community. The various elements of IDEaS include competitive projects, contests, innovation networks, sandboxes and innovation assessment and implementation.

Being able to adapt quickly to changing threats is one of the main goals of National Defence. This program will help bring forward the best ideas in each of these areas to help better support our women and men in uniform. It does not matter if someone is working from home, in a university lab or in a small company or large corporation; everyone is invited to participate in the IDEaS program.

The department has launched five calls for proposals under competitive projects, encompassing a total of 40 separate challenges. These calls for proposals cover a variety of existing and emerging defence and security challenges, from supporting Canadian Armed Forces members' physical and mental well-being, to enhancing Canada's cybersecurity, to finding ways to green defence, to all other ways the Canadian Armed Forces can be more nimble, more effective, more sustainable and more responsive to Canada's defence needs in the 21st century.

IDEaS also presents opportunities for innovators to field-test their projects in a realistic setting. This happened earlier this year at CFB Suffield, where participants had the opportunity to test their prototype solutions for detecting and countering micro- and mini-unmanned aerial systems in a real-world setting.

• (2130)

Finally, through IDEaS, the department is also running a variety of independent contests like the Pop-Up City challenge. Through this challenge, competitors are working with the Department of National Defence to develop improved energy, water, and waste management solutions through relocatable temporary camps that the military could one day use domestically or on deployments around the world.

Although these challenges are centred on defence, we know that innovation sparks further innovation. Canadian innovators are encouraged to workshop their ideas in a defence setting, but their work could also have applications across many other domains, just as the camera in our smart phones was originally designed to be small enough to sit on a spacecraft while still producing imagery of scientific quality.

Taken together, the IDEaS and MINDS programs demonstrate National Defence's dedication to inspiring innovation and to learning from new perspectives on defence and security.

We are also focused on ensuring that the Canadian Armed Forces receive the capabilities they need now and in the future, one that takes into account our diversity. That is why our defence team completes a gender-based analysis plus as part of all defence team activities, making sure that our policies and our equipment support those who serve, no matter what their gender.

At the same time, when we invest in our capabilities, it helps build up the Canadian economy, creating well-paying middle-class jobs for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

As members can see, National Defence is working hard to provide the Canadian Armed Forces with the capabilities they need to stay agile and effective.

While the Conservatives spent a decade underinvesting in our Royal Canadian Air Force, our government is stepping up to ensure that we can meet our NORAD and NATO commitments at the same time.

National Defence is making progress on the competition for Canada's future fighter for the Royal Canadian Air Force, the largest investment in the Royal Canadian Air Force in over 30 years.

By investing in 88 future fighters, Canada will have the advanced capabilities it needs to remain a dedicated international partner around the world. Through this process, National Defence will work with suppliers and other stakeholders to support industrial and technological growth across Canada.

In the meantime, National Defence is exploring ways to extend the lifespan of our CF-18 fighters until this procurement is complete. Phase one of the Hornet extension project is already under way. It will deliver enhancements designed to meet international regulatory requirements and improve interoperability. In the coming years, this project will also deliver key improvements to the CF-18's combat capabilities by enhancing sensors, weapons, survivability, and mission support systems. Throughout this project, in-service support will be conducted through existing contracts with

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Canadian industry, creating additional opportunities for the people who build and maintain Canada's fighter jets.

Likewise, the department is continuing to make progress on the new Canadian surface combatant for the Royal Canadian Navy. Construction is scheduled to begin in the early 2020s. These warships will provide improved combat power at sea and facilitate missions such as counterpiracy, counterterrorism, humanitarian aid and search and rescue. They have started work on the armoured combat support vehicle project. This means they can begin to replace Canada's current fleet of LAV II Bison and M113 tracked LAV fleets as early as 2021, ultimately saving money that would otherwise be spent maintaining an aging fleet.

Because the combat support vehicles are being built here in Canada, this project is estimated to support over 10,000 jobs across the country. That is intentional. National Defence's capital projects have a significant impact on Canada's economy, providing jobs and opportunities across different industries. We see that in projects like the Arctic and offshore patrol ships as well.

Last month, the minister was able to visit the future HMCS *Harry DeWolf* just as it began the builder's sea trials, a major milestone. As a result of the hard work of shipbuilders and suppliers across the country, these will be the first Canadian-made ships in 20 years.

There is also the fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft replacement project. We expect this plane to arrive in Comox this spring, enhancing the Canadian Armed Forces' vital search and rescue capabilities, including in Canada's north.

These projects demonstrate the ways that National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are driving innovation and creating jobs for Canadians, ensuring Canada remains a valued international partner while also supporting Canada's economy.

Whether we are talking about programs like IDEaS and MINDS or some of the largest procurement projects in the department's history, National Defence is making sure our military is ready for tomorrow's challenges, challenges that increasingly operate beyond a military context.

• (2135)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have questions and comments to the ministers?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Yes, Madam Speaker.

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As members of Parliament, we are very privileged to be able to interact with the many wonderful military families that exist in our respective communities. We hear their stories about the challenges our military families face. Their spouses are deployed across the country; they spend a great deal of time training and they move across the country when required. We can only imagine the stress that this places on our military families.

Could the minister please tell us what this government is doing to support our military families?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her question and also for her tireless advocacy for the Canadian Armed Forces.

As I stated before a number of times, supporting the families of the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces is a top priority for us. Making sure that they are looked after drives the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces, because if the troops know their families are looked after they are able to perform better.

We heard about the challenges the families go through when they go from posting to posting. That is why investments in military family resource centres are extremely important. Those investments provide everything from day care to mental health support for family members.

We have also started an initiative called seamless Canada, to start talking with the provinces and territories about the challenges that military families go through when they get posted from province to province, such as accreditation issues and finding a doctor.

A number of provinces are looking at those challenges and figuring out how they can provide the right types of solutions moving forward, because they agree that supporting the families of our Canadian Armed Forces members is the right thing to do.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Chair, our Rangers, the guardians of Canada's north, are a cornerstone of our forces. Can the minister inform us of the latest activities concerning Canada's Rangers?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, our Rangers are a gem within the Canadian Armed Forces. They provide a tremendous capability for us that is sought after by even some of our allies. Supporting them is about supporting our communities in the north, and having that knowledge base is extremely important.

That is why we are modernizing their equipment. New rifles are starting to arrive and they are being trained on them. We are investing \$32.8 million in delivering state-of-the-art equipment for them. This equipment allows the Rangers to have a tremendous impact because we have to make sure they maintain those skills.

Just as important as the Rangers program is the Junior Canadian Rangers program. Having junior rangers who eventually move up when they decide to become Rangers ensures that we have this tremendous experience that will be passed on from generation to generation.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Chair, I would now like to ask about the international operations of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Our military always punches above its weight when it deploys and it does great work abroad. Could the minister provide more de-

tails on the important work our military personnel have been doing around the world, working closely with our allies and partners?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, before I talk about the tremendous contributions and operations that we conduct internationally, I want to mention that with the launch of our defence policy, any international operations our Canadian Armed Forces members are deployed on are now tax-free for them. That provides a lot of flexibility for the families who are left behind.

We have had a significant footprint since we formed government. I have outlined our significant contributions to NATO on a number of occasions, being in Latvia, in the Mediterranean with our ships, air policing or supporting the NATO training mission.

We are in Ukraine supporting our Ukrainian counterparts there against Russian aggression. Operation Impact in the Middle East supports our Iraqi partners where now Daesh does not control any territory whatsoever, but challenges still remain for our air force training and our special forces doing tremendous work there. Also, the capacity-building that is happening around Iraq, in places like Jordan and Lebanon and even in Kuwait, is providing that region with stability.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the peacekeeping mission in Mali. Our troops there did tremendous work. They took the lessons learned from their allies and applied Canadian ingenuity to their work and enhanced the mission. The way they were able to operate allowed the troops on the ground to reach more areas because of how they operated.

I also want to talk about the Pacific, being a member of Parliament from Vancouver, and the sanctions and monitoring we are doing against North Korea.

I will wait for the next question.

• (2140)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes):

I am sorry. There is no time left, unfortunately.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Chair, I will ask the ministers present some questions.

The Liberal government failed to spend 40% of the funding promised for infrastructure over the past four years. Canadians still do not know how much the federal government is currently spending on infrastructure.

How does the President of the Treasury Board explain this loss of control over Canadian taxpayers' money?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, there is no loss of control whatsoever. On the contrary, between 2015 and 2019, in Quebec alone, and we are both lucky enough to come from Quebec, six times more infrastructure projects were funded by the federal government than over the four previous years. That is no coincidence. Investing in infrastructure is central to our mission to grow the middle class and grow the economy.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, the question was not about comparing one government to another. Why was 40% of the funding earmarked for infrastructure over the past four years not invested and committed?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, we are proud to talk about the success of the past four years, and we anticipate with pride our successes in the coming years. This is a plan that will be carried out over several years. We announced record investments in partnership with the provinces and municipalities that will make a big difference in the next few years.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, I gather that the President of the Treasury Board does not have an answer for us.

Before the election, the Parliamentary Budget Officer asked for a list of all the specific infrastructure projects funded by the government, but he did not get a response. Why?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am pleased to talk about the Parliamentary Budget Officer because he does exceptional work. We will continue to work with him to ensure that the work of MPs, in the House in particular, is done as transparently and openly as possible.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, in that case, will the government commit to tabling the list of all the specific infrastructure projects as requested by the Parliamentary Budget Officer?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, the answer is yes. We will do everything possible to ensure that the member, who is interested in our infrastructure program, can receive all the information he wants.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, the member can come to see me this evening after the sitting, and I will explain how to obtain this information, which is nevertheless already available on the Internet. After that, we will remain at his disposal.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, subsequent to an incomplete report on changes made to the government's \$186.7-billion infrastructure spending plan, the Parliamentary Budget Officer asked for an investment plan. He was told that no such plan existed.

How can the President of the Treasury Board accept that almost \$200 billion were spent without a plan?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, it is fantastic to be able to answer this question. The plan is why we were elected in 2015 and why we were elected again in 2019. Unlike other philosophical approaches that lack ambition for Canada, it is an extraordinary plan that I am always happy to discuss.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, he is going to talk about a plan that does not exist, according to the Parliamentary Budget Of-

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ficer. Canadians have been saddled with tax increases and massive deficits. The government's plan did not generate the economic growth it promised. The Parliamentary Budget Officer noted that the infrastructure spending had not increased Canada's level of real GDP.

How does the government plan to make up for this abject failure?

• (2145)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I want to quickly compare the years before 2015 and the years after 2015. In the 10 years prior to 2015, Canada experienced its lowest level of growth since the 1930s.

Since 2015, Canada has one of the top economies in the developed world. Our unemployment rate is at an all-time low.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, if the President of the Treasury Board is so fond of criticizing governments, I should remind him that his is a minority government. Things can change faster than he thinks.

In its first three years, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which costs \$35 billion, did not fulfill its mandate. Canadians are still waiting to benefit from these investments.

Can the President of the Treasury Board tell us how much each director is paid by taxpayers?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am always very pleased to provide the information requested by my colleague. Most of it is already available on the Internet. If he has trouble finding it, I am happy to direct him to the right spot.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, I am going to take him up on that.

During the 2015 election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to eliminate all the long-term drinking water advisories in first nations communities by March 2021. Since then, 87 long-term advisories have been lifted, but 57 remain and many of the 87 have been reissued.

Why is the government giving these communities false hope?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Chair, there is a big difference between a long-term and a short-term advisory. None of the advisories that have been lifted have been reissued.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, the government and the Parliamentary Budget Officer disagree on the real cost of drinking water and sewage infrastructure in indigenous communities. Who are we to believe?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, systems on the reserves are now maintained at a lower cost.

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Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, the federal government is refusing to talk about a third link, and it is refusing to acknowledge that a proposal to build a third link between Quebec City and Lévis even exists. Why?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, the federal government has invested record amounts of money in Quebec since 2015. In my riding alone, we invested \$1.2 billion. That is the biggest investment any federal government has ever made in the riding—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, can the President of the Treasury Board say the name of the project, the third link between Quebec City and Lévis?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, with all due respect, I know my region better than my colleague does, because I live there, as does my family. I can say that the infrastructure issues in the Quebec City area are the subject of ongoing discussions and collaborative efforts with the Government of Quebec.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, I would like to note that the President of the Treasury Board was once again unable to mention the third link in his reply.

I would like to say to the President of the Treasury Board that I, too, am from the Chaudière-Appalaches region and therefore I am very familiar with my region. I regularly use the links between Quebec City and Lévis.

Will egg and poultry farmers receive compensation by the end of 2019?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for reminding me that he also has the good fortune and the pleasure of spending time in the Quebec City area. We are both lucky. I invite him to come and see us regularly in the national capital. In Quebec City, we are very welcoming and always look forward to seeing them. With respect to compensation, as I recently stated, not only is it forthcoming, but sometimes—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, the President of the Treasury Board is talking about dairy producers. I am talking about egg and poultry producers who were abandoned by the government.

Why?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, this is an important opportunity to note how important and beneficial it was over the past few years for the federal government to work in a respectful manner with all sorts of producers. We look forward to continuing this collaboration.

● (2150)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, why did the federal government not provide any compensation for egg and poultry producers? These are the other two supply-managed sectors in Canada, something the President of the Treasury Board seems to fail to realize.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I know my colleague to be intelligent and knowledgeable. He knows full well that the Canadian government is working with all agricultural producers af-

ected by the agreement that was negotiated with Europe and Asia. We look forward to and are very interested in continuing to work with them.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, can the minister tell us when the full details regarding compensation for dairy farmers for this year and subsequent years will be announced?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, the beautiful thing about this discussion is that many people can take part. If it were a monologue, the federal government would decide on its own the steps, terms and conditions under which farmers and the government will work. We are fortunate to be working closely with the people involved.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, last week the Minister of National Revenue said that the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois should be ashamed for asking for a single tax return for Quebecers.

Can the government tell us whether it plans to act on this request to allow Quebecers to file a single tax return?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, there are two key words here: respect and collaboration. We have a great deal of respect for the Canada Revenue Agency employees who are currently working in Quebec and particularly in the regions of Quebec. Second, we are very pleased to work with Revenu Québec to make the job easier for Quebecers.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, does the President of the Treasury Board agree with his colleague that those who support a single tax return should be ashamed?

Should all members of the Quebec National Assembly be ashamed for asking for a single tax return?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, this is a great opportunity to talk about results and about the work that we are doing with the Quebec government to make life easier for Quebecers and to invest in families and workers in Quebec. We have a responsibility, as federal elected officials, to ensure that the federal government also commits—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, I have a lot of respect for the President of the Treasury Board, but I am not getting a lot of answers to my questions, so I will move on to another minister.

On September 5, I wrote to the Minister of Transport asking him to put an end to the transportation of dangerous goods by rail in the Eastern Townships because we have no guarantee that it is 100% safe. Why am I still waiting for an answer?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, Transport Canada is doing its job. This summer, we carried out inspections between Farnham and Lac-Mégantic. That is the rail line my colleague is talking about. We inspected the repairs that were done. Other inspections will take place in the coming year. We are doing our work to make sure transportation of dangerous goods is safe.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, with the additional funding in these supplementary estimates, how many aviation technicians and pilots will be hired to expand the defence team?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, what we are doing is investing and making sure that we have the right number of pilots. We started the program some time ago to increase. One of the reasons we need even more pilots is that we are buying more aircraft than the previous government wanted.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, how many pilots and aviation technicians will be hired using these funds?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, I do not have the exact number in terms of how many we are going to be hiring this year. However, regarding the number that the air force is managing, we are going to be needing a lot more pilots because there is a challenge for recruitment. One of the things we are doing is changing the support to our members so that we focus on retention.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, at which military base will the remotely piloted aircraft systems be located?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, it is not about which base. It is the operational aspect of where search-and-rescue aircraft go. Our helicopters and our fighters are across the country. When we look at the entire plan, it is about how many operational aircraft are going to be needed, and then the number is based on that. The number for recruitment has also been set.

● (2155)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, the *Diefenbaker* icebreaker project is worth over \$1 billion. It was supposed to cost \$720 million and be delivered in 2021. Now it will cost over \$1 billion and might be delivered in 2023. It is late, the cost has doubled, and many projects are on hold.

Is the government doing an analysis of the costs, repercussions and negative impact of these new delays?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, I did not hear which project the member was referring to.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, I am talking about the *Diefenbaker* icebreaker project.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, as the hon. member probably knows, the government has decided to invest heavily in the renewal of the Coast Guard fleet. More details will be provided soon, in due course.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, the crisis with China hurt canola producers and continues to hurt producers. Bad weather in 2019 forced canola producers to leave thousands of tonnes of their

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crop in the field. Can the minister tell us what is in the supplementary estimates to help the producers?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I remind my colleague that the supplementary estimates we are debating do not pertain only to agriculture. That said, I can repeat how important it is to the Canadian government to support our farms and our farmers. They are the backbone of many of our rural and remote regions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, through this whole process, I have listened to several ministers talk about different initiatives and I want to share a few thoughts.

When we talk about the issue of transportation, for example, I have seen the minister talk about the importance of airports to our local communities. I can only imagine the potential impact that an airport and the facilities surrounding it would have on the economy and the community in which they are located.

I know that even though the minister responsible talks a great deal about rail line safety and how important that is for him personally, being his number one priority, I also know that he gives a great deal of attention to our aerospace industry and in particular our airports.

We have seen legislation that has allowed for significant growth in our aerospace industry, and in particular our airports. In the city of Winnipeg is our Winnipeg international airport. I know how much it contributes to our economy and, as I mentioned a few seconds ago, the social fabric of our community.

I wonder if the minister can provide some of his thoughts on how important it is that, when we talk about budgets, whether a budgetary measure or a regulation measure, the government recognize how important our airports are to the many communities in all the regions in Canada.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, airports in this country, whether they are small and in remote regions or large and in some of our urban centres, are engines of our economy in a very significant way.

Canada is the second-largest country on earth. In order for Canadians to travel across the country and go to foreign destinations, because we are a trading nation, which requires us to visit other countries, our airports play an absolutely essential role.

The statistics indicate that flying is continuing to increase in our country, so we have to have airports that are safe, secure, efficient and well served by the different airlines. That can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. Canadians would like to be able to go to their local airport and sometimes go to destinations that are not possible to go to directly. Those are obviously some of the things we have to deal with.

Some people have said that when they go to airports it takes too long to go through security. That is another area we are trying to address: the challenge of making it a smoother experience. There are still things we need to do to improve that situation.

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Sometimes we would like our airports to be transportation hubs so when people come out of the airport, particularly in large cities, they can access other modes of transportation to get downtown and the like.

There are a lot of things we can do. However, the fact is more Canadians are flying and it is important to have safe, modern airports in this country that cater to those requirements.

● (2200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, as many of my colleagues will be aware, I have had the honour and privilege of serving in the Canadian Forces for a few years in the regular force. I was posted out in Edmonton, where I participated in the 435 Squadron. I was air traffic control assistant.

One of the things we were dependent on was the Hercules aircraft. It has been a workhorse for the Canadian Forces, in particular for search and rescue, for quite a while. Then just a couple of years ago, under the minister, we were looking at the replacement of the Hercules for search and rescue.

I had the opportunity to represent the Minister of National Defence in Winnipeg, where 435 Squadron, the search and rescue squadron, is located. We had a presentation of the C-295 aircraft, which is fantastic. I raise it because the minister is a leader on this. I like the line that he used in his report: strong, secure and engaged.

Through this government, the minister recognized the many different deficiencies of the Harper government. He said that we needed to be more long term in our thinking and we needed to ensure we were moving forward on many different fronts when it came to our Canadian Forces. He recognized that we needed to be there in that very real and tangible way, and the report highlights that.

My question for the minister is twofold. First, could he provide some of his thoughts in regard to that report? Also, I was really impressed with the C-295. I had the opportunity to go in one, take a look at its radars, its ability to magnify and see things from 30,000 feet in the air. The details they could see were amazing. They had infrared. It was very impressive.

I am not too sure what the actual deal was or how many we would acquire, but it was a positive step in providing our women and men of the Canadian Forces a state-of-the-art search and rescue aircraft. I believe all Canadians will benefit by this, because it is not only for military benefit; it is also for civilian benefit. I may be a bit biased because, after all, I served in Edmonton, but we can now provide second to no other search and rescue in the world.

Could he provide his thoughts on those two points?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank the hon. member for his service in the Canadian Armed Forces and his resounding advocacy for search and rescue, especially for 435 Squadron, which lost two of its members in accidents. It just goes to show the tremendous work that our search and rescue technicians do on a daily basis. They do get deployed quite regularly, so it is important for us to ensure they have the appropriate equipment to carry out their very difficult work.

The fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft is going to revolutionize how we do search and rescue. No longer is it going to be strictly by looking out the aircraft with binoculars. We are using the same type of technology we use when it comes to dealing with adversaries. We are using that technology to locate hikers who are missing or downed aircraft. One thing I am particularly impressed with is what members will be able to do with this type of technology. It will save a lot more lives. It just goes to show that when we give the right tools to our Canadian Armed Forces members, they will do wonders for us.

I want to give a huge shout-out to all our fixed-wing search and rescue folks who will be working on this project, because they will put the ingenuity into this and ensure they continue to save Canadian lives.

● (2205)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I was quite pleased that the minister responsible for indigenous affairs was able to be with us this evening, because it is one of the most important files. We see the importance of indigenous people in throne speeches and in every budget we propose. The Prime Minister says it quite well when he talks about the relationship between indigenous people and the national government.

In the last 30 or 40 years and beyond, we have been moving in the direction of doing some wonderful things by working with indigenous leaders. One of the issues that has come to the table in the last number of years is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and its 94 calls for action. I do not know if the minister is aware of it, but I know there were a number of direct responses to those calls for action. When we talk about those 94 calls for action, we are not saying that every one of them is of a federal or national nature, but a number of them are. The minister and I talked about this a little earlier. Language was part of it, and foster care and the issue of citizenship and the taking of the oath. In many ways, the government has made the Truth and Reconciliation report a very high priority when talking about establishing a sense of respect and having the dialogue necessary for us to move forward on such a critically important issue.

The minister spent a great deal of time on Bill C-262, dealing with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Could she provide her thoughts on the progress made, generally speaking, on the bigger picture? We see it in the throne speech and in budgets. I would ask her to provide some of her thoughts on those issues, and to reflect in particular on the private member's bill, Bill C-262, that passed the House.

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Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the member for talking about the calls to action that all Canadians feel we have to be part of. We are pleased to report that 80% of the calls for action that the federal government has responsibility for have either been completed or are well on their way. We have the other road map in the calls for justice from the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls commission, but our commitment to put the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into legislation is very important.

As the member has identified, the very important bill that former member of Parliament Romeo Saganash tabled was debated and eventually passed in the House. Unfortunately, it did not make it through the other place. However, we will work to co-develop legislation with first nations, Inuit and Métis to go forward with a piece of legislation for which Bill C-262 would be the minimum. With first nations, Inuit and Métis partners, we will build it as a true piece of legislation that will really explain what the rights of indigenous people are.

At this time, we congratulate the Province of British Columbia for its Bill 41, which actually sets that tone and legislative framework at a provincial level, and now we get to live up to that at the federal level.

• (2210)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has a minute and 50 seconds to ask a question and get a response.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, this was actually going to be my longest question and I was saving it to the end, so it is going to be a bit tougher.

The minister responsible for the Treasury Board is probably one of the favourite ministers for my constituents and me because he has really delivered, on behalf of this government and this Prime Minister, some really good stuff.

We can talk about the increase to the guaranteed income supplement, taking hundreds of seniors out of poverty from Winnipeg North. We can talk about the Canada child benefit program, taking thousands of residents in Winnipeg North, our children, out of poverty. There are so many other things that the minister has done in his other portfolio, yet we seem to be committed to continue. A good example of that is with the seniors over 75, giving a substantial increase for those seniors who really need it.

I wonder if the minister could provide his thoughts on how important it is that we continue to support our seniors and our youth through good solid, social progressive policies.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member used up a lot of time, so the hon. President of the Treasury Board has under 30 seconds to respond.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I will be brief but there will be so much good to say about my colleague from Winnipeg North, one of my most preferred members of Parliament, one of those I have enjoyed working with so much in the last four years. We are so glad to have him back. I know opposition members of Parliament are also very glad to have him back because he is a man of experience and knowledge. We look forward to his continuing to share that experience and knowledge with all of us, and I know—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry, the time is up.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River is resuming debate. The hon. member has just a little under seven minutes for questions and answers.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, I will go as fast as I can, but since I am standing for the first time speaking in the House, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of North Island—Powell River for allowing me to be here representing them. I want to take a moment to recognize the many forestry workers who are on strike right now in my riding, and struggling every day. My heart is with them and their families as they go through this very difficult time.

My questions are largely for the Minister of National Defence. I am so grateful that he is here today. I am so proud to represent 19 Wing Comox. Recently, Habitat for Humanity Vancouver Island North did a key ceremony and gave keys to several houses that were built in the Comox Valley. There are many volunteers from 19 Wing who have been donating a significant amount of time to support building these houses and I appreciate their hard work. Their commitment is the 19 Wing building our community.

However, the other reality is that in Comox Valley, the rental vacancy rate is below 1%, and the housing costs are increasing, skyrocketing in fact. Many people from the wing are struggling to find appropriate housing. I know some of our members are having to drive over an hour one way to get to work every day, which is definitely a challenge for them and their families. We also know that many of the barracks were built in the 1950s and need a significant upgrade to become more appropriate for the men and women in uniform.

The other reality is we have the addition of the search and rescue training facility. I am very proud of the work that we were able to do collaboratively with the community and with the minister to make that a reality. That resulted in a small increase of housing for the folks who are coming to get the training. It is not meeting that core housing need for so many of our members who need permanent housing on the base.

Could the minister update this place on any resources that might be coming to 19 Wing to address this important core housing need?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank the member for her tireless advocacy, giving her service for the women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces and specifically in Comox. I thank them for the tremendous work that they do and the connection that they have with the community. I know that the members are extremely proud of that.

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We have unique challenges across the country. We are looking at how we support our members. We have made significant investments on bases when it comes to the new capabilities that we are bringing in. Housing is a challenge in the area because there is a very low vacancy rate. Therefore, we are prioritizing this work. When I visited, I looked at this issue directly. I do not want to get ahead of myself to say that this is exactly what we are going to do, but one thing I can assure you is that I am personally looking into this, to make sure that housing is looked after.

• (2215)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind both members that they are to address the questions to the Chair, because both members referred to each other during debate.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Chair, as we all know, there is a housing shortage and the cost of housing is high. However, in reality, that is not the only high expense that military members are facing in my riding. It is an expensive place to live. One military member has told me that people who move to British Columbia must remember to bring cash, which adds a certain barrier.

Could the minister tell the House if the government is exploring the possibility of offering the post living differential to the members who are currently serving in 19 Wing Comox? It is really important to our members to acknowledge this financial burden and give them support to do the important work they do. I want to recognize that many of the military members in my riding went to Mali and continue to do great work in my riding and across the world. I want to make sure they do not get set behind because of the important work they are doing.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, we have conducted a review of PLD and how we support our members across the country, because as stated, there are unique challenges across the country and we want to make sure we get this right. There is more to follow on the PLD.

We will be investing more in housing in Comox. We want to make sure we get this right because the real estate challenges are very different from region to region and B.C. does pose a greater

challenge to our members. We are also going to make sure to provide short-term fixes as well for any current issues our members are dealing with.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Chair, one of the realities that I believe everybody in the House agrees with is that losing someone to suicide is a devastating experience. I am still very concerned about the fact that self-harm is still included in the military Code of Service Discipline. I know this prevents our men and women in uniform from feeling comfortable disclosing that they may be having a hard time and are considering suicide as an option. I just want to make sure that all the men and women who serve us and wear the uniform in this country feel they can disclose any thoughts, concerns or feelings they have, especially on the issue of self-harm.

Could the minister tell the House when self-harm will be removed from the code?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, first of all, the mental health and well-being of our women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces is an absolute priority for us, along with putting in the right investments when it comes to research on PTSD, mental health support and the joint suicide prevention strategy that we launched with Veterans Affairs.

On the exact topic the member is talking about, Bill C-77 was not the place to make those changes. As I have said, we will continue to work with all colleagues in the House and the Senate to address those direct concerns, because there is a much wider discussion to be had on this. I can assure the member that it is something we are taking very seriously.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 10:18 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), all votes are deemed reported.

The committee will rise and I will now leave the chair.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:19 p.m.)

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