



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 5, 2017**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 5, 2017

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP)** moved that Bill C-345, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (pregnant and nursing employees) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present an amended version of the bill that my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie introduced in the previous Parliament because I think this bill is very important for women's rights at work.

Many people do not understand the difference between preventive withdrawal for pregnant and nursing employees and parental leave programs. People may turn to employment insurance benefits when they are in a work situation that puts their pregnancy at risk, but preventive withdrawal is something completely different. Quebec legislation makes preventive withdrawal easier to understand.

Let me explain how it works for a Quebec worker under provincial jurisdiction to make sure everyone really understands.

When a worker feels that her work may put her pregnancy at risk, she requests a medical evaluation. If the evaluation indicates there is a risk, the worker must be reassigned to a less risky position or withdrawn from the workplace.

The priority really is to try to reassign the worker, because the employer must pay a certain amount of money if it decides to send the worker home. For instance, the employer has to pay for the first five days. When the worker can be reassigned somewhere with no risks involved, it is definitely better for the employer. This also means the worker can stay in the workplace and still remain safe.

Preventive withdrawal becomes necessary when the employer cannot adapt the workplace or the job. The woman stays home, because of the risk, and receives benefits that, in Quebec, are paid by the CSST, Quebec's workplace health and safety commission. Those benefits are paid as soon as the workplace poses a risk. For instance,

if the employer cannot reassign a worker who is five weeks pregnant and whose job poses a risk to her pregnancy, she is given preventive withdrawal benefits. She can receive those benefits from the beginning of her pregnancy, thereby avoiding any harm to her fetus. I think it is important to understand this.

One important aspect of preventive withdrawal is that women are eligible from the very beginning of their pregnancy, as soon as there is a risk, unlike parental insurance programs, which only apply once the woman has reached a certain point in the pregnancy. It is important to understand that.

Under the existing legislation, if a woman with a high-risk pregnancy works in an area under federal jurisdiction or if she works in a province that does not offer benefits like the ones offered in Quebec, she is entitled to preventive withdrawal, but at her own expense. In that case, she will have no income for 20 weeks or several months. She does not have the right to benefits because her job falls under federal jurisdiction and she is not far enough along in her pregnancy to be eligible for employment insurance parental benefits.

As a result, these women end up in a situation where they have no income at all and they have to make very difficult choices regarding their pregnancy. They either have to choose to continue working, even though doing so will jeopardize their health and their pregnancy, exposing them to the risk of a miscarriage or birth defects, for example, or they can take leave and end up in a precarious financial situation where they do not have any income until they can claim EI parental benefits.

Quebeckers are very lucky when it comes to parental benefits. To be eligible, women must have earned \$2,000 over the past 52 weeks. That means that most women have access to these benefits. In order to be eligible for the federal program, a woman has to have accumulated 600 hours. There is no guarantee that she will have accumulated the necessary hours, particularly if she chooses to stop working because it is too risky and she is not receiving any benefits or income during that time.

Many women are placed in a very difficult position, and there is a very simple way to fix that. The federal government could make an agreement with the provinces that have a better preventive withdrawal program for pregnant and nursing woman than it does. For example, the federal government could make an agreement with the Government of Quebec so that women in Quebec who fall under federal jurisdiction are entitled to the same benefits as every other woman in Quebec.

*Private Members' Business*

What benefits would these agreements provide? If every woman in a given province followed the same rules of preventive withdrawal it would make things much simpler. It would be much easier to communicate information, putting women in the same province on equal footing. That equality is especially important. It is outrageous that in a system like ours there are two classes of women depending on whether their employer falls under provincial or federal jurisdiction. That situation could be resolved through these agreements.

Under the bill, provincial legislation must be better than Canada Labour Code provisions for federal employees. That is not so hard to achieve considering that currently under the Canada Labour Code an employee is entitled to preventive withdrawal, but at her own expense. Other provinces might choose to introduce preventive withdrawal programs and the government could enter into an agreement with those provinces.

Alberta currently has an NDP government, a progressive government, and it is in a position to choose to act on this situation. British Columbia is going to have a coalition government between the NDP and the Green Party. Again, it can choose to act on this situation. If so, the federal government could enter into an agreement to provide measures that would help all the women in those provinces.

Preventive withdrawal is about the work and not the worker. Take for example the woman who has three part-time jobs and wants preventive withdrawal. If she can continue working at two of her jobs, she will get benefits only for the job she is no longer able to do, and she can withdraw only from that job if she cannot be reassigned.

This also has an advantage when we are dealing with preventive withdrawal. In the case of parental insurance programs, when we choose to take the weeks we are entitled to earlier, while continuing to hold both jobs we are able to do, those amounts are deducted from our benefits. It is therefore not very advantageous to do that, because there will be cuts to the amounts of money, and since those weeks have been used, they cannot be recovered. It is more advantageous to take that time to rest. Where there is no preventive withdrawal associated with the work, this requires that the worker leave all her jobs, even if only one of them is problematic.

Because this is associated with the work, it is not the employee's health that counts, it is the work, regardless of the conditions. What is done is really an analysis based on the work. The question is whether any pregnant woman would run a risk if she did that work. If the answer is yes, then an effort is made to find a solution, whether by relocating her or by paying her benefits.

• (1110)

This is a fairly simple bill. A few minor corrections have been made to it. There is also the addition of a report, because I think it is important that the federal government be accountable to the House, that it say what the status of the agreements is, and that it show what it has done, in concrete terms, and how things have progressed.

Because this is a bill that could help women who are under federal jurisdiction, it is important to act quickly. The choice these women have to make is entirely impossible to live with: they can go back home, with no income and no consequence for their

employment, and have access to parental insurance, but only after a few months. They therefore go back home with no income. The other option is to continue working, with the risks that entails for their pregnancy and for the fetus, in order to continue to earn a living.

Obviously, when there is another person in the couple to help, the decision may be a little easier to make, but we must not forget women who are on their own to deal with their pregnancy. In those cases, we can say that they have no source of income during a crucial time, precisely when they need money to start buying things to prepare for the baby's arrival, to eat well, and to stay healthy. What we have, in both cases, is a situation where the woman's health is in jeopardy, whether because she has no income and her status is precarious, or because her work presents a risk. This is a situation that would be impossible to live with, particularly if we consider cases where, for example, a woman might have worked for 10 years before becoming pregnant.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you cannot become pregnant, but try to put yourself in the shoes of these women. Imagine that a woman has tried for 10 years to have a baby; she finally becomes pregnant, and she discovers that she is not entitled to any benefits, when she was sure she was entitled and all her friends were entitled. In Quebec, for example, there is the CSST, the occupational health and safety commission, so the woman in question was certain she was covered, and that if there was a risk to her pregnancy, she would be eligible for benefits. Suddenly, she learns that she is not, because she is under federal jurisdiction, and that if she wants preventive withdrawal, she will have to pay for it. These situations really are impossible to live with.

It would be easy for the federal government to take action. All it has to do is enter into an agreement with the provinces so that women in those provinces working under federal jurisdiction are eligible for provincial benefits. We can sort out the paperwork afterwards. Relatively few women would be affected, but the issue is important enough that action should be taken on this. About 5% of employees in a province are under federal jurisdiction. Of that 5%, about half are women. Obviously, not everyone is pregnant at the same time. The number is further reduced based on the number of women working high-risk jobs. For example, office employees who are under federal jurisdiction will not be affected, because their jobs do not involve risk. They do not need benefits for preventive withdrawal.

I will conclude by saying that I believe this is an important subject. It is time to give every woman, in every province, the same rights in matters of preventive withdrawal. It is entirely reasonable for the federal government to take action. The Prime Minister has said several times that he identifies as a feminist.

I believe this is a good bill that will initiate concrete action to help women who might find themselves in very precarious situations. I hope that we will back up our words with action and that we will try to advance the rights of women, and in particular of women in Quebec.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1115)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from the New Democratic Party of Canada for her presentation.

[*English*]

I will not try to fine-tune my question in French. The steps taken in budget 2017, in particular make eligible those pregnant women whose work presents challenges to carrying a child to term, are an expansion of the benefits and are positioned in such a way as to accommodate the issues raised by a private member's bill in this House. I was curious as to whether the member opposite could reflect on the flexibility that has been built in as part of the change. With regard to the new approach that the government has taken to protect women who work in environments that are harmful to a full pregnancy, are those provisions something that her party can support?

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, the problem with EI benefits is that they are only given at the end of the pregnancy. When a woman has a job that poses a risk to her pregnancy, the beginning of the pregnancy is not included in the benefit period.

For example, if a woman who has an at-risk federally regulated job is five weeks pregnant and is unable to transfer elsewhere, she must wait until 12 weeks before the anticipated delivery date to receive employment insurance benefits. In fact, her case is taken over by the QPIP before that. In other words, she must wait for her 28th week.

However, the risks of miscarriage are greatest at the beginning of a pregnancy, so nothing is being done when the risks are greatest. That is why we must stop confusing preventive withdrawal with employment insurance, because preventive withdrawal exists to protect the pregnancy at particularly crucial times, namely at the beginning, when it is at a particularly high risk.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague. Our caucus will continue to study this bill.

[*English*]

I would like to ask a question about the member's speech in the context. As I see it, there are two specific and distinct issues. One is the question of the rules around preventive withdrawal, and the other is a question of alignment within jurisdictions.

On the one hand, the member's bill addresses a certain kind of misalignment, where we have different rules for a person in a federally regulated sector versus a provincially regulated sector in Quebec. On the other hand, if the bill were to pass, we could see another kind of misalignment, where a federally regulated worker in Gatineau would be under different rules from a federally regulated worker in Ottawa.

An alternative way of addressing this issue might have been to simply make changes with respect to the Canada Labour Code overall. I wonder if the member can comment on why she decided to

pursue this route, potentially creating misalignment across provinces, rather than addressing it through a sort of global Canada-wide change.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, as federally regulated employees are covered under the federal system, amending the Canada Labour Code will not affect the provinces.

Furthermore, we must respect provincial law. We can reach an agreement for all women to receive the same level of protection when provincial law provides greater benefits, and as such, the level of coverage would not drop below a certain point. Thus, no federally regulated employees will lose anything if this bill is passed. The best case scenario is that some of these women will have greater benefits.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the member for tabling this bill again before the House. The member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie had tabled a similar bill a few years ago.

When that bill was discussed a few years ago, there were very concrete examples that demonstrated its importance. I would like the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue to remind us of those concrete examples to illustrate the importance of such a bill.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, for example, flight attendants based in Quebec have a job that is considered to be at-risk for a pregnancy. However, they are given the choice to remain at work or to return home at their own expense. They are faced with an impossible choice.

That is a concrete example of women who could benefit. Those in Quebec could benefit from the provisions of the CSST and would receive benefits. Currently, they have nothing at all.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my great riding of Saint John—Rothesay, I am very pleased to stand in the House today to speak about the proposed legislation to amend the Canada Labour Code with regard to preventive withdrawal provisions for federally related workers who are pregnant or nursing. This is known in the House as Bill C-345.

The bill would add a new section to part II of the Canada Labour Code to allow the minister to enter into agreements with the provincial government to give pregnant or nursing employees under federal jurisdiction access to certain provisions of provincial health and safety legislation. The Canada Labour Code currently contains provisions that allow a pregnant or nursing employee to be reassigned, or have her job modified without loss of pay or benefits if there is a risk to her health, the fetus, or the child. If a reassignment is not possible, the woman may take a leave of absence for the duration of the risk.

*Private Members' Business*

Labour code job protection for maternity leave varies across the country. Bill C-345 proposes that the federal government enter into agreements with provinces that have provisions related to preventive withdrawals that are at least as favourable to the employee as those in the federal legislation. Currently only Quebec specifically offers preventive withdrawal job protection with wage replacement for pregnant and nursing women.

In Quebec, if a pregnant or nursing employee must stop working because of a health risk to herself, her fetus, or her child, and if her employer is not able to reassign her to another job, this employee is entitled to a preventive withdrawal leave with wage replacement equivalent to 90% of net insurable earnings. The maximum annual insurable earnings are set at \$67,500. Bill C-345 would represent a number of challenges which would have to be taken into consideration as we examine this proposed legislation. Among these challenges, applying provincial legislation to federally regulated workers in this area would create a situation where federally regulated employees working in Quebec would be treated differently than those in other provinces.

It is important to note that implementing Bill C-345 would involve increased costs to employers in Quebec, who could be required to pay additional premiums under Quebec's Commission de la Santé et de la Sécurité du travail. It is also worth mentioning that a review of Quebec's preventive withdrawal program in 2010 identified a number of concerns regarding its operation and scope, and recommended that the program be refocused on its original workplace health and safety objectives.

There are strong measures currently in place in the Canada Labour Code to protect pregnant and nursing employees. The government understands that at certain points in their lives, workers may also have to take time away from their jobs because of the circumstances or demands of their personal lives. Caring for a new child or providing care to a family member who is gravely ill are a couple of examples. This is when the employment insurance program helps eligible Canadians by providing the income support they need, allowing them to focus on what matters most. With budget 2017, we are helping working parents to better face the challenges that come with a growing family.

Budget 2017 proposes to make EI parental and maternity benefits more flexible. This is being received very well in my riding of Saint John—Rothesay. Parents would be able to choose the option that best suits their needs based on their work, family, and child care circumstances. Under the changes, parents would have two options: receiving EI parental benefits over a period of up to 12 months at the existing benefit rate of 55% of their average weekly earnings, or over an extended period of up to 18 months at a lower benefit rate of 33% of average weekly earnings. Parents would continue to be able to share these benefits. Budget 2017 provisions also propose allowing pregnant women to claim their EI maternity benefits up to 12 weeks before their due date, up from the previous eight weeks, if they so choose.

● (1125)

This additional flexibility would allow pregnant women to access EI maternity benefits and leave earlier than before. Again, in my riding, that change is going over very well.

I want to emphasize that these improvements were guided by last year's consultations on EI maternity, parental, and caregiver benefits. We held an online consultation, hosted round tables with stakeholders, and we sought their views in providing more flexible EI maternity and parental benefits, and leaves under the Canada Labour Code, as well as more inclusive caregiving benefits and leaves for Canadians who provide care to a family member.

It was essential for us to consult with all of our partners and stakeholders, especially Canadians directly. The reason is simple: amending the Employment Insurance Act is a complex endeavour, and we want to make sure that we do it right. The consultations with key partners were to help ensure that the program better responds to the needs of hard-working Canadian families.

In budget 2017, we have also proposed measures to help workers find the right balance between their work, family, and other personal responsibilities.

Amendments to the Canada Labour Code would ensure that federally regulated employees have the right to request flexible work arrangements, such as flexible start and finish times, as well as the ability to work from home. The amendments would also provide employees with new unpaid leaves for family responsibilities, the ability to participate in traditional indigenous practices, to seek care if they are the victim of family violence, and make bereavement leave more flexible.

In closing, our government is committed to supporting workers, and this starts with making sure that federally regulated workers are protected from harm in the workplace. Preventive withdrawal provisions in the Canada Labour Code emphasize work modifications in job reassignments so that women can continue to work in a safe environment. These provisions ensure that women can continue to participate in the labour force through the many measures put forward in our recent budget.

● (1130)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today and address the bill. Before I go on, I am sure I speak for all members when I say that our thoughts and prayers are very much with the British people as they grieve yet another terrorist attack this weekend, and certainly with the family and friends of the Canadian victim.

I want to congratulate the member who brought the bill forward. It is a bill our caucus is going to continue to study and review as we go forward and proceed to the second hour of debate. Certainly there are some important issues raised that we are very much aligned with in terms of supporting pregnant women, mothers, and families, but there are also some practical issues with the bill. Therefore, in my remarks today I would like to talk about some of those different questions and put those considerations on the table for members to draw on as we continue the debate on the bill.

*Private Members' Business*

Bill C-345 speaks of the issue of preventive withdrawal, the idea that a pregnant woman who finds she is in an employment situation that may create some risk to her well-being and the well-being of her unborn child may then ask to be reassigned, and if reassignment is not available, she may then need to leave the workplace for the period of time that she is pregnant. In the province of Quebec, under provincial jurisdiction, there is an ability to get paid leave during that time. In other jurisdictions and in the federally regulated workforce, it is possible for a woman to get that time out of the workforce, but she would not receive paid leave during that time.

How a woman in that situation might be able to access that time outside the workforce is an important question. As the mover of the bill rightly put forward, depending on the woman's financial circumstances, there might well be situations in which it would be difficult for her to leave the workforce, so she might remain in a dangerous workplace and take on additional dangers to herself and to her child as a result.

This is a legitimate and important question, and we need to engage with it and look for effective ways of solving it. There are probably a variety of ways of doing this. We can imagine different arrangements that would address that specific situation. Perhaps it could be a more targeted way that looked at those who clearly did not have the level of financial independence they would need to step out of the workforce for that period of time. There could be a range of different ways of addressing the issue.

The bill, in any event, does speak to the question of withdrawal from the workplace and the compensation that would be associated with that withdrawal when there is a risk to the health of the mother and her child.

However, there is another, separate issue, and this is where perhaps the problem arises. I mentioned the distinction between federally and provincially regulated labour forces. Many members will already know that in Canada, some workers are regulated at the provincial level and others are regulated at the federal level. Those different systems of regulation apply in different sectors. About 10% of the workforce across Canada is federally regulated. It is a minority, but it is still a fairly significant portion of the workforce.

On the issue of alignment, we can get into a situation where there can be, in the same place, different rules respecting labour certification, leave, and these kinds of things, depending on which sector one is a part of. People could live in the same city and the same neighbourhood, yet have a different set of labour laws apply to them because of the sector they happen to work in. To some people it may seem unfair that certain benefits are available to someone because they are regulated by a different jurisdiction, but it is a reality of the way labour is regulated in Canada. It is always going to be a reality. The only way to prevent it would be to have complete alignment across all jurisdictions, and that is never going to happen. This labour regulation reflects a reality of our constitution, the spheres of sovereignty that are given to both the provincial and federal governments separately.

• (1135)

There would be some new problems introduced if the federal government alone tried to achieve perfect alignment of labour rules even in this specific case in each province. If we were to have

alignment within individual provinces of the rules that exist, for example, on an issue like preventive withdrawal, then we would have misalignment for federally regulated workers across the country, perhaps even working in the same company.

The member who moved the bill brought up an example in questions and comments that is quite illuminating for the point she talked about, and that is flight attendants. Flight attendants are workers who might seek to withdraw from the workplace during pregnancy because of fear of the impact that the job could have on their well-being and the well-being of their child. On the other hand, companies that employ flight attendants are working across different provincial jurisdictions. This is something that falls squarely into federal jurisdiction because it involves interprovincial transportation.

We would have a situation where flight attendants from Quebec might be working alongside flight attendants from Ontario, Manitoba, or other parts of the country and be subject to a completely different system with respect to the kinds of benefits that they were entitled to.

Although one might say that there is some perspective on fairness to assist them in which two women in the same city, in the same neighbourhood in Quebec, have different labour rules apply to them, one might also say that there is some unfairness if two women who work for the same company, with similar hours, similar situations, similar working conditions, have different rules apply to them because their home bases are located in different places, such as Ottawa and Gatineau.

These are important questions to consider while we look for ways to address this issue of preventive withdrawal to ensure that there is safety in the workplace for everyone and that pregnant women have an opportunity to take the steps they need to protect themselves and their child, while at the same time trying to ensure some degree of consistency and alignment within the federally regulated situation so that a company doing business in a federally regulated sector involved in interprovincial transportation would not have to have completely different structures for different employees in different parts of the country.

In the remaining time that I have, I want to mention a number of other measures that the government should be looking at with respect to supporting women as they have children.

One of those measures is a proposal that our leader put forward during our recent leadership race, which is to make parental leave tax free. This would be an important way of providing income support to families while they are dealing with the loss of income that is associated with being in a parental leave situation. Making parental leave tax free would not create an additional burden for the EI fund, so it would not result in higher payroll taxes. It would provide that benefit back to families but do so through a tax cut that would impact general revenue rather than the EI fund. That is a positive proposal that has come from our new leader and one that I hope the government will consider. We will be happy to applaud the government if it chooses to adopt it, because it is the kind of tax cut that would impact parents precisely in the kind of situation that we are talking about.

*Private Members' Business*

One of the other things that I heard a lot about from people in my riding during the election campaign is the need to increase the flexibility of parental leave, especially for those who might want to work a bit while on maternal or parental leave.

There was a time when there was a kind of binary choice. One was either at home with children or at work. Things like the Internet make it so much easier for people to work from home, maybe to take work files home, yet our system for parental leave has not appropriately caught up with that reality. If we made it easier and more flexible for people to work a bit at home while still collecting some of these benefits, it would be easier for them to continue to work a bit and have that balance between work and being at home.

These are some of the other things that the government needs to consider as we go forward, as we seek to modernize and improve the benefits we provide to parents and families.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to rise in the House to support this important bill from my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, Bill C-345.

To a certain point, to a small extent, I feel this bill is my own, as Bill C-345 is a new and improved version of Bill C-307, which I had tabled in the previous parliament. No one should be surprised, then, to see me speak in favour of it, as it would raise standards and increase fairness, unlike what the previous Conservative Party MP declared. In particular, the bill is more in line with our values and stated positions, which are that society must strive to protect our children and support pregnant women.

It is often said that our children are society's greatest asset. Unfortunately, government decisions sometimes do not support that claim. Indeed, some pregnant women are forced to stay in a job that could jeopardize their own safety, that of their unborn child or that of a child who is already born and must be nursed.

Currently, women working in large federally regulated industries, most notably marine transportation, rail transportation, air transportation, telecommunications and aeronautics, make up about 10% to 15% of all workers in our society, which is a significant percentage. At this time, these individuals have access to almost nothing. However, there are time-tested provincial programs that can resolve the problem that I will discuss in a moment.

Under Quebec's safe maternity experience program, if a pregnant woman has a position that requires her to lift very heavy objects, make repetitive movements, walk a lot or remain standing for long periods of time, she can go see her doctor and ask for a risk-assessment.

There are also those cases where chemical or hazardous products may be inhaled or come into contact with the skin, which could have an effect on the unborn child or on the mother's milk, for example. If that worker sees her doctor and explains the situation, the doctor can assess the risk of the position. He could ask the employer to reassign the worker to another type of job that is less dangerous or that is better suited to her stage of pregnancy. We can agree that the risk changes throughout the nine months of a pregnancy. Obviously, I

cannot testify to that personally, but that is what I have read and what I have heard.

The program works well, and it is reinforced by another very interesting option, that of preventive withdrawal. If there are no other positions that are compatible with the pregnant or nursing woman's health, she could always be offered benefits so she can continue to receive remuneration, a salary, without jeopardizing her own health or that of the unborn child. That particular benefit demonstrates how seriously we take the future of our children. We do not take that lightly. Collectively, we are ready to assume the costs and to invest so that women can pregnancies it can be done in the safest way possible.

• (1145)

I thank my colleague from Rouyn-Noranda for introducing the bill once more, as it will improve living and working conditions for many women across the country who are not currently eligible for benefits.

The safe maternity experience program can improve the health of women and help their unborn children remain healthy. I have a hard time understanding why two women in Quebec, one in a federally regulated job and the other in a provincially regulated job, cannot both have access to the same program and the same rights. They are both taxpayers, both citizens living in the same province, and there are two standards. There is a double standard. This bill improves other things as well, but this situation would be eliminated to the benefit of all women who would have access to the provincial program. That is why I think that all members of the House should think about how, in concrete terms, we can help pregnant workers and those who have delivered and are nursing their child. This is a good example, particularly for members from Quebec, who can see concrete examples of this problem in their constituency offices.

Having spent a lot of time working with flight attendant unions, I will talk about those. These unions have long called for this change, as they see some of their members actually being financially penalized when they are no longer able to fly and the employer is not necessarily able to reassign them elsewhere, such as to a counter, a cash, client service or ticket sales, for the simple reason that there are already people in those positions. They cannot be moved and replaced by flight attendants who can no longer fly because that is not allowed past a certain point.



*Private Members' Business*

This demand is entirely legitimate, and anyone who has ever flown can easily understand why. Those workers are penalized. They are required to go home, with no pay, or to use weeks from their maternity or parental leave much earlier in the process, thus losing them at the end of their year of maternity leave. A Conservative member has stated that it could create an injustice or inequity if two people working for the same company are from two different provinces and are not subject to the same rules. I would say that, in some cases, that is true, particularly when people work on the border between two provinces. We need only look at people working in the House of Commons. Some live in Quebec, others in Ontario. They do not have the same health and safety system, nor do they pay taxes at the same rate. There are many provincial laws that differ, but that is part of life in a federation.

• (1150)

[*English*]

This is a very important private member's bill that my colleague from Rouyn-Noranda is presenting to us. It could really increase the health of pregnant workers and their babies, and it would make sure that if provincial legislation exists, it could be used to ensure a woman's work would not hurt her own health and safety or the health and safety of her baby.

[*Translation*]

Something has to give. At this time, the employment insurance system, which offers maternity benefits, includes restrictions that limit access to benefits for certain women. For example, at the moment, workers must have accumulated 600 insured hours of work to be eligible for benefits. However, there are no benefits available for women who have not reached the 600-hour threshold or who may need these benefits more than 12 weeks prior to their expected delivery date.

The Liberal government has taken measures, but it is still not enough. I am actually thinking of the extension of the leave benefit period from the current 12 to 18 months. In fact, the cost would be borne by the worker, by the employee who will use this measure, since instead of receiving 55% of her salary out of the 12 months, she will receive 33% of her salary out of the 18 months. Few people can afford to live on 33% of their salary.

The Liberal government says they support the middle-class people or those who wish to join it, but the type of measures it has implemented are far from adequate, and they are really not helping middle-class workers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a very real pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-345. I would like to salute my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for bringing forth the legislation. As a father of young children, I certainly know intimately how important it is to have comprehensive parental benefits. I have the privilege of representing an amazing riding which, particularly in the south end of the city of Langford, is seeing explosive growth at the moment, particularly with families with young children. When I go to my constituents and explain to them the benefits that are contained in the legislation, I know that will resonate very much with constituents, particularly in Langford but indeed all across this country.

This enactment would amend the Canada Labour Code to authorize the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to enter into an agreement with the government of a province that would provide for the application, to pregnant or nursing employees, of certain provisions of the provincial legislation concerning occupational health and safety. The bill would also require the minister to prepare a report on the agreements and to cause that report to be laid before Parliament. As someone who feels very strongly about the role of parliamentary oversight on the functions of the executive, I think it is a fantastic way for members of Parliament to keep track of how the executive is doing on its particular programs.

Just to go into a bit more detail, certain provisions would provide the better of the protection between provincial and federal protection to pregnant and nursing employees. It would ensure that women receive the best benefits possible before the child is born and during the breastfeeding period. Bill C-345 could protect women in high-risk work environments, and it would also motivate employers to adapt jobs in order to keep pregnant and nursing employees in the labour force.

Just on those two points, I am home to a riding that has a lot of industries where there are high-risk environments. The bill would elevate the value of pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding to the level that our society needs to place on those functions. In bringing forth much-needed equality in our society, we as a society, as a government, and as employers have to put value on those all-important functions of raising the next generation of our children, ensure the supports are there for women, and ensure that everything we do is looked at through that lens of equality.

The bill would put forth an amenable means of delivering the best-possible care to women by giving the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour the ability to consult with provincial governments in order to decide whether the provincial or federal maternal benefits package would better suit constituents on a province-by-province basis. That is an ideal situation. Often, with many different programs, because of that federal-provincial jurisdictional divide that we have, we can end up with a patchwork quilt. I look no further than what happens with benefits that are given under access to justice, particularly with legal aid. We are studying that issue right now in the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and certainly we do see a patchwork quilt. It is unfortunate that the types of benefits people receive are dependent on where they live in this great country of ours.

Finally, Bill C-345 would be able to provide equal pregnancy benefits to all pregnant and nursing employees across a given province once an agreement is reached between the provincial or territorial government and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, regardless of whether the employee's job falls under federal or provincial jurisdiction.

*Government Orders*

In the previous Parliament, my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, in the 41st Parliament, introduced similar measures, and that is why he made that reference in his speech. It was Bill C-307. While it is unfortunate that Bill C-307 was struck down at its second reading in the previous Parliament, I am glad to see my colleague continuing this fight with Bill C-345. Bill C-345 would expand on the goal of Bill C-307 by allowing pregnant employees and nursing employees to benefit from better programs between the provincial and federal maternity coverage if an agreement has been reached between the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and a provincial or territorial government.

• (1155)

It also does the all-important thing of streamlining the bureaucratic process to allow employee access to maternity benefits. A great example is the Province of Quebec. I believe it has one of the most comprehensive pregnancy protection plans in Canada. It is certainly something that we can look to as an example.

Ultimately, our goal with the legislation is to better protect nursing or pregnant employees from losing their wages, as well as provide equal protection for all women within a given province or territory with respect to receiving benefits during pregnancy and the breastfeeding period. Many labour organizations that represent thousands of employees across Canada have indicated their support, such as the Canadian Labour Congress, CUPE, PSAC, and CHRC. They have indicated that this is an ideal piece of legislation, and that the House should be supporting it.

From some of the statistics, we know that paid parental leave can be very important for the individual and for society as a whole. A 2011 study done by researchers from Canada and the United States shows how paid parental leave can reduce infant mortality by as much as 10%. Another study found that children were 25% and 22% more likely to get measles and polio vaccines, respectively, when their mother had access to paid maternity leave.

Women who have a protected job and paid leave after birth report fewer depressive symptoms, a reduction in severe depression, and an improvement in overall mental health. If we, as a society, are to place that importance on the health of the mother, I think these are important statistics to be looking at. This is not just with respect to slightly after giving birth; women who have parental leave are much less likely to suffer from depression 30 years on, and so forth.

If we look at single parent households, they are disproportionately negatively affected by the loss of income resulting from parents being unable to continue their position due to pregnancy. Statistics Canada estimates that there were 1,404,010 single parent families in Canada in 2016. These families earned a median household income of \$41,780. If we go back to the much-hyped middle-class tax cut that the Liberal government brought in, that actually falls below what those families would have to earn in order to qualify. That is the position that we, in the NDP, have been making all this time. So many of these families fall below the qualifying income level and do not receive the benefits given by that tax cut, it is not really fair to call it a middle-class tax cut at all. I think that is something that all hon. members in the House need to be reminded of.

If the bill is adopted and a province decides to make a program available, which is better than the current federal provision, or if a

province improves an existing program, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour has the ability to contract a new agreement or amend the existing agreement to include the newly created benefits. I think it is important to highlight that the legislation would allow the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour that flexibility, with the goal of improving benefits for a pregnant or breastfeeding mother. Going back to what I said in my introduction, this is about placing value on that so that we, as a society, can move forward with the best possible programs.

Bill C-345 conveys our belief, especially in the NDP, that it is essential to protect the rights of women in the workplace, and that pregnant and nursing women should not lose their wages because their work is unsafe. It also promotes the idea that women should not have to choose between risking their child's health or continuing to work and losing wages to protect themselves.

I will just conclude that this also needs to be put in the context of what we do for a national child care plan as well. I heard multiple times, on the doorsteps in the last election, that parents are facing that crunch. Often, we have cases where a woman has to abandon her career to raise a child.

• (1200)

When they have that child, because of a lack of affordable spaces or no spaces in the first place, they cannot afford to get a job or a second job because it does not pay enough. There is no room for a family to advance itself through the traditional ways.

The bill places that value on child birth, on breast feeding, which we so desperately need in our society. I would like to thank my colleague for bringing the bill forward. I would be happy to give my support when we have a vote on it.

[*Translation*]

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

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### PARIS AGREEMENT

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution; and that, despite the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, Canada remain committed to the implementation of the Agreement, as it is in the best interest of all Canadians.

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the economy and the environment go hand in hand. We say it often enough, and it is certainly true.

Until now, the global pursuit of economic growth has too often come at the cost of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil where we grow our food. Today, we better understand that if we are to leave behind a better future for our children and our grandchildren, we must not only be sound economic managers, but also stewards of our environment.

Our government has a long-term economic plan. We are doing what optimistic and ambitious countries do. We are investing in our people, in our communities, and in our economy. It is a plan that is showing early signs of progress. Unemployment is down, jobs are being created at a rate not seen in over a decade, yet there is still much work to be done.

We want to grow our economy sustainably and well into the future. That means making sure that the benefits and the growth are shared by the middle class and those working hard to join it. It means making sure that everyone pays their fair share. It means making sure that the economic growth we create does not leave us without clean air to breathe, clean water to drink or good food to eat.

Luckily we do not have to choose between the economy and the environment. In fact, more and more we are realizing the potential in flipping this relationship on its head, where environmental sustainability drives our economy forward.

That is why as Minister of Finance, I am fully committed to creating the conditions for Canada to thrive in a low-carbon economy. Climate change is not just a challenge; it is an opportunity. However, to seize the opportunity, we need to be strategic. We need to be thinking about the long term. That means working with provinces and territories through the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, to take coordinated action to move Canada toward a low-carbon economy.

• (1205)

[Translation]

Pollution is not free. As of now, most of the world agrees that the most effective and efficient means of addressing this issue is carbon pricing. This sends an important signal to the market, and it promotes the reduction of energy consumption as a result of conservation measures and energy efficiency, by allowing the use of alternative fuels and technological advances. This is why a central pillar of our pan-Canadian framework is the adoption, in all the regions of Canada, of a carbon pricing mechanism by the year 2018. The exact design has to be determined by each provincial government, based on what works best for their own province.

[English]

The government proposes that in jurisdictions with a direct carbon tax, the price should start at a minimum of \$10 per tonne in 2018, rising by \$10 each year to \$50 per tonne in 2022. Jurisdictions with a cap and trade system, like Ontario and Quebec, will need to set their annual caps to achieve at least the same amount of emissions reductions that would result in the carbon price in a price-based system.

Cap and trade systems will also need a 2030 emissions reduction target equal to or greater than Canada's 30% reduction target.

### *Government Orders*

By contrast, British Columbia chose a revenue neutral carbon tax. It was the first. That was nine years ago. Today, B.C. has one of the strongest provincial economies in the country. The sky has not fallen in B.C. Carbon pricing has not gridlocked its industry. Nor has it destroyed its competitiveness. British Columbia's approach sets a transparent and predictable carbon tax while returning all revenue to B.C. individuals and businesses.

The price signal creates a real incentive to reduce emissions across the economy. In fact, during the period of 2008-2015, the net benefit to taxpayers in British Columbia was \$1.6 billion. This is why I have so little time for the criticisms regarding our plan to fight climate change and be leaders in the low carbon economy, and I know we will hear many of those arguments here today. However, we need to remember that these critiques are based on ideology, not facts. The facts are clear and they support our evidence-based approach.

[Translation]

By establishing carbon pricing, for the first time, we receive incentives based on the market, which are necessary for encouraging more environmental activities and low-carbon innovation. For those who wish to receive an example in real time of the strong market for this kind of thing, I need only mention the \$500 U.S. green bond issued by Export Development Canada, its third and largest to date.

The products of this green bond will support the portfolio of green assets of Export Development Canada, including loans made to companies who are active in the fields of preservation, protection, or remediation of air, water, and soil, the creation of renewable energy, and the mitigation of climate change.

Therefore, the demand is clear, and we certainly have a solution. It is time we seized this opportunity.

• (1210)

[English]

We seize that opportunity by fostering innovation. We have to find new, innovative and efficient way of producing energy, generating electricity, and powering our businesses, homes and cars. Our government has a fundamental role to play here.

Around the world, countries are now investing in clean energy more than in fossil fuels. Companies are choosing non-polluting options as they produce and sell their products. They are making their operations more efficient. They are putting bold ideas into action, creating new jobs and opportunities in the process.

*Government Orders*

Global demand for these clean technologies is on the rise. Employment in our clean technology sector could increase to 76,000 over the next five years. There is an opportunity for Canada to get a bigger share of the rapidly growing global market for clean energy and innovative solutions to reduce pollution, and to position Canada as a world leader in a low carbon global economy.

Developments over the past decades have led to innovations in non-polluting technologies, such as wind, solar and geothermal energy production. In 2015, over \$300 billion was invested globally in renewable power. That is almost double the amount invested in traditional sources. China alone is forecast to spend close to \$350 billion on non-polluting electricity by 2020.

Clean energy is growing faster than ever. Since 2000, the amount of global electricity produced by solar power doubled seven times. Wind power doubled four times.

In the United States, as reported by its department of energy, more people were employed in solar power last year than in generating electricity through coal, gas and oil energy combined. Just under 374,000 people were employed in solar energy, while coal, gas and oil powered generation combined had a workforce of slightly more than 187,000 people. The boom in the country's solar workforce can be attributed to construction work associated with expanding generation capacity.

The gulf in employment is growing, with net generation from coal falling 53% over the last decade. During the same period, electricity generation from natural gas increased 33%, while solar expanded 5,000%.

[*Translation*]

Some countries, such as Costa Rica, are rapidly advancing toward consuming energy produced entirely from renewable sources. Very soon, solar roof shingles will power our homes with energy. More and more cars, buses, and trains will run on electricity. Electricity is also supplied to coastal communities through underwater rotary turbines that operate with rising and falling tides, such as those in the Minas Basin and the Bay of Fundy, which are currently in operation.

[*English*]

Canada has the talent and ingenuity to lead the world, tackle the world's challenges, and turn them into middle-class jobs and sustainable economic growth. Canada is already home to more than 800 clean technology companies, led by innovative entrepreneurs developing technologies like advanced batteries for use in electric vehicles, and employing more Canadians than any other key sectors like forestry or pharmaceuticals.

The clean technology industry in Canada employs about 55,000 people, including a large and increasing number of young Canadians. Take, for example, CRB Innovations, based in Sherbrooke, Quebec, that uses plants to make jet fuel that produces less pollution. Look at Siemens that started Canada's first wind turbine plant in Tillsburg, Ontario, and now employs about 300 people. This is what we mean when we talk about the jobs of the future.

This is only the beginning. Creating solutions that reduce pollution, from batteries for electric cars to capturing carbon

pollution from factories, could add thousands of jobs in the next few years. We need top-notch scientists, skilled workers, and trail-blazing entrepreneurs with new ideas to create and bring products to market. There will be new construction and manufacturing jobs as we make our buildings more efficient and modernize our electricity system.

Canada's industries will thrive as they find better and cleaner ways of working. Millions of Canadians will reap the rewards, not just of the jobs and opportunity innovation brings but of the cleaner, stronger, more resilient environment.

As Minister of Finance, I am fully committed to putting Canada in the best position to capitalize on the clean growth opportunity. That is why budget 2017 put Canada's skilled, talented, and creative people at the heart of a more innovative future economy, one that would create middle-class jobs today and tomorrow. We have made big bets on key sectors of our economy, where we have succeeded in the past and where we know we can lead in the future. Clean tech and clean resources are at the top of the list, along with agrifood, digital industries, health biosciences, and advanced manufacturing.

Through budget 2017, we continue to make investments in research and development, as well as in businesses seeking to bring these new ideas to the market. We are working with stakeholders and partners to develop a comprehensive clean technology strategy. This strategy would identify innovation opportunities, set ambitious growth targets, pinpoint sector-specific challenges and bottlenecks to innovation, and help innovators achieve their targets.

● (1215)

[*Translation*]

Our plan will include an international business development strategy to help Canadian clean energy companies to become world leaders and take advantage of the opportunities in the expanding global marketplace.

We are also developing a clean technology data strategy to promote innovation, develop knowledge in the private sector and stakeholder communities, and help the government make informed decisions in the future.

Lastly, we will establish a clean growth hub, which will be part of Innovation Canada's single-window service, with the goal of improving federal program coordination, enabling tracking and reporting on clean technology results across government, and helping stakeholders access international markets.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Supporting clean technologies will help position Canada to take advantage of opportunities in the new global economy by diversifying our economy and opening access to new markets.

For clean tech firms to really take off, they need access to capital and financing. That is why budget 2017 proposes to make available nearly \$1.4 billion in new financing through the Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada. This includes \$380 million in equity financing to support clean technology firms, \$570 million in working capital to support clean technology firms, and approximately \$450 million in additional project finance for high capital intensive clean technology firms.

We are also taking steps to incentivize clean tech innovation in Canada's vital natural resources sector. Budget 2017 will invest \$200 million over four years in Natural Resources Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to support clean technology research, development, and demonstration and the adoption of clean technology in Canada's natural resource sectors.

*[Translation]*

In addition, the government will lead by example, demonstrating leadership and showing that these technologies work and change things, by using them in its own operations. For example, by 2025, all electricity used in Public Services and Procurement Canada facilities will come from clean energy sources.

- (1220)

*[English]*

Around the world, leaders from government and businesses are united in their desire to work together on one of the great challenges of our time. The Paris agreement, negotiated by 195 countries, sent an important signal to the market. In fact, according to the International Finance Corporation, it has opened up \$23 trillion in clean innovation opportunities for climate-smart investments in emerging markets between now and 2030.

Canada remains steadfast in our commitment to work with all our global partners to address climate change and to promote clean growth. It is the right thing to do for future generations and will create good jobs as we grow a clean economy. That is why Canada will continue to take leadership on climate change. In September, we will co-host a ministerial meeting with China and the European Union in Canada to move forward on the Paris agreement in clean growth, and as host of next year's G7 meetings, members can be sure that climate change and clean energy will be top of mind.

We understand the huge economic opportunity of clean growth. We want to leave a cleaner and healthier planet to our children and grandchildren.

*[Translation]*

In the wake of floods, droughts, forest fires, and the melting Arctic ice, Canadians are seeing the very real effects of climate change in our country, and they understand the need to take action in order to leave a sustainable world to future generations.

*[English]*

We will continue to take advantage of the \$23-trillion clean growth opportunity. Businesses in Canada and around the world are investing in clean innovation, from renewable energy to zero-emission vehicles to energy-saving technologies. They understand that tackling climate change is not only the right thing to do but is good for business. Together with provinces and cities, we will create the clean-growth economy necessary for the collective health, prosperity, and security of this generation of Canadians and the next. It is about creating opportunity and building confidence in the middle class by finding new, sustainable ways to drive our economy forward, never losing sight of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is indeed the appropriate minister to address this issue, and not the Minister of Environment, because the government acknowledges today, by his presence as its spokesman, that the issue of carbon emissions and the Liberals' so-called price on carbon is an attempt by the government to raise money for its own operations and not to protect the environment for Canadians.

What I am surprised to have learned from the member's speech is not what he said but what he did not say. His department has done detailed studies about the cost of his government's carbon tax to Canadians, and it has broken down those costs by income quintile; that is to say, the very poor, the poor, the middle class, the affluent, and the rich. His department has information on what that tax will cost people in each of those groups. However, in access to information requests my office has in its possession, the numbers are actually blacked out. In other words, the government does not want Canadians to know what the carbon tax will cost families and what impact it will have on the poverty rate and on the gap between rich and poor.

Will the minister rise today and fill in the blanks that exist in the publicly released documents and tell us what the tax will cost those families?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, we believe it is absolutely appropriate that, as Minister of Finance, I am here to talk about our approach to the environment and the economy, because as I said in my speech, we know that those two things go hand in hand. We know that, first and foremost, what we are trying to generate for Canadians is confidence in a bright future for themselves and for their families. We know that the way to do that is through growing the economy and thinking about how that growth actually goes to all Canadians. We know that what Canadians will consider is not only where they are going to see themselves economically. They are going to see that their health and happiness also depends on a strong environment and a sustainable situation for the long term. That is why we know that investing in our economy and clean technology is important. That is why we know that creating a market-based approach to the environmental challenges presented by carbon emissions is the right way to move forward.

*Government Orders*

Our approach is to think about how we can do that in a way that has the smallest impact on firms and individuals, through market pricing, and the biggest positive impact on our long-term environment. That is exactly what we are doing with our pan-Canadian approach to climate change. That is exactly what we are doing by asking provinces to ensure that they have an approach that makes sense for each province and by allowing them the flexibility to regenerate those taxes into their provincial economies.

• (1225)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say at the outset that there are many in this place who are puzzled by the decision of the government to table exactly the same motion it tabled last October and that this House voted for. We have heard the Minister of Finance speaking to the need to move toward a greener, cleaner economy and the various initiatives the government is proceeding with.

What is troubling, and I look forward to the Minister of Finance responding, is that he speaks about hand in hand. Everyone who is in the renewable energy and energy-efficiency sector knows what is needed. The most important thing in moving forward is removing the perverse incentives for the fossil fuel industry. The Auditor General has already chastised the government for failing to move on its commitment—in fact, the last two governments' commitments—to remove the perverse incentives.

The Minister of Finance also spoke to the pan-Canadian agreement. Indeed, many of our provinces, territories, municipalities, and even homeowners have expeditiously moved forward to invest. However, when we look at the government's budget this year, and we look at all the pan-Canadian initiatives for creating Canada's clean growth economy, it has committed close to zero dollars in support of those initiatives.

Perhaps the minister would like to speak to how deep this commitment is to moving forward expeditiously toward a cleaner economy.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, we believe it is important to reinforce how critically important the issue we are talking about, the pan-Canadian approach to climate change, is for the long-term health of our economy and the long-term health of our people.

We know that there are many ways we need to do this. We have talked about this in budget 2016 and budget 2017 in terms of measures we have put forward. We put forward a low-carbon economy fund, putting forth \$2 billion to seek approaches that will actually find ways to reduce our carbon footprint. This year we put forward clean technology investments, \$1.5 billion in development and commercialization, which we know will be critically important.

We also talked about our ongoing goal of eliminating fossil fuel subsidies. We moved forward with one measure in budget 2017. We also reaffirmed our commitment, which was made internationally, to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies over time. That is a commitment we remain committed to.

What I can say is that in all the things we do, whether it be direct investments in the clean technology space, whether it be investments in public transit that we know have a positive impact on our

economy, or whether it be the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies, we are moving forward in the right direction in this area.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly welcome the resolution from the government today on the ongoing commitment of the Canadian government to the Paris agreement. We had already voted in this place and confirmed our support as a Parliament.

I quibble with the introduction, because as much as President Trump announced from the rose garden that the U.S. was out of the Paris accord, actually the U.S. cannot legally leave the Paris accord until November 4, 2020, which quite by coincidence, is the day after the next U.S. presidential election. That is a process based on the exit provisions we negotiated at COP21, that the treaty would have to be in place for three years after entering into force and then states could give one year's written notice.

My question for the Minister of Finance is similar to the one from my friend, the member for Edmonton Strathcona. What can we be doing in Canada, and particularly, what could his department be doing? For a government that has branded itself “sunny ways”, I would like to see more emphasis on solar energy.

Could the Minister of Finance update us as to why we continue to have a tariff on very efficient photovoltaic roofing tiles from China that directly take sunlight and produce electricity for those people who put them on the roofs of their buildings, whether schools or homes? It is time to take tariffs off solar energy.

• (1230)

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I think I should respond in a number of ways.

We continue to move forward on making the biggest possible impact on our long-term environmental health with the measure that we know will have the biggest long-term impact on that very health, and that is the pricing of carbon.

As we put forward the pan-Canadian approach to climate change, we knew that this single measure, moving from the roughly 85% or 86% of Canadians who were in agreement to 100% of Canadians, was critically important. However, setting targets that are going to have an important long-term ability for us to move forward progressively over time on this issue is also very important. From my standpoint, getting that right is critically important.

We will continue to move forward on other issues. On an ongoing basis, we will look at tariffs to see if there are ways we could remove them, because that is part of our free trade agenda. We will specifically look towards doing that in places that would have the biggest impact on our global trade as well as on our goals around environmental stewardship.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia, when the HST was brought in, it was challenged by a former premier, because he did not feel it could be possible under section 53, which said that there should be no taxation without representation. The court agreed that the province had wanted it. It was actually under the good governance clause.

*Government Orders*

Obviously, the Minister of Finance is going to be looking to put in place a carbon tax over the Province of Saskatchewan's wishes. This will create issues. Can the minister use federal taxing power to basically force a province on what is provincial policy?

First, has the minister heard from his officials on his preferred course of forcing Saskatchewan to pay into this carbon scheme? Does he believe that it is constitutional? If that is the case, will he bring to this chamber proof from his officials that it is within the power of the Canadian government to do so? It is not an environmental policy; it is taxation the minister is proposing.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start with not only what it is we are trying to achieve but how we are trying to achieve it.

First of all, what we are trying to achieve is a pan-Canadian approach, an approach for the entire country, to put a price on carbon. We know that a market-based approach to reducing our environmental impact over the long term is the right way to go.

Second, what we have decided is that we will allow provinces to take different approaches to getting to the same goal. In doing that, we have said to the provinces that they can take their own approach. British Columbia has chosen a tax. We can also see its economy has done very well under that approach, as it has moved that money back to its citizens. We see that in Ontario and Quebec, they have taken a cap-and-trade approach, which has allowed us to leave them with that approach but to set targets that make sense.

What we have also said is that each of those provinces are able to put that money back into their economies in a way that will have the best impact on their economies while having a broader impact on our environment over time.

We believe we have chosen an approach that is not only consistent with our goals but is consistent with provincial autonomy in the way they want to actually achieve those goals. Of course, we have a backstop if they do not do it, because we know that it is our federal right to do that.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by doing something that is unusual for me in this place, and that is to congratulate the government. I want to congratulate the government for acknowledging that the debate about its carbon tax is a fiscal one and not an environmental question. The Minister of Finance is here today representing the government on this question, and not the Minister of the Environment. That is because the government views the carbon tax not as an environmental policy, but as an opportunity to grow the coffers of governments by taking more money out of the pockets of everyday people.

For hundreds of years, our system of government has been based on the principle of no taxation without representation. Although many confuse this principle as being an American one, it actually has its origins in the Magna Carta of over 800 years ago, in the year 1215. Subjects of the crown said they were not prepared to pay any tariff or levy without their collective approval, through what would become the parliament, that is, a gathering of the common people. Hence, we have the term House of Commons.

The principle flowing from the Magna Carta and the meeting at Runnymede when King John signed it, is that for the crown to have

the legal authority to extract a levy, a tax, or a fee from the population, it must have the approval of the population through their assembled members of what we now call and know as being parliament.

However, not only is there no taxation without representation, there is no taxation without information. Unfortunately, the government has provided precious little information about the cost of its carbon tax. Normally, matters of taxation are quite clear to anyone who is prepared to sharpen their pencil or pull out the calculator. Most Canadians do their taxes at the end of the year and they can determine how much they are paying in income tax. On a daily basis, they can take their bill from a night at the movies or at a restaurant and see what they paid in harmonized sales taxes or other consumption taxes.

Carbon taxes are insidious in a very special way. The cost of a carbon tax is embedded deep inside literally thousands of products that Canadians buy every single day. For example, a basket of fruit that is transported by a truck, was also transported by a train, and before that a ship. A carbon tax on all of the fossil fuels necessary to bring that basket of fruit to the grocery store, where a single mother buys it for her children, increases the cost of that fruit. Unfortunately, when that single mother goes to the cash register and pays that bill, she does not know what share of it is going to the government through carbon tax. Therefore, as an elector, as a common person, she cannot ultimately hold the crown accountable for what it is charging her to nourish her children with the vitamin C from that basket of fruit. She can hold the government accountable for the cost of the harmonized sales tax, because when she purchases various goods and services, she can look at the receipt and it will tell her what she paid. If she thinks it is too much, she can tell her local member of Parliament, and if he or she fails to act accordingly, she can vote against that member of Parliament in the forthcoming election.

No such accountability exists with the carbon tax. I endeavoured to create such accountability by filing numerous Order Paper questions and access to information requests, demanding that the government reveal the following information:

● (1235)

Documents such as briefing notes, analyses, projections, and emails regarding the impact of a \$50-a-tonne price on carbon or carbon tax on the Canadian economy. Please include any analysis on how a price on carbon will impact the Consumer Price Index, median incomes, low-income household incomes, the poverty rate, the employment rate, and the unemployment rate.

Originally the government responded that it had no such data. It just did not exist. That was its original response to my Order Paper question. However, we later obtained documents showing that the government did in fact have the data. It had been calculated and it was in the possession of the Minister of Finance's department.

*Government Orders*

The government said secondarily that it was wrong, that it did have the information, but it would not tell us what it said. It released documents that were roughly 70% blacked out. For example, I have here a memo that was written on October 20, the day after the Liberal Party won the October 19 election, which says:

Imposing a price on carbon...either through a tax or a cap-and-trade system, would raise the cost of fossil fuels and energy. These...costs would then cascade through the economy in the form of higher prices, thus leading all firms and consumers to pay more for goods and services with higher carbon content. This would create distributional effects since the share of goods and services with high-carbon content may vary with households' income.

That is a quote from the document.

To simplify the overly complicated terminology here, “distributional effects” is an economics term for how the tax will shift income between rich and poor households. It would be effects on the gap between rich and poor, the poverty rate, and the income of the middle class.

I go back to quoting from the same document:

This [document] focuses on the potential impact of a carbon price on a household's consumption expenditures across the income distribution. Key findings are: [blacked out].

The key findings are blacked out and none of the information is included.

Now again, this memo advertises that the government will reveal the potential impact of a carbon price on a household's consumption expenditures across the income distribution. That word “distribution” is very important for those of us who are concerned about poverty. Distribution is used as a term by economists to describe how much money the very poor, the poor, the middle class, the affluent, and the rich have in this country. This document would tell us what impact the carbon tax would have on that distribution. How would it affect the very poor, the poor, the middle class, the affluent, and the rich? The House of Commons does not know. The finance minister does. He has this briefing, and, in his possession, that briefing is not blacked out.

Let me tell the House what else the finance minister has. He has a continuation of the background, which says:

A good predictor of the expected distributional effect of a price on carbon is to look at how the carbon intensity of a typical consumption basket varies across earnings groups.... This intensity is the result of the direct consumption of carbon intensive goods—like gasoline, natural gas and heating oil—and the indirect result from consuming goods with a high carbon [input]....

Let us return to common language, as we are in the House of the common people. Let us start again: “A good predictor of the expected distributional effect of a price on carbon”. Simply put, how will a carbon tax affect the gap between rich and poor? A look at the carbon intensity of a typical consumption basket varies across earnings groups. What does that mean in plainer language?

•(1240)

It means that people with less money typically rely on things that have lots of carbon inputs in them, more so than do rich households, at least as a share of their income. That is because rich households can afford to spend more on luxuries rather than on basic survival. Poor households, it is proven, spend a third more of their household budget on things that the tax will apply to, like heating their home, turning on the lights, and feeding their families. If people are rich,

they still have to do those things, it is just that those expenses represent a much smaller share of their household budget. Therefore, in percentage terms, the rich households are paying much less than the poorer households pay in carbon taxes.

If the members across the way disagree with my analysis, why do they not just remove all of the black ink on these documents and reveal what they say? It stands to reason, given the documented evidence from Statistics Canada, that the data contained here will show that poor families would be disproportionately hammered by this new tax because it is a larger share of their budget that would be taxed. In other words, as a percentage of income, a poor household would actually pay more than a rich household. That is the economic definition of regressive, from a government that tells us every day how progressive it is.

The Liberals also campaigned on transparency. Let us see if they lived up to that promise. In the September 11, 2015 documents, which calculated the impact of a carbon tax. I am going to quote what it says:

In the context of departmental work on the medium-term planning and transition advice on climate change, the memo provides the model based long run economic impacts of various policy scenarios to meet Canada's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas...emissions.

I would continue the sentence, but it is blacked out. It continues:

Environment Canada is in the process of updating their emissions projections and our analysis will be revised once these updated projections are available.

These are supposed to demonstrate what impact the carbon price will have on the emissions of greenhouse gases. Again, all the numbers are blacked out, so we do not even know if this expensive and damaging tax is going to have any successful impact on reducing greenhouse gases, which is the purported purpose of the tax. It goes on:

The estimated economic impacts from [greenhouse gas] mitigation scenarios are based on a computational general equilibrium...model of the world economy. The analysis shows that estimated economic costs (and the resulting carbon price) [will] vary greatly across the chosen mitigation policy.

How high does the tax have to be before it changes people's behaviour to be more conducive to the battle against climate change? Again, we do not know the answer to that question because it too is blacked out. I could go on and on. I have page after page here before me indicating that the government has data that it will not release because it does not want Canadians to know either the effectiveness of its policy or the cost that Canadians will have to bear in order to live under that policy.



*Government Orders*

I was very optimistic when I saw the finance minister stand in the House of Commons today to speak, that he would reveal the contents of these documents, given that they are housed within his own department and that it is his department that has blacked out those contents. However, no, he did not reveal any of that. Instead, he rambled on about all the spending and programs and government interference that his and the Prime Minister's administration are imposing under the ostensible pretext of battling climate change. If this were really about protecting the environment, then the government would ensure that every extra dollar in so-called carbon pricing that Canadians pay would be returned to them through lower income taxes or lower consumption taxes. The Liberals claim that these are revenue-neutral policies, but how can we possibly know that when they will not reveal what the tax will cost to begin with?

● (1245)

In every province the carbon tax has been imposed, there has been a net increase in government revenue. In other words, taxpayers have less so governments can have more. This is true even in British Columbia, which has the least damaging carbon tax regime. Recently, the Fraser Institute calculated that in British Columbia taxpayers will be net losers by about \$500 to \$700 as a result of the carbon tax. In other words, even as the government claims that it is reducing income taxes to compensate people for the higher cost of fossil fuel-based products, the taxpayer is actually a loser and the government, of course as is always the case, is the winner. Hence the need for transparency. Hence the need for Canadian taxpayers to have the ability to look at these documents and find out what in fact it will cost them.

Why is it that a carbon tax is so insidious? The answer is that its costs and impact are hidden. They are deeply embedded in literally thousands of products and it is mathematically impossible on a per unit basis to know what we are actually paying because the tax touches a product so many times as it moves through the supply chain. If a child asks his mother for a bicycle and she buys him one, the tires may have petroleum products in them and therefore the tax will have applied to the tires on that bicycle. There may be other plastics in the making of the bicycle. All of those plastics will have paid a carbon tax. The bicycle may have been transported by rail. Of course, our train lines burn fossil fuels to move products from one market to another. That bicycle is taxed as it travels gently along the railroad track.

I know how much the government and members across the way love bicycles. Many of them in municipal government have spent fortunes on bike lanes. We know how much they love bicycles, but that poor little child is now paying through his mother a carbon tax, probably many carbon taxes, just on the acquisition of that little harmless bicycle that he looks forward to riding down bike lanes in downtown Toronto and in downtown Ottawa.

That is the essence of an insidious tax: everything is hidden. Therefore, the reason we need government to be transparent about its own calculations is so that families know what they are paying. I say to my friends who support carbon taxes, surely if they believed this was not a net burden for taxpayers, if they were designing a revenue-neutral tax, surely if that were true, they would be delighted to release this data. In fact, it would be a great political benefit because they could walk up and down the streets and say this tax actually

does not cost anything because it is revenue neutral, but the Liberals are hiding something. Why? What is the reason for hiding these costs?

I submit that the reason is the same reason that the provincial Liberals went to such great lengths to hide the costs of their so-called Green Energy Act. About eight years ago, the Government of Ontario passed this monstrosity of a bill that created something called the feed-in tariff, which saw the government pay 90¢ for a kilowatt hour of electricity produced by solar even though the market price of electricity in Ontario was 2.5¢. The idea was that this would save the environment and it was going to create all kinds of green jobs. That is what we were told.

● (1250)

We heard a very similar speech on that subject from the Minister of Finance, that there really would not be any extra costs to Ontarians because the resulting growth in green solar jobs would be so powerful that we would all be so rich that we would not even notice a change in our power bills. Therefore, this policy was rolled out and very few people spoke out against it. In fact, in Ottawa, the only major media personality who caught on to what was happening was the legendary Lowell Green from Ottawa. Mainstream media did not care and did not address it. The average person thought that because the government said that it would not cost any more, it sounded fine to them.

There is no magic trick here. When we pay 90¢ for something that is worth 2.5¢, that cost goes somewhere. Where did it end up? It was on the electricity bills of Ontarians, which have doubled since the passage of the so-called Green Energy Act. The result, according to the Ontario Association of Food Banks, has been that 60,000 people have had to go to a food bank in order to feed themselves because they could not pay their power bills. The Windsor food bank said it literally had people come in with their power bills and say, "If you can pay my food bill, then I can pay my power bill."

The distributional effects of that, for those on the Liberal side who are so concerned about the gap between the rich and poor, were that some people became very rich. Let us make no mistake. Those insiders who were able to lock in the contracts to receive thousands of per cent's worth of price markups in order to sell wind and solar power to the electrical grid have made an absolute fortune. They, their children, their grandchildren, and their great, great, great, great grandchildren will be able to retire on the money that they have made off of this scam. Who cannot make money when they are selling something worth 2.5¢ for 90¢, with a government regulator that is forcing people to pay those prices? Who could not make money under those circumstances? As long as one has the connections to land the contracts, it is a pretty easy way to make money. That is the way that people get rich, when the government gets big.

In a free market, one gets rich by having the best product. In a government-run economy, one gets rich by having the best lobbyist. If one had a good lobbyist and was prepared to pay that lobbyist \$500,000 or \$600,000, the return on investment in Ontario was spectacular, because that \$500,000 or \$600,000 used to buy influence returned hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts to sell overpriced electricity into Ontario's grid.

*Government Orders*

What did this do for the environment? The Liberals will argue that, yes, people got poor, they ended up in the food banks, the gap between the rich and poor worsened, and that Ontario has the highest poverty rate of any province in Canada, after having had the fourth lowest under Mike Harris, but that they did it for the environment. They will say that all of those devastating economic impacts occurred and people suffered, but that it had to be done for the environment. What is the impact on the environment?

Right now, I am looking at the website of the organization that actually manages Ontario's electricity grid. It is called the IESO. It provides a breakdown of the sources of electricity that power our grid in Ontario. The amount of power we get from solar is 1%, the percentage of the power on our grid in Ontario that comes from wind is 6%, and from biofuels it is 1%, for a combined total of 8%. All of these literally tens of billions of dollars of subsidies mean that less than 8% of Ontario's electricity comes from the sources that were most subsidized. The irony of course is that clean, emissions-free electricity could have been bought from Quebec, which generates it for a couple of cents per kilowatt hour, or Manitoba, or nuclear production could have been expanded, which of course has no greenhouse gas emissions, and they could have paid 2¢, 3¢, 5¢, or 6¢ per kilowatt hour. Instead they paid 90¢.

• (1255)

What is the combined cost of this policy? According to an auditor general report in 2014, Ontarians, in the first eight years of the Green Energy Act, have overpaid for electricity by about \$26 billion. The cost going forward for another 30 years is another \$137 billion.

I have to say it hurts to say that, because I was part of a government that suffered a serious political controversy over a \$90,000 expense claim that was repaid. These guys do not deal in \$90,000. They go big. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars of wealth transfers, and after \$28 billion of subsidies so far for these wealthy, so-called green energy entrepreneurs, we get 8% of our electricity from the sources that are subsidized. It is so much expense for so little benefit. All the more reason to have transparency in how all of these green taxes and green levies are administered on Canadian households, yet we have had nothing in the way of transparency from the government. The Liberals have been secretive and closed. In fact I am curious how many greenhouse gases were emitted to produce the black ink that was required in order to cover up the information about the cost of the carbon tax in these documents that came out through access to information.

If it does not make us laugh, it makes us cry. I have a tomato farmer in my riding, SunTech tomatoes. If we want to talk about a green energy company, it is SunTech tomatoes. It has learned how to make a profit growing tomatoes in Canada in the winter. For a government that talks about innovation, that is innovation. SunTech does not call itself an innovative supercluster, so maybe it does not have all the right terminology to get a grant from the government, but it is very innovative. It does not just talk innovation; it practises it.

I went to visit SunTech tomatoes, the little miracles of Manotick. I encourage all members to go there. They are fantastic tomatoes. However, it is more expensive to buy SunTech tomatoes in Ottawa

than it is to buy Mexican tomatoes in Ottawa, even though a Mexican tomato is responsible for emissions of more greenhouse gases. After all, it has to be transported all the way across the continent, but of course Mexico does not pay carbon taxes, so even though eating a Mexican tomato in Ottawa causes more greenhouse gases than eating an Ottawa tomato in Ottawa, it is more expensive, due to Liberal carbon taxes, to eat the Ottawa tomato in Ottawa. Does that make any sense to members?

If already their heads are spinning, they are about to spin some more because I have some more information that will blow members away.

In order to help its plants grow, SunTech tomatoes actually releases CO<sub>2</sub> into its greenhouse, because plants feed on CO<sub>2</sub>. The carbon tax applies to that CO<sub>2</sub>, even though its not released into the atmosphere. It is consumed by the plant. I have some more news. There is a 3-D printer that is capable of sucking greenhouse gases out of the air and turning it into a solid building product. They are called trees. Sun Tech tomatoes uses the very same technology to make tomatoes. It pulls CO<sub>2</sub> right out of the air and turns it into an edible product. It is a 3-D printer.

I am trying to speak in the futuristic language that will get Liberals tingling over there and feeling excited because they want all of these innovative superclusters that will change the world. Here is an idea. If we want innovation, if we want a more dynamic futuristic economy, stop taxing the people who innovate and create that dynamic economy.

• (1300)

The problem with the Liberals is they think nothing good can happen except through them. Therefore, all good must travel through Liberal hands. Now, if a few Liberals get really rich along the way, all the better, but they are incapable of allowing prosperity to occur because of free people using their God-given gifts and talents to create good stuff. The last thing that the Liberal government wants to see is people being independent and producing positive outcomes on their own, because then they would not need the government.

One example in my riding is The WoodSource, which has a beautiful business right on Mitch Owens Road. It is a recycling and innovation business that has been taking down old barns and using the barn board to decorate coffee shops, libraries, and high-end restaurants, literally turning what some people think is trash into treasure. Abandoned barns that were filled with pigeons and mice now adorn the walls of fancy restaurants.

The WoodSource is taking something that was worthless and giving it great worth. It has had investment from a Belgian company. I did not know this, but across Europe there is demand for Canadian barnwood because it has such rich character and such incredible stories of the loggers, farmers, and pioneers who built those barns through post-and-beam. Those barns literally stood for 200 years, and now people want to have them inside their homes and coffee shops.

*Government Orders*

This business decided it was going to build a bigger shed to employ more people and provide more lumber across the Ottawa Valley. It took six years and \$600,000 worth of paperwork to get it approved. Fifty years ago, a shed of exactly the same dimensions was built, and it took one page of paperwork stamped by an engineer for it to be approved. It was approved in one week.

My friends across the way say that is reckless and dangerous. I have news for them: the building is still standing today.

This entrepreneur went to talk to the local Liberal minister responsible for all the paperwork and burden he had borne in order to build this shed. It was \$600,000, enough to hire 10 people at \$60,000 a year. He said that he had made him do all this paperwork just to build a shed, and it had taken seven years when he could have been creating many jobs. What did the Liberal minister tell him? He told him to talk to his staff, that they could get him a grant to help him pay the cost to his business. He did not want a grant. He earns his own money. He said, "Why don't you just let me keep the money I earned?"

The reality is that if the government did that, then there would be no need for the Liberal minister. He would be unimportant. He would be airbrushed out of the selfie. To have a government that burdens this business, only to then come forward and offer it taxpayers' money as compensation, is part of the egoism of Liberal government that requires politicians be involved in everything.

As an example, the island airport expansion in Toronto is an opportunity to land more flights in downtown Toronto, which means less traffic from Pearson airport and fewer emissions, as people no longer need to be stuck in traffic idling their cars as they travel from a distant airport to a downtown business centre, and of course that would have led Porter Airlines to buy more jets from Bombardier, right?

The government says that the island airport cannot be expanded. It knows this will do damage to Bombardier because Bombardier will lose sales, but there is no reason to worry: it will give Bombardier a taxpayer-funded subsidy to cover the costs of all the damage wrought by the government in the first place.

● (1305)

The logic that leads the Liberals to block this privately funded infrastructure project at the Billy Bishop airport is the same logic that my friends at The WoodSource experienced when they spent over half a million dollars on paperwork to build a shed that only 50 years ago could be built with one page of approval, which is that the government and its cousins at provincial and municipal levels want to be involved in every aspect of human life. They want everything that people do to be approved by government and for people to bear the burden of administration and cost in every enterprise they undertake.

It is as Ronald Reagan said: the Liberal believes that if something moves, tax it, and if it keeps moving, regulate it, and when it finally stops moving, subsidize it. That is the Liberal approach. We see it played over and over again, but these policies are parasitic. They take, but they do not give. They consume, but they do not produce, and eventually the government runs out of other people's money. That is the trajectory on which the government is set right now.

For those reasons, Conservatives oppose the Liberal carbon tax, and I propose the following amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following:

in particular, the interest of taking a realistic and achievable approach, as the previous government did, and finding the appropriate balance between protecting the environment and growing the economy in a way that does not increase the overall tax burden on Canadians.

● (1310)

**Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's dissertation on the subject of the pricing of carbon pollution. However, this is not the subject of the motion.

Does the Conservative Party support the motion, which states, "That, in the opinion of the House, climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution; and that, despite the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, Canada remain committed to the implementation of the Agreement, as it is in the best interest of all Canadians."?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I guess the Liberals now want to tell us that this is an environmental carbon tax and environmental policy. They started by having the Minister of Finance as their lead, which was an admission that this is really about raising money for the government, and now they have the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I was hoping that he was going to reveal what is in the documents that his government blacked out through the carbon tax cover-up. How will this tax impact the poorest Canadians, and what will be the increase in the gap between rich and poor as a result of increasing the costs of fuel, groceries, home heating, and other basic necessities?

I believe the parliamentary secretary has the ability to get his hands on all of that data, and I would encourage him throughout today to table in the House of Commons all of those facts so that Canadians can judge for themselves.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we heard a lengthy dissertation on the costs of addressing climate change, but what greatly disappointed me was that we did not hear one second of discussion by my colleague across the way about the costs of not acting on climate change. The longer we delay, the higher the costs rise, including, as the member would like to go on and on about, the cost of the carbon tax.

*Government Orders*

There were two measures that the Conservative government promised. When Jim Prentice was the minister of the environment, he said there was going to be cap and trade, but after 10 years in power, nothing had happened. One thing the Conservative government actually did was put in place an eco-energy retrofit program, which was oversubscribed and very popular because it helped to bring down the costs for people who could not afford to pay their energy bills. What did it do when it was over? It yanked the program.

Could the member speak to exactly what measures he thinks are useful and why he is not also equally concerned about the fact that the costs to address climate change are rising, given that for 10 years the Conservative government did not act and the Liberals are thinking about acting?

● (1315)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I see the member is attempting to change the subject. She does not want to address the matter at hand, which is that the government is imposing a federally mandated tax without revealing to Canadians what it will cost them.

It adds all these new costs and claims that they are all revenue neutral, but it is not prepared to release any of the data it has in its possession to prove that this in fact is the case.

The government could clear up all of the ambiguity today by revealing, unredacted, the calculations that its departments have done on the matter. If the government comes into the House of Commons and seeks consent to table that information, we on this side of the House, in the spirit of non-partisanship, will allow it to do so.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to taxation, there are always people who will pay more or pay less. I want to talk about tax cuts, which is a favourite topic of the members across the way, and I want to talk about the two-point reduction in the GST. Had that not happened, we would not be talking about deficits today, including the \$150 billion that the Conservative government rang up when it was in power.

To turn this subject on its head a bit, I want to ask the hon. member who benefited the most from that two-point reduction in the GST. Was it the well-to-do who bought an \$80,000 Bimmer or the less well-to-do who had to settle for a \$3,000 beater?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the answer, of course, is that consumption taxes are the most regressive, and therefore, in percentage terms, a reduction in the GST disproportionately helps people of low income.

However, the member across the way, in stating his opposition to former prime minister Harper's GST cuts, reveals that there is support in the Liberal caucus for raising the GST back up to 7%. It is no surprise. The Liberals are spending money they do not have. They are starting to run out of other people's money and they will be looking for ways to take that out of the pockets of everyday Canadian consumers and taxpayers.

I thank that member for accidentally telling the truth about his party's fiscal agenda, which is to raise taxes, including consumption taxes, which we know will disproportionately harm those with the least.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it was not clear through the long presentation on carbon taxes whether the Conservative Party in opposition plans to vote for this motion. Clearly the Paris agreement is one to which Canada is legally committed, and we should remain committed.

However, I did want to take him up on the, I think, quite misleading and inaccurate statements about British Columbia's carbon tax. It is revenue neutral. In fact, to the extent it is not neutral, the best new data shows that the government is paying out more in tax cuts than it is receiving in carbon price, because the previous government, under Christy Clark, stalled the application of the tax, which should increase year on year.

Further, the reason that any document has been redacted, as we have debated before in this place, is that it was prepared under the Harper administration and therefore cannot possibly have any relevant information about the Liberal government's intentions, unless we presume that everything Mr. Harper did is a blueprint for the Liberals, and I doubt the member for Carleton believes that.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, regrettably, I do not believe that. It would be quite positive if the Liberals were following the successful blueprint of the previous government.

The member's question, though, is about revenue neutrality of carbon taxes. I understand her position is that a carbon tax should be revenue neutral. I gather from her nodding affirmatively that she thinks they should be revenue neutral and they should not just be a means to increase government coffers.

If that is the case, just release the data. If the government shows us what people are paying in this new carbon tax, then it can make the case that its extra costs are being neutralized by other offsetting tax cuts. So far, the government is not prepared to indicate what this new tax will cost the average Canadian.

I notice that the member also voted against my motion to have them release that data. I do not understand, if she claims that these carbon taxes are all neutral, why she would not have joined in supporting my motion in favour of transparency about the costs of the carbon tax on the average Canadian. She did not because, like so many others, that member, the Liberal Party, and provincial governments that have imposed these taxes really want to fatten government coffers and raise more money for politicians on the backs of hard-working Canadians.

● (1320)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I need your guidance on this. The member for Carleton just said that he understood my position was revenue neutrality, but then went on to impugn my motives and suggested my motives were quite to the contrary.

I believe, as a point of order, the member cannot attack my character in the course of responding to a question.

*Government Orders*

**The Deputy Speaker:** While I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her intervention, she will probably know, as all members do, that it is all but impossible for chair occupants to weigh in on the veracity or the words that come in response to questions that are posed in the House.

The member is right in the sense that section 18 in the Standing Orders speaks to impugning motive, for example, as it relates to unparliamentary language. I did not hear anything unparliamentary in the member for Carleton's response. Admittedly, it comes close there, but I do not know that it really crossed the line in that case. We will listen carefully for that, as we always do.

We will go to our last question. The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

**Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I quite enjoy listening to the member for Carleton speak. He has a very nice speaking style. Unfortunately, there are contradictions in the content of his speech, and that is something I would like to address.

The member talked a lot about social justice and how any action should not impact on the poorest of Canadians, that there should not be a push to the gap between the rich and the poor. He has gone on and on about that.

However, there is a cost to greenhouse gas. There are real costs to climate change that come from it. In fact, less than a month ago my riding had severe flooding. There was a huge cost involved. What I am seeking to understand is why should that cost not be shared proportionately? For example, in our garbage collection, the more garbage I put out, the more I have to pay. That makes sense to me.

However, when it comes to pollution, why do the rich not pay more than the poor? Why should the rich be supported by the poor on this one?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his kind words. I do accept the logic that people should generally pay for the costs they incur, rather than offloading those costs onto government.

What I am attempting to have the present government release is what costs will be paid by which taxpayer. The member says that the carbon tax will burden the rich. I find that very hard to believe. Stats Canada has produced data that shows that low-income households spend a third more of a share of their budget on items that will be taxed by this levy than do rich households. That proportionality makes sense.

For low-income people, electricity, food, heat, and gas will be a large share of what they consume. Rich households spend on things that are unrelated to those basic necessities and as a result, in a percentage term, they will pay less in tax.

All I am asking for is that the government release the data it has to indicate how people of various incomes will be impacted by the new tax.

• (1325)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Drummond.

As I said previously in my question for the Minister of Finance, completely baffling is the decision of the government to retable essentially the same motion that was tabled here last fall, which was passed with the support of our party. What is disappointing is the Liberals have come forward with the exact same motion, sadly, missing the amendments we had recommended, which was that they revise their targets to enable them to deliver on their promise in Paris, to at least hold the climate change to a maximum of 2°, let alone their further promise of 1.5°.

I think there is an understanding now, particularly since the United States has said it will pull out the agreement. As one of the members pointed out, it will take four years for that to happen and many people in the world may hope we have a different administration in the United States by then, an administration that previously committed to delivering on the Paris agreement. It is very disappointing.

We look forward to the speeches by the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources. Daily we hear their mantra in here, which is to balance environmental protection with economic development, and that this is the path they will take to address climate change. We are looking forward to hearing the details of how they might be doing that.

Why would we be particularly interested in that? While the government has said that it is determined in every decision it makes on our energy future to balance environmental protection with economic development, it has been very good on one side of that balance by moving expeditiously to approve LNG plants, pipelines, and basically back away from a more intensive review of oil sands operations.

We recently received the report from UNESCO where it investigated the impacts of the oil sands and the Site C dam on a world heritage site in northern Alberta. UNESCO has directed that our nation will lose that world heritage site designation unless the government steps up to the plate and starts doing its job and better regulating the impact of the oil sands on the whole Peace-Athabasca Delta. It has called for a second review assessment of the Site C dam because the federal government, before giving the okay for Site C, did not consider the potential transboundary impacts into Alberta on the world heritage site. Why is that significant? Even during the review of Site C, intervenors came forward and said that building dams on this scale were massively expensive. Also, there did not appear to be the demand for that scale of a project, a demand that was realistically forecast to probably be delivered through geothermal, solar and wind. That was dispensed with.

The government is saying the right things, but we are deeply concerned that it is not necessarily moving in that direction.

Also, the government is still sticking with Stephen Harper's targets. It is a complete mystery not just to those of us in our party, but to all of those who are deeply dedicated to a transition to cleaner energy. The non-governmental organizations, the institutes, the scientists, and the people in the solar, wind, and geothermal sector are troubled. If we are to deliver on those commitments in Paris, then we have to come to the reality that we have to dig even much deeper to reduce.

*Government Orders*

That means the government has to move on another promise as well, which is to more rapidly get rid of the perverse incentives for the fossil fuel sector. We are not just saying that. The Auditor General has chastised the government for not moving more expeditiously. Now, of course, the previous Conservative government also committed to other nations that it would move expeditiously to remove those perverse incentives. It did not. This government has admitted today, through the finance minister, that it has taken one small measure. The Auditor General is saying it is not good enough.

● (1330)

We like the fact that the government is espousing the policy that it wants to move toward a cleaner energy economy. The Liberals agree with us that we are facing a serious challenge in the planet. We share their concern with the United States saying that it is going to pull out. However, I should not say the United States, but the President of the United States has said that. We are delighted to hear, as I am sure many in the country are, that many of the U.S. states, I think more than 80 mayors of U.S. towns, and many in major industries, including the fossil fuel industry, have said that they will continue down the path of divesting from fossil fuels and moving toward a cleaner economy. However, that means we have to step up our pace.

The government has announced again that it will have a big shindig with China and Europe here in the fall. However, what additional can Canada do to fill that gap? The United States of America, as I understand, contributes 25% of the greenhouse gases on this planet. The Canadian government has only committed to reduce part of the emissions that we emit, not even the emissions that are necessary to meet the Paris target. Therefore, one would think that the finance minister and other ministers of the government would have come forward today and told us what additional, deeper, faster initiatives the Liberals have committed to meet the promise they have made to the planet. It is concerning.

In April of this year, Environment Canada reported that the greenhouse gas emissions in the country were continuing to rise and that the government's 2030 target would not be met. In fact, if we progressed with using the initiatives the government had committed to, we would be almost 200 megatonnes over even that minimal target made by the Harper government. We are glad the government is saying the right things, but what we are disappointed in is where are the hard, concrete initiatives to move in that direction?

We are deeply troubled despite all this talk of the Liberals' deep commitment to assist families to reduce their energy use and to help Canadians get into the cleaner energy economy. Indeed, it is the booming economy in the world these days. I look at at pages 149 and 150 of their budget daily because people ask me questions about this. They want to know exactly what the government is doing to commit to move us forward expeditiously. People are stunned to see that in both columns of initiatives that have been listed by the Liberals, including the support for the pan-Canadian initiative of the provinces and territories, by and large, zero dollars actually have been committed.

As I mentioned previously, the sooner we invest the better, because it will simply become more expensive. Either the carbon tax will have to rise more expeditiously or we will have to invest more

money in parallel measures. Therefore, it is deeply troubling that the government says one thing, but it is not releasing the concrete measures to move forward as expeditiously as the Liberals are pretending.

Why in heavens did the government not bring back the eco-energy retrofit program? It is completely baffling. The Liberals go on and on about the carbon tax as the most effective measure to move forward and address the rise in greenhouse gases in Canada. However, review after review, including by people who are very supportive of the direction the government is going, have said that the carbon tax alone will not do it, that the government needs to be expediting parallel measures.

One of those measures is the eco-energy retrofit. If Canadians in their homes and in small businesses are to have a carbon tax imposed on them, particularly in the jurisdictions where the Liberals say they will have to impose a federal tax, then one way to potentially sell that and get buy-in is to say they will help them reduce their energy use. It is baffling. Also, there is the national building code. We need to expedite that. Article after article about this says that we need to be fast-tracking a more modern national building code. How much of the building stock is going to be built again and then go through the process of having to retrofit? It would be welcomed if the government moved forward on these two measures.

● (1335)

We have heard the Minister of Environment recently go on and on about the government looking forward to collaborating with its European neighbours. I would encourage the government to look at the United Kingdom, which has established, by law, binding targets and an independent commission that audits and advises it on how well it is delivering on its targets every five years. This is the kind of measure that we tabled previously, and we would like to see the government adopt it to ensure transparency and accountability.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Edmonton Strathcona, who has been working on this issue for decades, as have I.

As she pointed out, the Paris agreement sets long-term targets that are essential to ensuring that civilization can survive. That is why it aims at ensuring that the global average temperature does not increase 2° more compared to the global average temperature before the industrial revolution, and why there is the all-important target of striving to avoid going above a 1.5° global average temperature increase. The difference between 1.5° and 2° is not the difference between a safe zone and another safe zone. Two degrees is a large degree of gamble on such things as losing the western Antarctic ice sheet, or all of the low-lying island states almost certainly being submerged.

I agree with what my hon. friend suggested in her speech. Would she agree with me that we need to see more being done? Over 30 U.S. states and over 80 U.S. mayors have said they will continue to work to achieve the Paris targets. We need to step up Canada's role because our current target is incompatible with the long-term Paris goals. Would my hon. friend from Edmonton Strathcona agree that this is the moment to withdraw our weak target and ratchet up and do more?

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been dedicated to this topic for quite a few decades.

What troubles me is that there are many simple things that could be done that are actually on the list of matters in the budget that the government recognizes should be done. The government has said that it will help northern communities to get off diesel, and this would be relatively easy to do. A good reason for that is because diesel is contaminating those communities. However, zero dollars have been committed this year to help in doing that.

Why is that critical? It is critical because at the same time that our indigenous communities are begging for support to build better, high-quality housing, we could be building energy-efficient housing and putting measures in place to switch them over from diesel fuel.

There are so many measures that are not astronomical in price that could make all the difference in the world to supporting these communities. I would like to see the government move forward with more money in the supplementaries for real measures.

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the member on the environment committee. We have been able to come to a lot of agreement on a number of reports, and I look forward to continuing to work with her on that.

I agree with my colleague that we need to take a multitude of different approaches to dealing with climate change and trying to reduce the footprint of pollution that we are creating today. Our government has done an exceptional job in moving in that direction.

By imposing a price on pollution, by investing in innovation, we are hollowing out the need for fossil fuel-based energy. We are creating greater amounts of green technology and reducing the cost of that technology through these investments. We are also working on adopting better building codes and a regulatory regime that would have an impact on the burning of fossil fuels and reduction of our footprint in that direction.

Would the member not agree that these are the kinds of measures we need to take? We have further to go, but at least we are heading in the direction that we need to go in.

• (1340)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I have no quibbles with the list of initiatives that are listed in the budget. My quibble is that there are no dollars. For the life of me, I do not understand that while the deficit is rising, it is not coming from investments in cleaner energy, or from investments in reducing homeowners' energy costs.

The Liberal government, to its credit, followed in the footsteps of Alberta, which moved toward a faster period to shut down coal-fired power, a campaign that I worked on for many years. That is costing the Government of Alberta a lot of money. When the federal government said it would speed that up, why did it not provide some dollars to help with those costs? Alberta could then have put more money into helping people to retrofit and helping to move toward renewable power.

I would like to see more innovation and more fast-tracked support, with real dollars, and not to support merely thinking and planning.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to continue the debate on reiterating our support for the Paris Accord. I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, who gave an excellent speech and is very familiar with the issue.

Of course, we reiterate our support for the Paris Agreement. It is strange that the Liberal government has decided to use today's motion to do something that has already been done, rather than take further action and adopt a plan or stronger legislation to fight against climate change.

The NDP has been at the forefront of this issue for a long time, and it has called for strong and robust legislation that responds to needs related to climate change. Jack Layton, who was once my boss, worked very hard on this issue. He tabled a bill on the government's responsibility regarding climate change, because signing an agreement is not enough. We also have responsibilities. Year after year, the government has to be accountable and must take concrete action, but the Liberal government does none of that, although it is very important.

In 2010, when the Liberals were in opposition along with the NDP, this bill received a majority vote from the opposition parties, because the Conservative government was the minority at the time. We had led this very strong bill, which constituted a much more ambitious framework than that of Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, which was unambitious but was still adopted by the Liberals. Unfortunately, the senators, who are unelected, killed Jack Layton's bill, which was intended to strengthen the fight against climate change. It is very disappointing.

Today, we are talking about Mr. Trump's withdrawal from the Paris accord, but I remember that when I arrived in the House, in 2011, the government withdrew from the Kyoto protocol. We must not forget that. It was absolutely deplorable. Some people say we should follow the Conservatives' lead, but I have my doubts.

Let us say what needs to be said about the Liberals. They went to Paris and signed an important accord to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C, which is very important. Then they came back to Canada and said that in order to achieve that, they were going to keep the Conservatives' pitiful plan. It does not work. Obviously, there were people who said that we could not go on like that. We need to take real action in order to move forward on this.

For the moment, to move forward, the Liberals have put a price on carbon. I would like to say that this is a very good initiative. Everyone that is serious about fighting climate change, including every scientist and environmentalist, says this has to be the first thing we do. On that subject, the Conservative Party alone in the House does not seem to understand this, except for a certain Conservative member who was a candidate in his party's leadership race. This is extremely important. I hope that everyone will realize that this is a good measure and we have to move forward.

*Government Orders*

However, while a price on carbon is a step in the right direction, it is not sufficient. We have to have a comprehensive plan, and in that regard, the Liberals have only failures to show. They were supposed to invest \$1 billion a year, starting in 2016, to implement the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, but ultimately, they did nothing.

● (1345)

We were waiting for action in the 2017 budget, but what was announced in 2017? Nothing. What is going on, we wonder? There is also nothing in 2018. They will start investing when the next election comes around.

This is unfortunately very disappointing. We have to act; everyone says that today. I recall very clearly the report of the round table on the environment and the economy. The only federal institution that combined economy and environment said that when it came to climate change, not acting would result in losses of \$5 billion per year by 2020, and eventually \$43 billion by 2050. Investing \$1 billion per year is not that much when we consider that it may be costing as much as \$5 billion per year at present. Unfortunately, the Liberals have put nothing in place to combat that. Once again, the round table on the environment and the economy, the only non-partisan institution that put the economy and the environment together, was abolished by the Conservatives, and that is a sad track record, if I can come back to that.

What needs to be done now? What should the Liberals do? They should read the recommendations from the Green Budget Coalition, a coalition of scientists and environmentalists who researched and developed a balanced budget that sets out commitments the government should make and how those actions will save money.

For example, as members pointed out, we have to invest in all kinds of measures. Fine, but which ones? The parliamentary budget officer mentioned this, and the Green Budget Coalition recommended that the Government of Canada bring in a law with a timeline established in budget 2017 to eliminate all preferential tax treatment for the fossil fuel industry. The Minister of Finance, who spoke earlier, did not follow those recommendations. Bottom line, no more subsidies for the fossil fuel industry, which currently gets about \$1.5 billion per year.

Certain governments received fossil awards at international climate change conferences. The message is that they should turn away from fossil fuels and toward fair energy policy and decarbonization.

There is another important recommendation, an essential recommendation. In 2012, I moved a motion on the federal government's plan on energy efficiency, which my colleague talked about earlier. The current Liberal government has not presented any plan to improve energy efficiency. This is very disappointing.

Here is what our plan states, and I quote:

To support energy efficiency, the Green Budget Coalition recommends that the Government of Canada provide \$400 million per year for the next five years to re-establish an energy efficiency home retrofit program, similar to the ecoENERGY Retrofit program...

I had proposed a program similar to the eco-energy program. Unfortunately, the Conservative government did not support it, and the Liberals did not bring it back, as they should have.

This brings me to move the following motion, seconded by the member for Edmonton Strathcona:

That the amendment be amended by deleting all the words after the word "realistic and achievable approach", and substituting the following: "and by finding the right balance between environmental protection and economic growth, and that the House ask the government to commit to new science-based targets that will achieve Canada's commitment under the Accord, and to specific measures and funding to achieve these reductions in greenhouse gas emissions."

● (1350)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand some of the comments the member made. Given that his party, in the last election, claimed it was going to balance the budget, he is talking an awful lot about how much money he would spend on trying to satisfy our climate change commitments. He criticized our government for the lack of spending that he sees with respect to our commitments, yet there has been \$20 billion for public transit, \$20 billion for climate change and green infrastructure, and billions of dollars invested in innovation.

Given the commitments that we have made to try to tackle and meet our climate change commitments, how in the world was his party planning to do so and balance the budget at the same time?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House of what my hon. colleague from Edmonton Strathcona said earlier. The Liberals are not currently running a deficit because of all the investments that they have made in combatting climate change. They are running a deficit because of their own mismanagement. They have invested practically nothing in the fight against climate change. However, if my hon. colleague wants some advice on how to balance the budget and address climate change, I suggest that he read the recommendations made by the Green Budget Coalition. Scientists and environmentalists from across the country made recommendations for a balanced budget that fights against climate change.

The first thing we need to do is to eliminate the some \$1.5 billion in subsidies given to fossil fuels and invest that money in an energy efficiency program, as I have been proposing since 2012.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would be able to tell me what his feelings are with respect to this. We heard the other side say it would throw millions of dollars here and billions of dollars there. What about the initiatives that we have going on in this country right now, such as what was mentioned earlier, getting rid of diesel generation in our rural communities and improving things like solar and thermal energy?

I wonder if he could comment on where we could spend money within our country on items that we already know are proven to reduce greenhouse gases.



*Statements by Members*

● (1355)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is absolutely right. The Liberal government has been dragging its feet for two years and will continue to do so in the coming years. In the 2016 budget, \$1 billion was supposed to be allocated to the pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change to support measures like the ones my colleague mentioned and to help northern communities that unfortunately have to use diesel fuel as a source of electricity and heating.

The government could invest in this fair energy transition. It is extremely important, and the NDP has a plan to move forward with the transition toward renewable, low-carbon energy that would also be fair for Canadians.

The government needs to think about that transition and support those who would be negatively affected by it. They need to be supported.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, environmental protection affects all aspects of our lives.

Does the hon. member think that the government should have used its latest budget to bring back the eco-energy building retrofit program and to promote sustainable building in order to help protect the environment and create jobs at the same time?

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, the government should also have invested in affordable housing. I know that my hon. colleague from Hochelaga does a tremendous amount of work on supporting and promoting affordable housing. In future investments, we must ensure that the National Building Code is improved and updated to include energy efficiency in every construction project, not just for homes, but also for buildings, industries, businesses, and other structures.

This is a tangible measure that the Liberal government should have put in place two years ago already. It could have introduced an energy efficiency program that is good not only for fighting climate change, but also for creating jobs and allowing low-income Canadians to save money on heating and their home energy needs.

It is a very important measure that could have been included in the plan to fight climate change. Unfortunately, the Liberal government has yet to do that.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[Translation]***ALFRED-PELLAN**

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Alfred-Pellan is bursting with talented people who do amazing things every day.

Today I would like to share some of their achievements in several different categories: Chloé Panetta in figure skating; Anne-Sophie Gagnon-Métellus, a young singer who participated in a show called *Virtuose*; and Jessica Delnegro, in equestrian events.

Winners of the 2017 Dunamis prize are Dalila Chennafi, Josée Dufour, and André Hétu.

Winners of the 2017 Hosia prize are Josée Lefebvre, Mongi Zitouni, Pierre Giguère, Roch Isabelle, Claude Lessard, and Agathe Plante.

Many other people in my riding deserve recognition. That is why I am looking forward to July, when I will be giving Canada 150 medals to winners of my “150 outstanding citizens” contest. Details are on my website.

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**ATTACKS IN MANCHESTER AND LONDON**

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how many times must we rise to condemn these barbaric terrorist acts that keep happening? How many times must we rise to tell the victims' loved ones that our hearts go out to them, to tell the wounded that we wish them a swift recovery? How many more times before we end up just getting used to it?

London Bridge will not fall down. Manchester will remain united. We will stand together in solidarity, and we are asking the government and the entire world to do everything in their power to stop these cowardly terrorist attacks on our way of life.

It is time to take action. These crimes must stop. Is this the world we want to see our kids grow up in? We have a duty to act in memory of the victims and for future generations.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

*[English]***DOMINION DAY IN BARKERVILLE**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with Canada's 150th birthday fast approaching, I proudly rise in the House to share a little piece of history stemming from my riding of Cariboo—Prince George.

The first Dominion Day in Barkerville, British Columbia, took place just past midnight, July 1, 1868 before B.C. was even part of Canada. Unfortunately, cannons were in short supply so black-powder charges were detonated between stacked anvils, providing an improvised 21-gun salute. I am told the celebration was filled with games, laughter, and of course, fireworks.

Historical records would suggest that Barkerville began celebrating Dominion Day 11 years before it was even officially nationally celebrated. Once again, we are presented with an example of the true pioneering spirit of the Cariboo.

*Statements by Members*

As we reflect on the past and now look forward to the 150th birthday celebrations happening in just a few short weeks, I wish members and their families all a happy Canada Day and indeed a happy Dominion Day.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MADAWASKA—RESTIGOUCHE GRADUATES**

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, June is a rather special month. It marks the beginning of the summer and the end of the school year.

[English]

I would like to take this moment to wish all of the 2017 grads of Madawaska—Restigouche the best of luck in their choices after high school graduation.

[Translation]

I am talking about students from École Aux quatre vents in Dalhousie, Roland-Pépin high school in Campbellton, and Marie-Gaétane high school in Kedgwick, Alexandre J. Savoie high school in Saint-Quentin, École Grande-Rivière in St-Léonard, and Cité des Jeunes A.-M.-Sormany in Edmundston.

[English]

It also includes the grads from Dalhousie Regional High School, Campbellton's Sugarloaf Senior High School, and Edmundston's Saint Mary's Academy. Our young people are now entering a new chapter in their lives.

[Translation]

Dear graduates, I wish you the best of luck in your endeavours next year.

[English]

Some will choose college or university; others will jump immediately into the labour market.

[Translation]

Whatever path you choose, approach this new chapter in your life with gusto and do your very best.

[English]

Once again, congratulations and good luck to all those who are graduating in 2017.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the current government has been vociferous in defending its legislative and policy agenda, alleging it is protecting the environment while supporting economic development. However, these claims are roundly discredited even by the government's own expert panels, which report that public credibility in federal processes for reviewing and approving major energy projects is seriously broken. Significant environmental impacts are being given short shrift, including those to transboundary waters, indigenous

rights and title, and threatened species and habitat, as well as feasible less-impacting alternatives.

The growing number of lawsuits by indigenous communities offers similar evidence of a deeply eroded trust in the government. Canadians, particularly in impacted communities and particularly indigenous peoples, are demanding a voice well beyond individual projects and reviews. They want a seat at the table to ensure energy law and policy reflect their environmental, social, and cultural priorities.

On World Environment Day, is it too much to hope for real change to finally give Canadians a voice in their energy future?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**RAMADAN**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the Muslim community in Scarborough-Guildwood a peaceful and blessed Ramadan.

[English]

During this month of fasting and prayer, Muslims around the world engage in spiritual reflection, acts of charity, and good deeds. They are reminded of the suffering of those less fortunate and contemplate the values of compassion, empathy, and generosity.

[Translation]

Ramadan is a time for renewing faith and strengthening the bonds between family and friends.

[English]

I wish all those celebrating in my community and across the country Ramadan Mubarak.

[Translation]

As you fast and offer prayers, may you find greater peace, joy, and enlightenment.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[English]

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members will join me in commending among our fellow Canadians those Muslims who are fasting during this month of Ramadan.

In Canada, we proudly respect the hard-won right of all people to practise their faith. Unfortunately, some Muslim communities around the world will face severe discrimination as they seek to undertake this religious practice. Muslim Uighurs in China face various efforts by the government to prevent them from fasting: restaurants being forced to remain open; people being forced into 24-hour guard shifts, which make fasting virtually impossible; and students being forced to watch Communist propaganda films on the day of their prayers. In at least one school, students are regularly forced by administrators to eat and drink.

Uighurs, as well as Tatars in Russian-occupied Ukraine and Rohingya in Burma, face severe religious and ethnic discrimination. Muslim minority communities continue to face severe religious discrimination in many Muslim majority countries.

Rather than continuing to curry favour with brutal human rights violators, Canada must be a strong voice for justice and religious freedom.

Ramadan Mubarak.

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#### FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to honour the memory of parliamentarians who have left us in the past year. I want to thank them for dedicating their lives to serving Canadians.

As everyone knows in the House, parliamentarians often sacrifice careers and precious family time to contribute to Canada's thriving and stable democracy.

[Translation]

They make those sacrifices because they believe in our country, in our democracy, and in the importance of helping to advance our society. They are part of the men and women who, over the decades, have given their all to building a strong, united, and prosperous Canada that is open to the world.

These colleagues will forever remain in our collective memory. We thank them for their courage, their determination, and their desire to build a better future for all Canadians.

[English]

I thank them for their precious contribution to our country. They will never, ever be forgotten.

\* \* \*

#### PORTUGAL DAY ON THE HILL

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, [*Member spoke in Portuguese as follows:*]

*Bom dia a todos.*

[English]

I rise today to announce that tomorrow, June 6, the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group will be hosting our second annual Portugal Day on the Hill celebration. This year, everyone is welcome to join us in the East Block courtyard from noon to 2 p.m. for a delicious Portuguese barbeque. Please come hungry.

Portugal Day, June 10, is celebrated both in Portugal and around the world by Portuguese. It is a special day of pride for me, both as a Portuguese immigrant who came to Canada at the age of two with my family and as a resident of Mississauga, a city I am happy to call home to over 20,000 Portuguese Canadians, many of whom are constituents living in the riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville.

Portugal Day honours the date of the death of the 16th century poet Luis de Camões, who captured in words Portugal's age of discovery.

#### Statements by Members

To our Portuguese community across Canada—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

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#### CALGARY UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I joined fellow Calgarians on their journey of all things Ukraine at the 8th annual Calgary Ukrainian Festival. Every year this Calgary festival aims to inform, educate, and entertain in a celebration of the beautiful customs and traditions of Ukraine. It offers the unique and rich Ukrainian heritage brought to Canada over 125 years ago.

I want to take the opportunity to honour the memory of all those brave Ukrainians who traversed the oceans in search of a better life for their families and who, in the process, proudly contributed to the rich cultural history of Canada.

Through Ukrainian folks songs, dance performances, traditional cuisine, arts and crafts, and especially, beautiful pysanka eggs, this weekend's festival offered Canadians of all backgrounds the opportunity to appreciate and experience true Ukrainian hospitality, undiminished by the passage of time.

I would like to congratulate the organizers, including my friend Michael Ilnycky, on another successful festival that showcased the rich and vibrant culture of Calgary's Ukrainian community.

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#### STEEL DAYS

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my riding of Sault Ste. Marie and all Canadians, for the second year in a row I am honoured to rise in the House and extend a warm welcome to members of the Canadian Steel Producers Association as they partake in their annual Steel Days on Parliament Hill.

Domestic steel operations directly employ over 22,000 middle-class Canadians while supporting an additional 100,000 indirect jobs. The Canadian Steel Producers are the national voice of Canada's \$14-billion steel industry. Member companies, which include Algoma and Tenaris, annually produce approximately 13 million tonnes of primary steel and over one million tonnes of steel pipe and tube products in Canadian facilities. Canadian steel supports a healthy Canadian economy, which benefits Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Please join with me in welcoming members of the Canadian Steel Producers Association to Parliament Hill.

*Statements by Members*

●(1410)

*[Translation]***SAINT-LAURENT–MONT-ROYAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the Saint-Laurent–Mont-Royal chamber of commerce and industry Alpha gala last Thursday. Nearly 500 people were there to celebrate and highlight the excellence and entrepreneurial spirit of businesses in my beautiful riding of Saint-Laurent.

*[English]*

Winners such as Novatech International, Green Cross Biotherapeutics, BlueMed Medical Supplies, Brivia Group, as well as Legal Logik and many others are a few of the outstanding examples of what we can accomplish together.

*[Translation]*

I would also like to thank the Saint-Laurent–Mont-Royal chamber of commerce and industry and Développement économique Saint-Laurent for the strong support they provide the riding's many businesses.

I thank them for helping to create business and employment opportunities for thousands of Canadians.

*[English]*

I look forward to continuing to work with everyone to help our community thrive.

\* \* \*

**PTSD AWARENESS MONTH**

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, June is post-traumatic stress disorder month and is dedicated to raising awareness of those it affects. This month is also meant to teach all of us how we can help those who suffer from PTSD.

As a former firefighter, I am very proud to have supported the work done by the member from Cariboo—Prince George on Bill C-211, an act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder.

PTSD does not discriminate. It can affect anyone at any age at any time at any stage of their lives. It affects those in combat situations, veterans, first responders, and other occupations, like doctors and nurses.

I would also like to recognize the work of Natalie Harris, a Barrie resident who, as a paramedic, suffers from PTSD, but it does not prevent her from selflessly helping others with PTSD. Natalie was in Ottawa last month testifying at the health committee. She is an inspiration to me and to so many others.

Let us all work together to raise awareness and help those suffering from PTSD.

**ISLAMIC RELIEF CANADA**

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Islamic Relief Canada on 10 years of success, growth, and accomplishments. IRC is a humanitarian organization that provides assistance to the most needy at home and abroad.

In Canada, they were there for Fort McMurray after the wildfires. They have supported soup kitchens in Iqaluit and have helped resettle hundreds of refugees across Canada. Internationally, they are combatting gender-based violence, raising awareness against female genital mutilation, campaigning against hunger, and responding to natural and human-made disasters.

This year they are celebrating their 10th year in Canada. During those years, they have helped 30 million individuals, regardless of their race, faith, gender, or sexuality. That is almost the entire population of Canada.

I want to thank Islamic Relief Canada staff past and present, boards of directors, volunteers, and supporters for being exemplary global citizens who represent the best of humanity.

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**CHRISTINE ARCHIBALD**

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 30-year-old Christine Archibald, from Castlegar B.C., was killed on London Bridge when three terrorists turned a van into a weapon and targeted civilians walking on that bridge. She was one of seven people who lost their lives in the horrifying attacks. Her fiancé, Tyler, watched her die in his arms. This is such a tragic loss, almost beyond comprehension.

Christine has been described as a bright light by those around her. She dedicated her life to helping the homeless and people suffering from addictions. Her family said, "She had room in her heart for everyone and believed everyone was to be valued and respected." Her life deserved that same respect.

On behalf of all New Democrats, we extend our deepest condolences to Christine's family and loved ones. We are so very sorry for their loss.

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**CHRISTINE ARCHIBALD**

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, the people of the U.K. were once again viciously attacked by a group of radical Islamic extremists. This follows a string of attacks in Manchester, in Kabul, and in Egypt, in the attack that targeted and killed 28 Christians.

These Islamic extremist thugs and cowards are the lowest form of humanity. They are weak and they are impotent and they are only filled with hatred. There is no excuse for their existence, and there is no excuse for their actions. As Canadians, we must remain vigilant, but we must also join with our allies to confront and destroy radical Islamic extremism and terrorism in all its forms.

This latest attack hit us here at home. A Canadian woman from B.C., Christine Archibald, was among those killed. She had moved to the U.K. to be with her fiancé Tyler. Chrissy was a social worker, dedicating her life to those who are less fortunate. She was known as generous, kind-spirited, and a bright light.

Today we honour those who lost their lives in London, and we reaffirm that light, like the light Chrissy showed, will always outshine the darkness.

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•(1415)

#### CHRISTINE ARCHIBALD

**Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness I rise to share our condolences with the families and friends of those killed in the attack in London this past weekend. We grieve with those who have lost loved ones and wish all those injured a full and speedy recovery.

Our thoughts and prayers are especially with the family of Canadian Christine Archibald in their time of immense loss. Christine's family recently wrote, "She had room in her heart for everyone and believed every person was to be valued and respected." They added that "She would have had no understanding of the casual cruelty that caused her death", and called on us to honour her by making our communities better places.

These hateful acts do not deter us. They only make us stronger, strengthen our resolve, and bring out the best in our nature. Our response remains consistent when confronted by violence. We stand together with our allies.

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#### ATTACK IN LONDON

**The Speaker:** Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand that there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attack in London and to commemorate Christine Archibald, from Castlegar, British Columbia. I now invite hon. members to stand.

*[A moment of silence observed]*

### ORAL QUESTIONS

*[English]*

#### EVENTS IN UNITED KINGDOM

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, our friends and allies in the United Kingdom were once again attacked by radical Islamic terrorists. I want to thank the Prime Minister for his statement, and trust that all members stand in solidarity at this time.

A Canadian, Chrissy Archibald, from British Columbia, was a victim, and her family is asking Canadians to "Volunteer your time and labor or donate to a homeless shelter. Tell them Chrissy sent you." I want to echo that sentiment today.

#### Oral Questions

Can the Prime Minister please provide us with an update as to the government's response and reaction to this latest act of terror?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise to offer our condolences to the family and friends of Christine Archibald, who was a victim of Saturday's horrific attacks in London. As I reaffirmed with Prime Minister May an hour ago, we stand in solidarity with the British people.

*[Translation]*

The people of the United Kingdom have always been strong and resilient in the face of adversity.

*[English]*

This time will be no different.

*[Translation]*

Canadians stand with the British people, as well as with our allies, our friends, and our communities.

*[English]*

I also want to welcome and thank the leader of the official opposition for his question, and I look forward to working with him on issues of import to all Canadians.

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•(1420)

*[Translation]*

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is misleading Canadians about his \$35-billion infrastructure bank. He refuses to admit that taxpayers will be on the hook for bad projects.

However, we have learned that his own officials are telling investors that they can keep their profits, but the bank will absorb any losses incurred.

Can the Prime Minister tell us, once and for all, who will pay for failed infrastructure projects? Will it be foreign investors or Canadian taxpayers?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that we need to invest in infrastructure. That is the choice they made during the last election when they voted for a party with ambitious plans to build roads and bridges and invest in public transit and green infrastructure for the future and support our communities today and going forward.

However, there is such a desperate need for infrastructure all across the country that even our historic investments worth hundreds of billions of dollars will not be enough. That is why we are introducing a new tool to help build more infrastructure for Canadians.

*[English]*

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the historic investments in infrastructure came from the Conservative government, not from the Liberal government.

*Oral Questions*

Now the Prime Minister's billionaire friends have talked him into the infrastructure bank, and, guess what, Canadians will have to pay for it. It is not too late to do the right thing. He can listen to those who have raised serious concerns about this \$35-billion boondoggle waiting to happen.

Will the Prime Minister put the brakes on this scheme, or does he really want to force Canadian taxpayers to co-sign loans for the richest 1%?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we raised taxes for the richest 1% and lowered them for the middle class, which, unfortunately, the members opposite voted against. We are committed to making sure that middle-class Canadians get the infrastructure they need: community services, green infrastructure, the public transit that is so necessary. On top of our \$180 billion toward infrastructure, we know that drawing in private capital from around the world will get more things built for Canadians, will grow our economy, and create a better future for our kids.

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**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's message to foreign investors is: No credit, no problem.

[*Translation*]

On another note, we have been asking the Minister of Canadian Heritage for weeks now to cancel the partisan appointment of Ms. Meilleur as official languages commissioner.

Unfortunately, the minister is bound and determined to politicize the job by appointing a Liberal whom even the Prime Minister's advisers deemed too partisan for a Senate seat. This is ridiculous.

Will the Prime Minister do the sensible thing and cancel Ms. Meilleur's appointment?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we went through an open, transparent, merit-based appointment process.

For 10 years, the previous government always opted for partisan appointments. Now, we are choosing the right people regardless of their past political affiliation. We know Canadians need reassurance that the best possible people are getting these jobs. That is why we make sure to choose people from very different backgrounds who will serve their country, and that is what we will continue to do.

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the one thing we can count on about Liberals is that eventually they start acting like Liberals. Now Canadians are seeing the Prime Minister once again put the interests of a Liberal insider ahead of the integrity of our institutions. This time he is trying to ram through the appointment of Madeleine Meilleur as official languages commissioner. He wants us to believe that the only person qualified to serve in this non-partisan role just happens to be a lifelong Liberal who supported his leadership campaign.

When will the Prime Minister do the right thing, cancel this tainted nomination, and start a non-partisan process?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we came to power, we had to create a non-partisan process because the previous government had so politicized the appointments processes. One simply needs to remember the 49 last-minute partisan appointments that the Conservatives made in the dying days of their own government.

The fact is, we will not hold against any candidate who is qualified their past political affiliations. Canadians expect us to pick the very best people for the jobs. That is exactly what we always do.

\* \* \*

● (1425)

[*Translation*]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight. The infrastructure privatization bank will charge user fees, there will not be a single member of the public sector on its board of directors, only the private sector, and the only projects that will be approved are ones that are profitable to the investors.

The government is borrowing money at very low rates, and that is reflected on its balance sheet. However, when that loan is managed by investors over a period of 30 years, it costs much more, and that is not reflected on the balance sheet.

Is this bank some sort of scheme to avoid increasing the deficit by making this money disappear from their balance sheet?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the infrastructure bank will allow us to create new historic investments in infrastructure that go well beyond what we are putting on the table.

We know that Canadians need more public transit, more investment in roads, bridges, commercial infrastructure, and green infrastructure.

Indeed, the infrastructure bank will allow us to have the infrastructure that Canadians need now and in the future.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what he does not say is that those investments are going to come at a high cost to Canadians, who want to know why they cannot get Liberals in government to behave like the Liberals they vote for at election time. For instance, the Liberals have promised an infrastructure bank that would “provide loan guarantees and small capital contributions to provinces and municipalities”, not the BlackRock group. Nothing about user fees and tolls. Nothing about taxpayers taking on private risk. Liberals ran on a program that would have benefited communities, but, once elected, turned it into a \$35-billion slush fund for their international corporate buddies. We want to know, where is their sense of shame?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I was very pleased to attend the Federation of Canadian Municipalities meeting last week, where we were congratulated for being such extraordinary partners to municipalities across the country. We have demonstrated that we understand how important municipalities are as partners, how much the federal government needs to be there to both provide capital and unlock capital, so municipalities and provinces can achieve everything they want for their citizens. That is our focus. That is why we work so well with municipalities and provinces. That is what we will continue to do for Canadians.

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**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder how many of the small communities that are going to be left out of the infrastructure bank were clapping when that was said.

Every few days, new revelations come out about the Liberal pick for the official languages commissioner and her connection to the Liberal Party, to the PMO, and to the heritage minister's own office.

The partisanship in this appointment is so blatant that today a minority languages group out of New Brunswick will be seeking a legal injunction to stop it.

What is it going to take for the Prime Minister to admit that this time he has gone too far? When is he going to finally stop pretending that Madame Meilleur can be seen as an independent officer of Parliament?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we go back, I recommended that the member opposite actually look at our budget where he would see \$2 billion for small communities, because we understand how important small communities are for the future of our country.

On the issue of merit-based appointments, we will not hold against any qualified candidate their background in politics. We know Canadians expect the very top qualified people to serve their country. That is what we look for. That is why we were proud to choose former Prime Minister Kim Campbell to help us choose our next—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is becoming a joke. Every day this Prime Minister prattles on about the middle class and those working hard to join it. I would like to challenge him on that, but I cannot do so because the Prime Minister is undermining the independence of officers of Parliament and the value of official languages in this country, to the point where an injunction has been filed against him.

Will the Prime Minister show a little respect and do the right thing for once, out of respect for our linguistic minorities, and refuse Ms. Meilleur's appointment?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect the very best people to be appointed in a merit-based process, and we will appoint the right people without any partisanship. We will not hold any past political affiliations against a qualified candidate. That is what Canadians expect. We will continue to stand up for our country's official languages and pick the very best people for the jobs available.

● (1430)

*[English]*

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we just learned that Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick has filed an injunction in Federal Court to block the appointment of a partisan nominee, Madeleine Meilleur, in the position for official languages commissioner.

We know that her appointment has lost the trust of key official languages communities, the people she will be entrusted to represent, yet they are filing court injunctions to block this partisan nomination.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, withdraw the nomination, go back to the drawing board, and appoint someone without key donations to the Liberal Party?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the context of the appointment of the official languages commissioner, we were committed to finding the most qualified candidate. That is exactly what we have done by appointing Madeleine Meilleur as the next official languages commissioner, because she has the expertise and experience.

Therefore, I would also like to remind my colleagues that 95 leaders of the francophone community called upon the House to make sure to stop the political games and support Madeleine Meilleur, because she is a very good candidate.

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the political games are being played by that party that is going to its donation lists to make partisan appointments as officers of this place.

*Oral Questions*

Last week, the Minister of Canadian Heritage said that there was a firewall between her and the staff members in her office who worked directly with and for Madeleine Meilleur, but not a single ounce of evidence has been laid before the House of any proof that this firewall was in place before she was appointed as official languages commissioner. Therefore, I would ask the minister, what evidence can she share with the House that a firewall existed before the nomination took place?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity in the House to explain the process many times. There were 72 candidates that participated in the process. An independent firm went through all the CVs. Afterwards, there were 12 candidates that passed the interviews, and 10 of them went through testing. There were reference checks done. Ultimately, there was a small list of candidates that I had the chance to interview. In the end, because of the great expertise and experience of Madeline Meilleur, she was clearly the best-qualified candidate to become the official languages commissioner.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, breach of trust, partisanship, loose ethics, and the list goes on. The Liberal Party opposite is taking us back 15 years to the time of the sponsorship scandal, when the doors were thrown wide open to welcome friends who contributed to the party.

Today, the Liberals are appointing party donors and tough luck for everyone else. Ms. Meilleur is the perfect example.

When will the Minister of Canadian Heritage stop making up stories, tell members the truth, and redo the selection process?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when searching for a new official languages commissioner, we wanted to use a rigorous, merit-based process. We wanted to find the best person for the job, and that is exactly what we did.

After multiple rounds of interviews and a selection process, Madeleine Meilleur clearly emerged as the candidate with the most experience and expertise.

I would also like to remind my colleagues that 95 leaders of the francophone community signed a letter asking members of the House to stop playing political games and support Madeleine Meilleur's appointment.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the beginning of yet another week sees us still waiting for answers.

Just imagine if I had given \$5,000 to the Conservative Party and \$500 to Mr. Harper's leadership campaign and soon afterward been selected to serve as official languages commissioner.

Just imagine the Liberal Party's reaction. The Liberals would have been up in arms. It is about time they realized they are not above the law.

Do we need to call for a public inquiry into this process?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that, had she been a candidate,

she could have gone through the process, but it would have been up to her to demonstrate her qualifications.

As the Prime Minister has said a number of times, we respect public services. The fact that Madeleine Meilleur had a political career is something we considered to be part of her qualifications.

● (1435)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have managed to do the impossible. They have turned the selection of a non-partisan appointment into one of the most divisive issues in years among Acadian and francophone communities.

Michel Doucet of the University of Moncton, one of 10 other candidates for the position of official languages commissioner, says that the Liberals have made the selection process too political. He is also on record as saying that the Liberals have lost all credibility over the Meilleur nomination.

Why is the Prime Minister not listening to those who want the partisan games to stop and want the process of appointing this officer of Parliament to be redone?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague of the expertise and experience of Madeleine Meilleur.

For 30 years, she has been a very strong advocate in favour of the promotion and protection of official languages in the country. She was there at a time when there needed to be an intervention to protect the hospital for the francophone community in Ottawa. She was there at the first battle to make sure that ultimately official languages rights would be set in place. Therefore, that has been her battle throughout.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this sham of a process is anything but open and transparent. Madeleine Meilleur is a major Liberal donor and her key former staff now work for the Minister of Canadian Heritage in the exact same capacity.

If we are expected to believe this is a coincidence, then my chances of being hit by lightning while holding the winning Lotto 649 ticket and being a guest on Kelly Ripa and Ryan Seacrest are pretty good.

Everyone knows the fix is in. Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and start a new and fair search for Canada's next official languages commissioner?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the experience, the expertise and the integrity of Mrs. Meilleur has been recognized by many on both sides of the House. I would like to remind my colleague about all her experience.

The fact that she has been involved in the protection of the Montfort Hospital, her access to health care in both official language, especially the francophone community, and also the fact that she was a champion for the creation of the French language services commissioner in the Ontario government certainly makes her a very strong candidate to become the next official languages commissioner.



*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**MARIJUANA**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals promised to legalize marijuana, 15,000 people, including 7,000 individuals under the age of 25, have been arrested for possession.

The government keeps repeating that current laws still apply and that it cannot help young people who wind up with criminal records, all for doing something that the Prime Minister himself admits to having committed. Talk about a double standard.

Will the Minister of Youth stand up in the House and explain to these young people how he plans to ensure they are not stuck with a criminal record for the rest of their lives?

[English]

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have stated many times, our government is committed to legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis.

The process in place right now simply is not working. That is why we engaged a task force that provided substantive recommendations: health experts, justice experts, public safety experts. We have introduced legislation.

I hope all members in the House move this legislation forward so we have a system in place and we have a comprehensive regime that we have built with provinces and territories.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that since the Liberals were elected, more than 15,000 Canadians have been charged for simple possession of marijuana.

The Prime Minister has admitted to smoking pot and recently said that his family's contacts helped get his brother off a possession charge. He said that they were confident that their resources and connections would be able to "make the problem go away."

Would the Prime Minister be willing to share the contact information of those lawyers with the 15,000 Canadians charged with the exact same crime?

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, we are committed to legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis in order to keep it out of the hands of children and the profits out of the hands of criminals.

Simply decriminalizing at this time will not achieve those objectives. That is why we are committed to working very diligently, now that we have introduced legislation, with the provinces and territories so we can have a comprehensive regime in place in the country.

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● (1440)

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every parent deserves the right to know when a high-risk

sex offender moves into his or her neighbourhood. However, unbelievably, the Minister of Public Safety is considering scrapping a publicly accessible sex offender registry out of concern for, get this, the rights of high-risk sex offenders.

How, in good conscience, can the Minister of Public Safety stand in the way of the right of parents to know when a high-risk sex offender moves in next door?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is entirely untrue, and unfortunately very histrionic.

Our government takes very seriously the safety of our children. It ensures that law enforcement and communities have the tools they need to keep our children safe. When a potentially dangerous offender is about to be released from prison, Correctional Service alerts police. If police agencies determine there is a danger, they alert the public. We ensure that everyone is kept safe.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, time and again, the Liberals place the rights of criminals first, whether it be opposing mandatory sentences for violent offenders or now putting the rights of sex offenders ahead of the rights of parents to know if one has moved in next door.

Instead of worrying about sex offenders, why will the minister not do the right thing for once and put the rights of parents and the rights of children first?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member can keep repeating the same nonsense, but it does not make it true. The reality is this, and it is important to state. Every single member in the House takes the responsibility of protecting children incredibly seriously. When the member stands in his place and casts aspersions that somehow we do not care as much as he does, it is unbecoming of this place.

I will say to you that we take the safety of our children, we take the safety of our communities, and the safety of our families with the utmost seriousness, and act every day and comport ourselves—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I hope the parliamentary secretary is referring to the Chair when he uses the word "you". Of course, he should be.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' partisan interim procurement to replace our aging CF-18s has turned into a full-on boondoggle.

First, experts told the government that we did not need an interim measure. Now the Liberals have suspended talks with Boeing to purchase 18 Super Hornets, citing that it is no longer a trusted partner because the Liberals want to protect Bombardier's bottom line. So much for the minister's fabricated capability gap.

*Oral Questions*

Is the Minister of National Defence trying to protect his rich friends at Bombardier or is he looking for an excuse to get out of this terrible and ill-advised sole-source deal with Boeing?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the CF-18s, we have announced a number of measures to make sure we move ahead as quickly as possible with an open competition to replace the entire fleet. We are investing in the legacy fleet as well. We are also training new pilots. We are continuing our discussions with the U.S. government for the interim gap measure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for months, the Minister of National Defence told us that the government had urgent reasons related to national security for going ahead with its misguided plan to purchase 18 Super Hornets from Boeing.

Does the government really believe that we do not see through its tactic? Now the government just wants to protect the interests of Bombardier, to the point where it is putting those interests ahead of the safety of Canadians and our commitments to NATO and NORAD, if you listen closely to what the minister is saying.

Will the minister admit that he was the architect of a fake capability gap and finally agree to an open and transparent procurement process immediately?

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the previous government believed that the risk management and capability gap between our NORAD and NATO commitments were adequate, but for us it is not. We will be replacing the entire fleet of fighters with an open competition. We will also be investing in the legacy fleet. Our discussion with the U.S. government will continue to have an interim gap measure as well.

\* \* \*

● (1445)

[*Translation*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is World Environment Day. The Liberals promised to reinstate protective measures for all our lakes and rivers, but they are upholding the Conservatives' policies.

The current President of the Treasury Board described the previous government's changes as catastrophic and dangerous for our lakes and rivers. In my riding, the Noire, Yamaska, and La Renne rivers are suffering the consequences of this broken promise.

If the Liberals are so concerned about the environment, when are they going to reinstate the necessary measures to protect all our lakes and rivers?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, we intend to reinstate many of the protective measures that were removed by the previous government.

We recently received the report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, which contained certain

recommendations. We very much appreciate those recommendations. We will continue to work on this over the summer, particularly by consulting indigenous peoples. We will reinstate important measures for protecting navigable waters.

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**LABOUR**

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the government seemed quite content to hide behind the Chair to avoid answering the question. Now that you have ruled that the question was admissible, I will ask it again.

Given the labour dispute currently affecting the Parliamentary Protective Service and the employer's refusal to negotiate, will the Prime Minister consider reforming the Parliament of Canada Act in order to guarantee the independence of the Parliamentary Protective Service?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As she is well aware, all members of the House, including the government members, are grateful to the men and women of the Parliamentary Protective Service. They do a wonderful job of protecting members of Parliament, staff, and visitors.

The dispute that she is referring to is a discussion between the Parliamentary Protective Service and the union representing the employees. The Board of Internal Economy believes that it is important to respect that process and to maintain our current approach to discussions.

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[*English*]

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with the growth and importance of the digital economy and digital service in Canada, access to a reliable telecommunications service at an affordable price is essential for Canadians. However, Canadians currently pay some of the highest prices for wireless and Internet services compared to other developed countries. Many in rural and remote communities still do not have full, reliable coverage.

Could the Minister of Innovation share with us what the government plans to do to ensure Canadians have access to a reliable, affordable wireless Internet service?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. In the digital and knowledge economy, we need to end the digital divide. That is why I announced this morning a set of measures that would help us enable technology to promote more competition and more investment in the telecommunications sector. This will provide better-quality networks, broad-based coverage in our rural and remote communities, and affordable prices, which means lower prices and better choice for consumers.

This is part of our overall innovation and skills plan that will help the middle class.

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**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, investors are being told that the infrastructure bank is the cornerstone of the infrastructure plan. Investors have access to the largest and most lucrative infrastructure projects in the country, but municipalities are being told by the Prime Minister that the bank is just a tool, just an option. Let us be clear. This bank is designed to give private investors a return as high as 20% on the backs of taxpayers.

Why are the Liberals telling investors one thing and taxpayers another?

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Harper government, we respect local decision-making and we allow local municipalities to determine which procurement model they want to use. The bank is an optional tool available to them, as the Prime Minister stated on Friday.

As a matter of fact, our plan is very much appreciated by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and many of other partners. They twice gave a standing ovation to the Prime Minister in recognition of the commitment we have shown to them.

• (1450)

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, “Are you negotiating with the bank or with cabinet?” It was the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan board that said that to the Senate banking committee on May 18.

How can Canadians have any confidence or trust in the government when even the investors who the Liberals claim will benefit from this bank are questioning its integrity?

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled by the hon. member’s question. On the one hand she accuses us of being too close with the private sector, with banks, and on the other hand she is telling us that government will have too much power in decision-making.

We have created the right balance. We will allow the bank to be an arm’s-length organization and make decisions on its own, but it will still be accountable to Parliament. We want to make sure that we undertake projects that are in the public interest, that help grow the economy and create opportunities for the middle class, and also help—

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

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a little story about the infrastructure bank.

Once upon a time, the Liberals announced the creation of a bank meant to help municipalities. Then, they took away \$15 billion in subsidies that were supposed to go to the municipalities. At that point, people started to realize that the math did not add up, a bit like the deficit, and that only projects worth \$100 million or more will be accepted. What did the Liberals do next? They asked their pals at BlackRock to decide for them.

Mark my words: this story will not end well. When will the Liberals finally decide to scrap this infrastructure bank?

[*English*]

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a tripled our infrastructure investments compared to the last government. FCM, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, calls budget 2017 “a game-changer for municipalities”.

We are committed to investing in infrastructure, and only a small portion, 10% of the entire infrastructure plan, will be delivered through the bank. We are committed to supporting every municipality, regardless of its size—big urban centres, mid-size cities, and small cities. We understand that diversity of—

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

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue the little story I began a moment ago.

The parliamentary budget officer then raised concerns about transparency, and the Quebec National Assembly adopted a unanimous motion, supported by all members across party lines, calling for changes, but the Prime Minister was still given full authority to choose the bank’s leadership, and committee members were given only an hour and a half to study a bank that will cost Canadian taxpayers \$35 billion.

The Liberal members are currently—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

[*English*]

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the bank is only one optional tool available to municipalities when it comes to supporting infrastructure that their communities need.

Let me tell the House what the International Monetary Fund had to say about the bank. It said, “the proposed Canada Infrastructure Bank...will be an effective instrument in achieving this goal”, which is to grow our economy, create opportunities for the middle class, and provide the necessary support that our municipalities need to build the infrastructure they need.

*Oral Questions***FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, DFO announced it will end the popular education program called “salmonids in the classroom”.

For 40 years, this valuable program taught hundreds of thousands of students about the salmon life cycle. For a salmon-dependent region like British Columbia, to lose this cost-effective program is shameful. Hundreds of teachers, students, and parents have expressed their profound disappointment at this Liberal cut. They want the funding restored.

Can the minister provide a clear explanation of why he made the reckless decision to kill the salmonids in the classroom program?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has invested massively in marine science, ocean protection, and habitat protection.

We are proceeding, I hope this fall, in collaboration with the members of the standing committee to restore loss protections that were taken out of the Fisheries Act. We recognize the important contribution that the salmonid enhancement program has made for a long time, in particular and including the work of volunteers across the province of British Columbia, including in the classrooms.

I was in Victoria last week to announce a significant investment in exactly this kind of initiative, and we will work with these groups to ensure that this important work continues.

\* \* \*

•(1455)

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, public consultations on Canada's first national law for people living with disabilities identified key issues that need to be addressed immediately. Canadians voiced a strong preference for an independent body to oversee compliance with the new laws.

Will the minister create an independent body to monitor the upcoming accessibility act and enforce compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, yes or no?

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her continued work on this important file.

We heard from thousands of Canadians about what an accessible Canada would look like to them. We heard about the barriers that they continue to face as they try to navigate this complex world that was not necessarily built for them.

I can assure the member that we had many excellent suggestions from Canadians, including specifically with respect to enforcement and compliance. We are looking at these suggestions and looking forward to continued discussion as we craft this new law and have discussions in the House.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's oil and gas sector is a model for energy development everywhere, but the forces of no are conspiring against Canadian energy workers. One said that two-thirds of fossil fuels must remain underground. Who said that? It was Zoë Caron, the anti-energy activist who is the new chief of staff to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Crucial energy and pipeline projects hang in the balance. How can Canadians trust the minister to do what is clearly in the national interest instead of serving the chief of staff's agenda?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a government we understand the challenge workers and their families have had over the last while with the downturn in commodity prices.

Our support for the energy sector, as was heard last week in the House, remains clear. The Prime Minister has clearly said that we have approved the Kinder Morgan pipeline and we will stand resolute with that approval.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he wants to phase out the oil sands and the Liberals will not state the facts, which is that Canada's oil and gas sector is the most environmentally and socially responsible in the world. Long-time anti-energy activist Zoë Caron said, “Canada's decision to keep expanding and developing the tar sands is an example for other nations of what not to do.” Now she is in charge of all political decisions in the minister's office.

How can anyone possibly trust the natural resources minister to champion the energy sector and get pipelines built when the forces of no are right at the top in his office?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, our support for the energy sector reflects a balanced approach that ensures the environment is protected, all the while creating good, well-paying jobs for Canadians.

We did in one year what the previous government could not do in a decade. We approved pipelines while at the same time protecting our oceans, pricing carbon pollution, and working with indigenous peoples.

Our approach positions Alberta and Canada's energy sector well to capitalize on economic opportunities going forward.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that the chief of staff to the Minister of Natural Resources is adamantly opposed to the oil and gas industry.

Are the Liberals trying to improve their image with environmental groups? It is too late. They already know that the Liberals will not work with them.

How can the chief of staff remain accountable and impartial on files related to the oil industry after her numerous attacks on this industry? Is this government trying to send all workers in the energy sector to the unemployment line?

*[English]*

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we said last week in the House, we firmly support the oil and gas sector across this country, in Alberta, in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in other parts of Canada.

We understand the importance of our oil and gas sector to our economy and we will continue to support it, as we have since taking office.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, municipalities are key partners when it comes to building the infrastructure Canadians need. They own and operate most of the large public transit networks and housing corporations. It is therefore crucial that cities have the tools they need to succeed and a committed federal partner.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities tell the House about how the government is working with cities to build better infrastructure across the country?

● (1500)

*[English]*

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week we welcomed 2,000 delegates of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to the annual conference here in Ottawa. Working together with these municipal leaders, we have announced 2,900 projects with a combined investment of \$23 billion since taking office. FCM calls our 2017 budget “a game-changer for municipalities”. We will continue to work with the municipalities.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's tax-and-spend agenda is out of control. Canadian business owners are scared, and rightly so. Across this country, I have heard from craft brewers, distillers, and winemakers who are very concerned about the Liberals' never-ending excise tax increase. It is going to kill jobs and it is going to hurt local rural communities. Of course, the minister would have known that, had he taken any

time to consult with Canadians before moving ahead with this radical tax agenda.

Before it is too late, will the minister do the right thing? Will he listen to these Canadian business owners and cork this tax?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taxes, we know that we did the right thing by raising taxes on the top 1% and by lowering taxes on the middle class. We also know that making sure that we have a tax situation for corporate Canada that works is important. Just to be clear, in the case of the question that was posed, what we have done is make sure that the level of excise tax stays consistent over time because inflation happens. In real terms, it means the tax will stay consistent over time, which is exactly what we have done and which we know is fair to Canadians and to the industry.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in its latest budget, the government announced changes that will raise the excise tax on alcoholic beverages. This change will hurt the beer, wine, and spirits industry.

Our wine makers are already subject to one of the highest tax rates in the world, and they are already feeling the pinch from CETA. This increase will jeopardize many Canadian jobs.

Why are the Liberals hurting these industries? Why did they not consult them? It is not too late. They can still cancel these changes.

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important to have a fair, efficient tax system that works for both people and industry. Our plan will put Canadians in a good position and create a fair system for businesses. We introduced a long-term measure to keep the situation stable even with inflation. That is all this is, and it will work for the industry.

\* \* \*

*[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as chair of the environment and sustainable development committee, I am aware of the work that the government is doing to improve and protect the environment for Canadians now and for generations to come. In my riding of King—Vaughan, I am proud of the continued investment in expanding protected spaces—for example, Happy Valley Forest on the Oak Ridges moraine.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change speak to the importance of World Environment Day?

**Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for King—Vaughan for her leadership as chair of the environment committee.

### Oral Questions

Today we observe World Environment Day, and Canada is, for the first time, the host country for this global day of awareness. The theme of this year's World Environment Day, connecting people to nature, encourages us to get outdoors, appreciate healthy ecosystems that contribute to our well-being, and do our part to protect the planet we share. By continuing to work together with a common purpose around the world, including by addressing the critical issue of climate change in the Paris agreement, we can and will leave our children and grandchildren with a world that is cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous.

\* \* \*

### TAXATION

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, American manufacturing is getting a lot more competitive. Recently Procter & Gamble announced it will be laying off 500 Canadian jobs and moving them to the States. This is not happening because the American government is giving out boatloads of money to businesses; it is happening because of a systemic reduction of red tape and taxes. When will the Liberals put Canadian workers ahead of these Liberal-made job-killing taxes?

• (1505)

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member should know that growth is up, that exports are up, and that manufacturing is up. Job numbers are up as well. When we formed government, the unemployment rate was at 7.2%, and today it is hovering around 6.5%. Over the last eight months, that means 250,000 good-quality, full-time resilient jobs have been created.

We have a plan for the economy. We are going to grow the economy and help the middle class and those working hard to join it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Gala Québec Cinéma was held yesterday in Montreal. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners, the nominees, and the organizers of this event who make our cinema an essential voice for our culture.

During the ceremony, Xavier Dolan openly criticized the CRTC. Its decision regarding the licence for *Séries+* and *Historia* jeopardizes the future of Quebec television.

Will the minister do something to support our culture and require the CRTC to review its decision?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe in the importance of arts and culture, and that is why we invested \$1.9 billion in this area in the 2016 budget. That is the largest investment a federal government has made in arts and culture in 30 years, and we are the only country in the G7 that has invested so much.

That being said, I remind members that the CRTC is an independent agency, but of course I invite all those affected by the decision to make their voices heard.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the CRTC's decision regarding *Séries+* has already resulted in the cancellation of three Quebec television series. This is an attack on our culture, and this Canadian institution is opening the door to giving other broadcasters the same type of licence. That means fewer Quebec productions.

If the minister does not want to take action and if the CRTC does not want to fulfill its mandate, what is the federal government waiting for? When will it transfer authority over cultural matters to Quebec? We care about our culture.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe in culture, and that is why we are taking action.

I would also like to remind my colleague that we decided to take leadership on this issue and that we held public consultations on the impact of digital on Canadian content. I will be tabling a new cultural policy in 2017. Of course, I invite my colleague to share his comments with me as this policy is being prepared.

\* \* \*

### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we tried, but once again, this government is determined to ignore Quebec.

In the current wording of Bill C-44, the infrastructure bank can be made an agent of the crown, allowing it to circumvent Quebec statutes and regulations. This even includes expropriation powers. If that was not its intention, it needs to amend the bill. Otherwise, this will be just one more example of Ottawa walking all over Quebec.

This is the last chance. Will the government remove this power to give the infrastructure bank crown agent status, a power that goes too far?

[English]

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the bank has been set up with the same legal structure as many other crown corporations. I can assure the hon. member that any project undertaken by the bank will be required to follow all provincial, territorial, and municipal laws. We have committed to investing in infrastructure to support our provinces and municipalities. We will do that while respecting the local decision-making processes.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[English]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children”, adopted at Geneva on October 19, 1996; and the “Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance”, adopted at Geneva on November 23, 2007.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 28th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled “Public Accounts of Canada 2016”.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

**Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-357, An Act to amend the Public Service Superannuation Act (Group 1 contributors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with honour and pride, but mostly with humility that I rise today because this is the first time in my life that I have had the opportunity and incredible privilege, as a Canadian, to act as a legislator and introduce my first bill.

It is a private member's bill, of course, but it would require royal assent. I intend to do everything I possibly can to make the government see the importance of this bill.

It seeks to ensure that veterans can benefit from the grandfather provision in the changes made to the federal public service pension legislation.

In 2012, some changes were made to ensure the vitality of federal public service pensions. Some grandfather provisions were applied to ensure that those who were public servants before 2013 could benefit from the status quo. Veterans were inadvertently excluded from this.

When a veteran who fought for our country for many years brought the issue to my attention, I did not hesitate to move forward. For a year, I prepared everything I needed to and today I am very pleased to introduce this bill.

### Routine Proceedings

In closing, I would like to say that I love grassroots politics, but I want to be a full-fledged legislator. This is a big day for me and for all the veterans who served this country in another way, in the Canadian federal public service in particular.

That is why I am introducing this bill today.

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

\* \* \*

• (1515)

[English]

### PETITIONS

#### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and present this petition signed by many Manitobans, predominantly from the north, regarding Mr. Abiodun Ogunbanwo's family immigration application, requesting that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship allow him to reunite with his family here in Canada. Mr. Ogunbanwo, who now lives in Thompson, Manitoba, works with the Canadian Mental Health Association as the coordinator of the Thompson Homeless Shelter and he also works as a pastor. He has been separated from his wife and two children, who still reside in Nigeria, for almost six years. He fears for their lives because of the violence taking place in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, the lengthy process he has been through to bring his family to Canada is at a standstill. That is why my office, together with Thompson, Manitoba, MLA Kelly Bindle, has been working very hard to bring attention to this situation. It is our hope that in presenting this petition, Mr. Ogunbanwo will see his application moved forward once again.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on World Environment Day, it gives me great pleasure to table a petition from Edmontonians in support Bill C-202, the Canadian environmental bill of rights, which I have tabled in this place three times.

The petitioners want this bill supported because it would impose a public trust duty on the government to protect the environment, it would extend the right to a protected environment to present and future generations, and it would provide legal tools to hold the government accountable when it fails to deliver on those obligations.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today. The first petition is from residents of the Kipawa Lake area, who are very concerned by a proposal to mine rare earths by Matamec Explorations Inc.

The petitioners' view is that the Kipawa rare earths project threatens the unique ecological, cultural, and historical value of the Kipawa Lake system. They hope the House will support their efforts to protect the Kipawa Lake region.

*Government Orders*

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents throughout the area surrounding Cowichan Bay and also within my own riding.

The petitioners are calling for the House to take steps to ensure that products containing genetically modified organisms are labelled so that consumers have a choice of what they want to buy and what they do not want to buy.

[*Translation*]

## WATER QUALITY

**Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since today is World Environment Day, I would like to point out that, after spending a few years here, I came back because of two lakes; Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog. People have raised the alarm about these two lakes, especially Lake Champlain.

In the summer heat, the water turns as green as pea soup because of cyanobacteria, and it is awful. This lake is part of the Canada-United States boundary waters.

People in my riding want the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take action right away and order the International Joint Commission, which is responsible for boundary waters, to allocate part of next year's budget to fix the problems with Lake Champlain.

[*English*]

## PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present two petitions today. The first petition is relating to the protection of conscience of physicians and health care professionals. The petitioners say that coercion, intimidation, and other forms of pressure intended to force physicians and health care institutions to become parties to assisted suicide and euthanasia is a violation of fundamental freedoms of conscience. They highlight that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the freedoms of conscience and religion. The government, in the passage of legislation to permit assisted suicide, highlighted that there would be nobody forced to participate in assisted suicide against his or her will, but in fact in the province of Ontario that is now happening and it is going to the Supreme Court.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to pass legislation to ensure the protection of conscience.

• (1520)

## SEX SELECTION

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the other petition is with respect to sex selection. The petition highlights the fact that ultrasounds are being used to determine the sex of the preborn child, and if it is a girl, tragically, the pregnancy ends. It notes that discrimination against women and girls starts even before they are born.

The petitioners are calling on this Parliament to condemn the practice of sex selection against girls.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Environment Day to present a petition against

Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline. This is an especially apt day to present this petition because tomorrow we will have a vote here in the House of Commons on the pipeline.

A number of the constituents who have signed this petition are especially appalled that the Liberal MPs have sided with the company against their own communities and would like the government to reconsider its decision to approve this pipeline and instead reject it.

\* \* \*

## 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, please.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

## BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

## BILL C-44—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** moved:

That in relation to Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017, and other measures, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill; and

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

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Pursuant to Standing Order 67, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

I invite all hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so that the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. House leader of the official opposition.



*Government Orders*

[English]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here we are again seeing this government shutting down debate on important pieces of legislation like Bill C-44, the budget implementation act, a bill that has so many pieces that have unanswered questions. I am thinking about specifically the infrastructure bank and the fact that Canadians are going to be on the hook for any losses that might be incurred by investors who want to apparently invest using this infrastructure bank. The bank has not been explained, the risk to Canadians has not been explained, and, if anything, the government is trying to gloss over it by putting it into Bill C-44.

Now we are being told we cannot debate Bill C-44 and ask these important questions. All the while, and this is even more egregious, the government has just introduced and is making us debate two motions, one around the Paris accord, and one tomorrow around foreign affairs issues, both of which are absolutely needless. All the Liberals seem to want is to have someone tell them that they are doing a good job and doing the right thing. They have to use up time in the House of Commons to do that while making us sit here until midnight every single night, though we have no problem with hard work, and using time allocation and shutting down discussion on important things like the infrastructure bank.

This is unbelievable that the Liberals are doing this again and have completely mismanaged this House. How can they defend that?

• (1525)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a place to start might be to consider the amount of time that Bill C-44 has actually been considered in this House. The total length of debate in hours was 12 hours and 25 minutes. The total length in terms of days was four days. The number of committee meetings was 10, and the total number of witnesses heard was 70.

As we think about the total number of speakers, we have had 54 speakers in this House, and I would like to go through who has had the opportunity to speak. There have been 17 members from the official opposition, eight members from the New Democratic Party, one member from the Bloc Québécois, and, of course, members from our side of the House.

We believe we have had a good amount of time to review this, and we are looking forward to this bill going to committee so that we can scrutinize it further.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to remind hon. members to try to keep it to around a minute each for the questions and the answers. I notice there are quite a few people who have questions, so that would give everyone a chance.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Victoria.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with my colleague, the opposition House leader, in expressing concern about the limitation that the government is presenting on its signature budget bill. I remind those who may be watching at home that the bill is another omnibus budget bill. We thought those were gone when Mr. Harper left the room, but in fact they continue. It is a bill that includes veterans issues, that would amend the Parliament of Canada Act, and that would create an unprecedented infrastructure

bank. Now we are being told that if eight of 44 NDP members have a chance to speak, we should be satisfied by that.

Closing debate on a budget bill is not the same as a widgets bill. This is the lifeblood of our democracy, how the government spends money and how its priorities are reflected in its expenditure decisions.

Would the Minister of Finance please allow us more time to do what Canadians sent us here to do?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things in the member's question that I would like to respond to. First and foremost, we made a commitment that we would put in our budget bills things that were related to the budget, to spending, not things that were extraneous or not related in any way. That is exactly what we have done in Bill C-44. That continues to be what we want to do in order to make sure the measures that involve spending in the government are actually in the budget bill. That is the case here.

With respect to what we are trying to do, we know that parliamentarians have a responsibility to properly scrutinize legislation and a duty to vote on different pieces of legislation, and we look forward to this bill going to committee. At that stage, we know it can be studied further and we can hear directly in that way through Canadians and experts in a public forum. That is what we are looking forward to doing.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, we are seeing far more uses of time allocation than I ever thought I would see from a new Liberal government, particularly when I read the mandate letters that went to all the ministers that spoke to respect for the members of the opposition parties and respectful debate in this place. I do concede and want to say as an opposition member that I know a tremendous amount of time has been lost through motions that were delaying tactics from the Conservatives and the New Democrats. I have seen it for weeks. I understand that is why we are now sitting until midnight every night.

However, I am particularly aggrieved by this use of time allocation, because this is an omnibus bill. There are many separate sections. When they are considered as one bill and we are told we have had plenty of hours for debate, I have to protest and disagree. The infrastructure bank alone deserves proper independent study. The parliamentary budget officer provisions within that section of the bill need time.

I am aware of time, so I will stop there, but an omnibus budget bill should never be rushed through. They should not exist at all.

• (1530)

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her comments and for the constructive tone in which she presented them. It is important for us to get our bills through in a way that is productive and that allows us to deliver on the things we promised Canadians we would do.

*Government Orders*

Our objective remains to have a well-functioning House of Commons where all parties agree to work together and to study legislation in the best interests of Canadians. That is our goal, and we find it is difficult sometimes to achieve that goal with some of the tactics that have been used in the House.

We will continue to work with the opposition to ensure that their views are communicated and a proper amount of debate is held on government legislation. We believe the amount of debate that has been held on this is appropriate. We should now move the bill to committee where it can continue to be scrutinized, so we can move forward on the work we are trying to do in order to improve the long-term health of our economy and the creation of jobs for Canadians.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I love the math skills of the finance minister. There has been twelve and a half hours for debate on Bill C-44. That is a half hour for every billion dollars of deficit in budget 2017. He did not mention the less than two hours in committee to talk about the \$35 billion of infrastructure bank money that is coming from taxpayers. That is not even four minutes for every billion dollars. Is he in such a hurry to spend taxpayer money that he does not want any scrutiny on what is being done?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, we continue to view talking about the measures in the bill to be of importance. We look at it as time to work together so we can actually get things done for Canadians. That is the way we look at it. We know that Canadians expect us in the House to get bills passed, in this case, a budget bill, so that we can make a real difference for Canadians. We are starting to see some real improvements in our economy. We are starting to see big differences in terms of employment. There has been significant growth in employment. We are starting to see very positive results in our economy. We want to move forward to continue those results. That is the work we are here to do. That is the work we are doing through this budget, and I know that everyone in the House agrees with us that getting jobs for Canadians is critically important. Our bill will do just that.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Minister of Finance say a few times during this debate that he wants to get this bill to committee. I want to make him aware that this bill has been reported back to the House. I was here on Friday when the bill was first debated, and I think we had about an hour. This morning's debate was devoted to going over the Paris accord, which I think the House has already voted on, so that was a lot of time wasted.

In what world can the Minister of Finance possibly justify that the hour we had on Friday, and beginning this debate now, is enough time for members of the opposition to hold the government to account on that bill, all 300 pages? I would say that it is not.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the bill has gone through committee, and I am looking forward to it going back there to be debated. I will repeat the fact that we have had a significant amount of discussion on this bill. The length of the bill, of course, is vastly smaller than bills from the previous government. Everything in the bill is related to what we are trying to do in our economy, and that is critically important.

I will repeat the numbers. The length of debate was 12 hours and 25 minutes, the number of committee meetings was 10, and the total number of witnesses heard was 70. We have had a significant amount of review and scrutiny, and I am confident that members opposite can debate a good measure of that bill in the time allotted.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the Minister of Finance raised the subject just now of the record growth that Canada has seen for some time now, certainly since the 10 years of inaction on the part of the previous government. I am really very happy that he called our attention to the growth we saw during the first quarter here in Canada, the growth in jobs.

I would like the minister to tell the House why he would like us to act speedily to send this bill to the Senate so that these record investments in infrastructure, indigenous affairs, housing, and so forth can see the light of day.

Why does the Minister of Finance believe we must continue to forge this plan for the middle class in Canada?

● (1535)

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member.

This is a very important question. We know that the investments are very important for the future of our country. We know that we have already assessed how well our plan works, when our unemployment rate is lower than it was before. What that means is that the unemployment rate is now 6.5. It was 7.1 or 7.2 when we started, so that is a major change.

For each case where a person has found a job, there is a family that is in a better situation. That is very important. That is what we want to do for the future with our investments in infrastructure, for example. We know we can reach a more robust economic growth rate, now and in the future, with a higher level of productivity.

We have already had a good measure of success, as the member said, since we achieved 3.7% in the last quarter. We know that we can do better with our investments in the future of Canada.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we sometimes talk about groundhog day, an expression that brings to mind the famous movie in which history repeats itself day after day. The least we can say is that nearly every three days, the government introduces a motion to limit parliamentarians' right to speak.

That is unfortunate, particularly when it comes to Bill C-44, an essential, foundational law for our democratic process, since it implements the measures announced when the budget was tabled by the Minister of Finance. Need I point out that this is an omnibus bill that includes many other items that deserve much closer attention than simply introducing a bill that we see every day?

*Government Orders*

Some of the things this bill addresses are Investment Canada, the mandate of the parliamentary budget officer, and, most importantly, the infrastructure bank, which will be created entirely from scratch. On that point, almost all analysts and politicians agree that this is something that should be taken out of the bill so that it can be properly studied at a later date.

As well, our government has decided to use members' speaking time to table motions that, of course, only serve their interests. This morning, was the motion regarding the environment and the Paris accord tabled by the Prime Minister or the Minister of the Environment? No, much to our surprise, it was tabled by the Minister of Finance.

Does that not prove that the Paris accord means just one thing to this government, namely the Liberal carbon tax?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Bill C-44 contains only budgetary measures that affect our economy. That is why we tabled Bill C-44 in the House.

We know that time allocation is the only tool the government has to avoid indefinite delays in passing legislation. We do not take this type of decision lightly. We remain committed to ensuring that members from all sides of the House are given reasonable time to debate bills.

We continue to carry out our plan to improve our economy and have a significant growth rate. That is why Bill C-44 must be passed for Canada and for Canadians.

[*English*]

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that Canadians understand what is happening here today, based on some of the comments that have already been made.

I want to make sure that Canadians understand that when the hon. minister talks about a well-functioning House of Commons, it would have been much more expeditious in having a well-functioning House of Commons if the Liberals had agreed to making parliamentary changes in a collegial fashion and not unilaterally. That would have saved a lot of time. It is misleading a lot of Canadians today. That is why certain tactics had to be employed to protect the health and well-being of a parliamentary process that is facing unprecedented changes.

I also want to make sure that Canadians understand the total number of hours that are being talked about in the debate. This omnibus bill has many unprecedented changes that really deserve scrutiny. On the infrastructure bank we are talking about, you can tell by the quality of the answers to the questions being asked about the infrastructure bank that it is not well understood and that it needs careful scrutiny.

I want to make sure that Canadians understand that as we move forward with this process, there are many pieces that really need that very healthy debate. We are here to do our job. I just hope Canadians understand that time allocation does not do this any justice. It is very concerning, because it keeps being said by the hon. member that this is going to go to committee. This is it. This is the debate right now. We are at report stage. It is going to go to third reading, get voted on, and go to the Senate.

It is very disconcerting to hear the other side talk about it going to committee. That is done. That ship has sailed, and you are the ones that have sailed it.

● (1540)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I would remind hon. members that it goes through the Speaker and not to the speaker.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat that our objective truly is to have a well-functioning House of Commons where all parties agree to work together and study legislation in the best interest of Canadians.

What do we want to make sure we achieve? We want to make sure we achieve outcomes for Canadians that really help them and their families. This is what the program we put in place and our plan is doing. By lowering taxes on Canadians and by putting in the Canada child benefit, we helped families get more disposable income. By the way, this helps our economy as well. What we have seen as a result of those measures and other measures is a reduction in unemployment. It means more people are employed, and that, of course, is what we are really trying to do for Canadians. When we say that we are really proud of what has happened in economic growth, it is not just because of economic growth on its own but because of what it means for job opportunities and for the families of Canada in the future. This is what we are trying to achieve.

We know that putting forward Bill C-44 is going to make a real difference for Canadian families. That is why we are looking forward to moving forward with the kind of measures that will help make sure that this progress continues.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, democracy is not a hollow concept. It entails benefits and also obligations for people working in a democratic system. The current government seems to be unaware of that and to have forgotten it.

We have a bill with more than 300 pages that amends numerous laws and we have to settle the matter in a flash, without taking the time to discuss it. The matter of the infrastructure bank alone would require several dozen hours of study. It is an important, major issue. However, at this time, the democratic promises of this government are nowhere in sight. Canadians expect more of their elected officials.

We are in a democracy, we are in a legislative assembly, and we must take the time to discuss and to listen. At this time, with all due respect, this government is offering us a bad comedy act.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we think we have had enough time to examine Bill C-44. We had a debate that lasted 12 hours 25 minutes. It is very important. Moreover, if we measure it in days, the debate lasted 4 days. We had 10 committee meetings, and 70 witnesses appeared. Finally, in the House, 54 members had the opportunity to speak on this issue.

*Government Orders*

In our opinion, we have therefore had enough time to examine Bill C-44, and we would like to pass the bill in order to make things better for Canadians.

• (1545)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are forgetting that they were elected by a minority of the population and that Bill C-44 is not an ordinary bill. It imposes tax increases on parents whose children take piano or figure skating lessons, on public transport, on Uber, on beer, and on wine. It also imposes more burdens on small and medium-sized businesses.

Above all, this legislation will add a \$29.4-billion deficit to the previous \$23-billion public debt. That is more than \$50 billion and it is a structural deficit that upsets the balanced budget that we had achieved.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Why do the Liberals want to muzzle the House after renegeing on their promise and plunging the country into structural deficits?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, certainly there are significant figures. What I can say in this regard is that we had economic growth of 3.7% in the last quarter. That's very significant.

In our opinion, the situation and the economic growth rate will improve as a result of the measures contained in Bill C-44. There is another very important figure, and that is the unemployment rate in our country. It is very important to create jobs for Canadians. That is exactly what we have done, with a much lower unemployment rate than before. Moreover, an additional 250,000 jobs have been created over the past seven months. This is very significant, and most of these jobs are full-time.

Time allocation is the only tool the government has to prevent indefinite delays in passing legislation. We do not take this kind of decision lightly, and we remain committed to ensuring that members on all sides of the House are given reasonable time to debate bills. We believe it is time to pass Bill C-44 to create a better future.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of reasonable or sufficient time for debate, opposition members have proposed over 100 amendments to this bill. That means that the opposition has many concerns.

Does the Minister of Finance seriously think that five hours are enough to deal with all these concerns, these 100 amendments?

This is not nothing, and we need time to debate it all.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, we believe that a good number of people have had the opportunity to speak. Fifty-four members have spoken. Debate is important, but we think that 12 hours and 25 minutes is enough. We must now do what we are here to do in the House, which is improve our economic growth. That is the goal of Bill C-44. That is what we want to do, and the time is now.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during his speech, the minister indicated that the size of our economy is growing. Could he elaborate on how our plan is working, and what are the signs that our economy has been growing over the past 18 months?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, the best way to think about this is to think about why the government is here. What happened in the years before we got here was that the level of growth was just not high enough to produce the results Canadians need. We knew that the level of unemployment people were facing when we came into office was unacceptably high. I want to remind the members of this House that when we talk about unemployment levels, they forget that there are actually people we are trying to get jobs for, and that is exactly what our plan has done. We have actually increased the number of jobs in this country.

I know that when the members on the opposite side, just like the members on this side, go back to their home ridings and knock on doors, the people who have jobs who did not have jobs before are going to be happy. I know that they know, as we do, that the level of economic growth is much higher than it was in the last number of years. What we are seeing right now is strong growth. That is going to be really positive for people in the ridings of the members on the opposite side of the House. People are going to be happy, and we are fine if, when the members go to those doors, they actually take a bit of the positive impact themselves, because they are in the House where we are creating this growth.

• (1550)

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, does our hon. colleague have the per-province, per-riding breakdown of the number of jobs the Liberals say they have created since they have been in office?

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, those numbers are available. We believe that our responsibility, and what we are absolutely committed to doing, is moving forward continuously on a program to grow the economy and to create more jobs. The good news is that it is working, and it is working across the country. It is a situation we need to remain focused on so that we can ensure that we are having results all across the country. I can assure the member that when we have economic growth that is 3.7% in the first quarter, when we see parts of our country that had a pretty big challenge last year, like Alberta, that are going to have higher growth this year, we start to realize that there are going to be opportunities for people across the country, and that is positive. We are going to stay on it. In this bill, Bill C-44, the good news is that when the members opposite decide to vote for this, what will happen is better job opportunities in their ridings.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted that the Minister of Finance is imposing yet another time allocation motion. Debate is being cut short. The finance minister has the nerve to congratulate himself on letting 54 members speak. We are 338 members in this House. What about democracy?

This is one of the most important bills we can study. It amends 30 pieces of legislation. It is 300 pages long.

We are granted only five hours to debate such a bill? How generous. One hundred amendments have been tabled. How can we go in depth in five hours with less than one-sixth of members being allowed to take part in the debate?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. Minister of Finance has 45 seconds to answer.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, we believe it is very important that we have the opportunity to study the contents of Bill C-44. However, we think we have had enough time to do so. Fortunately, I am certain that we will improve the lives of Canadians with this bill.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

• (1555)

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

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

[*And the bells having rung:*]

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Chair read text of motion to the House*]

• (1635)

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

(*Division No. 291*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag  
Alleslev  
Anandasangaree  
Arya  
Bagnell  
Baylis

Alghabra  
Amos  
Arseneault  
Ayoub  
Bains  
Beech

Bennett  
Boissonnault  
Bratina  
Brison  
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)  
Chagger  
Chan  
Cormier  
Damoff  
Dhillon  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Dzerowicz  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Eyolfson  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fraser (West Nova)  
Freeland  
Fuhr  
Goldsmith-Jones  
Gould  
Grewal  
Hardie  
Hehr  
Housefather  
Hutchings  
Joly  
Jordan  
Kang  
Khera  
Lametti  
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)  
Lebouthillier  
Lemieux  
Lightbound  
Long  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)  
May (Cambridge)  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
Mendès  
Mihychuk  
Soeurs)  
Monsef  
Morrissey  
Nassif  
Ng  
Oliphant  
O'Regan  
Paradis  
Peterson  
Philpott  
Poissant  
Ratansi  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Rudd  
Rusnak  
Saini  
Samson  
Sarai  
Schieffe  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
Sikand  
Sohi  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Whalen  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young

### Government Orders

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Bossio  
Breton  
Caesar-Chavannes  
Casey (Charlottetown)  
Champagne  
Chen  
Dabrusin  
DeCoursey  
Drouin  
Duclos  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Easter  
El-Khoury  
Erskine-Smith  
Fergus  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fragiskatos  
Fraser (Central Nova)  
Fry  
Garneau  
Goodale  
Graham  
Hajdu  
Harvey  
Holland  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jones  
Jowhari  
Khalid  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Levitt  
Lockhart  
Longfield  
Maloney  
McDonald  
McKay  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendicino  
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Érables)  
Morneau  
Murray  
Nault  
O'Connell  
Oliver  
Ouellette  
Peschisolido  
Petipas Taylor  
Picard  
Qualtrough  
Rioux  
Rodriguez  
Rota  
Ruimy  
Sahota  
Sajjan  
Sangha  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
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## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Carrie	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Cooper	Cullen
Deltell	Doherty
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Johns	Jolibois
Kelly	Kent
Kmiec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Lebel	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Motz
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Plamondon
Poilievre	Quach
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Sansoucy
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Tilson	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viensen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 124

## PAIRED

Nil

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

## REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from June 2 consideration of Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

[English]

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Repentigny concerning an amendment presented in committee to Bill C-44, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017, and other measures.

[Translation]

The member raises two key points in this question of privilege: the first relates to the admissibility of the amendment she presented in committee, which she has resubmitted at report stage; the second issue she raised has to do with her status as a member from a non-represented caucus in committee proceedings. In so doing she is asking the Chair to select her report stage motion, Motion No. 87, for consideration during the report stage debate of Bill C-44.

The member argues that the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance wrongly ruled that her committee amendment was inadmissible because it required a royal recommendation. The member stated that her amendment altered the qualifying weeks needed to claim maternity leave benefits for newly or suddenly unemployed mothers of newborns. She maintained that it did not represent a new or extended charge against the consolidated revenue fund, which would require a royal recommendation. The member simultaneously argued that the employment insurance fund was separate, and that, therefore, additional payments from the EI fund could not be seen as a new charge against the CRF.

[English]

On that specific point, I would like to direct the House's attention to a ruling by Speaker Milliken on November 10, 2006, at page 5027 of the *Debates*. He said:

Although contributions to the employment insurance program are indeed made by employers and employees, appropriations for the program are taken from the consolidated revenue fund and any increase in such spending would require a royal recommendation.

Accordingly, I cannot agree with the member's view that a royal recommendation is not required. The ruling by the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance was procedurally sound and appropriate. Without a royal recommendation forthcoming for Motion No. 87, I cannot acquiesce in her request that the motion be considered during the report stage of Bill C-44. The Assistant Deputy Speaker indicated on June 2, 2017, that the motion would not be selected as it required a royal recommendation, and I see no reason to go back on that finding.

● (1640)

[Translation]

The member also argued that, because of her status as a member of a non-represented caucus, she did not have the ability to appeal the decision of the chair with respect to the admissibility of the amendment she presented in committee, as permanent members of the committee could.

*Government Orders*

The member is correct in her assertion that she is not able to participate in precisely the same way as permanent committee members, specifically in this case because committees' practice is clear that only permanent members can appeal the ruling of a chair. That is not to say, however, that the member for Repentigny has been excluded in all ways from participating in the proceedings on this bill.

[English]

My predecessor, in a ruling on a similar question of privilege on June 6, 2013, at pages 17795 to 17798 of the *Debates* stated:

Turning to the issue of the rights of independent members, the Chair can only observe that the decision of the finance committee permitted them to do something they could not do before: namely, to have their amendments considered in the committee and, indeed, to be granted, pursuant to Standing Order 119, an opportunity to speak in committee. This is something that was not open to them before. In that sense, they succeeded in obtaining a form of participation in committee proceedings, as imperfect as it may have been in their eyes.

[Translation]

In the matter currently before us today, the member may not have been able to participate exactly as other members, but the process did afford her the ability to participate. In fact, she has had the opportunity at report stage to present her case as to why her amendment should have been admissible and the Chair has delivered its findings on that matter. Based on the substance of the member's complaint, I cannot conclude that she has been impeded in the performance of her duties nor can I find, accordingly, that the Standing Orders or practices of the House have been breached.

I would like to thank all hon. members for their attention on this matter.

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Brandon—Souris, Taxation; and the hon. member for Montcalm, Air Transportation.

[English]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat ironic to rise to speak to Bill C-44 just as a Speaker's ruling concludes, which cites the previous Speaker turning down an application for revisiting the treatment of members who belong to parties with fewer than 12 MPs. It remains a source of concern, and the more I dig into it, the more I discover we are the only Westminster democracy that has this system of two tiers of MPs from larger and smaller parties.

However, I do digress, because I have the opportunity now to speak on the report stage of Bill C-44. I appreciate that my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and I share this distinction of being in an "all MPs are equal, but some are more equal than others" problem. We will continue to work on it.

[Translation]

I now have the honour of debating the omnibus budget bill, Bill C-44, at report stage. I find this so ironic, because I truly believed that the era of the omnibus budget bill would end when the new Liberal government took power. In fact, the new government promised that it would not use this strategy to cram several measures into one bill.

● (1645)

[English]

I want to start in this debate by setting out some of the background around the category of omnibus budget bills, because much has been said and only some of it, in my view, actually captures the problem that we have.

It needs to be said that omnibus budget bills were not offensive in the period of time before 2006. If we go back, we find that between 1994 and 2005, the average budget bill was 73.6 pages long. However, it is ironic—I am using the word "irony" a lot today and I apologize for that, but it does seem to be the appropriate word—that back in 1994, the then Reform Party MP and backbencher Stephen Harper objected vigorously to the 1994 omnibus budget bill put forward by former prime minister, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien. The Reform MP, as he was then, said:

Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the subject matter of the bill is so diverse that a single vote on the content would put members in conflict with their own principles.

...there is a lack of relevancy of these issues. The omnibus bills we have before us attempt to amend several different existing laws.

...in the interest of democracy I ask: How can members represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block on such legislation and on such concerns?

Now, that was referring to the omnibus budget bill of 1994. I would love to ask members here if they could guess how many pages it was, but I am not sure it would be proper form to ask members to shout out answers. However, I doubt that on a pop quiz members here assembled would guess that it was 24 pages long. Yes, Stephen Harper was complaining in 1994 about an omnibus budget bill of 24 pages.

The longest omnibus budget bill we had in the history of Canada, until Mr. Harper became prime minister, was when the Right Hon. Paul Martin was prime minister in the spring of 2005. He put forward the longest omnibus budget bill in Canadian history to that point. It was 120 pages long. I remember Stephen Harper complaining about it, because one of the measures the government was going to take in that omnibus budget bill was to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to ensure that greenhouse gases could be regulated under CEPA.

The Liberals defended it as a budget measure by saying that so much of the budget was their plan to reduce greenhouse gases that therefore this measure to amend CEPA was all right. In fact, in response to the vigorous criticism from opposition parties, the government of the day backed down and took that section out of the budget bill of 2005.

We began to see the use of omnibus budget bills a significant way in 2009 and 2010. The 2009 omnibus bill topped 580 pages, and the 2010 omnibus bill topped 883 pages, leading professor of political science and professor emeritus at Queen's University Ned Franks to write that the use of omnibus budget bills "subvert and evade the normal principles of parliamentary review of legislation."

*Government Orders*

The use of them in a minority Parliament made sense, because how else could a governing party that had the minority of the vote force Parliament to accept measures that it would clearly, if given the opportunity, defeat? Since budgetary measures are confidence measures, and parties for one reason or another did not want to have an election quite yet, there was always a sort of propping up of the Conservatives in minority, and big changes were made to the Navigable Waters Protection Act and to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. They were pushed through because it was a minority Parliament, and putting them in a budget bill was a very clever device.

The fact that Stephen Harper continued to use them in majority had a lot to do with the fact that when the Conservatives had the majority, they moved things through very rapidly and precluded proper study at committee. We had the double-barrelled omnibus budget bills Bill C-38 and Bill C-45 in 2012 that basically dismantled Canadian environmental law, from the Fisheries Act to the Navigable Waters Protection Act to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to the National Energy Board Act itself.

What makes omnibus budget bills offensive? It is not solely because there are many bills or many measures all in one bill. The point of an omnibus bill, which is not offensive in and of itself, is that every measure relates to the same purpose or to an overriding theme. There is much that has been written and decreed by Speakers, going back to former Speaker Lucien Lamoureux, who was the first to rule on this in the 1960s. He said that they were moving in a direction where a government could say here is our bill, and it is all the legislative work of an entire session, but it is omnibus.

We have to be careful about omnibus bills. This one has too many measures that should not be in it, although it is a far cry from the abuse we saw in the 41st Parliament.

These are the measures that should not have been included in an omnibus budget bill, because they are not receiving proper study. One is a change to the Board of Internal Economy. It is very welcome that the Board of Internal Economy meetings would be made public, but back to the position of members of Parliament and parties with fewer than 12 MPs, we would not be given any more access to the Board of Internal Economy than the public would get. In other words, the larger parties could still decide that this should not be open to the public and close the meeting of the Board of Internal Economy, and those of us who are members of Parliament would not get any new access to the Board of Internal Economy, any more than the public would get. I find that unacceptable.

Second are the sections relating to the parliamentary budget officer. I provided numerous amendments at committee. My amendments were defeated. There were government amendments to try to deal with what has become very controversial. The Liberals promised in the platform that the parliamentary budget officer would be made an officer of Parliament and given independence, although they promised no more omnibus budget bills either, which they described in the 2015 platform as “undemocratic practice”. Many of the sticky ropes put around the parliamentary budget office, particularly in the first draft of this bill at first reading, reduced the independence of the PBO. Some of those have been improved, but not enough. We still have work plans the PBO has to file. They

can make changes as situations change, but it is certainly not the independent officer of Parliament we expected to see.

As my time is running out, I will now turn to the infrastructure bank. If ever there was a piece of legislation that should have been stand-alone to be properly studied, it is the Canadian infrastructure bank. Given the lack of detail and precision, it still might not be as dangerous as it appears to be in some aspects, but we do know that the Auditor General in Ontario found that using privatization schemes for projects, so-called P3 projects, actually boosts the cost. The Ontario Auditor General found an \$8 billion increase for the 74 projects studied.

• (1650)

In my last 10 seconds, I will merely say that at third reading, Bill C-44 is moving through this place too quickly. It is not as damaging an omnibus budget bill as the ones we saw in the 41st Parliament, but I urge the Liberal government to be far more cautious and to set a better standard on budget bills.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sympathetic to what the leader of the Green Party is saying. Having said that, in fairness, it is not as much the length as the content of the legislation itself.

One of the examples the member makes reference to is the infrastructure bank. We have had a great deal of debate about the infrastructure bank. One only needs to look at question period to get a sense of the type of debate we have been having and at discussions and so forth, both in committee and inside the House. I find it very difficult to believe that someone could argue that the infrastructure bank is not part of the budget.

That is what the budget implementation bill is all about: to implement measures that were presented in the budget, a good budget, I would suggest, so that Canadians will be able to derive the many benefits of this particular bill passing.

How would the member ultimately articulate that the infrastructure bank is not part of the 2017-18 budget?

• (1655)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, a budget, as understood by the concept that a Parliament controls the public purse, is about expenditures. Increasingly, budgets are big fat pamphlets that declare what a government intends to do. They are almost an expansion of election platforms or a thicker version of a Speech from the Throne.

A budgetary measure is one that relates to a tax, a tariff, a subsidy: Liberal budgetary measures. The more the budget is used as the big fat spring brochure and the less it is actually about the finances of the country, the more we go down the slippery slope where many things are thrown together and pushed too quickly through Parliament.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during the Standing Orders debate, I had an opportunity to read the Green Party's discussion paper on changes to the Standing Orders. I certainly did not agree with all of it, but I thought it raised some interesting ideas.

One of the questions in this discussion is what is meant by an omnibus bill. It is a concept that is actually very different to define. From the government's perspective, it seems to define a bill as omnibus if it was proposed by a different party, which is obviously an incoherent definition. However, the Green Party discussion paper says that an omnibus bill is one where members might want to vote for some parts but not others. Of course, that is pretty routine in this place, even on a bill that deals with a relatively small number of pages. I can think of the issue around supervised consumption sites, where our party strongly agreed with and wanted to expedite some parts of it but disagreed with others.

I wonder if the Green Party leader can develop this idea of what actually is an omnibus bill. How do we identify it and how do we not identify it, because it is not exactly a clear-cut thing?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, that is actually a very great question. Omnibus means a lot of things altogether. There was an omnibus bill, for instance, a long one that touched on many pieces of legislation, that enacted NAFTA. We could say that even though there were many different pieces of legislation, and we might have liked some but not other bits, the reality was, and this comes from Speakers' rulings over the years, it had a unifying theme. It was to the same purpose.

Of course, that was not an omnibus budget bill. That was an omnibus bill changing our legislation to accommodate NAFTA. When we look at an omnibus budget bill, I think all the pieces in an omnibus budget bill, to be legitimate, must relate directly to the fiscal aspects of a budget and not to the various things that were announced on budget day to distinguish them.

On the question of the same theme, a unifying theme, one of the pieces I hope we can pursue, because it was in the government's proposal for changing our rules, was to give the Speaker explicit powers to split apart omnibus bills when they are clearly different pieces of legislation that are not intrinsic to the spending of the government accounts.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I speak to you today because, just 15 minutes ago, the Liberal majority in the House of Commons voted in favour of time allocation on Bill C-44, a major bill to implement the Liberal government's budget. It is, however, much more than that. It is also an omnibus bill that affects a whole range of things. That is why my speech will focus on the omnibus nature of this bill and the problems it causes as well as the fact that the budgetary measures it implements are bad.

First of all, let us talk about the omnibus bill. I remember that the Liberal Party was elected by claiming that it would never present omnibus bills as we had done at other times, it seemed to say, when we formed the government. This again shows that the Liberal Party said one thing during the election campaign and is doing exactly the opposite now that they are in power.

Furthermore, every time the previous administration tabled a bill that might include some distinctive elements, the Liberals would tear their hair out, saying it was the end of the world, that it did not make sense, and that the rights of parliamentarians had been infringed. Well, then, these people are doing exactly the same thing today. This is what makes people cynical, unfortunately.

Let us now look at the fundamental elements that, in our opinion, make this an omnibus bill. First of all, it literally provides for the creation of the Canada infrastructure and investment bank, and even brings major changes to the nature and mandate of the parliamentary budget officer. Let us examine these elements one by one.

The parliamentary budget officer is a fundamental institution of our Parliament. He is the person who ensures that the management of funds is carried out rigorously. However, this government, in the initial version of Bill C-44, is proposing, suggesting and imposing on the parliamentary budget officer a new obligation to report on his game plan for the year, which must be approved by the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons. This makes no sense, and I would even say that it is a denial of democracy.

Why? First of all, the parliamentary budget officer must draw up his plan for the year, and if a particular event occurs during that year, he will not be able to analyze the plan. This is the first mistake. Worse, however, is that he will become a figurehead who can be manipulated by the Speaker of the Senate, someone who is not elected, but rather appointed by the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House of Commons, who is appointed by all political parties.

This is exactly the opposite of what should be taking place. The parliamentary budget officer must be absolutely protected from any political intervention. With Bill C-44, the government will hold the parliamentary budget officer hostage, to some extent, to the decisions of the House of Commons. This is not acceptable.

I would now like to talk about Investment Canada. This is another invention of the Liberal government to attract foreign investment to Canada. Has the member for Papineau and new Prime Minister just invented this? Does he think no foreign investments have ever been made in Canada? Does he think that as a result of Investment Canada, the whole planet is going to discover that Canada exists and they can invest here? I would remind him that snow fell before he was born. If he has any doubt, I would remind him that when he was born, his father was the prime minister of Canada. He should know that Canada has favoured foreign investment for more than 150 years. Some might even say that it was the backbone of the creation of our country 150 years ago, since foreign investment was welcomed at that time.

*Government Orders*

Why, then, create Investment Canada, when our economic development agencies and our embassies have been doing the same job for decades, if not 150 years? We have institutions in Canada that work to attract foreign investment. Why, then, have another Liberal invention, other than to please some pals and create another administrative structure that will make the apparatus of Canadian government more complex? We do not need it; the job is already being done very well.

• (1700)

The same applies to the infrastructure bank, which is by no means a small matter. We are talking about hundreds of billions of potential dollars that are to be managed by that institution, when this kind of tool already exists: PPP Canada allows for investment of foreign capital and private capital to develop our infrastructure.

What does the Liberal government find fault with in PPP Canada? Does it think it is physically not a good thing and it has to oppose it because it was created by the Conservatives? If that is the case, what a poor approach this government is taking. We must admit that this is surely the case because that party denounces everything we did, although it is doing exactly the same thing as us today.

In the case of the infrastructure bank, it is no small thing. They want to create a bank that will use \$35 billion of taxpayers' money, \$15 billion of which will be used immediately to create the operating fund. That means there will immediately be \$15 billion less in the economy, at a time when people need it.

Then they are going to set that money aside to attract foreign investment, but on what terms? First, it will involve only projects of \$100 million and over. Already, they are leaving out almost three-quarters of the Canadian population, because few cities can afford the luxury of having \$100-million infrastructure projects.

Last Friday, I had the extraordinary privilege and honour of representing my leader at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I addressed an audience of about 1,000 people. There were municipal politicians, councillors, wardens, mayors, and even Reeves, the term I learned that is used for the mayors of rural communities in English Canada. I asked those people whether, in their municipalities, they had ever carried out projects worth over \$100 million. Only three people raised their hands, in an audience of about 1,000 people.

That is clear proof that this does not affect Canada's rural communities, or even Canada's semi-urban communities. They are part of the backbone of the Canadian economy, but this government is snubbing them by allocating only \$2 billion out of the \$180 billion to investments.

Need I point out that we Conservatives are in favour of investment in infrastructure? Under the leadership of the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, we put in place the most impressive infrastructure budget, the difference being that we did it while balancing the budget and not by creating compulsive gigantic deficits as the present government is doing.

The infrastructure bank will mean that private and foreign investors will only rake in the profits, leaving Canadian taxpayers to assume all the risks. That is why it should not be. Virtually all observers agree that the clauses of the bill relating to the

infrastructure bank should be withdrawn so they can be studied properly. This kind of thing is not something to be created by snapping your fingers. It deserves our attention.

This bill also implements this government's unfortunate budget measures. First, let us talk about the deficit. The Liberals got elected by saying they would run a small, \$10-billion deficit, but they are now at \$30 billion. They also said there would be a return to balance by 2019 when, in reality, it will not happen before 2055. I am not the one saying it; the information comes from the none other than the finance department.

Let us also not forget that these people are attacking families and the middle class by inventing new taxes on tobacco, on alcohol, Friday night beer or Saturday night wine, and by eliminating the tax credits for sports and arts activities and school textbooks, which helped families directly.

What is even worse is that this budget, in the form of Bill C-44, eliminates the tax credit for public transit that had been instituted by the Conservative government. Of the 200 or 300 tax credits we have, if someone had told me that the Liberals would eliminate the public transit tax credit, I would never have believed it, because they are always going on and on about their fine ecological principles. Here they are, however, doing away with the tax credit for Canadian taxpayers who take the bus to work every day.

For these reasons, we vigorously oppose this bill and we hope that the House of Commons will defeat it.

• (1705)

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the member opposite is criticizing us based on his selective memory. However, I would like to remind him that, through the Canada child benefit, we are giving more to Canadian families, young children, and parents, who now have the option of sending their children to music, dance, hockey, or other classes. However, that is not what I want to focus on today.

Earlier, the Minister of Finance spoke about our major economic achievements.

We have not seen the kind of results we obtained during the first quarter for a very long time, certainly not on the previous government's watch. The gross domestic product growth rate was 3.7% on an annual basis. What is more, 250,000 jobs were created under our government.

Obviously, our economic plan is working in every region of Canada. In fact, Quebec is number one in economic growth.

Will my colleague opposite at least recognize that significantly more economic progress has been made under the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister than when he was a member of the Quebec National Assembly?

• (1710)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, there are two things I want to address.

*Government Orders*

First, the hon. member talked about the Canada child benefit. Need I remind the government member that his party forgot a minor detail when it created its program, which cost \$2 billion more than ours? It forgot to calculate inflation. It forgot indexation. Any accountant at any firm who forgot to factor in inflation would be dismissed with a swift kick in the backside. The Liberals are still at it, however, and now they are giving us math lessons. Come on. When someone forgets to factor in inflation they do not deserve to be minister.

The Liberals are saying that they have a better record than the Conservatives did when they were in government. Need I remind the hon. member that when we were in government, we were faced with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression?

Which G7 country was the first to emerge from the crisis, not to mention in better shape and showing the best job creation and wealth creation numbers? It was Canada under the leadership of the Right Hon. Stephen Harper. Yes, we are proud of our record.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for his spirit and passion, which speak clearly to his energy in the House.

I would like to ask him a few questions. First, we have had a gag order imposed for an omnibus bill. Second, this budget implementation bill will hurt people. We know the famous Liberal credo, namely that they are working for the middle class and for people who are trying to join it. The budget eliminates the tax credit for those who use public transit. For some people, that was the only tax credit they could use at the end of the year to reduce their contribution and save a bit of money, between \$150 and \$200.

Moreover, the infrastructure privatization bank, as we know, will impose user fees, tolls, or usage charges on everyone who wants to use our airports, our ports, our roads, our highways, and all the infrastructure that is to be part of this scheme. It will cost money to taxpayers, to our fellow Canadians.

Can the member tell us about the impact of these two decisions on the people in his riding?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, the thanks and kind words from my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie are mutual.

I would like to talk about two items. First, frankly, I cannot believe that the public transit tax credit has been eliminated. That was an ecological, green measure. It was something for the most humble workers among us who take the bus to work. That is what the Liberal government is eliminating. If someone had told me it was going to do this, I would never have believed it, so little sense does it make.

On the subject of the infrastructure bank, unlike the NDP, we see no problem with private partnerships or foreign investment. The difference is that it has to be profitable for Canadians. That is why we created a tool called “PPP Canada”. That tool enabled us to screen projects so we could select the best ones, that would have benefited Canadians, and for which the private sector could have made its contribution without hurting Canadians.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for the area of Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, and also as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, it gives me great pleasure to speak today about the budget implementation act, better known as Bill C-44. Passage of this bill implements the next chapter of the government's plan to strengthen and grow the middle class. A strong and growing middle class is the engine of our economy and our highest priority.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the House of Commons finance committee for its hard work on this bill. Its careful study of the legislation has helped to provide members in this place with a clear sense of its intent. In particular, I would like to thank it for its work in ensuring that the legislation helps our government achieve the goal of a truly independent and transparent parliamentary budget officer, also known as the PBO.

Our government is committed to openness and transparency. That is why we have taken steps to strengthen the PBO in ways to make it truly independent. Bill C-44 recasts the head of the PBO as an officer of Parliament, supported by a team that is separate from the Library of Parliament and with the authority to report directly to Parliament. It would expand the PBO's right of access to government information and give the office a new mandate to provide costing of platform proposals during elections so that voters make informed decisions based on an independent analysis.

The government believes that the work of the PBO is fundamental to Parliament's ability to debate and consider economic and fiscal considerations of the day. That is why we listened and took action when we heard that more could be done to further strengthen the PBO's mandate and independence.

The government took action by introducing 12 amendments to Bill C-44 at the House of Commons finance committee that further strengthen the PBO's mandate. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the members of the committee for their hard work and collaboration and for improving the said legislation. It was with their efforts that those amendments have found broad support.

In fact, *The Globe and Mail* reported that the government has placed Canada's PBO on a “strong legislative footing”. That is why I was stunned that the opposition members seemed to oppose the changes. In fact, they have moved to delete every clause of Bill C-44. Blocking openness and transparency is not the only consequence of this ridiculous proposal. The proposed deletions will also have an impact on the ability of Canadians to live, work, and get around in their communities.

● (1715)

[*Translation*]

Our government is working hard to make significant and unprecedented investments in infrastructure. We have more than doubled our commitments for infrastructure under our plan. We are meeting Canadians' most urgent needs when it comes to infrastructure.

*Government Orders*

We knew that the infrastructure deficit had been caused, in part, by the lack of stable and predictable funding. Our partners across the country told us that they had major needs, not just for new projects, but also for repairs and modernizing.

Our infrastructure plan provides for investments in projects that will transform communities for the 21st century. We are aware of the risks and costs associated with underfunding of infrastructure, and those risks and costs are very significant. That is why the 2017 budget is the next step in the government of Canada's plan to make wise investments that will promote the growth of our economy and strengthen the middle class.

That is why, under our plan, funds will be allocated in three different ways: the funds will be paid out following negotiations for signing bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories, under programs offered by the federal government that are based on merit, and through the new infrastructure bank of Canada.

The budget implementation bill includes provisions to establish the infrastructure bank of Canada, which I would like to talk about now. When our government was preparing the long-term infrastructure plan, we met with numerous people all across the country. We met with our provincial, territorial, and municipal partners, with representatives of the aboriginal nations, and with various stakeholders and partners, and we listened to their views.

When it came time to design the infrastructure bank of Canada, we took the same approach. We consulted everyone: the mayors of cities all across Canada, and also international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF.

We also met with representatives of investment groups such as the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board. Thanks to the invaluable comments we received from those people and those groups, we were able to prepare the bill that is under discussion today.

The federal government has proposed to create the infrastructure bank of Canada because it believes that this is an opportunity for us to attract investments in infrastructure from the private sector and to establish partnerships with the leading players among the institutional investors on the international stage, in order to carry out more large infrastructure projects all across the country.

Subject to Parliament's approval, the bank will finance projects that would produce benefits for the public, but that might not have received funding otherwise because they are too expensive or because of competing priorities in a particular sector.

These are projects that could play a transformative role if they received support, but that have not been funded under traditional infrastructure programs.

The bank will invest up to \$35 billion in new infrastructure focusing on growth all across Canada. The kinds of projects that are envisioned and that could receive support from the bank include public transit in big cities, energy corridors, and many more.

An amount of \$15 billion for the bank would come from a long-term infrastructure plan. Additional funds of \$20 billion would be made available to the bank for making investments that would result in the bank holding assets in the form of equity or debts.

If the bank is approved by Parliament, its mandate would be to invest in infrastructure projects that would generate revenue and that would be in the public interest. The bank would seek to attract private sector investment by institutional investors for those projects, which would help cover the cost of transformative infrastructure projects across the country.

The bank would also be a centre of expertise that would work with other levels of government to gather and share data aimed at guiding future investments. Once operational, the bank could provide added value through its work, to help governments make evidence-based decisions regarding infrastructure investments.

The bank would be a new means of helping our financial partners finally meet their urgent infrastructure needs. If they want to use it, this new tool would help our partners, the provinces, territories, and municipalities, to create the infrastructure Canada needs.

I would like to reiterate that the bank is another tool that we could offer to our partners. We would not impose this tool on our partners.

By using the bank for large-scale projects, we would have more public funds to create more public infrastructure. Private capital would be used to carry out new projects that might not have been carried out otherwise, and federal funds will continue to support the achievement of municipal, provincial, and territorial priorities.

Our government believes it is important that decisions be made at the local level and it wants to support municipalities in achieving their priority objectives on infrastructure. Community representatives are the experts, and they are in the best position to know what is best for their community.

The Canada infrastructure bank was designed to leverage public funds to carry out more infrastructure projects for Canadian communities.

The investments we make today will create benefits for years to come, clean and sustainable economic growth, stronger and more inclusive communities, and more good jobs for Canada's middle class.

● (1720)

[English]

I call on all members of the House to support Bill C-44 and join us in helping build a brighter future for Canadians.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member's speech was similar to the messaging we have heard from most government MPs on the subject of the Canadian infrastructure bank. The real question is this: what is the need for this bank? We have five of the most respected financial institutions in the world, six or seven that finance infrastructure projects already in Canada and around the world. We have pension funds from the CPPIB to teachers to OMERS across the country that are already engaged in this as well. PPP Canada was already doing groundbreaking work on public-private partnerships. What is the need for this bank?

The last budget also includes the invest Canada office. The government will hire another CEO and staff up yet another government office to do what three departments of the federal government are already doing. It reminds me of the McGuinty-Wynne government in Ontario that would create more and more bureaucracy. We need less government.

Why can the Canadian banks' pension funds, working within the existing PPP Canada public-private partnership structure, not provide this same element of private investment in infrastructure? There is absolutely no need for this bank.

• (1725)

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, our government was elected on a promise to make historic investments in infrastructure. We recognize that over the past decade there has really been under-investment when it comes to infrastructure and our country is very much in need. We have heard this from coast to coast to coast. We made commitments to Canadians that we would invest over \$180 billion over the next 12 years to ensure those investments were made.

With respect to the infrastructure bank, we want to use all leverages out there to ensure the private sector can get involved. We recognize that the public sector cannot do it alone. We need to get business and more individuals involved to create more infrastructure for our communities.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today the finance minister commented a number of times about the importance of clean technology for the economy. On page 111 of the budget, we see the investment in Canada's innovation economy, clean technology, digital industries, and agrifood. However, if we look at the numbers, most of this funding will be after the present government's mandate expires. For example, for promoting the demonstration of clean technologies, the budget shows \$400 million. That sounds great until we see that only \$95 million of that is before the expiry of the Liberal government's mandate. Also, for advancing agriculture, science, and innovation, the budget shows \$60 million, yet only \$13 million of that will be by 2019.

How important is this investment in clean technology when the numbers clearly show that it is not actually going to be realized until after the next election cycle? I want to remind the member that there will be an election in 2019, and our party has committed to balancing the budget.

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, our government has made significant investments. We have identified six sectors that are big items in which we will invest a lot of money.

When we look at the area of agrifood, coming from the Maritimes, I know the agriculture sector is huge. Our government recognizes that the agriculture sector is responsible for about two million jobs in the country. We also recognize that the agrifood sector is responsible for about 7% of the GDP. If we are already doing well in this area, why not invest even more? That is exactly what we will do.

We recognize that the need for food in this world is going to be augmenting tremendously. Again, we are going to be investing where it is needed. We recognize there is tremendous growth in those areas.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise to contribute to the debate on Bill C-44, which would implement certain provisions in budget 2017.

We have heard members canvass some of the specific investments that we would make through the budget. What I would hope to do over the course of my remarks is offer a more personal twist, given my experience as someone who represents small towns and rural communities in Atlantic Canada.

I will hit on a few themes over the course of my remarks, but I would like to explain very briefly why I ran for politics and how this budget will help remedy some of the problems I saw.

I grew up in a family with six kids. Both of my parents were teachers. If the kids in my family had been asked 10 years ago what we wanted to do, we all would have said that we wanted to stay in Pictou County and make our lives and our careers there. Ten years later, when I was thinking about running for office, not one child in my family was living and working in the area we called home while growing up. There is a problem with that scenario, and it is not unique to Pictou County, Nova Scotia. It spreads throughout Atlantic Canada. This is a focus for me, and will be for the entire time I hold this job.

I see measures in budget 2017 that will help create a robust economy in Pictou Canada, the rest of Atlantic Canada, and the country as a whole. This is something our Prime Minister gets as well.

Recently, during a visit to the Nova Scotia Community College campus in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, he indicated that gone were the days when the only option was to move out west to find work. If we provided the skills and education to young people, they could grow up and raise a family on the east coast in the hometowns where they had always lived. This is inspiring to me. I know the last prime minister referred to Atlantic Canadians as living in a culture in defeatism. This difference in attitude makes a difference. However, these are not empty words; they are followed with unique actions.

I do not have time to highlight all the things I would like to, but I will point to a couple of programs that have led to projects in my riding.

### *Government Orders*

We have invested in infrastructure, including post-secondary education infrastructure. Nova Scotia is unique in its number of universities. It has 10 universities and many more Nova Scotia community college campuses. Just next to my hometown is the Nova Scotia Community College campus. We are contributing to a new trades innovation centre. The principal of that campus, David Freckelton, has worked his tail off to turn this project into a reality. However, it was only made possible with the investments of this government in our communities' infrastructure. This will create jobs in the short term, but, more importantly, in the long term this will ensure that the friends I went to East Pictou Rural High School with and my neighbours in New Glasgow still will be able to fill those positions that open up in machine shops throughout rural Nova Scotia. We will be educating the skilled trades people for the next generation.

In addition, programs at St. Francis Xavier University have recently been announced through infrastructure funding to create a new centre for innovation and health. Given the health care challenges in Nova Scotia, knowing we have more seniors per capita than any other province in Canada, this centre will pay dividends for generations.

We have also seen a contribution to the Institute of Government, which will help inspire people from different walks of life to take part in political leadership. I note specifically that program has included a leadership program for women as well, which is a tremendous contribution to our community.

It is not just infrastructure investments and post-secondary education. We are investing in the kind of infrastructure that makes a difference in the communities I represent. Small craft harbours provide an excellent example. I have basketball teammates from home who are fishing out of communities like Lismore. If we are investing in the wharves along the Northumberland Strait and the eastern shore, we are not just creating jobs in the next few years but we are securing a safe place to harvest what has become our nation's second-most valuable export. At the same time, we are pursuing export strategies to help bump up the price of our marquis seafood product in Nova Scotia, lobster, to ensure we are sustaining rural economies for years to come.

We are also partnering with municipalities to a degree that we have not seen before. Over the past few days, I have had representatives from my riding of Central Nova here for the FCM conference. They have been lauding the 2017 budget as a game changer. This has allowed projects like new water and waste water systems in a community like Plymouth. Friends of mine who grew up just down the road and have worked for great construction companies in my community say that this is the time of year that they are normally laid off. However, because there is a project going ahead, they are not only able to find work and contribute to the economy, but also build a project that is going to help the community grow. These are smart investments and I throw my full support behind them.

• (1730)

There are also key transportation pieces of infrastructure that need investment, and this is where the budget is going to come through as well. We have one of the deadliest stretches of highway running right

through my community. There have been 15 deaths since 2009 alone. Knowing that we have a partner in the provincial government that is willing to pursue a twinning project to help improve safety is a wonderful thing, but it is also going to create a phenomenal number of jobs in my community over the next seven years.

Local business people have been coming to my office since the beginning of my term as a member of Parliament advocating for the P.E.I.-Nova Scotia ferry connection to be funded, but also to set up a framework for long-term funding. This is something that was announced recently with a focus on transportation infrastructure that will allow producers, like Scotsburn Lumber, to make a long-term plan to get its products to market. It will allow trucking companies to perhaps get three trips instead of two to the island in a day. It will contribute to the local economy for years to come.

There is another issue I would like to hit on in the limited time that remains, and that is the fact that the budget has applied a gender lens to a degree I have never seen in Canadian politics.

It has been one of the great professional honours of my career to date to serve as a member of the status of women committee. Over the course of our nation's history, women have been suppressed and excluded from full participation in Canadian society and the Canadian economy. That is not the result of chance. That is the result of decisions that have been made over the course of a generation. However, the budget has considered specifically how the policies identified and, hopefully, adopted through this legislation will make a difference, not just in the lives of Canadians en masse but also specifically how they will impact women differently.

Some of the programs we are seeing rolled out are investments to the tune of \$100 million to develop a gender-based violence strategy. I have to thank the champions in my community who have been working on issues like this. I was so pleased to serve on a panel when we announced funding for the bystander intervention project, launched in partnership with different communities in Antigonish, including the campus community of St. FX; Lucille Harper, who has been an absolute champion for women's rights in the community over the course of her lifetime; and other tremendous panellists who served and told the stories of their experience living in the nearby first nations community, or generally, in the community, and how a lack of bystander awareness and intervention has contributed to social problems like gender-based violence.

We have also seen funding allocated for gender and diversity training for judges in the budget. I would like to thank the former interim leader of the official opposition for her work. We were able to collaborate on the status of women committee to ensure that judges have the training materials they need, which would be provided through this budget, to make sure they understand the unique considerations that might come before a court, for example, in a sexual assault case. We do not need another statement like the boneheaded ones we have seen in the cases of Justice Camp, and more recently, Judge Lenehan in Nova Scotia. Quite frankly, those attitudes are outdated, and if we can do something in the House to prevent the injustices we have seen in sexual assault cases in our communities, that is the least we owe women living in Canada today.

*Government Orders*

In the remaining minutes I have, I will shift my focus to a few social programs that are funded under budget 2017, which I fully support.

We have seen tremendous investments in health care. As I mentioned, with the large proportion of seniors we have in Nova Scotia, one of the long-term solutions to our demographic woes needs to be enhanced in-home care. While there are some improvements being made, the system does not work as effectively as it should. Budget 2017 would implement the accord between the Province of Nova Scotia and the federal government, which would see not only the largest transfer from the federal government to my home province for health care, but in addition, funds have been earmarked for in-home care to the tune of \$157 million, and \$130 million for mental health.

This means that people who need quality care in their homes will have CCAs, who put up with incredibly difficult working conditions and schedules, to provide quality care at a better price in their homes, where our seniors would rather be. We do not need to be financing people to the tune of \$1,000 a day for long-term hospital stays if that person can receive appropriate care in his or her home.

My grandfather, who is a veteran, has had tremendous benefits and has been able to stay in his home because he has had in-home care, supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs. We should apply what we have learned with our veterans to the rest of our community and ensure that all Canadians have quality access to in-home care, so that our seniors can retire with dignity and remain in their homes as long as they are able to.

I could go on for days about the virtues of budget 2017 and the priorities of our government, but as I am running out of time, I would like to say thank you for the opportunity, Madam Speaker, and I will be supporting this piece of legislation.

• (1735)

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Nova Scotia for his eloquent delivery just now. He spoke about the importance of the various initiatives that are put in place through the budget, in addition to the 2016 budget, that speak to economic growth and economic opportunity.

I wonder if the member could elaborate on the view of the government for economic growth in Atlantic Canada through the rolling out of an Atlantic growth strategy that focuses on a skilled workforce, increased immigration, innovation, infrastructure, clean growth, climate change, and on trade and investment. What opportunities for real economic growth in the region in which we both are proud to live does he see through the government's focus on the Atlantic growth strategy?

• (1740)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, there has been a shift in attitude since we have come into government that recognizes the potential in Atlantic Canada.

This has been put into action through the Atlantic growth strategy that was formed after the feedback from 32 Atlantic Liberal MPs and which was able to partner with the regional ministers and of course the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development,

who then reached a deal with the four Atlantic Canadian provinces to come up with a strategy that focuses on key areas that are going to drive growth.

With our demographic challenges, immigration is a major issue. What we have seen is a pilot project announced that will see at least 6,000 new families coming to Atlantic Canada to fill the labour needs of our labour market where a Canadian cannot be found to do those jobs.

We see a focus on innovation that is going to spur small- and medium-sized business growth. We see a focus on clean growth, and I note ACOA has set aside \$20 million specifically for environmentally green projects. I could go on, but I want to give time to other members who want to ask questions as well.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for providing time for me to ask him about his last exchange with the member for Fredericton.

I find it the height of hubris for Liberals to be talking about innovation and the innovation budget when they acknowledge the minister in charge of ACOA is not from Atlantic Canada. The 32 members of Parliament he mentioned being consulted were being consulted by a member of Parliament from Mississauga who occasionally visits that region.

I know the member is proud of St. FX and some of the amazing academic institutions and entrepreneurs we have coming out those institutions in Atlantic Canada, but I would like to see, in a budget that the Liberals called the “#innovationbudget”, a real commitment to Atlantic Canada. I would like to see a stand-alone minister for that important agency, working on employment and opportunities for the future.

I hope that the member and his 31 friends demand that in the coming shuffle this summer.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question and I congratulate him on his participation in a hard-fought leadership race for the official opposition.

I would like to say that perhaps this is my optimism or naïveté as a young member of Parliament from Atlantic Canada, but I sincerely believe that the days of parochialism are gone from Atlantic Canadian politics. When I can stand up and say, “We are going to judge our ministers and our members based on results, not by where they come from”, I will be proud. The results have been delivered.

With the Atlantic growth strategy, it is the first time I have seen a regional focus to policy and investments that are creating jobs in my community, that are going to improve the strength of those communities, and that will make Atlantic Canadians more successful.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have time for a short question.

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is shameful that time allocation is being imposed on something as important as a budget bill. I wonder how the member can pretend that the parliamentary budget officer will continue to be transparent when the bill forces him to submit his plan in advance to the Speakers of both Houses. What if one of the Speakers rejects the plan?

What will happen if the parliamentary budget officer wants to undertake a study that is not part of the plan? Will he still be able to conduct that kind of study?

[*English*]

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, on the issue of time allocation, I find this a difficult issue to take seriously at times because of what I have watched go on in this chamber over the course of the last few months. Again, perhaps this is out of a bit of naïveté, but I did not expect to come here and have to take half my day voting on which member stood up first. Canadians expect us to make investments and to move forward with an agenda that will actually turn into results in their communities.

As to the question of the parliamentary budget officer, I believe this is an important officer. I look forward to the day where we can, through the Speaker, break this up and have the officer give independent feedback on each piece.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the constituents of Kitchener—Conestoga to speak about the Liberal government's second budget. Perhaps I should call it the Liberal government's wishful election budget, as the majority of the spending outlined falls after the next election.

I am sorry to be the bearer of bad news for my hon. colleagues across the way, but there is an election in 2019 and our Conservative plan includes balanced budgets, fiscal responsibility, and an end to the reckless spending of the Liberal government.

Following the release of budget 2017, I held a round table discussion with several business owners and representatives from my constituency. I would like to share some of their comments and concerns.

With respect to red tape, taxes, and fees, all of the attendees expressed that they were disappointed the current government did not follow through with its promised small business tax cut. This is a promise the Liberals made during the 2015 election, throughout Canada and in Waterloo region, but they have had two budgets since, and there is still no tax cut.

The participants also shared concerns that it is becoming much more difficult and expensive to do business in Canada because of red tape, increased taxes, and fees. One participant told me that their revenues have more than doubled but there is less profit and a lot of it has to do with government payroll taxes and it's only going to get worse as CPP taxes are on the rise. Another participant told a story about how he now employs two full-time employees who deal specifically with government red tape. He spoke about the difficulty and cost of using the scientific research and experimental tax incentive credits and the difficulties companies face when dealing with the Canada Revenue Agency.

Small- and medium-sized businesses should be focused on running their businesses and being successful, not navigating government red tape. This was a common thread throughout most of our round table discussion. There was a concern expressed by all the members about the intervention of government in business operations.

A number of participants were disappointed—and that word is far too mild—that Bombardier was given a bailout. They feel that these dollars could have been spent far better elsewhere. Another member of the round table voiced his concern with the ballooning debt being carried by the federal government and talked about how much money could be used for infrastructure if it were not being spent on interest payments on the debt. Every member of the round table shared concerns about Canada's growing deficit spending and wanted to see a return to fiscal responsibility.

It is round tables like these that keep me engaged with the issues that affect my constituents the most. I would encourage the hon. members across the way to sit down and really take time to listen to their constituents, especially those who help to create jobs and opportunity, our small- and medium-sized business owners.

In addition to the issues that were raised in the round table, I will discuss a number of problems with this current budget: infrastructure spending, eliminating the public transit tax credit, and the laughable scheduling of inadequate funding for agriculture, clean tech, and home care.

Kitchener—Conestoga, being part of the Waterloo region, is both urban and rural. We are a community of people who utilize public transit. We are also a community of people who work both in the region and travel into Toronto along the 401. As well, we have many commuters travelling into the Waterloo region from the GTA, especially a large number who are employed in the high-tech sector.

By allocating public transit funding based on ridership, the Liberal government is disadvantaging Canada's growing communities in favour of already-developed large urban centres. That is what is happening in Kitchener—Conestoga in the region of Waterloo. Too often, communities like ours are left to fend for themselves. Of course, a bridge in Wellesley township will never have the traffic volume crossing that an intercity bridge does, but that does not mean it is not important to the growth and health of our local economy.

Municipalities need good and safe infrastructure, but they also need programs that are easy to access, without miles of red tape. They need programs that provide predictable funding and do not leave small and rural communities behind.



*Government Orders*

That brings me to the public transit tax credit. I raised this issue in earlier debates on the Liberals' budget and I heard the arguments from the other side of the aisle. My hon. colleagues point out that it is not used often and has not increased ridership. In that case, what the government clearly needs to do is highlight the availability of the tax credit, and possibly even increase the tax credit so that more Canadians will consider it as a viable option.

● (1745)

Cancelling the tax credit is exactly the wrong thing to do, especially when we are investing billions of dollars in that infrastructure. It needs to be more fully utilized.

My riding is an example. As a result of cancelling the public tax credit, an adult would lose about \$150 per year, or the equivalent of about two months' worth of bus passes. Talk about encouraging people to take transit: we want people to take public transit, but we are going to add a \$150 fee for the privilege.

Getting 12 months of public transit for the cost of 10 is a great incentive. We need to do a better job at communicating this to our constituents and possibly increase the credit, but certainly not eliminate it.

As I noted earlier, the budget should be called the next election budget, as the majority of its spending comes after 2019. The government's spending on clean technology, digital industries, and agrifood is an example. The government announced \$400 million, but less than half of that will be spent before the next election. To be more specific, only \$95 million will be spent by the fiscal year 2018-19. That is \$95 million of the \$400 million.

What about the government's plan to invest in agriculture innovation? Again, this budget announces \$60 million to invest in science, innovation, and agriculture, but less than 25% of that budgeted amount will be spent by the next election. It is only \$13 billion, yet the government bragged that it is investing \$60 billion.

I have been up multiple times during question period to ask the government about its plan for Canada's aging population and I have not yet received an adequate response. Maybe one of my hon. colleagues from the Liberal Party can give me an answer today. For the first time in Canada's history, there are more seniors than young people. Something needs to be done to address this situation, but the Liberals seem to be kicking this responsibility down the road again until after the next election. Of the \$5 billion they announced, less than half will be spent by the time the next election comes around.

We heard that the Liberals were going to invest \$3 billion in home care and palliative care, yet here we are 20 months later, and only \$5 billion has been announced over a long period of time, less than 25% of it before the next election. What does the Liberal Party plan to gain from backdating of their spending to beyond the mandate that Canadians have given them? It all sounds good, but there is no real action.

Last, I would be remiss if I did not mention and include some facts about the national debt and just how much interest we pay each year. Despite the Prime Minister's promise to return to budget balance, the Minister of Finance admitted on budget day that he has no intention whatsoever of returning our books to balance. The Prime Minister broke his election campaign promise to run a \$10 billion deficit. In

fact, for the year ahead it is \$29 billion, three times what was promised.

The government in four years will add a whopping \$100 billion to Canada's federal debt. The interest charges on our national debt just for this year will be \$24.3 billion, and that number increases every year for the foreseeable future under the Liberal government. By 2021, our interest costs alone will be \$33.3 billion each and every year, and it will continue to grow after that.

Let us think about what that \$33.3 billion could do. It could have meant increases to health care transfers, investments in palliative care and hospices and home care, more money invested in infrastructure, or simply a reduction in our tax burden.

I will not be supporting the budget, as it lacks a clear vision to return Canada back to financial stability, and just as it backloads funding to after the next election, it backloads our national debt to future generations. This is not a responsible action for the House to take.

● (1750)

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, early in his speech my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga talked about the public transit tax credit, which is an interesting topic because the idea of the credit was to increase ridership, yet the net result was that it did not increase ridership and it did not help those who needed it most because it was not a refundable tax credit. Between that and the comments on deficits and backloading, the Conservatives have not balanced a budget in over a century in real terms. I am wondering if the member has some clarity of thought on this that makes any sense.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Madam Speaker, what does not make any sense is to invest all of this money, billions and billions of dollars, in public transit infrastructure, light rail transit, subways, buses, and so on, yet we are not encouraging increased ridership. Why would we want subways or LRT buses half full? Why would we not try to increase ridership? If the current tax credit system is not working, we should not simply cancel it but possibly consider advertising more widely that it is available, and more importantly, even increase it slightly to encourage more people to utilize public transit.

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech on the budget implementation bill.

As we have mentioned many times, it is a mammoth bill. The Liberals swore that they would never proceed in such a way. They also said that they would not bring in time allocation at every turn. They are on track to beating the previous government's sad record. It is truly pitiful.

*Government Orders*

I want to talk to my colleague about something I am sure we will agree on: the infrastructure privatization bank.

Does my hon. colleague not agree that time allocation should not have been brought in and that we should have taken the time to properly study this infrastructure privatization bank? Our smaller and rural communities will not have access to this funding, which they desperately need for infrastructure investments. This bank will actually be harmful to Canadians, because they will take on all the risk while large private corporations rake in the profits.

Does the member not agree that this infrastructure privatization scheme does not pass the smell test and that it is a very bad idea?

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Madam Speaker, the point is well taken that the Liberal government promised there would be no omnibus bills, yet in this bill there are a number of issues that are not related directly to the budget, including the independence of the parliamentary budget officer and the infrastructure bank. I agree with my colleague that the infrastructure bank will be of very little assistance to those in rural communities.

The other point my colleague raised is the issue of time allocation. Earlier today, the Liberal finance minister boasted that 54 members of Parliament have had opportunities to speak to the issues in the budget, but 54 members of Parliament is not even 20%. It is more like 16% or 18% of members of Parliament who have had the opportunity to address Parliament on budgetary matters.

I mentioned in my comments that one of the benefits of taking time to listen to constituents at round tables and so on is to get input from them, but there is no point getting input from them if we do not have the opportunity to provide that input to the government in the chamber.

It is unconscionable that on a matter of this importance, the Liberal government has again chosen time allocation to shut down debate and has not allowed each member of Parliament who wishes to speak to get up and represent the voices of their constituents in the chamber. That should happen on every bill, especially one of this importance.

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Fredericton, I have the pleasure to rise today to speak in support of this budget bill, Bill C-44, which, if passed, would see important measures come to fruition, important measures that would help the government meet commitments it has made to Canadians and further strengthen the middle class and those working hard to join it.

These measures build upon important investments made in last year's budget, budget 2016, and this year, measures include increased supports for health care for an aging population, greater supports for veterans and their families, and a focus on job creation and economic growth through support for innovators right across the country.

[*Translation*]

These measures will have a tangible and positive impact on the lives of Canadians, New Brunswickers, and above all, my

constituents in the riding of Fredericton, which includes the cities and towns of Fredericton, New Maryland, Oromocto, and the Grand Lake region.

• (1800)

[*English*]

In budget 2017, we are committed to investing in the health and well-being of Canadians. My home province of New Brunswick has one of the fastest-aging populations in Canada. This demographic reality is not unique to our province, but it represents an opportunity and a potential for New Brunswickers to lead in healthy aging and health care innovation as we seek out the solutions to these challenges.

New Brunswick has already proven itself as a leader in scaling up health care solutions. For instance, just last week here on the Hill, the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, in partnership with the New Brunswick Association for Nursing Homes, spoke about the launching of the New Brunswick Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics Collaborative as a way to improve dementia care in our province. CFHI's original pan-Canadian collaboration, upon which the collaborative was built, saw a reduction in the use of antipsychotic medication by 46% of the residents at Fredericton's York Care Centre.

This is just one example of how innovative approaches are leading to better health care outcomes for patients and better peace of mind for their families. It is a reflection of the potential that New Brunswick offers to serve as a living lab in the demonstration and implementation of innovative health care solutions.

[*Translation*]

In addition, the demographics of New Brunswick are an excellent reflection of Canada's diversity, and this allows for greater innovation in health care.

We are French, we are English, we are indigenous peoples, and we are immigrants. We live in urban and rural communities that are well connected and in close proximity to one another.

[*English*]

When it comes to health care and health care supports, our government has stepped up. First we reached a deal with the Province of New Brunswick and then with the other provinces to see an investment of \$11 billion over the next 10 years in health transfers, including in New Brunswick an additional \$229.4 million for better home care and mental health supports. That is \$125.1 million dedicated to better home care delivery in our province, including critical home care infrastructure requirements, and \$104.3 million to be allocated in support of mental health initiatives.

*Government Orders*

These investments will allow seniors and people aging in our communities to live longer, healthier lives in their homes, reducing the financial and administrative burdens on our already overstretched health care system.

Furthermore, wait times for access to mental health services will be greatly reduced, allowing those experiencing mental health challenges better access to the care and treatment they need and deserve.

[*Translation*]

Our government is making the necessary investments to support the well-being of Canadians, and New Brunswick is well positioned to be a leader in the area of health care.

[*English*]

Veterans and families deserve our unwavering gratitude and support for their sacrifice and service to our country. Those who serve in uniform do so with bravery, honour, and dignity, protecting the values that we cherish most and doing so with their lives.

In budget 2016, our government invested \$5.6 billion over six years to deliver greater financial support to veterans with injuries or illnesses incurred during military service.

In budget 2017, we continue to fulfill our commitments to veterans by focusing on the financial security for ill and injured veterans, investing in education and career development in order to help veterans transition into post-military life, and by supporting families.

To provide more financial security for veterans, their families, and caregivers, budget 2017 commits \$187.3 million over six years to create the caregiver recognition benefit, which provides \$1,000 each month to the caregiver of an ill or injured veteran and better recognizes his or her vital role. We are also increasing the support we provide, and recognizing caregivers directly, by replacing the family caregiver relief benefit with this caregiver recognition benefit. This new tax-free benefit, again of \$1,000 a month, will be paid directly to the veteran's caregiver, providing him or her with better financial support.

In order to better support servicewomen and servicemen in their transition to civilian life, budget 2017 will invest \$133.9 million over six years to create the new veterans education and training benefit. This will provide up to \$80,000 to veterans in support of their pursuit of post-secondary education. This new benefit will provide veterans with the funding for college, university, or technical education of their choice. Veterans with six years of service may be eligible for up to \$40,000, and veterans with at least 12 years of service may be eligible for up to \$80,000, to cover tuition, course materials, and some incidental and living expenses.

To recognize the vital role played by families of veterans living with physical or mental health issues as a result of their service, budget 2017 proposes to invest \$147 million over six years starting in 2016-17, and \$15 million per year, ongoing, to expand access to the military family resource centres for families of veterans medically released from April 2018 onward. This would increase the availability of the military family resource centres for medically

released veterans from seven locations under the current pilot to 32 locations across Canada.

Since taking office, our government has had an unparalleled commitment to innovation and the development of a skilled workforce. This commitment is no more apparent in my region of the country than through the Atlantic growth strategy, a whole-of-government strategy led by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, along with the four ministers from the provinces in Atlantic Canada, and our four premiers. Further, this strategy has the buy-in and active engagement of all 32 members of Parliament from Atlantic Canada represented here in this House.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

It is an honour to serve as part of a government that understands, as proven by its actions, the importance of Atlantic Canada and its place in our Canadian identity and our economy.

Our government is focused on growing the economy through innovation, and more specifically, it is promoting Atlantic Canada's capabilities through its economic growth strategy.

[*English*]

Over the past several months, I had the privilege of chairing an innovation subcommittee of our Atlantic growth strategy, which tabled a report on May 15, culminating in five core recommendations, as a product of a pan-Canadian consultation tour engaging stakeholders from across the region.

[*Translation*]

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the process through their participation, as well as all the members who took part in the tour of Atlantic Canada.

[*English*]

Another area of priority for our government is amplifying the voice of young Canadians. Youth are leading progressive initiatives for change in our communities, and as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, I know we are well placed with young people in our communities to look ahead to the next 150 years. This includes the rolling out of youth councils across the country, on which I had the pleasure of working with 18 young people in Fredericton.

Our government is ambitious in our economic growth agenda, and I look forward to continuing to support Canadians right across the country as well as those in my home riding.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member for Fredericton is probably not surprised that I am up speaking. I am very much a fan of his community, and am particularly very thankful for the work done by the men and women and the families of CFB Gagetown. I am also very good friends with the hardest-working MLA in New Brunswick, Brian Macdonald, whom he knows well.

I am going to address the member's question, because the Liberals' work on veterans, which he talked about, is two things. Sadly, it is the dressing up with new names the programs we had started, all the programs at military family resource centres. They have renamed the family caregiver relief benefit to the caregiver recognition benefit. The renaming and moving around of chairs is one thing, but the disaster at Veterans Affairs that I would like the member to address is that most of that allocated \$5 billion was not well spent.

The way they looked at all injuries was to include thousands of people who had more minor injuries and who have already transitioned well after the military. That money, those resources, should have been focused at the medium to severely injured veterans who need care for their lives.

However, by spreading a lot of money around, it is having less impact. Liberals promised to return to the lifetime pension, and now they are backing away. Is the member going to commit to fulfilling that promise for the veterans who live in and around CFB Gagetown?

• (1810)

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** Madam Speaker, I share the member's unwavering support for the women and men who serve at CFB Gagetown, the home of Canada's army. Not only that, it is the largest economic contributor in the region.

I was proud to see our Minister of National Defence at CFB Gagetown last June announcing \$32 million of critical infrastructure upgrades that not only support the training of our women and men in uniform, but finally invest in infrastructure that puts Atlantic Canadians to work. We had not seen that for 10 years under the culture of defeat government, under the former leader, Stephen Harper.

In addition, I know the member was brought in as the minister of veterans affairs to save a sinking ship at the end of the last mandate. However, we will take no lessons from the way the former government tried to balance the budget on the backs of veterans and other vulnerable populations across our country. We are reinvesting in the health and supports for veterans and their families, and in their education and transition back to civilian life. We are developing greater supports for their mental well-being.

In this recent budget, we also committed to the reinstatement of lifelong supports for veterans.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, a commitment is one thing, but the Minister of Finance has laid before this House two budgets. There was the budget last year, and most recently budget 2017.

A lot of veterans live in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, particularly a lot who served in the navy. A lot of veterans

were very pleased to see the Liberal promise of restoring those lifetime pensions.

Two years into the government's mandate, why do we still have a commitment to lifetime pensions? Why has the Minister of Finance, through two budgets, not implemented that very clear Liberal promise that was made in 2015?

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** Madam Speaker, the member would know that the department was in a disastrous situation when the government came in, and this minister has committed to consulting with veterans right across the country.

As the MP for a region that sees a lot of veterans building lives for themselves after they leave the military, I too have had plenty of consultations with veterans. Veterans understand the complexity of getting their long-term financial supports right. This is not an easy solution. Veterans come in from all different backgrounds, with different experiences and needs. We want to make sure, as a government, that we get our support for veterans right, so that we do not have to correct mistakes as we have found ourselves correcting from the previous government.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I only wish I had something to be happy about this afternoon, but Bill C-44 is a major disappointment.

We all remember that the Liberals were elected on a promise of modest deficits. That was something everyone in the House could agree on, because both Conservatives and New Democrats had pledged to manage taxpayers' money responsibly. The first disappointment came last year with a budget that went well beyond the so-called modest \$10-billion deficit that the Liberals promised all the way to a \$23-billion deficit.

We hoped the Liberals would come to their senses this time around. I should point out that they were elected by a minority of Canadians and that one day, it will be time to pay the Liberals' piper.

Unfortunately, the forecast deficit in the budget is \$28.5 billion for this year. That is in addition to the previous deficit, so the total deficit for the past two years is over \$50 billion. As they say, when it rains it pours, and indeed, the Liberals are determined to remain in this downward spiral of reckless spending, so much so that the parliamentary budget officer says it will be decades before we can even start to talk about balancing the budget again.

I am asking this government and this Minister of Finance why they are being so irresponsible toward future generations.

*Government Orders*

On this World Environment Day, we are reminded of the fact that sustainable development is a social, economic, and environmental responsibility. Obviously, the Liberals have done nothing on the environment to date, except choose natural resource development projects based on questionable, political criteria.

It is not very clear where the Liberals are going on the social front, and if I may say so, their budget plan is basically a descent into hell with recurring deficits that will place a tremendous burden on future generations. As my grandmother so aptly put it, “He who pays his debts grows rich.”

The problem we have right now is that the government is racking up shameful amounts of debt and, unfortunately, it is spending money on frivolous things. Now, it has introduced an omnibus bill, a Chinese buffet of sorts that has a little bit of everything but that does not balance the budget, far from it. That is another thing that the Liberals promised not to do.

That is the big problem with this budget and that is why I, like my colleagues who also spoke today, am opposed to it. That is why it represents a betrayal by the Prime Minister and the Liberals. It represents more of the government's broken promises to Canadians.

When the Liberals were elected, they promised to run only a small deficit and to balance the budget by 2019. However, that is not what is happening. As I mentioned, the government has already racked up over \$50 billion in debt and is heading toward chronic deficits. Why chronic deficits? First, because the government is in a spending frenzy.

On the weekend, I spoke with a contractor in my riding who is doing work in downtown Lévis, near the ferry terminal. He said he was working on a major construction project and that he had asked the mayor where the money was coming from. The mayor said that it was from the gas tax. Therefore, it is not new money from the Liberals; the money that is being invested is coming from measures that our former Conservative government implemented.

Unfortunately, what we now see is that the Liberals talk a good game, but they are not so good when it is time for action. Not a lot of big projects are moving forward. It is quite the contrary: promises are sprinkled here and there, but the money is not flowing. Contractors and municipalities are waiting for that money for infrastructure projects.

• (1815)

Now, not only has the government decided to wake up and make sure that the money flows to the municipalities, but it also intends to take some of that money to put it in a new infrastructure bank scheme that seems to be completely arbitrary.

In Quebec, people are very worried that the Liberal government could infringe upon provincial and municipal jurisdictions. People are also worried about cronyism, because Liberals will be Liberals. We heard about patronage appointments this afternoon during question period. That scheme will certainly be good for the Liberals' friends, but not so much for the municipalities and the communities that need water systems and other infrastructure.

That is one of the measures in the budget plan. A gigantic \$30-billion organization will be created and middle-class taxpayers will

bear all the risk, while the Liberals' wealthy friends will pocket the profits. That is what this infrastructure bank is all about. The problem is that costs are socialized while profits are privatized, and all taxpayers get is the short end of the stick.

This is the kind of Liberal approach that requires close scrutiny. However, the Liberals are steamrolling the House and insist on passing this budget bill that completely betrays the Liberal government's commitments to Canadians.

My colleagues also talked about the parliamentary budget officer, who will be more or less scrutinized, when he should be accountable to the entire House. The government appears to want to meddle in how the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer operates. Naturally we are opposed to this, since it has to do with the sacred principle that links the legislative and executive powers. This kind of interference undermines the ability of the legislative branch to keep a close eye on this Liberal spending orgy.

I talked about the infrastructure bank, but that is not all of it. The Liberals still want to create a new scheme. This time I am talking about Investment Canada, which aims to attract foreign investors to this country. However, the Liberals seem to be completely neglecting the resources we already have at our disposal. We have consular and embassy services, and the whole economic branch of Global Affairs Canada. The government is making a complete mockery of the commitments made over the past few years by creating another body that will only generate more red tape without necessarily producing any results.

These are some of the measures contained in this bill, which are all being added to the deficit; as we have seen over the past few days, there is a lot of frivolous spending. These are in stark contrast to the budgetary measures we had gotten used to under Minister Flaherty and Minister Joe Oliver. Look at the 180 cuts we made in previous budgets.

Sadly, yet again this Liberal budget includes hidden tax hikes. It is a shame that the government is attacking the average family that it claims to want to protect, including parents whose children take figure skating lessons or piano lessons. The Liberals are taking away the tools we had given to families and taking more money away from them. The same goes for businesses and people who take public transit or use Uber. In fact they are taxing beer and wine and imposing additional charges on SMEs. It is an utter fiasco.

The theme of the budget is innovation. Well, the Liberals have certainly been innovative in their art of misleading the next generation with their syrupy words.

*Government Orders*

• (1820)

[English]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have been talking a bit about debt and deficits, and I want to point out that between 1996-97 and 2005-06, the Liberal government paid down \$81.4 billion against the national debt, a lot of the debt that had been created under the Brian Mulroney government. The Stephen Harper government inherited a debt of \$481 billion in 2006. The Liberal government had a \$13 billion surplus and the Conservatives immediately put us into deficit and added another \$153 billion to the debt.

In a short period of time, our government has forecast investing \$29 billion in Canada. That is the forecast, but we are going to be coming in at around \$21 billion or \$22 billion this year. We have created 3.7% in growth, versus 1.9% forecast, and have created 250,000 jobs.

Is it right to cut costs or to invest in Canada?

• (1825)

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that we Conservatives invested the largest amount in infrastructure in Canadian history, with a record amount of \$33 billion in our Building Canada plan. We also took Canada out of the worst economic crisis of the last decade by creating 1.2 million new jobs.

What are the Liberals doing? While we are in a relatively good growth situation, the Liberals are wasting Canadians' money and are giving a mortgage to the next generation.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I heard the member for Guelph's question, and it is the typical incorrect Liberal rhetoric that they fire away.

The reality of the situation is that there is good economic growth in the United States. We have a low Canadian dollar, and we have a lot of consumer spending here in Canada.

I wonder if the member could provide a little context on the reality of the situation. We have a \$2-trillion economy. The Liberals have a deficit. It is a shame of all shames that we are in deficit when the economy is growing and there is a strong U.S. economy.

Would the member shed some truth and some reality and facts on the debate here today?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Ontario for reminding Canadians that our Conservative government managed our country in a sound way. We left the new Liberal government with a surplus of \$2.9 billion, which is now turning into a real nightmare.

One thing I did not mention in my speech is that while the Liberals do not seem to really care about the fiscal future of the next generation, they certainly are concerned about legalizing marijuana. Who is going to benefit from that? We heard clearly in the last debate that our youth are at risk in terms of their health. We also heard that legalizing marijuana would increase organized crime. We discovered last week that half a dozen influential Liberal members will benefit to a large extent from the proposed legislation. Canadians expect more from their elected officials.

**Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have explained several times why our budgets of both 2016 and 2017 are good for Canadians. We are proceeding exactly the way we said we would.

I was a Conservative for many years. In fact, the first time I voted Liberal was in the last election, when I ran for office. It is pretty rich for those guys to say what they are saying. It is important that we go back and see their record. The Conservatives had the lowest growth in 69 years. If we look at nine prime ministers, from Prime Minister King to Prime Minister Harper, we would see the worst average real GDP growth under Stephen Harper. The worst growth in employment was under Stephen Harper. The worst in generating employment was under Stephen Harper. The worst annual growth in real GDP per capita was under Stephen Harper.

Why does that member think Canadians should give the keys back to the Conservatives to run our economy in 2019?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague's question. I would just like to say that we Conservatives are known to do what we say and say what we do. I am disappointed that my colleague is not only attacking the current generation but the future generation.

[Translation]

We are very proud to have left a \$2.9 billion surplus to our friends across the way. Unfortunately, they are in the process of mortgaging the current generation and future generations.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I want to talk about the proposed measures in Bill C-44, budget implementation act, 2017, No. 1.

These measures are part of our government's ambitious plan to grow the economy and the middle class, support sustainable development of the economy and the environment, and ensure that no one is left behind in our society.

• (1830)

[English]

Today I will focus on how budget 2016 and budget 2017 build on our commitment to reduce the gender wage gap, to raise greater workforce participation among women, and to help combat poverty and violence. Our government is providing more and better support for women as workers, as caregivers, as mothers, and as seniors. Canada succeeds when women and girls also succeed.

*Government Orders*

Let me start with some good news about recent trends. In recent decades we have seen more women getting a post-secondary education and more women in the workforce, which has helped boost incomes and the economic well-being of Canadian families. Canadian women are now among the most educated in the world. Nearly three-quarters of working-age women in our labour force hold a post-secondary certificate or degree. More women are working now compared to 30 years ago. Today women account for 47% of the labour force, compared to just 38% in 1976.

All this is good news, good news for our economy and good news for women, but there are still real challenges for women at work, including a persistent wage gap between women and men. This wage gap has narrowed over the last few decades, but we have a long way to go.

Causes of the gender wage gap are complex, though we can single out two as being particularly important. First, women and men still tend to work in different occupations. Jobs that have been traditionally dominated by women often pay less. Second, men are represented much more than women in the highest-paying jobs in Canada. A contributing factor is that women in general work fewer hours each week in paid employment, partly because they still do more unpaid domestic labour, such as caregiving for children and relatives.

Our government is putting in place concrete measures to support women in the workplace and to help close the wage gap: pay equity legislation, measures to increase female representation in senior management, more grants and loans for working women who want to continue their education, changes that make work hours more flexible, and early learning and child care.

Now I would like to move beyond the workplace and talk about employment insurance benefits. Our government is also increasing support to women by improving employment insurance to provide better caregiver, parental, and maternity benefits.

[*Translation*]

No two Canadian families are alike, and parents have unique needs when it comes to balancing their work and family responsibilities. To better help them deal with the challenges of raising a growing family, we announced, in budget 2017, measures to make employment insurance special benefits more flexible.

Budget 2017 announced the creation of a new caregiver benefit, which will help women in particular and give them more support when they need it. Statistics show that women are more likely to be family caregivers and that they devote more time each week to caring for sick family members.

Our government will also allow those who choose to do so to extend their parental benefits from 12 to 18 months. Right now, women use 86% of the total number of weeks of parental benefits. The proposed amendments will allow parents who are caring for a newborn or newly adopted child to choose the type of parental benefits that best suit their family's needs.

Parents can choose to receive parental benefits for a longer period of up to 18 months at a reduced rate or for a period of 12 months at the current rate.

This flexibility will help families who need it.

What is more, in budget 2017, we propose to allow pregnant women to claim employment insurance maternity benefits up to 12 weeks before their due date, which is up from the current standard of eight weeks. This will give families and future mothers more latitude when they need it.

• (1835)

[*English*]

In that respect, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and determination of my colleague, the member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands, in pushing forward the much-needed changes to EI maternity benefits to address the issue of women being under-represented in the skilled trades. We must ensure that we level the playing field so that women have equal opportunity to participate in all sectors of the labour force.

[*Translation*]

Our government is also recommitting to invest in child care and early learning. This will help women in particular because they are more likely to work, to find and keep a high-paying job, if they have access to affordable, high-quality child care. Child care also contributes to reducing the wage gap, because it facilitates continuous, full-time participation in the labour force. It also helps improve career opportunities for women.

Taking gender equality seriously also means taking child care seriously. In budget 2017, we are following through on our commitment to invest \$500 million, as promised last year. We are also proposing to invest another \$7 billion over 10 years to create affordable, high-quality child care spaces across the country.

I am currently working with my provincial and territorial counterparts to create a national early learning and child care framework. We will also create a separate framework for indigenous early learning and child care in collaboration with our indigenous partners, in order to take into account the specific cultural needs of first nations, Métis, and Inuit children across the country.

The homelessness partnering strategy is another way that we can help women. Through that strategy, we have approved 587 projects that help women, including 266 that are specifically targeted to assist women who are fleeing domestic abuse.

Budget 2017 renews that strategy, with a total investment of \$2.1 billion over the next 11 years, therefore doubling the funding that had been planned by the previous government.

*Government Orders*

[English]

This funding will ensure that every year for the next 10 years about 50,000 Canadians will be lifted from homelessness or prevented from falling into it. That means 500,000 Canadians who would otherwise find themselves on the streets will sleep in dignity under a roof.

[Translation]

Our work is far from over, but it is clear that budget 2017 is an important step in our government's long-term plan to improve living conditions for women, create jobs, and strengthen the middle class, while helping those working hard to join it.

[English]

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. minister for his excellent speech. I remember when the minister introduced the Canada child benefit in 2016. I think we agreed with him, on this side of the House, that it was the most significant social program introduced in a generation.

I wonder if he could comment on how that particular measure changed the lives of not only children but women as well. I wonder if he would also comment on the poverty reduction strategy that he is working on and whether that will have a focus on women.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I know really well, as he was my former parliamentary secretary. He is a very hard worker, not only for his constituents but also in the broad mandate of making our society more inclusive and reducing poverty.

As he said, we had the privilege last July to introduce the most innovative social policy in a generation. It is reducing child poverty by 40%, taking 300,000 children out of severe poverty and, equally importantly, taking 200,000 parents out of poverty. Seventy per cent of these parents are women. Why is that? Unfortunately, many of our parents currently living in poverty are women, in part because many of our families living in poverty are headed by a single mother.

This is very good news for children and child poverty, very good news for lower-income parents, and certainly very good news for women. This is in the context, as my colleague rightly said, of reducing poverty over the long term.

● (1840)

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one of the interesting aspects is the lack of opportunity in this budget for women and children in relation to unemployment insurance.

Let us be clear: unemployment insurance is a deduction that comes off someone's cheque, which is paid for by the person and his or her employer. It has nothing to do with the government.

My question for the minister is this: why did the government not reduce the requirements for eligibility, given the fact that women disproportionately receive less unemployment insurance than men because they have more precarious and part-time work? Why would it not extend the qualifications, since there is zero government money going into this fund, and it has used it for its pet projects and other things as opposed to supporting women and children?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos:** Madam Speaker, I agree entirely with the view that EI benefits should be helpful for families and workers in need. That is exactly what budget 2017 does, through an increase in the flexibility and generosity of parental benefits, for instance, and maternity benefits, as well as the creation of a new caregiver benefit, a benefit that is more flexible and more generous to Canadians at large, and particularly so for women across Canada.

That is exactly what budget 2017 does, and I encourage my colleague to support that budget as much as he can.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened very intently to my colleague's speech. My question for him in his capacity as a minister is not so much with respect to his portfolio but about the infinite wisdom of his leader, the Prime Minister, who has empowered the Senate, which has basically been amending numerous pieces of legislation such as Bill C-4 and other pieces of legislation and sending them back to the House, after which the government has subsequently ignored the wishes of the Senate.

What I want to know from the minister is this: what is he prepared to do and what is he prepared to say at the cabinet table when the Senate parses this bill and does not pass all of this budget implementation bill?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to signal what I think is a view shared by all members of this House, which is the view that all parliamentarians, including our colleagues from the Senate, have an important contribution to make to the debate. In that context, of course we work in different roles and different positions, so we have to listen to each other quite carefully. I look forward to seeing the results of those consultations and those efforts in the other chamber.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-44, budget 2017, better known by its working title: the "how to stick it to the next generation, offloading \$120 billion in debt on them to pay off in the future, oh, and at the same time pay off or look after the tsunami of seniors coming down the road, but hey, the Prime Minister has cool socks so don't worry about it" bill.

This bill is a train wreck, both for today's working people and for our children. The current government's own projection for this historic spending spree is a mere 1.7% annual growth in GDP.

Those listening on CPAC at home should find something else to watch, because there is better news than this, but they did hear it right: it is 1.7% GDP growth per year. That is all they get for \$120 billion of debt. There is all this historic infrastructure spending, this historic investment in superclusters and in innovation, and we get a less than historic 1.7% growth. I am just waiting to hear the government boast about how it is helping superclusters and those clusters working hard to join the superclusters.



*Government Orders*

We all know about the current government's broken promises. Liberals kill off promises quicker than George R. R. Martin kills off characters in *Game of Thrones*. Will they balance by the end of the mandate? Sure; as long as we do not have another election until 2052, that might just work out. Of course, with the Liberals' open disdain for Parliament and their fondness for changing the rules without unanimous consent, maybe that is their plan, so they can say in 2052, "We accomplished that."

The Liberals promised just small deficits of \$10 billion a year for three years. We are now looking at about \$80 billion. The promise of the tax cut for the so-called middle class and those working hard to join it was going to be revenue neutral through the tax on the wealthy. Oops: it turns out that was wrong, and the middle-class tax cut would be paid for by—wait for it—borrowing. It will mean billions of dollars of borrowed money. I cannot wait to see the looks on the faces of the so-called middle class who are getting a full buck or two extra per day right now under the current tax cut. I cannot wait to see the looks on their faces down the road when they realize that it is all going to have to be paid back, either with higher taxes or with cuts in services. Is anyone ever wondering where the oft-promised \$3 billion in palliative care funding went? Maybe it went here.

The Liberals have admitted they do not even know how to define the middle class and those working hard to join it, but maybe that is their excuse.

The government has blown past its debt projections and changed the storyline by saying it will just commit to a lower or stable debt-to-GDP ratio. This is starting to sound like the Britney Spears song *Oops!...I Did It Again*. That excuse died again. I am starting to think Liberal debt promises are the Sean Bean of the financial world, getting killed off each and every time.

The *Financial Post* said:

Less than two years into the government's mandate, it's increasingly worrying the number of times it has discarded its fiscal anchor when the discipline it is meant to impose becomes inconvenient. With the unceremonious discarding of...promise [after promise, and maybe Sean Bean] it's clear that federal fiscal policy is being set without any fiscal anchor at all.

This budget betrays the young, it betrays the middle class and those working hard to join it, and it betrays Alberta. We hear again and again that the current government consulted this group and that group in historic numbers of consultations across Canada with Canadians from coast to coast. I would like to hear who from Alberta said, "Things are tough right now, and yeah, unemployment is skyrocketing to the highest level since Pierre Trudeau was in power, but now that you ask, we could really use a higher tax on oil and gas exploration."

I would also like to hear what our four Alberta Liberal MPs were doing when the government wrote into the budget how it would use the tax system to reduce emissions and greenhouse gases, targeting the oil sector. I would invite these four Alberta MPs to stand here and tell us why they sat idly by and allowed this to happen, but at the same time happily agreed to a taxpayer bailout of the Liberal-connected super-rich owners of Bombardier. There are hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars for energy-guzzling, greenhouse-gas-belching planes, and tens of millions in bonuses for wealthy Liberal

Bombardier insiders, but does Alberta get? We get a tax system geared toward attacking energy jobs.

Great. Let us fail the oil industry and funnel taxpayer dollars into industries that make planes and cars that run on gas. At the same time, we are going to give subsidies to the Ontario automotive sector.

Sometimes I feel my head is going to explode in trying to understand Liberal logic.

• (1845)

I would like to turn my talk now to one of the more hypocritical and odious parts of this omnibus bill, and that is the attack on one of the most respected institutions here in Ottawa: the parliamentary budget office.

In defending this disaster of a budget earlier this evening, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance expressed her shock and outrage of our opposition to the budget, and to its reforms to the PBO, in particular.

The PBO has done amazing work. I do not think a single person of any party has ever stood in the House and disagreed with that. We have seen the PBO do amazing non-partisan work. We saw it bring to light issues with the F-35. Again, when we were in power, this was brought forward and the PBO was allowed to run with it, even though, argumentatively, it damaged our position. Recently it came out with a study on shipbuilding costs, stating how every month the process is delayed is going to cost an extra \$30 million for taxpayers. Just this morning, another report came out that the shipbuilding is being delayed by the government another two months, which is another \$60 million wasted.

However, the point is that none of this would have come out without the hard work of the PBO.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance said that PBO's reforms were lauded. She must have been listening to those same phantom Albertans who told the government to attack the energy industry, because I have not heard anyone else who has lauded these attacks on the PBO.

The government said it would make the PBO an independent office of Parliament. That is a great idea. It is one that I support, and I am sure my colleagues do. However, let us see what the PBO himself says. He says, "clause 128 [of the BIA] also contains elements that will undermine the independence and non-partisanship of the PBO and that will undercut the PBO's ability to support Parliament. These are concerning and deserve the Senate and House of Commons' careful scrutiny." The PBO also drew particular attention to "the degree of control that the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons will be expected to exercise over the office of the PBO".

*Government Orders*

Let us think about it. This eliminates the ability of the PBO to react because under this plan all of the studies have to be approved in advance by the Speakers of both Houses. Some of the best work that has been done has been in response to queries from members of the House, such as the F-35 and the, hopefully, approaching Super Hornet issue. These would not be approved in the future under the Liberal plan.

We have seen committees being blocked by the Liberal majority into studies of shipbuilding and the Super Hornets. This is just one more step down that way to stop the opposition from bringing to light spending issues or other issues.

The PBO continues with his concerns. He comments on “the limits on the PBO’s ability to initiate reports and members’ ability to request cost estimates of certain proposals” and also “the restriction on the PBO’s access to and disclosure of information and the lack of an effective remedy for refusals to provide access to information.”

Just two days ago, when presenting the PBO’s report on the shipbuilding, one of the members of the PBO stated that he has more access to information on procurement from our Five Eyes allies than he does from DND here. If we muzzle the PBO, we stop him from investigating spending, out-of-control spending, and other issues. It is ridiculous to muzzle the PBO and allow him less powers than he has going to Australia and investigating their procurement practices.

Has the government addressed these concerns and made subsequent changes to the legislation? No, of course not. I have to ask the government why not. How can the government claim its reforms are broadly supported when the institution that it wants to reform does not like the changes? I have to ask where the legitimacy is with this. I do not think there is any. With what authority is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance claiming that their reforms are broadly supported?

In response to our, the NDP’s, the Green’s, the PBO’s, and the public’s concerns about these reforms, the government House leader cheerfully says, “Let’s have a conversation and we’ll welcome the amendments.”

Why do we have to bring amendments to stop the government from damaging and muzzling the PBO to begin with? It is an attack on the PBO, clear and simple. It is an attack on transparency. It is an attack on our ability to have a functional oversight of government spending. The government has disgracefully brought in Motion No. 6 in the past. It tried to reduce the oversight of committees by changing the estimates process. It tried to change the rules by which we operate in the House just to make things easier for itself.

• (1850)

This blatant attack on the independence of the PBO belongs right up there with those other items in the Liberal government hall of shame. These actions are not good enough for parliamentarians and they are not good enough for Canadians. That is why I will not be supporting the Liberal omnibus bill.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have heard the phrase “omnibus bill” used quite often in this debate. I am looking forward to the first NDP provincial budget in B.C., where a budget is

presented clause by clause in the legislature and the members vote one at a time on over 200 or 300 pages.

A bill is not an omnibus bill when all the measures are budget measures and they are all tied together as part of a complex and large budget. It is an omnibus bill when a government slips in changes to the environmental assessment process and attaches that to a re-profiling of legislation that governs a federal port, for example, and adds to that a change in the definition of what constitutes a federal embassy, whether it should be land owned by the Canadian government or some other department. That is an omnibus bill. Bill C-44 is a budget bill.

The issue that was raised and spoken to specifically by the member had to do with this notion of a debt. In light of the fact that we inherited a \$150-billion debt from the Harper government, largely supported by every vote from the other side, what is their strategy for retiring that debt? Why have they not given us a strategy to retire that debt? When will that strategy be presented by the other side?

• (1855)

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** I have a very simple answer, Madam Speaker. Our strategy to eliminate the debt is to throw the irresponsible Liberal government out of power in 2019 and to bring in a Conservative government to look after the economy and look after Canadians.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear a Liberal parliamentary secretary is looking forward to seeing an NDP budget in British Columbia. That is terrific news, and I am not surprised, considering that we really have a problem with what has been going on over the last number of years. I know that the member still wants to contribute to the debate tonight, but I must say again that it is wonderful to hear the good news that he is looking forward to seeing a provincial budget. A lot of British Columbians are looking forward to it as well. In fact, Ontarians like him are looking forward to this as well.

I do have a serious question for the member, and it relates to the parliamentary budget officer. I have to at least ask my Conservative friend about the PBO. My colleague has criticized, with just reason, the PBO’s treatment by the Liberal Party. However, this is the similarity between red and blue that we see all the time. How can he justify how Stephen Harper treated Kevin Page, the parliamentary budget officer? Kevin Page had to take the government to court, and he was constantly under attack by Harper. How does the member square that circle?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Madam Speaker, if my hon. colleague wants to debate the past, then maybe we can go into the past and debate how he can square Bob Rae's NDP government destroying the Ontario economy.

I grew up in British Columbia. I lived under both Dave Barrett and Ujjal Dosanjh, and I think there was a Miller in there and Glen Clark in there as well. I wonder if the member would like to open up a debate about how they destroyed the B.C. economy.

I was not here under the previous government, so I cannot respond to that. I have worked very closely with the PBO since I have been here and I have the world of respect for him. I look forward to working more closely with him.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the finance committee we had the opportunity of debating the parliamentary budget office changes and hearing from a lot of witnesses.

I was interested in the Conservative member's comments. He implied that the Speaker could not be independent enough in order to allow the parliamentary budget officer to do his work. I am interested in his thoughts as he has a leader now who was a former Speaker. Is he saying that Speaker was not independent?

We made a number of changes at the finance committee that would increase the level of independence and give the parliamentary budget officer the level of independence that not only he was looking for but that the previous parliamentary budget officer was looking for. I think it is a fine example of how this Parliament works and how backbenchers can make suggestions to make government work better.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Madam Speaker, I am going to plagiarize my colleague from Calgary Shepard by reading a Yiddish quote: "All is not butter that comes from a cow." I did not imply that the Speakers are going to be partisan on this issue. It is important, though.

I will go back to the words of the parliamentary budget officer that this "contains elements that will undermine the independence and non-partisanship of the PBO". Anything that we are going to do that would damage the credibility of the parliamentary budget officer by undermining his ability to do his job in a fair, independent, non-partisan way would be damaging, not only to the House but to the country's finances and Canada as a whole.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to talk about Bill C-44.

[*English*]

I would like to start with a quote by Pope Francis, who stated:

And every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: "Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path?" If you don't ask those questions, your governance will not be good.

When I came to Parliament only 19 months ago, I was faced with choices, choices about who I will serve and who I will be working for day in and day out. For me, one thing that guided me throughout that time is that parliamentarians are here to serve all citizens,

everyone. I am sure everyone in the House agrees that we must serve both rich and poor alike, but we also have a duty to remind the wealthy to help the poor, to respect them, to promote them, and to build them up. I am reminded of that every time I am in Winnipeg Centre. I am reminded of that when I look at my family and friends and when I am in my riding when I am not here.

A few months ago, on April 16, I was called by Radio-Canada. The journalist was asking questions and wanted comments about the flooding going on in Manitoba and what the federal government's probable response would be concerning those floods. I said I would certainly talk about the first nation communities affected. It was a Sunday and my wife goes to a soup kitchen every Sunday. It is her form of going to church. She does not enjoy the service so much when she goes to church, but she enjoys going to a soup kitchen run by St. Euclid church in North Point Douglas.

She goes there with about 50 other people who help serve the poorest of the poor of Winnipeg: people who sniff gas, young families, and people who have very little to call their own. She takes my two oldest children, who are 12 and 10 years old, Xavier and Jacob, and I am left to look after the three younger children, who are eight, six, and five years old. I told the journalist that I would love to do the interview on Sunday, but I have to look after my children, so I asked if we could meet somewhere in my riding downtown, to which he said, "Of course."

My wife dropped me off on the south side of the Manitoba Museum. As we were doing the interview, a gentleman walked by. He was not dressed in an extremely rich way and did not look wealthy. As the interview was taking place, he asked very quickly if he could have a word with me once I was done the interview. He waited patiently until the interview was completed, my kids waiting patiently with him, and then we had the opportunity of speaking. He has been homeless for a number of years and has been forgotten for a number of years. People do not seem to have cared about him or his wife. They sleep under a bridge in Winnipeg. He told me about how many foster families he had been in throughout his life. He had been in 70, if anyone can believe it. He had been in 70 foster families throughout his life. He was taken by the government and thrown from family to family, with really no one to care for him. Imagine the type of individual who creates a sense of connection with others when no one, even as a child, really and truly wanted him.

He asked me what the federal government was doing for him. He said he did not read the newspapers and asked what it was doing for him. I was proud to say that in budget 2016, \$69.7 million were given to the provincial government in Manitoba for social housing and infrastructure. I told him that funding is not yet on the ground to build the housing, but I am trying to work with the provincial government to see if it can get to that place to get him housed, get him something. He asked me to please not forget about them and that he voted for me. He said he had picked up beer bottles and managed to raise \$10 to buy an ID card so he could vote in the election because it was so important to him. He said not to forget about him and his wife.

*Government Orders*

When I looked him in the eyes and saw the tears, I sensed at the same time that he is a little ashamed because he is homeless. One has to ask who we are here to serve. I asked myself what I am doing in Parliament and who I serve. I am reminded time and time again about that in my riding when I do meet and greets or go to the local Tim Hortons or Portage Place mall. The Portage Place mall had some racism issues. It was kicking indigenous people out of the mall about a year and a half ago when I was first elected, because they did not look right and were not welcome there.

● (1900)

We seem to have fixed that problem. I do my meet and greet there, so people who are poor and do not look quite right can go into the mall and sit down at the food court, and maybe I will buy them a cup of coffee. I get to hear their stories and what is going on in their lives.

I remember a young lady from an indigenous northern community, who on a Friday afternoon at 3:30 sat down in front of me, and—this is the troubling part—she smelled like she had been doused in kerosene. She was obviously a gas sniffer and had some addiction issues. She had the smell of alcohol on her breath. She had glassy eyes and she said, “Robert, help me.” She had been two weeks on the streets—

● (1905)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the hon. member not to use his own name in the House.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:** Madam Speaker, I did not realize I could not use my own name.

She asked me to help get her off the street. At 3:30, I started calling around to homeless shelters and addiction centres. At 3:30 p. m. on a Friday, it seemed that no one was around to respond to those needs. This is part of the issue about budgets. Budget are large macro things, but the issue goes far deeper. It is actually how we implement that budget on the ground, day in and day out. For me, that is the issue. How do I obtain services for this young lady? How do I get her the addiction counselling that she needs so that she can be successful because she was not happy working the streets?

She had come as a refugee from a northern community looking for better services, a better way, and she ended up slipping through the cracks. By 5:30 or 6:30, I had nothing that I could offer her. That is heartbreaking for an individual MP. All I could do was listen to her story and try to find whatever services existed, but no one seemed to respond on a Friday afternoon.

As we start moving forward in refastening the budget, I call upon the federal government to think about how our educated bureaucrats, who have bachelors' degrees and masters' degrees in urban design, social work, and finance, go about crafting the policy, how it actually impacts the people on the ground, how we ensure that we protect not those who do not need protecting but those who really need to be protected. This is the thing that pushes me to ask those bureaucrats to go in the trenches to talk to the people who need to be talked to.

I was proud to do town halls on homelessness recently, as well as on social housing. I went into a homeless shelter and asked homeless people what they want and need, to ensure that we get it for them.

With regard to the budget, I do not want to do a bunch of statistics because people forget stats, but we are contributing \$11.2 billion over 11 years to a variety of initiatives to build, renew, and repair Canada's stock of affordable housing. I know we are trying to renew our federal-provincial-territorial partnership in housing. We are also trying to build a new national housing fund administered through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which is going to receive another \$5 billion over 11 years. We are trying to target housing for people off reserve, and homelessness as well. However, these things are at the macro level, and I want to push our ministers to work for the people on the ground.

I will leave this with one final short quote from Pope Francis.

Each of us has a vision of good and evil. We have to encourage people to move towards what they think is good. Everyone has his or her own idea of good and evil and must choose to follow the good and fight the evil as he conceives it. That would be enough to make the world a better place.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we had the opportunity in the budget to consider a Canadian autism partnership. It did not find its way into the budget. We had an opportunity to consider it in a vote last week. The Canadian Autism Partnership Working Group was funded in budget 2015 by our government, with \$2 million to bring a group of experts together. They included world-class researchers and stakeholders from across the country. We had a seven-person advisory group that was part of it. They consulted with over 5,000 Canadians.

They worked for two years and submitted a budget asking for 10¢ per Canadian per year for a Canadian autism partnership, an entity that would bring together the autism community from across the country to advise governments in their jurisdictions on the best way forward for families living with autism. I wonder if the hon. member could explain why he and his government opposed this motion in the vote last week.

● (1910)

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:** Madam Speaker, from what I understand, the government's position was that the motion was a little too narrow. I applaud the member for his advocacy on behalf of people with autism and ensuring that this advocacy moves forward. We try to find what we can do to make lives for people with autism better.

I also understand the Minister of Health is trying to build some form of framework, a better policy that will build off that motion. Therefore, I do not think the debate is completely over. It is still going to move forward, and the member should congratulate himself for the hard work he has been doing.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about Canada's forgotten people. I would like to know what he thinks of one of the many parts of this bill, the one about a pay raise for judges.

*Government Orders*

Can the member comment on the fact that judges, who are already well paid, will be getting a raise? Does he think the bill should maybe be split so that part can be removed and we can vote separately on that specific issue?

As parliamentarians, we are being asked to vote on the bill as a whole. We cannot vote on each of its different parts.

Would my colleague comment on whether he would like to take out a part of the bill? That would be a good way for him to comment on the judges' salary issue.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Sherbrooke for that good question.

We are both members of the Standing Committee on Finance. He knows that I have a hard time with how much money judges make. They are not even part of the 1%. They are part of the 0.5% of highest earners.

Governments have long held a policy of negotiating with judges directly so that they may maintain their independence. The problem is that judges have become a class of their own in our society. They have even become more important than Parliament itself. That is one of the problems we have with judges.

I really do not agree with how much judges earn. Their annual salary is between \$340,000 and \$430,000. One of the reasons cited is that we must not have corrupt judges, but judges who are above reproach. Think about the message that sends about judges' involvement in our society.

I might get in trouble later for taking such a position, but it is in the budget because it is part of the budgetary measures. In the meantime, I believe that Parliament should have the courage to level more criticism at the judiciary and the salaries of judges, as they are an integral part of our society. They should understand what is happening and how the rest of the population lives with a more average salary.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, once again, we have a government shutting down debate in Parliament to adopt an omnibus bill. I do not know why I have a sense of déjà vu.

[*Translation*]

I am sorry for starting with a movie reference. I lament the fact that, after about 100 closure motions by the Harper government, the Liberals wrapped themselves in virtue, democracy, and respect for the opposition and swore, with hands over hearts, that they would never use time allocation to ram omnibus bills through.

Guess what? As is almost always the case when the Liberals promise something hands over hearts, their good old habits resurfaced, and it is their way or the highway. I want to take a minute to state, on behalf of every constituent in Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, that we are sick and tired of these gag orders that prevent us from doing our jobs. As the member for Sherbrooke just explained a few minutes ago, this bill bundles together measures that have very little to do with one another.

I will talk about some of these measures during the precious few minutes that the Liberal government was gracious enough to grant us to discuss its budget implementation bill. This bill amends the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, it makes changes to judicial appointments, labour laws, food security, and the parliamentary budget officer position, and it creates an infrastructure privatization bank. All of that is thrown together under the grandiose title of “The Budget”. Come on, let us be serious.

It is a budget that is rather lean when it comes to real action that can help people here and now. The government made some big announcements and threw around impressive numbers, but if we dig a little deeper, what we find is fascinating. In reality, the majority of the investments announced by the Liberal government will be made after the 2019 election or, better yet, the 2023 election. I can only assume that the Liberals think they will be in power for a long, long time. Making promises for eight or 10 years down the road is easy. There could be two different governments in that time span.

One of the best examples of that is the Liberals' boasting about affordable and social housing. They announced \$11 billion over 11 years. One of my sons is in first grade, learning about addition and subtraction. Next year, he will learn about division. If I were to ask him next year how much \$11 billion over 11 years is per year, I think he will tell me that it is \$1 billion per year. I am sure he will have the correct answer. Well, that is actually not what is going to happen, because everything is pushed back. During seven fiscal years, only \$10 million of the announced \$11 billion will be invested, less than 0.1% of what the Liberal government announced. That is not even enough to pay off the interest on that promise.

It is easy to throw around figures like that when you do not intend to keep that promise. I think that people who are in the real estate industry will realize that with \$10 million, once four small low-income housing projects have been built, that is pretty much it for the entire country. What concerns me tremendously is that the budget implementation bill includes the creation of the infrastructure investment bank—or the infrastructure privatization bank—in which the federal government will put \$15 billion at the start. The hope is that the private sector will bring in four or five times that amount to get to \$120, \$140, or \$150 billion.

*Government Orders*

•(1915)

Nobody knows how the bank will work. Will private investors put money in the bank as in a common pot, and then the bank decides which projects get the financing? Will they invest in specific projects, like a bridge—but not every bridge—a highway, an arena, or a swimming pool? Why would private investors choose one project over another? Because they would choose the most profitable one, the one that would bring in the most money in the medium or the long term. That is every investor's dream. For 25 or 30 years, the bank will ensure returns of 7%, 8%, 9%, 10%, or 12% per year. Otherwise, why would private investors put money in that bank? It means that users will become paying users. There is no other way to profit from an airport, a seaport, or a highway than making the users pay. Profit does not grow on trees.

I will quote a high-ranking Australian officer who has seen and experienced the problems caused by privatizing infrastructure. This is from a very interesting article published by the British newspaper *The Guardian*:

•(1920)

[*English*]

The head of the competition regulator and a former advocate of privatisation has called for the privatisation of public monopolies to stop because the government is mishandling them.

Rod Sims, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chairman, says he has become so exasperated by the way in which governments are privatising public assets that they need an “uppercut”.

He says governments have repeatedly botched the sale of airports, electricity infrastructure and major ports—making things worse for consumers—because, when selling the assets, they have been motivated by maximising profits rather than making efficiency gains.

He says governments have created private monopolies without sufficient regulation to stop those monopolies overcharging users—and the public knows it and has a right to be angry....When he was speaking to the audience in the Melbourne Economic Forum, he said at one stage “let’s just stop the privatisations”.

“It is increasing prices—let’s call it out,” he said.

[*Translation*]

I think that is exactly what is likely to happen to taxpayers in Quebec and Canada in the coming years if the Liberal Party goes ahead with its crazy plan, which is a gift for its Bay Street friends.

There was nothing about this in the Liberals' campaign platform. The Liberals said it was a good time to invest in infrastructure because interest rates were low. They were right. Governments can borrow money at lower rates than anyone else because their annual revenue is more stable than anyone else's. That is what they told us. What they did not tell us, however, is that they would get their Bay Street friends in on the investment act and guarantee them certain returns, certain profits at the expense of the people who are going to use the infrastructure. That is the part they did not mention. That was the nasty surprise we got when the Liberals took over. As everyone knows, it was not the only one.

The trick to how the infrastructure investment bank works is kind of like how PPPs work. When a government borrows money at low interest rates, that is good for the people, but it shows up on the books and counts as an official debt. However, if the government signs a deal with a private investor to manage a project for 25 or 30 years, it is like we are renting the infrastructure from that private investor. The magic of it is that the debt no longer shows up on the

books and the financial statements. The Liberals are waving their magic wand to make us believe that they will not increase the deficit.

[*English*]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there were so many inaccuracies in that presentation, I do not know which question to ask or which part of NDP history the New Democrat members wish to ignore in formulating their perspective.

The fact is that the infrastructure bank was mentioned on page 48 in the campaign platform. It was there to be read, and it is still there online, if the member wants to look it up. I will not ask questions about why the members do not read the platform before they criticize it.

I will ask about the NDP's lack of understanding of how the housing budget is put together. As a party, the NDP does not seem to understand that the money for this year was in the 2016 budget. We doubled the money for housing from a base of about \$2.2 billion to \$4.8 billion. Those dollars are flowing into projects right now. It is why I was in Thunder Bay, opening up projects. It is why I will be in Kitchener, Waterloo, and city after city that are finally building housing again.

Did the member not read the budget last year? Does he fail to understand that the base has gone from \$2.2 billion to \$4.8 billion and that when we add the \$11.2 billion over the next 11 years and the \$10.9 billion in loans, the actual expenditure in housing for this year is twice what it was when we took over and will be twice that again afterwards? We are putting a national housing strategy in place, the likes of which the country has never seen. Why will the NDP not support that?

•(1925)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, if I were my hon. colleague, I would not be so quick to mention the Liberal Party website, since it still says that the 2015 election will be the last under first past the post. I am not sure that people can really believe what they read there.

I would like to point out to my hon. colleague that, in committee, we proposed an amendment to Bill C-44 using the exact words found in the Liberal Party's election platform but that the Liberal members of the Standing Committee on Finance refused to add their party's own words to the bill. That is a prime example of Liberal consistency.

[*English*]

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it was interesting to hear the Liberal speaker, in his ever snarky manner, refer to what was in the budget and what was not in the budget.

*Government Orders*

I will tell the House what was not in the budget: \$3.8 million a year for Canadians living with autism. In a budget that is now in the \$50 billion range, in terms of deficit over two years, the government could not find a dime per Canadian.

The member for Winnipeg North, during the debate on the Canadian autism partnership, had some interesting words. He said:

Opposition members have already made their decision, and that decision is supported by the New Democrats, and that is good for them. We know the fine work the Canadian Autism Partnership Project has done in the past. We recognize that. I have visited the website, as I am sure most members have. The organization has done a phenomenal job in consultations...

He had all that to say just before he voted against it.

I will thank the hon. member for supporting Canadians living with autism, along with Conservatives, fellow New Democrats, and the Green Party. Why were the Liberal members were whipped to vote against it?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for fighting for all of these years for people with autism and their families.

It is completely shameful that the Liberal whip used his authority to block a pan-Canadian strategy that would have been so useful for so many families. It would not have even cost very much for a society that is a member of the G7 and that claims to leave no one behind. Parliament did not keep its word or respect that value in this case.

By way of comparison, during the election campaign, the Liberals promised to eliminate the tax loophole associated with stock options for CEOs, which allows \$800 million a year to be given directly to CEOs of the largest Canadian companies. With that money, the government could have given families who are dealing with autism the \$3.8 million they are calling for a number of times over. We see where the Liberal government's priorities lie.

[*English*]

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my friends and colleagues in the House. I did note more applause on this side of the House than from some of my friends on the government side. I know they have missed me, because they have told me that in private. It is good to be back here.

I still see a government relishing patting itself on the back. That is after almost two years of a stunning display of broken promises, so much so that it reminds me of a quote attributed to Churchill. It has been used so many times that it has become part of his canon of quotations. It reminds me of how the Liberals define success. They define success as going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm.

Whether it is broken promises to veterans, to taxpayers, to exporters or to our farmers, they are seeing a litany of broken promises that have really hit small businesses particularly badly. Seniors and families are tight with a dollar. I have met many of them in the last number of months across the country. They are already feeling the higher tax burden with the carbon tax schemes being implemented across the country.

We are debating a budget and budget implementation. As my colleague from the NDP so rightly commented, the irony of this debate was not lost on me. I want to thank my Jaimie's intern, for helping me prepare some remarks today. I want to anoint a certain member of the House, someone I will call the high commissioner of hubris. We see him regularly. He is a nice guy. He is a friend to us all. He talks a lot in the House. I am going to pull back a few nuggets from his speeches in the past to just show the hubris of the government after less than two years.

Why am I doing this? It is because today the Liberals brought in a time allocation motion, closure, on the debate with respect to budget implementation. Let me point out what someone said a number of years ago in the House on this time allocation practice. He said, "Never before have I ever experienced a government that is so persistent in using time allocation, a form of closure, using it as frequently as [it does]." He went on to say:

Why has the Government House Leader not recognized the value of sitting down with opposition House leaders and trying to work through House business in a fashion in which the government would not be so dependent on having to bring in time allocation on virtually every piece of legislation?

Who said that? The member for Winnipeg North, who is now the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. Does he forget those comments from a few years ago, where he decried this practice?

What is ironic is this is the least ambitious government in the history of Canada. After only two years, the Liberals have only received royal assent on 19 bills. How many times have they introduced motions for time allocation? It has been 23 times. They have used closure, or tried to, more than they have passed legislation through the Parliament of Canada, yet in the last Parliament, the member from Winnipeg North would howl at the moon if it was used. The Liberals are using closure more than they are passing bills. That is why I have anointed him today the high commissioner of hubris.

Let us hear a little more of that hubris. What is the budget implementation bill? It is an omnibus bill, the dreaded omnibus bills that the Liberals would go around the country saying that the last government was using to destroy democracy as we knew it. What did the member for Winnipeg North say about this type of omnibus bill? He called it "an assault on democracy". He went on to say, "It is an assault on the House of Commons, the manner in which the majority... government has brought forward budget legislation."

For the member of Winnipeg North, the high commissioner of hubris, I do feel assaulted. The irony is clear. The last budget implementation bill of the Conservative government was 172 draconian pages, to use the types of words the member would use.

*Government Orders*

●(1930)

What is this budget implementation bill? It is 308 pages affecting 30 acts of Parliament. Where is the outrage? Where is the indignation from the high commissioner of hubris? I do not see it. In fact, he is directing this right now in this House. He is in charge of the record use of time allocation and omnibus bills that are approaching the sky in length.

I would note that there is a certain irony that the Prime Minister said, just a few months ago, in response to talking about reforming and making this place better, because when he does come, he answers a lot of questions, "I hope that future prime ministers will not make excessive use of omnibus bills and will not resort to prorogation to avoid problematic situations."

The member for Winnipeg North should tell his Prime Minister that they have used closure motions more times than they have passed bills through this House of Commons. It is almost a ridiculous record of failure. In some ways, as a Conservative, I am glad the Liberals are so lacking in ambition, because they would be doing more damage if they had more than 19 bills receiving royal assent.

Why are we here? I have to also comment on the member for Kelowna—Lake Country. He said earlier in this House, and then recited a bunch of things going back to Mackenzie King, "We are proceeding exactly the way we said we would." He talked about being a Conservative and all that stuff.

What did the Liberal platform say with respect to budgeting? I am going to remind the member for Kelowna—Lake Country that it said:

With the Liberal plan, the federal government will have a modest short-term deficit of less than \$10 billion in each of the next two fiscal years.... After the next two fiscal years, the deficit will decline and our...plan will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019/20.

Someone should ask the member for Kelowna—Lake Country if \$28.5 billion is more than \$10 billion, because he broke his promise to the voters of his riding. The record cuts to the Department of National Defence under his watch are also a broken promise, so he is proceeding exactly how he said he would, I guess.

I said several times across this country that it saddens me profoundly that the finance minister's own department projects that the Liberals will not return to balance until 2055. As I often said as I was travelling across this country, my daughter Mollie, who is 10 years old, will be older than I am by the time the Liberals' plan can get to balance. That is a failure for a generation of Canadians, at a time when the global economy is not in massive recession, as it was in 2008-09. There is not a need for stimulus and growing every part of government, yet the reckless spending means future taxes for our children and more taxes in the future for small business.

They have to look at this astounding record. I do not know how a single government member could defend this in his or her riding. The Liberals have raised taxes on families. They have raised taxes on small business. They brought in a nationalized carbon tax. They brought in a payroll tax on CPP reform, yet the benefits of the reform would help fewer than 5% of Canadians. They brought in an excise tax on ride sharing in this bill. The Liberals are taxing sharing. That

is what they have resorted to. They will tax our beer, they will tax our wine, they will tax our income, and now they will tax us if we are going to share. A government budget entitled, "the innovation budget" is taxing and hindering the sharing, innovation economy. The irony is stunning.

The final thing is the infrastructure bank and the so-called invest in Canada department. The Liberals would spend over \$200 million on a department that is already done by the Canadian Trade Commissioner. Our new commissioner is an excellent Canadian and outstanding at her job. Global Affairs does that. Finance Canada does that. The government is already encouraging investment in Canada. We do not need an office tower and \$200 million. The infrastructure bank we do not need either. We do not need Ottawa to build up another department of bureaucrats and more Liberal appointees to build infrastructure, Canadians' pension plans, and banks. We are doing it already.

●(1935)

I hope one of my questions will come from the high commissioner of hubris, the member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I sat here listening to the opposition benches begging for the member for Winnipeg North to stop talking. I am a little surprised now that they want him to continue.

I was most curious about the notion that this is an omnibus bill. This is not an omnibus bill. The previous Conservative budget, which was 640 pages, and the one before that, which was closer to 750, had measures that were not even discussed in the budget documents and had amendments that were as far afield as selling embassies and cancelling the long form census. There were issues just stuffed in there, as if the ministers were instructed to find notes on their desks and stuff them into an omnibus bill and try to pass the legislation, regardless of whether there was a monetary impact.

Regarding the promise we made not to abuse omnibus legislation, all of us understand that budget bills contain all the measures in the budget and therefore are complex and often touch 30 measures.

The member likes to quote Churchill, but I will quote Stephen Harper. He said they would not present a budget that was not balanced. That is what he said. Every one of their budgets would be balanced, yet they failed to do that. They did not wait for the recession. They did it on day one. When the recession came, they really did it, and they never stopped.

Why did the Conservatives not ever balance a budget? What advice would they give us that we would possibly listen to?



*Government Orders*

● (1940)

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, that was, sadly, a feeble attempt by the member for Spadina—Fort York to defend the high commissioner of hubris, the member for Winnipeg North, because he called what is happening today an assault on democracy. They would change 30 acts of Parliament through this one bill, which is more than twice the size of the first budget implementation act he would have witnessed as a brand new member of Parliament after his by-election win. How can he possibly stand in the House and suggest that this is not an omnibus bill? I always thought he was the one that might not drink the Kool-Aid. I think he is making it now. He could very well replace the member for Winnipeg North and be the adjunct high commissioner of hubris.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns I have with regard to the process through which the bill has been introduced, and I would like the member to comment, is the lack of due diligence on the legislation. To be fair, his government did use this process, and we had a number of legislative measures that eventually ended up in the courts, because they did not go through the parliamentary process and inclusion.

This current bill has a lot of those weaknesses, so I would ask the member to comment on that and on perhaps what he thinks is going to happen to much of the legislation that has skirted proper legislative review, inclusion, and purposing.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, as I highlighted in my remarks, what is astonishing about the sunny ways government that was going to do everything differently is that it has used closure on more occasions in the chamber than it has actually been able to produce bills in Parliament. It is astounding.

The due diligence the member is talking about is also not taking place. The government said that parliamentary secretaries would not sit on committees and committees would be free to operate, and we have seen how it has used the committees to stifle debate.

We have seen how some of its members will show up at a World Autism Day event to support the great work done by many on this issue, our friend from Edmonton, in particular, and then they are whipped to not support that same measure. I am talking about a measure, and I think the member for Windsor West would agree, that cost \$3 million. This is at a time when the Liberals are running an almost \$30-billion deficit virtually creating new departments in Ottawa, yet it is whipping the vote to do that.

It is the same government that whipped the vote for another great piece of legislation, from another MP from Edmonton, on a national registry for organ donations. It is whipping their votes in the chamber far more than any government I have ever seen or read about, but it masquerades it in nice socks and slogans. Canadians will soon learn the truth, because it is now starting to impact their pocketbooks and jobs, such as with Procter & Gamble, in Brockville, moving to the U.S. The sunny ways sunburn is already setting in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind all hon. members that in the course of their remarks, when they refer to other hon. members in the House, they should use their titles and/or ridings, not commissioners and some such things that are not actual titles. I know that there was no ill intent in the use of such words, but

sometimes it tips into other similar situations, and then we get closer to disorder, and the House does not want that.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

● (1945)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to attempt to get through this speech with a bit of water and a candy, because I exercised my voice at the door over the weekend, among other things. Hopefully I will be able to speak for the full 10 minutes. There is a lot to be said, especially following the member for Durham. Where does one begin?

One thing I find most interesting about the member across the way is that he distorts reality and is maybe a little offside in terms of the truth. I would suggest that he is very selective with his quotes. Some of the member's quotes were right in reference to me, and I would suggest that he has missed a good portion of what I said.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not want to interrupt my hon. colleague, because I know he does not get enough chances to speak in the House, but he suggested that I was lying in his remarks, and I would like him to clarify the record. Some of the remarks, which in jest I was having fun with him on, were quotes from his previous appearances in *Hansard*. On a personal point of order, I and my intern spent time researching those quotes, and I want to make sure he is not suggesting that I was lying in my speech.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member for Durham. I was listening and did not hear a particular reference to unparliamentary language. It is certainly in order that members can question the veracity and/or intent and difficult interpretations members take from what other members have said, but unless they are specific to actually saying a member lied or, for example, deliberately misled the House, it is not unparliamentary language. I did not hear that. I will stay attentive to that.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would not want to offend my friend across the aisle, but when I talk about select activity, what the member does not tell us is that if his interns read a little more, they would find that even when Stephen Harper brought in time allocation, I often made reference to irresponsible opposition. It does not take much. Give me 11 rookie members of Parliament, and I can virtually force any government to bring in time allocation. Back then, we often had an irresponsible official opposition.

*Government Orders*

When I stood in my place and talked about the need for time allocation, I often made reference to the fact that time allocation was an important tool. At the end of the day, we need to recognize that in order to get a government agenda through, at times we need to use it.

There has been a genuine effort by this government to work with opposition parties. It was the opposition, for example, that chose to have seven days of debate on a privilege issue because two members had a difficult time getting on to the bus and there were some questions raised. It was the official opposition that made that a high priority. It was the official opposition that attempted, for the first time in the history of Canada, to put off the debate on the budget. We remember the day that it was introduced. Whether it was the financial markets in Canada, and many others, thousands of different stakeholders waiting for the official budget, the Conservatives chose to play a game at that time and attempted to throw off the budget.

We have seen members of the Conservative Party stand up and move that another member of the Conservative Party be heard. It was a fight between Conservatives as to who should speak in the Conservative spot. There are all sorts of dilatory motions and games. I must say, the Conservatives are very good in opposition, and we hope to keep them there for many years.

Having said that, we are in June, and in June we will often have extended hours. We in the Liberal caucus are not fearful of putting in overtime. Only the Conservatives and the NDP seem to have a problem putting in overtime, which is what other governments have done. In fact, this motion enabling us to put in the time we are putting in tonight was brought in by Stephen Harper. Other levels of government have done the same thing. June is usually a very productive month. We, on this side of the House, want to see MPs working hard inside the House to get through a very proactive, aggressive, legislative, and budgetary motion.

When we hear so much about the budget and the budget implementation, that is the reason there is not enough time. I do not know if my voice would survive for me to articulate the terms of what this government has been able to accomplish in 18 months. We have done more in terms of propelling the Canadian economy and getting Canadians engaged in a very real and tangible way in every region of our country through budget measures, and in good part because of legislative changes we have made. However, there is a lot more that we want to do.

That is the reason that at times we have time allocation. If opposition does not want to co-operate, it does not leave us very much choice. If we leave it to the opposition on every bill, we would not be able to pass any bill unless the opposition were prepared to assist. They are not prepared to assist. Therefore, it is somewhat important when the member for Durham says, "Yes, I used to say, and still abide by it today, that Stephen Harper did use time allocation in record numbers, but I also said, in good part it was because you had an irresponsible official opposition."

Ask me two weeks from now whether I believe the official opposition today is as irresponsible as the former official opposition. I hope not.

● (1950)

It is in the best interest of Canadians to allow the government, in consultation with and going through the committees, to proceed forward. All of us benefit from that, and definitely our constituents benefit.

Member after member has talked about this particular bill being an omnibus bill. Again, when I was standing up and the member made reference to some of my quotes, they were not 300-page documents, they were more like 600-page or 900-page documents, which affected laws that had nothing to do with the budget. The biggest criticism we hear in regard to the bill is that the infrastructure bank should not be a part of this particular budget implementation bill. That is the biggest criticism we are getting in terms of it being omnibus.

Let me suggest that the infrastructure bank is very relevant to the budget. In fact, this is something that was incorporated into the budget. What is the budget implementation bill that we are debating today? It is actions that are necessary to implementing the budget of 2017-18. This bill is in fact doing what it is meant to do, implementing budgetary measures, including what has been the biggest criticism from the opposition, both the NDP and the Conservatives, who have become close over the last number of months, and that is bringing in initiatives that are going to have an impact.

Let us think about the infrastructure bank and why it is so important. No government in the history of Canada, I would argue, has invested as much money in Canada's infrastructure in every region of this country. It is billions of dollars. We have a Prime Minister who is saying we can do even better than that, and that because of the neglect by the Conservative government, the demand for infrastructure is incredibly high. We have created yet another opportunity for some who might not have had that opportunity, even with the record numbers of billions of dollars, not to mention the hundreds of millions of dollars that leave our country, to invest in infrastructure in other countries because we do not have an infrastructure bank.

For the first time, unions and other stakeholders are going to have the opportunity to invest in Canada's infrastructure. We say that is a good thing.

● (1955)

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back in this House. I missed it for several months. I saw some amazing parts of this country, including Winnipeg. The member from Winnipeg is my friend. I was using a term in jest in my speech. However, I used the term "hubris" and to hear that speech just underscored the hubris that member is displaying.

I could refer to multiple quotes from the last Parliament where he criticized the use of omnibus legislation and time allocation when the Conservatives used them. He is now suggesting that he criticized it because it was an NDP failure, that of the official opposition. Only the Liberals are allowed to use time allocation and omnibus legislation. That is what I discerned from his speech.

*Government Orders*

If Conservatives use it, bad. If the NDP use it, bad. Only the enlightened Liberals, the natural governing party, can use it. It is that hubris that sets in and allows them to vote down the Canadian autism partnership, the national donor registry, and to cut the forces.

Could the hon. member tell us why he voted against the autism partnership funding? I would like a simple answer.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member talks about time allocation once again.

I would suggest that he have his interns do the research. Through their research, the interns will clearly find a number of examples where I talked, even when we were in third party, about the importance of responsible opposition parties. With responsible opposition parties, we can in fact get through a legislative agenda.

In regard to the autism partnership, when I spoke on the issue, I indicated it was very much a personal issue for me. I, too, have family members who are directly affected by autism. Let us not try to say that there is one answer to all situations.

I believe that the Minister of Health has her hand on the issue, and we will continue to move forward so that the people who need the necessary services will in fact get those services.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one has to question why we need extended sessions when probably one-fiftieth of the speech by the hon. member was actually with respect to the budget bill.

There is one thing that we do not find in the budget bill that is clearly a budget matter. It is not an issue that is simply being raised by one of the lowly opposition members over here, but a serious concern that was raised by the Auditor General of Canada. It is that the government promised it would expedite the removal of the perverse incentives for the fossil fuel industry. That is an important measure in allowing the renewable and energy efficiency sectors to compete, yet it is not in the budget. Could the member speak to why the government did not include that in its budget bill?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I think if the member goes over the budget, and I look at it as the first budget flowing into the second budget, there are plenty of things within it that the NDP could have supported and chose not to, such as the special tax on Canada's wealthiest, the tax break for our middle class, the increase to the child benefit program, the increase to the guaranteed income supplement, not to mention the record-high infrastructure program and so much more.

I look to the member for Edmonton Strathcona to show what the NDP's position is on the issue of pipelines. That is something I believe the member would have done well with in terms of having more influence within her own caucus on an important issue for the province of Alberta, and in fact all of Canada.

• (2000)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it sounds like the member is having some throat issues, so I guess the question would be whether anyone on that side had a lozenge for the member.

However, my real question is this. The member basically talked about how much the government is investing in infrastructure. All I

have seen is that it has added more categories that people can apply to. It has said that it will be put in more money over a period of time, and it has added the infrastructure bank. It has also basically made it difficult for rural areas like mine, whether we are talking Kelowna or whatnot, to apply to the infrastructure bank. They cannot apply to that. It has also changed the criteria for those infrastructure funds and based it on per capita. Therefore, large urban municipalities like Toronto and Vancouver will have more opportunities with respect to the infrastructure bank and these categories. Why is the government basically slighting rural Canadians in favour of large urban centres?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is not necessarily the case. For example, we know that British Columbia received the second-largest investment in water infrastructure among all the other provinces. In fact, the Minister of Infrastructure just announced last week that a number of projects were done in a relatively short time span, within a couple of weeks. There was more money announced for that program than the Conservatives had announced in four years.

With respect to my sore throat, I appreciate the comments. I can assure the member that the Minister of Status of Women and other colleagues of mine came forward and provided me with everything from warm water with honey to all sorts of candies, so I am well taken care of. It is a great family to be a part of.

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this place and speak to Bill C-44, the budget implementation act. They say that all politics is local and it is important as members of Parliament to look at budgets, as specifically tonight we are debating that, and how they affect local communities. I want to tell members about Battle River—Crowfoot, about the people, the problems, and perhaps the policies that are creating some of those problems.

My riding is predominantly a rural riding. Our largest centre has around 18,000 people, but it is just under 45,000 square kilometres of agriculture and a lot of natural resources. Gas and oil are abundant in the riding. Because of that, it is quite obvious that much of the constituency is hurting right now. Communities are hurting. We know what the oil prices have done, so these communities are legitimately hurting. Many of the people calling my office work in the oil patch, some even part time. Some are farmers who in the wintertime work with welding crews, service trucks, and service companies dealing with it, and there has been no work for many of them over the last number of years.

*Government Orders*

Let me also say that when we come to a point in time after a long winter, typically people understand that the time around a new budget should be a time of optimism, a time where we say how the government is going to address our current circumstances. After we toured our constituency before the last budget, people asked what I thought the budget would have that would affect our communities, so we sat and we explained and we waited. Sadly, when the budget came down, people realized there was very little for rural Alberta, very little that would help the oil and gas sector.

We had a Prime Minister and a provincial premier who said that the one initiative they could put forward would be a new carbon tax, a new level of taxation, a tax on everything. Wherever I went in my constituency, I did not hear any people say that this was a positive measure that would help them in their circumstances.

I want to tell members about two communities in my constituency, the community of Hanna and the community of Forestburg, two communities that are situated in a special part of Alberta. In one case, Hanna is right around the special areas. These communities have pasture and grain. It's cattle country, but it's also gas and oil country. The other interesting thing about Hanna is that it has a coal generating power plant. This is a community that has been told it will lose over 200 jobs because of the imminent closure of the Sheerness coal power plant.

Home prices are already being affected. Councils, mayors, and people are asking what to do next. What should they expect from the government? What are the alternatives they could bring in to help sustain their communities? There is nothing in the budget that will help sustain them and nothing coming from the province. There has been very little as far as alternative types of ideas for those communities.

● (2005)

The other one is the Battle River power plant in the community of Forestburg. People work there from all over the county, a number of counties, Paintearth, Flagstaff, undoubtedly Camrose. Again, a smaller community of about 800 people is being negatively affected, and very little in this budget will help them.

I stand in this place and I say that if politics is local, then they forgot a great amount of my constituency of Battle River—Crowfoot. They have no idea how to replace the hundreds of jobs in those communities, and they will be lost. Even if we went to natural gas generation instead of coal, the difference is over 200 jobs compared with 40 jobs.

There are problems. Let me say this. All through most of the time I have served, we have had an unemployment rate in my constituency of around 3%. It would go down to a little bit under 3% then go up to a little bit over 3%. Even during the recession it was remarkably low compared with other parts of Alberta and across the country. My constituency right now has the highest unemployment rate in Alberta. In the month of March, it was 9.9% unemployment. The statistics coming out for April say that we are down to 9.7%, but still, there are a lot of people unemployed who want to work.

What initiatives do we have? We have a government that tells us not to worry; it will help with EI. Yes, it will increase the premiums

on employers and employees, but it will also see what it can do to help EI. The answer to these problems is not in more social programs or programs to help keep people on unemployment. It is to get people back to work, to help create jobs.

In the other part of my riding we have agriculture, which is under a large cloud since last fall, with crops being left out in the field over the winter. I can recall when I was about five years old going out with my dad in the spring just to combine a few acres of wheat that had been left out. I remember how bad that was and how sick it made us feel over those winter months knowing that we would be going out in snowdrifts or maybe in the spring.

Thousands or maybe tens of thousands of acres in my constituency were left out. What does the budget say about that? The budget says we will do a consultation to see if we can take away the cash deferral that farmers use. That means if they sell their grain in the fall, they can defer the payment for it until the spring or after January 1. It helps them manage a little bit their income for the year. It also helps with storage on their farm, and typically we have problems with delivery.

These are issues. It seems as though every time there is a problem in Alberta and in my riding, the answer to the gas and oil industry is a new carbon tax. The answer to the agriculture crisis is taking away cash deferrals. This budget does not talk about the things that the Conservative budgets talked about, like being balanced, like lowering taxes, like more support for small businesses. When we have more revenues than expenditures, that is a surplus. That would be included as a balanced budget, but the government today has failed to deliver that.

In fact, when the Liberals came into power, they said that they would cap their spending at \$10 billion, and it went close to \$30 billion. They said they would balance the budget: "Have no fear, Canada, we will balance our budget by 2019." Now it is 2055.

The level of optimism is over. The level of optimism by the Canadian people is over. Balanced budgets, lower taxes—these are the bedrock of a strong and growing community. Unfortunately, this budget does none of these things. For the second year in a row, the Liberals have blown by their \$10-billion deficit pledge. They are raising taxes on everything from public transit to Uber. The government plans to nickel-and-dime Canadians to pay for its spending, and what has its spending accomplished? Nothing substantial. The last budget failed to grow the economy, failed to create the jobs the Liberals had promised, and it failed to deliver to a large degree the infrastructure they had promised. This budget is no different.

*Government Orders*

• (2010)

The Liberal government does not understand how to grow an economy. It does not understand that small businesses are the engine of our economy, representing over 90% of Canadian businesses and employing two-thirds of all Canadians. There was another broken promise. All political parties in the last election said they would reduce the small business tax rate from 11% to 10.5%, to 9.5%, to 9%. The Liberals immediately attacked the small business community and said, “No thanks.” Once again, it is a promise broken.

This side of the House is holding the government to account. Conservatives are holding the Liberals to account, but make no mistake, Liberals simply believe that big government is the answer to everything.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as in any member's riding, we all lament the loss of economic opportunity or the loss of jobs. We also know that history will record accurately that the world price of oil fell during the time of the previous government and with a Conservative government in the province of Alberta. We also know that sometimes energy and agriculture suffer the vagaries of world markets.

Our government's response to that has been multi-faceted. We want to get oil to market through pipelines. We want to make sure the country understands, via a climate policy, that we are able to reconcile market access, the environment, and the fight against climate change. We want to build trade-enabling infrastructure that helps get wheat and grain to world markets. These are our responses to some of the economic challenges that I am sure the member is facing and that members face in the west.

I would ask the member to be very specific when I ask him what his policy prescriptions are in the context of his commitment to balance the budget at any cost. I would ask what his specific policy prescriptions are so that he might offer some hope to the folks in Alberta.

• (2015)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, I think that is a fair question from the government side about the specific program initiatives that a government would take in spite of world prices being softened, as he said. First, I would say it is not always what one promotes; it is what one says it will not do. The very first thing I would say is that the carbon tax is not the answer to putting people back to work. A carbon tax that is dictated to the premiers to start administering is not the avenue for the oil and gas industry. It is piling onto the problems that the oil and gas sector are facing.

What are the answers to a balanced budget? The answer is not to only increase taxation. In fact, Conservatives lowered taxes and came to a balanced budget. In the first two years of the Conservatives governing, from 2006 to 2007, before the great recession took place, we paid down nearly \$40 billion of Canadian national debt. When we already have a deficit, low job creation, and low economic growth, the answer is not a carbon tax that hurts absolutely everybody.

That is just one. If I had more time, I would gladly provide more ideas on how to build this economy.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary previously talked about how the government had to move the legislation forward because there was no working relationship, and I want to correct the record. A couple of important things were achieved in the House of Commons this session, as well as one, unfortunately, that is not going to be achieved with this budget bill. In particular, the Marrakesh treaty that was passed by Parliament was done through the government asking both the Conservatives and the New Democrats to help it fast-track it through the House to allow those with visual impairments, the blind, in particular, to access printed materials and for us to join an international network to do so. I am happy to report that we did that with the government, and Canada became the 20th signatory to the treaty. We actually have some very serious achievements that we did together for this country.

Why was the same approach not applied to the autism request for \$4 million? I recently toured the Windsor-Essex Therapeutic Riding Association, which is using different types of things that are not applied in the rest of the country, but those shared services would be well applied to other people. In particular, it uses horses and other types of supports to break through autism. I ask the member that question, because it is a sad and serious situation that we could not achieve that goal, especially given the work that has been done on it.

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, I have had a number of remarkable experiences. One of them was working together with not only the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, but Jim Flaherty and Joe Oliver, as our finance ministers. I served with Jim Flaherty as a minister of state for finance. He was a finance minister who would come to the budget table and advocate on behalf of the disabled and the underprivileged. He would advocate on behalf of certain things like the Special Olympics. Certainly, together with the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, when the idea was brought forward to invest in the autism partnership, we had people who said there may be other ways of doing it, but it just seemed right to do. I will never forget those times.

On this side, I do not know if there was a reason why they did not. However, make no mistake, those types of initiatives from the Liberal government, which only believes in enlarging the size of government as an answer to everything, fail the average Canadian every time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we go to resuming debate, I will let hon. members know that there seems to be a great deal of interest in participating in the questions and comments time this evening. That is understandable. I will do my best to try to signal members who are making either questions or comments or responding to them to try to confine the time to allow as many members as possible to participate in the debate.

*Government Orders*

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

● (2020)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to talk about budget 2017.

More and more Canadians are talking to me about the lofty promises made during the election campaign—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I apologize, but I made a mistake in the speaking order of members who wish to participate in the debate.

The member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola was up next. I will invite the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot to speak after that.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly can appreciate that many people probably want to hear the previous speaker more than me. I will try to do her justice as I move forward, and I will appreciate listening to her speech later.

As members know, it is always an honour to rise in this place on behalf of the constituents of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. It is a very important debate for me and for all of us for different reasons. I will highlight one of the reasons that is very important to me.

As some members will know, I come from one of Canada's premier wine producing regions. Other members of this place represent regions that are also renowned for producing fine Canadian wine and, increasingly, craft ales, even artisan spirits. A few even have large-scale breweries that are huge employers in their home ridings. I mention these things as Canada's wine, beer, and spirit industry is an important one for many regions of our country.

There are some very serious concerns from this industry as it will be extremely impacted by some proposed measures in this bill. In short, let us call it what it is: the escalator tax. For the benefit of those watching or who may not be old enough to remember the last time an elevator tax was used, it was by the former Pierre Elliott Trudeau government.

Every year the tax rate on most wine, beer, and spirits sold in Canada will be subject an annual tax increase, linked to inflation, an annual tax increase that will not be linked to a budget that must be passed and debated in this place each year. Rather, unelected bureaucrats will hike the tax based on the consumer price index, locked in, potentially for who knows how long, all from this one budget.

Why is that a concern? Let us start with the obvious.

As parliamentarians, we should always be concerned when, in effect, we see stealth taxation, where a tax will increase every year without debate or scrutiny as it does not have to be signed off by the finance minister in each budget. It just automatically happens whether we, as parliamentarians, whose job is ultimately to

scrutinize government spending, especially with taxes, and authorize it. This is a big concern.

Is this truly a precedent that the Liberal government wants to set? Where will the line be drawn? How many more stealth tax increases via an escalator tax will it sneak in?

We all know that the use of escalator taxes was halted in the 1980s by former finance minister Wilson, because it was the wrong thing to do in the economy. We heard from the spirits industry that it devastated many Canadian success stories when the government linked inflation to an annual escalator for taxes.

Now maybe some on the Liberal side of the House think this is a good idea. I do not profess to know how they can defend this escalator tax. When I did a report on this topic to my constituents last week, all were universally opposed. Even those who generally supported Liberals were clear that this would lead to a form of taxation without representation. One individual made a very interesting comment. Canada was once known as a nation of savers. These types of stealth escalator taxes attack those principles.

However there is another consideration, which is the literally hundreds of small, medium, and even large-scale business that collectively produce wine, beer, and spirits. As we know, the Department of Finance estimates this new escalator tax will suck an extra almost \$500 million dollars out of the Canadian economy and send that money to Ottawa over the next five years. Of course this is all about that.

The Liberal government knows, fiscally, it is in serious trouble. Every single fiscal promise from the “modest” \$10 billion a year annual deficits to a return to a balanced budget in 2019 has been broken. The finance situation is so severe the finance minister actually spiked a report from his own department claiming not until 2056 would Canada possibly return to a balance.

● (2025)

Seriously, try to even get the finance minister to utter the words, “balanced budget”. Not even Liberals on that side of the House, although they can try, can achieve that.

This is a blatant tax grab with absolutely zero consultation whatsoever on how an additional half a billion dollar tax grab on this industry might impact it. To many of my constituents, this is really the offensive part.

The Liberal government is happy to give a \$327 million loan to help finance a carbon-burning aircraft to a company that openly stated it did not need the money. Owners of wineries, craft breweries, and distilleries get \$500 million in costs downloaded to them and their customers. What impact will this have on the industry? Does the Liberal government even know? Better yet, do the Liberals care?

*Government Orders*

Many in the industry feel abandoned, and that is the problem when a government decides to pick winners and losers in the private sector. In fact, one winery owner recently commented that if only that winery had bottled a pinot supercluster, maybe it would have fared better treatment from the Liberals.

We also have one other problem. A large segment of our domestic wine, craft, and spirit market is made up of products from outside of our country. This is in large part because we lack the domestic capacity in many cases to serve our own market. The upside of this situation is that we have room to grow and expand for Canadian producers. At least we did have that opportunity until the Liberals decided to tax them out of existence.

The other challenge is that foreign producers, for a variety of reasons, could have a case now to present a trade challenge. The finance committee actually received a letter from the European Commission outlining that it had grave concerns about it and planned to challenge it in an upcoming trade challenge as some products were becoming more expensive now and, in some circumstances, in a manner that 100% Canadian-produced wine did not.

Let me be clear. Right now, the policy is that if producers make Canadian wine using 100% Canadian grown produce, which helps our farmers, they are exempt from excise. However, those who use products from outside of the country or who import from places like Chile, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the United States also have to pay excise, so they will also be on this automatic escalator, every year their prices being higher. As we know, a trade challenge can be very harmful on an industry, much as we are seeing now with softwood lumber.

That is why it is so deeply concerning to see the Liberal government implement these draconian charges with zero consultation and no thought as to how it may adversely impact an import industry that then may cause us trade grief.

I would like to make it clear that I am not trying to fearmonger. These are real concerns that can be factually verified. As the elected representative for a region that may be adversely impacted by these changes, it is my responsibility to illustrate these serious concerns here. It is my intention that all members ponder them and ask serious questions of the Liberal government.

Before I close, I would like to point out today that seven out of 10 bottled wines sold in Canada are made outside of Canada. We know we are entering some of the most unprecedented new trade opportunities. However, if the cost of doing business in Canada continues to increase through new escalator taxation, higher payroll costs, increased CPP, and more, we very well could see examples of where companies like Procter & Gamble move production into lower cost regions outside of Canadian borders. With Procter & Gamble, 500 well-paying, middle-class jobs were lost. Not even the Liberal government, using borrowed money, can afford handouts to all of them.

This is the reason business investment has declined in Canada every quarter since the Liberal government was elected. I will submit it will continue to decline if costs of doing business in Canada do not remain competitive. An escalator tax means that every year we

become less competitive. We cannot afford this. That is why I remain opposed to these measures and will be supporting the amendments proposed by the member of Parliament for Louis-Saint-Laurent, with whom I have had the great pleasure of serving as his deputy finance critic.

I stand opposed for the people, not just those in Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola but for the many people who contribute to our economies right across our great country. The escalator tax will not serve the purpose. The government will see less revenue, fewer jobs, and trade challenges that will harm and decimate our industry if they are successful.

• (2030)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his work on the Standing Committee on Finance. It is always a pleasure to work with him.

One of the subjects that he did not talk about but may wish to do so, is that of the parliamentary budget officer. At committee, we saw the minister and his officials defending the changes that affect the parliamentary budget officer. They seemed to have a hard time defending the various clauses of Bill C-44 that amend the mandate of the parliamentary budget officer as an institution. At committee, they even had to do some stopgap adjustments and damage control, if I can use that expression. All the Liberal members had a very hard time defending the bill's contents.

I would like my colleague to comment on how Bill C-44 was drafted and how hastily it seems to have been prepared. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a bill that is poorly written and poorly put together, and that had to be corrected by the Liberals.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's contribution here and also at committee. I will simply say that I believe that the additions to the PBO were announced in the fall economic update to give the Minister of Finance a little sugar to help make the terrible deficit medicine go down a little easier.

Since then, we have seen that the Liberals were challenged by the previous parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page, and his new institute for fiscal studies, as well as the current occupant of that position, because there were some key flaws.

*Government Orders*

I will provide a good example of the amendments. One in particular stated that any person wanting to be the next parliamentary budget officer should have significant provincial or federal experience in budgetary matters. I asked officials at committee if we could end up in a situation similar to the one we saw with the Commissioner of Official Languages, with a partisan nominee, a former Liberal minister, taking that post. Could we possibly see the same sort of thing, with a former provincial or federal minister who would have significant budgetary expertise? The officials said yes, that was certainly a possibility. Thus, even the amendments that were put forward by the government to correct these so-called issues with the PBO, I would contend, are not in our best interest, and we should actually restart the process and have a joint standing committee or a special committee of both Houses go through it, because this is Parliament's budget officer, not the government's.

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned a flawed initiative in the budget bill that would create trade issues internationally. It would impair the capability for our craft brewers and wine producers to be competitive globally. However, with respect to trade, there is something that the government could have put in the budget that would not provoke any international intervention and would help Canadians enjoy these products interprovincially. I wonder if he might want to expand on this initiative that could have been in this budget, one that would have been very profitable and beneficial for those communities with craft brewers and wine producers but was not included.

• (2035)

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate that the member has been a big fan of the “free the beer” campaign with respect to the Comeau case out of New Brunswick. We raised it here last May, in fact. I will just make this point. Last May the Conservatives were telling the government to free the beer. Now, a year later, we are saying to the government to please not tax it to death. I thought I would just bring that up.

The New Brunswick government has actually suggested and sought leave from the Supreme Court of Canada. I have said in this place that I congratulate the provincial government for that. It is a Liberal government. The Supreme Court, to my delight, has said that it will take this forward, because unfortunately the so-called Canada free trade agreement did not include an agreement on alcohol. I am not sure how we can have a free trade agreement within a free country, as that seems to be a misnomer. This is a great opportunity for the Supreme Court to answer this question and to really free the beer so that we can have true internal free trade of this fine Canadian product.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again in the House today to speak to budget 2017.

More and more people are telling me about the fine promises made during the election campaign and the string of disappointments and disillusionment once the party that got voted in formed government. This is what I have heard about the Liberals for over a year and a half. The 2017 budget is no different, and there are many areas where the investment is inadequate, if not inexistent.

How can this government justify to the six out of 10 unemployed workers who do not have access to employment insurance that it is not planning to invest anything in improving access? The lack of access to these benefits deprives many workers of the resources they need to survive.

The government keeps telling us that it is creating jobs, but it is unacceptable to leave people unable to support themselves without assistance. Employment insurance is paid for through employee and employer contributions and it needs to help those who need it, when they need it.

The employment insurance system needs to be changed so that those who have been left behind can access these benefits. Many workers are in several precarious jobs, which is why they are unable to access these benefits. This is especially the case for seasonal workers, and I want to remind this government once again that each year 15,000 people are in this situation, close to 40% of them in Quebec. It is also the case for young people, since 40% of the jobs worked by 18- to 34-year-olds are precarious.

How can our small businesses create good jobs when they do not have adequate infrastructure? Internet access is a fundamental issue for rural residents and businesses. However, nowhere in the budget does the government announce new investment to allow rural communities to have access to high-speed Internet.

In the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, which I represent, we are among those left out of high-speed Internet. It is an impediment to our community, particularly our small businesses. I have pledged to bring fibre optic throughout the riding, and I will continue to fight for that. The government needs to invest in public infrastructure to make new technologies accessible to everyone, everywhere.

On the topic of small businesses, microbreweries and small wine producers are a vital part of our economy. Small businesses create 80% of good-paying jobs. Increasing the excise tax would impose added costs on microbreweries and small wine producers. Breweries pay to the federal government the same excise duties on each litre of beer, regardless of volume, and this is unfair to the microbreweries unable to compete with the major breweries.

The federal government should instead help microbreweries, microdistilleries, and vintners market their products. It needs to eliminate the excise tax hike on microbreweries and small wine producers.

This government has said time and again that it wants to help the hard-working middle class. Again, there is a big disconnect between what the Liberals say and what they actually do. Child care costs have gone up more than 8% over the last two years. This strong middle class that the government wants to build is paying very high child care costs, while the budget does not include one extra penny for new child care spaces this year, and the amounts to be provided later are mostly inadequate for the needs of parents.



*Government Orders*

During the election campaign, the Liberals criticized the NDP plan saying that it was too slow. Under our plan, there was more money for the first year than the government plans to invest during the fifth year. Some families pay up to \$1,600 a month per child for child care. No matter how hard you work, that is a gaping hole in the household budget.

• (2040)

The Liberals are also cutting the public transit tax credit that helped many people save up to \$200 a year. Families expect this government to work for them, but clearly it prefers to gift \$725 million annually to Canada's wealthiest CEOs. Is that what the Liberals mean by building a strong middle class?

To the long list of those who have been cheated, we must add dairy farmers. In November, the government promised to invest \$350 million to help dairy farmers cope with the repercussions of the comprehensive economic trade agreement signed with the European Union, but there is not a single line item in the budget for such an investment. Like many Liberal promises, this one seems to have vanished. Many dairy farmers in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and in Quebec and Canada in fact, were expecting support from the federal government. It is high time that a government protected our farmers and truly helped them.

People do not seem to be able to count on this government when it comes to health care costs. Despite all of the requests that have been made by the provinces, the Liberals have once again chosen not to make the disability tax credit refundable. Low-income Canadians therefore have to deal with the double sentence of living with functional limitations and being trapped in a precarious situation by a government that ignores them because it would rather give tax credits to the wealthy.

There are inequalities in health when it comes to the price of prescription drugs. Canada has the second highest drug prices in the world, but the government turns a deaf ear to the suffering of those who cannot get the drugs they need. Some people do not take all of their medication and some do not take any at all because they cannot afford it. Others have to choose between health care and eating. Unfortunately, the existing system can kill, and it costs \$7 billion a year more than necessary because we do not have a national pharmacare program.

This year, we celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary, and the government is constantly sending out its messages to remind us. However it should keep in mind some other figures. Nine hundred and ninety thousand is the number of children living in poverty in Canada in 2017. These 990,00 children among 4.5 million men and women in Canada living in poverty are the reality we must strive to change. People have less and less money. The household debt amounts to 167% of their revenues on average.

However, when discussing people getting poorer, I am obviously talking about the majority of them. A small minority of people, the richest in our society, keep acquiring more and more wealth. Whereas all hard-working wage earners have to pay income tax, only half of the revenues from selling shares is taxed. Just in case the government is unaware, let me remind them that selling shares is not a major source of income for the middle class and it is even less so for the most vulnerable.

The tax rate for big corporations has been constantly declining for the past 15 years, and that rate is applied only on taxable revenues. In spite of the ever-decreasing rate, big corporations still engage in tax evasion, a scourge that deprives the state of revenues worth 7 billion dollars a year.

That said, it really becomes indecent when the government itself allows the richest to evade income tax. The stock options tax break for big corporation CEOs represents a net loss of 800 million dollars a year for us. The government wants to promote hard-working men and women, but even by pushing themselves to the limit, most people cannot earn as much as a single one of the richest Canadians can earn from his shares. Owning shares that generate millions of dollars cannot be called work.

We can therefore see how negligent the government is. While it forfeits large sums of money in the form of tax credits for the wealthiest and fails to crack down on tax cheats, some people are hurting because they are poor.

• (2045)

Let us not forget that more than 800,000 people use food banks every month. This represents a 28% increase since 2008, and 36% of those people are children. Reforms could solve that problem, and it is high time the government took action.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her contribution to the debate on Bill C-44.

I would like to touch on one of the first points she raised about higher excise taxes for wine makers, brewers, and distillers, which will certainly have an impact, as we learned in committee. All of the witnesses were unanimous on this, and it is rare to see unanimity on any issue in committee. All the witnesses agreed. They all said it would hurt the industry, especially since inflation will continue to rise and put added pressure on the industry.

Can my colleague tell us what impact this is having in her riding? Wine makers, brewers, and distillers are all doing their best to source local products. As everyone knows, land in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is very fertile.

Can my colleague comment on the impact this may have on farmers who supply the raw materials for the production of beer, wine, and spirits across Canada and especially in her riding?

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sherbrooke for his question.

Indeed, I am very proud to represent an agrifood technopole. Microbreweries are getting more and more of their ingredients from local producers. In my riding, I am thinking of the award-winning Bilboquet and Brasseurs du monde microbreweries.

*Government Orders*

We are seeing microbreweries pop up all over Quebec and Canada. They are everywhere you go these days. These microbreweries are important to our communities. Indeed, they are getting their ingredients from local producers and are very proud to do so.

The city of Saint-Hyacinthe is home to Barry Callebaut, a major chocolate maker. There is even a microbrewery that used chocolate shavings to make a really nice beer. The output of one company becomes the raw materials of another. When these small businesses are attacked, an entire supply chain is attacked.

The Liberal government needs to think about our regions' economies, which are important, rather than only looking after large corporations and thinking of the interests of the wealthiest among them.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her speech.

In April, during World Autism Awareness Day, over a dozen MPs across the way had a photo op with people who supported the autism partnership.

Could the hon. member tell me why no money was allocated to the autism partnership in this budget?

• (2050)

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

As I said, this is another fine example of the government being all talk and no action. It takes more than fine speeches. There are great needs in health and the government must invest in it. A few decades ago, the federal government covered 50% of provincial health expenditures. In the most recent accord, there was talk of 20% and that percentage will only decrease because the 10-year agreement does not account for increased costs.

As we know, more and more families are grappling with problems such as autism. The population is getting older. Health care needs are great and the federal government has to be there to support families and individuals when it comes to health. I totally agree with my colleague.

[English]

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here tonight to debate Bill C-44, the budget implementation act. I thought I would start my speech by laying out a little context, at least from my perspective, about how the finance minister and the industry minister have it wrong, and how some other members I have heard speak here tonight have it wrong. They talked about economic growth. They talked about their last two budgets, their plan for the economy and how it is working so well, and that they have this terrific economic growth.

One thing we would agree on is that the economy is growing. What we would disagree on is why that economy is growing. In a \$2 trillion economy, the budget they have put forward and so heavily back loaded has not moved the dial at all. What has moved the dial for the Canadian economy is a strong U.S. economy, a low Canadian dollar, and strong consumer spending, basically around the housing industry, which is by and large completely financed by debt.

If we read any economic publication about economic growth, we would see no mention of the Prime Minister nor the finance minister's plan, and definitely nothing about the Liberal Party of Canada. Those are the facts. We are lucky. We all root for a good economy, but we have to be realistic about why we have strong economic growth.

The other points where I would like to lay out some context is that in spite of that strong economic growth, the numbers have been revised from where they were before. They were pegged around an annualized rate at 4.1%, which is way up from a couple of years ago, and certainly since last year, but they have been revised down to 3.7% annualized.

Other possibly troubling pieces in these economic numbers are inventories being back loaded, which they are currently, and that exports to the United States have slipped mildly. The annualized rate now, which everyone is projecting realistically to be 2.2%, not surprisingly, is behind the United States in economic growth.

Everyone in this room should know that when the U.S. economy goes well, we do well. When the U.S. economy goes bad, we do not do so well. There are 75% of our exports going to the United States, so it is no surprise. Exports to the United States were up 5.4% in April, and we will see where it goes for the rest of the year.

Another troubling fact that all parliamentarians should have, and Canadians in a broader sense should have, is that if we compare the deficits that we experienced in 2009, 2010, and 2011, for example, it was in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the great depression. With the deficits that we have and the debt we are going to be accumulating over the next four years, for sure to 2019, but if the Liberals somehow manage to get re-elected in 2019, which is looking more doubtful every day, we are trending towards 2055 for deficit and debt repayment.

My point is that the deficits we are adding today are at a time of economic growth, at a time where the economy is actually moving well in the U.S. and here. It is a little less well with the other G7 countries, but it is not too bad. If we compare that to the times of 2009, 2010, and 2011, those were terrible times. It is never a good idea to accumulate debt while times are good. It is never a good idea to accumulate debt at any time.

I am from Ontario, and we have another big problem. Her first name is Kathleen. We have some problems. We have a lot of instability with some of the policies she has put forward. Her cousin Dalton caused us a lot of trouble too. We have had 13 years of provincial Liberal government in the province of Ontario. They have accumulated more debt than all the other provincial governments combined. They might get out of deficit at some point, but they have sold the furniture to pay off the short-term financial issues. We have electricity rates that are absolutely ridiculous, that businesses cannot afford, seniors on fixed income cannot afford, and low-income Ontarians cannot afford.

*Government Orders*

• (2055)

The province that I live in has the same leadership, with Gerald Butts and Katie Telford guiding the Prime Minister's ship in the same direction that the Province of Ontario has been going for the last 13 years. The only thing that is saving us at this point in time is the U.S. economy. We are thankful for its strength and we are thankful that it continues to buy our products. We are also thankful that our dollar is low relative to the U.S. dollar.

The minister of industry talks at great length about his superclusters and all the other stuff he is doing, but it has not moved the needle. The three western provinces are going to show the best growth and the best strength for our Canadian economy, and that is basically led by the oil and gas sector. As much as the Liberal government considers the words “oil” and “gas” as two dirty words that they do not like to use, the reality is that our economy is still successful with the sector, and as we heard from many of our colleagues, it is the most ethically produced oil and gas in the world.

Other members have talked about companies like Procter & Gamble that have announced it is going to be leaving Ontario. That is 500 good-paying jobs in a small city of 30,000. That is a devastating blow at a time when the U.S. is going to reduce taxes, is cutting regulations, and has a number of infrastructure announcements coming out this week that will lay the foundation for its growth.

Contrast that to what we are doing here in Canada where we are adding taxes. We heard about the excise tax. The government is adding other levies and fees. We are revisiting the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. We heard the Minister of Transport talking today about the navigable waters act. These are all things that will slow our progress, slow our growth. If the Liberals are in government long enough, we will once again be doing environmental assessments on cedar benches in national parks, which is what we were doing before we made those changes.

This has been brought up already, but if I heard it once in the last election, I must have heard it 500 times. I am talking about how the Liberals said they would never do omnibus bills. They said, “Not us, if we ever get in.” Bill C-44 that we are looking at tonight is as prolific as any omnibus bill before it. I am sure that if a student in political science anywhere across this country wanted to have a good look at what an omnibus bill is, that student need look no further than this piece of legislation.

The government House leader has said that everything in this legislation is about money. I guess at the end of the day, everything is about money, but that is not what the Liberals were talking about in the last election.

Another topic we have heard a lot about in the House of Commons, and which is a continuation of the anti-rural policies that the Liberals have, is the investment bank. The overall arching sweep of infrastructure money is \$181 billion over the next 11 years. The slap in the face to rural Canadians, which I am one of, is that only \$2 billion over 11 years is specifically allocated to rural Canada. It is pretty much a given that not \$1 in the \$35-billion infrastructure bank will go to rural Canadian towns and municipalities.

Canadians should also be concerned about the wording with respect to the infrastructure bank. I apologize if someone else has brought this up today, but it is that the investments may be made in Canada or “partly in Canada”. This basically means that our Canadian tax dollars, which should be going into building infrastructure in this country, can go toward building infrastructure in China, India, and many other places. That is not what Canadians view as an infrastructure bank when they are talking about it.

In addition, other parts in the briefing that was presented are with regard to a significant portion of the risk. The bank could take on debt that allows other debtors to be paid first in order to provide a loss buffer. Those are not words that Canadian taxpayers want to hear, and they are not words we want to hear, especially when Liberal cabinet members are the ones who will be picking the projects.

I have many more pages to go over here, so hopefully the Liberals will ask questions that pertain to what I have in the rest of my speech.

• (2100)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to focus on another aspect of the bill that seeks to increase fees for Canadians, and that is the service fees act, which would replace a similar law.

The service fees that the Government of Canada charges Canadians for a wide variety of services will increase with inflation for an indefinite period. In committee, witnesses were saying that there are fees associated with over 1,000 services, including immigration and passport services, and Parks Canada services.

Could my colleague comment on that aspect of the bill? He already mentioned a number of hikes in taxes and fees, but in this case, the service fees act is a new way of increasing fees every year for an indefinite period, based on the consumer price index.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, this is coming right out of the Gerald Butts-Katie Telford playbook. They nickel-and-dime us to death. We have seen that in Ontario. Now we are going to see it here.

With respect to passports, low-income Canadians would love to have passports. Maybe they could go on a little trip. Especially where I am from, we can go over to Port Huron or into Ohio for a little visit if we like. If passport fees are going to go up, it sure would add a lot for a fixed-income person, especially a fixed-income senior.

*Government Orders*

Another one I would like to talk about is the agriculture and agrifood food side. Agriculture and agrifood is the biggest driver in the province of Ontario. The CFIA makes it difficult enough for small butcher shops, abattoirs, feed mills, and other things to stay open. We should be looking to decrease, not increase, fees. It is the same thing other members have talked about with excise taxes. It is so bizarre to hear the finance minister stand in the House of Commons and say that we need to continue to raise taxes so businesses understand, or whatever he said today in question period. I cannot believe it. It should be reducing taxes.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for an excellent speech, because he puts it into perspective for everyday ordinary Canadians.

I would like to ask him about competitiveness. He talked about the agrifood business. I come from Oshawa, where it is manufacturing. What is in this budget to help us be more competitive? He talked about the Ontario government. We have the highest electrical rates in North America for industry. We have the government putting in a carbon tax, and not only at the provincial level. If it is not big enough, it is going to make it even bigger. The new administration in the United States is actually working on lowering taxes and lowering red tape, and in Canada, the government is doing everything to raise taxes and raise red tape.

Would he talk about the importance of what should be in this budget to help Canadian competitiveness?

• (2105)

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, first and foremost, it should be certainty and common sense. The finance minister and the Prime Minister are definitely lacking in both areas.

We need to reduce taxes. We need to continue on the path our government had for 10 years and reduce regulations so that businesses can compete in North America against Mexico and the United States, which the Prime Minister is making more difficult to do each and every day, and around the world. Every time the finance minister starts to talk, it is, "How can I pick your pocket once? How can I pick your pocket twice?" The very last thing is, "I am going to raise your taxes."

It is tough, because it affects businesses. It affects fixed-income seniors across the board. We only need to go into my area, or other members' areas, and ask people what they think, and they will tell us pretty quick. They will tell us what they think about Kathleen Wynne and they will tell us about the Prime Minister. We did not hear that two years ago. We did not hear that prior to October 2015. We did not hear that 18 months ago, 16 months ago, but now when we go home on the weekend or we are there on a break week, what we hear is, "I cannot believe what these guys are doing to us in Ottawa. What can we do?" That is two years with Liberals.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-44, budget implementation act, 2017, No. 1.

We have heard from many members in this House about the numerous issues with the bill. When we have a bill that is over 300 pages long and amends 30 pieces of legislation, we really need to have a substantial amount of debate on these issues.

Unfortunately, the Liberals have been intent on ramming through this legislation without proper consultation and the discussion it deserves. There have been only four days of debate on Bill C-44 at second reading. There have been only six meetings of the finance committee on this legislation and just under two hours of consideration at the Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure. Now here we are at report stage, one of the final stages of the bill that amends 30 pieces of legislation, and the Liberals have moved time allocation again. This is simply not enough time to do our due diligence when it comes to making sure that we are passing the best piece of legislation we can.

I want to speak to one part of Bill C-44 in particular that really highlights the need for discussion and debate, and that is division 18, which creates the infrastructure bank of Canada act.

As the official opposition critic for infrastructure and communities, I have been following the Liberal process of creating their infrastructure bank since November 2015. I have raised concerns about the design of the bank, the need for the bank, the functions of the bank, and who will be benefiting from the bank. While Bill C-44 offers new details about the structure and the financing of the bank, it also introduces a multitude of new questions. I was looking forward to really beginning to drill down into this piece of legislation to make sure that the \$35 billion of taxpayers' money spent to finance this bank would be spent in a way that would ensure that Canadians and communities were getting the critical pieces of infrastructure they need.

Unfortunately, the Liberals allowed only two hours of study of this legislation at the Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure. I know that when they were questioned by the media as to why there was so little time given to members to study such an important piece of legislation, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities told the media that the committee could hold more meetings if it chose to and that the minister and the PMO were not involved in telling the committee what to do.

A motion was put forward at the transport committee to add two more meetings on this legislation and to bring in more expert witnesses who could speak to the development of the legislation and its impact on the future of Canadian infrastructure and communities. The Liberal MPs voted that motion down and blocked any further study of this legislation. The committee discussed a \$35-billion bank in under two hours. That is 3.42 minutes per billion dollars. We called for this section of Bill C-44 to be separated from the rest of the bill to allow the House more time to debate it, and of course, the Liberals voted that down as well.

*Government Orders*

The Senate is now considering separating the legislation from the rest of the bill, because it too recognizes that this bank will have a significant impact on Canadians and has serious issues that really do need to be addressed. As Bill C-44 comes before the Senate, I really hope that the upper chamber will do what this House refuses to do, and that is to separate the legislation for the infrastructure bank so we can give it the proper study and discussion it deserves.

I also want to highlight some of the issues surrounding the bank. The Liberal infrastructure bank will use \$35 billion of taxpayers' money to underwrite loans and provide loan guarantees to private and foreign investors.

● (2110)

These investors are looking for significant returns. J.P. Morgan put out a list, and depending on the project, it ranges anywhere from a 7% to 20% return on the investment. That means that investment will only occur for large, lucrative projects. Few municipalities in Canada will have their projects built through this bank.

Another troubling aspect of this legislation is that executives from BlackRock, the world's largest investment firm, were invited to be directly involved in the development of the legislation and to preview the minister's speech before the bank was pitched to their clients. That is a blatant conflict of interest.

This legislation gives the Liberals the power to provide loan guarantees to investors. We already have PPP Canada, which has been in operation since 2009. This crown corporation was specifically designed to leverage private sector dollars to build infrastructure. From the initial investment of \$1.3 billion, it has leveraged over \$6 billion in infrastructure in an open, transparent, ethical, and effective way.

If the Liberals had actually put the \$35 billion into PPP Canada and expanded its mandate, PPP Canada could have leveraged \$170 billion in infrastructure. In fact, in the KPMG report, which was commissioned by the Liberals, it advised them on setting up the infrastructure bank. It stated that putting the bank under an existing agency, like PPP Canada, would have been cheaper, more efficient, and less bureaucratic than setting up a whole new crown corporation. However, the Liberals ignored that expert advice and decided to set up a new institution that has significant conflict of interest issues surrounding it.

Furthermore, pension plan investors, the very same ones the Liberals claim are supportive of this bank and will benefit from this bank, are also raising concerns. The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan board told the Senate banking committee last month, on May 18, that their biggest concern with this bank is that they do not know who they should be negotiating with. Are they negotiating with the bank or are they negotiating with cabinet?

The minister and cabinet underwrite the loans, appoint the board of directors, and approve the CEO. They can fire these people without cause, and according to the Minister of Finance, will have the final say over which projects get built and which do not.

We simply need to have more time to debate these issues. Canadians have questions for this Liberal government about this bank and its relevance, about how the legislation was written and by whom, and about who will truly benefit. It is obvious that the

Liberals do not want these questions to be answered, because they have rammed this legislation through the House and committee with minimal debate, and today they have just moved time allocation to shut down third reading debate as well.

This legislation has not been passed yet, and the Liberals are already advertising job postings for the CEO and board members. I truly urge my colleagues to stop and think, because we need to be putting Canadians first and making sure that our communities are getting the infrastructure they need, not focusing on making sure that private investors are getting their 20% returns at the expense of Canadian taxpayers.

● (2115)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure formerly sitting on the transportation and infrastructure committee with the member. There was a massive agenda in that committee.

I can remember in a previous incarnation, I think it was when I was on the OGGO committee, that we looked at and analyzed P3. One of the big issues with P3 was the lack of transparency. There were a lot of concerns about P3. However, the government decided to go with that. One of the big issues was to make sure we were getting a proper benefit and so forth.

I am wondering if the member could elaborate a little more on P3 versus this infrastructure bank. I was no fan of P3. I know, frankly, that there are some members of this House from my city who were opposed to P3s when they were city councillors, but it was foisted on them by the previous Conservative government to get money for LRT.

Is the member of the view, within her party, that they are beginning to rethink these mechanisms and that perhaps we need greater accountability for the spending of taxpayers' dollars?

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that question, because there is a significant difference between P3 Canada and the infrastructure bank. P3 Canada never did any underwriting of loans. In this case, \$20 billion is going to reduce the risk on the private sector and give them a return on their investment and underwrite the loan. That is a significant difference.

With P3 Canada, it was a partnership between the private sector and different levels of government that came together. They were not underwriting the loans and they were not giving a return on the investment. It was a partnership, and therein lies the difference. What it did was leverage private sector dollars, which the Liberal government purports is a new-found mechanism for the bank, but it has been there since 2009. We were just not putting taxpayers at risk in terms of underwriting loans.

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with the wildly successful Building Canada program that the former Conservative government had in place, we had a very low rate of interest as government to provide collateral for infrastructure building. Roads were built, bridges were built, community centres were built, all on the basis of interest rates that were just above zero.

I would like to know whether the member could compare and contrast how it was with Building Canada versus what will be expected, especially of new municipalities, in having to deal through an infrastructure bank instead of through the provincial-federal secretariat as we used to have to do.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts:** Madam Speaker, that question is relevant, because small communities will not be able to access money from the infrastructure bank. It is plain and simple. The rates of return are based on projects over \$100 million. When the Building Canada fund was there and when we indexed the gas tax, it went directly to communities. There were many different mechanisms that went to small and rural communities and also went to larger communities, and 94% of all of the projects announced from the Conservatives were built. That is 94% as opposed to \$1 billion from the 2016 budget that the current government has allowed to lapse, and it will not be reintroduced until 2022. That is \$1 billion taken right off the top.

When we look at the number of announcements, we see that the minister is so proud that he has made more announcements than any other government in history. Yes, he has. He has announced them all, but they are not getting built. Some 94% are not under construction. Those that are under construction are the projects that we implemented through the Building Canada program.

• (2120)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-44.

“Pleased” is perhaps a bit of an exaggeration because I do not really know where to begin talking about Bill C-44, which is 290 pages long and affects about 30 different acts and some 450 sections.

As the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance, I have had the privilege of spending several hours examining the bill and even doing a clause-by-clause study. I would have liked to speak to the House about several aspects of the bill, but I will focus on just a couple. I will speak about those aspects I believe are the most important ones to address in today’s debate. I will be trying to persuade my colleagues on all sides of the House to support the amendments proposed here at the report stage. These are mostly to remove some of the bill’s provisions that we believe are bad.

We are not alone in thinking this; sometimes, even the Conservatives agree with us on this. The Bloc Québécois and the Green Party also proposed amendments at committee, and once again, at the report stage, they have tried to improve, if that is possible, Bill C-44 by removing some of the more highly problematic parts that witnesses repeatedly brought to the committee’s attention. I will therefore speak to the House about some of these issues.

First, although I decry the length of the bill, I must say that I am very disappointed, as the national revenue critic for the NDP. I myself have asked the Minister of National Revenue several times in the House about combatting tax evasion. I have urged her to act on the issue of combatting tax evasion. Unfortunately, Bill C-44 would have been a good opportunity to introduce a few meaningful measures to fight tax evasion, measures that were even in the motion we recently put forward, I believe in March. This motion, which aimed to more effectively combat tax evasion, received the Liberal government’s support and was adopted by the House.

After the vote that took place on March 8, I think, one could have hoped for a follow-up on these commitments in the budget, on March 22, especially through a cap on stock options for corporate CEOs. It would have been a good way, through this bill, to combat tax evasion and make sure that each and everyone pays their fair share. Nevertheless, it was completely excluded from the bill, and I was very disappointed when I first read Bill C-44. It is a missed opportunity to do more on that front.

While the government refuses to act against tax evasion in Bill C-44, it is cancelling the public transit tax credit, although this is in no way a means of tax evasion. A total of \$250 million went back to the 1.5 million Canadian taxpayers who benefited from the public transit tax credit. Public transit users kept their receipts and, at the end of the year, applied to the government for a refund of part of their transit costs. Although Canadian public transit users—and therefore not the wealthiest—were getting back 250 million dollars, they were told that, since the tax credit was not important, not meaningful, and did not meet its objectives, it had to be cancelled. On the other hand, tax loopholes for corporate CEOs are being kept. I saw that as completely nonsensical.

I have not even mentioned the increase in numerous fees and taxes contained in the bill. Because I will run out of time, I will mention only the increase in excise duties. I know my colleagues talked about it earlier today, but I want to point out that witnesses all agreed that the increase in excise duties is simply excessive.

• (2125)

Not only are they unfairly increasing them in the budget, but what is more, they will increase each year based on the consumer price index indefinitely. This was condemned by industry stakeholders who obviously see that as a danger for their industry. This is understandable, because it will never stop. Raising excise duties means higher costs for microbreweries, microdistilleries, and vintners of all sizes.

This is certainly something that should be removed from the bill, and the Liberal members will soon have a chance to do so, when we vote later on amendments, at the report stage. I encourage them to remove this aspect from the bill.

I am also asking them to remove another aspect of the bill that has gone somewhat unnoticed, but was also raised in committee, which is the elimination of the exemption for insurers of farming and fishing property. They were eligible for a tax exemption for good reasons, because in the past, farming and fishing businesses had trouble getting their property insured. That is why mutual insurance companies were created. These companies were entitled to an exemption if they kept a certain number of policyholders, who were fishers and farmers.

However, once again, the government is saying that this tax exemption is not significant and absolutely needs to go. However, I will point out that this bill leaves CEOs' stock options untouched.

This is in addition to the changes concerning the parliamentary budget officer, whom I had the chance to talk about a little earlier. We have to admit that the government completely missed the mark on this one. People came to committee to testify about it. There was the current parliamentary budget officer, the previous parliamentary budget officer, Mr. Page, and other subject matter experts. They all condemned the amateurish approach of the government, which introduced woefully inadequate amendments regarding the parliamentary budget officer.

Thank goodness the Liberals saw the light and passed a few amendments even though they rejected all of the opposition's amendments, as usual. At least they admitted to a bad job. The public servants who testified before us had a hard time defending the bill and justifying why they did not consult anyone before introducing it, not even the current or former parliamentary budget officer. It was very clear that they did not consult anyone before moving the amendments and that they had to pick up the pieces in committee. What a fine example of Liberal amateurism. What came to us in committee was a fait accompli, a poorly thought-out and poorly written bill condemned by those it affected most. In this case, that was the parliamentary budget officer.

The other subject that captured the committee's attention was the infrastructure bank. I know that several of my colleagues mentioned this in their speeches, but the infrastructure bank and its mission are ill-conceived. We are talking about revenue-generating infrastructure. The Liberals never mentioned this before. I asked a departmental official what it meant, and he clearly said that it meant tolls and user fees. How else is infrastructure supposed to make a profit? We are going to see tolls popping up all across Canada.

In committee, I moved a motion to include wording about the infrastructure bank from the Liberal Party platform in the budget implementation bill, but my motion was rejected. The Liberals did not approve their very own words about the infrastructure bank's mission. This is clear evidence that the Liberals cannot keep their promises to Canadians. The infrastructure bank is a good example of that because the only people who are going to benefit are the Liberals' friends.

● (2130)

Since my time has expired, I will be very glad to answer questions from my colleagues on anything which might be of interest to them in Bill C-44.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his speech.

### *Government Orders*

I would like to have more details about the infrastructure bank. The way the bill is set up now, the bank will be making investments as an agent of the federal government. Therefore, the laws and regulations of Quebec and the provinces will not apply.

According to my colleague, should this provision be excluded from the bill?

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank my colleague for his comments and his work on the finance committee, where he raised that point.

I was very proud to support his amendments in committee. I will again be very proud to support them here to try to fix the bill to the extent possible, so that the infrastructure bank is not as bad as it is now, although it will remain imperfect.

That being said, the fact that the bank will act as an agent of Her Majesty the Queen of Canada is a blatant problem pointed out by various stakeholders, including by my colleague from Joliette. That calls into question the ability of provincial and municipal governments to have a say in such projects and to simply enforce their legislation, be it on environmental matters or other areas under their jurisdiction.

As proposed, the infrastructure bank is a crown corporation, and therefore it will be acting as an agent of Her Majesty. It may be a problem if the bank chooses to use all the authorities granted to it as an agent of Her Majesty. This is dangerous. To avoid any confusion and risk, it would be appropriate and reasonable to remove that provision from the bill. The bank would not be perfect, but it would not be as bad as it is now.

[*English*]

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us look at the dollars, especially the \$20 billion the infrastructure bank will set aside to underwrite loans and reduce the risk to investors while charging taxpayers, whether through tolls and fees, to pay for its return on its investment. How does he feel about using taxpayer dollars to underwrite those loans, and what could we better use that for in terms of infrastructure?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I could not say it better than one of her colleagues did earlier: profits are privatized while risks are nationalized. Of course, in this case, it is a way to reassure investors who demand returns of 7% to 9%. My colleague says that returns sometimes reach 20% for the most profitable projects.

*Government Orders*

In some cases, the federal government will give loan guarantees. I assume that it will be for the riskier projects for which Canadians have the most to lose. The public will be on the hook for those projects that are not profitable, so that the private investors do not lose any money. Canadians will have to cover the losses for projects that are not profitable. On the other hand, when there is profit, 100% of it will go to the private sector, and that is unfortunate.

We think that this is absolutely unfair. The bank should not have been set up this way. It simply should not have been set up, period, because it is not what the Liberals promised Canadians during the campaign. That is another broken promise by the Liberals. Each passing day brings its share of new broken promises. I hope it will stop at some point.

• (2135)

[English]

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to be back in the House, speaking to such important issues.

We have been talking a lot about the infrastructure bank. I just want to add to that conversation. I know we have people who know much more about it than I, but I want to read an excerpt from the Canadian Press today. The title of this is “Infrastructure bank may bear large portion of risk in projects”. The article states, “The man advising Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on building a new infrastructure financing agency was told the body could take—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order, please. I want to remind the member that she is not allowed to mention a member's name or the Prime Minister's name.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I apologize, Madam Speaker. That was my error.

The article states that:

The man advising [the Prime Minister] on building a new infrastructure financing agency was told the body could take on a “significant” amount of risk to help projects come to fruition.

The agency would “help bear a significant portion of the risk” in a project if the government took on an equity stake to make a project more attractive to private investors, says a confidential briefing package prepared for special adviser Jim Leech.

The Feb. 20 briefing document says the bank could take on debt that allows other debtors to be paid first in order to provide a “loss buffer” to the private sector, or invest on an equal footing “at concessionary terms.”

That latter reference could mean giving a private partner exclusive rights to use and receive revenue from a piece of infrastructure, like a rail line—such as the arrangement between the U.K., France and the private companies involved in the Channel Tunnel.

With reference to the infrastructure bank, we have asked time and time again in the House of Commons if there will be risk to the government and to the private sector. All the opposition side, whether the official opposition or members of the NDP, has heard is that the only person on the hook for this will be the taxpayer. The only way we were going to get this type of information was through an access to information request, and it was requested by the Canadian Press. The government has backgrounders on information and it is not willing to share because it is against its mandate and agenda. We see that with the carbon tax and the infrastructure bank. We are asking for some transparency on behalf of taxpayers. Somebody needs to be the voice of the taxpayers.

By no means am I an economist. I like to look at things as simply as possible. I am looking at information from the Fraser Institute, which noted that in 2016-17 the combined debt of the federal and provincial governments will be \$1.4 trillion. I know we have talked a lot about this. People have said that deficits do not matter. We have heard that over and over again. However, when the government continues to spend greater than the revenues received, it will matter. It will have an impact on those things that are vital and important to Canadians, our top priorities.

If we know we are spending billions of dollars, a lot of which is money that we have borrowed, imagine when we have to start paying interest on that, money that could benefit Canadian society. I believe the cost would be over \$37,000 per person if we were to divide the debt among everybody. That is more than the cost of my new car. That means everybody would be able to buy a brand new car as of today. I want to put that into perspective, because most families are buying a used car or cannot afford a car at all.

The government is spending all of this money. If we are looking at \$62.8 billion just in interest in 2015-16, let us put that into what really matters. The member who sits beside me could buy the Toronto Maple Leafs 62 times over. Everybody knows how wealthy the Toronto Maple Leafs team is. Our debt is 62 times the worth of the Toronto Maple Leafs. We could buy 315 F-35 fighter jets. Would that not be wonderful for our troops? Instead, we have to worry about a debt that will continue on.

I look at the effects this will have on our generations. We talk about the debt, but we really do not understand the effects of that debt. What will that mean to the future of our health care system or our educational system? How will that affect the environment, something so important to the government? How will that affect the government if we spend all of the money today? Later on we will be unable to afford anything. It concerns me because as we move forward with the great plans of the government, all we see is debt. We have already discussed that the debt we are accumulating is all on borrowed money. Who is going to pay this debt back? Debt and deficit do not seem to be key words for the government, but for most families it is.

• (2140)

As the critic for family, children, and social development, what would happen if we budgeted that way in our own homes? We would lose our cars, houses, and everything we ever owned. We cannot max it out time and time again. This is what the government is doing.



*Government Orders*

A lot of times when we have this conversation, the government of the day will reflect back to the spending of the previous government when we went through a global economic downturn. There was one in 2008, 2009, and 2010. We were the first country to recover, and we did so very well. I would like to thank the late Minister Flaherty for doing such a phenomenal job in the work that was done in Canada. Out of that spending, there were new arenas, new roads, new facilities for our communities, and a lot of growth in the economy as we went forward.

Now we are spending for the sake of spending and it does not make sense. We are not in a global recession when we need to go up against huge debt. I do not know why the government is putting our future in debt time and time again. The next generation will pay for this. When we look at medical care, such as palliative care, as Bill C-277 put through, why are we not investing in things that are really important to Canadians? Why are we not investing in long-term plans? We are spending so much money. I could talk about the \$130,000 spent by the Prime Minister to travel abroad. Something as simple as that reflects respect for Canadian taxpayer dollars, and we do not see that.

I will bring this back in layman's terms. A lot of times when we talk to Canadians, we often talk about such big numbers, and they cannot grasp it. We are talking about miles and miles of money. If we laid it down, how much would it look like? A lot of times Canadians cannot put it into perspective because it is so grandiose. We want to do a lot of things in Canada and I am really fearful of where this ongoing debt and bad plans, such as the infrastructure bank and all of the other things that are planned, are going to put our country. It is going to put our grandchildren far behind the eight ball. What is going to happen to their education and health care? These are so important that we have to step back and ask ourselves how we can do it better. We are spending and spending and there is no plan to get back to a balanced budget.

Again and again, the opposition side has asked the government for its plan to get back to a balanced budget. Unfortunately, I do not think any member on the government side has actually said there is a plan. All we are hearing is 2035, 2055, or whenever it may be, but it will not be in two or three years, as it should be. When the government was elected, you said there would be a \$10 billion deficit and I am not sure why you, time and time again—

• (2145)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I first want to remind the member that she is to address her comments to the Chair and not directly to the government or individual members.

It being 9:44 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 3 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 6.

The next question is on Motion No. 5.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

The recorded division on Motion No. 5 is deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 8 to 13.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

The question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 7 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 8 to 13.

The question is on Motion No. 14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 14 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 15.

*[English]*

The question is on Motion No. 16. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 16 stands deferred. The recorded division also applies to Motions Nos. 17 to 85.

• (2150)

The next question is on Motion No. 88. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division also applies to Motions Nos. 89 to 92.

*[Translation]*

The question is on Motion No. 93. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 93 stands deferred.

*[English]*

The question is on Motion No. 94. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on the Motion No. 94 stands deferred. The recorded division also applies to Motions Nos. 95 to 97.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 98.

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on Motion No. 98 is deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 99 to 106.

The next question is Motion No. 107. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on the Motion No. 107 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 108-113.

Normally at this time the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 30, 2017, the division stands deferred until Tuesday, June 6, 2017, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, there are special moments in a politician's life when we get to do something truly transformative.

May 16, 2017 was one of those moments for me. I had the great pleasure of introducing Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, which will help bring our government's vision of a state-of-the-art national transportation system to fruition.

This legislation breathes life into transportation 2030, a strategic plan for the future of transportation in Canada, to promote our government's agenda for economic growth and job creation.

It fulfills our promise to review the Canada Transportation Act and related legislation. We want to ensure our laws and regulations position Canada to capitalize on global opportunities, thrive in a high-performing economy, and better meet the needs and service expectations of Canadians.

This bill represents a first legislative step to deliver on early transportation 2030 measures. It consolidates into a single bill some of the essential components required to advance a strategic and integrated plan for our country's transportation system.

Bill C-49 proposes a range of improvements to better meet the service requirements and overall experience of the Canadian traveller. It aims to create a safe, innovative transportation system that takes advantage of international best practices, opportunities for international investment and contributes to a highly productive Canadian economy.

Bill C-49 focuses on our immediate priorities in the air, rail and marine sectors. It addresses the needs of air passengers for fairer and more transparent rights, the needs of the Canadian air industry for greater investment, the needs of shippers for safer and more efficient rail transportation, and the needs of railways for strengthened trade corridors to global markets.

*Government Orders*

Specifically, the bill proposes to strengthen air passenger rights; liberalize international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers; develop a clear and predictable process for approval of airline joint ventures; improve access, transparency, efficiency, and sustainable long-term investment in the freight rail sector; and, increase the safety of transportation in Canada by requiring railways to install voice and video recorders in locomotives.

Before I explain each of these in greater detail, let me first make clear that action in these areas reflects the priorities identified by Canadians.

We undertook extensive consultations over the past year following the release of Canada Transportation Act review report. We heard from more than 300 Canadian transportation and trade stakeholders, including indigenous groups and the provinces and territories, about how to ensure that the national transportation system continues to support Canada's international competitiveness, trade, and prosperity.

We also heard from individual Canadians in communities, large and small, all across the country regarding their concerns about our transportation system. Canadians have expressed their disappointment with their air travel experiences. I am committed to improving those experiences.

● (2155)

[*English*]

The concerns of Canadians have been highlighted in recent weeks with much-publicized cases of the unacceptable treatment of air travellers both in this country and south of the border. Stories of passengers forcibly removed from flights and other unacceptable industry practices that have significant impact on consumers have made the news headlines.

The bill, if passed, would provide assurance to Canadians that if they choose to travel by air, they would be aware of their rights, and should they feel that their rights have been violated, they would have a clear, simple, and timely mechanism for resolution.

Bill C-49 proposes to mandate the Canadian Transportation Agency to develop, in partnership with Transport Canada, new regulations to enhance Canada's air passenger rights. These new rules would ensure air passenger rights are clear, consistent, and fair for both travellers and air carriers.

I believe that when passengers purchase an airline ticket, they expect and deserve the airline to fulfill its part of the transaction. When that agreement is not fulfilled, passengers deserve clear, transparent, and enforceable standards of treatment and compensation. Under this proposed legislation, Canadians would benefit from a uniform, predictable, and reasonable approach. The details of the new approach would be elaborated through the regulatory process, which would include consultation with Canadians and air stakeholders.

My objective is to ensure that Canadians have a clear understanding of their rights as air travellers without negatively impacting on access to air services and costs of air travel for Canadians. Bill C-49 specifies that the regulations would include provisions regarding the following: first, providing passengers with

plain language information about carriers' obligations and how to seek compensation or file complaints; second, setting standards for the treatment of passengers in the case of overbooking, delays, and cancellations, including compensation; third, standardizing compensation levels for lost or damaged baggage; fourth, establishing standards for the treatment of passengers in the case of tarmac delays over a certain period of time; fifth, seating children close to a parent or guardian at no extra charge; and sixth, requiring air carriers to develop standards for transporting musical instruments.

I have been clear that I also intend that the regulations would include provisions ensuring that no Canadian is involuntarily removed from an aircraft due to overbooking. I have issued a challenge to Canada's air carriers on this matter, and that of seating arrangements for minors, that they move to strengthen their practices even before new air passenger rights are finalized.

The bill also proposes that data would be required from all parties in the air sector flow to be able to monitor the air traveller experience, including compliance with the proposed passenger rights approach.

The legislation also proposes to liberalize international ownership restrictions from 25% to 49% for Canadian air carriers, with associated safeguards. For example, a single international investor would not be able to hold more than 25% of the voting interests of the Canadian air carrier, and no combination of international air carriers could own more than 25% of a Canadian air carrier.

I should point out that the policy change would not apply to Canadian specialty air services, such as heli-logging, aerial photography, or firefighting, which would retain international ownership levels of 25%.

Liberalizing international ownership restrictions means that Canadian air carriers, which include all passenger and cargo providers, would have access to more investment capital, which they can use for innovation. This would bring more competition into the Canadian air sector, providing more choice for Canadians and generating benefits for airports and suppliers, including new jobs.

In fact, in the fall of 2016, I exempted from the ownership restrictions of 25% two companies that wanted to enter the Canadian market supported by increased foreign investment. This decision is now permitting Enerjet and Jetlines to pursue their intention to create low-cost carrier services for Canadians. Liberalizing the foreign investment provisions will give Canadians more frequent access to air travel within Canada, and from Canada to transborder and international locations.

• (2200)

[*Translation*]

Another improvement in the bill is that it proposes a new, transparent, and predictable process for the authorization of joint ventures between air carriers, taking into account competition and wider public interest considerations.

Joint ventures are a common practice in the global air transport sector. They enable two or more air carriers to coordinate functions on specific routes, including scheduling, pricing, revenue management, marketing, and sales.

In Canada, air carrier joint ventures are currently examined from the perspective of possible harm to competition by the Competition Bureau.

Unlike many other countries, notably the United States, Canada's current approach does not allow for the consideration of the wider public interest benefits other than competition and economic impacts. Furthermore, the bureau's review is not subject to specific timelines.

The bill that is before this House proposes amendments that would allow me to consider and approve air carrier joint ventures, where it is in the public interest, taking into account competition considerations. On this latter concern, I would work in close consultation with the Commissioner of Competition to ensure that I am properly informed regarding any concerns that he or she may have with regard to competition. Air carriers that would choose to have their proposed joint ventures assessed through the new process would be given clear timelines for an expected decision.

I am also convinced that providing Canada's air carriers with such a tool would also benefit the air traveller. By joining up networks, air carriers could allow seamless travel to a wider range of destinations and reduce the duplication of functions. For Canadians, this could mean more seamless access to key global markets, easier in-bound travel in support of tourism and business, as well as increasing transiting traffic through our airports, thus increasing flight options.

• (2205)

[*English*]

Globally, airports are making investments in passenger screening to facilitate passenger travel and gain global economic advantages. Canada's largest airports have expressed an interest in making investments in passenger screening, either through additional workforce or technology innovation, and smaller airports have shown interest in obtaining access to screening services to promote local economic development. In the last two years alone, 10 small airports across Canada have requested screening services.

The proposed amendments in the bill would create a more flexible framework for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, known as CATSA, to provide new or additional screening services on a cost recovery basis. This would enable industry stakeholders to enter into agreements with CATSA to increase access to screening services at small, low-risk airports.

In turn, this would support our efforts to maintain an aviation system that is both secure and cost effective. It would also strengthen

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Canadian communities' competitiveness as they attract new commercial routes.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-49 proposes significant enhancements to increase the safety of the rail sector, too. Once in place, this legislation would build a safer, more secure rail transportation system that Canadians trust.

As a top priority, the legislation would amend the Railway Safety Act to require that railway locomotives be fitted with voice and video recorders. Mandating the installation of the recorders would strengthen rail safety by providing objective data about crew actions leading up to, and during, a rail accident. Beyond that, the requirement would also increase opportunities to mitigate risks and prevent accidents from occurring.

The updated act would not only require companies to install the recorders. It would limit how the recorded data could be used, within strict criteria. For instance, while the Transportation Safety Board would have access to recorded data for post-accident investigations, Transport Canada and railway companies would also have access to the data for proactive safety management, and for following-up on incidents and accidents not investigated by the Transportation Safety Board.

The specific limits on the use of the data are designed to maximize the safety value of this technology while limiting its potential to infringe on employees' privacy rights.

[*English*]

Canada's freight rail system is a cornerstone of our economy. Bill C-49 would strengthen the freight rail policy framework to foster greater transparency, balance, and efficiency in the Canadian rail system. The proposed improvements would provide fair access through stronger remedies for shippers on service and rates, promote increased efficiency of the rail transportation system, encourage long-term investments in the railway network, and deliver improved data on rates and service.

As I committed last fall, fair access measures would allow for reciprocal financial penalties in service-level agreements to ensure that railways are held accountable for service failures. They would improve access to and end the timelines of the Canadian Transportation Agency processes to settle service and rate disputes. The new measures would ensure the agency offers informal dispute resolution options and guidance to shippers. The legislation would also broaden eligibility for rate remedies, benefiting small and medium-sized shippers, and allow an arbitrator's decision to apply for two years instead of only one.

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We would also create a new mechanism called long-haul interswitching. This would be available to all captive shippers in all regions of the country and all sectors. It would introduce competitive alternatives for their traffic and better position them in negotiations for service options and rates. Other measures would modernize the methodology to calculate the maximum revenue entitlement in order to promote long-term investments in the rail system. Among other things, these improvements would better recognize railway investments, including in hopper cars.

The bill would also make it easier for the agency to update regular interswitching rates so that they adequately compensate railways for interswitching costs. As well, Canadian National's single shareholder restrictions would be relaxed from 15% to 25%.

To enhance transparency and level the playing field, the amendments would require large railways to report some performance, service, and rate data relevant to their Canadian operations. Transport Canada would have the authority to publicly report rate trends.

In the context of these advancements for the freight rail system, the short-term measures in the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act would be allowed to sunset as scheduled. With Bill C-49 we are taking important steps to ensure that the right conditions are in place for a successful winter season in the grain handling and transportation system this year and for years to come.

These are not the only ways we propose to improve trade and global markets. Bill C-49 would also amend the Coasting Trade Act to enhance marine transportation as well.

The proposed amendments would allow vessel owners to reposition their owned or leased empty containers between locations in Canada using vessels of any registry. This is something the Shipping Federation of Canada began asking for as far back as 2009. Extending the repositioning of empty containers to all ship owners would support industry's request for greater logistical flexibility and also would help address the ongoing shortage of empty containers for export purposes.

Equally important is Bill C-49's focus on marine-related infrastructure. The legislation proposes amendments to the Canada Marine Act that would allow Canadian port authorities and their wholly owned subsidiaries to access Canada infrastructure bank loans and loan guarantees. As members are aware, the bank would be responsible for investing in key infrastructure projects. Enabling port authorities to access the bank would support investments in key trade-enabling infrastructure, creating the conditions for companies and communities to build, expand, and thrive.

● (2210)

[*Translation*]

I am proud to table Bill C-49, the first legislative step toward making Transportation 2030 a reality. I trust I can count on the support of all parliamentarians to seize its immense potential, and to pass these measures as soon as possible.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I recognize that the air passenger bill of rights is a key part

of the legislation, as highlighted in a tweet that the minister put out on Twitter when he introduced the bill.

In the legislation, the Minister of Transport is being given the authority to set the compensation rates for the air passenger bill of rights. How much does the minister think is an appropriate penalty for a delayed flight? Why is this amount not included in the legislation? Why is the Minister of Transport the only person the Canadian Transportation Agency should consult before setting the compensation regime the government envisions?

● (2215)

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, we will mandate the Canadian Transportation Agency to give us the specifics of the passenger bill of rights.

They will do this by consulting with Canadians, with the airlines, and looking at practices in other countries, so that they can come up with a bill of rights that is not only fair for passengers but also for the air carriers, and that takes into consideration what other countries are doing.

The Canadian Transportation Agency will prepare this, and they will work with Transport Canada to set the final bill of rights, which will be in position in 2018.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech. It is not easy to ask him just one question about an omnibus bill that affects nearly every area of transportation. However, I would like to know more about this air passengers' bill of rights because, not so long ago, when the minister was sitting on this side of the House, he voted in favour of a bill on a passengers' bill of rights.

That bill was introduced by the NDP and contained specific measures in all areas, including cancelled flights, overbooking, wait times on the tarmac, and so on. I therefore expected the minister to build on that bill that he supported when introducing his own passengers' bill of rights. However, there is nothing to his bill of rights. It is completely lacking in substance.

My question is twofold. As a member of the House of Commons, how can I vote for or against something that is not really there, and what does the minister mean when he tells airlines that, in the meantime, he would like them to respect the spirit of the law, which has absolutely no substance?

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**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I simply want to tell my colleague that he will have many opportunities to ask questions when the bill is examined in committee. I hope that we will have many interesting witnesses who will answer our questions.

Of course, we have said from the beginning that the bill would give the Canadian Transportation Agency the mandate to prepare a bill of rights based on consultations. I am not autocratic enough to think that I have all of the answers regarding this bill of rights. Consultations will be held. The Canadian Transportation Agency will do that work and present us with the results of those consultations later this year. That is when we will be able to define the exact parameters of the compensation that my colleague asked about.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to speak on this debate for the transportation modernization bill. I recognize that it deals with many aspects of transportation, reflecting in some cases recommendations from the expert panel on transportation created under the previous government and chaired by David Emerson.

We see approaches to improving passenger experience, quality of experience, and passenger rights on air transit, but all the references to rail are for grain and freight. My question for the minister, before diving into the details of this bill as it relates to movement of goods by rail and movement of people by air, is on whether we have abandoned the movement of people by rail. When will we see a modernization bill to bring VIA Rail into the same status that Amtrak has, with a legislated framework, so that we can have passenger rail for the 21st century?

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, my colleague will know that transport is a vast domain. It covers rail, the marine side, the air side, the movement of cargo and freight, and it also covers people.

I was very careful to point out that Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, is but a first step in transport 2030. I encourage her to read my document, "Transportation 2030", because we touch on all sorts of other things, including the one that she brought up, which is passenger rail.

That is something we are working on. We cannot do everything in one shot, but I will let the member know that we are working on passenger rail.

• (2220)

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the minister on this initiative. I think we have all been horrified by pictures of a doctor being dragged out of a plane against his will when there was an overbooking in the United States, about families being separated on flights in Canada, with children being told they could not fly with their parents, and one member of a family being bumped off a flight.

I have a question for the minister. We all understand that there are maximums in compensation that differ from airline to airline, but will these regulations also consider setting a minimum amount of compensation, as well as the maximums, related to someone being dislodged from a flight?

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Mr. Speaker, the intention is that when we talk about compensation, we will be establishing minimum levels of compensation. In other words, it cannot be below that, though it could certainly be higher. For example, where there is an overbooking situation and there has to be a seat freed, or more than one seat, there may be a certain amount of negotiating that will take place for one passenger to agree to offer a seat to someone else. However, there would be a minimum compensation. The maximum is not at this point something we are going to include in the passenger bill of rights.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we heard a moment ago from the member from the Green Party on the movement of goods by rail. Of course, VIA Rail might be important. If we could perhaps get some of our oil cars off of the rail and into the pipelines, that would be a great start.

Talking specifically to the interswitching, the minister mentioned that the current arrangement is going to be sunsetted. I am wondering if he could speak about what the grain elevator associations and farm groups have said about the changes. They looked at the maps and said this is what they need, and now it looks as though there has been an arbitrary 30-kilometre distance put into this. I am curious about what types of things he has been told by those organizations.

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague I think is referring to the regulated interswitching that has always been in place and which will continue to be in place, for 30 kilometres. Nothing has changed from that point of view. What we have done is extended interswitching to 160 kilometres, with long-haul inter-switching which goes out to 1,200 kilometres and which addresses all captive shippers. The grain industry is extremely important in this country. I know that. I have met with lots of farmers and shippers. It is 10% of what the trains carry. The other 90% very often represents resources that are important to Canadian provinces and communities, but they are captive because they are on the end of one line.

We are extending long-haul interswitching not just to the western provinces, but to all of Canada and to all sectors, so whether it is a forestry product or a mining product that happens to be in a captive shipper situation, they will have better access at more competitive rates. This is the whole plan. We are trying to come up with a long-term solution, not just a solution that will be a Band-Aid for a few years, but something that is long term and applies to all of the sectors. The reaction of the shippers up until now has been positive.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to debate Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, at second reading.

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The bill could simply be renamed the transportation omnibus act for the number of different bills being amended, with many of changes being more than just technical in nature. The Air Canada Public Participation Act, the Canada Transportation Act, the CN Commercialization Act, the Railway Safety Act, the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act, the Coasting Trade Act, the Canada Marine Act, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Competition Act, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the 2009 Budget Implementation Act, and the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act are all being amended.

How this squares with the Liberal election promise not to use omnibus legislation is beyond me. Do not get me wrong, I am not complaining about an omnibus bill, just the fact that the Liberals did and then made a promise they knew they would not keep. Furthermore, when I introduced a motion in transport committee last week calling on the committee to write to the Minister of Transport and his government House leader to ask them to split the bill into the following sections, rail shipping, rail safety, air, and marine, to provide an enhanced and possibly expedited scrutiny, every single Liberal member voted against it without even a single comment as to why.

I found this vote particularly ironic, as it was the Liberal member for Niagara Centre who raised the idea of expediting the passage of the bill in the first place, in order to provide grain farmers with a greater amount of certainty as they negotiate contracts for future shipping seasons.

The more measures that a bill contains, the more time it takes to provide adequate scrutiny. Separating the bill would be the easiest way to facilitate expedited passage, and thus my motion calling on the bill to be split into several parts.

Unfortunately, Liberal members were unwilling to split the bill into these natural divisions. This does not inspire confidence that when the bill eventually does reach committee, the Liberal Party members will be open to any amendments. While Bill C-49 is supposed to be the Minister of Transport's legislative response to the 2015 Canada Transportation Act review led by the Hon. David Emerson, it would appear that what we have before us is a bill that is designed to change the channel from some of the bad news that keeps piling up for the Liberals.

The government's communications strategy for this legislation has overwhelmingly concentrated on the air passenger compensation regime that is being introduced, and not the other very consequential measures. Here is what the Minister of Transport posted on his Twitter feed as he introduced this legislation, "These air passenger rights will ensure that travellers are treated like people, not just a number."

Like many members here, I travel a lot and only have positive things to say about all the employees working for the airlines and at our airports. Of course, on occasion, flights do not go as we hope, but the Minister of Transport appears to be willing to pit passengers against airlines rather than fixing the structural problems in Canada's aviation regime.

This legislation does not spell out what the compensation regime will be, just that there will be one. The bill states that after consulting with only the Minister of Transport, the Canadian Transportation Agency will make regulations concerning carriers' obligations toward passengers. However, for even greater clarity, subsection (2) of proposed section 86.11 states that the Canadian Transportation Agency must comply with any instruction from the minister with regard to setting regulations concerning carriers' obligations to passengers.

What this means is that the Canadian Transportation Agency is tentatively responsible for setting what financial penalties a carrier would have to pay to the passenger in the case of a service breach, unless the minister is dissatisfied with the level of prescribed compensation that the CTA decides is appropriate, in which case he or she can dictate what that level of compensation will be.

It is noteworthy that the agency will, by law, only be allowed to consult with the Minister of Transport concerning the setting of these regulations, and not with consumer advocate groups, airlines, airports, Nav Canada and other stakeholders in the sector.

• (2225)

I do not understand what the purpose of consulting only the minister is. If the Canadian Transportation Agency is to be an arm's-length organization, this legislation clearly diminishes its independence. If the minister will not allow the agency to independently set the parameters of the passenger compensation regime, he should just spell out in legislation what it will be and let members of Parliament and stakeholder groups decide whether this is a good proposal or not.

If this legislation were truly aimed at reducing the cost of travel for the passenger, while increasing service and convenience, the minister would immediately lobby to have the government's carbon tax, which will make every single flight more expensive, withdrawn. He would reform the air passenger security system, which was universally identified as a major irritant for all passengers during the Canada Transportation Act review by all the organizations that participated in the process.

While it would be preferable to have the sections of the bill dealing with air and rail examined as stand-alone pieces of legislation, I can only surmise that the government's complete mismanagement of the House's agenda has led us to the point where an omnibus transportation bill is what we have in front of us today. At least we have finally begun debating something in the transport sector, now that we are two years into the government's mandate. So far, the only achievement the minister has to show in terms of legislation is the act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Let us talk about Bill S-2, an act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act. This was first introduced by the government's representative in the Senate 13 months ago and passed third reading in the Senate on February 2. The minister claimed that Bill S-2 was a priority in his speech to the Montreal Chamber of Commerce in November 2016, yet it has not been touched since.



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On May 12, just days before the introduction of the legislation we are debating today, the Minister of Transport introduced the oil tanker moratorium act, a bill that his own officials conceded would only impact the future development of Canada's oil sands and no other activity in northern British Columbia. Equally concerning about this oil tanker moratorium, which could be renamed the oil pipeline moratorium, is that there is considerable support among first nations on B.C.'s coast for energy development opportunities, but the wishes of these first nations are being ignored. For the Liberals to move forward with this tanker moratorium without properly consulting coastal first nations is extremely hypocritical.

The Liberals go to painstaking lengths to emphasize the amount of consultation they undertake, but it is becoming more and more apparent that their interest in consulting is about being told what they want to hear and not about listening to differing views. If anyone needs further proof that Bill C-48 was introduced only for political purposes, it is that this moratorium has been introduced as a stand-alone bill and not as part of this omnibus package we are debating today.

The Minister of Transport's silence and inaction on critical and time-sensitive transport issues, especially rail transport, is leading to uncertainty for both shippers and the railroads, which both want certainty as they negotiate shipping rates for the season.

That is why over the past several months I have asked many times whether the government intends to renew the sunset measures in Bill C-30 before they expire on August 1, 2017. The response I have been given time and time again is that the government recognizes the urgency to get this done and that legislation is forthcoming. Unfortunately, the Liberals have made a muck of this, and the key measures in Bill C-30 will sunset before any replacement legislation can receive royal assent and become law.

Last week in the transport committee, a Liberal member moved a motion calling on the committee to begin its consideration of this bill, Bill C-49, in September, before the House begins sitting, to expedite the study of the sections of the bill that deal with the shipping of grain. While Conservatives have no objection to considering this legislation in September before the House returns from the summer break, government members fail to realize that our producers needed them to turn their attention to this months ago, as the measures will sunset on August 1 of this year. At best, there will be a two-and-a-half-month gap between when the measures in Bill C-30 sunset and replacement legislation is in place.

• (2230)

By the time this legislation has passed, the majority of contracts for this year will have been negotiated with the law in flux. Because of the government's mismanagement of the legislative agenda, these popular measures will sunset without replacement, and shippers will be the worse off.

This is important to note, because for a combination of reasons, including a lack of rail capacity, preparedness by railways and shippers, weather, and the size of the crop, western Canada's 2013-14 grain crop did not get to market in a timely manner. Consequently, the previous Conservative government introduced Bill C-30, which gave the Canada Transportation Agency the power to allow shippers access to regulated interswitching up to 160

kilometres, mandated that CN and CP both haul at least 500 tonnes of grain per week, and introduced a new definition of adequate and suitable service levels. With this extension, the number of primary grain elevators with access to more than one railroad with the extended interswitching limits increased from 48 to 261.

These measures were met with universal support from the members of the shipping community, because even if they did not use interswitching, they could use it as a tool to increase their negotiating position with the railways, as the shippers knew exactly how much the interswitch portion of the haul would cost them.

At the same time, the government announced that the Canada Transportation Act statutory review would be expedited, and it began a year early to provide long-term solutions to the grain backlog of the 2013-14 shipping season and other problems in the transport sector within Canada. The hon. David Emerson, a former Liberal and Conservative cabinet minister, was tasked with leading the review. This review was completed in the fall of 2015 and was on the Minister of Transport's desk shortly before Christmas. The minister then tabled this report in mid-February 2016 and promised wide consultations on the report. As the key measures of Bill C-30 were going to sunset on August 1, 2016, and parliamentarians were hearing from the shipping community that it would like to see these extended, Parliament voted in June 2016 to extend those provisions for one year.

In the fall of 2016, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities undertook a study of Bill C-30 and held a number of meetings on the merits of these measures and whether they should be allowed to sunset. We were assured that if we lived with this extension, these issues would be dealt with by August 1, 2017.

The vast majority of the testimony heard was supportive of maintaining the 160-kilometre regulated interswitching limit at committee, which is why the committee's first recommendation was the following:

That the Canadian Transportation Agency retain the flexibility provided under the Canada Transportation Act by the Fair Rail For Grain Farmers Act to set interswitching distances up to 160 km, in order to maintain a more competitive operating environment for rail shippers with direct access to only one railway company.

Anyone who has read this bill will know that the government ignored the committee's main recommendation. At some point during this debate, I hope to hear from Liberal members on the transport committee about whether they believe that the government was right to ignore the committee's recommendations, and if so, whether the entire committee study was just a waste of time.

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Basically, what the government is proposing with this legislation is to replace the 160-kilometre interswitching limit with the creation of a new long-haul interswitching tool that would be in effect between Windsor and Kamloops on hauls of up to 1,200 kilometres, or up to 50% of the length of the entire haul. Shippers would be charged the regulated interswitching rate for the first 30 kilometres of the haul and then a Canada Transportation Agency-determined rate, which would be determined on a case-by-case basis based on the price of a similar haul, for the remainder of the distance to the interswitch point. Shippers would only be able to interswitch at the first available interswitch point within the zone.

What the government has done is take a little-used existing remedy, called a competitive line rate, and rename it long-haul interswitching.

● (2235)

Under a competitive line rate, a shipper could apply to the agency to set the amount of the competitive line rate, the designation of the continuous route, the designation of the nearest interchange, and the manner in which the local carrier would fulfill its service obligations. We know from history that this remedy was infrequently used because of the prerequisite that the shipper first reach an agreement with the connecting carrier, and the two main carriers effectively declined to compete with one another through CLRs. What we do not know is what the difference will be at a practical level between this new long-haul interswitching and the existing competitive line rates.

Like competitive line rates, long-haul interswitching is a much more complicated system for shippers to use, and the jury is still out on whether this will achieve the minister's stated objective of improving rail access for captive shippers. When Bill C-30 was first introduced, there was universal support among shippers for the extended interswitching. So far, very few organizations I have spoken to can say that this tool is better.

In conclusion, this much is certain: the key measures in Bill C-30 will be allowed to sunset on August 1, before this legislation receives royal assent. The Liberals have had nearly a full year to get new legislation in place but failed to do so, and shippers will suffer the consequences.

Canada remains one of the most expensive jurisdictions in which to operate an airline, and it is about to become even more so with the imposition of a national carbon tax. This bill does nothing to address the systemic cost issues, which are passed on to passengers, that were identified by the Transportation Act review. As has been the case with almost everything with the current government, optics trump everything, and this bill exemplifies that.

● (2240)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have put this question to the minister, but I did not get the opportunity. I also had the pleasure of serving on the committee with the hon. member. Of course, she participated in the very long, intensive review on rail safety. I am sure she recalls when the minister used to stand in the House and say, "Rail safety is our number one priority", yet that is exactly the measure that is not included at all in this legislation, nor have we seen a single measure tabled in this place to respond to our unanimous report.

What I am deeply troubled by is that the Liberals have hand-picked one of the measures that was highly contentious, which has to do with recorders. There was some concern that this information, if made available to the rail companies, would be used against the employees. However, what they have not dealt with is the issue of rail fatigue, which, according to the workers, is the real concern.

I wonder if the member could speak to whether she shares my concern that we have seen absolutely nothing come forward, apart from this one rather prejudicial measure, to address serious concerns across this country about rail safety.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her question and for the work she did while she was on the transportation committee. I believe she was the member who was pushing for the committee to set in place a timeline for us to conduct the review of Bill C-30 to ensure that we were not bumping up against the deadline that we now seem to be bumping up against.

Definitely, rail safety was one of the first studies we undertook, when we were first elected, as part of our first session.

What is really interesting is that there have been a number of studies and very little action on the studies the committee has undertaken. As the member noted, the minister has stood up many times saying that rail safety is his number one priority. I find it somewhat curious that the ink was barely dry on the government's announcement that it would begin the review of the Railway Safety Act when it included a measure like the LVVR measure in this act, when it was about to launch a review of the Railway Safety Act. I do not know if this is by design or default, but it seems a somewhat incoherent approach to all matters in the transportation file.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of her speech the member was referencing all of the different transportation aspects the bill touches on. Knowing that we have an integrated transportation network within Canada and we are moving toward a transportation 2030 integrated strategy, is there one type of transportation that you would like to see removed from this discussion, such as air transportation?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I would like to remind hon. members to speak through the Speaker.

The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I think I pointed out at the beginning of my speech that what we have in front of us is an omnibus bill. We actually tried, in committee, to encourage the members to consider breaking out the different modes of transportation so that we could actually study them more effectively, and in fact, expedite those measures that are in Bill C-49, which were meant to replace the measures that were in Bill C-30.

My answer is absolutely not. However, I think that we could have taken a more systematic approach and not had all of these measures included in an omnibus bill, which is probably not going to get the due consideration it needs.

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• (2245)

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things we were talking about is that on August 1, the last legislation we had is going to be sunseting. However, I think something that people do not recognize is that the start of the crop year is August 1. That is when contract people are working hard to make sure they have their contracts and everything is set up with the rail providers. We now have this uncertainty because we are going to have this gap.

The other point, which I had mentioned to the minister in my previous question, is the difference between the 30 kilometres they are setting up and the 160 kilometres that has been analyzed as we have gone from 48 to 261 sites. It was done for a reason. There was a reason why the 160 kilometres was there, and this was the discussions that had taken place with various shippers and other groups.

On the whole, the legislation is going to weaken the shipper protections against railways and especially the protections for grain farmers in western Canada. I wonder if the member would comment on that particular position at this moment.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, I know this is something that is very near and dear to the member's heart.

Coming from Alberta, knowing that the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act was actually addressing issues that grain farmers in the Prairies were experiencing, I can tell members that what we have been hearing from stakeholders, as they have begun to review the legislation and as they have begun to take these two pieces of legislation and compare them, is that they are confused. They do not understand exactly what the changes are meant to accomplish. They believe that the devil is in the details.

While they continue to look at this, they continue to highlight the fact that these measures in Bill C-30 are sunseting on August 1. There will be a gap. That is why we asked the committee to consider calling upon the minister and the government House leader to break out at least the measures in Bill C-49 that would address the measures in Bill C-30 so that we could at least address the concerns of our shippers and our producers as they are bumping up against that August 1 deadline.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I want to say what a pleasure it is to work with her on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. We agree more often than not on both the form and content of the bills that come before us.

I would like to ask her opinion on something very specific. This bill lacks substance, as I said earlier. It is airy-fairy. Many of the measures in it are so vague that we cannot tell whether they will be relevant or effective. I want to share just one example. The minister is increasing the foreign ownership limit for Canadian air carriers from 25% to 49%. He says this will make the market more competitive and result in cost savings for consumers.

That increase from 25% to 49% is from the Emerson report and was stuck into the bill with no explanation. There is even a University of Manitoba study showing that there is no connection between increasing foreign ownership and lower fares for consumers.

Is the government just making stuff up?

• (2250)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate working with the member on committee. As he said, often we find ourselves on the same page when it comes to our responses to the governing members' comments and initiatives.

My response would be that the member is absolutely right. When we take a look at the measures that are included in Bill C-49, for some there are absolutely no real explanation for why they are included, except to perhaps state that they were part of the Emerson report. This is a report that the minister has had in his hands since December 2015.

As committee members, we thought that we were going to be taking a systematic review of that report and dealing with all of the recommendations that Mr. Emerson and his panel had come forward with. We have done none of that. Instead, in the last couple of weeks, what we have gotten is an omnibus bill that has a couple of issues chosen that the minister wants to highlight, rather than a systematic approach to looking at the issues within our transportation sector.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would say that I am deeply disappointed in many ways, as I rise to speak to Bill C-49.

First, the bill was sponsored by the minister whose name I must not mention in the House, but who was an astronaut in his previous career. I admit that I have a virtually unbounded admiration for all Canadians who pursue a career as an astronaut. They are truly remarkable people with extraordinary resumé.

That is why when the Minister of Transport, a former astronaut—once an astronaut, always an astronaut, I imagine—told me in the House that he was studying the bill, that answer had tremendous value to me. I recognize him for the intellectual that he is, and I told myself that his reflections would surely bear fruit.

When I heard him answer that he was thinking about the relevance of the high-frequency train, for example, at first I was motivated and awaited his response impatiently. When the minister told us, month after month, that he was studying the transportation issues in Bill C-49, I told myself that the bill he finally tabled would be a bang-up piece of legislation.

For example, we are now awaiting the results of an inquiry into the events at Lake Saint-Pierre. I am thinking that will also be extraordinary.

However, on this rare occasion where the minister introduces something in the House, Bill C-49 in this case, I must say that my disappointment is as strong as my expectations used to be.

*Government Orders*

What do we find in this legislation, into which the minister has invested more than 18 months of study, thinking, reading and, I expect, exhaustive consultation? We find three kinds of measures.

I would say that the first category is made up of empty shells and the second, of questionable measures. The term “questionable” does not necessarily mean that they are bad. Some are definitely bad and should be removed. Others may deserve some amendments or would require a better argument to show how they may deliver on the promised Eldorado.

The bill does include a few good measures, which are sadly lost in a sea of measures trying to tackle any and all possible aspects of transportation. As a result, as happens too often in this House, we are asked to cast only one vote and to swallow a lot of nonsense in order to support the few measures that may make a difference. As my colleague rightly said earlier, this bill should be split in two.

Let us then focus on these three categories. I will try to give examples that are concrete enough to see what things could look like. Let us see first what has probably been, in the media, the most high-profile element of the minister's presentation on Bill C-49, the new passenger bill of rights. To me, it is the perfect example of an empty shell.

I said earlier, in a question for the minister, that in the previous Parliament, the NDP had introduced a passenger rights bill, which the minister voted for. The bill was complete and skilfully written. It was the result of much hard work. Let me give just one example to see what that bill looked like.

First, let us talk about cancelled flights, something that probably happened to each one of us. Clause 10 of the NDP bill provided for a reimbursement or re-routing. The clause reads as follows:

The air carrier shall offer without charge to every passenger to whom this section applies the choice between

(a) reimbursement of the full cost of the ticket at the price at which it was bought, for the part or parts of the journey not made—and for the part or parts already made if the flight is no longer serving any purpose in relation to the passenger's original travel plan—together with, when relevant, a return flight to the first point of departure at the earliest opportunity;

• (2255)

Furthermore, there was money allocated to all of that. We were therefore talking about flight cancellations and flight delays, with very specific and well-thought-out measures. We were also talking about the rights of passengers who, sometimes, have to wait long minutes, if not hours, on the tarmac because the plane cannot take off for some reason and who, at this time, have no rights. We were talking about passengers being denied boarding, their rights to be refunded or redirected, and their right to information. In short, this bill already contained all the necessary measures.

What does Bill C-49 propose? With regard to flight cancellations, we are going to ask Transport Canada to make proposals. With regard to flight delays, we are going to have to wait for Transport Canada's proposals. With regard to passengers' rights, including on the tarmac, Transport Canada will probably conduct a study on this. We realize that the list is getting longer and that, right now, air passengers have no idea what their rights will be under Bill C-49.

As we say back home, the minister has simply kicked the can down the road, but one day, he will have to deal with the can. The government is going to ask me and all members of Parliament to vote on that according to our conscience? Should I be for or against the total lack of substance? It seems to me like a figment of my imagination or an abstract idea on which I cannot vote. If the minister has not finished his bill, he should do his homework first, then present us with his bill later.

In fact, I find it rather puzzling that the minister asks airlines to comply with the spirit of the law while we are studying Bill C-49 and while the transportation agency will be drafting regulations that the minister could well reject, which would delay the process even more.

Could someone explain to me the spirit of an empty shell? I simply cannot understand it.

The foreign ownership limit for air carriers, which I asked about earlier, will increase from 25% to 49%. What is this decision based on? It is based on a recommendation of the Emerson report, which does not show beyond any doubt, or even with some doubt, the relevance of this measure when it comes to market competitiveness and the results or positive impact that it could have for passengers in terms of air ticket costs, for example.

A study by the University of Manitoba shows the exact opposite. It shows, beyond any doubt, that an increase in the foreign ownership of a Canadian airline cannot be linked to an effect on airfares.

Again, why is the government introducing this measure? I do not know. Bill C-49 is nebulous. I do not think we will be able to solve this issue given the short amount of time that will be available to the committee to study a bill as large as this one. There is another serious problem here, namely the Liberal bulldozer. The Liberals dragged their feet on introducing measures, that is, if there are even any in the bill, and they are now trying to rush the bill through.

I would like to come back to the agreements between airlines, which the minister also talked about. Again, like we have seen many times before, the legislation enhances the powers of the minister. I must say that every time that happens, a little light goes on. It tells me that we should be worried about what is happening. What powers does the minister want, and what good comes from it?

Basically, these joint venture agreements are nothing but a type of partial merger that is approved when rules of competition continue to apply. That is why entities like the Competition Bureau, which is the competition tribunal, exist.

• (2300)

Members will recall the joint venture between Air Canada and United Continental Holdings. These two airlines asked to merge their operations for 15 air routes. At the time, the Competition Bureau approved five of them, and the situation has not changed since then.

*Government Orders*

That means that even if that is against the rules of competition, in the public interest—another concept that is not defined in bill C-49—the minister could muzzle the Competition Tribunal, and authorize that joint venture for the 15 air routes. Again, there is a lot of uncertainty, and I am unsure as to how to vote on this bill, for as long as I do not understand its implications.

As for the Coasting Trade Act, maybe members will recall that during the elections, liberals had promised not to touch it. That is another example of a broken promise that liberals intend to be flexible on, circumvent, or, more specifically, break.

Therefore, what is being proposed in the bill? We are now told that the repositioning of containers, which was allowed only for Canadian shipowners, will now be permitted for ships registered in other countries. One could say this is meant to promote a competitive market, but we all know that foreign shipowners do not necessarily have to follow the same rules and the same requirements regarding their staff as Canadian shipowners. Chances are that we will never see what I would call fair competition.

Dredging and the carriage of bulk commodities will be allowed between the ports of Montreal and Halifax for ships registered in a member state of the European Union. I suppose this is meant for the government to implement the agreement it is about to sign with the European Union.

However, before making such a public statement, one should specify what the reciprocal measures are to look like. Will Canadian ships be allowed to carry bulk shipments on the other side of the Atlantic? The bill does not say anything about this. The law would also be amended to allow ports to obtain financing from the famous infrastructure bank, which everyone talks about because it would not serve anybody's interest, except the Liberal Party's wealthy friends.

Let me remind everyone that the infrastructure bank is supposed to finance projects worth \$100 million or more. Therefore, for an ordinary port like the one in Trois-Rivières, I am not sure that bank is the finding of the century. This is part of the measures that are not very well explained in the program.

As far as the Railway Safety Act is concerned, it would have been interesting to see a clear and precise provision in the bill ensuring that a rail bypass was built for our fellow citizens in Lac-Mégantic. Instead, we are being told again that corporations' interests will prevail over the workers' interests. Among other things, railway companies will have to equip their locomotives with voice and video recorders.

● (2305)

First of all, if the goal is to give the Transportation Safety Board, or TSB, additional tools so it can investigate after an accident and make sure that whatever caused it would never happen again, one could say that the voice and video recorders are the equivalent of the black box aboard airplanes and might be acceptable. The point where things become unacceptable is where railway companies have access to these audio and video recordings for, perhaps, security reasons, but also potentially to monitor the work of their own employees. It bears asking whether such a measure, which enables employers to watch employees through a camera lens all day long,

violates the employees' right to privacy. This question has to be asked.

It is especially important to ask how having a voice and video recording device in a locomotive would somehow resolve the issue of conductor fatigue. That is a problem that has absolutely not been resolved. Ostensibly for security reasons, we have completely side-stepped the main issue and the main risk factor, namely human fatigue. It is absolutely unbelievable; so much for that.

The previous speaker spoke at length about grain transportation. There is a glimmer of hope in that section of Bill C-49 that could alleviate some of the long-standing concerns that producers have and potentially address the issue of standards sunseting on August 1. I have a really hard time understanding this. Given the time necessary to give a bill royal assent, even in a streamlined fashion, I fail to see how royal assent could come down from the Senate like a dove from the sky before August 1.

There an urgency about these measures, and a lot of them seem interesting, but they cannot be demonstrated, and we do not have the time to consult with key stakeholders to see if, for example, new provisions about interswitching fit their needs, and if the new ways to calculate the guaranteed minimum income meet their expectations. There are several.

I want to talk about two things. It is clear from what I am trying to explain, and will not have the time to finish, that supporting this bill at second reading will be very difficult for me. That being said, even if I vote against Bill C-49 at second reading, I will make sure to work as hard as possible in committee to propose amendments to strengthen it. We could even support the bill at third reading if the Liberals can show its usefulness.

For this purpose, in the interest of consistency and to prioritize issues of grain transportation and postpone studying the bill's other sections that do not involve such tight deadlines, I seek unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion: That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts, tabled in Parliament on May 16, 2017, be amended by removing the following clauses: (a) clauses 3 to 13 and 22 to 59, related to grain transportation; that the clauses mentioned in section (a) of this motion do compose Bill C-51, an act to change temporary agreements related to grain transportation; that Bill C-51 be deemed read a first time and printed; that the order for second reading of the said bill provide for the referral to the Standing Committee on Transport; that Bill C-49 retain the status on the Order Paper that it had prior to the adoption of this order; that Bill C-49 be reprinted as amended; and that the law clerk and parliamentary counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary to give effect to this motion.

*Government Orders*

• (2310)

That is the motion, and it is a simple one. It seeks to remove from Bill C-49 all clauses related to grain transportation, so that we can quickly study the legislation in time for the August 1st deadline. We would look at the remaining clauses later.

That is both my proposal and my conclusion.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, since the bill seeks to amend the Canada Transportation Act.

My question is about protecting the rights of air passengers. Does the member think that these rights are adequately protected when airlines sell more tickets than there are seats available?

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

The events we have witnessed over the past few weeks undoubtedly made an impression. I had hoped that Bill C-49 would feature a clause setting out clear, straightforward rights for passengers who are “victims” of overbooking.

We are being told that Transport Canada will submit a proposal to the minister sometime over the coming months, a proposal which the minister will be free to accept or refuse. If he were to refuse it, the question of passengers' rights would be delayed even further. As I mentioned, when it comes to the passengers' bill of rights, Bill C-49 is an empty shell.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the problems the hon. member saw in the legislation.

He mentioned the use of equipment for recording audio and video, and that this had some problems around it. The Railway Safety Act is very specific that this equipment is only to be used under prescribed circumstances defined within the act, and that rail equipment needs to have that equipment on board for it to be operated within the limits of the legislation.

The Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act says how the information that is collected would be used, how it would be restricted, and who would have access to that information.

Is there part of this that is not getting interpreted or is part of that still causing a problem with the hon. member?

• (2315)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I would be curious to know who the minister consulted on that specific subject. I have a feeling that workers' groups were not consulted.

If such a recording device were available to the TSB to help them get to the bottom of what caused a particular accident, I would not necessarily be against it. What really bothers me is what little we are doing to help prevent accidents from happening in the first place.

Where are the provisions in Bill C-49 that would make it so that accidents are not recorded on audio or video tape because they never happened in the first place? Where are the provisions around train conductor fatigue? Where are the provisions that will prevent accidents from happening or at least reduce their occurrence as much as possible?

Audio and video recording devices will not prevent accidents. They only allow us to understand what happened after the fact and maybe help us reduce or prevent the same type of accident. However, nothing in Bill C-49 addresses the issue of train conductor fatigue.

[*English*]

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his hard work on this bill and for raising many cogent points. He did not have the opportunity of participating in the rail safety review, although he is well aware of those issues since he comes from Quebec.

A serious concern that was raised during the previous review on rail safety was regulatory capture. That was one reason that there was unanimous agreement that the government needed to expedite a review of rail safety. The concern was that Transport Canada appeared to be, by and large, from what we looked at, captured by the sector. Now the minister is suggesting that the passenger bill of rights will be developed by Transport Canada. There seems to be a pattern of reverting back to an entity of which there are suspicions that there is regulatory capture.

I wonder if my colleague could speak to that and to his concern that there has not been enough consultation. Perhaps the government should come forward with a clearer idea of what it plans to do in initiatives like the passenger bill of rights, which our former colleague spoke to almost every day in the House when he was elected.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Tabling a bill without proper consultation strikes me as disrespectful. Consulting stakeholders before tabling a bill is the sensible thing to do. Committees can also hold consultations while they are studying bills, that is okay too. However, when the government says that it is going to hold new consultations on top of studies that have already been done and those that will be done by the committee, it feels like overkill. I do not think that there are so many stakeholders interested in transportation modernization, even if we consider every mode of transportation, that a single round of consultations cannot cover all of them in one go.

*Government Orders***TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT**

My colleague already did all that when she sat on the Standing Committee on Transport. The minister did it as well, and the Standing Committee on Transport will do it again for Bill C-49, and the minister is talking about further consultations.

Are we going to fall for that or will we finally accept that this is all about kicking the can down the road to buy time?

• (2320)

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent work.

In the Eastern Townships, we are mostly affected by the issue of rail safety, and one of our main concerns revolves around the regulation of this specific area of transportation.

I was wondering if my colleague could comment on the presence or absence of measures that deal with the concerns of my fellow citizens in Sherbrooke regarding the number of operators per train. Does the bill address the problem raised in the wake of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy? The lack of oversight is also an issue. Trains are sometimes left unsupervised, without any operator around. Sadly, as was the case in Lac-Mégantic, these trains can go out of control.

There is also the issue of the kinds of materials transported by rail and whether the municipalities can have access to information in real time to deal to accidents. All of these questions regarding rail safety have been raised.

Could my colleague talk about the presence or absence of measures to respond to these concerns, in particular those that feature in the Transportation Safety Board of Canada report that was released after the Lac-Mégantic accident?

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Sherbrooke for his question. To paraphrase the minister, “Railway safety is my first priority.” However, according to Bill C-49, air transportation is also his first priority, and so is maritime transportation. Actually, every mode of transportation is the minister’s first priority.

Bill C-49 is not exactly ripe with concrete measures designed to prevent tragedies like the one that happened or make sure nothing like it ever happens again.

The only provisions related to rail safety involve audio-video recording devices that are of no help at all in the wake of a catastrophic event. These are among the many questions that we will have to ask in committee to improve the bill and make sure that the opposition does its job and the government’s job by making significant amendments to Bill C-49.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PARIS AGREEMENT**

## NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to Government Business No. 15, I wish to give notice that at the next sitting of the House a minister of the crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comments, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Guelph.

In commenting on Bill C-49, I will be focusing on the liberalization of the international rules of Canadian airlines.

Canadian travellers and their experiences are top of mind for our government. During consultations conducted by the Minister of Transport, we asked Canadian travellers for their feedback and they were clear. They wanted lower-cost air travel, more opportunities for leisure and business travel, and they wanted to see Canada become a more attractive travel destination for visitors. They asked for long-term sustainable competition, which would allow for the introduction of additional air services, improved air connectivity, and perhaps, above all, more choice. The government has listened and is committed to achieving tangible improvements to the traveller experience.

As a result of the feedback we received, a number of proposals have been introduced in Bill C-49 to help improve the traveller experience in Canada.

For example, the government intends to liberalize international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers. What does this mean for Canadian travellers? Let me begin by briefly describing this initiative.

Like most countries, Canada limits international ownership and control of domestic air carriers. Under the Canada Transportation Act, non-Canadians currently cannot possess more than 25% of the voting shares of a Canadian carrier. Additionally, Canadian air carriers must also be controlled by Canadians, which means they may not be subject to controlling influence by international investors.

Limits on foreign ownership and control of air carriers are the norm around the world. For instance, in the United States, the limit is 25%, while the European Union, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand allow up to 49%, and Japan allows 33.3%. Limits vary depending on the circumstances of each country and the circumstances of each region.

However, Canada’s current ownership limits may be acting as a barrier to new services and enhanced competition. Two prospective ultra low-cost carriers, Canada Jetlines and Enerjet, have already applied for and received exemptions to the current limits on international ownership from the Minister of Transport. Both companies successfully argued that under the current 25% limit, there was insufficient risk capital in the Canadian market to support the launch of new services.

*Government Orders*

Reflecting on this reality and the Canada Transportation Act review recommendations, the government is proposing changes that would allow international investors to own up to 49% of the voting shares of Canadian air carriers by introducing legislation that would amend the act and all other relevant acts.

As mentioned earlier, countries have different approaches to international ownership of air carriers, and our government wants to ensure that Canadian carriers compete on a level playing field. To protect the competitiveness of our air sector and support connectivity, no single international investor or any combination of international air carriers will be allowed to own more than 25%.

The direct impact of higher levels of international investment is that Canadian air carriers would have access to a wider pool of risk capital. This would allow air carriers to be better funded and could allow new carriers, which are otherwise not able to find sufficient risk capital, to enter the Canadian market.

New carriers, including ultra low-cost carriers offering extremely competitive prices, are expected to bring more competition into the entire Canadian air travel sector. This could in turn reduce the cost of air transportation and open new markets to Canadian consumers and shippers.

• (2325)

Small markets currently underserved by existing carriers could also benefit from services by new carriers. For instance, airports in smaller cities that currently offer services to a very limited number of destinations could benefit from the addition of new services, since we know that ultra-low-cost carriers use these smaller airports as their hubs. All of this could lead to more choice when purchasing an airline ticket; more travel destinations for all travellers, including those from smaller cities; and lower prices for Canadian travellers. Additionally, there could also be benefits for airports and suppliers and the entire country as more jobs and more prosperity are added to the Canadian economy.

To finish, let me underscore that the experience of Canadian air travellers is a great priority for the Government of Canada. We know that it is also a priority for Canadians. This is why we have proposed to increase international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers. If this initiative is implemented, we believe it could significantly improve the travel experience for all Canadians. Once in place, it could also help lower prices, support increased competition among air carriers, provide more choice to Canadians when it comes to purchasing an airline ticket, and ultimately improve service and connectivity for Canadian travellers.

• (2330)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his contribution to the debate on the bill.

As was explained earlier, parliamentarians are being asked to approve a bill containing an air passengers' bill of rights that is not defined. The only information we have are a few quotes by the minister here and there to try to explain it, but in the bill, the air passengers' bill of rights is an empty shell.

How can the member explain that parliamentarians are asked to support a bill of rights without knowing what it will contain? We have been talking about it for a long time.

In the past, one of my NDP colleagues proposed a bill of rights that was well-defined. Almost two years after taking office, the Liberal government has still not defined its own bill of rights. It is always putting it off. What will air passengers' rights be?

How can my colleague explain that parliamentarians are asked to approve or reject a bill of rights that has no content?

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It is very important for the government to have a more competitive air transportation system in which air passengers have more choices. If the air transportation system is more competitive, Canadians will have more rights to decide what they want to do. Let us think, for example, of a family that wants to take a two or three week vacation somewhere. Changing the rules will mean more choices for Canadians. That is very important. Airlines must have the ability to do that. I am completely in favour of making those changes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy sitting on the agriculture committee with the hon. member.

I am going to go back a few years. Before politics I was on the advisory board of the local airport in Waterloo, YKF. We were trying to attract small air carriers to a smaller community to go to other smaller communities, communities that the larger airlines would never service, communities that we could not get the larger airlines into even if we wanted to because of the cost of their operations versus the cost of the other lower-cost airlines that we are talking about in the bill tonight.

When we talk about choice, there is choice between airlines, but there is also choice at the local level in getting air service into communities. Could the member expand on how this could help rural Canada?



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido:** Mr. Speaker, we are a vast country, and as a government we tend to focus on the big cities. Though not exactly in my riding of Steveston—Richmond East, YVR is a little north. The focus tends to be exclusively on YVR, but that ought not to be the case. By increasing the limits on international funding, the bill allows the smaller centres, like Kelowna, Prince Rupert, all over B. C., and all across the country, the opportunity to expand and develop as hubs. They give choice for folks to travel wherever they want to go. I think this is a welcomed improvement on our transportation system.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today to Bill C-49, which proposes amendments to the Canada Transportation Act to advance the efficiency and competitiveness of our freight rail system. This is especially important to Guelph, which is home to one of Canada's three federally chartered railways.

The Guelph Junction Railway was established in 1886 by a special act of the federal government to foster economic growth in Guelph and in the surrounding communities. The City of Guelph has owned the railway since 1908. The GJR operates 38.6 kilometres of track that runs from Guelph Junction near Campbellville, Ontario, to Guelph's northwest industrial park. It is a strategic line that runs between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway.

Canadian exporters today have the advantage of the lowest freight rates in the world, even lower than in the United States, and a track record of significant investment by the railways that is essential for keeping these rates low in the future. However, even the strongest system has room for improvement, and we have heard concerns from both shippers and railways through our consultation process. We have heard in particular about system bottlenecks and other constraints that slow the movement of our goods. We have heard about delays in shipping that can affect our nation's reputation for reliability, and about regulations that dampen investment in the network to everyone's detriment.

Canada's rail system is the backbone of our export trade. It moves our goods to destinations across the country, to the United States, and for export overseas. The conditions we establish now, in 2017, will be essential for our nation's long-term growth and prosperity.

Following extensive consultations, our government is proposing new measures that would lay the groundwork for future success.

The bill would promote greater efficiency and investment in the system for the benefit of all Canadians. First, the bill proposes a new competitive access tool for shippers that would allow them to obtain better options for service and rates. This new tool, long-haul interswitching, would allow a shipper served by only one railway to access a competing railway at a rate and on service terms set by the Canadian Transportation Agency. Long-haul interswitching has been designed to meet the needs of captive shippers across a wide range of sectors: grain, forestry, and mining just to name a few. It would apply at a distance of 1,200 kilometres or more to ensure that some of our most remote shippers could benefit.

By providing competition between railways, this measure would improve system efficiency in moving goods to market, and at the same time, railways would be fairly compensated for their services

and for the cost of maintaining infrastructure. The agency would set the rates under this measure based on comparable traffic. This would help prevent the risk that railways might under-invest or even close their lines due to lack of revenue.

As a part of this, we would allow extended interswitching in the prairie provinces to sunset as planned on August 1. Many members will recall that this measure was adopted in 2014 under the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act in response to the unique challenges in the grain handling and transportation system at that time and in that season.

Most challenges no longer exist, and extended interswitching is problematic in many respects. It only applies up to 160 kilometres and only in the prairie provinces. It does not cover other shippers in Canada who have told us about railway service issues. Its rates are far too low to compensate railways for moving the traffic, which would erode investment over time. A key beneficiary of this measure is not the shipper community but the American railway, the railway that scoops traffic away from Canadian railways but makes comparatively little investment in the Canadian network.

Long-haul interswitching is a far better tool as it would apply across sectors and across regions of Canada.

● (2335)

The grain sector would be far better off, as all captive grain shippers would have access to this competitive tool, not just those falling within a specific zone. The railways would be compensated appropriately to ensure that the system runs smoothly and grain moves to market effectively. The proposed new measure is also being carefully structured to minimize the risk of American railways unfairly taking traffic.

Many members will recall that the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act also imposed minimum volumes of grain to be moved by the railways. In our consultations, we have heard that this had negative effects. It benefited specific shippers to the detriment of others. It was good for the large companies, but not for the farmers. More importantly, the unique challenges of 2014, and that growing season, no longer exist. For these reasons, the volume requirements would be allowed to sunset as planned on August 1.

*Government Orders*

Our government recognizes the importance of moving grain and other commodities efficiently to market. Greater transparency on how well the system is working is obviously critical to efficiency. That is why Bill C-49 would require railways to report publicly every year on their plans to move grain and to manage weather-related disruptions. They would also need to report service and performance metrics that help them measure how the system is doing. The agency would have clear new authorities to hold an inquiry into any emerging issue at the minister's request. These measures would help all parties to keep track of emerging problems and work together to find solutions before the crisis point hits.

Importantly, this bill would provide shippers with the ability to maintain reciprocal financial penalties in service agreements. Applying penalties for service failures would encourage the most efficient service possible. Our rail system can only flourish within the right regulatory framework. To promote system efficiency, the bill would also modernize the Canada Transportation Act. For example, it would update the insolvency regime for railways, which dates back to 1903 and cannot address the complexity of modern business arrangements.

The railway industry must invest significantly in the network to keep it running safely and smoothly. That is why this bill also proposes measures to promote continued investment. For example, it would loosen shareholder restrictions on CN Railway that have been in place since it was privatized in 1995.

Bill C-49 would also fix problems with the maximum revenue entitlement, which caps the revenue per tonne that CN, CP, and Guelph Junction can earn for moving western grain. I just threw in Guelph Junction. It would fairly credit their investments in the network, and encourage them to obtain new modern hopper cars. It would also promote the movement of grain by containers, which is an innovative way to provide service and extra capacity at peak periods when the system is full. Again, this would apply across all regions of Canada, including Guelph.

Together, these amendments would achieve the goals of a competitive, efficient freight rail system, a system in which commercial forces drive efficiency but legislative backstops are in place to ensure that the system is fair, balanced, and transparent, a system in which the conditions are right for low rates, future investment, and future success.

I urge colleagues to adopt Bill C-49 as quickly as possible so that we can serve our farm community.

● (2340)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech on grain transportation in Canada, which is an extremely important issue. He is saying that this part of the bill is very important. My colleague from Trois-Rivières has just moved a motion to divide the bill so as to prioritize grain transportation and to immediately send the bill to committee so it can be passed as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, when my colleague asked for unanimous consent, several nays were heard from the side of the House where he sits.

Therefore, I find it hard to reconcile the priority aspect of this part of the bill that my colleague talked about in his speech with the fact that the Liberals have completely refused to immediately deal with this issue at the transport committee so the bill can be passed as soon as possible.

There is indeed an important deadline, specifically August 1, 2017. How can he reconcile that? The Liberals opposed this perfectly reasonable motion. We were not playing procedural games. The goal was merely to speed up the process for this part of the bill.

How does the member explain that some nays were heard from his side of the House, considering he just said how important this part of the bill is?

● (2345)

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Mr. Speaker, I hope I can comment sufficiently on the question from the member for Sherbrooke.

Bill C-30 really looked at grain. It was looking at a bumper crop situation and it had to do something. It was really a Band-Aid solution that focused on the grain market.

In the case of today's market and what we propose in Bill C-49, we would also be handling lumber. We are looking at softwood lumber being an issue in the United States. We are looking at new markets in Asia. How do we get lumber to either coast, and a lot of it? Lumber would be something that we would want to address. In the case of mining, resources coming out of the ground, how do we get that efficiently to market? How do we get auto parts to market in southwest Ontario?

It is really more than just a Band-Aid solution for grain. We need a comprehensive solution that is part of an integrated transportation strategy. Bill C-49 addresses that need.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to confess that on the interswitching piece of the legislation, the hon. member for Guelph might be able to further explain how that would deal with the efficient allocation of rail to grain shipments so it reaches destinations in a timely way.

I certainly remember in December of 2013 when Vancouver Island was two days away from being completely out of grain to be milled for livestock to keep the livestock of Vancouver Island farmers fed. It was a very desperate situation. They ended up organizing truck fleets. Of course, that increased the price of getting grain to the mills. The mills were normally competitors, but they were actually pooling what grain they had to share it to ensure that everybody could still produce what they could to get it to the livestock. It was a desperate situation that caught the government off guard. It would not have happened if we had the Wheat Board.

*Government Orders*

I wonder if the interswitching proposals in the bill will really give us the oversight and the ability to organize rail so we match up when grain needs to get to market with available freight shipments.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Mr. Speaker, the long haul switching looks at a couple of things. We have mentioned a 1,200 kilometre limit, but also it would be able to break off up to 50% of the haul in situations where that needed to be done, something like the emergency the hon. member described.

Each shipment would be negotiated. Therefore, it is important, when we look at the LHI strategy, that each circumstance would be included in the negotiations for each shipment rather than a one size fits all. It is integrated, it covers all types of equipment, and it is flexible.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska has the floor.

I remind the hon. member that he has 10 minutes before the expiry of the time provided today for the consideration of the bill, but he will have 10 more minutes the next time Bill C-49 is before the House.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thought I would only have 10 minutes, but it sounds like I will have 20. I will try not to bore you too much and close off nicely this long day that the Liberals have granted us.

The subject of today's debate is the transportation modernization bill. The Liberals have proposed this transportation bill—an omnibus bill, I might add. Bill C-49 establishes new rights for air passengers and liberalizes international ownership restrictions for Canadian air carriers; enables the Minister of Transport to consider and approve joint ventures by two or more airlines; updates the Canadian freight system; requires railways to install audio-video recorders in locomotives; enables the Governor in Council to require large railways to provide rate, service and performance data; and amends the Canada Marine Act to allow port authorities to access Canada infrastructure bank loans. I will focus on that last aspect in a few minutes.

I am saying all this to show how huge this part of the bill is. Unfortunately, we will have little time to discuss it. This part is hidden in an omnibus bill. The government has found a way to muzzle us so that we cannot point out the flaws in this bill.

The Emerson report is a study of the Canada Transportation Act that was led by the Hon. David Emerson. The study was launched on June 25, 2014 to address a variety of changing conditions and challenges, especially in the grain transportation industry across the Prairies.

Liberals tabled this report on February 25, 2016. Then, they launched a new process because the work done by the Hon. David Emerson was not enough for them. This means that today we have very little time to discuss this issue. The bill was introduced after 18 months of work. It built on the work done by the previous government and contained 60 recommendations to deal with a variety of changing conditions and challenges in Canada's transportation industry.

Unfortunately, the Liberals decided to launch another consultation process, and are only now introducing another bill. We will study it to make sure it strikes the right balance between the industry and consumers rights. That is the thorough work we, the opposition parties, will do together to try and support the government, who needs a lot of help implementing structuring bills for all Canadians.

This bill is supposed to amend the Canada Transportation Act but surreptitiously empowers the mysterious Canada infrastructure bank. This particular clause can easily be overlooked, and yet it raises many questions. We are not even sure why this infrastructure bank is being created in the first place.

That is what I want to speak to in the House tonight. The infrastructure bank is funded with taxpayers' money to the tune of \$35 billion. Those same citizens will have to guarantee these \$35 billion if foreign investors fail to bring projects to fruition. Thus, it will be the citizens taking the risks. The Liberals are putting their infrastructure bank in place for all of their friends around the world, those foreign investors our Prime Minister likes to visit outside of the country.

The top infrastructure bank official said it was created to underwrite funding for carefully planned, complex projects.

“Underwrite” means that if someone defaults on a loan, the underwriter is responsible for the debt.

In this case, Canadians taxpayers will assume all of the risk for the Liberals' bank venture. Considering how they are managing the deficit, we have every reason to be concerned about how they will manage the \$35 billion if that is really how the bank was set up.

I would like to tell the House the story of the infrastructure bank.

● (2350)

In October 2015, the Liberals promised small deficits on the order of \$10 billion and announced the creation of an independent infrastructure bank. We know what happened next. In November 2016, the highly anticipated bank was announced. At a meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, I asked the minister where the money would come from. All I got was radio silence. There was no response in the budget.

The next day, I again asked where the money would come from, and I was told that the government would take the \$15 billion out of the infrastructure program that was supposed to help all Canadian municipalities.

The minister decided to take that money and put it in the infrastructure bank to finance projects worth more than \$100 million in the municipalities.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Now we get to the really good part because a few weeks later, I had an opportunity to ask the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities questions about who would really benefit from these \$100-million-plus projects they wanted to fund through the infrastructure bank.

We are wondering about this because most municipalities cannot afford projects of \$100 million or more except maybe Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. We get the feeling that the government has diverted \$15 billion that should have been given to all Canadian municipalities to support infrastructure projects and put it in a new infrastructure bank that it created for its little friends. The government is still trying to figure out what kind of projects can really be funded under this program.

In November, December, January, February, March, April, and May, we asked the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to name a single project of \$100 million or more that could be carried out in Canada's small or medium-sized municipalities. Every time, we got complete radio silence, despite the fact that, at one point, the minister was surrounded by his cohort of senior officials and experts at a committee meeting. We repeated that it was not a complicated question and asked him to name, not five or six, but just one single project. We wanted to know one project that a small or medium-sized municipality in Canada would need the infrastructure bank to carry out. Radio silence.

That is normal, because over the past 10 years, and not over the past six months or 10 days, the average cost of infrastructure projects in Canada was not \$100 million or \$500 million, as certain investors would like. It was \$6.7 million. The difference between \$100 million and \$6.7 million is a lot of money. This is simply to prove that this infrastructure bank will not serve many people, apart from reassuring investors by making sure that it will be Canadians all across the country who carry the risk for these projects.

I think the Prime Minister is missing something about the Robin Hood story. Indeed, instead of taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor, he decided to take taxpayers' money and give it to his friends and Liberal Party donors. This is where we get a sense of the dishonesty of these plans for the infrastructure bank.

Then we learned that Michael Sabia, president of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, and other investors who are working with the infrastructure bank, will want returns of 7% to 9%.

As a former mayor of a municipality of 45,000 residents, I can say that I never would have accepted funding at a cost of 7% to 9% when I had access to all kinds of municipal bonds at a rate of return of roughly 2% to 2.5% at most.

Once again, one might wonder why a municipality would need to go looking for financing. Just last week I had the opportunity to meet with the vice-president of the Union des municipalités du Québec, who is also the mayor of an important city in Quebec. I do not want to name him and put him on the spot here tonight. He is probably sleeping at this hour, but he might be listening on CPAC. I asked him whether, during all his years as mayor and at the council table, he had ever needed to go looking for financing from a bank. It has never happened.

●(2355)

It is late and we all want to get to bed. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time you have given me to speak to Bill C-49. However, it is not nearly enough time to speak to such an important bill.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** When we resume debate on Bill C-49, the hon. member will have 10 minutes to finish his speech.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for months, I have been raising the issue of a significant increase in asylum seekers crossing into Canada from the U.S. at unauthorized border points. Disappointingly, the government has continually refused to even acknowledge the issue exists. The minister has gone so far as to suggest “nothing has changed”.

In a series of shockingly opportunistic tweets, in light of the tragedy that occurred London, President Trump has made it clear that the minister is very wrong on that assertion. He stated, “People, the lawyers and the courts can call it whatever they want, but I am calling it what we need and what it is, a travel ban!”

Things have changed. From January to April, the RCMP has intercepted 2,719 individuals. For all of 2016, 2,464 individuals were intercepted. Should this trend continue, we could expect over 8,000 interceptions this year.

I had the pleasure of meeting with the Immigration and Refugee Board chair, Mario Dion, in May. During our conversation, I learned about the various increases to efficiencies and initiatives being undertaken by the IRB to do the incredible work it does as timely as possible. Unfortunately, it was also made clear that with this increase in asylum crossings, as well as the global increase in forced displacement, all the efficiencies in the world cannot make up for the chronic underfunding and vacancies at the IRB.

The minister even acknowledged funding was an issue when he appeared at the citizenship committee. When I asked him about the indefensible situation of legacy claims, he stated, “I think the approach should be efficiencies plus...resources.”

*Adjournment Proceedings*

However, budget 2017 provided no additional resources. The IRB has been forced to reallocate internal funding and some of its most veteran board members for the creation of a legacy claim task force. A lack of resources and vacancies at the board, all while we are seeing increased levels of asylum claims, is putting a significant strain on the system. There are currently 24,000 backlogged cases, and the backlog increases by 1,000 cases per month.

To make matters worse, the CBSA and RCMP, in communities affected by the increase in irregular crossings, are also experiencing a strain on their budgets to deal with the issue. All the while, the government sits idly by, ignoring the issue altogether. Tragically, someone has now died attempting to cross the border.

Thus far, the government's response has been nothing short of callous, including the Minister of Public Safety's mischaracterizing irregular crossings and attempting to blame the victim of the tragedy.

This tragedy was entirely avoidable. If the government takes its head out of the sand, acknowledges that things have changed, and suspends the safe third country agreement, asylum seekers can orderly cross at authorized ports of entry, where there is no risk of death from hypothermia.

When will the government act and make a difference?

● (2400)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House that the Government of Canada will continue to offer its protection to people in need.

Canada will continue to have an asylum granting system with safeguards in place to ensure that those who would face harm are not sent back to persecution.

The safe third country agreement remains an important tool for Canada and the U.S. to work together on the orderly handling of refugee claims made in our countries. Recent changes in U.S. immigration policy have not impacted the functioning of the U.S. asylum system.

In fact, as the minister has pointed out, the UNHCR representative in Canada has stated that the conditions that prevailed at the time of the agreement in 2004 remain the same today. The safe third country agreement is based on the principle that individuals should seek asylum in the first country they arrive in. This principle is accepted by the United Nations Refugee Agency.

It is important to note that the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement applies to refugee claimants seeking entry to Canada from the United States via land border only. It does not apply to requests for refugee protection made inland. It also does not apply to claims made by people intercepted while entering Canada at a place that is not a legal point of entry.

Foreign nationals from any country may make a claim for asylum in Canada. Immigration officers receiving a refugee claim will decide whether the claim is eligible for referral to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, an independent administrative tribunal that makes decisions on immigration and refugee matters.

The Immigration and Refugee Board decides who is a convention refugee or a person in need of Canada's protection. Once a claim is made, individuals may also apply for social assistance, which is the responsibility of provinces and territories.

While the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement remains an important tool, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act requires the continual review of countries designated as safe third countries to ensure that the conditions that led to the designation continue to be met.

We will continue to monitor this evolving situation, and we are working with the United States as it reviews parts of its resettlement program. The Government of Canada will continue to honour this country's tradition of compassion and fairness, values that are a great source of pride for all Canadians.

● (2405)

[*English*]

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary misses the point entirely. The whole thing about the safe third country agreement is precisely that the U.S. is supposed to be a safe country for asylum seekers. The fact that it is not is why many of them are trying to cross at irregular crossings to come to Canada.

In fact, Seidu Mohammed, an asylum seeker who crossed into Emerson, Manitoba, lost eight fingers due to extreme weather. His claim was denied by the United States for the same reasons highlighted in the Harvard University and Canadian law student reports urging the suspension of the agreement: there was punitive immigration detention and no access to counsel. The fact is that the individual felt it was not safe.

That is why the safe third country agreement needs to be suspended if we are going to make a difference in addressing this issue.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows very well how this agreement works, and the recent immigration policy changes in the United States have had no impact on that country's asylum system.

I would like to quote the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Canada. I know the member does not like it when we quote such people, but I will do it anyway:

I really think that the conditions which prevailed at the time of the drafting and adoption of the safe third country agreement in 2004 are the same as [they are today], and...it will be difficult to change the policy...[that is] seen as a good co-operation, a good responsibility-sharing between two...systems [that have] the same values and the same procedural guarantees.

...As far as the asylum system is concerned in the United States, legally speaking, we have not seen a change.

That is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I am therefore surprised that the member opposite is questioning his skills and expertise on this file.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

## TAXATION

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise tonight to speak on a related issue to Bill C-44 that we spoke about today in the budget discussions. Tonight I want to speak specifically about the deferred cash ticket purchase system that farmers in western Canada have used for generations to help manage their affairs. This was tucked away in the Liberals' latest budget in the early pages. It is one of those areas where they said they will not do it immediately, but they would have some discussions as to whether they should take it away. I am raising this issue, as I did in question period six weeks ago, because it is a management tool that farmers can use.

The current cash purchase ticket system helps farmers to stabilize their income from year to year. It means that if they can sell a product at harvest, they can defer that income into the next fiscal year and thereby help them in their tax planning. It looks upfront that the only person who would benefit would be that farmer, but that is certainly not the case. I used this management tool for all the years that I farmed and it was available. Balancing out the type of income that the farmers have on an annual basis helps to have a cashflow in a whole community. Therefore, it helps farmers to manage their time in regard to when they would hire, the purchase of fertilizer, purchasing their farm inputs, and perhaps even making decisions in regard to the necessity to hire others to help them take off their crop, depending on the weather.

No one wants to store grain in a damp condition, so they would hire a custom combiner, as an example, to get that into the bin in a dry state. That is important. If we take away the deferred cash tickets, some of this grain being forced to be held instead of being sold upfront might deteriorate to the point of spoilage in the bins. I think that is something that the government has not taken into consideration in making this decision. It has looked at a bottom line item and decided it needs to cut somewhere. This is a change that is not going to impact the government. From a tax perspective, they will still get the same amount of tax every year, it is just that they may not get a whole lump sum this year and then have a smaller amount next year. This helps to level that out. It is a management tool that the government could use as well, in its tax preparations and in the budget for Canada.

It is a win-win for everyone. The government puts dollars into things like crop insurance and other areas of growing forward on a regular basis anyway. This is one that it does not have to support very much, and it does not really impact the government at all. If it is not broken, why try to fix it, is the analogy that many farm groups are talking to me about in this regard. This is at a time when we are already discussing what growing forward 3 will look like as an agricultural program for safety to the future of our farm community.

Government also helps by putting trade on the line, and having trade agreements that help to even out the flow of our products. One of the roles that the government could play is to make sure that we have trade opportunities. This is important in this area because at times a particular grain company may require a certain kind of grain and—

● (2410)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris is right to be defending the needs of farmers. Our government recognizes the importance of agriculture and it will continue to ensure that the agriculture sector remains strong in this country. Budget 2017 clearly acknowledges that Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector is a major engine for economic growth.

The agricultural industry will benefit from many initiatives announced in budget 2017. These include an investment of \$70 million over six years to further support agricultural discovery science and innovation; the creation of a new strategic innovation fund, which will invest \$1.26 billion over five years to improve access to support measures for value-added processors; an investment of \$950 million in superclusters that increase Canada's global competitiveness by focusing on innovative industries, including the agri-food industry; an investment of \$200 million over four years to support clean technologies in Canada's natural resources sectors; an investment of \$2 billion to support rural infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow Canadian agri-food producers to more easily access markets in Canada and abroad; an investment of \$80 million for a new, world-class plant health research facility; and an investment of \$6 million over three years to support the growth of businesses by streamlining the regulations governing Canada's trade partners.

The government is also determined to establish a tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it. This commitment includes the understanding that, over time, changes in the economy have made many of the provisions of Canada's tax laws less relevant than they were when they were passed.

That is why, in budget 2017, we launched consultations on the ongoing relevance and possible elimination of the income tax deferral available via cash purchase tickets for deliveries of listed grains. Budget 2017 invited stakeholders to share their comments on this tax deferral, including the appropriate transition period and rules.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

As specified in the budget, the consultation period was initially supposed to end on May 24, 2017. However, given the overlapping initial consultation and spring seeding seasons, when farmers are very busy, the Department of Finance decided last month to extend the consultation period until July 24, 2017. As such, all stakeholders who wish to take part in consultations will be able to do so. Once the department has received comments from all stakeholders, it will take into account all views when it looks at the merits of maintaining the tax deferral on income earned through advance payments for the delivery of listed grains.

This will also allow us to make sure that we meet our government's commitment to implement a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it, which—

• (2415)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

[English]

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member for at least listening to farmers. The Liberals brought this forward in the budget, and the discussions were, as the member said, to end on May 24. It is a very difficult time across all of Canada for people to put their ideas forward, in the middle of spring seeding. Extending it to July 24 is good.

I want to say that this is a very valuable tool. I hope the minister has listened to some of the farmers. During my question period discussion, one of the farmers sent this to me, which says, “It is becoming harder and harder to defend the Liberal government to fellow western Canadian farmers.”

The member has gone off on a number of other areas in the budget, a number of things they are doing for farmers, but here is one that really does not cost anything, or not very much. It is minuscule compared to many of them. I am just asking the member if the government would consider dropping the idea and leaving the deferred cash ticket program in place.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I mentioned, the government is committed to implementing a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it. The extended consultation period means that all stakeholders who wish to take part in this process will be able to do so. We will support Canadian farmers and ensure that the agricultural sector remains strong across Canada.

## AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am here before you on June 5, at 12:20 a.m., because the Minister of Transport has not seen fit to meet with me so that I can show him that his decision to approve the Mascouche-Terrebonne aerodrome was based on erroneous facts and approximations.

On February 12, in response to questions, including one from my colleague from Terrebonne, the minister said:

...before a decision was made about the Mascouche airport, the proponent commissioned a Léger survey, which indicated that 64% of the people in the

Mascouche and Terrebonne area were in favour of developing this airport. We did due diligence in the public interest.

That is not true. The Minister of Transport misled the House. I have the Léger survey right here. It was not done by proponent of the aerodrome, which would be built in a forested area that is protected by the Montreal metropolitan area and has been since April 24, 2013.

Polled on the future of the airport that was built in Mascouche in the 1970s and which is now closed, 64% of those polled said that the runways should be rebuilt and the activities maintained. Only 3% of the people of Mascouche were in favour of relocating the airport in that same 2013 survey. The survey polled people from Mascouche only and not people from the surrounding area. The minister is basing his decision on an approximation.

The minister also based his decision on economic spinoffs. With help from the notes that public servants provided him, he quoted a 2010 study by Explorer Solutions. Again, the study was on the potential economic development of the former airport facility, not on a new recreational aerodrome which will have almost no economic benefits. There could be a flight school, perhaps. However, is that worth clear-cutting 19 hectares?

This government's slogan is not about doing politics differently, it is, “do as I say, not as I do.” The Prime Minister said in Neuville that respecting local communities is important. The minister says that only a handful of people were opposed to the project. However, there have been two unanimous motions by the National Assembly, with all-party support. Then there was the CMM, the Fédération québécoise des municipalités, the Union des municipalités du Québec, the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party.

That is considerably more than a handful. These are the people who are opposed to the minister's project, and they were all elected to represent their fellow citizens. Maybe the minister ought to reconsider his claims that a small minority of people oppose the project.

• (2420)

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Montcalm for his question.

First, I want to assure the House that our government is working with Canadians to make sure that federally regulated aerodrome building projects take into account public safety and interest.

In March 2016, in order to make sure that the new aerodrome in Mascouche-Terrebonne was secure and in the public interest, the Minister of Transport issued a ministerial order to put the construction of the aerodrome on hold while the proponent, the Corporation de l'aéroport de Mascouche, held new public consultations.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We are aware of the concerns that the building of new aerodromes in Canada can create. That is in part what motivated the Minister of Transport to bring in additional regulatory changes to enable Canadians to voice their concerns. We examine thoroughly all the documentation and the arguments that are submitted over the course of the consultation process.

Members can be assured that Transport Canada will continue to work with provincial authorities and the aerospace industry to maintain the safety and security of the transportation network for all Canadians.

As for this project's compliance with the provincial Environment Quality Act, I am sure my colleague will understand that I cannot comment on that, since the matter is currently before the Quebec Court of Appeal.

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, whose interests are we talking about here?

The Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal implemented a land use and development plan regarding wooded lands and forest corridors in urban areas, and people want to set up there with the help of an invasive and abusive federal law that disregards local communities. There is a consensus in Quebec against that project. What about public interest? What is the parliamentary secretary to the minister's definition of "public interest"? None of this makes any sense.

What we are asking for is not a bogus consultation held by the proponent. That is why the minister's decision was biased in the first place. The proponent held its own totally bogus public consultation. We want an independent process. Quebec laws on the environment and the protection of agricultural land must be taken into account. This is 2017, not 1939.

● (2425)

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** Mr. Speaker, our government is aware of the concerns that the building of new aerodromes in Canada can create, including the project currently in progress in the municipalities of Mascouche and Terrebonne.

I want to assure my colleagues that our government is working with Canadians to make sure that federally regulated aerodrome building projects take into account public safety and public interest. Thanks to the regulatory changes made by the minister, which are already in place, Canadians can now voice their concerns before the decision to build or modify an aerodrome is made.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:26 a.m.)

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