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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: We will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

NUNAVUT

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.):

[*Member spoke in Inuktitut*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian national funding formulas must be adjusted to consider Nunavut's unique circumstances. I have and will continue to raise my concerns about per capita funding and how it continues to fail Nunavut.

In the south, Nunavut's population would be served by one easily accessible, full service hospital. However, the reality is that our population is spread out over 25 completely isolated communities separated by thousands of kilometres. This means that the majority of Nunavummiut do not have the same access or service. This is just one example of where the per capita system fails us.

How is the Government of Nunavut expected to provide basic services with this system of allocation? Nunavummiut deserve to have the same standard of living and basic services Canadians in the south enjoy. This can only be achieved by changing the per capita funding system to more of a needs-based approach.

* * *

• (1405)

HOUSE OF COMMONS PAGES

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for those who brave the daily event that is question period, they may have noticed the efficiency with which the House runs. I should clarify. I

do not mean the efficiency of debate, because some days, we can get a bit off track. Some even go as far as to do the odd pigeon dance. The efficiency I am referring to is more logistical.

They deliver messages, support the Speaker, and distribute official documents. Simply put, without them, the House would not run. I refer to our pages.

This year, a constituent from the great riding of Malpeque was chosen as one of 40 pages from across Canada. Sebastien Arsenault, a commerce student studying at the University of Ottawa, started the page program in August. I congratulate Sebastien. I am sure his family is very proud of him.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the wonderful pages who help the House run, and I encourage graduating high school students to apply today for next year's program.

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ETHICS

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was change-the-channel day. The Liberal finance minister delivered an economic update, but it was really all about changing the channel on his ethics crisis.

Canadians are not dumb. They know that the minister should have put his Morneau Shepell shares into a blind trust. He led Canadians to believe that he had done so, but he had not. Instead, he used a loophole in the Conflict of Interest Act to put them in a numbered company in Alberta. Now, after being caught, he says he will finally do the right thing. He also tabled pension legislation that could directly benefit Morneau Shepell, and the finance minister conveniently forgot to disclose that he owns a villa in France through a numbered company. This scandal is so evident, even *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* has teed off on it.

It is time the finance minister stops trying to change the channel, apologizes to Canadians, and starts following the rules that apply to all members of Parliament.

*Statements by Members***CADENCE HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mental health issues, specifically PTSD, afflict far too many Canadians. That is why I was so proud to attend the recent opening of Cadence Health and Wellness. Located in Newmarket, Cadence provides support for members of the Canadian Armed Forces, veterans, and emergency first responders, and importantly, their families.

Cadence is a mental health service provider providing an innovative approach to healing through one-on-one, group, and peer support programs. The team at Cadence is there every step of the way, from assisting with paperwork to hosting family fun social nights.

I want to personally congratulate Chris and his wife, Angel, co-founders of Cadence, as well as Greg and the entire team on their outstanding leadership and truly inspirational commitment. On behalf of everyone in Newmarket—Aurora, I thank them for stepping up and for helping those who need it most.

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OJIBWAY SHORES

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Ojibway Shores is an ecological national treasure. These 33 acres of land on the Great Lakes are home to rare flora, fauna, and countless species at risk. The steward of this public property is the Windsor Port Authority, which has tried to bulldoze this property to the ground. However, citizens have united to protect the land named for our aboriginal heritage and to stop unnecessary environmental degradation.

In a classic shakedown, the port now wants \$10 million for a 30-year lease to not develop this property. The money is to come from a community benefit fund in one of the most economically challenged areas of Ontario, Sandwich Town. This is obscene. The public should not be asked to pay for land it already owns, and the money should not be taken from a community that needs those funds to reduce poverty, increase health, and protect heritage and a better economic future for those most disadvantaged.

The Prime Minister just approved a new border crossing for a private American citizen, a billionaire. It is time to make amends, protect Sandwich Town, protect the environment, and make sure that we protect those who are Canadian first.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday our finance minister tabled the fall economic update in this House and demonstrated to all members that real change is working. The numbers speak for themselves. Canada has the fastest growing economy in the G7. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since 2008, with 450,000 jobs created. Our government is enhancing the working income tax benefit with an additional \$500 million per year, and it is strengthening the Canada child benefit by providing more after-tax dollars to Canadian families. We are also reducing the small business tax rate from 11% to nine per cent.

We are not done. We understand that more work needs to be done to ensure that hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast can achieve their very own Canadian dream.

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● (1410)

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 150th anniversary of Confederation. In 1867, our founders built a Constitution and a democratic system that have endured to this day.

In my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills, the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce tourism committee marked the occasion by challenging local residents to fly our national flag. The committee set a goal of 15,000 flags. Residents responded with unrivalled enthusiasm. By July 1, there were 57,073 flags flying across Halton Hills. In recognition of this accomplishment, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds did a flypast over Halton Hills, dazzling the thousands of spectators below.

I would like to congratulate local residents as well as the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce tourism committee for marking this occasion. As we celebrate Confederation's sesquicentennial, let us give thanks for the democratic system we have inherited, and let us resolve to build an even stronger democracy.

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[Translation]

ÉPILEPSIE MONTÉRÉGIE ORGANIZATION

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the work of a group of volunteers who have dedicated themselves to helping people with epilepsy and their families for the past three decades.

Épilepsie Montérégie is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Its mission is to support people with epilepsy by making information and treatment available to them and educating the wider community about the needs of people with epilepsy.

I am truly grateful to all the dedicated volunteers, the board of directors, and Joannie Beauchemin and Anie Roy, two pillars of the Granby community who put their heart and soul into making sure our community has the resources to deal with this disorder.

I also applaud their courage and dedication to supporting people with the condition and improving treatment options, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Épilepsie Montérégie in my riding, Shefford.

Statements by Members

[English]

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have among us on Parliament Hill today some of our brave young women and men who currently attend Royal Military College in their journey to serve our great nation. This visit is one the students undertake every year, and I am proud to be able to stand in the House today to speak to the accomplishments of RMC and its graduates.

[Translation]

My riding of Kingston and the Islands has an important military tradition, and our community is very proud to be home to one of only two royal military colleges in Canada.

The Royal Military College of Canada trains officer cadets, giving them the military and university education they need to become the future leaders of our armed forces.

[English]

I believe that all Canadians can learn and grow from the lessons that are instilled in RMC students. Allowing honesty, honour, and integrity to guide our actions every day will make Canada a greater nation and will improve the world we live in.

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MEDICINE HAT—CARDSTON—WARNER

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner for the opportunity to represent them in Ottawa. It has been one year since they elected me to champion their concerns. I am humbled by their trust and the opportunity to serve them and to work with so many incredible people from across this great nation, on both sides of the aisle. I stand by my election promise to be a tireless advocate for the hard-working families, farmers, and small businesses in my southern Alberta riding. Sectors like agriculture and energy are the heart of our local, provincial, and Canadian economy and must remain strong, viable, and competitive.

It is an honour to work on public safety and national security issues, placing the safety of Canadians first while ensuring support for victims, first responders, and those on the front line.

My desire is to continue to be an effective voice and to work hard for all Canadians. I want to again thank my constituents. It is the utmost privilege to represent them in this House.

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● (1415)

SPANISH & PORTUGUESE SYNAGOGUE

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue in Montreal, located in my riding of Mount Royal, will celebrate the 250th anniversary of its formal establishment. It is the oldest congregation in Canada and is a proud testament to the long history of Montreal's Jewish community.

Founded originally by English Jews from the Sephardic community whose families originated in Spain and Portugal, today it is one of Montreal's most diverse synagogues, serving Canadian Jewish

families who can trace their origins back to almost every country in the world where Jews have lived.

[Translation]

Whether they are of Sephardic or Ashkenazi descent, whether they speak English or French, Jewish Montrealers feel at home within this magnificent congregation.

[English]

Next year, a number of celebrations and exhibits to honour the anniversary will be held. I would like to ask all of my colleagues to join me in honouring the legacy of the synagogue and congratulating it on 250 years of serving Montreal's Jewish community.

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[Translation]

COLLÈGE SAINTE-ANNE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *Cognosci ut melius facias*, or “to know so as to better do”.

Not only is that a great guiding principle for our committee work, it is also the motto of Collège Sainte-Anne, one of Quebec's oldest schools. This academic institution, which was founded by the Sisters of Sainte-Anne in 1861, predates Canada's Confederation. For over 150 years, it has provided one of the best educational experiences in the province, and its presence has done so much to enrich the town of Lachine.

[English]

Normally, I only get to see the students when I am in the riding as their lovely main pavilion is located near my constituency office. However, I am pleased to inform the House that 50 young, bright minds from the school are here today on the Hill and are looking forward to our spirited debates. Hopefully, it will encourage them to get into politics.

I thank them wholeheartedly for coming here today and wish them well in their studies. Go Dragons.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberal government was slow to act on the Rohingya crisis, their response has been non-existent when it comes to the persecution of Christians. So-called apostasy and blasphemy laws that target Christians and other minorities are widespread in the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Southeast Asia. Conversion even carries the death penalty in some so-called moderate nations.

However, beyond this ongoing structural discrimination, we are seeing ancient Christian communities in the Middle East marked out for complete destruction, destruction that is well advanced in many places. The government has consistently refused to recognize the genocide of Christians at the hands of Daesh in Iraq and Syria. It has also failed to recognize that Christian refugees, clearly among the most vulnerable, are often not safe in UN refugee camps and so cannot access the UN refugee certification system.

Oral Questions

While the government has failed to prioritize human rights in general, Christians facing discrimination, ethnic cleansing, and genocide are a group to which it rarely even pays lip service. It is high time that the government do more to stand up for human rights, including the rights of Christians.

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REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 10, I attended a poppy pinning ceremony at Pickering City Hall organized by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 606, to officially kick off the 2017 poppy campaign. Beginning on October 27, I encourage all Canadians to purchase and wear a poppy with pride to honour our fallen heroes.

Throughout the next few weeks, there will be several events across my community honouring the sacrifices of the brave men and women who have served our country. Wearing a poppy is a powerful reminder of the bravery and valour that Canadian soldiers have displayed, and continue to display, in service to our country.

In the lead-up to Remembrance Day ceremonies, I want to recognize the legions in my community, Branch 606, Branch 483 in Claremont, and Branch 170 in Uxbridge, for all the work they do on Remembrance Day, and, indeed, every day to honour and remember the fallen and support the military families.

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WOMEN IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have discovered an important network for Canadian women working in the energy sector. WiRE, or Women in Renewable Energy, was launched in 2013 to forge partnerships for women working across a broad spectrum of renewable energy sectors and associations. Their mission is advancing the role and recognition of Canadian women working in all renewable energy and clean technologies.

WiRE's programming includes capacity building, field trips, free networking, awards, student bursaries, and speed mentoring. WiRE supports the leadership accord on gender diversity in Canada's electricity sector and other programs improving organizational diversity and inclusion in that sector. Starting in Ontario, the network now includes chapters in Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia, and is soon coming to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am confident all will wish to join with me in applauding the leadership of WiRE supporting opportunities for women to contribute to building a cleaner energy future.

* * *

• (1420)

TAXATION

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would say the Liberal government is spending like drunken sailors, but that would be unfair. At least drunken sailors spend their own money.

The day after we find out these Liberals have doubled down on the deficit, we get an idea of why our nation's finances are so deep in the red. The newly appointed ambassador to France will be paid up

to \$120,000 more than a career diplomat would earn for the same posting. This falls in line with the Liberal government's trend of overpaying for things, such as the appointment of a failed Liberal candidate as consulate general to San Francisco, who will make nearly double the post official salary; spending over \$200,000 on a 2017 budget cover; and spending \$110,000 in legal fees fighting a first nations girl over \$6,000 in dental care.

For the Liberals, every problem has but one solution: spend more money. That is why more than 80% of middle-class Canadians pay more tax today under the Liberal government, and it is not going to get any better.

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[Translation]

ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this October 25 to mark the 10th anniversary of the passage of the motion moved by the former member for Ottawa—Vanier, our friend Mauril Bélanger, to designate October as Islamic History Month.

[English]

The aim of the commemorative month is to recognize the important contributions of Canadian Muslims to Canadian society, the importance of Canadians learning about each other to foster greater social cohesion, and the importance of efforts to organize public activities to achieve a better understanding of Islamic history.

[Translation]

Today, celebrations and events are being organized across the country to bring together Canadians from all faiths and origins, to bridge communities, and to learn more about the accomplishments of our Muslim friends and neighbours.

[English]

All Canadians are encouraged to take this opportunity to learn more about Islamic contributions to our great nation.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister gave Bombardier nearly \$400 million.

Oral Questions

Bombardier wasted no time giving its executives huge bonuses. Who else benefited from this agreement? Morneau Shepell did, of course. The Minister of Finance's company has contracts with Bombardier and the minister was a strong proponent of the agreement.

When did the Prime Minister learn that the Minister of Finance had a personal stake in the agreement with Bombardier?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition's misleading insinuations are baseless.

There is no conflict of interest. We are proud to have always been there for aerospace workers across the country. We are proud to continue supporting Canadian workers and companies that make extraordinary products and that will keep creating economic growth and good jobs for everyone. We are staying the course. We are investing in this country's future and will continue to do so.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister bragged to the media about participating in the Bombardier bailout discussions. We were told that the bailout was for jobs, but now it turns out that the jets will be built in Alabama. We were told it was for innovation, but now we know that it will be controlled in Europe. As for Canadians? They are stuck with the bill for subsidizing it, except for Morneau Shepell, which has contracts with Bombardier. When did the Prime Minister learn that the finance minister had a personal interest in the Bombardier deal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have always stood up for Canadian aerospace workers, and we will continue to. We know those are good jobs right across the country. The proposed deal with Airbus, that we are certainly looking at under the Investment Canada Act, potentially has good jobs for Canadians at Mirabel and across the country beyond 2041. This is the kind of good news for the economy that Canadians expect. This is what we are continuing to work on.

An hon. member: It's a joke. It's a joke.

An hon. member: You said Alabama, not Alberta.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1425)

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, the member for Edmonton Riverbend, and the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands to try to restrain themselves and not interrupt, in accordance with Standing Order 18.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at what Canadians got for their \$400-million Bombardier bailout. The C Series technology has been given to the Europeans, and the jobs have been sent to Alabama. Bombardier still has the \$400 million, which of course it used to give its executives big bonuses. Why did the Liberals fork over the money? The finance minister had motivation to make it happen. Bombardier is a client of his family company. Can the Prime Minister explain why the only Canadians to benefit from the

Bombardier deal are the billionaire Beaudoin family, and the finance minister's family fortune?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the opposition has nothing more to do than sling mud today, because the economic news from this country is better than it has been in a long time. In the last election, Canadians had a choice between the Conservative government, which had created worse growth than we needed and did not help the middle class, or this party, which planned on putting money in the pockets of the middle class and helping those working hard to join it. We have been doing that for two years and it is creating the best economic growth in the G7, and has created 400,000 jobs, most of them full time. We are going to continue—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current government certainly has spent a lot of effort making sure that money is put in the pockets of billionaire families like the finance minister and his own family fortune. Yesterday, we saw the Prime Minister trying to defend his decision to increase taxes on Canadians suffering from diabetes. In typical fashion, he blamed everybody but himself. He even tried to claim that the reason why this happened was because there are not enough people working at the Canada Revenue Agency. When will the Prime Minister come clean and just explain to Canadians why he chose to cancel much-needed help for those suffering with diabetes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government will ensure that people access the benefits to which they are entitled. This is something that we are continuing to focus on. This government is focused on supporting those who need the help, on helping the middle class and those working hard to join it. We would never do anything as mean as, I do not know, cancelling health benefits for refugees or closing nine offices for veterans across this country. Those things would be simply mean, and this government would never do that.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the mean-spirited attack on farmers and local business owners. Let us talk about the mean-spirited attack on waitresses and retail workers having their discounts taxed. Now let us talk about the mean-spirited attack on people suffering from type 1 diabetes. It is his government's decision to cancel this much-needed benefit. What does he say to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians suffering from this disease? Why did he take their benefit away?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians expect of us, we will ensure that everyone who is entitled to these benefits gets these benefits. Our focus is on supporting people suffering, supporting the middle class and those working hard to join it, and making sure that Canadians who need help get it.

Oral Questions

That is why we stopped sending child benefit cheques to millionaires and instead are sending them to the nine out of 10 Canadians who actually need them. That has worked not only to reduce child poverty by 40% in this country but is also delivering the economic growth that in 10 years those guys could never get.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of National Defence had a controlling interest in a weapons company, he would be in a conflict of interest. If the Minister of Health had a controlling interest in a pharmaceutical company, she would be in a conflict of interest. If the Minister of Natural Resources had a controlling interest in an oil or gas company, he would be in a conflict of interest.

The Minister of Finance still has a controlling interest, directly or indirectly, in Morneau Shepell. This company specializes in the pension plans that this minister directly regulates.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to protect him?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition's misleading insinuations are simply baseless. There is no conflict of interest. The minister took all of the commissioner's advice, including creating a screen, which the commissioner felt was the most effective measure.

The minister followed the rules. He acted in accordance with this screen and will continue to do so. That is why we continue to invest in Canadians to ensure that everyone has a better retirement.

• (1430)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not what the Minister of Finance said. He said that for two years, he led his caucus, the media, his company, and Canadians to believe that he had placed his assets in a blind trust. He misled them.

Yesterday, the NDP gave the government and the Prime Minister a chance not only to acknowledge that their finance minister had shown a lack of judgment, but also to close the loopholes in the act that allow him to indirectly control holdings he cannot control directly. It just makes sense.

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to close these loopholes in the Conflict of Interest Act?

Is it because they hope to continue exploiting them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I feel bad for the NDP. Mudslinging is all they have left, because the economic news is positive and we are currently helping the most vulnerable Canadians, putting money in the pockets of those who need it the most, and creating inclusive economic growth.

It is disappointing to see the NDP taking a page out of the Conservatives' mudslinging playbook. I hope they will ask us questions about the economic growth we are creating for everyone.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): The voice of the out of touch 1%, Mr. Speaker.

Has anyone ever tried to change the channel knowing that the batteries are dying in the remote and just been too lazy to get up to fix them? That is what the Liberals were doing yesterday, trying to change the channel. However, Canadians are not buying it. Rather than admit they screwed up and close the Morneau Shepell ethical loopholes, the Liberals actually voted against doing so.

The Prime Minister must believe there are two sets of rules, one for him and his buddies and another set for everyone else.

While Canadians are worried about protecting their pensions, why is the Prime Minister only worried about protecting his finance minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past weeks I have been criss-crossing the country and talking with voters in Alberta and Lac-Saint-Jean about the issues they are facing. The people who were talking with me were grateful for the Canada child benefit that helps nine out of 10 Canadian families, grateful that the first thing we did was lower taxes on the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%, and pleased that we are now lowering small business taxes to the lowest rate in the G7.

These are the kinds of things that help Canadians. These are the kinds of things we are happy to be talking about.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): He did not just criss-cross this country, Mr. Speaker, he double-crossed this country.

I am about to ask the Prime Minister of Canada a clear and direct question. Would anyone like to bet whether he is actually going to answer? Let us find out.

In less than an hour I am going to table a motion at ethics committee inviting his finance minister and the Ethics Commissioner to come forward and testify, to tell us exactly how this mess all started in the first place, and to work with us to close these ethical loopholes.

If the Prime Minister really wants to clear the cloud over his finance minister's head, will he allow the minister to show up or will he once again shove him aside and out of the way? What is it going to be?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we are incredibly pleased with the work of the finance minister. He has lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them for the wealthiest 1%. He has put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families by delivering a Canada child benefit that is not only lifting hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty across this country, but creating economic growth of the type that is the best in the G7.

Whether it is increasing the GIS for seniors, whether it is making sure there are more up-front grants for students going to university, these are the kinds of things that are making a difference.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister forked over \$400 million to Bombardier. Now we know that Alabama got the jobs, Europe gets the planes, the billionaire Bombardier Beaudoin family gets the money, and taxpayers get the bill.

Who benefited from this?

We now know that the company Morneau Shepell has Bombardier as a client. What else is the finance minister hiding in his vast network of numbered companies and trust funds?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was happy to talk with people in Lac-Saint-Jean about Bombardier, about the work we are doing to protect aerospace workers, about the work we are doing to protect forestry workers, about what we are delivering for agricultural communities and families, and about what we are delivering directly to Canadians and the nine out of 10 families who need help with the Canada child benefit.

These are the kinds of things that people were talking to me about, and the Conservative Party is once again showing itself to be completely out of touch with the priorities of Canadians. I cannot say that I mind, but it is amusing to see that they have not learned any lessons in two years.

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not looking for some intimate detail of the finance minister's personal life. We do not care what he had for breakfast or what kind of socks he wears, but we do care about the fact that he controls \$330 billion of other people's money.

He hid his offshore company in France, he hid his \$20 million share in his family business. What else is he hiding in his vast network of numbered companies and trust funds?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know there is a lot of back and forth that goes on in this House, and one of the things that matters to them is that we have a commissioner who is in charge of ensuring that the behaviour of all of the people in this House meets the high standards of Canadians.

The Minister of Finance worked with the Ethics Commissioner, followed her advice, and is willing to go above and beyond what she recommended two years ago. Those are the facts of the matter.

The fact that the members opposite are trying to sling mud simply highlights the fact that we need to focus on the Ethics Commissioner and what she actually determines and decides, not the partisan attacks from the opposite side.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when someone controls \$330 billion of other people's money, that someone's financial business is everyone's business.

The new infrastructure bank will allow the finance minister to give out billions of dollars in loans and loan guarantees to companies that he may well own within his numbered companies and trust funds. However, the Prime Minister is not insisting that he be transparent with the taxpayers who will have to pay for those very loans and loan guarantees.

Therefore, once again, will the Prime Minister require that his finance minister reveal to all Canadians what he holds in his numbered companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we have an adversarial system in this House that requires the members opposite to try to attack and ask whatever questions they have. However, Canadians are reassured to know that we have a Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner who oversees the actual behaviours of everyone in this House and makes determinations on how they should move forward. That does not take away from the opposition's responsibility to try to make partisan attacks, but it should reassure Canadians that the finance minister worked with the commissioner and followed her recommendations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants us to accept that the finance minister filed a secret report to the Ethics Commissioner in which he supposedly revealed what exists inside his vast network of numbered companies and trust funds.

We already know that he hid from the Ethics Commissioner his offshore company in France. He hid from Canadians his \$20 million share in Morneau Shepell. The only way for us to find out if he is hiding anything else and if he is profiting privately from his public powers is for him to reveal what is inside those companies. Why will he not?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fundamental question here is whether or not the opposition trusts the Ethics Commissioner to be professional and to do her job. I can understand the personal attacks they feel are their best way to play politics, but the fact is, we trust the Ethics Commissioner and we follow her advice, which is exactly what the finance minister did. All the rest is just partisan noise from the opposition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance presented a hastily thrown together economic update to try to make Canadians forget about his ethical lapses, but Canadians are not fools.

This government's most important minister is in the midst of a very serious ethical crisis. For example, he introduced a bill that directly benefits his family company. In short, the action he took as minister will make his family and his company richer. That is just one example we know of. Imagine what we do not know.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he must absolutely ask the minister to disclose all of his assets in order to clear the air?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the member wants to talk about yesterday's economic update because it was very good news for the Canadian economy.

Two years ago, we promised to put more money in the pockets of the middle class, to help those working hard to join it, and to invest in our communities. That is exactly what we did. Our actions delivered the desired results: we have created economic growth for everyone.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives wanted to make budget cuts and do whatever it took to balance the budget, but that would not have worked. We are investing in Canadians and that has worked. We are going to continue to do what we have been doing—

• (1440)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the minister's speech from yesterday.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance practically tried to make us feel sorry for him when he talked about how he and his family, who are very rich people, were now paying more taxes. Poor thing, we really feel sorry for him. It does not make any sense.

The reality is that the minister forgot to mention that the richest Canadians are paying \$1 billion less in taxes now that the Liberals are in power, and it is the finance minister who says so. Furthermore, middle-class families are paying \$800 more because of this government. Even worse, the finance minister forgot to mention that he is receiving a monthly income of \$65,000 from his private company, which he still runs.

The question is clear: why has the Prime Minister not asked his minister—

The Speaker: Order. The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years, the previous Conservative government handed out benefits to the wealthy. That did not create the economic growth that Canadians expect.

We chose to raise taxes for the wealthiest and to lower them for the middle class. It was the first thing we did. We then implemented the Canada child benefit, giving more money to nine out of 10 families without sending any child benefit cheques to millionaires, like the Conservatives did.

That is exactly what we are doing to meet the expectations of the middle class and to create the economic growth that we are seeing today.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the census painted a sad picture of indigenous communities living in Canada. Indigenous people are poorer, more indigenous children are in foster care, and indigenous people continue to face a housing crisis. Twenty per cent live in housing in need of major repairs, compared to only 6% of the non-indigenous population.

In northern Saskatchewan, I constantly hear from constituents about their difficulty finding affordable and adequate housing. Why are the Liberals still ignoring these shortfalls?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no relationship is more important than the one between our government and indigenous peoples. That is why we invested over \$8.4 billion over five years to build and create opportunities and infrastructure and services in indigenous communities.

We recognize that there is an awful lot of work to do, but we have taken the first meaningful steps at improving outcomes for indigenous peoples. We have eliminated long-term drinking water advisories. We have moved forward on opening new schools for indigenous peoples. We are going to continue to improve services for indigenous peoples across the country.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spent nearly a million dollars fighting indigenous kids in court. Now his ministers are blaming the provinces, but documents show that federal programs are so underfunded that indigenous parents actually have to give their children away to provincial foster care to get help. There is something fundamentally wrong in a nation where indigenous families have to give their children away, while we have a finance minister who cannot remember that he owns a villa in the south of France.

Will the Prime Minister call off his lawyers, stop blaming the provinces, and end this system of child-focused apartheid in Canada, and do it now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we feel passionately about the need to create nation-to-nation relationship and opportunities to set indigenous communities on the kind of path they have not been on for centuries because of the oppressive policies of this place and previous governments.

We are working very hard to fix that relationship, to move forward on a true path of reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We will continue to do so. We will continue to invest record amounts of money and work with indigenous communities to build a better future for everyone in this country.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for two years the finance minister led Canadians to believe he had put his assets, the Morneau Shepell shares, in a blind trust, and only when we found out that was not the case, did he admit to it and make changes. This just begs the question of what else he is hiding in those numbered companies and trust funds that we do not know about that could put him in a potential conflict. He will say, "Well, trust me. I have a system set up that is going to work to make sure that I am not in a conflict of interest".

However, Canadians do not believe him. I want to know from the Prime Minister, what is the finance minister hiding in these other numbered companies?

Oral Questions

●(1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this House, we trust the Ethics Commissioner. We trust her to ensure everyone here is following the rules. We trust her to make recommendations to each of us to do the right thing. I can assure this House the finance minister worked with the commissioner, and followed her advice. He is happy to go above and beyond her original advice to demonstrate the trust that Canadians placed in us, and will continue to do so.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the Prime Minister throughout this entire question period, and after hearing his answer for the seventh or eighth time, the ignorance of the Prime Minister to the Conflict of Interest Act, and how it works was actually embarrassing to me.

Here is the point, Mr. Speaker. The Ethics Commissioner works with the public office holder to set up a conflict, but it is who minister's office members that administer the conflict of interest screen.

Will he stop hiding behind the skirt of the Ethics Commissioner, and tell us what is in these numbered companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, leaving aside that unfortunate characterization of the wardrobe of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, it is important that everyone in this House can work with, and have confidence in, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. This is something that protects us.

Obviously, the opposition's job is to try and attack the government. That is fine, but we all need to know that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is there to protect us all, and she does an excellent job of that.

[Translation]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition's job is to make sure the Minister of Finance is not in conflict of interest and represents all Canadians.

I am very disappointed to see that the Prime Minister is still defending and protecting his finance minister despite the latter's many conflicts of interest.

If ethics are so important to the Prime Minister, why does he not just tell his finance minister to disclose all of his assets and numbered companies so Canadians can get a sense of just how many of the finance minister's interests are in conflict?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I have confidence, we have confidence, and Canadians can have confidence in the commissioner.

As for the work the Minister of Finance is doing, we are very proud of the fact that the first thing he did was raise taxes on the wealthiest Canadians and cut taxes for the middle class. That is not what the Conservatives wanted to do. For 10 years, the Conservatives consistently tried to create economic growth by lowering taxes on the wealthy and giving them all the advantages, but it did not work.

We chose to invest in the middle class and those working hard to join it, and our approach has produced extraordinary results over the past two years. Canadians continue to have confidence—

[English]

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister failed to place his considerable assets in a blind trust. He now finds himself in numerous conflicts of interest, as a result, all thanks to a single numbered company that sheltered his Morneau Shepell assets. However, the minister has seven or eight more numbered companies that are hiding the rest of his secret assets.

In the interests of openness and transparency, when will the Prime Minister demand that the finance minister release all of his assets, so that Canadians can judge just how many more conflicts of interest the finance minister is in?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner works with all members in this House, on all sides, including everyone on both sides who hold numbered companies. This is something that the commissioner is there to do, to set the rules, so that all Canadians can have confidence in them.

I understand the members opposite have nothing to do but attack, because they have been shown the economic growth we have created over the past two years. They were completely wrong in the last election, and Canadians were right to pick a better government.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, members of the expert panel set up by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to advise her on her cultural policy have spoken out in a Radio-Canada article. They wonder whether they wasted their time, or worse, if the government only ever saw them as token advisers, since the Minister of Canadian Heritage neither listened to nor consulted them on the deal with Netflix. After 3,000 testimonials, 252 briefings, and 18 months of consultations, the Liberals refuse to listen to anyone, including the community, the experts, the deputy minister, and even the minister herself, according to the news.

Who was the Prime Minister listening to when he decided to sell out Canada's cultural sovereignty?

●(1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are proud of the work we have done with the cultural community and creative sector across the country. They have proven that they are world class institutions and that we should be able to share our stories, not only with Quebeckers and Canadians, but with our fellow citizens worldwide, who, incidentally, want to hear our stories.

Oral Questions

Accordingly, attracting investors from around the world to invest in our productions, our creativity, and our cultural community is exactly what it takes to be competitive in the 21st century, in the digital age.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not listening at all. It is simple. The government kept members of the advisory committee in the dark about the negotiations and agreement with Netflix. The committee never discussed this agreement.

I imagine that the government must have been afraid of hearing that it was the worst idea in the world for our cultural sovereignty and for tax fairness in Canada. The experts on this committee have been clear: the Internet giant must be subject to the same rules as Canadian companies and it should not get a free pass. It is simple.

Why did the Prime Minister create an advisory committee and conduct consultations if he just keeps ignoring them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this committee told us that Canadian producers and creators are extraordinary and that they deserve more platforms to share their productions around the world in the digital age. That is exactly what we want to do, and that is exactly why we are looking for investors to create more jobs and more productions in Canada. We want Canada to flourish not just here at home, but also around the world. This is a hopeful and proud step towards the new international digital age. This is what we are doing, and this is what producers wanted.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has a lot to be proud of, including the Canada child benefit. Under the Conservatives, families got the same whether they earned \$25,000 a year or \$2.5 million. That is not right.

Our government has stopped giving Canada child benefit cheques to millionaires, and gives more to nine out of 10 Canadian families. As I hear jeers from across the aisle, I know this program is lifting 300,000 Canadian children out of poverty.

Could the Prime Minister advise this House how we are enhancing this incredible program to deliver change for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our plan has always been to invest in Canadians and to trust Canadians.

That is why, yesterday, we announced that the tax-free Canada child benefit will be fully indexed two years ahead of schedule. For a single mother, making \$35,000, with two children, her benefit will increase by over \$500 in 2019-20. This is what we can do when we stay focused on, and invest in, the middle class, and those working hard to join it.

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Minister of Finance introduced Bill C-27 to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, and immediately afterwards, Morneau Shepell's profits just happened to increase by \$2 million. I would like the people listening to us on social media to get a simple answer to an extremely simple question.

When will the Prime Minister demand transparency from the finance minister so that he will stop deceiving Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, it is the opposition that is making baseless insinuations. There is no conflict of interest. The minister acted on all of the commissioner's recommendations, which included setting up an ethical screen, which the commissioner said was the most effective way to handle things. The minister followed the rules, he set up an appropriate screen, and nothing goes against Bill C-27.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all MPs are required to declare their assets within 60 days, but funnily enough it took the finance minister two years to realize this. The Prime Minister is trying to deflect attention away from the finance minister's personal conflict of interest. However, the fact remains that the finance minister's bill benefited his own company, Morneau Shepell.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister: was the Prime Minister aware that Bill C-27 would benefit Morneau Shepell?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I understand that by trying to attack the government, the opposition is just doing its job. The reality, however, is that we have a Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner who makes sure all MPs follow the rules and follow her advice. The minister did exactly that. I understand that the opposition is hoping to divert attention away from the fact that our economic growth is helping Canadians and putting money in the pockets of the middle class, but it is not going to work.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Morneau Shepell and the finance minister will benefit from Bill C-27. Although we all know the Prime Minister is a very fine and gifted dramatic performer, his "let us just blame the Ethics Commissioner" shtick is not passing the muster test. The Prime Minister needs to be clean with Canadians.

When did he find out the Minister of Finance would benefit from Bill C-27?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I am not trying to blame the Ethics Commissioner, I am trying to trust the Ethics Commissioner. That is what opposition members need to do.

Oral Questions

They need to understand that despite all the attacks and mudslinging that goes on here, we have a system whereby officers of Parliament and commissioners ensure that people follow the rules. That is exactly what happens here. Those rules that apply to us apply to them, and we trust the advice given by the commissioner. We will continue to go above and beyond what she asks whenever possible.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we trust the Ethics Commissioner, but we do not trust the government. We do not trust the finance minister. We do not trust the Prime Minister to give the Ethics Commissioner accurate information. That is the problem.

The Prime Minister himself has a problem, because this conflict of interest is ultimately his responsibility. He either knew the finance minister was making \$65,000 a month off this and he did not care, or he did not know, which means, can he trust the finance minister's judgment and ethics?

Again, when did the Prime Minister find out the finance minister was making money off Bill C-27?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I feel bad for the Conservatives right now. They put forward an economic plan two years ago that completely failed. They attacked us non-stop for wanting to put more money in the pockets of the middle class, for wanting to invest in our communities, for wanting to support people working hard to join the middle class. They did not believe that doing this would actually grow the economy, but it did and it has.

We have created economic growth by doing exactly what we said, We put money in the pockets of Canadians who need it. We are going to continue doing that, much to the despair of the poor Conservatives.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Most members in all parties are able to sit through question period, and hear things they do not like, even things that might provoke them, and not be provoked and not react. There are a few who have difficulty doing that.

[Translation]

I encourage hon. members to restrain themselves.

The hon. member for Essex.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we get closer to Halloween, I would like to tell a scary story. Like all good tales of ghosts and zombies, the trans-Pacific partnership is another tale that appeared dead, but apparently is not. Despite an overwhelming percentage of Canadians who want it gone, the Liberal government just keeps bringing it back to life. In an access to information request, only two out of 18,000 Canadians wrote to the Liberals in support of the TPP. That is .01%.

Why will the Liberal government not stop reviving Frankenstein, and kill the TPP for good?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP, we are a pro-trade party. However, unlike the Conservatives, we believe in good trade deals. That is why we renegotiated a progressive version of CETA. That was the only way that CETA was actually moving forward.

We continue to work with the United States to ensure that NAFTA is modernized. Yes, we continue to look for opportunities to increase trade with the Pacific, but we look to do so in a progressive way that works for everyone. That is what Canadians expect from this government. That is what we are going to deliver.

* * *

BANKRUPTCY

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while in opposition, the Liberals vowed to change bankruptcy laws to protect workers, but since then, the government has done nothing to help workers except apparently monitor the situation, leaving workers at companies like Sears, U.S. Steel, Stelco, Algoma Steel, Wabush Mines, and Cliff Mines reeling. Today we wrote to the Prime Minister, asking him to initiate a special parliamentary investigation into the liquidation of Sears.

Will the Prime Minister initiate an investigation, and commit to changing bankruptcy and insolvency laws to protect Canadian workers, retirees, and their families, yes or no?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course our hearts go out to the workers affected by the decision taken by Sears. We are making every effort to connect Sears' employees and pensioners with programs and services that will help them through this tough time. I understand that the current Sears Canada pension fund assets are held in trust and must be used solely for the benefit of pensioners. Service Canada has been meeting with representatives of Sears Canada to ensure a rapid national and coordinated response to meet the needs of the impacted employees. We will continue to work to help employees affected by this decision.

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TAXATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the Prime Minister claimed that the Liberals would never take away a benefit from a vulnerable Canadian. However, we have a letter dated May 10 that confirms that this is exactly what they have done. The Liberals changed the process, resulting in an 80% denial rate for applicants suffering from type 1 diabetes.

Does the Prime Minister really think that this latest tax grab on vulnerable Canadians is helping the middle class, or is it just a desperate attempt to raise additional money to fund an out-of-control spending problem?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are ensuring that all Canadians who deserve benefits and qualify for benefits get them. However, again, the allegations and the insinuations of the members opposite that we are spending money in the wrong places really makes us wonder, what are the investments they have such issue with? Is it putting more money in the pockets of the middle class? Is it raising taxes on the wealthiest 1% and lowering them on the middle class? These are the kinds of things that the Conservative Party worked against in the last election and continues to rail against now, even though it is growing the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible that the Liberals are taking money away from the most vulnerable. Every day, we hear more and more cases of type 1 diabetics who had previously been approved but have now been rejected for the disability tax credit. It is even worse than we thought, though. Canadians with type 1 diabetes may lose thousands of dollars more in government assistance. That is because in order to qualify for a registered disability savings plan, people have to qualify first for the disability tax credit. Will the Prime Minister stop trying to raise revenue on the backs of the most vulnerable Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, we are focused on helping and supporting the most vulnerable Canadians. That is why we are moving forward on accessibility legislation to help Canadians across the country. That is why we are ensuring that people get the benefits to which they are entitled, which is why we are rehiring nurses at the CRA to help process these files after, yes oh yes, the Conservatives fired them.

The fact is we are going to continue to stay focused on Canadians who need the support and need the help. Unfortunately, the Conservatives for 10 years chose to do things like closing veterans offices and eliminating health benefits for—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for the Prime Minister. It comes from a constituent from Sainte-Justine.

She is concerned because she has diabetes and can no longer collect her disability tax credit. Worse yet, she will no longer qualify for a registered disability savings plan. The Prime Minister better not tell us that he needs more nurses. For years these people have been getting their credit automatically through their doctors.

Why is it easier for the Prime Minister to protect the Minister of Finance than it is to take care of a woman with diabetes in Sainte-Justine?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work on ensuring that people who are eligible for assistance receive that assistance.

Our government's priority is to help the most vulnerable and help those who are in need. For 10 years, under the Conservative

government, people were getting less help than they needed. We have restored the government's ability to serve the public.

In the matter at hand, I will be happy to make sure that the Minister of Health and the Minister of National Revenue follow up on this case should we be asked to do so.

● (1505)

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, Canadians had a choice. They could go with the NDP and Conservative plan for cuts to services, or they could go with our plan to support the middle class and people working hard to join it. They chose our plan that helps people put a roof over their heads and healthy food on their tables. Our plan grows the economy and provides opportunities for people to join the middle class.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what we are doing to help vulnerable Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that we have a responsibility to support those who are working hard and who need just a little help. Yesterday, we announced that we will further increase the working income tax benefit by \$500 million per year. This means a total increase of 65% to this program. Pedro Barata, co-chair of the National Housing Collaborative, said that the “Extra help for [the] working poor is welcome news”, and that this announcement was a key plank to reduce poverty. We could not agree more.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has, for decades, been a petri dish of corruption, financial mismanagement, and political bias. Instead of honouring education, science, and history, UNESCO has denied Jewish history on Temple Mount and across Jerusalem and outrageously proclaimed Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs to be a Palestinian world heritage site.

The United States is withdrawing from UNESCO, as is Israel. When will Canada and the Liberals take a stand?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken a stand. We believe in ensuring a strong Canadian voice within UNESCO to continue to stand up for Israel, to continue to stand up for good projects around the world, to continue to be the voice that Canadians and, indeed, people around the world expect from our representatives to stand up and fight for what is right. We believe that doing that from within organizations rather than from without is, in many cases, the best way to go.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

POVERTY

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals claim to have lifted 300,000 children out of poverty with the Canada child benefit. However, a new report issued by Citizens for Public Justice clearly shows that one in seven people are still living in poverty. One in seven. Even working Canadians are still living in precarious circumstances. The government still has a lot of work to do to eliminate poverty.

What is the government waiting for? When will it help to improve the situations of first nations, the working poor, children, unemployed workers, people with disabilities, families, and refugees in order to make them less vulnerable?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question because it gives me an opportunity to repeat what we announced yesterday. We are in the process of ensuring that the Canada child benefit is indexed to the cost of living. This will help put more much-needed money in the pockets of families in the coming years and reduce child poverty by 40%. We are also giving more assistance to the working poor, who face major challenges. We will be investing an additional \$750 million in 2019 to give more support to those who need it.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reliable access to drinking water and wastewater treatment is vital to the well-being of our communities and an important issue for our indigenous communities. Our government is committed to renewing the relationship with indigenous peoples and providing the infrastructure they need to prosper.

Could the Prime Minister give us an idea of the kind of work the government is doing to improve access to drinking water and wastewater treatment on reserves?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Nickel Belt for his question. The state of indigenous peoples' drinking water and wastewater treatment systems is unacceptable. That is why we recently funded 235 new drinking water supply and wastewater treatment projects in 116 indigenous communities in Ontario. These projects are helping to improve the quality of life in these communities across Ontario. We are also committed to doing more of the same across the country in partnership with indigenous communities.

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●(1510)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that 60 ISIS fighters have entered Canada after fighting a war against our allies and our own soldiers.

How is it possible that these criminals are allowed to return to Canada and live here freely?

We do not know who they are, where they are, or what their plans are.

Why has the Prime Minister not been proactive in informing Canadians about these criminals, and what mechanisms are being put in place to keep Canadians safe?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member and all Canadians that our intelligence services and the RCMP are working very hard to keep Canadians safe every day. We are proud to have created a parliamentary committee that will soon be able to look at everything our security services are doing, to ensure that every effort is being made to protect Canadians and to protect our values and our rules. That is the kind of initiative our government is taking and that the Conservative government never wanted to take.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we now know that the Minister of Canadian Heritage had all the information in hand when she negotiated her agreement with Netflix. She knew full well that it was a bad deal. She also knew her announcement would be historic, as it was the first time a law was being made specifically to exempt a company from taxes. Everyone else has to follow the rules, but not Netflix.

How is it that in a \$500-million deal, there is zero money for francophone creators? This is unacceptable.

Will the Prime Minister tell his minister she needs to stop failing francophone producers and to make a minimum commitment of \$133 million?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, under the deal we signed with Netflix, it will invest \$25 million in the development of projects in Quebec. An additional \$500 million will go to creators across Canada.

I know that Quebec is home to world-class creators and producers. This funding will give our own people the chance to tell their stories not just to Canadians, but to the world. This deal is a boon for Canadian culture in the 21st century.

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[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Patrick O'Donovan, Minister of State at the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform of Ireland.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord on a point of order.

*Routine Proceedings***JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW TRAINING ACT**

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find the unanimous consent of the House for me to move the following motion:

Given the scale of the #metoo campaign, launched by male and female victims of sexual assault and harassment, that the House call on the Senate to consider the victims and promptly adopt Bill C-337, the judicial accountability through sexual assault law training act.

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

Hon. members: Agreed.

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

Hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, on September 29, I rose in the House regarding the absence of community consultation before the Liberal government decided to close the CBSA office in my riding of Oshawa. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of public safety stated that consultations did in fact take place, specifically with the mayor of Oshawa. Since that time, the mayor has been vocal about the fact that he was not consulted and has called on the parliamentary secretary to set the record straight.

I would like to give my fellow Durham MP the opportunity to correct the record and apologize to Mayor Henry and for misleading the House.

● (1515)

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I have reached out to the mayor. Our officials talked to his department beforehand. There was one international flight last year that flew into Oshawa. This is going to be a material improvement.

I have reached out to meet with the mayor on numerous occasions. The mayor says he does not want to meet, so I guess we will have to leave it there, and hopefully he will—

The Speaker: Order. That sounds like debate.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I have two letters that demonstrate the difference in policy and the change that occurred with the applications for type 1 diabetics. I seek unanimous consent to table these two documents.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to table the documents?

I see there is no unanimous consent.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**WAYS AND MEANS**

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to table a notice of ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017, and other measures. Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, three reports of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.

The first concerns the Pacific Northwest Economic Region 26th Annual Summit, held in Calgary, Alberta, from July 17 to 21, 2016.

The second concerns the 56th Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum of the Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Conference, held in Quebec City, Quebec, from August 7 to 10, 2016.

The third concerns the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance Conference, held in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from October 2 to 4, 2016.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 42nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled, "Review of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment".

[English]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of constituents from my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills who are calling on the Government of Canada to include regenerative agriculture in its climate change plans.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present from a number of residents from southwestern Ontario who are very concerned about the fact that the Conservative government of the past stripped environmental regulations covered in the Navigable Waters Protection Act and that the current government has failed to keep its promise to reinstate the environmental protections gutted by that original bill.

The Thames River, in London—Fanshawe, is an incredible and historic river, and we would like to protect it. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support my bill, Bill C-355, which would permit the government to prioritize the protection of the Thames River by amending the Navigation Protection Act.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition in the House today calling on the government to support the energy east pipeline. This petition was signed by the petitioners before the project was, unfortunately, cancelled, but they were concerned, and continue to be concerned, that the government is not supportive of pipeline construction. In fact, the government is looking for every opportunity to put barriers in the way of pipeline construction, and it has indirectly killed the success of the energy east pipeline.

The petitioners want us to do more to support the project, and they want to see it come back.

• (1520)

The Speaker: I encourage members, as happened in the last two days, to not engage in debate when presenting petitions.

The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition calling on the government to identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act. Signatories of this petition would like to see provincial and territorial governments entitled to funds under the Canada health transfer system to specifically make hospice palliative care accessible to all residents of Canada.

IRAN

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present petitions signed by Canadians highlighting that many Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups have murdered and injured Canadian citizens and have committed heinous

Government Orders

acts against foreign diplomats. As such, these petitioners are calling on the government to maintain the listing of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism.

FALUN GONG

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from people across Canada, but mostly from Whitehorse, Yukon. There is even one from a mobile home a couple of hundred yards from the mobile home I live in.

The petitioners explain that Falun Gong is a spiritual practice. It consists of the principles of truth, compassion, and forbearance. They say that the United Nations, Amnesty International, and western governments have condemned the terrible torture and deaths of Falun Gong practitioners, including reports of thousands being killed for their organs.

The petitioners call for the immediate release of Canadian citizen, Ms. Sun Qian, who has been detained in Beijing for practising Falun Gong.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of 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, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There are 15 motions and amendments standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-49.

Motions Nos. 1 to 15 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

Government Orders

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-49, in Clause 14, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 18 on page 8 with the following:

“aux termes de l'article 53.8, le commissaire rend”.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 61.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 62.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 63.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 64.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 65.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 66.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 67.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 69.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 70.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 71.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 72.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 73.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-49 be amended by deleting Clause 74.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise and speak to my report stage amendments to Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act.

This bill amends 13 other acts. It deals with planes, trains, and ships. It touches on airports and seaports. It is vast in its reach and wide in its scope. Yet, if I had to state my thoughts on this bill in two words, it would be “missed opportunity”.

Through Bill C-49, the government had the opportunity to make great strides in improving our Canadian transportation system to

ensure that it works well for all Canadians. Instead, the government let that chance go by.

The transport committee began special hearings on Bill C-49 in the week prior to the House's return from its summer recess. Over the course of that week, we heard 44 hours of testimony from dozens of stakeholders and expert witnesses in each of the sectors touched on by Bill C-49. We were given briefs and letters, consisting of thousands of pages of data, with over 100 suggested technical amendments from those whose lives and livelihoods will be affected by this bill.

We heard, almost unanimously, that Bill C-49 was a good start, and that if the suggested amendments were made, the bill would actually accomplish its stated objectives. However, after only two weeks to review this mountain of information, the Liberal members of the transport committee defeated over 24 reasonable technical amendments. Again, these amendments were suggested by a wide range of stakeholders and experts, and were written to make the bill a workable solution for all involved.

The good news is that there are still some amendments we can make here at report stage of this bill. I will be suggesting four amendments, as they were moved. The first of these has to do with airline joint ventures. Joint ventures, while sometimes useful for creating efficiencies for airlines on routes in the air passenger industry, can also run the risk of comprising consumer interests due to the loss of competition on a given route, and the ensuing increase in ticket prices.

That is why the decision to grant or deny an application for a joint venture has historically been left in the hands of the very capable Competition Bureau and the Commissioner of Competition. Bill C-49 would change that. If the bill were to pass in its current form, the Minister of Transport would have the final say on whether or not two airlines could combine routes and share cost and profit.

Further, this bill stipulates that the Minister of Transport must consider the nebulous terms “public interest”, and not simply whether or not a proposed joint venture would reduce competition. I use the word “nebulous” to describe the terms “public interest”, because over the past two years, far too often we have seen the Liberal government and its ministers claim to be serving the public interest while, in fact, they are only serving their own political or personal interests.

The recent political machinations that led to the cancellation of energy east come to mind as an example of the government serving its own political interests rather than the interests of all Canadians.

However, getting back to the amendment before us, this change gives an uncomfortable amount of power to the Minister of Transport over the currently non-partisan process and over the Competition Bureau. Bill C-49 risks taking a non-political process and politicizing it.

Government Orders

Bill C-49 also introduces an option for airport authorities to purchase the services of additional security personnel from CATSA. Ostensibly, additional staffing would increase the speed at which travellers are processed through security. On the surface, increasing security and processing speed to ensure that travellers remain safe while not missing their flights sounds like a good idea. However, there are two significant areas of concern.

The first has to do with costs. Air travel in Canada is already among the most expensive in the world. This provision could increase the costs even more. We all know that any added cost for the airports would simply be passed along to the end user, making air travel for middle-class Canadians even more expensive.

• (1530)

Second, we heard in testimony throughout the study of this portion of Bill C-49 that the federal government currently takes more in security fees than it provides back to CATSA to perform its duties. I believe this is unacceptable.

This is the opposite of making travel more affordable for Canada's middle class. Bill C-49 would, rather than addressing the issue, simply impose yet another de facto tax on Canadian travellers. For this reason, I have proposed a report stage amendment to remove this clause from the bill.

I am also proposing an amendment to remove two other clauses, clauses 73 and 74, from Bill C-49 that would give port authorities access to the Liberals' infrastructure bank. The infrastructure bank is funded by taking \$15 billion away from infrastructure projects for small and medium-sized communities across Canada through the Liberals' imposition of a \$100 million minimum cost requirement for projects to qualify for support from the infrastructure bank. Small and medium-sized communities would see almost no benefit as a result. While I understand that our ports are in need of infrastructure investments, the infrastructure bank is not the way to address this.

While these are the report stage amendments I am proposing, I was very disappointed by the display of partisanship at committee when this bill was reviewed. At committee, my colleague from the NDP, the member for Trois-Rivières, and I proposed small, reasonable, technical amendments, which were defeated by the Liberals at committee.

For instance, with the introduction of long-haul interswitching, the Liberals sought to create their own solution to a problem which had already been addressed with a reasonable Conservative solution.

In the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, the previous Conservative government had created a regime of extended interswitching that worked so well in the prairie provinces that shippers from across Canada requested that it be extended to the entire country.

Instead, the Liberals created the complicated, inefficient long-haul interswitching regime that has such poor conception, and so many exceptions, it will be all but useless to shippers. For example, the member for Trois-Rivières and I both proposed an amendment requested by many stakeholders that would have made LHI work that much better.

This minor technical amendment would have changed the wording of the provision to allow the first interchange point to be

in the reasonable direction of the shipper's destination. What does that mean exactly? Simply put, shippers did not want to have to send their product potentially hundreds of kilometres in the wrong direction to reach the nearest interchange point, as this would increase their costs. What happened to this very reasonable technical amendment? The Liberals defeated it. It was another huge missed opportunity to make this bill work.

Meanwhile, not content to make this measure simply worthless, the Liberals may have actually succeeded in making it harmful. In Bill C-49, toxic inhalation hazards, known as TIHs, are exempted from long-haul interswitching, supposedly due to safety concerns. However, this is not a reasonable exemption to make. TIHs are shipped under an extensive safety regime, as prescribed under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and its regulations.

The real concern is that this exemption undermines the principle of the common carrier obligation. This principle essentially states that railways are obligated to carry all products without discrimination, and allows shippers to access the railway's services without unreasonable carriage fees or threats of denial of service. Denying access to long-haul interswitching for TIHs could be the thin edge of the wedge that would one day break apart the common carrier principle.

Ten minutes is not nearly long enough to list every reasonable technical amendment that the Liberals voted against. Suffice it to say this bill is full of missed opportunities. It is my hope the government will take a small step forward, and accept our report stage amendments.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek for her presentation. I admit that I agree with the key components of her speech. It is truly a pleasure to work with her at the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. I would not have believed it when she was in the Conservative government and that brings me to my question.

Since she was once on the government side, and it will surely be my turn in 2019, what happens to members when they arrive in government to make them suddenly think that they have all the answers and that every amendment proposed by the opposition is out of order?

That is what we experienced with Bill C-49, and that is what we recently experienced with Bill S-2 as well.

What makes the Liberal government members think that the light only shines when it is red?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I can manage to get inside the head of a Liberal. This is really an omnibus bill that amends 13 different acts, and has consequential impacts on all three modes of transportation.

As I mentioned, we heard from many stakeholders in a short period of time who all agreed that if the government would be willing to make some small, very technical amendments, this bill would actually go a long way in addressing many of the concerns they had. It is sad the government is not actually listening to those stakeholders, and to those experts who recommended these technical amendments.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a mentor who said that public service is good for us. As the member here mentioned earlier, we really are seeing a government that does not put the public's interest first at hand, or really their political interests, let alone what we are seeing from the finance minister and his lack of transparency.

With respect to this bill, and clause 14 that amends the Canada Transportation Act with respect to airline joint ventures, it takes the final decision-making authority pertaining to joint ventures away from the Commissioner of Competition and gives it to the Minister of Transport. In giving the Minister of Transport that final authority with respect to airline joint ventures, the clause mandates the minister to keep the act in the public's interest, but exceptionally subjectively.

Could the member comment in detail on what her concerns are with respect to this clause. I do not believe it is in the public's interest; it is only in the political interests of the current Liberal government. I know she believes in the public's interest. I am looking forward to her comments.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, quite simply put, as we have seen time and time again from the government, and the last number of weeks would highlight this, it has great difficulty in distinguishing between its own political interests and the public interest.

A potential effect of clause 14 would be that Canadian consumers might have fewer airlines to choose from on certain routes. As a result, Canadians might face higher costs for air travel. This is one of the reasons why we raised this at committee and why this amendment was brought forward. Again, that nebulous term of public interest is what is really concerning when it comes to the Liberal government.

• (1540)

[Translation]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-49.

Our rail transportation system is essential to Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner. It is one of the economy's driving forces. That is why our government is taking a proactive approach by introducing this bill. The proposed measures will support the system's commercial orientation, which has made Canada's freight rail service one of the most efficient systems with some of the lowest freight rates in the world—even lower than in the United States.

Railway companies have also made significant investments to make Canada's rail transportation system more efficient and safe. That is why this bill also includes measures to promote future investment. This bill not only adds to our success, but will also ensure future risk management. Even if the rail transportation system is currently doing fine, there are some pressures to handle.

• (1545)

[English]

Canada's freight rail legislative framework must address these pressures, and that is why Bill C-49 would foster a balanced, efficient, transparent, and safe freight rail system. Overall, the freight rail measures in this bill strike a delicate balance between railway and shipper interests and provide the right conditions for our freight rail system over the long term. These legislative provisions would provide shippers with stronger tools so they can access the highest level of service at the best possible rates.

Through their diligent work in reviewing Bill C-49, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities has proposed amendments that would further strengthen Canada's freight rail legislative framework. Amendments made by the committee include providing captive shippers in British Columbia, Alberta, and northern Quebec with access to long-haul interswitching; extending the notice period for the removal of interchanges and clarifying that the removal of an interchange does not relieve a railway of its level of service obligations; advancing the timelines for the coming into force of the new data requirements on service and performance metrics to six months following royal assent; and tightening the timelines for the posting of these metrics on a weekly basis by the Canadian Transportation Agency, which would improve transparency. Together, these amendments would strengthen the freight rail provisions while maintaining the balance that Bill C-49 is intended to achieve.

Safety is also a critical element of our future success, and that is why this bill includes important measures on voice and video recorders. We recognize that the greater use of technology can often create challenging and complex dynamics in the work environment. I am certain that my hon. colleagues can appreciate that this is the case with the proposed amendments to the Railway Safety Act, which would mandate the installation of voice and video recorders in the locomotive cabs, including both freight and passenger trains.

As background, allow me to remind my hon. colleagues that the call for in-cab voice and video recorders was added to the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's watch list in 2012. Further, the question of mandating this technology has been studied numerous times and been the subject of various recommendations from technical industry working groups, the TSB, and parliamentary committees. This includes, over the years, Transport Canada working groups, with the participation of the railway industry and labour unions, to study the feasibility and safety benefits of requiring this technology in locomotive cabs, specifically in 2006, 2009, and 2012. The latter resulted in the adoption of a voluntary approach whereby railways were encouraged to install the devices on a voluntary basis. More recently, there have been calls for a mandatory regime in the independent Canada Transportation Act review report and in the 2016 report of a committee of this House, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Government Orders

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada has always supported a regime such as the one being proposed in this legislation, which is outlined in their safety study on in-cab recorders published in September 2016. In that report, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada concluded that to maximize safety benefits, the use of data obtained from these recorders should not be limited to post-accident investigation, but rather should be used to also support proactive safety management.

The government has carefully considered and examined how to maximize the safety benefits of this technology while respecting employee privacy. This is why the changes we are proposing specifically define, limit, and control access to, and uses of, the data obtained through these recordings in accordance with Canadian privacy laws. As my hon. colleagues can attest, this is a comprehensive and balanced approach that would significantly advance railway safety while expressly supporting employee rights.

Bill C-49 also proposes a new, transparent, and predictable process that takes into account both competitive and public interest considerations in the assessment of air carrier joint ventures. Under the proposed process, the Minister of Transport would receive a report from the commissioner of competition identifying any risks to competition. The minister would assess these arrangements from a public interest perspective and make a decision taking both competition and public interest considerations into account.

As mandated by the amendments made at committee, a summary of the commissioner's conclusions and the minister's final decision would be made public to ensure the transparency of the process. Making this information public would inform Canadians of the grounds for granting or refusing a joint venture arrangement, and under what conditions, and would likely help build public confidence in the process.

Also, due to a clerical error, the text of the French language version of the adopted amendment continues to make the publication by the commissioner of competition a voluntary step in the process instead of a mandatory one. There is a government amendment being proposed at report stage today that would correct this clerical error so that the English and French versions of this bill will be aligned.

To conclude on this topic, it is expected that joint ventures would lead to better connectivity and an overall improvement in the air passenger experience, while ensuring competition.

As it relates to air passenger screening services, Canada's largest airports have expressed an interest in improving the timelines of passenger screening, either through additional screeners or technological innovation. At the same time, some smaller non-designated airports have expressed an interest in obtaining screening services to help develop economic opportunities. The proposed amendments to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act are important, as they would create a more flexible framework to allow CATSA to provide these services on a cost-recovery basis, which would in turn allow Canada to maintain an aviation system that is both secure and cost-effective.

Additionally, important amendments to the Canada Marine Act are proposed that would allow Canada port authorities to access loans and loan guarantees from the newly created Canada

infrastructure bank, which would support investments in Canada's trade corridors and infrastructure projects, contributing to our long-term growth as a nation. Finally, Bill C-49 would improve the efficiency of Canada's supply chain by allowing foreign vessels to reposition owned or leased empty containers between locations in Canada on a non-revenue basis.

In summary, Bill C-49 provides critical objectives, including fair access to shipper remedies, efficiency, long-term investment, transparency, and safety. I urge members to support Bill C-49 in its current form and to adopt it as quickly as possible so that the right conditions will be in place for a successful winter season in our rail transportation system.

● (1550)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question focuses specifically on the locomotive voice and video recording portion of her presentation. I agree, and I think most Canadians would agree, that all locomotives' black boxes, so to speak, are probably, and theoretically at least, a good idea. We want to ensure that if there is an accident, investigators, post-accident, can determine exactly, if they can, what happened. The question, however, is one about privacy, and the parliamentary secretary mentioned that. There was a lack of specificity in her comments when she said that they want to respect the privacy of employees, which I can appreciate, but I did not hear any details about how they expect to do that. I have received many questions from union members in my riding concerned about the fact that their privacy may be violated, because they have not heard any clarity from the government on how their privacy will be ensured.

Could the parliamentary secretary please perhaps further explain to the House how the privacy concerns expressed by union members in particular would be met, and privacy maintained and ensured?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question and something the committee struggled with. It had quite a fulsome discussion on the issue. We have committed to this path because we believe that it is in the interests of Canadians to have access to this data for safety management purposes, but we have also committed to defining access, limiting access, and controlling access to the data, limiting how and for what it can be used for. All of the uses will be in accordance with Canadian privacy laws. I understand the concern. We have heard it loud and clear, and will make sure that this data is used for its intended purposes, which is to make our rail system even safer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to tip my hat to the response I got from my Conservative colleague a few minutes ago when she said that she cannot get inside the head of a Liberal. I would not be able to manage it either.

Government Orders

I always believed that in the House, as well as in committee, solutions emerge from the clash of ideas. That is how we come up with the best solution. I must apologize to the hon. member for saying earlier that no amendment had been accepted. That is not true. One amendment was accepted, and then only because the Liberals had proposed the exact same one. That is not what I would call open-minded. Even in the example that we are talking about, voice and video recorders on locomotives, what is being proposed in Bill C-49 is at odds with the conclusions of a Transport Canada working group.

I will repeat the question. What place do the opposition parties have in developing a bill if all amendments are always rejected?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, I know this issue is very important to the hon. member and the committee as a whole.

What we are trying to do is to create a transportation system with a focus on a long-term, comprehensive, and balanced approach among competing interests, oriented toward improving the security and safety of the system and the services it provides to Canadians, and that is in their best interests. A focus on a permanent, long-term solution is really what we were trying to achieve. There is no doubt that it is often a delicate balance, but we have heard a lot of testimony from a lot of witnesses, and finding that delicate balance is what we have tried to do.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I admit that I had two reactions when I learned that I had another 10 minutes to speak to Bill C-49.

First, I felt a little bit of panic. I asked myself how I would manage, in 10 minutes, to cover everything that is wrong with this bill. Second, I told myself to calm down, because no matter what I say, I will not be heard, and nothing I suggest will be retained. I will simply have to talk about some aspects of the bill that seem to have major problems, raise the question of relevance, and talk about how we work in the House and in committee.

Members will recall that during the 2015 election campaign, the Liberals said that everything about the previous Conservative government's approach had to be changed. Now, we see that essentially nothing has changed. As soon as a party is in government, it seems to magically become all-knowing, and bills automatically become wonderful and unchallengeable.

I still maintain that enlightenment comes from the clash of ideas. This is also what Quebeckers and Canadians expect from Parliament. They expect all members, regardless of their role in the House or their political stripes, to bring their perspectives and to work together to find the best solution. I must say that this is not the experience I am having right now.

I want to take the few minutes I have left to give an overview of the aspects of this bill that are ill advised. This bill plays well in the media, because Canadian consumers have been waiting for this for years. For a number of weeks the public saw Bill C-49 as a bill on the passengers' bill of rights, and yet, it is much more than that. It is

an omnibus bill, so even if it often deals with transportation, it remains an omnibus bill.

One might ask why the government would introduce an omnibus transportation bill instead of addressing each problem and finding the best solution. Was the government hoping to use a wide-ranging bill such as this to discreetly gloss over some issues it does not care as much about? To ask that question is to answer it.

I will say that, as I was preparing my speech, I began to think 10 minutes might be too much. Perhaps I would not need more than 10 seconds to sum up Bill C-49 with the help of an old saying about biting off more than one can chew. That is exactly what is happening with Bill C-49, a bill that tried to tackle some major and necessary changes but falls short in many regards.

I want to comment on the passengers' bill of rights that consumers have been waiting for for years. Canada will once again be the last hold-out in adopting a passengers' bill of rights not unlike the ones that already exist all over the world. Let me emphasize that a great many witnesses told the committee that similar bills of rights already exist and that the European version is probably the gold standard. The European model is actually the one that inspired a New Democratic colleague of ours to introduce a proper passengers' bill of rights during the 41st Parliament. All Bill C-49 does is offer some general guidelines for Transport Canada consultations so that, at some point in 2018, the department can come up with some recommendations that the minister can do with as he pleases. If we are lucky, I get the sense the government will propose a passengers' bill of rights a few weeks or months before the 2019 election to generate some media hype. In the meantime, passengers will still have no rights.

No one needed to reinvent the wheel, here; every single witness testified that the systems that already exist work well, and yet, what we have amounts to an empty gesture. I would like to share one brief example of the difference a bill of rights can make.

• (1600)

Flight cancellations that invoke the European passengers' bill of rights account for 0.4% of all cancelled flights, whereas in Canada, where we still do not have a bill of rights, the rate is four times higher. That shows beyond a doubt that a bill of rights does have a real impact.

This could even be described as a government approach, since all of the rules that will make up this bill of rights will be applied by regulation. They will not be embedded in the act and so the minister will be able to easily change them on the back of a napkin some Friday afternoon as he sees fit. It is much more complicated to amend a law since that requires the involvement of the House. The approach is therefore questionable, as is the fact that the bill of rights is not embedded in Bill C-49,

Government Orders

I also want to say a few words about the voice and video recorders that were mentioned in previous questions. Everyone agrees that we should try to do everything we can to enhance protections and decrease the number of potential incidents. That is why airplanes have black boxes. As soon as there is an incident, the data from the black box can be checked to try to determine what the problem was, come to the best conclusions possible, and amend the approach if necessary.

We proposed an amendment that allayed all of the concerns workers have about the bill of rights and the protection of privacy. Everyone agreed that the Transportation Safety Board of Canada inspectors were the ones who needed that information. That is what those recordings should be used for. The TSB and the TSB alone should have access to those recordings if an incident occurs. That would allay all of the concerns of workers who might think that the employer could use those recordings for disciplinary or other purposes. It also addresses any concerns regarding the violation of privacy. The recordings would be available to TSB inspectors and only TSB inspectors when necessary. That is another amendment that was dismissed out of hand.

I would like to talk a little about the competition commissioner. Those who followed the case will remember the joint venture agreement between United Airlines and Air Canada that the competition commissioner ruled on. He said that a number of routes should be omitted from the agreement because, in the end, it was consumers who would lose out. He had the authority to limit this sort of agreement.

Now, the government is giving the minister that power, and relegating the commissioner to an advisory role. The minister can make his own decisions based on the public interest, a concept that is rather vague and becoming even vaguer. The committee never managed to define this concept. Neither the minister nor any of the witnesses or public servants who appeared managed to define it. That could result in an abuse of power by the minister, who may not necessarily defend the interests of Canadian and Quebec consumers. That is a serious problem.

Finally, I want to talk about regional airports. We all agree on the need to develop regional airports. Many companies want to offer cheap flights from regional airports rather than the larger airports. Some municipalities, such as Trois-Rivières, have explored the option of developing chartered flights, but had to abandon the idea because the cost of security is too prohibitive. No consideration is being given to the possibility of redistributing the cost of security to every passenger and airport. Instead, those who want security services are simply being told they have to pay for it. If a regional airport like the one in Trois-Rivières wanted to offer security services and pay for them itself, it would have to charge an extra \$70 or \$80 per ticket. We know full well that at that rate, the airport cannot compete and the idea will be dropped.

•(1605)

Those are the four elements I wanted to address. I sense that the Speaker would like me to wrap up so I will leave it there and make myself available to answer questions.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I completely agree with him,

particularly when he said that our bills are “not unchallengeable”. That is true.

It is all well and good to criticize the government, but what does he have to say about our government's accomplishments? Our government has created over 400,000 jobs, and our economy is beginning to prosper. We introduced the Canada child benefit that helped lift over 300,000 children out of poverty, and our Prime Minister has played a key role in restoring Canada's image on the world stage.

We created an infrastructure bank. Over \$160 billion will be invested in infrastructure in the years to come, the largest commitment to infrastructure in Canadian history.

About a month and a half ago in Laval, which is in my riding, we announced a \$20-million investment to improve the public transit system.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite. I understand that the Liberals are now in the habit of changing the subject and talking about something different when we ask questions.

I also noticed that, at the beginning of his question, the member said “not unchallengeable”. In my opinion, two negatives always make a positive, so Bill C-49 should be challenged. If the Liberals really want to talk about the economy, then let us talk about it.

I would like to know why the government rejected all of the recommendations that we made on the development of regional airports.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his remarks. I thoroughly enjoy working with him on committee. In fact, he would have made the observation during our clause-by-clause study of the bill and amendments made that we often had the same amendments we would have brought forward. I believe that was because it completely reflected what we heard from the stakeholders and experts. These were not amendments that we came up with ourselves, but amendments that the industry told us were needed.

The other observation made at that time was that this piece of legislation was a crowning achievement. I do not know if he would like to comment on that, but what I would ask him to comment on is the privacy commissioner's letter that was written to our committee chair, dated September 12, 2017, which raised concerns about how Bill C-49 was addressing the data that was going to be collected from LVVRs. Now that we are at report stage, does the member believe that the bill addresses these concerns adequately?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. My speech and questions may have made it sound as if I want to throw the baby out with the bathwater and think everything is terrible.

Government Orders

There is one positive aspect of our work that I would highlight, however, and that is the collegiality of committee testimony. We get to hear every point of view in committee. We studied Bill C-49 for five days from dawn to dusk, and we were happy to do it. Every piece of testimony added one more brick to the building of this bill.

That being said, why is it that, after our study, these bricks are not being used to build up the bill? Why are they instead being used either to build a Liberal version of the bill, or to stone some amendments to death?

Several lines of consensus clearly emerged from all of the testimony we heard during our study of Bill C-49. The reason they are no longer reflected in the bill is not because members from any party felt uneasy about calling for a given addition, deletion, or change. It is because, I repeat, all of the amendments were rejected, except those the Liberals had proposed.

• (1610)

[English]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking to Bill C-49 today. I am opposed to this bill because of a number of issues with it, but in particular I want to speak to section 14 of the bill.

Section 14 concerns the review of arrangements involving two or more transportation undertakings providing air services. In other words, section 14 involves joint ventures between two airlines, joint ventures that allow airlines to co-operate in terms of sharing routes, frequent flier programs, and revenue-sharing and cost-sharing.

This is not an insignificant section of the bill. This is a major change to competition law. Section 14 of Bill C-49 makes major changes to the Competition Act.

I want to take a step back and explain why I think this is so concerning. The Competition Bureau is a very important organization. It ensures fair competition in Canada. It ensures that Canadian consumers and Canadian companies operate in a marketplace where they can prosper, a marketplace where there is sufficient competition, and a marketplace that delivers lower prices and more choices for consumers and companies.

Canada has long had a strong legal tradition and strong framework legislation in the area of competition law. We introduced competition law before the United States did in the 19th century, and throughout the last 150 years we have continually strengthened that competition law in order to ensure that we do not see anti-competitive behaviours in the marketplace.

I remember in 2004 when the then-minority government of prime minister Paul Martin was in place. It introduced a bill that would modernize competition law with the introduction of administrative monetary penalties that would work in place of, and alongside of, Criminal Code penalties that have a much higher threshold of proof.

While that legislation did not pass, the subsequent Harper government introduced similar legislation that was eventually adopted, and administrative monetary penalties are now part of our competition law. Canada has long had a strong tradition of ensuring competitive marketplaces. We are also seen around the world as

leaders in competition law enforcement and ensuring that companies cannot abuse their marketplace position.

It is with great concern that I read section 14 of this bill that is in front of us, because it would weaken the bureau. The bureau is an independent law enforcement agency. This bill would actually take power away from the Competition Bureau and the commissioner of competition, and give it to the Minister of Transport. Not only that, it would allow the Minister of Transport to ignore competition concerns and to approve airline joint ventures.

The reason why this is so very concerning is that we know that more competition and a more competitive marketplace leads to lower prices and more choice for Canadian consumers. If we look at the history of airline policy in this country, we have come a long way over the last 30 years.

Privatization and increased competition have given Canadians more choice and lower prices in the airline industry. We started with deregulation in the 1980s, we privatized Air Canada in 1988, we spun out of Transport Canada the airports across this country in 1992, we established independent airport authorities in the 1990s, and because of that, there have been literally tens of billions of dollars of investment in airports and in airlines in this country.

For example, in the early 1990s, some \$50 million a year was being spent on airport improvements. Since airports were spun out of the Department of Transport in 1992, over \$14 billion has been invested in Canadian airports. The same is true of Air Canada. It is a much better airline today than it was in the 1980s when it was heavily regulated and not subject to competition, and owned by the Government of Canada. Today it is a much better airline, and it is a better airline because it has been subject to competition.

• (1615)

However, the job is not yet done. It is clear through numerous studies that the Canadian travelling public is still paying far too high a price to get from A to B in this country. That is why section 14 of the bill is so very concerning. It is going to lead to less competition, increased prices, and less choice for the travelling public, which runs counter to the effort that we made over the last number of decades to increase competition and lower prices for Canadians.

I want to give an example to illustrate this point. In 2011, Air Canada wanted to enter into a joint venture with United Continental that would allow them to share many transborder routes between Canada and the United States, and Canada and other destinations. That joint venture was fully reviewed by the Competition Bureau and the bureau demanded that certain conditions be put on that joint venture. The bureau in its review concluded that 10 cross-border routes between Canada and the United States would be less competitive for Canadian consumers because Air Canada and United Continental would be subject a monopoly and nine other routes would be subject to less competition than currently is the case.

Government Orders

The bureau refused to approve the joint venture unless certain routes were exempted, so the consent agreement that was entered into between the parties and the Competition Bureau exempted 14 cross-border routes from this joint venture, ensuring that on those 14 cross-border routes there was sufficient competition for Canadian consumers. The bill in front of us today would allow the minister to override the bureau and to approve these joint ventures without any conditions to ensure sufficient competition.

If we take a step back from this and we ask ourselves why the government is doing this, it seems to me that one of the reasons is that it has become a bit of a political “scratch my back and I will scratch yours” game. The government pressured Air Canada to buy 75 C Series jets from Bombardier in order to help the government politically with the problem it had with Bombardier. Fearing that the company was entering a dangerous period of insolvency, the government put a lot of pressure on a private sector company to purchase these 75 C Series jets.

I suspect that in return two bills were introduced in Parliament. I think the government needs to come clean on whether or not there was a quid pro quo in this arrangement. Air Canada buys these jets and in return the government introduces two bills, Bill C-10, which lifted the requirement for Air Canada to have maintenance facilities in certain cities in this country, and Bill C-49, which has section 14 that would allow the Minister of Transport to approve joint ventures without any conditions to ensure sufficient competition.

This would be a real step back for competition law. It would weaken competition particularly when it comes to future joint ventures that airlines in this country may enter into. It would lead to higher prices for Canadian consumers and less choice. It is for that reason that I strongly believe that this section of the bill should be deleted and why I am opposed to the bill. I look forward to members' questions and comments.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have already heard a lot of people speak about Bill C-49. I had the privilege of attending the hearings in September when I subbed in for that week. I found the hearings incredible in the sense of the knowledge that was shared by all of the experts, as well as the learning, and collegiality among all parties listening and questioning the people there. Having said that, I put some notes down on paper. I am not as well spoken as the previous member, so I will refer to my notes extensively.

Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, makes large-scale changes to how transportation is regulated in Canada. It is an omnibus bill. It makes big changes to rail, air, and marine port authorities. The question is, does it make all the right ones?

I would like to discuss the complicated set of changes Bill C-49 makes to rail in Canada. The changes to the long-haul interswitching this bill makes replace the provisions introduced by the previous Conservative government, which extended interswitching distance to 160 kilometres. Those provisions expired on August 1. I remember well the winter of 2013-14, and the reason why these changes were made at that time.

This is a significant challenge. It needs to be dealt with sooner rather than later. The shipping industry has been left in limbo since that time. Shippers and producers rely on those tools to ensure access

to competing railways. Without them, they lose an important bargaining chip in negotiating prices with railways. Some would say they were not used that much. On the other hand, they were there as a bargaining tool.

This directly hurts competition and can even result in no produce being moved at all in some areas. That's what happened in the Peace country in 2014. That is why the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act was necessary to address the situation in 2014.

Therefore, new interswitching provisions are long overdue. Unfortunately, it is far from clear whether this bill meets its objective of improving shipper and producer options with the 1,200-kilometre interswitching tool. The system introduced through Bill C-30 was popular with shippers. It provided the certainty of a regulated rate up to 160 kilometres. Bill C-49 proposes changing this so that the interswitching rate over 30 kilometres will be decided by the CTA on an ad hoc basis. The witnesses I heard at the transport committee preferred the 160-kilometre regulated rate system we already had.

The 30-kilometre interswitching rate will be set each year. It takes into account the railroad's infrastructure needs across their entire network. This could increase the rate paid by shippers.

The rate-setting regime this bill introduces needs to be designed to ensure that shippers have access to competitive rates. As designed, the rate will be derived from comparable traffic that is subject to captivity. This system needs to concentrate on a concrete review mechanism to ensure it is actually working for shippers. The government cannot just design this system and leave it to its own devices. Without a sunset clause, which we heard asked for many times, or predesignated review dates in two to three years, there are absolutely no guarantees for shippers and producers that they will benefit.

As it stands, there is simply too much uncertainty about the impact of the newly redesigned interswitching provisions. They need to be reviewable and they need to be timely. We need them implemented now.

Speaking of captive shippers and producers, it is noteworthy that the nearest interswitching location for many shippers and producers in northern Alberta and B.C. would be in Kamloops-Vancouver corridor. The other exclusionary zone is from Quebec City to Windsor. Interswitching is not allowed beyond 30 kilometres in these areas. For these captive shippers, the new interswitching provisions will do nothing to yield more competitive rates and improve competition. This is a serious problem. These captive shippers and producers have no choice but to use one company to which they are effectively held hostage.

Government Orders

It is important to remember that railways in Canada operate in a near monopoly situation. This situation could put shippers and producers at a real disadvantage. The provisions of Bill C-49 that allow shippers to request a contract from a railway, with reciprocal penalties, offers the chance to foster more competition.

• (1620)

However, the penalties need to be designed to acknowledge that the railways have much greater economic power than the shippers. Bill C-49 is intended to encourage the efficient movement of shippers' traffic while creating a system that is fairly balanced between the shipper and the railway. Therefore, the government needs to take a clear position that because of the difference in economic power, railways would be penalized at a higher rate than shippers. One dollar to a shipper versus one dollar to a railway is very different. Giving both the same fixed penalty would not be reciprocation. The railway simply would not face a meaningful penalty for failing to fulfill its service obligations.

The lack of short-line rail is also a pressing issue. There are very few left, and they are a critical component, where they do exist, of our infrastructure. Without them, we need to rely on trucking, which is hard on the roads in municipalities and worse for the environment.

When the railway does not operate efficiently for shippers, the whole supply chain is impacted. This we heard a number of times. They need to collaborate and plan with the whole chain, or the system does not work efficiently. If the respective parties plan their supply chain, the whole system has a chance to be more equitable and efficient. If a producer contracts with a shipper for a specified date, then gets a call that the cars will be showing up a week late, that is a problem, and the producer pays the penalty. The cars then show up late at their destination, and the producer is often the one who ends up suffering for it. When railways do not get their cars where they are supposed to be on time, that incurred cost goes back to the producers. They are held ransom by the whole system.

What I heard in committee when this bill was being considered was a lot of talk about adequate rail service. This bill needs to do more than strive for adequate. The government has expressed a desire to increase agriculture exports by 40%. Transportation needs to work much better, or increasing the amount of produce will be irrelevant. Canadians need and expect great rail service. We need an efficient system that ensures that cars show up and ship grain on time.

We all are aware that NAFTA negotiations are ongoing. It is therefore remarkable that the government would allow the new 1,200 kilometre interswitching distance to increase U.S. rail access to Canada at regulated rates. The U.S. could access this Canadian traffic without reciprocity. It seems like weak negotiating on the part of the government to give up this leverage before NAFTA negotiations are concluded.

With regard to air travel, Bill C-49 introduces some interesting provisions. It would take the ultimate authority on joint-venture decisions away from the commissioner of competition, which was mentioned by others, and would give it to the minister. It would further require the minister to take into account the public interest. This is a broad and extremely subjective term. We currently have an independent, non-partisan public official making the decisions to

promote competition. The bill may introduce a needless political component to the decision-making process.

Bill C-49 would also allow the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority to sell security screening services to airports. When large designated airports that already have security screening services buy additional screening, that cost is shifted to the airlines. The airlines then pass it on to consumers. This provision would essentially be a veiled tax on air travellers.

I respect that the government intends to benefit air passengers by introducing this bill. However, it would leave what compensation passengers would be entitled to from the airlines to the discretion of the minister and the CTA. This would be extensive government intervention. We cannot risk those well-intentioned measures actually making air travel more expensive through ad hoc decisions. The CTA would have to determine on a case-by-case basis if a service breach was the fault of the airline or of any other factors. We need a charter of rights. We need it up front. People need to know what the compensation factors are, not to be judged ad hoc.

The administrative costs of implementing this legislation could be large. Again, it is a large omnibus bill, with many parts to it. Do we have all the right parts in it? I think not. There are other things that could have been done and should have been done.

• (1625)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of sitting on the committee during the hearings on Bill C-49 and enjoyed the company of the hon. member for Bow River.

I took some of the member's comments to suggest that perhaps the bill would not go far enough to protect the interests of shippers. I cannot help but point out that the bill includes a number of pro-shipper measures, such as reciprocal penalties, adequacy of service, protecting the maximum revenue entitlement, enhancing data disclosure, improving the arbitration process, and a number of other things.

The member raised the measures included in Bill C-30, suggesting that they were preferred, according to the witnesses he heard. When I listened to the witnesses over the course of the entire study, many of them suggested that having remedies only for one industry and only for one region of the country was not the best approach and that the long-haul interswitching would open up a more efficient transportation system across sectors and across geography. Does the member support measures that would extend this improved service to new parts of the country and to different sectors?

Government Orders

•(1630)

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned a number of things, specifically the long-haul interswitching. What I am most familiar with, particularly in my region of the prairies, is that the interswitching has worked. There were a lot of people in as witnesses, and people I know, who said that 160 kilometres works, so let us keep it in place.

With respect to the arbitration you mentioned, we had a witness who said that it is an interesting game, but the other party has to agree, and very few of the railways agree to go to arbitration. The arbitration fees only work for the richest carrier in the country, so the arbitration piece actually does not work. There are other things in it, and there are some things that do work. Thank you for the question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. I want to remind hon. members not to speak directly to each other but to go through the Chair.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the much ballyhooed part of the bill is the air passenger bill of rights, yet from everything I have heard, it seems that a lot of air passenger advocates are not really on board with this bill. Is there any good reason they are not stepping up, when it is supposed to be an air passenger bill of rights?

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting point. It is one that came up in the discussion, and all members discussed that thoroughly with the various witnesses. The member is right. It was the air passenger people who said that it is not fair. I think it is a critical point, when we know that there are numerous examples out there of passengers' rights and what the passenger would know he or she would receive under certain conditions. Having it on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis is not what we need for a passenger bill of rights. We need specifics. Passengers need to know what it is they are going to receive when things do not work.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the structure of our proposed passenger bill of rights exactly mirrors that of the European Union's. The legislation would provide the guidelines and the structure, and the details would be put into regulations. Therefore, that concern is not really valid.

I would like to know from the hon. member what he thinks the important elements of a passenger bill of rights will be for Canadians.

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, the airline passenger bill of rights would be a critical piece for consumers in Canada who travel on the airlines. They would know up front what the results would be for delays and lost luggage. People need to know those things. When they are stuck in a travelling situation, obviously their anxiety can be high. There can be family issues. They are trying to move. They are trying to travel. If they knew this up front, it really would make a difference to lessen the anxiety for travellers, which I believe is very important. The sooner we have this, the better.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as

follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Lethbridge, Health; the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable, Infrastructure.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

•(1635)

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating a bill that makes significant changes to 13 existing laws and affects three different sectors, namely the air, rail, and marine sectors.

By introducing this grab-bag of a bill on transportation modernization, the Liberals are breaking their campaign promise to not introduce omnibus bills during their term. This is just one more broken promise. Let us face it; Bill C-49 has lost the media's attention. There seems to be some push-back now, after it was introduced under false pretences as dealing exclusively with the passengers' bill of rights to ensure rights and guarantees for all Canadians. Perhaps that is what the Liberals are going for, that is, a communication plan, a political strategy, and a few talking points designed to make people forget all of their mistakes and broken promises.

From the beginning of the session, the Liberals have been managing one disappointment after another and are drowning in a political quagmire: supply management threatened, the mishandling of the Netflix deal, incredibly long delays and chaos regarding the plan to legalize marijuana, and the Minister of Finance's conflict of interest regarding his botched tax reform. This government could really use some good news, and that is probably what it is going for here.

Nevertheless, it is our job as parliamentarians to scrutinize the repercussions of a bill and to have the courage to point out the risks and problems of a given measure, even if that is not a popular move. That is what the Conservative Party did when the government introduced tax reforms that it framed as fair but that we figured out were anything but. That is what the Conservative Party has done since this bill was introduced. My colleague the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, who sits on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, talked to her committee about asking the government to split the bill into four parts to make it easier for the committee to examine it closely. Every single one of the Liberal members said no, and they refused to explain themselves. Canadians do not see that as a confidence-inspiring move on the government's part; it is the kind of decision that feeds the public's cynicism towards politicians.

First of all, let us clarify a misconception: this bill does not specify what compensation passengers might be entitled to; it only establishes that they will eventually be eligible for compensation. We are to vote on the form, but not on the substance. We have no real information whatsoever. The government would rather shirk this responsibility and hand it over to the Canadian Transportation Agency. We are asked to vote on a blank cheque.

Government Orders

That is not all. If we give the Canadian Transportation Agency the responsibility of deciding which regulations will be part of the passengers' bill of rights, we also give the Minister of Transport the power to be the sole advisor to the CTA. That means that penalties will not be set by an independent body, unless the minister objects to these penalties and imposes his own proposals. How ironic for members to have to vote on handing over all of their powers to a single minister, the Minister of Transport. How ironic for an elected official to be allowed to deliberately influence an independent, non-partisan agency.

The Canadian Transportation Agency will therefore not be able to consult consumer groups, airlines, airports, or any other stakeholder in the sector, only the Minister of Transport. That is not all. The minister is also giving himself extensive powers to approve joint ventures between airlines. That power traditionally belongs to the Competition Bureau, which should also be independent and non-partisan, and certainly operate at arm's length from the Minister of Transport.

The lack of integrity and transparency in the process is quite apparent, but mostly it is troubling. If the minister cannot bear to allow the agency to establish its own standards, he should simply present them to the House and give all members a say on the matter.

There is another false message: the purpose of the bill is to reduce travel costs for Canadians, while improving service, and yet the reverse could happen. The costs related to the bill could force consumers to pay more, since they will have to pay for the new regulations, for example, regarding overbooking.

• (1640)

If the goal is to enable Canadians to travel for less, why not just lower taxes for airline companies, which already have a narrow profit margin, by cancelling the carbon tax, for example? Canada already has more than enough aviation legislation. Today, the government is just making it more cumbersome and complicated and forcing passengers to foot the bill.

The third inaccurate and false message is that this bill is a new air passengers' bill of rights. That is how the government is presenting it, but in reality, it will also affect three other modes of transportation and amend 13 different laws. Passengers' rights and benefits are just part of the bill. By leading Canadians to believe that this bill simply creates a new bill of rights, the Minister of Transport is glossing over a good portion of the bill, the part that is much more controversial and unpopular. The goal of this voluntary oversight is clear: to control the media message and ensure that the Liberal government does not make any more mistakes by announcing controversial measures.

That is why the transport minister failed to mention that the bill will allow foreign investors to own up to 49% of the shares in a Canadian company, give the transport minister the power to approve joint ventures, update the Canadian freight system, require railways to install audio-video recorders in locomotives that could be used for disciplinary purposes, and amend the Canada Marine Act so that port authorities can go through the Canada infrastructure bank that the government just created.

On top of all that, passengers' rights advocates and many consumer protection agencies are opposed to the bill as it was introduced by the Minister of Transport. Gabor Lukacs of Air Passenger Rights thinks that the bill of rights will not adequately protect passengers and that it would be more effective for Canadians to take legal action.

Jeremy Cooperstock, associate professor at McGill University and founder of a passenger rights web site, felt that this bill did nothing to protect air passengers and that the air transport regulations and the Carriage by Air Act already do the bulk of what is promised in this bill. In other words, we are reinventing the wheel. The Liberals are very good at that.

As if that were not enough, case-by-case management of the complaints and the long-haul tariff being charged to the railways could add more red tape. We will have to hire extra people and hope that consumers do not get discouraged by the response time and drop their complaint. In short, no one will come out ahead and no Canadian will be better protected.

I urge the House to be wary of the smokescreen this Liberal government is deploying today to make us forget its endless string of failures, disappointments, and disorganized policy ad libbing. I also urge all my parliamentary colleagues to be wary of the scope of power that this bill would give the Minister of Transport. We must also closely monitor the minister's dangerous intrusion into independent, non-partisan organizations such as the Transportation Agency and the Competition Bureau.

Lastly, to all those who are thrilled by the prospect of passengers getting more rights, I must point out that this bill makes no provision for consumer compensation. I would remind all members who are planning to support this bill that they will not be able to boast of having voted to improve rights and protections for the Canadian public.

Passengers' rights advocates are all profoundly disappointed to see this issue fumbled yet again. The bill before us is incomplete, imprecise, and totally inconsistent. It would be deeply troubling if it were to pass in its present form.

This bill is yet another sloppy rush job aimed at grabbing even more power by any means possible and entrusting it to a single individual, in this case the Minister of Transport. The same thing happened with the Minister of Finance's tax reform plan. We need to be extremely vigilant. I urge all members, even those on the Liberal side, if they have the guts, to condemn this bill and vote against it.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I sat on the transport committee, we had a very intensive review of rail safety. I have to say that I am stunned at how little has come forward. We identified a lot of problems with the regulation of rail safety. I know that government members are out talking to people, but they should be talking to the lawyers who have a whole litany of reforms they would like made to the Railway Safety Act.

Government Orders

What is particularly stunning to me is the testimony we heard, including from the Transportation Safety Board and the inspectors from the Department of Transport, that there is a problem with the lack of inspection and a problem with the lack of response to problems identified by the Transportation Safety Board.

All this bill is doing is picking on the workers on the rail lines. The number one safety issue the workers have identified is fatigue, and the change in the rules has allowed the rail companies to hire fewer and fewer people and to work very erratically.

The member appears to share my concern that they have handpicked this one issue. There is no clarity on how this information will be used. It is going to violate workers' rights if it can be used by a company for other, nefarious purposes.

Would the member like to speak to my concerns?

● (1645)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her highly relevant question.

As I said in my speech, workers are very concerned about the government's plan to install voice and video recorders to capture every conversation. Apparently the purpose of this measure is to monitor workers who actually want to do their job. We have a lot of questions about this. The really surprising thing, considering how much work the committee put into this, is that every amendment put forward by the opposition was rejected by the Liberal members who had a lock on the committee. What we are going through with this bill right now is a crying shame.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciated working with my hon. colleague on the transportation, infrastructure and communities committee when he served as the shadow minister for infrastructure. It is on that note that I ask my question.

Clauses 73 and 74 would amend the Canada Marine Act to allow ports to borrow money from the Canada infrastructure bank. When the member was on the committee, he put forward a motion that we study the infrastructure bank. Would he like to comment on that measure in Bill C-49 and why he believes this might be problematic?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and I want to say that it was a pleasure and a privilege to work with her on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

I also had the pleasure of working on the government's proposed infrastructure bank, which was really just a new bank set up to serve Liberal cronies' interests. The government took billions of dollars out of the infrastructure budget and moved it all over to the infrastructure bank; that money was supposed to flow directly to municipalities across Canada, especially in the smallest regions, not really those in major centres. Now that various departments are quietly introducing bills, including this one from Transport, it is becoming clear that one of the unspoken reasons they created the infrastructure bank was to privatize pieces of infrastructure all over the place, including airport infrastructure. We know that the Minister of Transport did some

research and consultation about the possibility of privatizing airports across Canada.

Right now, many questions remain unanswered. The government seems to be playing its cards close to its chest, waiting to be caught with its hand in the cookie jar before it responds and starts to back down. That is why it is important to have a strong opposition.

I think my colleague pointed out one of the real flaws in this bill, which is that it goes to great lengths to help the infrastructure bank that, in turn, will help the friends of the Liberals who will be financing the venture.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, who did an excellent job for us.

People need to understand how large this omnibus bill is. What is an omnibus bill? "They don't build those in Canada anymore", is one of the things that comes to mind. However, the reality is that there are several pieces of legislation crammed into this one piece of legislation. What usually ends up happening as a result is that we do a lot of things, usually rather poorly. That is where we are headed today with regard to the very serious measures in this transportation act. These include rail safety issues, on which there are lessons that we should have learned from Lac-Mégantic and other places where derailments are still taking place. Rail safety issues continue to come up daily in Canada. We recently had another derailment.

We also have other things that could become quite problematic with respect to consumer rights. An airline passenger bill of rights is included in the legislation by name, and name only. It is a good example of what the government is proposing, namely, doing things by regulation, with no enforcement, no real law and, at the end of the day, nothing for consumers.

I will follow up a little on the people that consumers should contact about those types of situations in the future. If consumers have a problem with their airline and any type of compensation or problem related to it, they should contact the Liberals. The Liberals will own all of these problems directly, because they are willfully passing this on to the regulator. They will be the voice in the future to address any particular problems to that consumers face.

Government Orders

It is clever, because they are avoiding the responsibility of a real passenger bill of rights, which should have been done in a separate piece of legislation, with a rules-based system that is very clear and legislated. By doing it this way they are thinking they can say it is just a matter for the regulators and that they have nothing to do with it. However, the public could become quite educated about this process when they have a problem with the regulation in force. They would just need to see their Liberal member or to call another Liberal member somewhere else to get that direct input, because the Liberals are going to pass this piece of legislation with that knowledge. That will be the only real route to have input on anything, ranging from being delayed to not having one's rights observed, to being stuck on the tarmac for unlimited time, and so forth. All of those things, in terms of regulation, will basically be set through the minister. That is going to be a curse that the Liberals brought upon themselves once members of the public become a little more educated about how to actually respond to their particular situations.

With regard to report stage, the bill went back to committee and several pieces of legislation were dealt with in separate sections, which are important for Canadians to understand. One of them was the arrangements between airlines that would be allowed. We had amendments on that to challenge what would take place, because we will see less accountability in regard to airline mergers and ownership, and there will be no oversight to ensure that passengers and/or competition thrive. In fact, this bill would be a disincentive to competition, because it would take away that accountability and review by the tribunal.

The bill would strip away powers from an independent body that ensures competition in the airline industry, a body that would at least examine those issues and bring them to the minister, who would basically have the final say. That is problematic because when we look at the fact that the government has to deal with issues related to competition in the industry, not only domestically but internationally, with this bill we would be taking away an opportunity for increased competition in Canada. Indeed, we would potentially see some greater mergers take place, with less competition, and probably less routing. We have seen some development in medium-sized markets. There would be a disincentive to doing that now. It is important to note that we would be taking away what is currently being done, that lens of review for consumers. We are abandoning it.

●(1650)

The Railway Safety Act would also be affected by this legislation by adding video and voice recorders, but there is very little description on how that will take place, how they will be used, and what they are for. I think they are going to be used to reduce these positions while potentially increasing the hours for conductors and engineers as we have seen in this industry in the past.

We know from past independent reports that employees face a culture of fear and intimidation. These are the independent tribunal commission's own words as they relate to the safety management system.

With respect to the safety management system, people are expected to report problems in the workplace without any repercussions. Imagine doing something important at work for customers and realize there is a safety issue that could affect workers

or customers, and that safety issue is brought to the attention of the person in charge. There is no accountability with respect to what happens to that information. We have seen the same thing federally. Whistleblowers have been fired and maligned in the public, because they have brought forth a number of cases relating to consumers. Imagine the intimidation.

We can even look more recently at some of the stuff that is happening with TD Bank. They are not necessarily life and death matters, but rather matters of privacy violations. A whistleblower spoke of privacy violations taking place in the bank, and that whistleblower is concerned about it.

The safety management systems that are in our rail systems right now are not conducive to good environments. It has been proven by an independent panel that workers are often blamed for bringing forward their safety concerns, and they face repercussions for doing so. That is the reality we are faced with today.

The Canada Marine Act would also be changed by this proposed legislation. It is important to note that ports are going to receive more autonomy, and have access to funds in the infrastructure bank, funds put there by taxpayers. Ports are fiefdoms unto themselves. They can often override municipal acts, or not follow them at all, in terms of environmental, and other planning practises that are necessary to ensure there is cohesiveness between the port, the municipality, and the areas around it.

They have the luxury of this type of environment that really creates quite a bit of conflict or animosity, because of the fact that individuals who sit on boards of various ports are political appointments. Ports are patronage bastions left from the dark ages of democracy. We only need go to the website, locate a person's name, and we will find the amount of the donation. We can see which riding association he or she belongs to, provincial or federal. It is quite interesting. I hope some thesis student is listening to this who would like to do a project on political appointments. This is low-hanging fruit which is easily accessible. In my experience, I have found some good rewards.

The Coasting Trade Act is also challenged in Bill C-49. Foreign registered ships would be allowed to have more freedom in Canadian waters. These are unaccounted ships. There is a problem with that. International ships are allowed to change flags for convenience to avoid human rights and worker rights issues on their ships and vessels, but also the way they can get oversight done with flags of convenience in particular. We had a case with former finance minister Paul Martin, who liked the Bahamas and Bermuda for flagging Canada Steamship Lines to gain tax advantages. This is no different than the current finance minister's use of those offshore avenues as well. This is very concerning because environmental issues and worker issues are at the forefront of that.

●(1655)

I will conclude by saying this is a missed opportunity. It is a dog's breakfast of legislation on so many serious issues. It is unfortunate, because it is an economic loss for us in terms of the operating systems we could put in place that would make us more competitive as a country.

Government Orders

• (1700)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to expand on his comments in one particular area.

I questioned the parliamentary secretary earlier this afternoon on the same issue, and that is on concerns that railway employees, particularly unionized employees, may have about privacy violations or potential privacy violations.

We heard the transportation safety agency is planning to install video and audio recorders as a safety measure, and I can appreciate that. If there were an accident, whether it be a Lac-Mégantic or something of a lesser degree, investigators would like to know exactly what happened and, hence, their access to what we know as a black box in the airline industry, but as a video and voice recorder on the trains.

What impact, however, might that have on employees, whether they be conductors, engineers, or the like, knowing their actions are being recorded, and there might be at least the potential for disciplinary action taken against them in an unrelated matter simply because they were being recorded? Is that not, in the member's view, a violation of their privacy rights?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, it goes back to what I am pulling from memory as the Wilson report. A commission went across the country and identified that CP Rail and CN Rail had, under the so-called safety management self-reporting system, created a culture of fear and intimidation. The transport committee addressed this when I was transport critic. It involved the issue of confidence in employees.

Yes, there are some benefits on the surface for video and audio recordings, but the problem is that there are no sets of rules in place on how that information would be used and managed, including the context of it. It becomes very problematic in terms of the confidence of employees and, most importantly, whether it really improves safety at the end of the day.

My concern, from what I have seen in the past when inspectors moved inspections of brakes and so forth to these types of systems, is that instead of actually doing the physical, hard inspections on the machinery and equipment themselves, the inspectors would now rely upon visual and audio equipment, which has degraded safety, in my opinion, and I think it also shows that scientifically.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

The Lac-Mégantic derailment is before the court in Sherbrooke. This criminal trial against three employees of MMA, the owner of the railway at the time, is bringing the railway safety management system's flaws to the fore. One of those flaws is that employees report any problems they see with equipment to their superiors within the company. In the case of MMA, the major problem was that one of the heads of the company failed to keep a locomotive that he knew had mechanical problems off the rails the night of July 5 to 6, the night of the tragedy.

Does my colleague think that the bill before us addresses the serious problem of self-reporting and fixes the safety management

system that trusts companies to identify and correct problems themselves? Does he believe the bill will fix this clearly problematic situation?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, that makes it worse. The member for Sherbrooke is quite right to cite the cases that took place, and I thank him for that.

The reality is that we are moving more to a self-regulating process by getting away from oversight that is necessary for an industry. The term "being railroaded" did not just pop out of nowhere for no reason. It came about, because of the historical problems we have had with the laws that allowed railroad companies to have dominance.

I have always said we have municipal governments, provincial governments, and a federal government, and then we have the railway companies. That is kind of where it lays in the old laws of Canada. The flexibility and the ultimate accountability they have is quite right, and so it is an onerous proof. I understand this situation is only going to get worse, because we are again moving toward self-inspections. Sadly, that has not been good enough.

• (1705)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House again to speak on Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act. As we know, this omnibus bill would substantially amend 13 different acts and have consequential impacts on three modes of transportation: rail, air, and water. It should have been broken up, yet the Liberals across voted against the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek when she made recommendations in committee to break this up and study each one in greater detail in order to cover some of the problems we have in Canada.

This bill is in response to the Canada Transportation Act review, which was tabled in 2016 by the Liberals, but was initiated by previous Conservative minister Emerson in 2014. The review Emerson did was looking ahead 20 years to 30 years to identify priorities and potential actions in transportation that would support Canada's long-term economic well-being. We recognized that transportation and the economy were changing, and had to make sure the legislation was up to date. The Emerson report was submitted to the minister almost 18 months ago, and provided the government with 60 recommendations to address a range of changing conditions and challenges across Canada's transportation sector. Unfortunately, the Liberals decided to launch another consultation process and are only just tabling the legislation this year.

I am not going to say there are no good parts to this bill. There are good parts and there are bad parts. They missed the mark in a few areas, and I would like to address some of those. I am going to address the good ones too.

I will deal first with railroad. In going through Bill C-49, the creation on new long-haul interswitching regulation has a lot of good facts. That followed suit from the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act that was brought in by the Conservative government. I am not going to go into too much detail, but there are good parts of it and there are some bad parts. I know it has been debated a lot in committee, and I think they worked pretty well on that.

Government Orders

One area I would like to comment on, which I think was positive, is that the Canadian Transportation Agency would gain the power to order a railroad to compensate any shipper that would be adversely affected for a railway's failure to fulfill the service level obligations under the new definition. It would also allow the Canadian Transportation Agency to try to inform these settled disputes between railways and shippers, and would mandate 90-day rulings by the CTA.

I was very glad to see this. CN runs through my riding of Yellowhead, and is a major east-west corridor for it. Over the last three or four years, I have received many complaints from major companies in forestry, coal mining, gravel hauling, fracking sand hauling, grain hauling, etc. about the railroad company committing to have a train at a specific location or facility at a certain time. These companies would have a crew of 10 people ready to load that train, yet no train would show up, and sometimes would not show up for a day or two. They are paying these crews, have shipment orders that might be going to the west coast or need to connect with a ship to get to an overseas port, and yet the railway did not consider that in good faith. This portion of the act is excellent to see, and hopefully it will resolve those types of issues.

Another concern I have that was not addressed in this omnibus bill is the length of trains that are now running in Canada and the lack of proper crews on those trains. Trains are running that are probably two to three times larger today than they were 10 or 15 years ago. It puts a lot of stress on the train crews and on communities. I am going to give an example, but before I do, I want to read a section of the Grade Crossing Regulations. Section 97(2) states:

It is prohibited for railway equipment to be left standing on a crossing surface, or for switching operations to be conducted, in a manner that obstructs a public grade crossing—including by the activation of the gate of a warning system—for more than five minutes when vehicular or pedestrian traffic is waiting to cross it.

• (1710)

It went on to say in section 98 that if there is a repeated issue with trains blocking a crossing, it should be resolved through collaboration between the rail company, local road authorities, etc. If that does not work, the local authority can send a letter to the minister to request a resolution.

Rail crossings have been brought up a number of times and the government and the committee failed to address those concerns. I am going to give an example.

The town I live in is Edson, located in the centre of Yellowhead riding. Our town is divided by the railroad tracks. We have two-mile trains that come in and stop, whether it is for crew changes, whether it is for checking brakes, or whatever. I could stack on my desk the number of complaints that the train is stopped for 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour. When it does that, people from the other side of that track cannot get into town. We have had ambulances stranded and emergency situations. We keep bringing this up with CN, but we do not see changes.

CN is monitoring the crossings, but we still continue to see blockages. This is a problem. CN says if we phone it in, that CN will break a train. Try to break a train two miles long at a crossing. It is virtually impossible. If a person has a heart attack on the other side of that train and needs an ambulance, that person's life can be in

jeopardy. That is the situation we are facing in our community and other communities throughout our riding.

CN says people can talk to the railroad company, then go to the minister and look for results. I did that as the member of Parliament. I called a meeting of CN and Transport Canada. The Transport Canada officials said, "We have really long trains. Disregard the five minutes, it is not a big problem. Ten or 15 minutes, so what?" We have big trains and Transport Canada is not interested in looking after it. That is a failing in the new regulations. It should have been addressed.

Creation of air passenger rights regime is right. We all know that over the last few years we have seen a lot of bad things happening in airlines and we see a lot of bad things happening in Canada: delays, lots of times the airlines say they do not have a crew, people cannot go to a smaller community, or the flight is cancelled.

One thing that was not addressed and is very important to Canadians is the cost of air travel. As an example, I go back and forth to my riding almost every weekend. It costs me four times as much to go to my riding than to go from New York to Los Angeles, which is 1,000 kilometres shorter. We need to look at the costs incurred by Canadian air travellers.

We are looking at parts of the new air regulations allowing CATSA to be increased at certain airports to improve the flow of people going through and security measures. I do not disagree with that. I spend a lot of time going through Ottawa and Edmonton airports, but that cost should not be deferred to the air traveller. I believe it should be incurred by the Government of Canada, which is requiring the security recommendations.

I want to quickly deal with marine ports and the ability for them to borrow money from the new infrastructure bank. I believe that is totally wrong. The infrastructure bank would say it would lend \$100 million or more, but what about the small communities like Edson, the city of Fort St. John, small cities across this country that are looking for infrastructure money to assist them in their infrastructure needs? We are going to take that money and squander it in the large centres and large seaports, which is not the right way to do it.

• (1715)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the member's last comments in terms of infrastructure program. For the first time we have a government that has dedicated hundreds of millions of infrastructure dollars for rural communities in every region of our country to be spent. That is true. It is money that has been allocated to support our rural communities.

Government Orders

I wonder if the member opposite would make that commitment to support that aspect of the budget at the very least. He seems to be concerned about rural infrastructure. We finally have a government that is genuinely concerned about building urban areas and ensuring that smaller communities receive infrastructure dollars. Could he share his thoughts on that program, which I believe is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$2 billion?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, I am not talking just about rural communities, I am talking about small cities as well. Looking back in my riding, what I have had in the last two years is probably a quarter of what I had in the two years that we were in government. I am not saying that there is a difference there. However, it is hard for the smaller communities to go after infrastructure funding. If large amounts of money go to seaports and major infrastructure in bigger cities, the smaller communities will be left out.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I have a question for him about the air passengers' bill of rights, which does not really amount to much in the legislation. It is not even described in the bill. We know almost nothing about it. It will be determined later by the Minister of Transport when he decides to publish regulations on the matter.

What does my colleague think of the government's boasting about its much-discussed air passengers' bill of rights in light of the empty shell that we ended up with? We have no assurance that this bill of rights will actually protect Canadian consumers.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, no, it is not clear.

I will just step off the subject for a minute to look at the regulations pertaining to the railway, and the little black boxes inside the engines. It is not clear exactly what the government is doing. It came up with this idea to put them in for safety. I agree for safety it is probably there, commercially. I know about the black boxes in larger aircrafts and the need for that facility.

Let us go to public air transportation. Are they looking after the public? No. Yes, they put in some regulations. However, it should be affordable to travel in your own country. I lived in northern British Columbia and it used to cost me more to go from Fort St. John to Vancouver than it would cost me, once I was in Vancouver, to go to Europe. People in this country should have the opportunity to travel with a reasonable amount of funds from one part of this country to the other part of this country.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Yellowhead for his speech on this and his knowledge about travel around this country.

We have heard how this bill is not complete. There is so much that is being left to regulation and total power within the minister's discretion of how the regulations are passed. Would he like to comment on how this compares to some of the other legislation we have seen through this House that is poorly prepared, ill-thought-out, incomplete, and left up to the public or others to worry about afterwards? There seems to be consistency here.

● (1720)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, it is being consistently rammed down the throats of people without proper consultation.

When we look back again to voice and video recorders on locomotives, there are concerns. I do not believe that there were proper consultations done with the employees of the railroad, the railroads, and the communities. They just decided to do it because they wanted to do it. If they had had better consultations, I do not think that there would be as much mistrust by the railroad employees. They do not know what will happen and how it will affect them. If they had better consultations with the little guy, not with the big guy up there all the time, and remembered the little guy, and talked to that little guy, it would probably solve a lot of these problems.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that I think that Bill C-49 is a very poorly written bill. There is a host of things wrong with it. There is a lack of detail and a lack of specificity in many areas, which I will get into in just a few moments. I will only have a chance to address perhaps two or three of the elements of this bill that are poorly crafted.

I will start with the airline passenger bill of rights component of the bill, but before I get into those comments, I have to say that every time I hear someone speaking on an airline passenger bill of rights, it brings a smile to my face. I recall an exchange several years ago in this place, and many of my learned colleagues who have been around this place for a while may remember the exchange I am referring to. It happened between an NDP member of Parliament—I believe his name was Jim Maloway—and a minister of the government at the time, Mr. John Baird. It was on a Friday morning. Sittings on Friday mornings, as most members know, are usually not that well attended. Many times, subject material comes out of left field. We were in government at the time this exchange took place. We never really knew what questions would be coming from members on the opposition benches. Because so few members attended, it meant that many members who had never had an opportunity to ask a question before could get up to ask something that was of local concern to their constituency. As a result, many of our members did not have direct answers for the questions. In this particular case, Mr. Maloway got up and indicated that he had introduced a private member's bill for an airline passengers bill of rights. In his question to former Minister Baird, the member pointed out that reports had indicated that in Europe a number of airline authorities were thinking, as a cost-saving measure, of charging airline passengers a fee to go to the washroom. Mr. Maloway asked Mr. Baird whether he thought it was right that airlines would be able to charge passengers to go to the bathroom. Mr. Baird, without a moment's hesitation, responded, "Depends". Members may have to think about that for a moment, but it was one of the cleverest quips and retorts I have heard in my time, and one that I will never forget.

Government Orders

Let us talk about this bill and its suggestions for an airline passenger bill of rights. Once again, there is a lack of specificity and a lack of detail. The bill is suggesting that any passengers who feel aggrieved by an airline or who wish to file a grievance against an airline for a host of different reasons would potentially be able to receive monetary compensation from the government. That means that if a passenger had a poor flight and the airline lost that person's baggage or if passengers were stuck on a runway or the tarmac for several hours for whatever reason, or if passengers felt aggrieved in a number of different areas, they would be able to go after the airline for monetary compensation. This bill suggests that the minister responsible would then have the ability to set a monetary compensation level, but it is completely open-ended. It does not set down any clarity or any rules surrounding this compensation, such as what would prompt it, what would curtail it. The bill merely states that a minister would have the ability to arbitrarily set a monetary level of compensation for a passenger who felt his or her rights had been violated. On that basis alone, I do not think most members in this place could support the bill, because it is too vague. There is no detail illuminating exactly what the responsibilities of the airlines would be and what the responsibilities of the passengers should be. It is poorly written and I would encourage all members to at least go back to their own caucuses, talk to the minister and suggest that he look to at least amend or rewrite that portion of the bill, because it is poorly written.

• (1725)

Also, in a section in the bill dealing with air transportation and screening, in particular, whether or not airports would be able to avail themselves of additional screening devices. On the surface, it appears that might be a legitimate consideration for airports if their traffic were increasing and they felt they needed more screening devices to be able to properly screen passengers. It is something that most members here would think is a legitimate consideration. However, the bill also suggests that if an airport avails itself of a new screening apparatus, then the airline might end up paying for that screening device and passing along the additional cost to the passenger. In other words, rather than the airport authority paying for a screening device, it may pass that cost along to the airline.

The airline would want to recover that cost and would then pass the additional cost on to the passenger. What is that? It is a tax. There is no other way I can define it. It is simply a tax. Canadians are being taxed enough right now. The government, of course, wants to tax them even more, but that is perhaps a debate for another day. However, this provision is poorly thought out, poorly designed, and might end up, as an unintended consequence, taxing airline passengers even more than they are taxed today. It is another example of how the bill is not only poorly thought out, but poorly designed and poorly worded.

I will talk for a moment about another provision in the proposed act, the suggestion that locomotive railways would be able to put in voice and video recorders so that if an accident, God forbid, ever happened, the investigators would be able to determine, through examination of the voice and video recorders, what happened. The government is framing this as a preventative matter and safety matter. However, I do not agree that it really is. While it may be of some benefit in the case of a major disaster, a major train derailment, for example, it really is not, in my view, a safety-related matter as

much as things like brake inspections are. What it would do is open the door to the potential for abuse by railway investigators, who may take that voice and video recorder and use it for other purposes, perhaps for disciplinary action against locomotive, engineers, or union members who happen to be on that railway.

There are privacy laws in this country for a reason, and I am afraid that this particular provision, which may intend to address a safety issue, may have unintended consequences and end up violating Canadians' basic privacy rights. For that reason alone, together with the fact that I think the bill is poorly written, it should be defeated.

I can assure the House that members on the official opposition side will certainly be voting against Bill C-49.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motion in Group No. 1.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-46.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 2.

• (1810)

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

(*Division No. 371*)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Aubin
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias	Boulterice
Boutin-Sweet	Brousseau
Cannings	Caron
Choquette	Christopherson
Cullen	Davies
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseau	Duvall
Fortin	Gill
Hardcastle	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kwan	Marcel
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
Moore	Mulcair
Nantel	Paupé
Plamondon	Quach
Ramsey	Saganash
Sansoucy	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Stewart
Weir— 43	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Beech
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Bittle
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boissonnault
Boucher
Bratina
Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes
Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Clarke
Cooper
Cuzner
Damoff
Deltell
Dhillon
Diotte
Dreeschen
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Egliniski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Gladu
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Graham
Harder
Harvey
Hoback
Housefather
Iacono
Joly
Jowhari
Kent
Khera
Kmic
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
LeBlanc
Leitch
Levitt
Lightbound
Lockhart
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Maguire
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)

Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Baylis
Bennett
Bergen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blair
Block
Bossio
Brassard
Breton
Brown
Calkins
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chong
Clement
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Doherty
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Falk
Fergus
Finley
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gallant
Gerretsen
Godin
Goodale
Gourde
Grewal
Hardie
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Jeneroux
Jordan
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Lake
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Liepert
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
McColeman
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)

Mendès
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nater
Nicholson
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poissant
Ratansi
Reid
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sangha
Saroya
Scheer
Schmale
Serré
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Spengemann
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vandal
Viersen
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Wong
Yurdiga
Zimmer — 251

Mencino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nassif
Ng
Obhrai
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Peterson
Philpott
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Rayes
Richards
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saijan
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Schulte
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Tootoo
Trudeau
Van Loan
Vecchio
Virani
Warawa
Waugh
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Zahid

PAIRED

Members

Hutchings

Thériault — 2

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 defeated.

[*English*]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

Government Orders

And five or more members having risen:

• (1815)

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

(Division No. 372)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boudrias
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Gill
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hardie
Harvey	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Iacono
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Marcil	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Soeurs)	
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Pauzé	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petipas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Plamondon	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard

Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Sajjan
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Schulte	Serré
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tootoo
Trudeau	Vandal
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Young	Zahid— 174

NAYS

Members

Albas	Albrecht
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Doherty
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Finley	Gallant
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Moore
Motz	Mulcair
Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	Obhrai
Paul-Hus	Poillievre
Quach	Ramsey
Rayes	Reid
Richards	Saganash
Sansoucy	Saroya
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 120

Private Members' Business

PAIRED

Members

Hutchings

Thériault — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

CARBON PRICING

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 131, under private members' business, in the name of the member for Oshawa.

• (1830)

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

(*Division No. 373*)

YEAS

Members

Albas
Allison
Arnold
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Chong
Clement
Deltell
Doherty
Egliniski
Fast
Gallant
Gladau
Gourde
Hoback
Kelly
Kitchen
Lake
Leitch
Lobb
MacKenzie
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Richards
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

Albrecht
Anderson
Barlow
Bergen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Brown
Carrie
Clarke
Cooper
Diotte
Dreeshen
Falk
Finley
Genuis
Godin
Harder
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
Lukiwski
Maguire
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Obhrai
Poilievre
Reid
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Wong
Zimmer — 88

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Baylis
Beech
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Bossio
Boulerice
Bratina
Brison
Caesar-Chavannes
Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Christopherson
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gameau
Gill
Goodale
Graham
Hardcastle
Harvey
Holland
Hussen
Johns
Joly
Jowhari
Khalid
Kwan
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef
Moore
Mulcair
Nantel
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Patuzé
Peterson
Philpott

Alghabra
Amos
Angus
Arya
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Boissomnault
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Brosseau
Cannings
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Choquette
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hehr
Housefather
Iacono
Jolibois
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Marcil
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Pescholido
Petipas Taylor
Picard

Private Members' Business

Plamondon	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Saganash	Sahota
Sajjan	Sangha
Sansoucy	Sarai
Scarpateggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tootoo	Trudeau
Vandal	Virani
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Young	Zahid— 206

PAIRED

Members

Hutchings Thériault— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[English]

SUPREME COURT ACT

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-203, An Act to amend the Supreme Court Act (understanding the official languages), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-203 under Private Members' Business.

● (1835)

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

The Speaker: I see the hon. member for Davenport rising on a point of order.

● (1840)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, in the excitement of this vote, I ended up voting twice, but my intention was to vote no.

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

(Division No. 374)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Aubin
Ayoub	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Breton	Brosseau
Cannings	Caron
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cullen
Dhillon	Di Iorio

Drouin	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Erskine-Smith
Fortier	Fortin
Gill	Godin
Gourde	Graham
Hardcastle	Housefather
Johns	Julian
Lapointe	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
Mendès	Moore
Mulcair	Nantel
Nassif	Nater
Obhrai	Ouellette
Pauzé	Plamondon
Quach	Ramsey
Sansoucy	Schiefke
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Tilson
Van Kesteren	Vandal
Weir— 65	

NAYS

Members

Albas	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Arya
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Beech	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bemier	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boissonnault	Bossio
Brassard	Bratina
Brison	Brown
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins
Carr	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Chong
Clement	Cooper
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Deltell
Dhaliwal	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Egliniski	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk	Fast
Fillmore	Finley
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Gallant	Garneau
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gladu	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Grewal	Harder
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Hoback
Holland	Hussen
Iacono	Jeneroux
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmieć	Lake
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Leitch
Leslie	Levitt

Private Members' Business

Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Christopherson	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseau
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Gill
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hardcastle
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Iacono	Johns
Jolibois	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Khalid
Khera	Kwan
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	Maloney
Marcel	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	McCrimmon
May (Cambridge)	McGuinty
McDonald	McKenna
McKay	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Mendicino
Mendès	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Mihychuk	
Soeurs)	Moore
Monsef	Mulcair
Morrissey	Nantel
Murray	Ng
Nassif	Oliphant
O'Connell	O'Regan
Oliver	Pauzé
Ouellette	Peterson
Peschisolido	Philpott
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Picard	Quach
Poissant	Ramsey
Qualtrough	Rioux
Ratansi	Rodriguez
Robillard	Rota
Romanado	Ruimy
Rudd	Saganash
Rusnak	Sajjan
Sahota	Sansoucy
Sangha	Scarpaleggia
Sarai	Schulte
Schiefke	Shanahan
Serré	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sheehan	Sikand
Sidhu (Brampton South)	

Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Stewart
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tootoo
Trudeau	Vandal
Virani	Weir
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Young
Zahid — 205	

PAIRED

Members

Hutchings Thériault — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-344, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-344 under private members' business.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.

[Chair read text of motion to the House]

● (1900)

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

(Division No. 376)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Choquette	Christopherson
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubé

Private Members' Business

Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Fry
 Gameau
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Grewal
 Hardie
 Hehr
 Housefather
 Iacono
 Jolibois
 Jordan
 Julian
 Khera
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lebouthillier
 Levitt
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 Masse (Windsor West)
 Mathysen
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Medicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Nassif
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouelletle
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Sahota
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Spengemann
 Stewart
 Tan
 Tootoo
 Vandal
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Young

Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fuhr
 Gerretsen
 Goodale
 Graham
 Hardcastle
 Harvey
 Holland
 Hussien
 Johns
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Khalid
 Kwan
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 Long
 Ludwig
 Maloney
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Cambridge)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Ng
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Quach
 Ramsey
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Saganash
 Sajjan
 Sansoucy
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sorbara
 Stetski
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Trudeau
 Virani
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Zahid— 196

Boucher
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Chong
 Clement
 Deltell
 Doherty
 Eglinski
 Fast
 Fortin
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Gourde
 Hoback
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Lake
 Leitch
 Lobb
 MacKenzie
 Marcil
 McColeman
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Nater
 Obhrai
 Pauzé
 Poilievre
 Reid
 Saroya
 Shields
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Van Loan
 Viersen
 Warawa
 Waugh
 Wong
 Zimmer— 93

Boudrias
 Brown
 Carrie
 Clarke
 Cooper
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Falk
 Finley
 Gallant
 Gill
 Godin
 Harder
 Jeneroux
 Kent
 Kmiec
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Liepert
 Lukiwski
 Maguire
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Motz
 Nicholson
 Paul-Hus
 Plamondon
 Rayes
 Richards
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Sorenson
 Ste-Marie
 Stubbs
 Tilson
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Vecchio
 Wagantall
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Yurdiga

PAIRED

Members

Thériault— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of the motion that Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (drug-impaired driving), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill S-230 under private members' business.

● (1910)

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

(*Division No. 377*)

NAYS

Members

Albrecht
 Anderson
 Barsalou-Duval
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)

Allison
 Arnold
 Beaulieu
 Bernier
 Bezan
 Block

YEAS

Members

Albrecht
 Anderson
 Arnold

Allison
 Angus
 Aubin

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the delay, there will be no private members' business hour today. Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting, as will the debate on the motion to concur in the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

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, the government will be announcing the 2018 immigration levels plan soon. This will provide an opportunity for the government to match its lofty rhetoric with action. Far too often, the government makes grand statements and fails to act on them. When it does act, the action, unfortunately, seems to revolve only around meeting a self-interested goal, with short-sighted planning and one-time exceptions. Then it is just back to more consulting.

We saw this with the Syrian refugee initiative. If it were not for Canadians from coast to coast to coast stepping up, the government would have fallen short of its lofty promise, even after changing that promise three times. While taking as many self-congratulating photo ops as possible, the government failed to provide the necessary funding for resettlement services once its resettlement target was hit.

We continue to see long wait lists for newcomers trying to access language training and a lack of child care spots, which has a disproportionate impact on newcomer women. So much for our feminist Prime Minister. We heard at committee about the extensive pro bono work being done by Canadian medical professionals due to the inadequacies of the interim federal health program. We also heard about refugees struggling to pay back travel loans while seeing the one-time exception of the government's waiving travel loans for a select cohort of Syrian refugees to ensure that enough people could arrive before its self-imposed deadline.

For this year, we saw the government immediately scale back refugee resettlement, squandering the humanitarian drive of Canadians by capping private refugee sponsorships, and committing to only 7,500 government-assisted refugees. This year, the government has also failed to take leadership in dealing with the situation of asylum seekers crossing the border. There was a lofty tweet and then months of ignoring the repercussions. Despite underfunding and understaffing at the Immigration and Refugee Board, the government continued to ignore calls for action, even as the IRB's backlog increased by 1,000 cases per month, which has now, by the way, increased to 1,400 cases per month, and still no action being taken in response, only consultation and more review.

In the meantime, the IRB is forced to rob Peter to pay Paul, reallocating its internal funding and experienced staff to clear the legacy claim backlog. At this rate, the writing is on the wall: the

government's failure to act is going to create legacy claims 2.0 when all is said and done. This will leave the parliamentary secretary's successor forced to respond down the road, as he did in response to my question in May when he said, "The board also set up a working group to deal with the existing caseload, which will help eliminate the backlog of refugee claims inherited from the previous government." The government cannot claim to be living up to its promise to "deliver a safe, secure, and humane refugee system" when it continues to ignore the needs of the IRB. People's lives become trapped in limbo as they spend years wondering what will happen with their files. It is unjust and, frankly, inhumane.

Does the government plan on matching its words with actions? Will next year's levels plan match its humanitarian rhetoric? Will it finally provide the IRB with the resources it needs?

• (1915)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question. I am pleased to have an opportunity to talk about Canada's asylum system and the other subjects my colleague raised.

Although we are always endeavouring to find new ways to enhance our system, I could not disagree more with my colleague when she describes our asylum system as defective and broken. On the contrary, Canada has been proud to provide refugees with assistance and protection for a long time.

Members will recall that Canada recently welcomed more than 40,000 refugees fleeing dire circumstances in their home country. We are going to continue to welcome refugees from many different countries around the world.

The Syrian refugee resettlement initiative was a national project that was embraced by Canadians across the country, to whom we owe a debt of thanks. Canada's system is highly respected around the world as a fair, safe, and efficient model. In fact, our approach has attracted a great deal of interest.

When the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, visited Canada last year, he hailed our private refugee sponsorship program as a model for nations around the world. Canada then joined the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the University of Ottawa, the Radcliffe Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations to launch the global refugee sponsorship initiative, a joint initiative to increase private refugee sponsorship around the world.

This joint initiative will help more refugees resettle around the world by enabling states, civil society groups, the business community, and individuals to launch private sponsorship programs based on the Canadian model. I believe that private sponsorship, which has worked so well in Canada, can produce results in other countries and save more vulnerable people around the world.

Adjournment Proceedings

Even though our refugee system continues to respect Canada's longstanding humanitarian tradition, we are sparing no effort to make this system as efficient as possible and anticipate making further improvements to ensure it continues to garner respect around the world.

For example, we made investments to improve our system in budgets 2016 and 2017. I can assure the House that the government is concerned about the backlogs raised by my colleague and that we are working very hard to resolve the situation. For example, the IRB recently announced initiatives to reduce the backlog and expedite application processing.

As I have said before in the House, we have launched an independent review of the IRB to find ways to improve its productivity.

We are determined to improve our immigration system and we will get there by working together. That has been our government's approach from day one and I think that Canadians understand that our immigration system has a bright future.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, the government, frankly, is tone deaf on the issues that have been brought to its attention. If the government does not adequately fund the IRB, it will put the integrity of our immigration system in jeopardy. The government went from #welcometocanada to sending MPs around the U.S. to try to convince minority communities not to come to Canada. It has been out of touch on the situation on the ground from the start.

To quote an IRB decision-maker, ruling in favour of one of the 69% of successful claims made by irregular crossers, on the increasing fear and uncertainty in the U.S. system, "Certainly, that seems to be playing out as you have feared, and today on the news I know that President Trump has suspended the Syrian refugee program. You have provided, in my view, a reasonable explanation of your failure to claim in the U.S."

Instead of rhetoric and consultation, will the government take action and provide the IRB with the staffing and resources it needs to protect the integrity of our system?

● (1920)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the past, we are proud that Canada has an immigration system that is respected and regarded internationally as one of the best.

At committee recently, the member opposite had the opportunity to put a number of questions to various experts, including for example, representatives from the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. She also had the opportunity to ask questions of departmental officials. Furthermore, she was able to ask the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Public Safety questions regarding what we are doing to improve our immigration system.

As I said, we are currently conducting an independent review of the IRB. However, the IRB has also taken measures to reduce backlogs and wait times. We are working closely with all those groups and we will succeed in improving our system.

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Canada right now, one in 68 children are diagnosed with autism. More than 500,000 Canadians are living with autism today, and it is the fastest growing and diagnosed neurological disorder in our country.

About half of those with autism are of average or above average intelligence, yet very few of them actually graduate from high school and go on to post-secondary institutions. These numbers are concerning to me, because they represent a tragic loss in our society. We have these individuals who have immense potential and abilities, which are not being developed, because families lack the resources they require.

To better advocate for individuals and families living with autism, the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance brought together more than 90 autism organizations, researchers, and public policy champions, and consulted with more than 5,000 people across the country, including self-advocates, remote and rural communities, indigenous people, researchers, civil society organizations, and Canadians from every region of Canada in order to lay the foundation for a national Canadian autism partnership. Together, under the autism partnership, these groups and individuals would work together to advance research, and make sure families had the resources needed instead of duplicating their efforts.

How much would this cost? In November 2016, the Autism Partnership Project proposed it would need \$19 million over the course of five years, which is only \$3.8 million per year. Instead of granting this small amount of money, the current government actually made a decision to kill the partnership altogether.

The Liberals will try to tell us they spent money on research, but they are missing the point altogether. Research is one small piece of what the autism partnership would have accomplished had it been able to go forward. The autism community wanted a coordinated national strategy to pull together research, treatment, and best practices all in one. To use a metaphor, it is kind of like entire families going to a dealership wanting to buy a car, but the Liberals are actually just willing to sell them a tire.

Families struggle to know how to best support their loves ones, because there just are not enough resources available to them, and there is not enough research to backup those that are developed. However, the Liberals made a choice that reveals they really do not believe these families are, in fact, worth the investment. I find this very sad.

Adjournment Proceedings

Just this week, the government took another step further for those who live at a disadvantage, and cancelled the tax credit for those who have diabetes.

The government claims to stand for the middle class, and for those who are working hard to join it. This is the Liberal tag line. The Liberals like to use that in this place day in and day out. However, in essence, or in happenstance, they actually take direct, and destructive action toward the most vulnerable among us in this country. I do not believe that is right. In fact, I believe it is altogether mean.

My question is simple. Why is it the current Liberal government can provide \$400 million to Bombardier to subsidize a plane that will be owned by European billionaires, and assembled by people in the U.S., therefore putting jobs there, but it cannot find a mere \$19 million, or \$3.8 million per year, in order to create a Canadian autism partnership, and benefit the most vulnerable here in Canada?

• (1925)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Lethbridge for her question and her interest in this issue. Frankly, I will assume that her comments about Bombardier are rhetorical. Instead, I would like to take this opportunity to explain the Government of Canada's work on autism.

The Government of Canada is profoundly concerned about the pressures and challenges faced by all individuals with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and their families. Autism spectrum disorder, or ASD as it is often referred to, is a broad and complex issue. We understand the value of collaboration and the role the federal government plays in this important area.

That is why the federal government has focused its efforts on building research and evidence on ASD to improve our understanding of this disorder and to help organizations, professionals, and families address the health, social, and other impacts of ASD. In fact, over the past five years, the federal government, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or CIHR, has invested over \$44 million in ASD-related research, with over \$11 million allocated in 2016-17 alone. This funding has contributed to advancing our knowledge about the underlying causes of ASD and to the translation of research knowledge into better diagnostic tools and treatments for patients. CIHR's investments also include partnering with ASD organizations to support a research chair whose work focuses on the relationship between mental health and ASD. Since the launch of this research chair in 2012-13, much more has become known about the prevention and treatment of mental health challenges for people with ASD.

An essential component of building the evidence base around ASD is ensuring that we have accurate data. That is why the Public Health Agency of Canada is working with provinces and territories to implement the national autism spectrum disorder surveillance system. Data collected through this system will tell us how many Canadians are living with ASD and how many new cases are emerging. The Public Health Agency of Canada is also supporting the Canadian Paediatric Society in developing clinical assessment guidelines for ASD. These guidelines will contribute to improve-

ments in early detection, screening, and diagnosis, as well as early intervention.

Our government is committed to supporting greater accessibility and opportunities for Canadians with disabilities, including those with ASD, in their communities and their workplaces. Under the guidance of the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Department of Employment and Social Development Canada is working to provide people in Canada with disabilities, including ASD, with new opportunities to learn and develop their skills, and to participate in our economy. Through the disability component of the social development partnerships program, the Government of Canada supports projects intended to improve the participation and integration of people with disabilities in society. An example of such a project is Meticulon Consulting, which created an innovative assessment model used to train, support, and engage individuals with ASD in addressing their social inclusion needs and identifying opportunities for their community participation.

Employment and Social Development Canada is also supporting initiatives to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. For example, the Government of Canada is investing \$26.4 million in employment and skills training specifically for individuals with developmental disabilities, with a primary focus on ASD, to improve their labour market participation. Projects currently under way include working with partners to provide community support, employer engagement, and vocational training.

Under the leadership of the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, we have recently completed Canada's largest ever national consultation on disability to inform the development of new federal accessibility legislation. We anticipate that this legislation will be introduced in Parliament later this year, or very early in 2018.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm that the Government of Canada understands the complexity of this issue. We are committed to working collaboratively with our provincial and territorial partners and stakeholders to ensure that federal initiatives support a better quality of life for those living with ASD and their families.

• (1930)

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, the problem with the argument that we just heard from the hon. member across the way is that he is talking about the government putting program after program into place, meaning that we have made the government much bigger and created many levels of bureaucracy that someone will have to step through to receive any sort of help that their family with a loved one with autism needs. That is not okay.

Adjournment Proceedings

What I am talking about is a partnership that actually brought people together at a grassroots level. I am talking about more than 5,000 people from across the country who gathered the best knowledge, the best experiences, and the best practices possible, who would have been able to share that wealth of information and pursue greater research to help everyday families.

This is the problem with the current government. The Liberals think they know best. They think they can dictate to Canadians what they need. Well, they cannot. They are wrong. Canadians know what they need and should be empowered to be the solution to the challenges they face. The role of government is to empower people, not disempower them, not to create more bureaucracy, and not to create more application levels.

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Lethbridge for her comments with respect to consultation and partnership. I want to assure her that the Government of Canada acknowledges that ASD cannot be effectively addressed without proper consultation and partnership among all stakeholders. We are working to identify where the federal government can best invest in help for individuals with disabilities, including people living with ASD.

I want to assure the member opposite that we are committed to working with stakeholders to ensure that federal initiatives help support a better quality of life for those living with autism and for their families. For example, the government is making significant investments in ASD research. We will continue to do so. We have provided \$39.1 million to the Kids Brain Health Network over a 10-year period to further our understanding of the genetic and environmental causes of neurodevelopmental disorders, such as cerebral palsy, autism, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

We remain committed to broad consultation, partnership with all stakeholders, and we share the member's concern that we need to ensure that we hear from all people with a concern about this issue.

[*Translation*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and follow up on a question that was raised in the House on May 17. The more time goes by, the more history repeats itself.

It is worth taking the time to read out part of the question I asked the Minister of Finance on May 17. That day, I told the Liberal version of the story of Robin Hood. It was the story of the Minister of Finance, who invites his rich billionaire friends to pick the pockets of poor Canadian taxpayers. At the time, I said that the minister's recipe was to borrow billions of dollars, to be paid for by future generations of young Canadians, and give them all to his rich Liberal friends, while promising them risk-free returns. I called him the "Robinbank" of infrastructure, referring to the Canada infrastructure bank.

However, I must admit that I was wrong. The finance minister's role was not to take money from poor Canadians and give it away to his rich friends. It was to keep it for himself. As we have been seeing since Parliament reconvened, the Minister of Finance forgot to disclose certain information about his personal finances to the Ethics Commissioner and the Prime Minister. This allowed the minister to

keep amassing personal wealth while serving as a member of Cabinet.

My family and friends would say that it is a coincidence, but I say that there are no coincides, and that this is just history repeating itself. Yesterday, I listened carefully to the speech given by our finance critic, the member for Carleton, who was responding to what the government calls an economic update. That announcement cannot really be called an economic update because all the government did was announce that it was going to continue spending. It is going to continue to try to take all the money it can out of taxpayers' pockets to try to pay off this huge deficit. The infrastructure bank was one way of doing that, but the Minister of Finance thought it was such a good idea that he would personally take advantage of it.

What we are seeing is that the government is continuing to do the opposite of what it says. Speaking of rich Liberal friends and the money the government is taking out of the pockets of the middle class, let us remember that the government was supposed to take that money from the wealthiest Canadians. That is what the Liberals said that they would do, that they would make the wealthiest Canadians pay more. The Liberals said that they were raising taxes for the wealthiest Canadians. However, the member for Carleton was very clear yesterday when he said, "...according to the finance minister's own department, the rich are paying \$1 billion less in taxes". That is the reality.

The "Robinbank" forgot that it is supposed to help the poor and the middle class. Unfortunately, this government has been doing the exact opposite from day one. The result is that the wealthiest Canadians are the winners since they have been paying \$1 billion less in taxes since this government took office in 2015.

In short, the "Robinbank" still exists. I hope that the members opposite will understand that it is not by pushing Canadians further into debt that they are going to improve the lives of the real middle class.

• (1935)

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his speech.

[*English*]

When the member mentioned Robin Hood, I could not help but think about Robin Hood's companion, Friar Tuck, which was altogether characteristic of the previous government's action in their gluttony, in which it consumed the democratic process. It gave me a chuckle. Gladly, Canadians put that to an end, and that is why we are here today.

The Government of Canada is taking a new approach to infrastructure financing with the establishment of the Canada infrastructure bank, as my colleague mentioned. The bank is an additional tool to build new infrastructure by attracting private sector and institutional investors to support the infrastructure that Canadian communities and Canadians need.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Government of Canada is committed to finding new and innovative ways to help partners address their pressing infrastructure needs. The bank is one of the new tools we are bringing in to meet these needs.

[*Translation*]

The infrastructure bank will invest \$35 billion in growth-oriented infrastructure across Canada, such as public transit and trade corridors, and serve as a centre of expertise for projects supported by private and institutional investors. It will also advise other levels of government on designing and financing revenue-generating projects. The investing in Canada plan will provide \$15 billion, which represents about 8% of the total infrastructure funding commitment in our historic long-term plan worth over \$180 billion.

We know that many infrastructure projects will not be a good fit with the bank's mandate. However, for those projects that are, we will work with select partners to provide even more infrastructure to Canadians. The infrastructure bank will be one of a number of funding options available to our government partners. This will enable the federal government to allocate more funding to projects that need public money.

To ensure that the bank meets the needs of our partners and our communities, we have created a system that will produce long-term benefits. We have done extensive work and held broad consultations with third parties and specialized partners across Canada, including in the infrastructure and finance sectors, at every stage of its development.

[*English*]

To ensure appropriate independence, the bank is structured as an arm's-length crown corporation. It will be led by a chief executive officer and governed by an independent board of directors. The bank will make independent investment decisions that represent good value for money for Canadians. This includes structuring, negotiating, and managing its investments using its specialized expertise to meet its mandate.

The bank also is subject to appropriate oversight as it is accountable to Parliament and the public in a number of important ways. It is required to submit, through the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, an annual report that will constitute the appropriate oversight.

Again, in conclusion, I would like to highlight the fact that the hon. member across the way has suggested a number of allegations with respect to our finance minister. It must be noted that at all times he has complied with the instructions of the Ethics Commissioner, and he has gone above that in the steps he has taken to proactively put up the proper measures to ensure proper transparency. All that to ensure that he is completely above board with the Canadian public. We are proud of the record. We are proud of the fiscal economic update. Canadians should be proud as well.

● (1940)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to stick to a small \$10-billion deficit, but now it is a \$117-billion deficit over a few years that the government is going to leave our children. That is the issue.

My question was: when will “Robin Infrastructure Bank” stop taking money from middle class Canadians to give to the Liberals' rich friends?

The plot has changed. It is no longer about bows and arrows for Robin Hood. Now we have structures, screens, and ethics commissioners. There is an entire system that protects the minister from having to give us access to the information we need in order to be able to trust him. He is the most important minister in the Liberal cabinet. This is the Minister of Finance we are talking about here, the one who manages our country's finances. It is only normal for us to have 100% trust in the Minister of Finance. That is why, on this side of the House, we are calling on the Minister of Finance to disclose all his assets and all his numbered companies so that we can get an idea of whether or not there is a conflict of interest. Above all, we have to be able to trust him and not a third party like the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Mr. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a question there, but this gives me an opportunity to say some more about our economic plan, which is working well and moving full steam ahead. On that note, I would like to wind up my response once again by talking about the Canada infrastructure bank, which was the subject of my colleague's initial question.

[*English*]

As mentioned previously, the bank is an additional tool that our partners can use. It is an engagement tool that our partners proposed to us. It is not forced upon them, such as the measures that were taken by the previous government to force certain projects through a screen. They can decide to use it or not. We will not impose it on anyone. By having this tool available for some projects, it frees up the federal grant dollars for those projects that would not be a good fit for the bank. All this is focused squarely on Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Through infrastructure projects like those we are supporting, and through our fruitful partnerships, we are going to make a real difference in the lives of Canadians and the future of our country.

[*English*]

This is a project that we will go ahead with cautiously, but with the infrastructure dollars and the additional dollars by our private partners that we have committed to.

It is new. It is innovative. It is squarely focused on Canadians, squarely focused on building the infrastructure necessary for the 21st century.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands

adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:43 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Nunavut	
Mr. Tootoo	14497
House of Commons Pages	
Mr. Easter	14497
Ethics	
Mr. Diotte	14497
Cadence Health and Wellness	
Mr. Peterson	14498
Ojibway Shores	
Mr. Masse (Windsor West)	14498
The Economy	
Mr. Grewal	14498
150th Anniversary of Confederation	
Mr. Chong	14498
Épilepsie Montérégie Organization	
Mr. Breton	14498
Royal Military College	
Mr. Gerretsen	14499
Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner	
Mr. Motz	14499
Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue	
Mr. Housefather	14499
Collège Sainte-Anne	
Ms. Dhillon	14499
Religious Freedom	
Mr. Genuis	14499
Remembrance Day	
Ms. O'Connell	14500
Women in Renewable Energy	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	14500
Taxation	
Mr. Kmiec	14500
Islamic History Month	
Mr. Leslie	14500

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ethics	
Mr. Scheer	14500
Mr. Trudeau	14501
Mr. Scheer	14501
Mr. Trudeau	14501
Mr. Scheer	14501
Mr. Trudeau	14501
Taxation	
Mr. Scheer	14501

Mr. Trudeau	14501
Mr. Scheer	14501
Mr. Trudeau	14501
Ethics	
Mr. Caron	14502
Mr. Trudeau	14502
Mr. Caron	14502
Mr. Trudeau	14502
Mr. Cullen	14502
Mr. Trudeau	14502
Mr. Cullen	14502
Mr. Trudeau	14502
Mr. Cullen	14502
Mr. Trudeau	14503
Mr. Poilievre	14503
Mr. Trudeau	14503
Mr. Poilievre	14503
Mr. Trudeau	14503
Mr. Poilievre	14503
Mr. Trudeau	14503
Mr. Deltell	14503
Mr. Trudeau	14503
Mr. Deltell	14504
Mr. Trudeau	14504
Indigenous Affairs	
Ms. Jolibois	14504
Mr. Trudeau	14504
Mr. Angus	14504
Mr. Trudeau	14504
Ethics	
Ms. Raitt	14504
Mr. Trudeau	14505
Ms. Raitt	14505
Mr. Trudeau	14505
Mr. Bernier	14505
Mr. Trudeau	14505
Mr. Strahl	14505
Mr. Trudeau	14505
Canadian Heritage	
Mr. Nantel	14505
Mr. Trudeau	14505
Mr. Dusseault	14506
Mr. Trudeau	14506
Taxation	
Mr. Fraser (Central Nova)	14506
Mr. Trudeau	14506
Ethics	
Mr. Rayes	14506
Mr. Trudeau	14506
Mr. Rayes	14506
Mr. Trudeau	14506

Ms. Bergen	14506
Mr. Trudeau	14506
Ms. Bergen	14507
Mr. Trudeau	14507
Trade	
Ms. Ramsey	14507
Mr. Trudeau	14507
Bankruptcy	
Mr. Duvall	14507
Mr. Trudeau	14507
Taxation	
Mr. Kelly	14507
Mr. Trudeau	14508
Mr. Albas	14508
Mr. Trudeau	14508
Mr. Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	14508
Mr. Trudeau	14508
Ms. Dabrusin	14508
Mr. Trudeau	14508
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Kent	14508
Mr. Trudeau	14508
Poverty	
Ms. Sansoucy	14509
Mr. Trudeau	14509
Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Serré	14509
Mr. Trudeau	14509
Public Safety	
Mr. Paul-Hus	14509
Mr. Trudeau	14509
Canadian Heritage	
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	14509
Mr. Trudeau	14509
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	14509
Judicial Accountability Through Sexual Assault Law Training Act	
Mr. Fortin	14510
Motion	14510
(Motion agreed to)	14510

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Ways and Means	
Notice of Motion	
Mr. Garneau	14510
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	14510
Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mr. Easter	14510

Committees of the House	
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Bagnell	14510
Petitions	
The Environment	
Mr. Chong	14511
The Environment	
Ms. Mathyssen	14511
Natural Resources	
Mr. Genuis	14511
Palliative Care	
Ms. Jolibois	14511
Iran	
Mr. Viersen	14511
Falun Gong	
Mr. Bagnell	14511
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	14511
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lamoureux	14511

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Transportation Modernization Act	
Bill C-49. Report stage	14511
Speaker's Ruling	
The Speaker	14511
Motions in amendment	
Mrs. Block	14512
Motion No. 1	14512
Mr. Garneau	14512
Motion No. 2	14512
Mr. Aubin	14512
Motions Nos. 3 to 9	14512
Mrs. Block	14512
Motion No. 10	14512
Mr. Aubin	14512
Motions Nos. 11 to 13	14512
Mrs. Block	14512
Motion Nos. 14 and 15	14512
Mr. Aubin	14513
Ms. Leitch	14514
Mrs. McCrimmon	14514
Mr. Lukiwski	14515
Mr. Aubin	14515
Mr. Aubin	14516
Mr. El-Khoury	14517
Mrs. Block	14517
Mr. Chong	14518
Mr. Shields	14519
Mr. Fraser (Central Nova)	14520
Mr. Diotte	14521
Mrs. McCrimmon	14521
Mr. Rayes	14521
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	14522
Mrs. Block	14523
Mr. Masse (Windsor West)	14523

Mr. Lukiwski	14525	Motion negated.....	14534
Mr. Dusseault.....	14525	Department of Public Works and Government Services Act	
Mr. Eglinski.....	14525	Bill C-344. Second reading	14534
Mr. Lamoureux.....	14526	Motion agreed to.....	14535
Mr. Dusseault.....	14527	(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) .	14535
Mr. Arnold	14527	Criminal Code	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	14527	Bill S-230. Second reading	14535
Criminal Code		Motion negated.....	14537
Bill C-46. Report Stage.....	14528		
Motion No. 2 negated.....	14529	ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS	
Motion agreed to.....	14531	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
		Ms. Kwan	14537
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Mr. Cormier	14537
Carbon Pricing		Health	
Motion.....	14531	Ms. Harder	14538
Motion negated.....	14532	Mr. Blair.....	14539
Supreme Court Act		Infrastructure	
Bill C-203. Second reading	14532	Mr. Berthold.....	14540
Motion negated.....	14533	Mr. Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	14540
Excise Tax Act			
Bill C-342. Second reading	14533		

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