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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 9, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 9, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

2016-17 DEPARTMENTAL RESULTS

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 84 departments and agencies, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the departmental results reports for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

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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 four petitions.

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JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF CORRUPT FOREIGN OFFICIALS REGULATIONS

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 5 of the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Regulations, which were made on November 2, 2017, and for referral to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

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REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, the Minister of Veterans Affairs was taken ill this past week, and he deeply regrets not being able to be in the House today for the solemn moments of remembrance that are a characteristic of our Parliament every year at this time. The minister asked me to extend his warmest

personal greetings to all MPs today and especially to all of the veterans whom we have the collective honour and duty to represent as I say just a few words on behalf of Canada's Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Across this country, millions of Canadians will soon be paying heartfelt tribute to veterans, Canadian Armed Forces members, and all the brave women and men who made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of Canada over our nation's lifetime.

[*Translation*]

We understand that our freedom, our prosperity, and the opportunities available to all our children are possible because of their sacrifices and achievements.

[*English*]

One of the ways Canadians recognize this is by wearing the red poppy in remembrance of those who fell in service. Another is by participating in commemorative events that will be taking place from coast to coast to coast. Canadians are also visiting the Remember Them website and engaging in social media with the #canadar-emembers.

Some of us have had the incredibly moving experience of walking close to the footsteps of those who fought and those who died to preserve our rights and freedoms and our open, inclusive, generous, democratic Canadian way of life. It hits us powerfully when we walk up Vimy Ridge and touch that soaring monument or travel to Hill 70 or into the town of Ypres and under the arches of the Menin Gate amidst all the names inscribed there of young Canadians who passed that way en route to Passchendaele 100 years ago.

A few miles away but a generation later there were bitter losses for Canadians at Dieppe, 75 years ago in August 1942, and then our triumphant return to that same town two years later after the landings at Juno Beach and on our way to liberate Holland.

On the other side of the world, what Canadian can stand without huge emotion at the top of the steep hill that forms Sai Wan War Cemetery in Hong Kong, and look down to the South China Sea across the rows of white headstones bedecked with red Maple Leaf flags? The same emotion overtakes Canadians at the Canadian Korean War Memorial Garden just below the hills northeast of Kapyong-gun in Korea. More recently, we can trace the footsteps of brave Canadians through Kosovo and Afghanistan, and more than 50 other international missions since Korea, right up to today.

Skill, strength, courage, valour, selflessness, love of country, loyalty to comrades, faithfulness, service, sacrifice, these are the qualities that Canadians in uniform have epitomized.

*Routine Proceedings**[Translation]*

This year, we especially remember the Canadian Corps deployed to Europe in 1917. They faced unimaginable hardships and incurred tens of thousands of losses on the western front, but emerged as an elite force, victorious where others failed.

● (1010)

[English]

Tomorrow, November 10, marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the Battle of Passchendaele. In the ceremony of remembrance in Belgium, a torchlight procession will go from the Canadian Memorial to the Passchendaele church.

[Translation]

Our colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, is there now.

[English]

The Minister of National Defence will be there tomorrow with a Canadian Armed Forces contingent from the same units as fought in that horrific battle, regimental representatives, the RCMP, actual veterans, youth, indigenous people, and the band of the Royal 22nd Regiment, the famous Van Doos. Canadian pride.

[Translation]

Our government is committed to honouring and commemorating our men and women in uniform from every era and every generation.

[English]

That is why we were all very proud to sponsor the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto, for injured, ill, and wounded military members and veterans. Prince Harry was there, the Prime Minister, the former president and vice-president of the United States, the incumbent first lady, and thousands of Canadians in the stands to cheer on the vets. These games demonstrated how far the dedication of these wounded warriors truly goes. Yes, they gained something from the camaraderie and competition of the games, but we all gained so much more from their inspiration: to persevere in the face of daunting obstacles. Honouring our women and men in uniform is a privilege.

[Translation]

We encourage all Canadians to remember and to express gratitude and appreciation for veterans, the fallen and those who continue to serve.

[English]

We should think of Canada's veterans and all those who gave their lives in service. Think of the current members of the Canadian Armed Forces across this country and around the world. Think of men and women from every region of our country, every walk of life, every ethnic, cultural, and religious background, from first nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, francophones, and anglophones. We should think of all those who have put service before self and thank a veteran or a Canadian Armed Forces member when we see them, ask about their stories, and listen carefully to what they have to say.

[Translation]

Most importantly, join the country for two minutes of silence at 11 o'clock on November 11th to honour the memory of all who have served.

[English]

On Remembrance Day, I will be in the hockey arena in Regina with the Royal Canadian Legion. The stands will be filled. Soldiers, sailors, air personnel, cadets, Mounties, other police and peace officers, and community groups will march in formation, the bands will play, speeches will be given, prayers will be offered, wreaths will be laid, and the Act of Remembrance will be performed. Then, at the end, the veterans will parade across the arena floor, some in wheelchairs, some with canes, some on their own.

● (1015)

The entire place will rise, and the applause will be loud and long, following their every step, saying "Thank you" to real-life heroes, and also to those who did not come home.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

[Translation]

Canada remembers.

[English]

Lest we forget.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this, Canada's 150th year as a nation, I rise to honour the men and women who have served our country in uniform, past and present. During Veterans Week and on Remembrance Day, all Canadians are called to express our gratitude and thanks to those who have answered the call of duty to preserve our freedom, human rights, democracy, and rule of law. Their sacrifices have secured and preserved our way of life.

We stand on the shoulders of the brave, loyal, courageous, and heroic men and women who have served in Canada's military. Selflessly, around the world, in World War I, World War II, South Africa, Korea, Rwanda, Bosnia, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and in peacekeeping missions, Canadian men and women have bravely stood their ground with uncommon courage.

One hundred years ago, our nation found itself on the battlefields of the Great War at Ypres, the Somme, Passchendaele, Amiens, and Vimy. Our rock-ribbed, steadfast, determined, and brave troops showed the world what Canada was made of.

Routine Proceedings

George Harold, or Harry, Baker, member of Parliament for the riding of Brome, in Quebec, was one of them. Harry was one of 50 members of Parliament and senators who enlisted to serve in the Great War, and Harry was the only one killed. He died in action at Ypres, West Flanders, Belgium, on June 2, 1916. Today, and every day since 1920, parliamentarians pass by the bronze statue of George Harold Baker in the foyer just outside the House of Commons. It is dedicated to one man but personifies a nation's loss and the spirit of those who served.

Prime Minister King made these comments at the dedication:

[The statue] is personal in character, it is also essentially symbolic.... It speaks of Canadians, approximately 600,000 in number who enlisted for service in the Great War, and above all of the more than 60,000 who gave their lives as the supreme sacrifice of this nation in the cause of the World's freedom.

In my hometown of Brantford, Private Peter Alexander Balfour was killed at Vimy. Described at his memorial as a home-loving man who never sought strife of any kind and did not like war, he enlisted at age 30 and responded to what he believed was his call of duty. He left behind his wife and two young children.

From Six Nations of the Grand River territory, 18-year-old Private Isaac Clause, an indigenous soldier, was killed in the battle of Passchendaele on November 6, 1917. A telegram announcing the death of her son was delivered to his mother, Mrs. Aaron Clause, at their home at Sixty-Nine Corners, Ohsweken.

These are but three of 1.7 million Canadians who have served our country over the last century. In the First and Second World Wars alone, 116,000 paid the ultimate price: losing their lives. Ordinary Canadians, from all walks of life, willing to face the horrors of war, regardless of the time or place where they served; this is our collective heritage. Unconditionally and in every respect, our freedom has been won by their blood and sacrifice.

Last Sunday, a Remembrance Day service was held at the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, where military members of the territory were honoured. Anishinaabe songs and prayers were offered in front of the traditional memorial built as a sacred burial mound. The ceremony included reading the names of 97 Anishinaabe veterans, many who served and paid the ultimate price in the Canadian and American Armed Forces.

• (1020)

In closing, I offer a poem read last Sunday and written by Stacey Laforme, chief of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. It is engraved on a memorial stone mounted in front of the sacred burial mound. It is called *Remember*.

To all those who have gone before,
To all the people who have gone to war,
To the men and women who faced death,
To those who will never draw breath,
To the mothers and fathers whose children gave all,
To the husbands and wives whose mate answered the call,
To the children who faced life on their own,
To everyone who talks to the name on a stone,
No medal or ribbon can repay what we owe,
The parade and applause are not enough, and we know.

How to thank someone for everything you have and everything you are?
Without you, never could we have accomplished so much or come so far,
I want to say thank you,

But no words are enough for what you went through.
There is one promise I can give,
The oath that I shall never break for as long as I live,
I will remember that we owe all to you,
A person, a people, I never knew.
I will remember.

Lest we forget.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House today on behalf of New Democrats to honour the bravery and loyalty of the men and women who have fought for the freedoms we cherish as Canadians. This week we remember the service and sacrifice of all those who have served. We remember those who put their lives on the line for our country and did not return home, and we remember those who did return but were forever changed.

This year is a special year for Canada, as we mark 150 years of Confederation. This year we also reflect on the anniversaries of significant military events in our history. One hundred years ago, 100,000 members of the Canadian Corps took part in the arduous Battle of Passchendaele. In those dark and terrifying days of World War I, the allied forces launched an attack to take back Passchendaele, in the region of Flanders, in Belgium. The battle was long and difficult, and the sacrifices were great. There were 4,000 Canadian soldiers killed and almost 12,000 wounded. Canadian soldiers and their families paid a horrendous price for a battle that was later known for this senseless slaughter. All four divisions of the Canadian Corps took turns in the assault on the ridge. One battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, lost most of its junior officers in the first hour of the assault on October 30.

This year we also mark the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge. Approximately, 100,000 Canadian soldiers participated in the battle, fighting valiantly to capture the ridge, marking a strategic turning point for the allies in the war. The success of the assault is attributable to the careful preparation by the Canadians and the use of the creeping barrage. The precise and timely use of aimed shellfire forced the Germans to take cover while 15,000 Canadian troops followed behind the barrage and eventually overran and captured enemy positions before the German troops were able to react. The price was heavy: 3,600 Canadians lost their lives, and 7,000 were injured.

Routine Proceedings

In August 1942, 75 years ago, almost 5,000 Canadian soldiers took part in the daring pre-dawn landing at Dieppe, Puys, and Pourville. The raid resulted in heavy losses. More than 900 Canadians lost their lives, and nearly 2,000 were taken prisoner. This summer, Canadians had the honour to be in Dieppe, along with the minister, the staff of Veterans Affairs, and four Canadian veterans who landed on that beach 75 years ago. The people of Dieppe, Pourville, Puys, and France have not forgotten the sacrifice of Canadians all those years ago. Our veterans marched proudly along the town promenade to the applause and tears of the people who remain so grateful to them. I was taken by the fact that there was a young French soldier, armed and in his fatigues, who looked to be about 21, who wept openly when our veterans passed.

These battles left scars on the soldiers, families, and communities, scars that never healed and should never be forgotten.

We should also remember the people on the home front who made incredible and important contributions to the war effort and in support of Canadian troops and personnel. Sadly, many are unknown to us, like the women in Stratford, Ontario, who worked in the rail yard repairing the locomotives and railcars that took the supplies to the troops at the front during World War II. Most are remembered only in a photograph taken while they laboured for the war effort.

Men and women continue to serve this country, and we would be remiss if we failed to recognize their contributions, their bravery and valour. They include those who served in the Korean War, during the Cold War, in peacekeeping missions around the world, and in the war in Afghanistan and those who serve here at home.

We must also recognize those who have served this country with honour, despite facing unique challenges to that service, including those from the LGBT community, indigenous people, and individuals who have experienced military sexual trauma. We honour their service and their dedication to Canada.

● (1025)

Of course there are the families of serving members and veterans that welcome home family members forever scarred, and they support, advocate and care for their loved ones.

On November 11, I invite all members of the House, as well as all Canadians, to honour the valour, devotion, and loyalty of the men and women who have served Canada. They deserve our ongoing support and gratitude, and to be treated with the greatest respect.

It is essential that this week's reflections translate to concrete actions for tomorrow. The transition to civilian life can be difficult and can come with great and many challenges. The road to healing is not a seamless one. Thus, we must listen to our veterans and their families to ensure they receive the support, help, and recognition they need and deserve.

We must honour our sacred obligation to these brave men and women. We shall always remember their courage and valour today and every day. We must make absolutely sure that we have lived up to the obligation we owe them.

Lest we forget.

● (1030)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the hon. member for Terrebonne to say a few words?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, on Remembrance Day, we all have a duty to honour those who fought for their country.

“Duty” is a word that often comes up when we are talking about troops that are currently deployed. Soldiers, officers, and non-commissioned officers, we salute you and we offer our profound thanks for the sacrifices you make every day, here in Canada and abroad. We are proud of you, your loved ones are proud of you, and Quebec is proud to be represented by you all over the world. We are forever indebted to you, and we have a duty as parliamentarians to remember.

“Duty” is a word that these men and women understand better than anyone. These individuals leave their family and friends behind, only to risk their lives in an attempt to help make the world a better place.

“Duty” is a word that will always carry profound significance for those who come home from the front lines forever changed, for those whose scars serve as a constant reminder of what they have been through, and for those who will carry an unimaginable burden for the rest of their days.

“Duty” is also a word that will always carry profound significance for the families and descendants of our fallen soldiers. Those people have paid the ultimate price so that others, both here and abroad, can live more peacefully, humanely, decently, and above all, democratically.

Let us not forget that the freedom we enjoy is not a gift, but a legacy. It is the legacy of people just like us who accepted the fact that on any given day at any given moment they could lose their lives so that others could live theirs.

I know that many of my colleagues in the House are veterans. More than anyone else, we have a duty to never forget the significance of the decisions that are made in the House. We have a duty to never forget that the choices that are made here have an impact on our fellow citizens when it comes to national defence, or any other issue for that matter. We will never be able to erase the image of fallen soldiers from our minds. We know what it means and we have a duty to carry their torch and to remind others of their sacrifice.

We also have a duty to keep our colleagues in check at times if ever a hint of cynicism should cloud their outlook and the common good should cease to be the only motivation for their actions.

Our democracy came at a high cost.

I remember.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

The Speaker: Does the House give its unanimous consent to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to add her words?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues this morning for this moment of remembrance. We will all be in our ridings on Remembrance Day attending events with our communities.

[English]

As the hon. Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has so beautifully conjured for us the event he will attend in his riding, all of us will be at familiar places, our town centres and our cenotaphs, gathering with our veterans. As the minister reminded us, sometimes we notice that someone we saw last year is no longer with us.

One of the war veterans and heroes I have the privilege to know in my own community of Sidney is Charles “Chic” Goodman, who was one of the few Canadians to receive the medal of honour from the French government, the French Legion of Honour medal, for his role in D-Day. I just received a note from his wife, saying that he was feeling fine but thought the march was too much for him this year. She asked me if I could meet them later to have a cup of tea at the naval club, which I will.

I have come to know a wonderful gentleman named Ken Curry, who fought at Dieppe. Ken was too young to enrol in the military and lied about his age. When it came time to be sent overseas, he needed a note from his mother. He went to Dieppe and as the carnage occurred all around him, he wondered why he had asked his mother to send that note.

So many brave men and women continue to go into dangerous places to protect that community centre, that cenotaph, that village, that place they know. Increasingly, Canadians are called to go to places where the connection between our safety and security at home and the dangerous places they go, whether in Afghanistan or elsewhere, have been more tenuous.

My thoughts turn today to Trevor Greene, who now lives in Nanaimo. He was the Canadian officer who, in a show of respect, in meeting with elders in the Taliban, took off his helmet and was attacked from behind with an axe. Trevor Greene struggles every day and fights every day to walk again. He has enormous courage and always says that he wishes that when he first enrolled, he could have worn the blue beret. He sees his role as someone who defends Canada, as someone who wants to make and keep the peace.

In that spirit, I want to remind all members that this building was built after one of the most devastating of wars, the First World War, which took so many young lives. It was supposed to be the war to end all wars. In that moment of armistice, the initial thought for Parliament, as it was being rebuilt after the fire, was that the central architectural feature, the tower, be called the war tower. Then members changed their minds and decided it should be called the Peace Tower.

As we remember and honour all those who fought, who served, who died, who came home shattered, who came home only to later take their own lives, and all the horrors of war, our prayer is always for that name on the central tower of this building. Our prayer is always for peace.

• (1035)

[Translation]

The Speaker: I thank the hon. Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the hon. member for Brantford—Brant, the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, the hon. member for Terrebonne, and the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for their comments.

[English]

If the House would indulge me, I would like to add a word, although I can only guarantee that it will be far less eloquent than those who have preceded me.

On Saturday, I will be in Ottawa at the National War Monument for the ceremony. It will be the first time I will not be in my riding at a cenotaph in many years.

On that morning, I will be thinking of my great-uncle, Private Walter Greene, from Cape Broyle, Newfoundland. He served in the First World War, received the Distinguished Conduct Medal after serving at Gallipoli, was injured in France, was out for a year, then went back and was killed in the First World War. It of course affected my grandmother throughout her life. I never knew him as a result of that.

I say this, certainly not because I can attach myself to his valour or to his self-sacrifice, because that would be entirely wrong. However, I have great admiration for what he did and what so many Canadians did in self-sacrifice, and for all those Canadians who have served our country for so many years.

* * *

• (1040)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, further to Motion No. 39, proposed by the member for Fundy Royal and adopted by the House, I now have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report from the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled “Immigration to Atlantic Canada: Moving to the Future”.

I would like to thank all members of the committee for their hard work and all members, especially those from Atlantic Canada, who came to our meetings, observed, and participated in the testimony.

[Translation]

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

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from over 100 young Canadians from my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay and also the adjacent neighbouring riding of Kootenay—Columbia.

These young Canadians point out that Canada has endorsed the Paris agreement on climate action. Canada has current greenhouse gas reduction targets that are not consistent with those of the Paris agreement.

The petitioners ask the government to take meaningful steps to support the future of young Canadians and fulfill Canada's obligations under the Paris agreement by adopting a detailed climate change action strategy that includes science-based targets for greenhouse gas reductions with a plan to meet them, including, but not limited to, eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, implementing a comprehensive and steadily rising national carbon price beyond 2022 that rises to \$150 per tonne by 2030, and redirecting investments into renewable energy systems, energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation, and job training.

TAXATION

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present several petitions today from people in and around Calgary. These petitions were submitted by Dr. Robert Melof and Dr. Michael Mah.

These physicians are concerned about recently proposed tax changes and the impact it will have on their ability to provide quality health care. I have heard from many medical practitioners who are concerned. Many have signed these petitions.

The petitioners ask the government to abandon its proposed tax changes, so Canada's medical community can continue to invest in quality care.

[Translation]

ALGOMA CENTRAL PASSENGER TRAIN

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to the Minister of Transport.

The petitioners continue to be concerned about the fact that the Algoma Central passenger train is still not back in service. They are saying that this is having a growing negative impact on the region's economy and that there is no other safe and reliable alternative that gives them access to their homes and businesses. The petitioners are asking the Minister of Transport to promise to help put the passenger train back in service.

The petitioners are from Sault Ste. Marie, Desbarats, Aweres, Searchmont, Mindemoya, Goulais River, and Michigan.

[English]

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by residents of and visitors to the beautiful, scenic riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. The petitioners call on the government to ensure that campgrounds with fewer than five full-time, year-round employees be recognized and taxed as small businesses.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of Londoners who are concerned about and wish to protect the Thames River system. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government stripped environmental regulations covered in the navigable waters act, leaving hundreds of rivers, streams, and lakes very vulnerable. The Thames is a unique heritage river, with many species at risk along its banks and in its waters.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government has failed to keep its promise to reinstate the environmental protections gutted from the original act, so these petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support my bill, Bill C-355, which commits the government to prioritizing and protecting the Thames River by amending the Navigation Protection Act.

● (1045)

TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today related to the proposed tax changes by the finance minister affecting private corporations operating in Canada. The list of people from my riding includes doctors, farmers, and small business owners. They are calling on the Minister of Finance to cancel the proposed tax increases and to honour the Liberals' election promise to lower the overall small business tax rate.

[Translation]

FOOD

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to present two petitions calling for a pan-Canadian food strategy. Food is a basic need, and unfortunately Canada does not have a food strategy. The petitioners are therefore calling on the government to implement such a strategy, which will help Canadians to stay healthy, eat fresh local food, and enjoy all of our country's delicious flavours.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present so I will do my best to present them quickly and effectively.

The first petition has to do with marine protected areas from coast to coast to coast.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

The petitioners ask for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to work with other branches to improve the creation of marine protected areas.

HOUSING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from many residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands. It calls on the Government of Canada to move forward with a national affordable housing program. They note the plan of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in this regard.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls for a national strategy for environmental education. It also comes from residents throughout Saanich—Gulf Islands. Although they recognize that education is largely a provincial responsibility, these petitioners see a role to play for a national strategy to encourage environmental education.

[Translation]

ELECTION LAWS

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would ask your indulgence because I also have three petitions to present.

[English]

The first petition is from citizens of Ontario. It is an electronic petition. It was signed by 703,086 Canadians from across the country. They state that there is currently no election law at the federal level that allows elected politicians to be removed from Parliament, so the petitioners are calling on the House of Commons and Parliament as a whole to pass a bill that allows for recall referendums.

[Translation]

FALUN GONG

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with a Falun Gong practitioner who is imprisoned in China. She is a Canadian citizen. The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to condemn this individual's arrest in China and to call for her immediate and unconditional release. She is a Canadian citizen and deserves to be properly represented by our government abroad.

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition was signed by hundreds of people from Sherbrooke this summer and concerns the fight against tax havens.

It calls on the government to acknowledge this increasingly pervasive and significant phenomenon. It asks the government above all to take steps to actively fight tax evasion and to put an end to amnesty deals such as the one in the KPMG affair.

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1189, 1191, 1193, 1197, and 1208.

[Text]

Question No. 1189—**Mr. Peter Kent:**

With regard to government contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of each contribution to the program, including the (i) date, (ii) amount; and (b) what specific safeguards are in place to ensure that contributions are not being used for radicalization or by Hamas?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), since January 1, 2016, there have been four payments from the Government of Canada to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA. The first is providing basic education, health and social services to Palestinian refugees 2016. The funding instrument was signed on November 1, 2016 in the amount of \$20 million Canadian. The second is Syria crisis – emergency assistance to Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon 2016. The funding instrument was signed on November 10, 2016 in the amount of \$5 million Canadian. The third is providing basic education, health and social services to Palestinian refugees 2017. The funding instrument was signed on August 23, 2017 in the amount of \$20 million Canadian. The fourth is Syria crisis – emergency assistance for Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon 2017. The funding instrument was signed on September 18, 2017 in the amount of \$5 million Canadian.

With regard to part (b), the Government of Canada does not tolerate any misuse or diversion of assistance to support terrorism. Accountability and safeguards are central to the management of Canada's development and humanitarian assistance in the West Bank and Gaza.

Canada exercises enhanced due diligence for all international assistance funding for Palestinians, including funding for UNRWA. This includes strong anti-terrorism provisions in funding agreements, ongoing oversight, regular site visits, and a systematic screening process. All programming and funding mechanisms are thoroughly examined to be consistent with Canadian values and to meet the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, Global Affairs Canada officials based across the region play a key role in ensuring ongoing oversight on programming. On a near-daily basis, Canadian representatives are in contact with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza to ensure that UNRWA is addressing issues of concern for Canadians. Regular visits are conducted to UNRWA schools, health centres, and other facilities to ensure that they are used only for their intended purposes.

Routine Proceedings

In addition to the enhanced due diligence processes, Canada and UNRWA have agreed to a framework for co-operation that outlines shared commitments and Canada's expectations regarding the implementation of UNRWA's reform initiatives, regular monitoring and reporting, and compliance with Canadian anti-terrorism requirements.

Canada also supports UNRWA in its ongoing efforts to improve neutrality within the agency and its operations. Canadian funding will allow UNRWA to engage a neutrality coordinator to monitor activities related to neutrality, lead the development of neutrality initiatives, respond to allegations of neutrality violations, and uphold UNRWA's neutrality. This assistance builds on Canadian funding in 2016 to 2017 that provided social media neutrality training to more than 3,000 UNRWA staff with managerial and supervisory responsibilities.

As an engaged member of UNRWA's advisory commission, Canada works with UNRWA and other donors to advance ongoing reforms related to governance, effectiveness, monitoring, and financial administration. Canada's active participation on UNRWA's advisory commission provides an opportunity for oversight, influence, and engagement on key issues.

UNRWA receives widespread support from the international community and Canada's like-minded friends and allies, including significant funding from the United States and all other G7 countries. Canada works together with UNRWA and other donors to ensure that assistance goes towards its intended purpose.

Question No. 1191—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the Minister of Finance's promise of September 18, 2017, to return the phone calls of Canadians wishing to discuss the government's consultation paper titled "Tax Planning Using Private Corporations": (a) how many people have requested callbacks; (b) how many calls has the Minister returned; (c) how many calls does the Minister anticipate returning by the consultation closing date of October 2, 2017; (d) how many calls does the Minister anticipate returning by December 31, 2017; (e) for all requests made in (a), how is the Minister being informed of the requests; (f) for each person in (a), what is their (i) title, (ii) field of work, (iii) province; (g) for each person in (b), what is their (i) title, (ii) field of work, (iii) province; (h) how many government officials from the Department of Finance have been assigned to receive requests for callbacks from the Minister, and what is their position or title; (i) how many Ministerial exempt, or other political staff have been assigned to receive requests for callbacks from the Minister, and what is their position or title; (j) has the Department of Finance requested additional resources to handle requests for callbacks and, if so, what is the cost of these resources; and (k) what is the itemized breakdown of any costs referred to in (j)?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in July 2017, the government released a consultation paper with proposals to address tax planning strategies using private corporations. Over the course of the consultation, many Canadians indicated their support for these proposals, but also raised significant concerns and areas where improvements were required. Over 21,000 written submissions were received by the Department of Finance Canada.

Canadians were engaged through town halls and round tables from coast to coast to coast. Ministers and members of Parliament heard and carefully considered the views and perspectives of small business owners, farmers, fishers, professionals, and experts. The government is committed to addressing unintended consequences. Its focus is on strengthening middle-class small businesses, while

targeting unfair advantages that largely benefit the wealthiest of Canadians.

Officials in the department, notably in tax policy branch, have been engaging with stakeholders in developing the proposals. The department does not track phone calls placed to the minister. No request for additional resources has been made.

Question No. 1193—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all grants and contributions made from the fund, including for each the (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) project description, (iv) type of contribution (repayable grant, loan, etc.), (v) location of recipient, including municipality and province; (b) what is the total amount which has been paid out from the fund, broken down by province; and (c) for all grants and contributions from the fund which were paid out to a recipient outside of Atlantic Canada, what is the rationale for how that recipient qualified for the Atlantic Fisheries Fund?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary for Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no grants or contributions were made from the Atlantic fisheries fund between November 4, 2015 and September 26, 2017.

Question No. 1197—Mr. Erin Weir:

With regard to Section 810.1 and 810.2 Orders under the Criminal Code of Canada: (a) how many Section 810.1 Orders were requested in each of 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (b) how many Section 810.2 Orders were requested in each of 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (c) how many Section 810.1 Orders were granted in each of 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (d) how many Section 810.2 Orders were granted in each of 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (e) what number and percentage of all individuals convicted of sexual assault and due to be released from their sentence for sexual assault were placed on one or both of Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders during 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (f) what number and percentage of individuals subject to one or both of Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders were charged with breaches of these Orders in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (g) what number and percentage of individuals subject to one or both of Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders were convicted of breaches of those Orders in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (h) for individuals convicted of breaches of one or both Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders, how much was the average, maximum, and minimum jail time extension past the original sentence release date, considering all breaches of Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (i) what number of individuals on one or both Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders reoffended substantively (meaning an offence in the category targeted by the Order, i. e. a sexual offence or serious personal injury offence) in the duration of the Order in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; (j) what number of individuals on one or both Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders were subsequently placed on Dangerous Offender or Long Term Offender Orders in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario; and (k) what number of individuals previously subject to one or both of Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders were subsequently placed on another one or both of Section 810.1 and Section 810.2 Orders in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba, (v) Ontario?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, federal departments, including Justice Canada, and agencies do not track section 810.1 and 810.2 orders requested.

Question No. 1208—**Ms. Tracey Ramsey:**

What protections have been put into place by the government to ensure foreign steel dumping does not occur in Canada?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian producers harmed by unfairly traded, i.e., dumped or subsidized, imports may seek to have anti-dumping and countervailing duties applied to offset the injury caused by these imports. In accordance with the Special Import Measures Act, SIMA, duties can only be imposed following independent, impartial, and transparent investigations conducted by the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, which determine whether imports were dumped or subsidized, and whether such imports injured Canadian producers.

The steel industry regularly uses Canada's trade remedy system to address dumped and subsidized imports. As of October 2017, Canada has 69 trade remedy measures in force that apply to 15 different steel products originating from 23 countries. The largest proportion of these measures concern imports from China. In all of the measures on primary steel from China, anti-dumping margins were calculated on a non market economy basis, to account for price distortions in that sector.

The government is committed to ensuring that Canadian producers injured by unfair trade have adequate remedies under domestic law, while ensuring consistency with Canada's international trade obligations under the World Trade Organization, WTO. Since budget 2016, the government has taken steps to modernize and strengthen Canada's trade remedy system to provide Canadian producers with a more rigorous response to unfair trade and better align Canada's trade remedy system with those of our major trading partners.

In budget 2016, the government amended SIMA to extend the duration of anti-dumping and countervailing duties by up to eight months before being reviewed and to allow trade remedy investigations to continue to their final phase even if the margins of dumping found at the preliminary stage are insignificant. The government also committed to undertake public consultations on further measures to improve and enhance Canada's trade remedy system.

Following these consultations, the government announced in budget 2017 additional measures that would improve the transparency of Canada's trade remedy system and strengthen enforcement of trade remedy measures.

These measures include creating a new anti-circumvention proceeding that would allow the CBSA to investigate allegations that anti-dumping and countervailing duties are being circumvented and, where warranted, to extend duties to address the circumvention.

The measures include creating a new scope proceeding that would establish a transparent process to allow interested parties, including domestic producers, to request a binding and appealable ruling as to

whether a particular product is subject to anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

The measures include providing the CBSA with new tools to use alternative methodologies for calculating margins of dumping where price distortions in the country of export render those prices unreliable.

The measures include providing unions the right to participate in trade remedy investigations.

The legislative amendments to SIMA required to implement these measures received royal assent on June 22, 2017, as part of Bill-44, Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No.1. The government is working expeditiously on the regulatory amendments that are required to operationalize these new tools. Moving forward, the government will continue to work closely with Canadian industry in responding to the challenges of unfair trade.

The challenges of steel dumping and the underlying issue of global steel excess capacity are addressed in the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade, CIIT, report entitled "The Canadian Steel Industry's Ability to Compete Internationally", which was tabled on June 15, 2017. The CIIT report contains a number of recommendations to improve Canada's trade remedy system and address the underlying problem of global steel excess capacity. The government tabled a detailed response to the CIIT report on October 17, 2017.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government responses to Questions Nos. 1188, 1190, 1194, and 1199, as well as starred Question No. 1224, could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 1188—**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau:**

With regard to funding applications from dairy producers submitted to the Dairy Farm Investment Program (DFIP) during the first application window, which ended August 29, 2017: (a) what is the total number of applications received from producers, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) applications approved per province and territory, (iii) applications rejected per province and territory, (iv) applications put on a waiting list per province and territory; (b) how many applications for large investment projects have been received, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) applications approved per province and territory, (iii) applications rejected per province and territory, (iv) applications put on a waiting list per province and territory; (c) how many applications for small investment projects were received, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) applications approved per province and territory, (iii) applications rejected per province and territory, (iv) applications put on a waiting list per province and territory; (d) how much of the total \$250 million in DFIP funding has been allocated, broken down by (i) large investment project, (ii) small investment project, (iii) province and territory; (e) what is the total value of funding applications that were rejected, broken down by (i) large investment project, (ii) small investment project, (iii) province and territory; and (f) how much of the total amount has already been allocated to Quebec producers, broken down by (i) large investment project, (ii) small investment project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1190—**Mr. Peter Kent:**

With regard to the protection of Canadian journalists working abroad: (a) has the Canadian government raised any concerns with the Chinese government regarding freedom of the press in China following the detention of Globe and Mail journalist Nathan VanderKlippe; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details, including (i) the date, (ii) who raised the concerns, (iii) with whom, within the Chinese government, were the concerns raised; and (c) what response, if any, has been received by the Canadian government in response to any concerns raised?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1194—**Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to correspondence received by the Minister of Finance from Liberal Members of Parliament in relation to the proposed tax changes which were announced on July 18, 2017: what are the details of all such correspondence, including for each piece the (i) date, (ii) Member's riding, (iii) title, (iv) date response was sent by the Minister of Finance, if applicable, (v) file numbers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1199—**Mr. Ben Lobb:**

With regard to the legal settlement paid to Omar Khadr: (a) on which date was the settlement between the parties signed; (b) what was the date of the settlement's payment; (c) what is the average processing time between the settlement and the payment regarding out-of-court settlements paid by the government; (d) were there any orders given to expedite the payment to Omar Khadr; and (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, who gave the order

(Return tabled)

*Question No. 1224—**Mr. Ed Fast:**

With regard to the tendering and construction of a new fire hall in Grasslands National Park: (a) what are the details of the tender, including (i) criteria, (ii) amount of the winning bid, (iii) winning firm, (iv) number of bidders; (b) what are the details of the construction of the new fire hall, including (i) total budget, (ii) construction start date, (iii) expected completion date; (iv) overall construction budget; and (c) what are the details of any government expenditures in relation to the new fire hall, with the exception of the tendered payment to the winning bidder referred to in (a), including (i) date, (ii) vendor or recipient, (iii) description of goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time.

• (1050)

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statements, Government Orders will be extended by 32 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed from October 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to talk about Bill C-17, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act. To be honest, this bill is regressive. It reverses several positive steps taken by the former Conservative government in Bill S-6 in 2015. It is a poorly conceived piece of legislation that, if passed, will gain votes in the southern part of this country at the expense of northern Canada.

on October 3, the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs heard testimony by Mr. Brad Thrall, the president of Alexco Resource Corp. He summed up the problem up best, in stating:

...I'm urging deferral of Bill C-17's passage until all affected and interested parties can deliberate, and mutually determine language to preserve the reassessment and timeline provisions currently within the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act. Repeal of the reassessment and timeline provisions, as anticipated in Bill C-17, without replacement language ready to go, will perpetuate economic uncertainty, and will negatively impact the competitiveness of Yukon, and will diminish economic and social opportunities for all Yukoners.

Why would we want to pass legislation that would diminish economic and social opportunities, especially in the north? The population of Yukon, according to the last census in 2016, was just under 36,000 people. It is a small jurisdiction. Therefore, we can understand how the benefits and opportunities of one operation can have tremendous benefits for first nations and all Yukon residents in terms of tax dollars, health care, education, employment, and benefit agreements.

Government Orders

The mining industry contributes 20% of Yukon's GDP and Bill C-17 would immediately increase the regulatory burden on project proponents. It would slow down the review process by increasing the number of projects that need to be reviewed and remove the timeline for approval. Mining representatives testified that over the past eight years, the time period required to deem project proposals adequate was increased more than fivefold. Removing the timelines put in by the former Conservative government would damage proponent and industry confidence in the regulatory regime and cause companies to take their investments elsewhere. It is already happening in this country.

The Prospectors & Developers Association told us that it has definitely seen a decline in investment in Canada in the past two years. If members do not believe me, they only need look at what Shell did with the Carmon Creek project in Alberta, an investment of roughly \$2 billion. Shell sold its assets in Carmon Creek while going to Europe, citing a more stable investment regime there compared to Canada. This was a major opportunity lost not only for the people of Alberta but the people of Canada and northern Alberta.

Mr. Thrall went on to testify at committee on October 3 as follows:

The current legislation allows proponents of certain projects to apply to the decision body, usually Yukon or first nation governments, under section 49.1, to allow a project to proceed without the need for reassessment. This allows previously assessed projects to proceed to the authorization process without duplication.

As we all know, the reality of mining is that during the process, new ore bodies or extensions to them may be identified. These discoveries may require slight modifications to mine operating plans under the current legislation, but the resulting modifications would generally not require a complete project-wide reassessment.

• (1055)

However, if Bill C-17 is passed, they would, even though there is no significant environmental or socioeconomic impact and no change in the production stream.

Mr. Thrall went on, continuing on October 3:

On the environmental side of our business, we were required to go back through an entire environmental assessment to maintain a water licence to extend the operating period for various water treatment facilities. Ironically, these same facilities were mitigating historic environmental liability, but this simple extension required 134 days of YESAB's time to assess the entire project yet again. Please understand that we firmly support a rigorous environmental assessment process for the Yukon, for new projects and when fundamental changes are made to existing projects. However, small changes to a mine plan or to environmental facilities should not require a "back to square one" assessment. If set back to the previous legislation, uncertainty will prevail, and investment, jobs, benefits, and opportunities for residents and communities will be compromised.

This is just another example of the Liberals making promises without thinking of consequences. The Liberals could have worked to find a solution, addressing everyone's concerns, rather than rushing forward and choosing to handicap Yukon's development for years to come, possibly even decades.

Mr. Jonas Smith, the project manager of Yukon Producers Group, gave compelling testimony to our indigenous affairs committee on October 3 of this year. His focus was on the matters of reassessment. Mr. Smith explained the burden that will be placed on industry, municipalities, and all Yukoners by Bill C-17. He told us:

The absence of a reassessment provision not only negatively affects proponents, but places a strain on the financial and human resources of publicly funded assessors and governments as well.

Another very recent example from a Yukon mine ramping up to production revealed that in these last few months when Bill C-17 has been making its way through Parliament, the company was once again subjected to an expensive, time-consuming, and ultimately unnecessary reassessment. In this case YESAB ultimately determined that reassessment and any further mitigation beyond the original assessment were not required. Yet despite this relatively favourable outcome, the process that led to it still consumed considerable resources from the company and the YESAB assessment office.

He means there were more delays.

It resulted in a missed season of work for the company [up north], where those financial and human resources could have been put to far better use employing citizens of the affected first nation and the community where it operates.

As I mentioned previously, since section 49.1 was enacted in 2015, over 100 projects have applied for exemption from reassessment. These were not only mining proponents, but municipalities as well. The City of Whitehorse, a major employer in our territory's capital, received this determination under section 49.1 for one of its permanent renewals:

"The project has been assessed once by YESAB in 2013. Since that time, the only changes in relation to the project were minor and regulatory in nature. There have been no significant changes to the project and therefore an assessment is not required."...

It has been suggested, given the number of Yukon's economic sectors that have benefited from this reassessment provision, including industry and municipalities, that removing it before its replacement is in position is like ripping the roof off your house before you've decided what to replace it with and leaving [in this case] Yukoners out in [the cold and] the rain [and the snow] in the process.

• (1100)

Yukon's mining industry is modern, responsible, and innovative. It is a partner at the forefront of research and relationships that balance economic, social, cultural, and environmental values. It and its supporting service and supply companies are our territory's largest private sector employers. It contributes [as I mentioned] 20% to our GDP, a significant number in a small developing jurisdiction [of just under 36,000] otherwise dominated by the public sector.

The mineral industry is committed to working with all orders of government to provide opportunities that allow Yukoners to grow up in the territory, study and train in the territory, and pursue rewarding and well-paying private sector jobs and careers.

In closing, Mr. Smith added at that October 3 meeting:

In conclusion, Madam Chair and committee members, the Yukon Producers Group proposes that a committee of interested and affected government and industry parties be struck to work on replacement for the reassessment and timelines provisions and provide its recommendations for this replacement before Bill C-17 receives royal assent.

If replacement provisions are not in place beforehand, industry, municipalities, and all Yukoners will suffer.

Mr. Burke, the president of the Yukon Chamber of Mines, told us the following on October 3:

I would like to draw your attention to Minister Bennett's commitment in a letter to the Yukon Chamber of Mines dated July 6, 2017, "Once amendments to Bill C-17 have been made, the department is willing to work with Yukon first nations, the Government of Yukon, and stakeholders such as your organization to review these issues in order to identify possible short-term administrative or long-term legislative solutions."

Government Orders

We appreciate this commitment. However, it is imperative that all orders of government work to undertake and implement solutions to these issues in advance of the passage of Bill C-17 to ensure continuity for all parties involved. The time to start this work is already in the past. Our concerns for the future of our business have been shared with all levels of government. We strongly urge you to begin this work and establish a timeline to report progress on this front.

Mr. Burke went on to tell us the following at that October 3 meeting:

The Yukon Chamber of Mines and our membership support the need for a robust environmental review process. We represent a science-based industry composed of geologists, engineers, tradespeople, and other professional and non-professional occupations, that has made and will continue to make significant investments in reducing the impact our business has on the environment. We do not want to save money at the expense of the environment. That is a myth.

Let me repeat that: “We do not want to save money at the expense of the environment. That is a myth.”

We are at the forefront of reconciliation as we invest in the backyards of Yukon first nations. We are at the forefront of reconciliation as we partner with Yukon first nations and provide economic opportunities where, in many cases, [as we know] few other opportunities exist [in the private sector in this country].

We support the passage of Bill C-17 in order to reconcile with Yukon first nations. We urge the federal government to immediately engage with first nations governments and the Yukon government to find short-term administrative or long-term legislative solutions to the impact of the removal of the reassessments and timelines contained in Bill C-17. The impact of Bill C-17, without addressing these concerns, will have a serious negative impact on investment and mining and exploration projects in the Yukon.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines urges that this work be undertaken to implement solutions to these issues in advance of the passage of Bill C-17 to ensure continuity for all parties involved.

● (1105)

The government has claimed that all stakeholders are 100% behind Bill C-17. That is simply not true. The support was not an unconditional rubber stamp. In fact, the support is contingent on what has been promised by the now Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. They emphatically told the committee:

The federal and territorial governments must work immediately with first nations governments to address the concerns and risks associated with the removal of the provisions addressing reassessment and timelines from the act.

I will reiterate the commitment the minister made to the Yukon Chamber of Mines when she was there in July. She wrote: “Once amendments to Bill C-17 have been made, the department is willing to work with Yukon first nations, the Government of Yukon, and stakeholders such as your organization to review these issues in order to identify possible short-term administrative or long-term legislative solutions.”

I hope the minister is listening to what stakeholders are telling her. We had three excellent people who came to our meeting on October 3 to address this situation. However, it was back in July that the minister addressed these concerns in Yukon. Now we are into November. The months have passed. All stakeholders, including Yukon first nations, are ready to collaborate to ensure the regulations have something in place to address these major concerns, but the minister's office remains silent, surprisingly. It is imperative that the minister follow through on her commitment that she made in July, and do so very quickly.

Bob McLeod, Premier of Northwest Territories, told the Arctic Circle assembly on October 13, a month ago, that people of the Arctic want what everyone else wants. They want good jobs, they

want a good standard of living, they want to be healthy, they want to be educated, and most of all they want a sustainable future for themselves and for their families based on their own vision and their own priorities.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am a very lucky person. I get to represent the great riding of Prince Albert that used to be held by former prime minister Diefenbaker, who had a great respect for the north. He actually looked at the north's opportunities and brought the north into Canada. I also had the privilege to serve under former prime minister Harper, who also looked at the north as an opportunity and looked at its potential and its people and asked how we could include them in Canada and make them part of the process. I look forward, in 2019, to kicking the Liberals out of office and sitting with prime minister Scheer, so that he can actually do the same thing as prime minister Diefenbaker and prime minister Harper—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he cannot mention names of sitting members or sitting leaders in the House.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

Mr. Randy Hoback: I apologize, Madam Chair. I look forward to a new Conservative prime minister in 2019, so we can address all the mistakes that the current government has passed on to the Canadian people.

I just think of all the election promises we have seen from the current government: sunny ways, open and transparent government, keeping its promises, and doing things differently, supposedly. The Liberals are doing things differently. We can just look at committees. They have used 50 adjournment motions. Conservative governments never, ever did that.

As my colleague talks about the north and advantages of the north, as he looks at what people in the north want, and as he heard in committee what they were asking for, has the current government actually done the proper consultations to bring forward a piece of legislation such as this? Have the Liberals actually done the work, or are they just doing what they want to do, as they have always done in the past?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, it is obvious that the Liberals have had two years to bring forward a fairly simple piece of legislation, Bill C-17, and yet we are still going on. The north is crying. It wants in. The reassessments they are going through up there are simply ridiculous. They start a project, such as in mining. As members know, there are opportunities there. When stakeholders start drilling, they might want to go in a different direction. Instead of getting it assessed at that point and moving on, they have to get everything else reassessed from square one. We heard that from the stakeholders. This is a regressive situation they are going through.

Government Orders

Jonas Smith, Brad Thrall, and Mike Burke talked about that at committee on October 3. There is nowhere else in the world where this would happen, where people might have a project that is a year or 18 months in and have to start all over again if they want to extend something. Then it becomes an issue of human resources. We heard testimony that they had lost a whole year there, a whole year of employment, a whole year of economic benefit for an area of this country that desperately needs it right now.

• (1110)

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments by my colleague opposite, but they remind me of the previous Conservative government's gutting of environmental regulations, from environmental assessments to the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and on and on.

Does the member believe that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, or does he believe that it is all right to consult only the economic stakeholders and make changes that move the dial away from environmental protection playing a role in how government regulates in this country?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I recognize the member, I want to remind the member for Prince Albert, who indicated how long he has been in the House and who knows the rules, that when he was speaking, he had the privilege of having members listen to him without being interrupted, and I would expect the same respect when other people are speaking.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, it is an interesting question because on October 3, we had three business people from Yukon testifying about the environment in Yukon and saying that was a myth. They are well ahead of the current government. The mining industry in this country is innovative and cares about the environment. It wants to start relationships with first nations and government. As I said in my speech, it is all a myth. These companies are well ahead of the government.

Yesterday, was one of the darkest days in the province of Saskatchewan that I represent. Cameco, one of the greatest companies in my province, was forced to lay off 845 workers from northern Saskatchewan. Why? It is because of commodity prices. Cameco has been a source of strength for indigenous voices in my provinces. It did not want to do this, but it was forced to. It will start the layoffs in January, but hopefully bring the employees back in 10 months' time. These are the very people in our country we want to help, namely, indigenous peoples. Yet one of the major employers in my province yesterday was forced to lay off 845 of these people. They are decimated at McArthur River and Key Lake.

We have to work with companies. Companies have to work with governments. We understand that, but ensuring employment in areas of northern Saskatchewan, in the territories, and Yukon is important if we are to move our economic base forward in this country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find it very disappointing that the Conservatives

are opposed to Bill C-17, which would allow indigenous communities in Yukon to regain their autonomy and decision-making authority.

When the Conservatives introduced Bill S-6, it was challenged. In fact, it is presently before the courts. The indigenous peoples of Yukon decided, however, to put this challenge on hold while waiting to see whether Bill C-17 would be passed or supported in the House. In fact, they support this bill despite the fact that work remains to be done to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are upheld.

It is rather difficult to understand why the Conservatives are opposing this bill when it is what the indigenous peoples of Yukon want. We constantly hear in the House that relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples must improve and that there must be a nation-to-nation relationship. The Conservatives oppose this.

We must respect the indigenous peoples. I find it hard to see this respect when the Conservatives are opposing Bill C-17.

• (1115)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, well, it is simply put.

In my speech, I talked about a project that was started and should be in operation, but is not because of a reassessment that is going on. They start a project, they could get people in the north employed, and now it will have to be reassessed from square one. Now we have lost a whole year up north in mining. The company has put hundreds of thousands of dollars into human resources. The economic spinoff up north has been lost for that year, or 18 months. Why would we support this revision to Bill C-17?

We want to get people working in this country. This could be addressed if we had an exemption for projects from reassessment when their authorization is renewed or amended, unless there has been a significant change to the project. I stress the words "significant change". Some of the changes are not very significant, and so we should be able to continue on and people to continue to work. However, if we have to start over from square one, it is ridiculous. On the economics, Yukon, in this case, and first nations up there are the ones who are suffering.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with much of what the member across the way is saying. He is trying to create an impression that is just not true on a number of counts.

We have seen prosperity in all regions of the country. This is a government that truly cares. It is unfortunate whenever there is layoff of any nature. We try to do whatever we can to improve the conditions so that we all have a better way to move forward.

Government Orders

Would the member not, at the very least, acknowledge that we have seen substantial growth? Around 500,000 jobs have been created in all regions of our country. I believe that is a good indication of the policy and investment in Canada's middle class. Will he not acknowledge that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to give time for the member to respond.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, we have an unemployment rate of nearly 10% in the province of Alberta. We have mines in my province suffering layoffs. I just mentioned two mines with 845 people laid-off. We had an opportunity with the Alexco mine in the Yukon to hire people, and they cannot do that.

It might be rosy in some areas of this country, and I accept that, but other areas of this country are not doing so well, namely Saskatchewan, Alberta, and northern Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried on division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

• (1120)

CANNABIS ACT

The House resumed from November 1 consideration of Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts.

I think all members will agree that protecting the health and safety of Canadians is a key priority for all orders of government in Canada. With this in mind, on April 13, Bill C-45 was introduced in the House. Its goal is the creation of a strict national framework for controlling the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis in Canada. The bill would provide for legal access to cannabis where adults could obtain it through an appropriate legal framework, sourced from a strictly regulated industry or by growing it safely and in limited amounts at home.

[Translation]

The bill would also establish safeguards to protect youth, including prohibiting the sale or distribution of cannabis to anyone

under 18 and restricting marketing and advertising activities geared towards youth.

[English]

Growers and manufacturers of cannabis would require a federal licence and be subject to a strict oversight regime intended to control product safety and quality, and to prevent diversion to the illegal market. Effective oversight and control of cannabis cannot be achieved by working in isolation from our partners in the provinces, territories, and municipalities.

From the outset, our government has been clear that the control and regulation of cannabis requires a pan-Canadian approach, involving all orders of government, at all stages of development and implementation. This reality is reflected in the important role that our provincial and territorial partners played in the work of the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation.

The task force was established in June 2016 with a mandate to provide advice to the federal government on how to legalize, strictly regulate, and restrict access to cannabis. Input from the provinces and territories, as well as from indigenous communities, was essential to the successful work of the task force.

The provinces and territories nominated experts to serve on the task force, and made suggestions as to who should be consulted. These individuals met with the task force, and shared their views on cannabis legalization and regulation and on how best to achieve our shared objectives of better protecting public health and safety.

[Translation]

It should come as no surprise that the input from the provinces and territories was instrumental in shaping many important provisions of Bill C-45.

[English]

Consistent with the task force report, Bill C-45 proposes a shared framework for the control and regulation of cannabis that would require ongoing federal, provincial, and territorial collaboration. The bill sets out clear controls and standards around cannabis, and provides flexibility for each government to work within their own jurisdictional authority and experience. Those who are best placed to implement each aspect of the framework would do so.

At this time, I would like to explain how the various roles and responsibilities would be shared between our governments, beginning with the federal role. Bill C-45 proposes that the federal government would be responsible for establishing and maintaining a national framework for regulating the production of cannabis, setting standards for health and safety, and establishing criminal prohibitions.

Government Orders

This would include establishing restrictions on adult access to cannabis and serious criminal penalties for those operating outside the legal system; creating rules to limit how cannabis or cannabis accessories could be promoted, packaged, labelled, and displayed, in line with the rules in place for tobacco products; instituting a federal licensing regime for cannabis production that would draw on lessons learned from the current system for access to cannabis for medical purposes; establishing industry-wide rules and standards, for example, serving sizes or potency limits, as well as a tracking of cannabis to prevent diversion to the illegal market; creating minimum federal conditions to provide a national framework to protect public health and public safety; and enforcing cannabis importation and exportation prohibitions at the border, except when legally authorized.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

At the same time, Bill C-45 recognizes that provinces and territories and municipalities have a key role to play in the new system.

[*English*]

The legislation would respect that provinces and territories, together with municipalities, have the authority to tailor certain rules in their own jurisdictions and enforce them through a range of tools, including administrative sanctions. Consistent with the recommendations from the task force, the provinces and territories, working with municipalities, would be able to establish rules with respect to where cannabis-based businesses could be located within a community, and also where cannabis could be consumed in public.

Provinces and territories could also set additional requirements to address issues of local concern. For example, provincial and territorial legislatures would have the authority to set a higher minimum age for cannabis possession. Provinces and territories could also set more restrictive limits on possession or personal cultivation, including lowering the number of plants or restricting where they may be cultivated.

Thus, Bill C-45 is drafted in such a way as to provide the provinces and territories with the ability to establish stricter rules under their own authorities.

We are pleased to see that the provinces and territories are already taking action to prepare for the legalization and regulation of cannabis. From coast to coast to coast, provinces and territories are continuing the conversation with Canadians about how best to regulate the sale and distribution of cannabis in their towns, cities, and communities.

While provinces and territories will decide on a system that responds to their particular circumstances, it is clear that all jurisdictions share our government's responsibilities to keep cannabis out of the hands of youth, to shut out organized crime, and to protect public health and safety. This is true for all orders of government.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, having served with my colleague across the way from Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and being the only two non-lawyers on the committee, I know that he is a very common-sense and practical kind of person. Therefore,

my question to him is this. Does the legislation really meet the objectives that the Liberals have stated, that is, to minimize the access that youth would have to cannabis? Does he believe that allowing every household in Canada to have four mature marijuana plants would minimize the exposure and access that youth would have to cannabis?

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Madam Speaker, I also appreciate serving on the justice and human rights committee with the hon. member for Provencher.

In answer to his question as to whether the legislation would serve to protect Canadians and youth, absolutely. It also recognizes the role of parental responsibility in households in the same way that parents and adults in a household now protect their children from access to alcohol that may be widely present in the home. If there is cannabis present or being grown in the home, it would still be part of that parental responsibility to maintain control in a responsible way, just as parents do when looking after their children, and as they will do throughout their lives.

• (1130)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, I lived in Lincoln Park in Port Coquitlam for 10 years, and I still have friends who live there. I know how important this issue is to the people of Port Coquitlam.

In my own riding, I held a town hall about a year ago where 3,300 people stayed on the phone for an hour to learn about this initiative, and of course to express some of their concerns.

About a year ago, I met with the Canadian Nurses Association. I asked one of the nurses there what she thought about the legalization of marijuana, and some of the concerns. I appreciate that the member talked first and foremost about safety. She said that she has a friend who works in emergency rooms in Colorado, where marijuana has now been legal for a number of years, and that this friend had said that the number one thing that was now bringing people through the doors of emergency rooms in Colorado was related to marijuana, either because of impaired accidents, both automobile and otherwise, and paranoia from combining mental health prescription drugs with marijuana.

Therefore, I would like to ask the member this. Do you feel comfortable that the proposal you have brought forward will actually keep Canadians safe?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that he is to address the question to the Chair, and not to the individual member.

The hon. member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Madam Speaker, the legislation will keep Canadians safe in many ways. For example, marijuana is currently very widely used among our youth. Canada has one of the highest per capita rates of marijuana use among youth in any developed country. The problem is the marijuana they are getting is from an unknown source, of unknown potency, and unknown quality. It also puts them into contact with the black market, which is a gateway to many other serious drugs and substances.

Government Orders

Providing a controlled source of marijuana of a known provenance, with a known potency and purity, would help that situation. It would also provide a way for people to buy and sell it legally, controlled in a similar way to tobacco.

The biggest effort to keep children away from using marijuana is going to be around education, not by prohibition, and not by threatening them with some sort of criminal prohibition. It devolves upon all the adults in the equation to look after the children, to keep them educated, and to advise them of the danger of this substance.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, your time is up.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not detect much enthusiasm when my colleagues on the government side are talking about Bill C-45, the marijuana legalization bill. Many of them simply read out prepared speeches and do not really believe everything they are saying.

Since I live in a rural area, in a community that is very worried about what is happening in Canada for the first time in its history, I cannot honestly imagine that, deep down, the members opposite are happy about moving forward with Bill C-45. I am not the only one who thinks so. There is very strong opposition in my riding, of course. Police bodies, municipalities, and provincial governments are also opposed to having this kind of legislation imposed on them and especially object to the government's utterly irrational agenda with regard to Bill C-45. Doctors, psychiatrists, scientists, and leaders everywhere are speaking out.

Just before coming here to give this speech, I asked some of my constituents about their thoughts on Bill C-45. Here are some of the comments I received:

I no longer live in the area, but I am still 200% against it. People are not allowed to smoke anywhere, but soon people are really going to start complaining when they realize just how much pot stinks. Legalizing the drug is a really stupid idea.

Here is another comment:

We have enough trouble dealing with drunk driving, and now they want to add another driving problem with this legislation. The accident rate went up in countries where they legalized cannabis, and we will be no exception.

I am not the one who is saying this. Here is another quotation:

I am 100% against. I have seen the havoc drugs have wreaked on the lives of users and their loved ones, and it really is not pretty. We cannot forget that this "soft" drug is a stepping stone to other hard drugs. Therefore, people will be saying that it is no big deal because it is legal. This is very dangerous, especially for our youth.

That is not all. Here is another one:

It seems that politicians have not consulted, or have not consulted enough, with experts on the subject.

Here is one final comment:

They are already having a hard time providing mental health care, so how are they going to deal with growing demand because statistics show that marijuana use often leads to problems like that and makes a lot of people depressed. This makes me worry about the future.

If the proper process had been followed, these people would not be so worried. If this bill were addressing an actual need, these people would already have answers to their questions. They would

not be so worried about how marijuana legalization will affect our roads and our young people, the very young people the government claims it is helping by legalizing marijuana.

I recently read a comment about how this legislation will normalize marijuana to the point that young people may be even more interested in using it. I am trying to keep my feelings out of this, but I must admit I am having a hard time.

July 1, 2018, is nine months from now. In September, the Ontario Provincial Police Deputy Commissioner told the Standing Committee on Health that more time and more resources are needed to train police officers. Those two elements are lacking here. This is how the Deputy Commissioner described the likelihood that police officers will be ready by July 1, 2018:

...it's impossible. The damage that can be done between the time of new legislation and police officers being ready to enforce the law...can make it very hard for us to ever regain that foothold.

We heard the same message from Mario Harel, the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights:

...are we delivering on the public safety objectives Canadians would expect of us? We are 10 months away, so allow me to put this into perspective.

We have 65,000 police officers in Canada who require training to understand the new legislation once it is passed into law...Provincial governments for the most part are still developing regulatory and delivery schemes, which directly impact law enforcement.

Quite frankly, the capacity currently is not there to deliver the amount of training required.

● (1135)

The police themselves are the ones saying this.

Why are the Liberals so determined to rush Bill C-45 through? What are they hiding? What is the hurry? Who do they have to answer to, if not Canadians, police chiefs, doctors, and psychiatrists? Who is the government trying to pander to by rushing to legalize marijuana?

This will have a serious impact on young people. We know this. I have heard from many people who are saying the same thing. What the government is claiming is totally false.

If young people under 25 are allowed to use cannabis, this will have a serious impact. It has been proven that this can have a permanent and possibly very serious effect on their mental health and brain development. I will not start quoting scientists and all the studies that have been done on that, for there are too many to name.

Government Orders

All I know is that if the government goes ahead with this on July 1, 2018, Canada will not be the same, Canadian society will not be the same. The Liberal government and every Liberal member will be to blame. The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead, the hon. member for Shefford, the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, the hon. member for Québec, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, the hon. member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, the hon. member for Louis-Hébert, the hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi, and the hon. member for Saint-Jean and all the others will be to blame for everything that happens after July 1, 2018.

They still have a chance to get this right, but, if they continue to impose Bill C-45 on Canadians, after July 1, 2018 it will be too late.

Police chiefs have said that they are not ready. The damage will be done and we will never be able to go back. This is where this government is taking us. This is where this government is taking our society. This is where this government is taking Canada after July 1, 2018.

History will be defined by what came before July 1, 2018, and what came after July 1, 2018.

Those are the facts and that is what we are up against. I hope that the members I named and all the others, such as the hon. member for Pontiac, the hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville, the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, the hon. member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, the hon. member for Bourassa, and the hon. member for Laval—Les Îles will understand this before the damage is done.

We are at a point where individual members of the Liberal government must assume their responsibilities towards their constituents, the youth in their ridings, and Canada.

I regularly see the member for Scarborough Southwest defend this irresponsible date of July 1, 2018. I invite him to come and tour our regions and to speak with our mayors and police chiefs so that he will understand once and for all that the date of July 1, 2018 is premature. Canada is not ready to deal with these changes.

Personally, I prefer the Canada as it exists now prior to July 1, 2018, to the Liberals' Canada after July 1, 2018.

• (1140)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his invitation to go to his riding to give his constituents information, not to cause fear but to help them be better informed.

I find the member's comment that he prefers the situation as it currently exists intriguing. Let us be clear what that situation is. Today we have the highest rate of cannabis use among children of any country in the world. The member apparently prefers that. The current supply of cannabis being sold to our children comes from organized crime. They make billions of dollars from that. The member prefers that.

I am just curious. Does the member not see that with the imposition of a strict regulatory regime for the production and distribution of cannabis we would have an opportunity to do a better job of protecting our kids and a better job of making our communities safe, displacing organized crime from this business?

I find the current situation unacceptable, but the member opposite laments its passing. I would like him to explain why the current situation is his preferred environment.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, we are looking to the facts.

With respect to Colorado, consumption of marijuana rose after legalization. That is why I prefer the Canada as it exists now to the one that will take shape after July 2018.

I will remind the member for Scarborough Southwest, who was a respected police chief, what his colleagues say when asked if it is possible for the police to be ready for July 1, 2018.

[English]

“Impossible. Senior police officials tell MPs they won't be ready for legal cannabis.”

[Translation]

That is the reality, and these are the facts. I am tired of hearing them insist otherwise.

In my riding's high schools, it is not true that most students consume cannabis. It is simply not true. The students who consume cannabis are far outnumbered by those who do not. Unfortunately, once marijuana is legalized and normalized, the scales could tip the other way, with consumption becoming more common among youth than not. That is what will happen.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, for his remarks. I thought one thing he said was particularly interesting, namely that he holds the Liberal members to blame.

I was under the impression that every member of this Parliament was elected to be a lawmaker. We did not choose this poorly crafted bill, evidently. However, I have trouble understanding how my colleague, as a Conservative, would bear some of the blame, given that his party proposed no amendments or changes, not even to postpone the coming into force of what I must say is a rather poorly crafted bill.

Listening to his speech, I shared some of the concerns expressed by the people of his riding, because we hear these concerns in many ridings.

Why are the Conservatives not proposing any amendments to this deeply flawed bill?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, when an apple is rotten, we do not cut it up to try to salvage what we can from it. We throw it out. That is what we should have done with Bill C-45.

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government is continually saying that this legislation would keep cannabis out of the hands of our children, but that is not true. The provinces disagree. The New Brunswick health minister just came out with some added provisions to try to protect children from homegrown cannabis. I see that Saskatchewan advocates are looking for more things.

Subclause 8(c) of the bill would allow children aged 12 to 17 to have up to five grams.

Could the member share what they think in Quebec about those provisions?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, everyone agrees that it makes no sense for children between the ages of 12 to 17 to be in possession of marijuana.

Unfortunately, that is probably what is going to happen, particularly since this bill will allow people to grow marijuana at home. Who is going to start counting the leaves on their pot plants to make sure that three or four of them have not been stolen by children between the ages of 12 to 17? That does not make any sense. This measure is irresponsible and disrespectful toward Canadian youth.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to share a bit of information that will hopefully be of benefit to members and will get Conservative members to rethink some of the spin they are hearing from their Conservative colleagues, or possibly their research team. I do not know exactly where they are getting their facts. On the last question, about the five grams, it would be illegal under this legislation to have five grams in one's possession. Less than that would be under provincial jurisdiction.

Let me start by commenting that I was really touched by the comments made earlier today by representatives of all political parties. As someone who has served in the Canadian Forces, I have had the opportunity to participate in many marches in remembrance. I would like to briefly provide a comment of respect for those war veterans I marched with back in the early 1980s. I applaud and recognize their ultimate sacrifice to make Canada what it is today.

I understand that the New Democrats and the Green Party will be supporting this legislation. Canadians need not be surprised. Liberals talked about this in the last federal election. It was in our election platform that this was what we would do. At the end of the day, there has been a great deal of support for what the government is moving forward with. I am surprised at the degree to which the Conservative Party seems to want to fight this issue. What surprises me most is the fact that it does not have any problem using misinformation.

In Canada today we have the highest consumption rate in terms of young people engaged in using cannabis. That means that there are more young people per capita in Canada who have tried or used cannabis than in countries like the United States, the U.K., and Australia. We already know that our system is not working, and we

need to address the issue. It might affect some ridings more than others, but at the end of the day, it is a national issue.

There are already too many young people being encouraged to use cannabis. There is a criminal element out there that wants young people to use it. They sell it to young people, because they have a vested financial interest in getting young kids to use cannabis. This legislation, in good part, would deal with that.

The Conservatives seem to have no problem with people going into our schools and telling children to buy bags of cannabis. Those students are going to be experimenting with who knows what, because criminal elements are trying to get our kids to smoke marijuana. We do not know what is in the bags being circulated in our schools, or in the cigarettes, or tokes, or whatever they are called. Excuse me for not knowing the word. We have no idea what the drugs are being laced with or what is sold to children in our schools. What we know for a fact is that there are too many young people in Canada who are being enticed to participate in the consumption of cannabis.

● (1150)

We finally have a government that is saying that it is going to strictly regulate, legalize, and restrict access to cannabis. In the area I represent, I believe that is good news. Every year we get gangs or that criminal element making hundreds of millions of dollars. A major amount of that money comes through selling cannabis to young people. I am talking about 11 to 13-year-olds.

When people talk about the impact on the brain and on a young person's growth, there is no question that we need to be concerned about this. However, if members are really concerned about this and they want to do something about it, they might want to consider voting in favour of the legislation. If they are really sincere in their comments about young people, they will vote in favour of this.

I am concerned about the young people whom I represent in Winnipeg North. I want to see less money going to the criminal element there. I want to see fewer 11-year-olds consuming cannabis. This legislation is a giant step in the right direction to allow that to happen. The Conservatives seem to believe that if the legislation passes, people who have consumed cannabis will be driving around on streets all over Canada. I have news for them. That happens today.

When it came to training our police or our law enforcement agencies, the Conservatives committed \$2 million. This government is committing \$161 million for training of law enforcement officers and providing the type of equipment that is going to be necessary. Therefore, not only are we doing the right thing by bringing forward the legislation, we are also providing the financial means necessary to assist our law enforcement agencies. I do not share the opinions of Conservative members who seem to think that our law enforcement agencies will not be ready in time. The resources and the sense of commitment we see day in and day out from law enforcement officers will ensure we are in a ready position to deal with this good, sound legislation.

Government Orders

A great deal of effort has been put into this legislation. I made reference to the fact that we had an election platform. Canadians have been consulted extensively on this issue. We have had a task force on it. We have standing committees that have dealt with it, either directly or indirectly. A great deal of debate has taken place, not only in Ottawa but in our constituencies. We now have before us legislation that would make a positive difference.

I want to bring it down to the real grassroots communities we represent. Today, far too many dollars flow to the criminal elements in our communities. Cannabis is one of those things that contributes hundreds of millions of dollars every year to that. This legislation would help to get rid of that. By doing that, we will see fewer young people using cannabis because we will be taking the profit away from the criminal element, which has a financial interest in getting our young people on cannabis or at least trying it. That is one of the reasons why more young people in Canada use cannabis than in any other country in the world.

• (1155)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

There are 338 members of the House of Commons. The government has a slight majority, which means that it is in charge of planning our country's legislative agenda. That brings us to the bill proposed by the Liberal government. The 338 MPs are the ears and the voice of the people we represent. The members on this side of the House are not all complete idiots who do not care about what our constituents say.

How is it then that not one of the 38 amendments proposed by the NDP to try to strengthen this bill was accepted? One has to wonder.

How is it that the Liberals always seem to have all the answers?

• (1200)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, whether with this legislation or other legislation, we have seen a change in attitude at the standing committees. I am very familiar with the amendments and the process in which amendments are brought forward. The standing committees control the committee, what is debated, the votes, and so forth. We have had standing committees in which amendments have been brought forward and have passed. Opposition amendments have passed, many in fact, on a wide variety of legislation. We can contrast that to the former government. I could not name one amendment that ever passed during the years of the Conservative majority government.

Our government listens. It is very responsible with all ideas brought forward. I do not want to comment specifically on the amendments the member across the way might have brought forward, but our government gives consideration to all amendments.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague defend this bill with great passion, but I do not know where this passion is coming from.

The Liberals want to usher in the type of world where, starting July 1, 2018, a 12-year-old will be able to legally access marijuana. I have children and grandchildren. In all honesty, I cannot believe that, in a developed country like ours, we are going to be sending a message to kids that it is perfectly acceptable and easy to do drugs whenever they want.

Does my colleague have any grandchildren? Does he think that the day when they can easily buy drugs on a street corner will be a good day for his grandchildren?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have grandchildren. Like the member across the way, I do not want my grandchildren to go in a direction that is unhealthy for them. That is one of the reasons why I think this is good legislation. I do not want some 22-year-old individual trying to sell my grandchild marijuana. If he sells him that little bag of marijuana, he will make money that will go into criminal activities. Millions of dollars go into criminal activities, and that happens today. It is out of concern for my grandchildren and other children that we need this legislation passed.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the member for Winnipeg North on being nominated for hardest-working MP. Well done, dear colleague.

I have tremendous respect for my colleague, but I would add the caveat that just because a person is hard-working does not mean everything they do is right.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind members that November 5 was municipal elections day in Quebec. The 28 municipalities in the beautiful riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier voted in a mix of new officials and re-elected incumbents. The day after the elections, I wasted no time in congratulating the mayors and councillors. However, a warning was in order as well. In eight months' time, these municipal councillors and mayors will have a problem to deal with. These elected officials will be responsible for making sure life goes on in their municipalities after July 1, 2018. They will have decisions to make. They will have to keep an eye on their parks. What will be happening around schools?

My colleague said earlier that 12-year-olds could be walking around with drugs in their pockets. We must not forget that children are more impressionable than adults. I am deeply troubled.

Municipal elected officials will also have to look at what this means for highway safety codes. Those are under provincial jurisdiction, but municipalities do have local responsibilities. Recently, the Government of Quebec enacted legislation giving municipalities additional responsibilities, including speed limits in residential areas. Municipalities handle that. What a gift for our newly elected officials.

Government Orders

I take no pleasure in rising in the House today to speak to a Liberal bill that will destroy our youth, the act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other acts.

I was talking about municipalities. We also have to talk about the other level of government, the provincial government, which will have to deal with all these problems in return for a portion of the federal government's revenues from legalizing this product.

Many studies have made it abundantly clear that using marijuana affects people's health, especially the health of our young people. We must not forget that health is under provincial jurisdiction.

We also have to talk about road safety. We have no idea how our hard-working police officers are going to enforce that. There has been talk of training and investment, even of sending people to the United States for training. Nobody is ready for this. We should be taking our time.

As for personnel management, the Quebec minister of labour does not know what to do about the problem. People will be going to work after using drugs. It is a lot harder to verify people's state after they use drugs than after they drink. This is just one more thing being downloaded onto the provinces.

A university president from the Quebec City area asked how they are supposed to deal with this and manage it on campus. A myriad questions remain unanswered, and yet the government is fixated on one thing: July 1, 2018. Why is there such a rush to get this bill into law?

I recognize that drug use exists and that we need to do something. However, just because the government cannot control an existing problem does not mean that we should trivialize and legalize it. We should be taking more responsible steps and taking the time to come up with better solutions. I do not think this is the right way to tackle the problem.

We need to work on prevention. We need to encourage our youth to play sports and get involved in the arts and in their community. Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier has 500 organizations. Their problem right now is that they cannot renew their membership lists or find new volunteers.

•(1205)

Why has the federal government not developed a program to encourage our youth to get involved in their community? When they are involved in sports, dancing, singing, or arts and crafts, whatever the activity, that is all they think about. They do not have time for mischief or smoking marijuana.

The government opposite outlined specific purposes in the legislation. They are:

a) protect the health of young persons by restricting their access to cannabis;

However, it will be sold everywhere. Furthermore, people will have easy access from home since they will be allowed to grow their own pot plants. I will continue:

b) protect young persons and others from inducements to use cannabis;

Once again, it will be available everywhere. Here is the the third purpose:

c) provide for the licit production of cannabis to reduce illicit activities in relation to cannabis;

In other words, the government is saying that it will kill organized crime, but the Canadian Police Association said that it was naive to believe that organized crime activity could be restrained, reduced, or influenced. That is the word the Canadian Police Association used to describe this government. Then, the bill goes on:

(d) deter illicit activities in relation to cannabis through appropriate sanctions and enforcement measures;

Young people from 12 to 17 will apparently be able to go around with 5 grams of marijuana, which is the equivalent of 10 to 15 joints depending on their size. I will keep reading:

(e) reduce the burden on the criminal justice system in relation to cannabis;

Yes, we agree on decriminalization, but let us make the distinction between decriminalization and legalization. All 338 members of Parliament probably made some mistakes in their youth. It is certainly better to pay a fine, as we do for speeding, than it is to have a criminal record. The bill goes on:

(f) provide access to a quality-controlled supply of cannabis; and

(g) enhance public awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis use.

The government is saying that marijuana is not good for people's health, but it is going to legalize it. The government is saying that people should not use it, but it is going to put measures in place that will make it more accessible to our young people. I rise in the House today to protect our young people. That is important for any self-respecting society. It is naive to think that this is going to get rid of organized crime.

My goal is to protect young people under 25. All studies show that the brain development is complete by age 25. Why put young people between the ages of 18 and 25 at risk? The government is treating our young people like lab rats. We are the first G20 country that wants to legalize this drug. Why? We will become a testing ground and that is unacceptable. We are sacrificing a generation. That shows a lack of respect for our young people and makes it seem the government does not believe in the future of our country.

This government is here for the wrong reasons. It is spending money hand over fist and now has backed itself into a corner, so it is looking for a way to make some fast cash. First, that is an irresponsible way for a government to behave, because it has no vision. Second, it is using our young people to fill its coffers. The government has failed to mention what the cost of the consequences will be. We need to take the time to find a more respectful solution.

Even the tax is set out in budget 2017. We are wasting our time here today. The Liberals want this measure to take effect on July 1, 2018, and they did not agree to any of the amendments proposed by the NDP. They are looking forward to July 1, when they can raise some money for the friends of Pierre Elliott Trudeau's heir, our famous Prime Minister.

Government Orders

It does not take a genius to understand that this government is implementing measures that will take money out of the pockets of Canadians and harm our young people. That is unacceptable. This government needs to listen to reason. I am calling on the government to take more time before implementing this legislation, to be serious, and to show some respect for our young people. I am rising today on behalf of our youth.

• (1210)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to begin by simply advising the member that I spent most of my adult life fighting crime, and crime and violence can be reduced in our society, but not through tough talk, through smart action.

I also wanted to clarify something. The member opposite said that he supports decriminalization. I suggest to him that we have recognized the harm that can be visited on young people from being criminalized by getting a criminal record. That is why we have set limits. For example, if a young person under the age of 18 has more than five grams of marijuana, that would be a criminal offence. However, below that, we have worked with the provinces and territories so they could enact provincial legislation that would enforce an absolute prohibition on the possession, purchase, and consumption of cannabis. In every province, a provincial offence would prohibit a person under the age of majority in that province from possessing cannabis. It would give the police the authority to seize that cannabis and ticket for that offence. What it would not do is give that kid a criminal record.

I have spoken to people on both sides of this House, and we all care about our kids. We care about their health, their safety, and their outcomes. One of the greatest impediments to their outcomes is that criminal record. This government has listened to that, and have done exactly what the member wants us to do. We have removed the threat of a criminal sanction from those kids, but we have enforced the prohibition through smart provincial regulation, exactly as we do for alcohol, by the way.

If we look at those provincial regulations coming forward, we see that we would be getting exactly what the member thinks is the right thing to do. Does it ease the member's concern knowing that is happening? Does it ease his concern with respect to young people having prohibited access to this drug?

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, first, I am aware of my colleague's past, and I am surprised and disappointed with his position.

He is saying that, because the penalties imposed on young people in the past had no effect, we should give up. That means that we are unable to curb the distribution and sale of drugs.

Mr. Speaker, correct me if I should not be saying this, but that is a cowardly approach. It is unacceptable, because it means shirking our responsibilities. Instead of dealing with the problem, we are legalizing marijuana because we are unable to take control of the situation. That means that, if there are other problems in society, we

will simply say that, because we are unable to take control, because we cannot find a solution, we will give up and open the door wide. It is irresponsible.

Unfortunately, I did not really understand the question, because it was too long, but I hope I answered it to my colleague's satisfaction.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will return to what my colleague has just said about criminalization. All the studies show that criminalization and the longer minimum sentences implemented by the Conservatives for cannabis-related offences have not worked. They have not reduced drug use in young people, and they have not reduced the involvement of organized crime in the sale of cannabis.

On the contrary, according to the statistics on drug-related offences reported by the police in 2014, one year after the Conservatives' repressive laws were passed, cases of methamphetamine possession rose by 38% and trafficking by 17%, while cases of heroine possession rose by 34% and trafficking by 12%. The minimum sentences did not work, the war on drugs was unsuccessful. Why do the Conservatives not want us to adopt and implement a new strategy, an approach based on public health? Right now, the number one drug, the most commonly used drug in Canada and throughout the world, is cannabis. The people who use cannabis the most are young people between the ages of 12 and 25. We need a new strategy to continue to work with young people and improve prevention. Obviously, there are shortcomings in the bill we are debating, but we can work on these shortcomings and make improvements.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, if my colleague had really listened to what I said, she would see that I agree that there is a problem and we need to find solutions. Decriminalization is not a magic wand to solve all our drug-related problems, but it is a step in the right direction. Now, let us take the time to determine the best way to proceed.

What I said earlier is that we need to protect young people aged 25 and under and set up a prevention program. In fact, I might not have said it because I was short of time, but I included it in my speech. We need to establish a prevention program, a program to encourage young people to become involved in sports, the arts and volunteering, and put in place the means to eliminate the distribution of drugs to young people.

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to engage in this debate. Bill C-45 is, of course, the bill that would legalize marijuana in Canada.

When we talk about legalization, we have to understand what this legislation would do. It would normalize the use of marijuana in everyday life across Canada. Like cigarettes, which were normalized many years ago, and the same with booze, marijuana would now become an accepted part of Canadian life. The message we send to our children would be a terrible one. It is one that says we give up, we surrender, because we are no longer going to take action to eliminate the use of marijuana and other drugs in our society. We are simply going to go, as my colleague said, the coward's way: acquiesce and legalize it.

Government Orders

I am absolutely confident that Bill C-45, which represents the normalization of the use of marijuana in Canada, would become a massive public policy failure for the Liberal government, just like its tax reforms, where it attacks small businesses, diabetics, those who are getting employee discounts, and the mentally ill. That has become a massive policy failure, and Bill C-45 would also become a massive policy failure for the reasons I will articulate.

The bill would effectively legalize the sale, use, and cultivation of marijuana. As I said, it would normalize its use. We have worked so hard as a society to discourage cigarette smoking, and yet here we are opening the door to what is arguably an even more dangerous substance. The irony is that the current government, while it would pass the bill to legalize the use of marijuana, would then engage in a public relations and communications strategy telling young people who would be purchasing marijuana that they should not buy it because it is very dangerous and they should not use it, but it would be legalized and normalized. I mean, the hypocrisy of that is jaw-dropping.

I was an elected official in the City of Abbotsford for many years. I was very pleased to serve there as a city councillor. I can tell members that, as a council, one of the biggest challenges we had was the growing of marijuana plants at home. Many of these were illegal grow ops. Eventually, medicinal marijuana was approved for use in Canada, and homes are now growing this under the auspices of providing some kind of medicinal relief. What has happened is that we have communities and neighbourhoods within Abbotsford that are wonderful neighbourhoods, but they have houses in which marijuana is grown. Historically, they would cover the windows with foil, and the stench emanating from those properties was overwhelming. There was a constant stream of neighbourhood members who would come to us council members and complain about it.

This bill would authorize the growing of marijuana plants at home. I can assure members that many Canadians, unfortunately, will take that opportunity to grow more than the four plants that would be allowed under the proposed legislation. This would result in continued challenges with our neighbourhoods across Canada.

There was a stated objective of the government that it wanted to protect youth, and that the regulation and legalization of marijuana would achieve that end. The Liberals stated that they also wanted to eliminate organized crime, but we know that children under the age of 18 are not supposed to be buying marijuana. Anyone over the age of 18, under the proposed legislation, would be able to legally purchase and consume marijuana, but those under the age of 18 would not. Ironically, those between the ages of 12 and 17 would be allowed to possess small amounts of marijuana. Where would they acquire that marijuana? They cannot buy it legally. Who are they going to go to? Well, organized crime would supply that drug.

● (1220)

There is a bigger problem. All of the medical and scientific research says that marijuana use among young people has a very negative impact on their developing young brains.

Why would the Liberal government want to legalize a drug that we know will be used by our youth in increasing numbers, because it will be that much more available to them? Why would we allow this to happen when it is very clear from the medical literature that the

use of marijuana amongst young people invariably leads to significant mental health issues? In fact, I am predicting that if this legislation passes, in 5, 10, 15 years from now, Canada will face a mental health crisis. All of these youth who have had greater access to marijuana will be suffering from significant mental health challenges. What a terrible legacy for us to leave for our children.

I want to address the issue of the timing of this legislation. As we know, the Prime Minister has said he is going to ram this thing through and implement the legislation by July 1, 2018. However, we have heard from police chiefs across Canada that it is impossible for them to get ready and implement this legislation with all the challenges this bill represents. We have heard from communities across the country, including from my own city of Abbotsford, which communicated with the federal government, made a submission to the committee that studied this bill, and said, "Please, you cannot do this by July 1". The provinces and territories are saying to the Prime Minister that July 1 is way too ambitious a date to implement this plan by, that they will not be ready for it. Their police services will not be ready, their educational system will not be ready, and Canadians will not be ready for it.

Generally speaking, it is going to result in a fiasco. However, that is what we have to expect from the Liberal government. Whatever file it touches, it ends up being a huge mess. That includes ethical failures like those of the finance minister and the Prime Minister and his fundraiser having offshore accounts. No one trusts the government anymore. There has been a fundamental breach of trust.

Let us look at some of the other challenges. I want to be very clear that we support ticketing the possession of small amounts of marijuana. We are supportive of decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana. We do not want to leave young children with a criminal record.

However, this bill goes far beyond decriminalization. It is clear-cut legalization of the use of marijuana and the normalization that will follow. We run a huge risk as we normalize the use of marijuana in Canada, where people will be entitled by law to possess small amounts of marijuana. Many Canadians will be travelling. They will have used marijuana regularly. They will have some of it in their glove compartments. When they get to the U.S. border, suddenly the border agents will be asking, "Hey, what do you have in your car? Do you have any guns or drugs?" People will say, "No, we do not." The agents will rifle through the car and find marijuana in the glove compartment. Those people will probably be apprehended on the American side of the border. They will have a criminal record on that side of the border. They will have to go through the legal process there. That is one of the many small consequences the bill will generate.

Finally, it is very clear that the government has run out of money. That is why it is taxing Canadians to death. It has gone after small businesses, diabetics, employee discounts, the mentally ill, and now it is going after marijuana. The government is going to tax marijuana. More and more, it is because the government is running short of money. Can members imagine that being the reason for passing a bill like this that will have enormous consequences for Canadians?

Government Orders

I say to my Liberal friends across the way in closing that they should give their heads a shake and reconsider what they are doing here. This is bad policy that will hurt future generations of Canadians. They should not do it.

• (1225)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the member for Abbotsford. We get along great at the environment committee and had a great discussion this morning.

Regrettably, I see some challenges with what he has presented here today. In particular, he talked about normalizing the use of cannabis. Is he aware of the fact that 21% of our youth have used marijuana? Is he aware of the fact that 30% of young adults use marijuana? What more is required for him to realize it is already a problem?

He then talked about access to cannabis, particularly the access of young children to cannabis, and how it will somehow give rise to the criminal activity behind production and distribution. How many of these young people are getting alcohol brewed at home, or tobacco that has been grown and dried at home and rolled into cigarettes? It simply will not work like that.

The reality of the situation is that when we have legalized it and regulated its production, and when we can start to properly inform and educate children about the challenges involved, as we have done with cigarettes, we will be so much more successful. I am not creating a brand new scenario here. This has already been the case. We have already seen this happen with alcohol and tobacco. We have had a much higher success rate at keeping those out of the hands of children.

Would the member like to respond to the fact that so many youth are already experimenting with cannabis?

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go to the hon. member for Abbotsford, I want to remind the hon. members, as I know a few of them are getting antsy and making suggestion out loud, that when I say “questions and comments”, I leave it to the members to either ask a question or make comments.

The hon. member for Abbotsford.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did want to reiterate what my colleague said. We do work very well at committee and get a lot of things done, which indicates there is a lot of goodwill around the environment committee table.

He has suggested that a significant percentage of Canadian youth already use drugs to some degree. He is right. Therefore, the member asked if this was not already a problem. Yes, it is.

This bill would make that problem much worse for the reasons I articulated. Just because there are youth who have been using it illegally, like our Prime Minister did, it does not mean it is good for them or that we should normalize its use. It means we should find new and creative ways of discouraging the use of marijuana.

The irony is that with this bill, the government's legalization of the use of marijuana will increase marijuana use amongst our youth at the same time the government is establishing a policy to

communicate with youth telling them not to use marijuana. The hypocrisy is jaw dropping.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. However, I often have difficulty understanding the Conservatives' logic when it comes to finding solutions to problems. Often, their first reaction is to say that all the answers are in the Criminal Code. They want to criminalize everything, as though that would solve the problem.

My other colleague even drew a parallel with cigarettes by talking about the awareness campaigns, which, statistics have shown, enabled us, over time, to reduce tobacco use without having to criminalize the toxic substance.

I therefore wonder why we should not use the same approach with cannabis that we used with cigarettes; in other words, legalize it and launch awareness campaigns to reduce its use.

Since it worked for cigarettes, why would it not work for cannabis?

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I will say this. The member suggested that we in the Conservative Party want to make the use of marijuana criminal. Here is a news flash: the use and selling of marijuana in Canada is illegal right now. We want to preserve the state of the law as it is. The best thing we can do, something that has been resisted by the NDP and the Liberals for time immemorial, is to come up with targeted mandatory minimum prison sentences for those who produce and sell marijuana, especially those who sell marijuana to our youth. I articulated in my speech the terrible impact that marijuana use has on the young developing brain. Therefore, we should be going after the predators who produce the stuff and sell it to our kids, rather than simply saying that we should give up and normalize it. That is a backward solution.

• (1235)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour and privilege to represent my beautiful community of Langley—Aldergrove. I want to thank the member for Abbotsford for his hard work over the many years, representing his community well. He brought up many good and important points. I hope the government is listening.

I want to congratulate the parliamentary secretary for being recognized for having spoken more words in Parliament than anyone else. What a great record. He sure talks.

The parliamentary secretary asked where the facts were coming from. If the government does not know where the facts come from, we have a problem. Maybe this is one of the reasons why Canadians are concerned with the government and why they are losing trust in it. The decisions the Liberals make are not logical.

The member for Abbotsford addressed the national issue of too many young people using marijuana. It is a problem when 21% of children use it.

Government Orders

I took a one-week bike training course with the RCMP. I wanted to be with RCMP members as they travelled into parks. I wanted to see how they dealt with the issue of drugs. It was being confiscated from youths because it was bad for them. The officers also took their names. Yes, it is illegal. Yes, 21% of youth using it. It is a problem. I was very proud of how they handled the situation.

I agree with the member for Abbotsford that it should be decriminalized and that it should be a ticketable offence rather than a criminal offence. However, right now it is illegal and we have a problem.

The government is talks about the 21% of children and 30% of young adults. Young adults are on my youth advisory board. These are bright young people who, hopefully, will be our leaders in the years to come. I did not ask what percentage of them were using cannabis. I asked them what they thought of the government's goal to have it legalized by July 1, and they all smiled. I asked if they thought the Liberals were on the right track. Almost all their hands went up and they all wanted to have input. Overwhelmingly they criticized the government.

Young people from all political persuasions sit on the youth advisory board. I did not want just Conservatives, I wanted a full spectrum representing our community of Langley—Aldergrove. They said that the government should not be moving so fast, that it should be listening to the different police forces across Canada, and that it should be listening to health authorities across Canada, all saying that Canada was not ready for this.

The Prime Minister may have smoked some joints or been in the room where joints were being smoked while he was the leader of the opposition, which is inappropriate. However, because we can do something does not mean we should do something. The youth advisory board overwhelmingly said that the government should slow down the process. It is a problem, so it needs to educate youth on the risks associated with it. That is how we dealt with the tobacco problem, and it has been quite successful.

Past governments maybe should have done more to address this through education. Maybe there should have been research on what the medical benefits were from marijuana, because it is a problem. The logic of the government is that we have a problem, so let us legalize it and that will solve it.

● (1240)

In criminology, one can determine what somebody is likely to do by past behaviour. It is the same in psychology. It is common sense; it is logic. Therefore, why not look at what has happened in other jurisdictions that have legalizing marijuana? Did it make things better or worse? Actually, it made things way worse. The criminal connection to the distribution of pot has increased in Colorado. These are the facts and the research that has been done.

In the years since it was legalized in Colorado, the state has seen an increase in marijuana-related traffic deaths, in poison control calls for aid, and in emergency room visits. The marijuana black market has increased in Colorado, not decreased. Numerous Colorado marijuana regulators have been indicted for corruption.

Dr. Harry Bull, superintendent of Cherry Creek Schools, said, “We were promised funds from marijuana taxes that would benefit

our communities, particularly schools.” This superintendent is in charge of one of the largest school districts in the United States. He went on to say, “So far, the only thing that the legalization of marijuana has brought to our schools has been marijuana.”

I have been with the police bike unit and also in police cars. I have seen how officers professionally protect our communities, how they try to keep our communities safe in practical, realistic ways, and how they confiscate.

The government is proposing that if somebody is driving a car with some buddies in it and there is an open bottle of alcohol in that vehicle, if the care is stopped by the police, the police can confiscate that open bottle of alcohol. However, if police officers stop a car that has four people in it and marijuana is found, every one of in the car can legally have 30 grams of marijuana, or 60 joints. That is 240 joints in total.

It is illogical to say that this is the way we will fight the problem or this how we will fight organized crime. The parliamentary secretary said that too many criminals wanted young people to use pot but the government did not. Therefore, the Liberal government is going to compete with the criminal element. The Liberals will ensure that the quality of the pot is good and people can have lots of it. The Liberals are saying that anybody aged 18 and older can have 60 joints. If it were a child, the Liberals would confiscate it. Under this legislation, children between the ages of 12 and 18 will be able to have five grams, which is 10 joints. What the government is saying is illogical.

We should learn from others who have made mistakes. The government has proposed that we go way beyond what Colorado did. Our roads will be less safe and there will be more deaths, yet the Liberals are rushing the legislation through before there is any technology to determine drug-impaired driving.

We just dealt with Bill C-46. How will the government get tough when somebody gets killed by a drunk driver? There will be a fine of at least \$1,000 for driving drunk and killing somebody. The second offence will result in at least 10 days in jail, a 30-day sentence for killing the second time. What the government has proposed is bizarre. Our communities will be less safe. This is wrong.

I would remind the government that just because a government can do something does not mean that it should.

● (1245)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the unfortunate attempts of my colleague across the aisle to show that there is a problem by trying to explain why we need to decriminalize cannabis.

In other words, he is telling parents and Canadians in his riding and mine, among others, that there is no problem, we will leave the profits to organized crime. We will just give offenders a small fine and reduce the penalty.

Government Orders

By what lack of logic can they promote the status quo? They have done nothing for 10 years, and they admit that it is a problem. By what twisted logic can they explain to parents in our ridings that we prefer to keep organized crime in charge rather than taking control as we are doing?

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite wrong to insult police chiefs and health professionals and say that is bombast. There is a problem. The solution the government is proposing and stubbornly moving ahead with is wrong. Canadians and professionals are telling the government that it is wrong, asking it to please reconsider what it is doing.

As the official opposition, we will work with the government, if it listens to Canadians, the police chiefs, and the health care professionals and does the right thing. We would support that. However, what it is doing now is foolish and wrong.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must address what was just said, because my colleague is offering no solution. In fact, he thinks that the status quo will do the job. In his opinion, allowing marijuana to remain illegal, as it has been for decades, works. How can he offer the status quo as a solution?

Can my colleague at least acknowledge that what his government did for 10 years did nothing to improve the situation? In fact, the situation got worse, since cannabis use increased over the 10-year period in which his government was in power.

How can he stand up today and say he wants to reduce cannabis use, while the strategy his government used for 10 years did absolutely nothing? In fact, it made things worse. How does he explain this?

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the member may have missed some of the comments that were made in the House. I do not know why he would have missed those, but he is incorrect.

I think all members in the House realize there is a problem and are open to discussion to make appropriate changes. The status quo is not working. That has been acknowledged by members on all sides of the House. The question is whether the Liberal plan is the right one. Is it the solution? Professionals are telling us no. Others that have legalized, not even to the degree that the government has proposed, have warned us not to do this because it is wrong. The small revenue the federal and provincial governments would get would be outstripped dramatically by the social and medical costs, so it would hurt Canada.

I ask the government to please slow down.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's commitment to our shared province. The government has proposed legislation that it feels is the proper approach to legalization. It is doing two things.

First, it is saying it is going to keep marijuana out of the hands of children. Second, it is saying that it is also going to get rid of organized crime. The problem is this. We have a heavily regulated industry like tobacco, but there is a tremendous amount of

contraband tobacco, because organized crime moves in. On the flip side, if we try to regulate something like marijuana to stop children from getting a hold of it, we kind of end up in a circle where we cannot achieve either goal because one is almost fundamentally at odds with the other one.

The member has mentioned a third option. Could you maybe suggest what the Conservative policy is in addressing marijuana and its use?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will not, but I am sure the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove will.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, that is a genuinely important question. We need to have a true study on the possible benefits of medical marijuana. There is a lot of opinion on that. We are seriously considering that we should perhaps decriminalize marijuana so it could be confiscated and be a ticketable offence. No one should have a criminal record for possession, unless he or she is part of a criminal element that distributes it to our youth.

The government proposes that youth would now be able to have it, which is illogical, because its goal is to keep it out of the hands of children. However, now it is saying small children can walk around with 10 joints in their pockets. When they turn 18, they can have 60 joints in their pockets. No one should have that in their pockets.

● (1250)

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-45 will legalize cannabis use within the limits my colleagues have already mentioned.

Many decisions fall to the provinces, including the legal age for using cannabis, the development of a point-of-sale system, and education. The government is pushing for a very short deadline. We are talking about passing this bill before July 1, 2018, which is only eight months from now. In politics, eight months goes by fast.

However, we are still waiting to see how the federal government intends to make sure that the law is applied from Vancouver to St. John's, Newfoundland, by way of Quebec. Despite everything, I think it is very clear that we must go ahead with this bill. I support the legalization of marijuana, provided that it is done effectively and that we can prevent the sale of cannabis to children, that a reliable long-term source of revenue is devoted to public health, prevention and research, and that a comprehensive strategy to fight impaired driving is adopted.

We know that the prohibition and criminalization of cannabis, which the Conservatives have maintained in place in the past 10 years, have proven to be completely ineffective in reducing cannabis use and related criminal activity in Canada.

Government Orders

Earlier I touched on the statistics concerning drug-related offences reported in 2014, when the Conservatives were in power and had already implemented an extremely repressive system with longer minimum sentences, in an attempt to manage drug use. One year after the Conservatives passed their repressive laws, cases of methamphetamine and heroine possession had increased by 38% and 34%, respectively. Methamphetamine and heroine trafficking had increased by 17% and 12%, respectively.

Thus, drug use was not reduced, but actually increased, as did trafficking. We need to determine a strategy for making sure that those who use cannabis the most, young people aged 25 and under, are truly taken into consideration, and that we stop hiding our heads in the sand and practising denial. We must realize that the war on drugs has not worked, and that we need to find new solutions.

We agree with the solution proposed by the Liberals, namely adopting a public health approach. There are, however, many flaws in their approach, hence the need for discussion. Unfortunately, we are already at the third and final reading stage. We are concerned because we proposed several amendments that were rejected out of hand by Liberals at committee.

The government set up a task force, and in their report, the experts on the task force explained that legislation must be enacted to do the following:

reduce the burdens on police and the justice system associated with simple possession of cannabis offences; prevent Canadians from entering the criminal justice system and receiving criminal records for simple cannabis possession offences; protect public health and safety by strengthening, where appropriate, laws and enforcement measures that deter and punish more serious cannabis offences...

The bill addresses those issues by legalizing the consumption of up to 30 grams of dried cannabis and the possession of up to four plants per household.

However, as I said, the bill is scheduled to come into effect on July 1, 2018. Around 100,000 people have been given criminal records over the past two years for simple cannabis possession even though the government is planning to legalize it in less than a year. How many more young people is the government willing to put in jail for something that will be legal in about 10 months? Will it at least direct the police and judicial authorities to stop enforcing the existing law until such time as the new law is in force?

The Liberals' own working group was given a recommendation to decriminalize marijuana. They do not agree amongst themselves. The Prime Minister recently said that granting pardons would certainly address some of the backlog in the justice system. We know that, since the Jordan decision, a number of investigations have been halted and charges have not been laid in cases involving offences much more serious than simple marijuana possession.

• (1255)

We are going through the same thing with Bill C-45, as they do not want to proceed with decriminalization in the interim. This will only add to the burden on the judicial system and to the monumental costs associated with arresting people for simple possession.

Statistics Canada and other organizations have repeatedly demonstrated to us that these arrests and ensuing criminal records

disproportionately affect young people, racialized persons and aboriginals. I wonder how many criminal records from young people arrested for smoking a joint end up on the desks of my colleagues from Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. How many applications for pardon do they process each year?

As elected members, do we not want the Liberal government to fulfill its promise while making the right choice for Canadians, regardless of their age or the colour of their skin, meaning to go ahead with decriminalization, at the very least, and consider granting pardons? I cannot understand why this would be a problem in light of the fact that it appears in the Liberal Party's platform in 2015.

These long overdue amendments will only come into force in 15 months, at the earliest. Delays and lack of resources are causing a crisis in the justice system. We cannot afford to continue to allocate police and court resources to charging and convicting people for simple possession of cannabis, a substance that will be legalized in a few months.

The working group will continue working toward meeting its objectives, which now focus on youth, prevention and education. The bill must protect Canada's youth by keeping cannabis out of their reach, and must ensure that Canadians are well informed through public health campaigns so that young people especially are made aware of the risks of cannabis use.

Bill C-45 imposes heavy sanctions on whomever traffics, sells or gives cannabis to a minor. How is this a public health matter, I wonder? First off, we need more scientific research not only on the short and long-term effects of cannabis use, but also on the properties of this plant. Some people already use it for medicinal purposes. We have often heard of patients undergoing chemotherapy or veterans using it, for example.

Since they claim to want to protect youth, will the Liberals increase funding for research on the chronic and long-term effects of consumption on the health of young people in particular?

I am also looking at the 2017 budget, which announced a ridiculous budget of less than \$2 million per year over five years. Last week, it was announced that this budget will be increased to \$6 million per year over five years, but it still totally ridiculous. On top of education, awareness campaigns and prevention, we need federal funds for frontline community organizations. Along with the schools, they will be ready to engage with young people on the ground when they want information. However, how will \$6 million ever be enough to help the millions of community groups in Canada? Will the burden fall on the provinces? It is a fair question.

If we do a comparison with American states such as Colorado, we are far from doing all we can. Colorado spends nearly \$37 million per year in prevention alone. That is seven times what the Canadian government provides for in this major bill on the legalization of marijuana. I would remind members that will happen in less than eight months.

Government Orders

I also know very little about what the government intends to do with the money that will be made from the sale of marijuana. What types of prevention programs will be available? Who will they be targeting? Will there be funding for community groups? We should keep in mind that this is extremely important.

The bill also raises a lot of important questions concerning the provinces. Will they need additional time to establish their regulatory system? This is another reason why we would have wanted the process to start earlier or go beyond July 1, 2018. The issues relating to the sale system and the legal framework are also very important to minimize the risks associated with the legalization of marijuana.

Another issue we need to clarify has to do with the nature of the cannabis tax structure and revenue. How will they be shared among the provinces and the federal government? The provinces and Canadians are looking to the Department of Finance to make a decision on this issue. In Quebec, Minister Charlebois has already expressed her displeasure about the time granted to the provinces, and Premier Couillard did the same regarding taxation.

• (1300)

I would like to talk about many other things, but I see that my time is up. I want to simply point out that the NDP proposed 38 amendments in committee and that all 38 amendments were rejected. That is rather absurd.

[*English*]

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 would like to begin with a point of clarification for the member. I thank her for her conditional support for Bill C-45. I want to simply advise her that the government has, in fact, announced \$46 million for a public education program that will begin to roll out very shortly. I hope that addresses one of her concerns.

I seek clarification from the member. She has stated that she supports decriminalization, but let us be really clear about what decriminalization is. Decriminalization maintains the prohibition and simply replaces the criminal sanction with a civil penalty: a ticketing scheme with a fine. In an environment in which the prohibition remains, one cannot regulate the substance.

When the member described her vision of decriminalization, she said that the law would not be enforced, not that it would be enforced in a different way with a different outcome, a civil penalty. I submit to the member opposite that what she was describing was, in fact, legalization without regulation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have once again shown that they do not listen at all to the NDP's recommendations.

First, my colleague announced \$45 million. However, that is over a five-year period, which means about \$9 million per year, total, and that includes all the drugs in Canada, not just marijuana.

As for his argument on decriminalization, we recommend that the government decriminalize marijuana while waiting for its legalization in eight months. We are not asking for either one or the other.

Since the legalization is supposed to happen anyway, why would we allow thousands of young people across the country to have a criminal record that will prevent them from having a job, buying a house, and travelling? That would be a crippling disadvantage for a young person.

We are talking only about decriminalizing the simple possession of marijuana, not about more serious crimes. This is really a matter of nuance. I think that my colleague across the way is very smart and can understand the nuances.

We hear about increased investments in prevention. Community groups have been calling for this for years now. There is not enough money. I used to be a teacher, and many young people are falling behind in school because they are under the influence of drugs, marijuana being the most popular among young people. I am not sure if my colleague has visited any schools.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made many good points. It is clear that the government is not going to achieve its stated objectives with Bill C-45. It is certainly not going to offload from the criminal justice system, because there is more criminality in this bill than there was already. It is certainly not going to keep cannabis out of the hands of children, because it would allow home grow, and it is certainly not going to get rid of organized crime.

If we want to implement something, we tend to look at who else did this and who else did it with positive results. If we look at Washington State, it actually reduced organized crime to less than 20%. Young children there are finding it hard to get hold of marijuana. What did it do? It did not allow home grow, except for the medically fragile, and it controlled all the distribution. It took its medical marijuana system, which was very well regulated, and expanded it.

It seems to me that this bill falls really short in many areas, but especially in the area of public awareness. There was clear testimony that we needed to get on that. We only have 234 days left before the government would arbitrarily roll things out. Can the member comment on the public education needed?

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, indeed, as my colleague just pointed out, not enough is being invested in prevention or in awareness and education campaigns. We want young people to understand that our intention here is not to normalize marijuana use, but rather to educate them about its effects. There is also not enough being invested in research on long-term use and the effects of chronic use on young people's health. The Liberals need to invest more money in that area. I cannot say enough about the importance of prevention, and my colleague talked about it too.

In addition, we need to stop criminalizing and increasing penalties for the simple possession of cannabis. Many studies have shown that the war on drugs did not work. Over the past 10 years, drug use and drug trafficking have continued to rise. We need to work harder and change our strategy.

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[English]

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on an issue I care deeply about. I am thankful to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-45. This is a piece of legislation that pertains to an issue very close to my heart. Today, I am going to speak to why Bill C-45 cannot be passed.

I want to provide some context. Marijuana is a dangerous drug. With all the pro-marijuana publicity lately, it can be hard for many Canadians to remember that marijuana is indeed a damaging and addictive drug. Further, it causes harmful effects on youth brain development, and a greater incidence of psychosis and schizophrenia.

The Conservatives oppose this legislation on marijuana in Canada. Our opposition is based on the concerns we heard from scientists, doctors, and law enforcement officials, who said that the government's plan is being rushed through without proper planning or consideration for the negative consequences of such complicated legislation.

Most concerning is that this bill does not keep marijuana out of the hands of children, nor does it eliminate organized crime or address issues with impaired driving.

Canada will be in violation of three international treaties if this bill passes. The three UN treaties to which Canada is a signatory are as follows: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. This legislation will be compromising Canada's integrity on the world stage. How can Canada hold other countries to account on their treaty obligations when Canada does not honour its own?

Almost daily, I hear about another new report on the harmful effects of marijuana, yet the Liberal government refuses to consider the mounting evidence and is recklessly pushing ahead with this legislation. The government claims it wants to protect our youth and that this legislation will be regulating the industry and eliminating the black market. However, Bill C-45 will not accomplish even one of these goals. The Liberal government is not listening to medical professionals. It is not listening to the police forces. It is not even listening to concerned Canadians who believe this bill is fundamentally flawed and is being rushed through Parliament in order to meet an arbitrary and irresponsible deadline.

For these reasons and many more, I am entirely opposed to this legislation. When it comes to our youth, I want to ensure that they are safe, and able to have a better life and more opportunities than we did. Allowing easier access to drugs does not achieve that.

Currently, the bill recommends the age of 18 as a federal minimum. However, the provinces are being given the power to set a higher age. If we look to our southern neighbour the United States, the states of Washington and Colorado, which have legalized marijuana, have used the age of 21 as the minimum. As of now, Ontario says it will set its minimum age at 19, and Alberta at 21. This is not safe. A number of medical professionals have testified that the brain continues to develop until the age of 25. According to the Canadian Medical Association, the increased use of marijuana before the age of 25 increases one's risk of developing mental

disorders, such as schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety, by up to 30% compared to those who have not used marijuana under the age of 25. Is this what we want for our children? This is most certainly not what I want for my children, my constituents, or Canadians. For these reasons, the Canadian Medical Association and various other medical professionals recommended increasing the age at which a person can consume marijuana to 21 at the very least. The government would fail our children if it goes through with this proposed legislation.

• (1310)

The second goal the Liberals claim would be achieved through the bill would be regulating the industry. I will explain why they will not reach this goal either.

Bill C-45 would allow for four plants per household with no height restriction on the plants. If grown in optimal conditions, this could yield as much as 600 grams of marijuana. The vast majority of witnesses at the health committee spoke strongly against home grow in their testimony, including most medical groups and the police forces that appeared.

Allowing home grow will most certainly not regulate the industry. Further, the police have said before the health committee that, because they cannot see inside homes, they would be unable to enforce a four-plant household quota. Even more concerning is that a large network of legal home grows could easily become an organized crime network. This would not be regulating the industry. It would not eliminate the black market. It is internally inconsistent.

This brings me back to my worry for our youth. The bill would not keep marijuana out of the hands of youth, which is one of the stated goals of the bill in clause 7(a). If marijuana is in the home, youth will have access to it, not to mention the issue of impaired driving, which will increase as a result of legalization.

There is currently no instrument that can accurately measure the level of marijuana impairment roadside. Canada is unable to train officers at home on how to recognize marijuana-impaired driving. We do not have the technology or resources, so the government needs to send officers for expensive, lengthy training in the United States. Our police forces do not currently have the resources and the training required to manage the increased threat of impaired driving associated with the legalization of marijuana. This training currently has backlogs and wait lists. Canada is not ready for this.

As it stands, the proposed legislation is not what is best for Canadians. Canadian families expect safe and healthy communities in which to raise their children. Elected representatives can and should provide guidance on drugs to reflect the views of all Canadians. Let us all remember that we are talking about the health and safety of Canadians, and they deserve better.

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There are only 233 days to go until the arbitrary date of July 1, 2018. Let us not rush through this proposed legislation. We need to do what is right for Canadians. The provinces, municipalities, and police forces are not ready to implement this legislation. I cannot support Bill C-45.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. I think that his concerns are valid, from a scientific and medical perspective.

However, the problem I want to point out to him is that we have a larger population of 18-to-25-year-olds who use this product, and that is illegal. How will setting the legal age right in the middle of the 18-to-25 bracket solve the problem for those who are 18 to 21?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, there are many issues in solving this problem.

The hon. member for Scarborough Southwest was the police chief for the metro police. He probably jailed 200,000 or 300,000 people. It was the honourable thing to make sure that the youth understood that this drug is bad, and it could be an issue with their mental development and many other issues.

I think this is more Liberal hypocrisy, since the Prime Minister smoked it, as he said. His brother and other family members smoked it. This is just pushing it down the throats of all Canadians. I think it is simply wrong to push through somebody else's personal beliefs. This is another reason we simply will not support the bill.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year, I held a telephone town hall and 3,300 of my constituents stayed on the phone for an hour to hear from a panel I had put together, an addictions expert, a municipal official, and a retailer, who were trying to deal with some of the challenges. They produced a list of questions and concerns, which I then submitted to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health, who were able to put together a very nice report that is available to my constituents. The number one thing that came out of all of that was a concern about the safety of children and the public. From my perspective certainly, we need to make sure that a lot of money goes into education moving forward to try to deal not only with the issues associated with marijuana use but also to keep the public safe.

If the member does not agree with the path that the Liberal government is currently on, what is the best way to keep Canadians safe moving forward since mandatory sentences certainly have not worked in the past? What does he see as a way to keep Canadians safer forward?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, I held town hall meetings last year and 98% of people said no to this legislation in Markham—Unionville. Many questions came out, such as how we would educate kids, what is bad, and how much the budget will be if it is legalized. After this legislation goes through, what happens if somebody has a glass of beer, smokes cannabis, and has an accident? The police cannot deal with what they are handling today; imagine the burden on police. What happens to a kid who eats a brownie at home that had marijuana oil, or other things in it? What if dope

keeps going to schools? What happens to people who drive to work impaired and show up at work impaired? What about the accidents? Who will pick up the tab for police? According to the Colorado report, it tripled the cost for policing, tripled the cost for paramedics, and doubled or tripled homelessness.

The government has not done the homework. It is pushing the bill through quickly, it is not ready, police are not ready, and people are not ready, they are not educated. Conservatives are simply asking the Liberal government to go back to the table and rethink the whole thing. Why the hurry for July 1, 2018? We should be celebrating Canada's birthday on that day. Why is it being pushed through?

• (1320)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the House deals with one of the largest changes regarding controlled substances in my lifetime. Throughout the debate on the larger issue of legalizing recreational marijuana, I have discovered that the issue is not as black and white as some members have put forward in their arguments. I agree with many of the points my colleague from Markham—Unionville raised. However, I said that it is not as black and white, and I will give an example. Every time the Liberal MPs talk about how marijuana legalization would keep the substance out of the hands of youth, it is asinine. For anyone to think that youth currently do not have ready access to illegal marijuana is also rather absurd. I am well aware that Canada has some of the highest rates of adolescent marijuana consumption in the world. It is available far too often in our high schools and I have heard horrible stories of how marijuana consumption has led to disastrous life decisions.

This can also be said of alcohol. It can also be said of crystal meth, fentanyl, and cocaine. I do not for a moment believe that marijuana is in the same column as the illegal substances I just referenced, and it is not my intention to degrade those who consume marijuana for recreational purposes. My intent is to emphasize that we parliamentarians should wade very carefully into legalization of recreational marijuana, which would soon allow every household in Canada to grow four plants.

Government Orders

I have carefully reviewed many of the submissions to the health committee, such as by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses' Association, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. These are just a handful of the over 185 briefs tabled with committee members, and in many respects the concerns these well-respected organizations put forward were almost identical to those voiced by my constituents during the five town halls I hosted on this topic this summer.

The best way to describe Bill C-45 is by quoting a *Brandon Sun* article published the morning after one of our town halls. I can assure those who think the *Brandon Sun* is under the umbrella of Postmedia that it is not. The article stated, "If a consensus could be drawn from a wide-ranging town hall in Brandon about the proposed legalization of marijuana, it's an acknowledgement the legislation is flawed."

I fully agree with what the article said. That is why I submitted a brief not only to the justice and health ministers, but also to the entire committee tasked with studying this legislation. It was not surprising, but still unfortunate, to report that I received a boilerplate response from the Minister of Justice that did not even acknowledge the recommendations I put forward. If a duly elected member of Parliament cannot even get the correspondence team in the Minister of Justice's office to go above and beyond just copying and pasting a response, it begs the question of whether the current government has any intention of listening to concerned Canadians.

For a government that pretends it listens, the only way to get its members to back down from a proposal is for thousands upon thousands of angry taxpayers to show up en masse at town halls and write some of the funniest tweets I have ever read. For example, during the taxpayers' revolt this summer, many farmers took pictures of themselves sitting in their combines while harvesting, referring to them as their tax shelters.

I ask the government not only to implement my recommended change to push back the bringing-into-force date of Bill C-45 to 2019, but also that its members listen to the brief by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which stated, "Canadian police services will not be equipped to provide officers with the training and resources necessary to enforce the new regime within the existing contemplated timeframe," or to the Canadian Medical Association, which recommended a comprehensive public health strategy with a health education component before Bill C-45 is implemented.

• (1325)

If the government thinks that police services, the medical community, and our education system will be ready within the next six months, and that municipalities and provinces will be fully prepared for July 1, I would humbly remind it on its own part, two years later, it still cannot accurately pay public service employees.

It is sad to say, but the government's credibility in implementing and executing effective policies within a reasonable time frame is not that believable. My hon. colleagues across the way have essentially ignored the plea by provinces and municipalities for more time to properly prepare for the government's politically driven July 1 deadline.

Not a single member of this House has any idea what the rules will be in their communities, because their municipal governments have yet to determine what they will be. It will cost serious money for municipal governments to properly train their law enforcement and bylaw officers, and even more, they will not receive adequate financial assistance to do so. They will be stuck with all of the headaches, while the Prime Minister, on Canada Day, will proclaim that marijuana is now legal.

To expand on my recommendations to the government, the majority of my constituents believe that the federal government should not look to marijuana as a cash cow, but should provide a significant portion of the federal taxes it collects from marijuana directly to municipalities in the same manner as it does with the gas tax fund.

For any of my colleagues who believe that police and law enforcement agencies will see cost savings from the legalization of recreational marijuana, it would be naive at best to think that such a highly regulated, controlled substance that will have even more strings attached to it than alcohol will somehow free up their time. Any time a government has decided to legislate, regulate, and control something, I have failed to see the resulting cost savings.

Regardless of the flaws of this piece of legislation, there is still no overall consensus among my constituents that marijuana should be legalized for recreational use. There were many questions about the effects on someone's cognitive abilities and the lack of general education about its long-term impacts.

While we debate this legislation and put a heavy emphasis on educating our youth, we must not forget that millions of middle-aged adults have next to zero experience with recreational marijuana and, therefore, that any educational programs must include this demographic.

It is absolutely imperative that the legalization of recreational marijuana not be rushed until the various law enforcement agencies, provinces, and municipalities are fully prepared.

I urge the government to rethink how the tax revenues will be distributed to those who will have to absorb many of the costs of regulating and policing marijuana use. I ask the federal government to heed the advice of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities not to move forward with this legislation until it receives further direction from its municipal partners.

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In closing, I am under no illusion that the government has any intention of listening to the concerns of the good people of Brandon—Souris. It would be an understatement to say that I have hesitations regarding the legalization of recreational marijuana. Regardless of my personal trepidations, it is clear that the country is not ready for the July 1, 2018 implementation date. It is my hope that even if the government ignores every other concern or recommendation put forward, either by me or stakeholders, that it at the very least would push back the bringing-into-force date to allow more time to properly prepare for legalization.

With that I will finish my remarks and urge my Liberal colleagues to break ranks with their whip and the government to listen to its local law enforcement agencies, provinces, and municipalities to do the right thing.

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 want to assure the hon. member for Brandon—Souris that we listened very carefully, particularly to the point he made about ensuring that learning and education are available to all Canadians who may choose to use this drug. There are significant risks that need to be properly managed and that could help people stay safe.

I want to address some of the concerns he raised about what we have heard from law enforcement. I have been engaged in that conversation for almost two years and want to share it briefly with the member.

First of all, in 2008, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police unanimously urged the government of the day to make resources available for the training of drug recognition experts, and for all officers in standardized field sobriety testing. That plea fell on deaf ears.

Second, in 2013, by unanimous declaration in CACP's resolutions, they again urged the government to make available to them oral fluid testing technology, acknowledging that this technology was being used in other jurisdictions to help keep our roadways safe. That fell on deaf ears as well.

Additionally, very important public safety advocacy groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, urged the government to bring forward effective legislation to address some of these concerns and, prior to 2015, that plea fell on deaf ears.

Therefore, we have listened to the concerns of law enforcement. We have made available \$161 million to provide them with training, resources, and access to technology and legal authorities that they have asked for. When they came before us, naturally, after a decade of being ignored, they were skeptical. However, we have assured them that we are making those resources available to them and that they will have what they need to keep our communities safe.

• (1330)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's concern, but it is the biggest oxymoron I have ever heard. They obviously have not listened to what the Canadian public has said, and they are the ones bringing forward the licensing of recreational marijuana.

Why the rush? If they need more time, they have lots of it. They could do that and still put in place the proper analysis and training that police forces across Canada have asked for. The medical association has given them that background as well.

There are many reasons to take more time, such as those relayed by the nursing association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which are going to have all of these costs dumped on them. This government is not going to make any money out of this process. In spite of that, the Liberals are trying to suggest to the public that they need this money to bail themselves out of their huge debts. The government is not going to make a cent on this because it will all be used up in enforcement and administration.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone here agrees that we all want to make Canada a safer place, and we all want our young people to be safer and healthier. However, I think we would also all agree that the situation as it stands is untenable.

I am just wondering what my Conservative colleagues are offering up as an alternative to this pathway to legalization of marijuana. What did they do in the previous 10 years that helped the situation, and what do they offer up for the future?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, of course, that is exactly what I am speaking of today. After listening to the people at the five town hall meetings and other events I attended throughout the summer in my riding, I felt it necessary to offer the plan that I did.

I even sent a letter to the parliamentary budget officer back in June, before the House rose for the summer, requesting all of the information around Bill C-45 and the enforcement bill, Bill C-46. I had many questions about how much money would be spent on enforcement, what would be needed for administration, and how it would be done. I had two pages of questions. We got back a reply from the parliamentary budget office that basically said that the government had the information but had not given it to them, and thus they could give none to me.

I find that atrocious. If the money to be made in this process is broadcast, and then the government is so ashamed of the results that it cannot even put out there what it will cost, including administratively, it shows that the government does not know what those costs are, that this process has been done too quickly without the necessary detail behind it, just like the government has done with its small business tax program.

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Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to contribute to the debate on Bill C-45, which proposes to legalize recreational marijuana use here in Canada. The medicinal use of marijuana in Canada is, of course, already permitted when prescribed by a doctor, and I support that measure. However, what we are considering here today is the recreational use of marijuana, using drugs for fun.

The health committee, on which I serve, heard in September from more than 100 witnesses from across Canada and from all parts of the world. They presented their thoughts and their concerns on a number of issues related to the legalization of marijuana. We heard from many who literally called marijuana a miracle drug, a miracle antidote for relieving and in some cases eliminating conditions such as epileptic seizures, migraine headaches, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, arthritis, and I can go on. The testimony from these individuals was heartening.

Even hearing about the option for physicians to be able to prescribe marijuana instead of opioids such as OxyContin and fentanyl for treating chronic pain is enough to convince many that medicinal marijuana has a place in our society. However, Canada is now on the verge of normalizing recreational marijuana use, and we have heard a number of serious concerns from a variety of stakeholders.

A couple of weeks ago I spoke at length on Bill C-46 and the issue of drug-impaired driving, so I will not reiterate what I said back then, but I will say that drug-impaired driving is of deep concern to many, and we heard that day in and day out at committee. I will focus on a couple of other serious concerns.

As we have heard many times, there are many studies that show marijuana does have a negative impact on the developing brain. The Canadian Medical Association, which represents 83,000 physicians in Canada, said:

Existing evidence on marijuana points to the importance of protecting the brain during its development. Since that development is only finalized by about 25 years of age, this would be an ideal minimum age based on currently accepted scientific evidence...

Last month at the World Psychiatric Association's world congress in Berlin, the community was presented with further evidence that marijuana use by youth can facilitate the onset of schizophrenia and other psychosis conditions in certain people. Complications may include cognitive impairment, social isolation, and even suicide.

These are the doctors who are talking. These are the physicians, the scientists, and the health care providers who are saying this. The reality is that not all our youth are aware of this body of scientific research and so they are not making informed decisions when it comes to marijuana drug use, and that has to change. It is imperative that we inform our young people that using this drug, marijuana, will likely have serious, permanent, and negative effects on their brain and their mental health.

Without question, the largest single concern that we heard at the health committee is the Liberal government's complete failure to properly execute a public education campaign.

In just eight months, we will most likely have marijuana for sale as a fun recreational drug. Is that not great? Witnesses testified that,

if we are going to achieve the primary results we want—and that is to reduce marijuana use and lower youth consumption—then we need to educate Canadians well in advance of the proposed July 1, 2018, legalization timeline set by the Liberal government. Unfortunately, there has been no real education campaign started by the government, and time is running out.

● (1335)

It has not gone unnoticed that we are spending a great deal of time and money to legalize marijuana, but very little time and money on a public education campaign. An immediate public education plan is critical. The Liberal government claims it has committed \$46 million to a plan, but I have not seen it in my community. I have talked to health care people in my community, and they have not seen a dime of that.

Even the former Liberal cabinet minister and head of the task force on cannabis, the Honourable Anne McLellan, said at committee:

I think the most important part of prevention, which we have learned from tobacco, alcohol, and probably some other things—I might include gambling—is public education. That's the lesson you hear over and over again in states like Colorado and Washington. You have to have robust public education, and you need it out of the box early.

Not a single witness in committee advocated against an early and intense public education campaign, so why is the Liberal government not starting now with an education campaign?

Another serious concern that was brought forward in committee is the impact the proposed legislation would have on Canada in the eyes of the world. We heard in committee that there are three United Nations international treaties that we are bound to violate if this legislation is passed.

We heard great testimony from Dr. Steven Hoffman, who is a professor law at the prestigious Osgoode Hall Law School. He is also an expert in international law. He is very concerned, as are we Conservatives, that Bill C-45 would in fact violate international laws. The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 is one of the three major UN drug control treaties currently in force that we as a nation have signed onto and committed to. The treaty provides additional legal mechanisms for enforcing the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, which is to limit exclusively to medical and scientific purposes the production, manufacture, export, import, distribution of, trade in, use, and possession of drugs.

The passing of Bill C-45 would put us in contravention of these three UN international agreements. The Liberal government has failed to tell Canadians how it will handle the situation. It should tell us, but it has refused to. As Dr. Hoffman said:

Government Orders

I really would love to emphasize that the consequences actually are quite severe in the sense that it's not just our reputation. It's not just Canada's standing on the global international scene. If we violate international law we are actually undermining the best mechanism we have to get countries to work together and solve some of the biggest challenges we face in the world. One only needs to think about examples like serious use of chemical weapons, or North Korea testing nuclear weapons, or even closer to home, the United States imposing illegal trade barriers against softwood lumber. Canada wants to be in a position that we are able to rely on our fellow countries, our partners around the world, to follow these rules that make Canadians safer, that make Canadian businesses prosper, yet it's very difficult for Canada to be taking moral stances on international laws if Canada is also violating them.

We are not ready as a nation to rush into marijuana legalization, and the consequences will be severe.

• (1340)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern for education. We are taking a public safety approach with Bill C-45, with \$240 million to support law enforcement to detect and deter drug-impaired driving, \$161 million invested in training front-line officers, another \$81 million for provinces and territories, and \$46 million for a public awareness campaign. Does he not agree that this is a comprehensive approach to providing education and training?

• (1345)

Mr. Len Webber: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the investment, because we need it, and law enforcement agencies need it. They told us at committee that they welcome the money but they need time, and they do not have enough time. July 1 is eight months away. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and numerous associations around the country are thankful for the money but they need time.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member for Calgary Confederation for all the work he has done on this issue. He has been a shining star in our party and on the health committee for a couple of years.

Canadians will be facing a very serious situation in the next eight months.

I was a trustee for 10 years. There has been no dialogue with the government. It has not reached out to the Canadian School Boards Association. It has not reached out to one province or territory with respect to how it is going to deal with 12-year-olds bringing five grams to school in their pockets. The government has not reached out to teachers' associations in this country, and yet we are eight months away.

The Liberals have a simple answer. They are going to throw some money at it and leave the decisions to others. There is no game plan.

I thank the hon. member for Calgary Confederation for bringing this up. Education is first and foremost.

I ask my colleague how he thinks the government should deal with this, other than throwing money at it, which is two years too late.

Mr. Len Webber: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood for his kind comments. They are much appreciated.

I am very passionate about this issue, as many of us are here in the House.

I have a background in education. My family runs a private school in Calgary, the Webber Academy. There are more than 1,000 children in our school. We care about these children. We care about informing them and educating them about the harmful effects of marijuana, yet it is not happening in the school system. It is not in the curriculum. If it is, it is not enough.

The public education plan that we need should have happened two years ago in anticipation of this bill passing by July 1. It is too late. By the time the government legislates the bill into place, marijuana will be on the streets, with uneducated children throughout the country unaware of the harmful effects of this drug.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend just mentioned harms. Three thousand Canadians are born every year with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. That is 3,000 Canadians and just one issue. That is not counting drunk driving. That is not counting domestic abuse. That is not counting rape and sexual assault, including on campuses, and all of the harms that come from alcohol.

Perhaps the member could explain to me why he thinks cannabis, according to the evidence, is more harmful than alcohol. Why does he think we ought to throw young Canadians in jail for having a joint, but it is okay to allow glossy flyers to come to my doorstep advertising alcohol?

Mr. Len Webber: It is well known, Mr. Speaker. Testimony given by the Canadian Medical Association stated all about the very harmful effects marijuana has on the developing brains of youth. We all know that.

If we smoke marijuana during the brain development period between zero and 25 years of age, we are highly susceptible to conditions that could occur. I am talking about the recreational use of marijuana. It will create a lot of problems for the mental health of children at this age.

There is clear scientific evidence that marijuana causes schizophrenia in individuals with a developing brain. Schizophrenia has been blamed for many—

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup has 10 minutes for his speech. He will have five minutes for questions and comments when we resume debate on this bill.

The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and very proud to represent the people of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Government Orders

When I was elected, I started touring my riding. In the spring, I visited our schools to explain what the Government of Canada was, the way it worked, and the process of passing a bill. Since at that time the Liberal Party had already introduced the possibility of passing a bill to legalize marijuana, that was the example of a bill that I used. We already had an idea of what this bill was, and I spoke about it openly, mostly to primary and secondary school students, as well as CEGEP students.

At some of these meetings I led in 10 different schools, I talked to 300 students between the ages of 12 and 16 in an auditorium. I presented them the bill as it was written. I explained to them that it legalized the production of marijuana at home, among other things, and that it did not contain meaningful provisions addressing drug-impaired driving. In short, by discussing the various elements of the bill, I asked the students to tell me, by raising their hand, if they agreed with the legalization of marijuana.

To my amazement, 80% of the young people in my riding raised their hands to say they did not agree. These were not seniors in homes, these were students. I was stunned because I thought that the Prime Minister's sunny ways would have encouraged open-mindedness and the liberalization of pretty much everything. However, these young people unequivocally showed me that they did not at all agree with legalizing marijuana, for all kinds of reasons. This also gave us more opportunities for discussion.

That said, I was also able to meet with groups of seniors, including members of all the senior citizen clubs in my riding, and some groups of farm women. These women do a lot of work with young people, since they train them for all kinds of trades. All these groups are in daily contact with young people. They also told me unequivocally that they oppose the legalization of marijuana.

I have no words to describe the government's level of hypocrisy with this bill, which would be in violation of three international treaties, among other things. The government claims to respect the UN and to abide by international treaties. It says that it works all over the world and that it has taken all sorts of steps to ensure international consistency, and yet this bill is in violation of three major international treaties on drug control. Apparently, that is no big deal.

Also, the Liberals keep on boasting that their actions are based on science and the facts. That is what they have been telling us non stop for the past two years, and yet, the science is quite clear—

• (1355)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would like to remind the hon. members that there is a presentation being made. I am hearing a bit of rumble, and I am having a hard time hearing it. Out of respect for the Speaker, who is getting old and whose hearing is going, I would like members to keep the talking a little lower.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very good of you.

Obviously, the party across the aisle does not want to listen to what we have to say. There were studies in committee; we were asked to propose amendments. The NDP proposed 36 amendments, all of which were rejected, one after the other. The Liberals are calling us out for not proposing any amendments, but what is the point of doing so when we know that the bill is going to stay the way it is?

Here is another example of the absolute hypocrisy of this bill. It mentions the cultivation of four marijuana plants at home. I raised my children at home, and they are raising their children at home. I am trying to imagine having four marijuana plants at home and explaining to the children that they are not to touch them. That would be really confusing for them. It is total hypocrisy. How can we protect children when people can grow marijuana at home?

When you do the math, people looking to really maximize their yield can grow quite a lot of marijuana in six weeks with four plants. I did the math, but I do not have the exact figures with me. However, it takes about six to eight weeks. Imagine that over 52 weeks. There can be many harvests over the course of a year, which holds tremendous financial potential. I can just imagine young children at home helping their parents water the pot plants because they want to sell them later on. That is obvious. Can we be so blind as to think that young people will not help themselves directly from the plants at home?

The other concern is that we keep hearing that this will reduce organized crime. I have a report from Colorado, where marijuana was legalized four years ago. There has been an increase in organized crime. There is a reason why it is called organized crime. These people are able to react and adapt to situations like these. Legalizing marijuana will increase organized criminal activity, not decrease it.

Worse still, this bill does not deal with cannabis derivatives at all. In Colorado, these derivatives are now more profitable for the government in terms of sales and taxes, than the sale of marijuana itself. What are we going to do in Canada? People have already started asking me if they will have access to derivatives. Will they be sold in the equivalent of SAQ in Quebec and LCBO in Ontario? If employees are making \$25 an hour, what will be the price of the marijuana? I can understand that the quality would perhaps be the same across Canada, but the reality is that organized crime will only increase the rate of THC in the marijuana and drop its prices. It will not stop selling it. It will increase its sales, even. This is the reality. This is what could happen.

We have talked about training and information. This is ridiculous. The Liberals are barely allocating any funds, only \$40 million over a five-year period. They have just invested \$500 million in an infrastructure bank in China. This money was spent outside of Canada. They should have invested it here for training and prevention. This is not what is happening at all. An investment of \$40 million for the whole country is peanuts for prevention.

Statements by Members

The Liberals accepted not a single amendment. We proposed only one, which aimed to scrap the bill and start again from scratch. The problem is that the government across the way does not listen to us at all. The Liberals gave no consideration to the NDP's 38 proposed amendments. I am certain NDP MPs came up with some very well thought out amendments to improve the bill. The Liberals thinks that they know everything on that. I cannot believe it.

People can hear us and see us from the gallery. I am convinced that not all of them are in favour of legalizing marijuana. In my riding, 80% of the people who responded to a survey said they were opposed to legalization. Our government does not listen at all; it just says everything will be fine and we should proceed.

I could talk about this issue for hours. Once again, the government is being completely hypocritical on this issue.

• (1400)

The Speaker: There will be five minutes for questions and comments following question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

JOHN SHIWAK

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to proudly acknowledge the many contributions of our veterans and the service of Inuit veterans in Canada. They have served our country with the utmost courage, bravery, and respect.

One shining example of the efforts of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was Jack Shiwak, of my riding of Labrador, an Inuit from the community of Rigolet. Mr. Shiwak is remembered as the regiment's best sharpshooter, and it is said he credited his feat to the time he spent trapping, hunting, and fishing on the vast lands and waters of Labrador. At only 26, John entered the war effort and quickly rose through the ranks, ultimately becoming a lance corporal. Sadly, on November 20, 1917, John and six other members of his regiment were killed in battle. His loss was keenly felt by the whole regiment.

Today we remember him. We remember all our veterans. We continue to feel their loss, and we support their families throughout our country.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, let us all be thankful for all we have.

Across our nation, Canadians will pause to honour the sacrifices of those who have given so much for our freedom. Remembrance Day serves to educate our youth and future generations that the rights and privileges we enjoy do not come without sacrifice. That is why I am so proud to stand in this House today and recognize the hard work of the grades five and six students from Kersley Elementary School. They raised money to buy three plaques honouring those who fought in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and

in peacekeeping missions. These new plaques will serve as a reminder for future generations that freedom is not free. I am so proud of these students and their efforts to ensure that we honour those who, in their service to our country and our communities, paid the ultimate sacrifice.

To those who continue the fight today, whether in our communities or on the battlefields overseas, or who suffer quietly in the shadows, we shall never forget.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour those who have served our country over the last 100 years. Over a million men and women have served our country to make peace around the world. Thousands have come from my home of Cape Breton.

Since I became a member of Parliament in 2000, I have had the honour of visiting gravesites throughout the world of the many who gave the ultimate sacrifice and did not come back. I have visited gravesites in Normandy, Vimy Ridge, the Netherlands, and Hong Kong. We must always remember those who gave their lives for our freedom.

It is important that we help those who come home, and it was an honour for me to be with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, and many of my colleagues in this House to reopen the Veterans Affairs office in Sydney at this time last year.

I commend all my colleagues in this House who will go home over the next few days and attend events in their ridings with veterans and constituents. Let us never forget the ultimate sacrifice our men and women made for us, and continue to make for us every day. All gave some; some gave all.

* * *

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we are hearing many moving statements on Remembrance Day, but this afternoon I rise to mark another day of remembrance: the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20. People in communities across Canada and around the world will be remembering victims of transphobic violence and rededicating themselves to working to end discrimination against transgender and gender-variant people.

Last year there were 317 reported murders of trans people, and many more were victims of violence and discrimination. This includes the murder of Sisi Thibert in Montreal, on September 19. Despite hopeful signs that came this week with the election of several transgender people to public office in the United States, there have still been 23 murders of transgender Americans so far this year.

Statements by Members

On this Transgender Day of Remembrance, we in Canada can point to Bill C-16, which guarantees the same rights and protections in law that all other Canadians already enjoy, but it is clear that much more remains to be done to build a more inclusive Canada, one where transgender and gender-variant Canadians can participate fully, on an equal basis, and without fear.

* * *

● (1405)

CANADA-MACEDONIA PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently I had the pleasure to host the inaugural meeting of the Canada-Macedonia Parliamentary Friendship Group. A number of MPs came out to support this group, and we had the pleasure of hearing from His Excellency, Toni Dimovski, the Macedonian ambassador to Canada. I was proud to be elected chair of this group, and I am looking forward to continuing the exchange of ideas and culture between our two countries. We are working toward hosting an event for all parliamentarians in the coming year.

Building partnerships and connecting with the world is integral to how Canada operates on the world stage. Macedonia has strong ties to my riding of Cambridge, and many residents are among the 40,000 Macedonian Canadians calling our country home. I thank everyone who has supported this friendship group.

Blagodaram.

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BRANDON MARLINS

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Brandon Marlins team, the management, and players from their 1999 to 2008 seasons for being chosen to be inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame, on June 2 next summer, in Morden, Manitoba.

The Marlins were assembled in 1995 by a late great athlete, Neil Andrews, who, with the help of many others, recruited a great group of athletes who had played together since they were 10 or 11 years old.

With the entry of the Marlins into the league, it breathed new life into Brandon's baseball community and fans were privileged to watch some of the most exciting baseball games in league history.

It goes without saying that the Marlins are champions. The players went on to win the Manitoba Senior Baseball League title in 1999 and proceeded to win again in 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2008, among other accomplishments.

I know many of the players personally and they are true leaders on and off the field. I can think of no greater honour than to recognize these gentlemen being inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame so their accomplishments will be remembered for generations to come.

MARGARET ROSE KURY

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a few days it will be a day of remembrance, where we honour each and every Canadian who has served and fought for his or her country, Canadians like Margaret Rose Kury, who was from my riding of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge and was a champion of hard work. She was a selfless, loving individual, and a veteran who served in the Canadian Armed Forces. Since 1976, she had been an active member of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Even after Margaret retired, she continued to serve by being involved in multiple organizations and devoted her time by visiting local schools to talk about the importance of Remembrance Day. She was a passionate and unwavering woman, who worked tirelessly as she touched thousands of lives, and made a difference with every step she took.

In August, sadly, Margaret passed away, after spending over 40 years serving our community.

On this Remembrance Day, I would like to ask everyone to honour and remember inspiring veterans like Margaret Rose Kury.

* * *

[Translation]

BOWVEMBER

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to talk about the only charity in Quebec entirely devoted to fighting prostate cancer. Procure is an organization that specializes in research, awareness, information, and support for men and their families.

As hon. members know, I am a proud supporter of Bow Tie Thursdays. That is why I am acting as an ambassador for Procure's Bowvember campaign. I invite every member of the House to contact my office in order to get a bow tie. I challenge every member to wear a bow tie here in the House every Thursday in November, in support of the fight against prostate cancer.

Together we can make a difference.

* * *

INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was born in Loretteville near the Wendake first nation, and I have spent my entire life there. For nine years, I have been proud to represent the Wendat people: two years here in the House of Commons and seven years before that in the National Assembly. I know them, I love them, but most of all I respect them.

The Wendat, like every first nation, have been passing down their beliefs for centuries. Let me share with you what they believe.

According to Wendat tradition, Yaa'taenhtsihk fell from the sky and was saved by geese who took her under their wings and placed her on the shell of the Great Turtle, the chief of the animal kingdom. Great Turtle then became a beautiful island, our Earth.

Such is the Wendat belief. It is not my belief. It is their belief.

We can take one of two attitudes towards another person's beliefs: ridicule or respect. We respect their beliefs, we respect all beliefs. That is what it means to respect first nations.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

VETERANS

Mr. Neil Ellis (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as MP for the Bay of Quinte, I would like to recognize all our Canadian veterans, past and present.

My riding is home to one of the largest veteran populations in the country. Men and women arrive to serve and many stay to contribute dynamically to our region in their post-service years.

When I became MP, it was an honour to hire a veteran on my team. A veteran's empathy, expertise, and eagerness to build solutions are valuable tools that raise the standard of service we can offer to our veterans' community.

I would like to commend all employers in the Bay of Quinte riding that have also embraced hiring a veteran. I call on each of my hon. colleagues to hire veterans in their offices. Likewise, let us encourage all other Canadian employers to follow our example and that of my community.

It is Veterans Week. Hire a veteran. It is our best chance to turn our words into action and show everyone how much we value our Canadian veterans.

* * *

ETOBICOKE SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2017 inductees into the Etobicoke Sports Hall of Fame. This evening, four worthy individuals will have their names added to the roster of great Canadians who have made significant contributions to the world of sport.

These individuals include jockey Eurico Rosa Da Silva, winner of over 700 races; and award-winning sportswriter, Steve Buffery, who covered the Olympics for 15 years, not to mention the Leafs, Raptors, Blue Jays.

I am particularly proud of David “Two-Cup” Bolland, who brought the Stanley Cup home to Mimico and to his parents, Drew and Carol, on two occasions, the second time was the result of his cup-winning goal in 2013.

Last, I want to congratulate my good friend, Councillor Mark Grimes. He has worked tirelessly for youth sport in Etobicoke. He was instrumental in building the MasterCard Centre in Etobicoke and BMO Field in Toronto. He is truly a builder.

I want to thank them and congratulate them.

I cannot be with them tonight, but have fun and “let's go”.

Statements by Members

BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will recognize the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, a defining battle in Canadian war history.

The Battle of Passchendaele is remembered as one of the worst horrors of the First World War. The conditions for our soldiers were deplorable, with mud, water, and blast craters turning the battlefield into a literal quagmire.

Sergeant Charles Pinkney, Private William Doyle, Private William Hodgson, and Private Henry Siddall from my home town were among the 15,600 Canadians who lost their lives in that battle. Sergeant George Mullin from Moosomin, Saskatchewan of the PPCLI was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery in saving many lives.

This Saturday, I encourage all Canadians to attend the Remembrance Day ceremony in their community to pay tribute to the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice so we may enjoy a life of peace and prosperity in Canada today.

Their country needed them. They answered the call. We shall not forget.

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MARCONI CLUB

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to congratulate the Marconi Club in Sault Ste. Marie on the success of its first annual joint banquet. My wife Lisa and I had the pleasure of attending the event and thoroughly enjoyed it.

I want to congratulate President Joe Oraziotti of the Guglielmo Marconi Society and President Nancy Fragomeni-MacDonald of the Elettra Marconi Society for the progressive ideas in honouring the rich Italian heritage and culture we are lucky to have in Sault.

This event could not have come together so beautifully without the hard work of Rosetta Sicoli and her legendary eggplant Parmesan.

Grazie to the entire Marconi Society for producing this historic event. I am proud to say the Italian community in Sault Ste. Marie is a perfect example of how multiculturalism and diversity can make Canada better.

Buona fortuna Marconi Club.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday November 11, we will commemorate Remembrance Day. This day is an opportunity to remember all the men and women who served in uniform.

Oral Questions

These past few days, we have proudly been wearing poppies, a symbol in memory of those who defended our country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. In my riding of Jonquière, a very special ceremony will be held this year to honour our veterans.

I will have the honour of participating in a major parade in the presence of many members and veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Régiment du Saguenay, the naval reserve, the RCMP, as well as the Arvida and Kénogami branches of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Everyone is invited to take part in this ceremony that will take place in the heart of Arvida's heritage district.

* * *

[English]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to celebrate the justice committee voting to keep section 176 in the Criminal Code. I would also like to thank those tens of thousands of Canadians who wrote and emailed their respective MPs to stand for their right to worship peacefully and in security.

Parliamentarians heard the calls of citizens from across our nation and because their voices were resoundingly clear, Canadians and religious officials will be able to practise their right to worship knowing they will continue to be protected in the Criminal Code.

The Conservatives have always supported religious freedom and the protection of those freedoms because we know the disruption of a religious service is serious and is not as a mere mischief charge. It is a fundamental right that greatly affects all Canadians regardless of whether they attend religious services.

Today is a victory for all faith communities in Canada.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 11, we honour the valour and sacrifice of those Canadian men and women who have served and continue to serve in the defence of peace, the protection of Canada and her allies, as well as in the name of freedom and democracy.

This week I had the great honour of joining in the celebration of the 75th anniversary of 429 (Bison) Squadron, the squadron I once had the privilege of commanding. The squadron was formed in 1942 as a bomber squadron, and still serves Canada with distinction 75 years later.

Like the members of 429 Squadron, men and women of the Canadian Forces, past and present, have served in wars and combat missions, on countless United Nations, domestic sovereignty, rescue, humanitarian, and disaster relief operations, all with unparalleled bravery and selflessness.

To all those who have sacrificed so much, including the families who supported them, I say, and all of us say, "Thank you".

Canada is so very proud and so very grateful.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to commemorate Remembrance Day on Saturday, it emerged this morning that the Liberal government plans to cut allowances to elite soldiers if they are sick or injured for more than 180 days. I will say it again for the benefit of the House, more than 180 days. Once more, the actions of this self-proclaimed fair and equitable government prove it is anything but.

Can the Prime Minister explain to us why this government sees nothing wrong with cutting financial compensation to our soldiers while shamelessly protecting its rich Liberal friends, like Stephen Bronfman?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the health and well-being of our soldiers is our top priority. The changes we made give soldiers a grace period of almost six months to transition to their regular pay rate. Our government is committed to ensuring that soldiers are compensated fairly for their service to Canada. That is why our government recently approved a 6.34% pay raise for most soldiers. In addition to their pay, some soldiers receive one-time allowances when they are exposed to higher levels of risk or hardship, as is the case for paratroopers and rescue specialists or those who spend long periods of time—

● (1420)

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

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the decisions we make in life are reflections of our values. The actions of this government are disappointing. It has no respect for the men and women in uniform who risk their lives to defend Canada. Crisis management is a strange way to govern.

Does the Prime Minister have a sense of the additional pressure that this government is inflicting on our soldiers and their families, these Canadians who make the ultimate sacrifice for their country?

[English]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to our veterans. We have shown that since we came into power. We are investing in financial security. We have reopened offices. We have invested in front-line staff. We are delivering on mental health services to better support our troops, and we will continue to find ways to help them build their lives after service. Our government believes in our veterans and will be there with them every step of the way.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that this government swore to make mental illness a priority, and it is now imposing on our soldiers who struggle with traumatic stress a maximum period of 180 days to recover. The Liberals made that decision. The Liberal government seems to have two ways of dealing with people: one for its Liberal cronies and another for all other Canadians, including our soldiers.

Should members of the Canadian Armed Forces rush back to work if they are still injured or ill, or even if they are not ready, to avoid being penalized by this Liberal government?

[English]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to our Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans and their families. We continue to build upon the supports we have in our mandate letter, including reopening offices, investments in front-line staff, delivering on financial security, improving supports for mental health. I will let the member know that we are investing in a centre of excellence for mental health for our veterans and their families to get the help that they need. We are standing by our veterans and their families, unlike the Conservatives, who ignored them in the 10 years that they were in office.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, we were shocked to learn that the current Liberal government is stripping the pay of our brave men and women who are severely injured in the line of duty. This disgraceful decision to remove benefits from those who put their lives on the line for us is nothing short of cold and heartless. Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and reverse this shameful pay cut to our Canadian special forces?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the health and well-being of our soldiers are top priorities. The changes that we made give soldiers a grace period of nearly six months to transition to their regular rate of pay. What is more, our ill and injured veterans have access to a significant level of support to help them to recover. The chief of the defence staff is responsible for administering these policies, and the Minister of National Defence asked him to review this file to make sure it is appropriate.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister seems to have no problem making sure his friends are all taken care of, whether it is proclaiming Stephen Bronfman innocent or turning a blind eye to the Minister of Finance's blatant conflict of interest, but when it comes to doing what is right for our men and women in uniform and those who put their lives on the line every day, the Prime Minister has no time and zero sympathy. We can tell that from the minister's answer. Do the Liberals understand the damage that they are inflicting on our Canadian military by cutting the monthly allowances of these soldiers?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that

our soldiers receive fair compensation for the service they render to our country. That is why our government recently approved a pay increase of 6.34% for most military personnel. In addition to their regular pay, some soldiers also receive allowances when they are called upon to carry out special duties or more difficult tasks or when they are exposed to a higher level of risk. These include paratroopers, rescue specialists, and those who are deployed for a long time, either on land or sea.

Most of these allowances were also increased by 5.1%. Our soldiers are well-paid—

• (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue has been saying since the beginning of the week that her government has managed to recoup \$25 billion by cracking down on tax evasion. However, the Canada Revenue Agency still refuses to confirm whether the money has actually been recovered by the Crown.

This minister and her government cannot keep their stories straight from one day to the next. The minister must show some backbone and end the culture of secrecy at the agency.

What is the truth? Did the agency actually recover the \$25 billion or just identify the money?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to cracking down on tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. We are about to recoup \$25 billion as a result of audits conducted over the past two years. All companies and individuals affected by these audits have received notices of assessment. The Canada Revenue Agency has launched the collection process for amounts owed to Canadians. No one is above the law.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is odd because in June the minister was quoting \$13 billion, not \$25 billion. The amount has almost doubled in six months.

[English]

The Minister of National Revenue keeps boasting about the CRA's investigation into tax evasion, but she sets a double standard. Remember when the CRA offered a secret amnesty to KPMG clients who stashed \$130 million in the Isle of Man? A quick visit to the Canada Revenue Agency's website shows the names of hairdressers, farmers, and realtors who were caught, but nothing on KPMG clients.

The Liberals keep bragging about how they had a carpenter pay a fine, but when will the government take on the real tax evaders?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are on track to recoup \$25 billion as a result of audits conducted over the past two years. I would like to say to my colleague opposite that two years amount to 24 months, not six.

We have invested \$1 billion. We are continuing our efforts and putting tools in place. We are auditing four jurisdictions per year. We are working on hiring 100 auditors and our efforts are producing results.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, ever since the paradise papers revealed information about Stephen Bronfman, the Minister of National Revenue has been giving us the same line: the government is committed to combatting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

Wait a second, though. According to Revenue Canada's website, tax evasion involves deliberately ignoring the law. It is illegal. How can something illegal be aggressive?

Are there things that are illegal but not aggressive? Is there such a thing as acceptable fraud? Does the difference between something acceptable and something fraudulent depend on whether one is a friend of the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party of Canada?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is firmly committed to combatting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. In our last two budgets, we allocated nearly \$1 billion to doing just that. Our plan is working. There have been 627 cases transferred to criminal investigation, 268 search warrants executed, and 78 convictions. We are continuing to work on this for all Canadians. Everyone must pay their fair share.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have another number for the minister: 22.

Twenty-two is the number of agreements the Liberals have with tax havens, and they are not lifting a finger to do anything about it. An article in this morning's *Le Devoir* states:

When will the Liberal government finally cancel the tax treaties that allow a Canadian company registered in Barbados to avoid paying taxes here...When will it finally get tough on Canadian banks that earn some of their profits through their activities in tax havens in the south...

Those are excellent questions. Are the Liberals doing nothing because that is better for their millionaire friends on Bay Street? Is that what is going on here?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is well aware that billions of dollars are at stake. We have made historic investments to the tune of \$1 billion in our last two budgets. The CRA uses the information it receives through lists disclosed by its partners in the OECD and the BEPS project, which the agency is part of. That is why, as of September 30, 2017, the agency was conducting more than 990 audits and 42 criminal investigations related to offshore financial structures. We—

●(1430)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Provencher.

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, new Liberal ethical lapses seem to surface almost weekly, and they are not just islands unto themselves. The finance minister hid his Morneau Shepell shares for almost two years. He hid his French corporation, and though he was found guilty and fined by the Ethics Commissioner for that, he still holds numerous numbered companies.

Will the finance minister clarify for us today what other conflicts are lurking in the muddy waters of these other numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned time and again in the House, the finance minister, when he arrived in Ottawa as an elected parliamentarian, did what is expected of all parliamentarians and all ministers. He met with the Ethics Commissioner. He has always followed her guidelines. He made sure he was in compliance with the rules. He mentioned recently that he would even go above and beyond that, by divesting himself of all shares in Morneau Shepell and placing all of his assets in a blind trust.

The measures he put in place when he arrived were the ones recommended by the Ethics Commissioner, which were good enough for members on the other side of the aisle while they were in government; good enough for the member for Milton; and good enough for Denis Lebel, which was to put in place a conflict of interest screen, which has been in place, and is in place.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are fed up. Everywhere they look more Liberals are displaying their lack of ethics. What bothers them most is that the Minister of Finance, the person responsible for our country's budget, is hiding his assets in numbered companies. He hid his Morneau Shepell shares for two years. He never disclosed that he owns a company in France. He was found guilty by the commissioner, and more importantly by all Canadians, and he had to pay a fine. How many more conflicts might we find in the rest of his numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always worked in full transparency with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and followed her recommendations. That is what is expected of every parliamentarian on all sides of the House. He announced that he would go even further and put all his assets in a blind trust, divest himself of his shares in Morneau Shepell, and make a charitable donation of the difference in value of his shares between October 19, 2015 and now.

The Conservatives are only trying to distract from their poor record on the economy. What they do not want to talk about is the good record of the Minister of Finance, who created 500,000 jobs in two years and has given us the strongest growth of the past 10 years. That is not something they can brag about because for 10 years they had the worst performance in every respect.

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the finance minister spent the summer attacking small business owners, it has become crystal clear that the Liberals are the party of the privileged and that there are two sets of rules. There are rules for them and rules for the rest of us.

While the minister hid his foreign corporation from the Ethics Commissioner, Liberal insiders were hiding their wealth in a complex web of offshore tax havens. Middle-class Canadians, and those working hard to join it, do not try to hide things from the tax man. They cannot afford it.

Why does the minister not publicly disclose what is in all of his numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that the finance minister has done what is expected of all parliamentarians. He has worked with the Ethics Commissioner, in whom we have the utmost trust to provide the right path forward for parliamentarians, for parliamentary secretaries, and ministers. That is what he has done in putting in place a conflict of interest screen, a measure that the Ethics Commissioner saw as the best compliance measure possible, a measure that was good enough for members on the opposite side while they were in government. Now, the finance minister has announced that he will go above and beyond her recommendations to continue the important work he has been doing for two years for Canadians.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps saying he has disclosed all of his assets, but he told everyone two years ago that he had placed all of his assets in a blind trust. He told the media, Parliament, and even members of his own caucus that he had a blind trust, but we know that was not the truth.

Now he is asking us, once again, to blindly trust him. However, if he really wants to repair the trust he has broken with Canadians, the solution is simple. He should shine a light on what is in all of his numbered companies. Why is that so hard?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this Parliament we have an institution, the Ethics Commissioner, whose mandate is to provide the right path forward to protect the integrity of Parliament by providing recommendations to make sure that all members follow the rules. The finance minister, when he was first elected two years ago, met with the Ethics Commissioner, disclosed all of his assets to her, followed the path she set forward, put in place a conflict of interest screen, and has focused for the last two years on serving Canadians and the public. He has helped to grow this economy at a faster rate than they ever could achieve in two years. I fully understand why they do not want to talk about their record and the finance minister's record, because when one compares the two, it is clear who is doing the better job.

* * *

● (1435)

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has gone on the hunt for wealthy tax cheats, but skipped right over his finance minister, who had hidden interests in France

and Barbados, and skipped over his chief fundraiser in the Liberal Party, who is linked to a \$60-million tax haven in the Caribbean, but he did find diabetics, and farmers, and now special forces soldiers.

When will Sherlock Holmes over there realize that if he is looking for wealthy tax dodgers, they are all around him?

The Speaker: I do not think there is a Sherlock Holmes in the House, and of course if there were, we would not refer to him by name. I ask members to remember to address their questions to the Chair, but to mention the minister they are addressing too, if possible. If they do that, it would be fine.

[Translation]

I see the hon. Minister of National Revenue rising to respond.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition member's comments are complete nonsense. I would even go so far as to call them irresponsible. No one is interfering with the agency's work. Our government is fully committed to fighting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

In our last two budgets, we invested nearly \$1 billion. How strange it is to hear the Conservatives talk about how important these issues are, given that they made no such investment when they were in power. *The Globe and Mail* reported in 2014 that the Conservatives had eliminated the positions of 50 senior managers responsible for international files.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this minister is hiring a lot of tax collectors. The problem is that they are going after the wrong people—diabetics, farmers, and small business owners—not the real tax cheats. As for her comment that no one is interfering with the CRA, well, maybe no one except the Prime Minister and her. She wrote a letter on July 31, in which she said that type 1 diabetics are unlikely to qualify for the disability tax credit even when their doctors certify they are diabetic.

Will she withdraw that letter and tell her department to give diabetics back their tax credit?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians receive the credits and benefits they are entitled to.

Oral Questions

The eligibility criteria for this credit have not changed. It is important to recognize that far too many Canadians are struggling and need help. That is why our government has always taken a compassionate approach and helped those in need. Here is what we have done. We have simplified the forms and hired specialized nurse practitioners. We are doing everything we can to help people.

* * *

VETERANS

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, veterans are on the Hill to ask the Liberals to keep their election promise and give them a full pension.

These veterans were betrayed by the Conservatives and disappointed when the Liberals brought them back to court, after promising to do better. In 2015, the Liberals voted in favour of an NDP motion that indicated that Canada has a sacred obligation to our veterans.

Will the Liberals keep their promise, provide full pensions, and once again recognize that Canada has a sacred obligation to veterans?

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have a sacred obligation to veterans who have a hard time when they return home. We will help them. We demonstrate that every day with the services and benefits we offer veterans and their families.

We will deliver on our promise of a pension for life, and we will have more details about that later this year.

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the current government has repeatedly promised to bring back veterans' pensions, yet it continues to deny that it owes a sacred obligation to our veterans. In fact, the Liberals hired the same lawyers as the Conservatives before them, and have taken these veterans right back to court. So much for their words.

The Prime Minister has a choice. Will he keep his promise and bring back the full pension or will he continue to deny the sacred obligation we owe Canada's veterans?

• (1440)

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, we did not take these veterans to court. The Equitas litigation deals with issues that are addressed in the minister's mandate, including re-establishing lifelong pensions as an option. Unlike the Conservatives across the way, who could have addressed veterans' concerns while in office, we will deliver on our promise of a pension for life.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the revenue minister to release valuable information so that Canadians can understand how widespread the problems are with the disability tax credit for diabetics. The minister totally evaded my question. When it comes to the disability tax credit, Diabetes Canada has said that "nobody's being targeted the way people with diabetes" are. When will the revenue minister do

her job, release the data on the disability tax credit, and come clean with Canadians suffering from diabetes?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that everyone receives the tax credits and benefits they need and are entitled to. We are moving forward with a national disability act that will remove barriers and improve access for all Canadians living with a disability.

We have made tax credits more accessible. For the past two years, amounts have continued to rise. We simplified the forms and hired specialized nurse practitioners, and we are even allowing them to fill out the forms.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of National Revenue is saying that payments have increased, why is it that a constituent from Sainte-Justine who used to get a disability tax credit no longer qualifies for a registered disability savings plan, according to the CRA?

The Prime Minister gave me his word that the Minister of National Revenue and the Minister of Health would follow up on this case.

What progress has the minister made on the case of my constituent from Sainte-Justine who has diabetes, who is worried, who unfortunately is not a friend of the Prime Minister's, and who has no tax haven in the Caribbean?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that everyone receives the tax credits and benefits they are entitled to. The eligibility criteria for the tax credit have not changed. My colleague opposite knows very well that all personal information held by the CRA is strictly confidential. I will not discuss any individual in the House today or at any time during our term in office.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are tired of empty talk. We want action. What my constituent from Sainte-Justine wants is action. She wants the government to stop going after her savings, which will provide her with a secure retirement, because she is diabetic and she has children to take care of. We want action.

Why is the Prime Minister defending his bagman, who is hiding millions of dollars in the Caribbean, rather than taking care of my constituent from Sainte-Justine?

I expect some action.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are fully committed to combatting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. It is funny to hear the Conservatives talking about how important it is to combat tax evasion since they did so little in that regard when they were in office.

Oral Questions

In its last year in office, the Harper government conducted 98 offshore audits. We conducted 223 last year. In its last year in office, the Conservative government transferred 244 cases to criminal investigation. We transferred 335 last year. These numbers show that we are taking the situation much more seriously than the Conservatives—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking for the people with type 1 diabetes who have had their previously approved disability tax credits rejected. That is because refusal triggers a letter telling them that they are not eligible for the retirement disability pension fund they have been putting money into for 10 years and that the account must be shut down. What are the Liberals going to do with the funds that were supposed to help these people manage their disability? They are going to use them to pay for their out of control spending. How can they not see this is wrong?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that everyone receives the tax credits and benefits that they are entitled to.

The eligibility requirements for this tax credit have not changed. It is important to recognize that far too many Canadians are struggling and need help. That is why we are helping low-income workers keep more of their hard-earned money by increasing the working income tax benefit by \$500 million a year as of 2019.

We continue to deliver on our promises to Canadians.

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●(1445)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, next week, Canada will host a major international summit involving about 70 peacekeeping nations.

However, in the meantime, Canada has yet to deliver on its own pledge to contribute to peacekeeping operations. That is a shame. It seems this government is really in no rush to fulfill its promises and international obligations.

When will the government stop embarrassing itself and us and finally announce a contribution to peacekeeping?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we strongly believe that Canada has an important role to play in peacekeeping operations, and we are proud of our track record.

Canadians expect us to make an international contribution. That is why we have committed half a billion dollars and promised troops for peacekeeping missions.

Last week, we announced an ambitious action plan to integrate gender equality into peace and security efforts. We are proceeding with caution, as Canadians expect.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that Canada will be welcoming the world to a conference on peacekeeping without making any specific commitment on a peacekeeping mission.

To make matters worse, United Nations officials believe that the things being considered by Canada do not even match the UN's priorities. Now, with this conference just a few days away, it is still not clear if or how Canada will contribute.

Again, will the government be announcing a specific peacekeeping mission commitment before the conference opens?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a proud history of peacekeeping, and our government knows how important it is for Canadians, for us to re-engage in that leadership role in a modernized view of how peacekeeping is done through the United Nations.

We committed personnel and \$500 million to re-engage and take on a leadership role in peacekeeping operations. Last week, we announced an ambitious action plan that talks about gender equality in all of our engagement and fragile states, including in police and military deployments.

Canada will re-engage in a leadership role in peacekeeping operations around the world.

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[*Translation*]

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2017, the government announced that it would make maternity and parental leave more flexible and improve support for caregivers.

[*English*]

Could the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development please update this House on recently announced measures our government is implementing to support parental benefits and those providing compassionate care?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to take this opportunity to thank the member for St. John's East for his remarkable work on behalf of his constituents.

I am also delighted to have been able to announce this morning that a budget 2017 enhancement to our EI system will take effect on December 3. This means that parents will have more support, more flexibility to look after their children. It also means that caregivers will have more flexibility and support to look after their dear ones when they go through difficult health circumstances.

Oral Questions

This is part of our plan to grow the economy, grow the middle class, and help more Canadians join the middle class. We will celebrate that next week.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for weeks we have asked the Liberals to provide details about the scandals we are debating today in the House, especially those involving tax evasion.

The minister responds every time with the number of investigations conducted. However, we have heard nothing about investigations of the Liberals' cronies. My question for the minister is very simple.

With respect to the paradise papers, which were recently disclosed, will all the people named in those papers be investigated by her department, yes or no?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are firmly committed to working on and cracking down on tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

It is strange to hear the Conservatives talk about the importance of cracking down on tax evasion as they did so little when in power. In the last year they were in office, the Conservatives sent 244 cases to criminal investigations and only 39 search warrants were executed. Last year there were 335 cases, and 123 search warrants.

While the Conservatives work for the wealthy, we work for the—
• (1450)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Beauce.

[English]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me make it a little more specific for the minister.

The Prime Minister's friend and bagman for the Liberal Party of Canada, Stephen Bronfman, was referenced in the paradise papers. The revenue minister spoke about a full investigation into those exposed in these papers.

My question for the minister is very simple. Can the minister assure the House that Stephen Bronfman will be investigated, yes or no?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite knows very well that I cannot discuss any specific cases, and I will not do so today or at any point in the future. The integrity of our tax system is at stake. What I can say is that our government is fully committed to fighting tax evasion and tax avoidance. No one is above the law. The law applies to everyone.

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister just said she cannot comment on an ongoing investigation but that is exactly what the Prime Minister did. He said, "...we have received assurances that all rules were followed...and we are satisfied

with those assurances." He has done exactly the opposite of what the minister promised had to happen.

Apparently, if people raise enough money for the Liberal Party, its assurances are all they need to get off the hook. It must be nice.

Why is there one set of rules for the Liberals and one set of rules for everyone else?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comments being made by the Conservatives and members opposite are totally absurd and completely irresponsible. No one is interfering in the agency's work. In our last two budgets, we invested historic amounts totalling nearly \$1 billion. It is funny to hear the Conservatives talk about the importance of this issue. According to *The Globe and Mail*, in 2014, they eliminated 50 positions of managers responsible for international cases. Former minister of national revenue Jean-Pierre Blackburn—

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

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is absurd and irresponsible are the words of the Prime Minister who said, "...we have received assurances that all rules were followed... and we are satisfied with those assurances." He has let Stephen Bronfman off the hook based solely on his word.

The lesson for Canadians: If they want to avoid a pesky investigation first of all, be rich; second, be famous; but most of all, be a good, close friend of the Liberal Party who raises a lot of money.

Why is there one set of rules for friends of the Liberal Prime Minister and a different set for everyone else?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is firmly—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Speaker: Order. If there is any more chanting, people will be chanting outside.

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to fighting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, and our actions prove it. We have invested close to \$1 billion over the past two years. I repeat, no one is above the law. The law applies to everyone equally. What the Conservative Party is trying to do right now is truly appalling. The comments I am hearing are absurd and perhaps even dangerous. No one is interfering in the agency's work. We have a system that is fair and equal for all.

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[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's special LGBTQ adviser said there is no link between an apology to the LGBTQ community and remedies.

Oral Questions

A year ago, the military ombudsman said that as soon as the minister gave approval he would begin revising service records for veterans who were kicked out for being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. A year ago every member of defence committee voted for this process to begin.

If there is no link between an apology and remedies, why are these vets still waiting?

•(1455)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians should be safe to be themselves, love whom they choose, and be free from discrimination of any kind.

We have already made significant progress on these issues with Bill C-16 and Bill C-39. Our special adviser on LGBTQ2 issues, the member for Edmonton Centre, has been working hard and consulting broadly with the community to ensure that when an apology happens, it will be thorough and complete. That applies to veterans who are LGBTQ as well.

Funds have been allocated for things like the expungement of records. We will be addressing the issues of veterans.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has committed to a long overdue apology to LGBTQ Canadians, but this is the same Liberal Party that promised to eliminate the discriminatory ban on gay men donating blood, and broke that promise. There is no scientific basis for this policy and it constitutes clear discrimination today.

How can the Liberals offer a sincere and meaningful apology to the LGBTQ community for past injustices when they are practising discrimination in the present?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through our efforts over the years, Canada continues to have one of the safest blood systems in the world. In June 2016, we took steps forward in reducing the barriers that prevent men who have sex with men from donating blood. Our government has also committed \$3 million to Canadian Blood Services in collaboration with Héma-Québec to make further progress on this issue.

This funding helped organize an international health conference on blood donor policy. It will support behavioural research required to develop non-discriminatory practice and encourage the advancement of this technology.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the previous Conservative government, Canadian pulse exports went from \$1 billion to a record \$4.2 billion a year, with exports to India at \$1.5 billion. However, negotiating exemptions for Canadian exports expired more than a month ago, and now we have learned that there is a 50% duty on Canadian pea exports to India.

How did the agricultural minister allow this situation to go from bad to worse, and when he is going to secure this vital market for Canada's pulse sector?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are extremely concerned over India's

increase in duty by 50% of all imported peas, without providing any advance notice. We are right in our concerns with the Government of India and we will continue to work with our farmers and colleagues to closely monitor the development, determine implications, and raise these concerns with the appropriate Indian ministers.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a third of Canada's pulse exports go to India. The Minister of Agriculture must make this a priority. There is simply too much at stake.

The inactions of the minister have very real consequences. Further delays will jeopardize Canada's \$4 billion pulse sector. We have critical trade agreements that are in jeopardy and this minister has been pushed to the sidelines. He has not even been invited to a vital trade mission to India.

When it comes to these negotiations, when will the Prime Minister appoint a Minister of Agriculture Canadian farmers can trust will be at the table fighting for them?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a decision that has been made by the Indian government, as I think my hon. colleague is fully aware. We are fully aware of the importance of the export of lentils to India, but it was a decision that was made by the Government of India, and we are working with the Government of India to attempt to resolve this. We do not want to complicate the situation any more.

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HOUSING

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, the Liberals made it more difficult for Canadians to qualify for a mortgage, and taking away the dream of home ownership from thousands of first-time buyers. Now they are tacking on even more costs, adding thousands of dollars in expenses when Canadians build, sell, or renovate their homes. As the Canadian Home Builders' Association said, when talking about \$30,000, \$40,000, or \$50,000, our concern will always be about what this means for affordability.

Why are the Liberals making home ownership more expensive for middle-class Canadians, while owners of fancy French villas are let off the hook?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be part of a government that knows how important it is for every Canadian to have access to affordable and adequate housing. In that context, we have invested over \$2.3 billion over the last two budgets to make sure that this is achieved.

We are also going to be launching, in the next few weeks, the first ever national housing strategy with partners all across Canada. These partners have been waiting for us for a long time. We are back, and we are here to stay.

* * *

• (1500)

HEALTH

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has committed to legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis. Through a public health approach, we are maximizing education and minimizing harm.

Can the Minister of Health please update the House on her efforts to raise awareness of cannabis, particularly for young people, and of the risks of cannabis use?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from St. Catharines for his hard work. As he stated, our government has already begun raising awareness about the risk of cannabis use, especially for our youth. In this area, we are proud that we are investing \$46 million, which will support awareness and health promotion activities, including for classrooms and youth organizations all across the country.

Tomorrow, we are hosting a symposium that will bring partners together across the country to identify priorities and actions, and also opportunities to promote partnerships with these agencies.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the immigration committee held two meetings to review how Canada is assisting Yazidi genocide survivors, and today I moved a motion to have the findings presented in a report and to have one additional meeting to hear directly from genocide survivors who have been resettled to Canada.

In a shameful display and in front of Yazidi witnesses, the member for Surrey Centre moved to adjourn debate. The chair then shut down the committee without a vote on anything. I feel that this should be a nonpartisan issue, so will the chair of the committee correct his error and commit to holding an extra meeting and tabling a report on this issue?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill for her question and also for her commitment and her work for the Yazidi women, men, children, girls, and boys. The concern that she raised has come to our committee for the last two meetings. We have heard from officials and stakeholders. There is now a motion on the floor that we extend that by at least one more meeting, and that motion will be dealt with at the next meeting possible.

I do need to add that, very personally, I think that more information and better information is very important for us, as we all are very concerned about Yazidi men and women and their settlement in Canada.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government likes to deride the Conservatives for their failed action on climate change and Canada's melting Arctic. How then do the Liberals defend that it took a private petition just to get the government to finally provide just enough dollars to keep the lights on for one year for our renowned PEARL project? The government is granting a mere \$1 million to a climate program that was once given \$22 million overall by the Conservatives.

Will the government respect calls by our nation's leading scientists and recommit long-term support for this critical climate change research?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that the Arctic matters more than ever before because of climate change. That is why yesterday, along with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I announced \$1.6 million to continue operations and research at the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory. It is one of Canada's most remote scientific stations, located on Ellesmere Island, and researchers there monitor the changes in the atmosphere, climate change, ozone, and the environment.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nine academics cosigned a letter in which they pose the question: "Who is standing up for official languages in the federal government?"

The question is neither inconsequential nor gratuitous. It has been coming up regularly for two years now, but the Liberals seem unconcerned about languages issue, to wit the appointment of an ultra-partisan commissioner, an agreement with Netflix that ignores the francophonie, an action plan that never materializes, and a department that is failing to meet its legal obligations, including obligations with respect to the Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences, the literacy and skills development network.

Protecting official languages is obviously not a priority for the Liberals. Why not?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, our two official languages are central to our history and our Canadian identity. We are firmly committed to promoting the use of both official languages in society and to supporting our official language minority communities.

We are working on a new action plan to support and promote the vitality of these communities. This is a matter our government takes very seriously.

Oral Questions

•(1505)

TAXATION

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue keeps saying that the CRA recovered \$25 billion from tax havens. However, her department's report that came out today indicates that it is more like \$33 million for the last fiscal year. That leaves a shortfall of just \$24,967,000,000, which is 1,000 times less than the minister claims.

Does the minister have a flair for exaggeration or is she getting her millions mixed up with her billions?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to collecting taxes and combatting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. We are on track to recovering that \$25 billion, as a result of audits conducted over the past two years.

Every company and individual affected by these audits received notices of assessment. The CRA is recovering money that is owed to Canadians. No one is above the law.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the House to agree to the Quebec National Assembly's unanimous request to award the Davie shipyard its fair share of Canadian contracts. The 40 phantom Liberal MPs from Quebec refused. I will give them a second chance.

Meanwhile, their colleague, the member for Central Nova, announced that Quebec would get nothing because the Liberals have 32 Atlantic Canadian MPs who are great advocates for their region.

How many jobs must be lost before the Quebec MPs on the other side of the aisle start to advocate for Quebec?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to the national shipbuilding strategy. The strategy is a long-term commitment that rejuvenates our marine industry, supports Canadian innovation, and creates jobs for Canadians. As announced in the strategy, there are still \$2 billion in opportunities available to the Davie shipyard and other Canadian shipyards in the small-ship construction and ship repair, refit, and maintenance programs.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is just more rhetoric to hide the Quebec Liberals' pandering. Canada is going to invest \$100 billion over the next 20 to 30 years to renew its fleet, and not one cent of that is going to the Davie shipyard. Not one cent is going to Quebec.

Where is our tax money going? Where are the 40 phantom Liberal MPs and their support for the Davie shipyard?

Six hundred workers are going to lose their jobs because the Canadian government does not want to lift a finger.

What are the 40 phantom Liberal MPs doing? Are they worried about upsetting the Liberals from the Maritimes?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to the national shipbuilding strategy. The strategy is a long-term commitment that will rejuvenate our maritime industry, support Canadian innovation, and result in jobs for Canadians across the country. As set out in the strategy, \$2 billion in opportunities remain for Chantier Davie and other Canadian shipyards for small ship construction projects, as well as ship repair, refit, and maintenance. We are also committed to consulting the marine industry on other requirements that may arise following an open and competitive procurement process.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The member for Terrebonne on a point of order.

Mr. Michel Boudrias: Mr. Speaker, I once again seek the consent of the House for the following motion:

That this House recognize the expertise of the Davie shipyard in Lévis, which represents 50% of the country's production capacity; and

That it call on the government to adjust its national shipbuilding strategy—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is obvious that the member does not have the unanimous consent of the House.

[English]

I understand the hon. member for Vancouver East has a point of order.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during question period, the member for Don Valley West, chair of the citizenship and immigration committee, mentioned that a motion was moved at committee to extend the study on the Yazidi issue by one extra day and to have a report come out of that committee study. The member only suggested that it was to extend the meeting, which is not factually accurate. Therefore, I raise that as a point of order.

•(1510)

The Speaker: It sounds like debate, but I will have a look at that and perhaps come back to the House if necessary.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Minister of National Revenue talked about the taxes paid by the wealthiest members of our society.

In order to set the record straight for Canadians, I ask for the consent of the House to table a document, issued by the Department of Finance, entitled "Annual Financial Report of the Government of Canada". On page 16 of that report, it reads:

[English]

"Personal income tax revenues decreased by \$1.2 billion...largely reflecting the impact of tax planning by high-income individuals..."

[Translation]

I ask for the consent of the House.

Government Orders

The Speaker: The member does not have the unanimous consent of the House.

[*English*]

Now I believe the hon. government House leader is rising with the usual Thursday question.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members are aware, this is the final day before we go back to our ridings for what is probably one of the most important weeks for all of us as members of Parliament, as we celebrate, honour, and think about the sacrifice that has been made. When I say “celebrate”, it is celebrating the freedom we have because of the price that has been paid. As we get ready to do that, I know that all of us have the same goal in mind, which is to serve our constituency, our veterans, and those who are currently serving in the Armed Forces as we remember and honour them.

With that in mind, I would ask the government if it could let us know what it will be planning to bring forward when we return after our constituency week.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a small footnote in history, I used to have the honour of serving as the government House leader. After an absence of 807 weeks, it is my privilege to answer this question once again on behalf of my colleague the current government House leader. Again as a historical reference, members might be interested to know that 807 weeks ago, what we were discussing in the Thursday question was reproductive technologies, public safety, competition legislation, species at risk, and pest control. In some ways, things never change. However, to get to the answer, this afternoon we will continue with the report stage debate on Bill C-45, which is the proposed cannabis legislation.

First, let me associate myself, and I am sure all members of the House, with the comments that the opposition House leader made about the respect we all have, and must have, for our veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

After we return from this constituency week, we will commence debate on Bill C-59, which deals with national security. I would inform the House that, in the interests of transparency, we will be referring this bill to committee before second reading, which will allow for a broader scope of discussion and consideration and possible amendment of the bill in the committee when that deliberation begins.

Following that, we hope to be back to the debate on Bill C-24, which would amend the Salaries Act. Our focus for the rest of the week after we return will be disposing of Bill C-45 at report stage and third reading.

Finally, Thursday of that week will be an allotted day.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. opposition House leader and the Minister of Public Safety, in particular, for their words about Remembrance Week and what we are doing over the next while, and also the Minister of Public Safety for the little history lesson. I

thought for a minute he might tell us what it was like to be with Wilfrid Laurier.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CANNABIS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: There were five minutes left for questions and comments on the speech of the hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I look at Bill C-45, for me, personally, it is saying that we need to do what we can for our children. I hear a lot of the arguments from the Conservative benches that under the new law, somehow our children would be worse off, not recognizing that Canada already has the highest participation of youth in the consumption of cannabis in the world. A big part of that driving force is the criminal element. Criminals realize that they can sell and profit by selling to our kids. Would my colleague not at the very least concede that for criminals, it is a viable option to make money by selling to minors? That is something that is happening today.

This is a step in the right direction to deal with crime and deal with young people and the issue of cannabis and marijuana.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague's question. In the 1980s, we introduced the GST and the Liberals were adamant that they would eliminate it as quickly as possible. Quite the opposite happened and, even worse, they increased this tax several times. It was lowered again under Mr. Harper.

In reality, the government is now proposing a tax on a good that will be sold to young people. Not only are they taxing all Canadians, they are taxing young people. The goal is to collect money to pay off the Liberal deficit at the expense of young people. That is what they are doing.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want my colleague to address something we have heard over and over, and that is the deceitful approach I see in bringing this to Canadians. The Liberals have said that the status quo is not working. I would like to cite a study from the Canadian community health survey, mental health, from 2015. It said that for teens aged 15 to 17, which is the target group, they have lowered marijuana use from 40% to 25%. In other words, the status quo lowered it by 15%.

The Liberals say that they want to keep this out of the hands of children and keep it out of the hands of organized crime. Experts at committee said this bill would not do that.

Could the member comment on the deceptive nature of the Liberals? They are telling Canadians one thing, when they know that the facts do not support this bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question clearly exposes the Liberal's hypocrisy with respect to this bill.

The facts are clear: the legalization of marijuana will not reduce its consumption by youth. On the contrary, it is being legalized. That tells young people to go ahead and enjoy it, and it is no big deal to use it. That is the message the government is sending our youth.

This makes no sense in terms of public health. My children and especially my grandchildren, who are still growing up, are going to be part of a society where, as of July 2018, a 12-year-old can possess five or six grams of marijuana. That makes no sense. If that is what you call protecting children, it makes no sense.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really glad to hear the member talk about children and the impacts of cannabis on children, but we know as fact that over 20% of children under the age of 18 already have access to marijuana and are using it. Thirty per cent of young adults are already using it. We know the status quo is not working. Given that, why would the member suggest continuing with the status quo?

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Speaker, an expert came to committee and said exactly the reverse of what my colleague just said. The Liberals do not believe the facts. That is the reality. They do not believe what the police, the doctors, and all the associations across Canada say to them. That is a fact. That is a problem with the government. It does not believe them.

• (1520)

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk again about Bill C-45, a bill that will legalize cannabis, which has been illegal for nearly 100 years in Canada. This bill will come into effect in the next eight months.

The hasty passage of this bill raises several concerns, as was pointed out by a very large number of provincial organizations, experts, police forces and health-sector groups. Such a huge and complex bill requires time for reflection and a comprehensive study. It is difficult to understand the Liberals' sense of urgency on this bill,

unless they are thinking of the next election, which is slowly but surely approaching. I will add “fortunately” to that.

I oppose this bill because it simply does not meet the objectives that it claims to achieve. To prove it, I propose that the various objectives announced by the Liberal government be reviewed to see whether they pass a reality check, what we call in Quebec *l'épreuve des faits*, the smell test.

First, the government claims to be protecting the health of young persons by restricting access to cannabis while protecting them from inducements to use it. This objective will simply not be met. To begin with, if we allow Canadians to grow up to four cannabis plants at home, it will be impossible to control children's access to the drug. Therefore, it will be impossible to regulate consumption by the young people who live in these homes. I am not claiming to be an expert in this area. I only observe and listen to what the experts tell us.

Even Health Canada is warning us that marijuana is a dangerous drug for young people. This is what is posted on the department's website: “Youth are especially vulnerable to the health effects of cannabis, because adolescence is a critical time for brain development”.

We know that the brain continues to develop until age 25. During those years, the brain is especially vulnerable to the health effects of marijuana, and use is associated with a disturbing increase in the risk of developing mental disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety. It is estimated that young people who use marijuana are 30% more likely to develop these disorders. When we talk about those under 25, that includes 12-year-olds, who, under the bill, will be able to possess up to 5 grams of marijuana. Yes, members heard me right, children in grades seven to twelve, and even those in grade 6, will be able to have an equivalent of 10 to 15 joints on their person. In short, there is nothing to protect the health of young people. It is more likely that they will be encouraged to use.

Second, the government believes that it will deter the illicit activities associated with cannabis. For now, that is by no means a given. If no improvements are made to the price, packaging, and distribution of cannabis, it is rather unlikely that we will be able to take this market away from organized crime. This is what we have seen in the states of Washington and Colorado, and in several countries such as Uruguay, where home growing did not reduce the involvement of organized crime. In fact, nothing prevents home-grown from being sold for illegal purposes.

That is what Cynthia Coffman, Attorney General of Colorado, said. She is not a Conservative here in the house. She said that criminals were still selling marijuana on the black market, that a host of cartels were operating in Colorado, and that crime has not gone down since marijuana was legalized.

Third, the government claims to be making our roads safer. However, in every state and every country where cannabis was legalized, the drug-impaired driving rate increased. That is what Kevin Sabet, a former advisor to Barack Obama, said about drug policies. He said that there has been an uptick in marijuana-related car accidents in Colorado.

Government Orders

I would like to remind members that drivers who have used marijuana are six times more likely to have a car accident than sober drivers. Also, we recently found out that the government still does not have reliable scientific data on the quantity of marijuana that an individual can use before it hinders his or her ability to drive a vehicle or on how long a person should wait after smoking marijuana before driving. The paper that was presented shows that everything is still vague, even though we are eight months away from legalization. There are no facts and no evidence, but the government is rushing the bill through anyway.

Fourth, the government thinks it will be providing access to quality-controlled cannabis. That is an odd goal considering that this government cannot in any way regulate the home grow that it is allowing.

• (1525)

It is impossible to measure the toxicity, the use of fertilizer, the amount produced, or the presence of mould. Furthermore, in Ontario and Quebec, building owners will not be able to prevent renters from growing marijuana, with all the risks that entails, such as a 24 times greater likelihood of fire, according to experts.

The government thinks it can raise awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis use. If it really wants to achieve that objective, it must address the growing concerns expressed by police officers, provincial governments, municipal governments, and indigenous leaders, all of whom have said they will not be prepared to implement the proposed measures eight months from now.

The government should start by listening to these groups of elected representatives and citizens who have sounded the alarm about the Liberal government's pie in the sky objectives. Raising public awareness means launching massive campaigns and providing law enforcement training for police officers and addiction treatment training for mental health workers. These measures will cost Canadian taxpayers dearly, but responsibility for them will most certainly be downloaded onto the provinces, which will have to pick up the tab for the Liberals' promise. Just as they are getting no help now, they will not get any then either.

To sum up, we have reason to seriously question why the Liberal government is in such a hurry to pass this bill.

Perhaps it is so everyone will quickly forget its promise to reform the electoral system or the many other promises I could mention that have really disappointed Canadians, and especially young Canadians, in this case. This kind of commitment requires a great deal of preparation, but instead we are seeing nothing but improvisation in this case.

I therefore urge the members to look at this bill with a critical eye, be prudent, and vote against it. As the many experts I consulted and discussed this with said, this bill does not in any way meet the government's objectives, which are to keep drugs away from kids, make our streets safer, and eliminate organized crime.

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to know if the member realizes that doing nothing is not an option anymore? Cannabis has been banned up to this time, but consumption of it has increased. Today it is easier for our kids to buy

cannabis than to buy a pack of cigarettes or a bottle of beer. Putting our heads in the sand, assuming everything is all right, is not an option.

Stakeholders such as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Canadian Nurses Association have come out in support in this.

Does the member not realize that it is best to regulate and educate in order to have healthy growth rather than ban it outright?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I am not sure where my colleague opposite is getting her information from, but it is completely contrary to all my research. Yes, it is true that many young people are already getting and using marijuana.

Do the Liberals really think that the drug will be harder for them to get once it is legalized and legally available pretty much anywhere? That is completely false, and anyone who believes that is the one burying their head in the sand. The Liberals are simply minimizing the impact this product will have on Canadians and especially on our young people.

I want to point out that if the government had at least listened to the experts who confirmed that using marijuana is dangerous for people under 25, if they had at least banned it for people under 25, we could have begun talking about it. Health experts all agree on that. I say this with great emotion because I have three children: the Liberals are doing exactly the opposite of what health experts are saying. They are therefore putting our kids' health at risk.

• (1530)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the member's last point, he said that cannabis was dangerous when consumed by young Canadians. We know that 30% of young Canadians are currently consuming it. The status quo, the approach we have been taking, is not working. It is time to try something different, and we do not have look too far from where we have come with the way we have regulated tobacco and alcohol to ensure we keep them out of the hands of children. That is exactly what we are striving toward now. Why can the member and the opposition party not see that the status quo just does not work?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, the member just stated that young people under the age of 18 do not consume alcohol or smoke cigarettes. I think that he has never spoken to young people.

Government Orders

In fact, even if it is illegal, some of them consume it all the same. Just because something was legalized for people over 18 does not mean young people will not consume any. It is wrongheaded to claim otherwise, and amounts to willful blindness. I keep having to say this.

There are certain pieces of information I would like to share. According to Health Canada, “Young people are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of marijuana because adolescence is a critical time for brain development.” This is Health Canada highlighting this.

I have one last thing to point out. The number of hospital visits has increased dramatically in Colorado since marijuana was legalized. It has almost tripled, reaching 803 diagnoses per 100,000 people from 2001 to 2009, as a result of legalization. Therefore, in every jurisdiction where this happened, there was a resulting increase in the number of accidents and intoxication problems for school age children. All the figures are there to support these facts.

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to salute my colleague. He is in Quebec, just like me. We had a consultation on the legalization and strict regulation of cannabis. Dr. Goyer, director of public health services in the Laurentian region, was among the guests. According to him, 32% of youth under age 18 in Quebec used marijuana in the previous year. In the Laurentians, the area where I come from, it is 50%.

It is clear that the current system is not working. It is easier to buy marijuana than it is to buy alcohol or cigarettes. That is why it is so critical that we regulate and ensure that this works with the young people.

What does my colleague think about that?

Mr. Alain Rayes: The answer is simple, Madam Speaker. Currently, yes, we all know that the young people consume cannabis. However, it is not true that, by legalizing it, those numbers will drop. With regards to what the doctor she met with said, I can tell her of a bunch more specialists who are extremely worried about the message that we are sending to young people by legalizing drugs.

It is unbelievable that this government has made this a priority. If it put the same energy into rolling out programs to make young people aware of healthy lifestyle, consumption rates would drop right away.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak to Bill C-45 regarding the legalization of cannabis across Canada. I would like to recognize the work of my colleague, the member for Sarnia—Lambton, and thank her for her tireless efforts in ensuring all aspects of this matter are considered before the legislation moves forward.

There are many areas of concern surrounding the bill, mainly in the areas of how the legalization of cannabis will affect the general health of population and issues surrounding youth. I have some deep-rooted concerns about what the legalization of cannabis could do to Canada's youth. I will discuss these concerns in my remarks.

It is necessary to point out just how rushed this legislation is. The government has set an arbitrary date of July 1, 2018, for the legalization of cannabis. This means that by that date, all provinces and territories, including the municipalities and the police forces within these regions, will need to have implemented legislation that allows members of the public to access recreational marijuana. This is a huge ask.

There needs to be time for the appropriate authorities to figure out just how they will handle this new endeavour. It is a serious matter, and should absolutely not be rushed. I worry that the Liberals are more focused on keeping a campaign promise than they are about the health and safety of our communities. Indeed, this is one promise we wish they would not keep, given the wide-ranging implications it could have on society. The legislation needs to be picked apart with a fine-toothed comb to ensure that every aspect of it is considered by the provinces and territories, which will have the responsibility to implement it. Less than one year from now is not enough time, and the government needs to realize that.

In my previous life, before becoming a member of Parliament, I was a chiropractor in my hometown of Estevan. Having a medical background allows me to see the bill through that lens and gives me a unique perspective on just how the legalization of cannabis could affect the general health of our country. I have also been very involved with sport in both a medical capacity and as a coach for youth. I will draw upon those experiences when discussing the use of recreational cannabis.

As most of the members of the House likely know, Bill C-45 recommends the age of 18 as a federal minimum for access to recreational cannabis. While the provinces will be given the power to set a higher age, the federal legislation puts it at 18. This creates an issue from a medical perspective. Given what we should all know and given what health care professionals have testified before committee, the brain continues to develop until the age of 25. In fact, the use of cannabis before the age of 25 increases one's risk of developing mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety by up to 30% compared to those who have not used cannabis under the age of 25.

This is a very significant number and should not be ignored. For this reason, the Canadian Medical Association, CMA, recommends raising the age at which a person can consume cannabis to at least 21. This reflects the assumption that if the age is raised too high, illegal consumption of cannabis will continue.

I need to reiterate the fact that the CMA is bending when it says that the minimum age for cannabis consumption should be 21. All scientific evidence to this point states that there are significantly increased risks with the use of cannabis under the age of 25. It is simply irresponsible for the government to set the minimum age at 18, let alone at 21.

That also leads me to this question. What is the government's motivation? It says that it is a party of scientists and constantly remind us of just how important science is. However, on this issue, the government chooses to ignore the facts. It is clear and utter hypocrisy. The science is clear on this health issue.

Government Orders

Could this be because the Liberals are trying to appeal to a younger demographic of voters in hopes they will win the next election? Is it appropriate for them to ignore the health and safety of young Canadians so they can rush through legislation that will make them appealing to young voters?

Furthermore, if it comes out 10 years from now that the effects of cannabis use are much more damaging than was initially thought, as it was with tobacco, will the government be responsible for that? Given that there is not a plethora of medical-based research on the long-term effects of cannabis use and given how rushed this legislation is, will these Liberals take accountability for the results of legalizing recreational cannabis use? I think not. I do not want to be the person who said, "I told you so", but I will. The Liberals need to do their job to ensure the health and safety of all Canadians, and the bill simply does not do that.

• (1535)

Another issue I have with this bill, and that many others have expressed to me, has to do with the marketing and, more specifically, the packaging. All Canadians know that in recent years there has been a serious crackdown on how tobacco is marketed. We have all seen the grisly warnings on cigarette packaging. I am sure that many of us are familiar with the idea of plain packaging and other measures that serve to deter people from tobacco use. We know the consequences of smoking tobacco, such as breathing problems, emphysema, and lung cancer, but 50 years ago we did not. When the same happens in regard to cannabis, who will pay that bill? It will be the taxpayer once again, whom the Liberals have no problem deferring their expenses to.

Bill C-45 has absolutely zero provisions on how cannabis can be marketed. While tobacco products need to be covered in warnings and hidden from view behind store counters, cannabis will be allowed to have bright, flashy packaging, with no limitations on how it can be marketed. To me, this is a clear double standard. Both products are harmful to one's health, so why is one regulated and the other not? It is yet another major oversight that this bill does not deal with.

Of course, there is also the matter of public safety in general and how the legalization of cannabis could have serious negative impacts on the well-being of Canadians. Drug-impaired driving is simply not addressed at all in Bill C-45. A recent study by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction put the costs of impaired driving from cannabis at \$1 billion. If we look at our neighbours in the U.S. who have legalized recreational cannabis, we see that there has been a dramatic increase in fatal car accidents involving the use of cannabis, not to mention the fact there is currently no instrument that can accurately measure a person's level of impairment roadside.

We cannot forget about the impact this legislation will have on our businesses, manufacturers, and employers. There are too many questions and no answers with respect to liability and workplace safety. This will affect on-the-job employee performance. Again, how do we test for this? The increased cost to employers to account for this in policy, procedure, and implementation will further add to the increased economic burden they are already experiencing under the current government.

The legal technicalities and challenges will be astronomical, not to mention the costs of training a police officer, which will be charged to municipal governments, as well as provincial and federal police agencies.

It is absolutely irresponsible to move forward with legislation that is clearly missing some major provisions that would keep our country and Canadians safe. There needs to be some sort of public education program before the legislation can be put in place so that Canadians, especially our youth, can understand the risks associated with partaking in recreational cannabis. One month, two months, three months, even nine months, assuming education starts today, will not be enough. It astounds me that this was not considered by the federal government when drafting this legislation.

As with other matters, such as the framework for palliative care, I would not be surprised to hear that the government is hefting the responsibility over to the provinces and territories, rather than taking on this task itself. It needs to put on its grown-up pants and take on the responsibility to look at all aspects of this legislation instead of focusing on what makes it look cool.

In conclusion, we on this side of the House oppose the legalization of recreational cannabis based on evidence and testimony from professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, scientists, law enforcement officials, and many others. We will do everything possible to ensure that cannabis does not end up in the hands of children, something this bill would actually allow.

Unlike the Prime Minister, we will listen to the experts on this matter who say the bill is flawed. I call on the government to stand up and do what is in the best interests of Canadians, and not what is in the best interests of the government in achieving its political goals. This issue is more than about politics; it is the health, safety, and well-being of our country that is on the line here.

• (1540)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will provide some reassurance to my colleague across the way when he speaks about the lack of legislation dealing with impaired driving. Just last week this House passed Bill C-46 at third reading. My colleague's party did not vote for that bill, but it would provide all the authorities now required to keep our roadways safe. We have included in that bill, which is now headed to the Senate, a promise to provide all the money that has been asked for and required to train police and to provide them with the required technologies.

The member mentioned that he is concerned about the lack of regulations regarding packaging, promotion, and advertising, etc. The legislation would allow for that, and those regulations are also under development. He talked about the public education campaign. Our government has committed \$46 million for such training.

Government Orders

Finally, the member talked about expertise. About 18 months ago, we formed a task force. That task force had representatives and experts in public safety, justice, public health, and problematic substance use. The task force received over 30,000 submissions from Canadians across the country, over 700 written submissions, and held hearings in every region of this country, where it heard from hundreds of experts. Based on that testimony, the members of the task force provided a series of recommendations to the government, which took these very seriously. We have in fact engaged very broadly with that level of expertise. This is public policy based entirely on that evidence, and I hope that the knowledge of that will provide some of the reassurance my friend opposite seeks.

• (1545)

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member brought up a number of points. He talked about the money being put forward for education. That money, as I stated in my speech, is not there today. It is not there for the education of young people. This legislation would allow 12-year-old children access to marijuana. It would allow children to have up to five grams of marijuana, to walk around through schools or wherever they are and have it in their hands. It is a shame that we see and hear such in this legislation. We talk about educating children, and yet here we are leading them on by giving them access to this medication.

The member talked about the legislation dealing with impaired driving. The member may not know, but I was a victim of a stoned, impaired driver when I was 16 years old. That impaired driver got off free of charge. I was left for dead on the side of the road, with brain matter draining out of my ear. Half of my face was gone. It took me years to recover from that. Yet this member stands in front of me, unfortunately, and tells me that this legislation is there to stop people on the road when it will not keep people off the road. They are going to be out there and driving because there is no way to test them. There is no piece of equipment available to test and make sure that these people are off the road.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate our colleague on this side for his personal story, because it will be the personal stories of all Canadians that will come out. This is just one of many that we have heard in the House.

The packaging that the member for Souris—Moose Mountain talked about is a major concern. This country has hidden cigarettes from consumers when they go into stores, and now we are hearing that marijuana will be marketed in bright packages. I absolutely cannot believe this. We have spent the last decade hiding cigarettes from everyone in society and having big messages on cigarette packages. Is it true that marijuana would be packaged in bright colours for everyone to see?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, it is true. As the member said, we have spent many years trying to hurt the owners of small convenience stores for selling tobacco and have buried their product behind their counters. That hurts them in two ways. First, they are being attacked by the current government for being small business owners, and second, the people who are out there selling marijuana would be able to market it in a big fancy way, put nice flavours into it, and sell it free of any hindrance. I was a regulator once of the chiropractic profession and know that regulation is one thing, but

that it needs to be done appropriately to protect the public. This legislation would not protect the public.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with a lot of interest to my colleague's remarks. He is a chiropractor and said that he is concerned about medical hazards, and I believe him. I believe that he truly is concerned. I am a physician, and would like to explain why I support this bill.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Then you should know better.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I do know better.

I support this bill. It is important to look at a 2015 UNICEF report that showed that Canadian youth have the highest rates of cannabis smoking in the developed world, but at the same time also have the lowest rates of cigarette smoking in the developed world.

The hon. member is right: cigarettes are legal. They are sold, regulated, and subject to restrictions and legislation on how they are sold and packaged. The point is that 80% of Canadian youth in that survey said it was easy to get marijuana. Now, if we are concerned about youth, if we are concerned that 80% of them have access to this illegal drug and have the highest rates of smoking this drug in the developed world, it tells us that what we had been doing has not been working. It tells us that we have been unable to stop our young people from getting access to cannabis, young people whose frontal lobes are very susceptible to the effects of cannabis.

As for all the things the hon. members spoke about regarding impaired driving, etc., it also means that they are going to be driving impaired, and that everyone is going to have access to this drug without our having any ability to regulate it, look at it, or look backward at what the surveys are showing us to see what the issues are that are affecting people. It is obvious to me that we have to do this because we have to get rid of organized crime. The people profiting off our youth are organized criminals, because they are selling it to them.

It is very clear in the legislation that we will legalize this drug, then regulate it, and then put all of the legislation penalizing the sale of tobacco to minors, with the same penalties, behind the selling of cannabis to minors. I do not know of any drug that is equivalent to tobacco. Tobacco is the only drug that, when used as directed, will kill us, because we will get heart disease, high blood pressure, emphysema, chronic lung disease, or a stroke as a result. The issue is that we have this currently legal drug, but thanks to all of the policies, programs, and legislation we have put in place for tobacco, our children are now among the lowest users of tobacco in the world.

Government Orders

If we take that template, look at the evidence that suggests that 80% of our youth can get cannabis, and recognize that we currently have the largest number of youth in the developed world smoking cannabis, we have to do something. Therefore, let us look at the experience we have had with tobacco. Let us look at this and continue to regulate it. Let us make sure that it cannot be sold to anyone under the age of 18, and let us make sure we are monitoring impaired driving and use.

For instance, we know there are tools that exist right now to monitor impaired driving. At Christmas time we see the police out on the roads looking for people who are drinking and driving. Look at how much MADD has done with respect to the issue of drinking and driving. What we are trying to do now is to try to achieve the same results so that we can eventually have our young people among the lowest users of cannabis in the same world, in the same way they are among the lowest users of tobacco.

Not to do this would be absolutely irresponsible of this government, given that evidence, and so I do support this bill. I agree with the member that we have to keep monitoring. Cannabis is not used or consumed just via smoking. We need to look at the impact of smoking or using cannabis in other forms. There is oil, leaves, and brownies, and all kinds of other ways of using cannabis. We need to consider we look at the quantity and quality of the cannabis, because we want to make sure that people are not getting what they are now. I understand that the best bud in the world comes from British Columbia. We need to be able to look at that kind of qualitative analysis when considering the amount of cannabis in a cigarette, or whatever a person is using.

● (1550)

These are important things for us to regulate and monitor if we really care about the medical effects and if we really care about the use of it, and yet, I point out that cannabis has positive benefits, which I cannot say for tobacco. Cannabis has positive benefits, and we know it is used for neurological pain and in terminal illness to deal with the side effects of chemotherapy. We know it is useful in many instances. There is proof that there are some medical uses. How we monitor that will come through regulations. How we look at what the impacts are will come through regulations.

It also means that, when we have a piece of legislation, we do our homework and we do our surveys and we check out how many people are using, how many children are using, what the reasons are that they still use, how we can tighten that legislation. All of those things are things we will treat the way we did with tobacco.

At the moment, I see this as a good bill. Prohibition did not work. I see this as protecting our youth. I see this as preventing the supplier right now, which is organized crime, from being able to supply on the black market, in schools, and everywhere. I see the idea of putting a ban on promotion to youth so that we are not going to have the nice gaudy little things that appeal to youth, but packaging that is not going to appeal to youth. That is part of the legislation when we talk about looking at packaging. The devil is in the details.

It is important to look at the fact that we are talking about non-promotional packaging to youth. It is important to work with the provinces, because it is provincial police and city police who are going to be looking at impaired driving. We have tools now to look

at cannabis-impaired driving, and we are going to have the training ready that is necessary for law enforcement officers.

What I like about this, which we never had with alcohol and tobacco that are still legal, is that we never put the kind of money into that proactive public education, public awareness, public understanding that there are side effects to this drug, as there are to alcohol and tobacco. The appropriate usage, the amount of dosage, this is where we will be able to start building the research capacity, the indicators, etc., that will tell us what is the appropriate way to use this drug.

Keeping it out of the hands of our children is the priority for me. It is the biggest responsibility this government has, and looking at all of the evidence—and our friend talked about evidence-based decision-making; this is evidence-based decision-making—at least we will be keeping our children safe; at least we will be monitoring usage; at least we will be checking up on who is selling and why. The penalties for people selling to minors is particularly high. It is a maximum of two years in jail, or is it \$5 million, or \$3 million? We are looking at the same kinds of penalties we have for tobacco, yet I do not hear any members across the way talking about tobacco. I do not hear them talking about the ills of tobacco. Maybe we should not legalize tobacco. Maybe we should make tobacco illegal, if they care that much for the health of Canadians.

Maybe we should look at how we deal with alcohol, because at Christmas when police are standing on the streets with a Breathalyzer, they are checking for what drug? They are checking for alcohol. We know that these drugs have negative effects. We know that one or two of them have some positive effects. I understand that there was work being done to say that red wine taken in moderate amounts is good for our heart and our blood pressure.

I am saying we have a responsibility to bring forward this legislation, and anyone who stands in the House and says they care about our youth and about the health of Canadians would support this, because it is a way to begin to control something that right now is not controlled at all.

● (1555)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, a medical doctor by profession, for her speech today. She mentioned the provinces and she mentioned prohibition. She did not mention the fact that all responsibility for the sale, distribution, monitoring, and enforcement of the laws has been downloaded by the federal government to the provinces.

Government Orders

My riding of Thornhill is in the province of Ontario where the premier has told us that cannabis will be distributed by what is known as the LCBO, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. It was set up after prohibition to control the distribution of alcohol, but it should be rightly characterized today as the liquor promotion board of Ontario because once a month a shiny, glossy magazine is delivered to virtually every Ontarian promoting the variety of exciting ways people can consume alcohol.

How can the member ensure and guarantee Ontarians that the LCBO will not promote cannabis in exactly the same way, which would be counter to all of the concern we hear from the government side about the status quo not working, Canada being the largest youth consumer of marijuana and marijuana products? How can it guarantee governments like Ontario are not going to actually accelerate and increase the number of young people using cannabis?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, my colleague is a very thoughtful man and I appreciate his question.

He mentioned the downloading, as he calls it, of the sale, distribution, and use of cannabis to the provinces. At the moment, the provinces are responsible for the sale, use, and distribution of alcohol. At the moment, the provinces are responsible for the sale, use, and distribution of tobacco. We are actually following what is an appropriate place for this to be monitored, at the ground level, not somewhere up on high in the federal government. The overarching legislation is still there.

The idea of promoting it is an interesting one, because the legislation talks about fines for promotion. Obviously, this was not so for alcohol. We have legislation here that looks at promotion, so the provinces are going to be guided by that idea of promoting this drug and of promoting it the way we see alcohol being promoted.

We have learned some things from tobacco and alcohol that we are implementing here with regard to promotion. It took us a long time to stop the promotion. Members may recall all the nice fireworks that we had that were run by tobacco companies. It took us a lot of time to stop that promotion. I was one of the people who fought in the House for us to stop that promotion. We learned a lesson. We are not going to allow that kind of promotion to occur.

• (1600)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was astonished to hear my colleague opposite talk about the health benefits of marijuana. Here is the position of the Canadian Medical Association:

The CMA has longstanding concerns about the health risks associated with consuming marijuana, particularly in smoked form.

Children and youth are particularly at risk for marijuana-related harms, given their brain is undergoing rapid, extensive development.

I would like to focus, however, on the government's claim that somehow legalizing marijuana will put paid to the illegal trade. A perfect policy experiment just happened in the last decade or so, and that is the case of cigarettes. Cigarettes are legal. They are so-called controlled. They are kept out of the hands of children, and so on. However, the illegal trade has not only flourished, but it has expanded, and that is because, as the taxes on "legal" tobacco are increased, it is very easy for organized crime to undercut the so-called government cigarettes. The exact same thing will happen with

marijuana. The government wants to increase the tax. It will make the price so high that organized crime will easily—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. There is only so much time for questions and comments, and people have to keep their questions and comments short enough that we can get answers.

The hon. member for Vancouver Centre has 30 seconds, please.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, the member answered his own question. No one is talking here about raising taxes on anything. We are talking about regulating a drug that has very negative side effects. We are talking about keeping it out of the hands of our children. We are talking about regulating the ability to promote. We are talking about selling to youth. This is what we are doing here. We are not talking about taxes. The hon. member needs to read the legislation better.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak again to Bill C-45 now that it is at the report stage, having previously commented on certain aspects of the bill at the second reading stage. I will not go over that again, but I would like to address certain elements that were changed in committee, especially the 100-centimetre limit on plant height, which seemed a bit arbitrary to me. I could not understand where that number had come from.

In committee, experts told us this limit might actually backfire, because shorter plants tend to have higher concentrations of THC, producing stronger psychoactive effects. The 100-centimetre limit was therefore removed, which was a good thing.

In committee, it also became clear that the Liberal government is not interested in getting the best bill possible. It was so partisan that when the NDP proposed an amendment to eliminate the 100-centimetre limit, the Liberals insisted on voting it down and proposing their own version a few minutes later saying the exact same thing, just because they did not want us to beat them to the punch. That may not be the best way to treat such a serious issue. I am disappointed.

Initially, we did not plan for edible products to be allowed, but this has changed. We will allow them but only in one year. I would like to speak to this particular issue, which I believe is quite important.

Dried cannabis has to be smoked, which is toxic for the lungs. Any inhaled smoke has a certain degree of pulmonary toxicity, whether it comes from a cattail or a cigarette. However, according to the studies I have read, cannabis smoke is apparently 10 times more toxic for the lungs than tobacco smoke. Let me be clear: I am not telling people to smoke cigarettes. All I am saying is that cannabis is highly toxic for the lungs when it is inhaled.

Thus, by allowing that substance to be included in food, we would at least eliminate the issue of pulmonary toxicity. In spite of that, it was decided to allow people to smoke cannabis before allowing them to eat it, which is illogical. Many people in my riding did not understand why people were being encouraged not to smoke tobacco just about everywhere, while at the same time, smoking another substance would become legal. I can see why people might be confused.

Government Orders

Furthermore, when cannabis is ingested in its edible form, be it as a syrup or lozenge, it is much easier to determine accurately the concentration of its two active ingredients. I would like to say a few words about these two ingredients, because they are important. These studies have yielded some interesting results.

First, cannabis contains two cannabinoids: THC and CBD, also called tetrahydrocannabinol and cannabidiol. These two substances seem to have a different effect on our body's endocannabinoid system. THC is the psychoactive ingredient, and it is believed to act on the immune system in such a way as to reduce inflammation, alleviate pain, enhance the mood, trigger euphoria, increase appetite, relax the muscles, reduce certain types of seizures and relieve nausea.

• (1605)

We must not forget that it is also the substance that produces euphoria.

Cannabidiol does not produce a euphoric effect. It is used much more for pain relief, reducing nausea and anxiety, controlling epilepsy, immunosuppression, and muscle relaxation. It is also an anti-psychotic, it reduces inflammation and insomnia, and it is calming.

The reason I wanted to take the time to explain this is that many studies have shown the pot available on the streets has increasingly high concentrations of THC and lower and lower concentrations of cannabidiol. That is why we are seeing more and more episodes of toxic psychosis: cannabidiol tends to neutralize the more psychotic effects that may occur.

The product on the streets has higher levels of THC, which means that it is becoming riskier.

The reason I wanted to explain this is because it would make it possible to have edible products in which all chemical substances could be carefully controlled. It would also make it possible to prevent some of the side effects that are common with the increasingly stronger strains of street drugs. One way to better control side effects and psychosis is to increase cannabidiol and reduce THC.

When it comes to dried herb products, it is really hard to control the concentration of substance in each product. What that means is that we are about to legalize a product that is much more difficult to control, but we are waiting to legislate on edible products, even though they would be much easier to control and it would be easier to limit THC and cannabidiol concentrations.

I find that a little strange. It would have made a lot more sense to legalize edibles right away, while imposing limits on the various substances, such as THC and CBD, to determine how much of each substance could go in the products.

The other reason it might be particularly useful to allow edible products and to be able to control each chemical is for the purposes of research and improving our understanding of this substance. Even though medical pot has been in use for a decade or so, the fact remains that knowledge of its effects on the human body is often based on anecdotal evidence. Essentially, this means someone started taking it on their own and found that it helped with a condition they

had. Our knowledge is not based on conventional clinical research, but on personal experiences compiled over time. Since some discoveries were based on anecdotal medical evidence, the results are not 100% reliable.

It is important to bear in mind that even though we are talking about recreational use, many people still take cannabis for medical purposes. Even though they do not have a prescription, they decide to try cannabis and find that it helps with their insomnia or other health problems.

Singling out recreational use and completely ignoring those who use cannabis for self-medication is not right. We need more information so we can better educate people on the actual effects of cannabis.

One of the problems is that we currently do not have that information, and many people who might decide to take cannabis could be endangering their health, because they do not fully understand the substance or the circumstances in which it might be useful or dangerous.

This bill should have placed more emphasis on health and the prevention of side effects. I also sincerely believe that not allowing edible products, only dried herb products, is somewhat illogical.

• (1610)

[*English*]

BILL C-45—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to advise that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other acts.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings of the said stages.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, first, how outrageous is this. The Liberals want to bring in legislation that we have studied at committee and experts have said that the bill will not do what the Liberals have told Canadians it will do, that it will not get not get the job done.

I have a question for my NDP colleague. Many of the things she brought forward are reasonable and sensible. They identify the problems with the bill. It will not get the job done, as the Liberals have promised Canadians, to keep it out of the hands of kids and away from organized crime.

Government Orders

My question for the member is one that many people have ignored. It is about the three international trade agreements to which Canada has been a signatory. They basically state that stated we would not legalize marijuana. If the Liberals wanted to get out of these trade agreements, they had to state that in July. What effect will the bill have on our international reputation, on our international ability to trade, especially with our most important trading partner, the United States, especially when we are undergoing NAFTA negotiations? Will it be detrimental or will it help open up the border?

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Madam Speaker, I may not have the expertise to know what impact this will have on the free trade agreements, but it is clear that the Liberals need to immediately get to work with regard to the three trade agreements that my colleague mentioned.

I also think that we need to take into account the fact that two U.S. states decided to legalize marijuana. I do not know what sort of impact that will have on the free trade negotiations, whether it will be positive or negative, but I do know that the Liberals need to act now to resolve the issue of the three agreements we have signed that prohibit the trade of cannabis.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the member comment on the government's plan to properly prepare for the implementation of the legislation. This afternoon we have heard a lot about this. In particular, there are \$274 million to support law enforcement; another \$161 million for training front-line officers; \$81 million over the next five years for continued training of officers; and \$46 million over five years for public education, awareness, and surveillance.

What does the member think of that money? Does she concur that it is necessary to put the funds into the preparation, as the government has done?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Madam Speaker, the problem with the current government is that it seems to believe that money is the solution to all problems.

It is not the amount that is important, but what is done with it. The government needs a strategy. The Liberals can throw as many numbers around as they like, but what counts is how that money is used. Does the government have a specific plan? Does it know where it is going? The government seems to think that money is the solution to all problems. The Minister of Finance throws money around saying that he will repay what he never should have earned because he was in a conflict of interest and he thinks that will magically make everything better. That is not a responsible attitude. It is not the amount of money that counts. It is what is done with it.

The government could allocate smaller amounts if it knew exactly where it was going and what it was going to do. In my opinion, it is not the amount that matters. What matters is knowing exactly what is going to be done with the money and having a strategy. The

government cannot just say that it is going to make investments and then leave it up to others to take the necessary action.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-45, the government's marijuana legalization legislation.

It is a little more than 200 days until July 1, 2018, and a little more than 200 days before the Liberal government plans to legalize marijuana in Canada. With a little more than 200 days to go, the provinces are saying that they are not ready. The municipalities are saying that they cannot be ready. Law enforcement agencies are saying that they are not ready and they cannot be ready for July 1. In turn, the government is saying it really does not care that they are not ready, because it is moving ahead with July 1, 2018, ready or not. Talk about irresponsibility on the part of the government. Then again, we are dealing with a reckless government that is prepared to put the health and safety of Canadians at risk, all so their pot-smoking Prime Minister can actually keep an election promise.

The issues the municipalities and the provinces face in order to deal with the effects of legalization are manifold. The provinces will have to deal with issues around workplace safety, employment standards, and traffic safety. The municipalities will have to deal with issues around licensing, zoning, enforcement, and inspection.

With so much work to do and so little time to do it, no wonder the provinces and the municipalities are saying to the government, "Slow down. Give us time to do what we need to do". In that regard, some provinces have not yet even unveiled a plan, not even announced a plan to deal with issues around implementation and regulation of marijuana.

Lisa Holmes, who was the mayor very recently of Morinville, about 10 kilometres north of my home town of St. Albert, appeared before the health committee in her capacity as the president of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. She indicated that 96% of urban municipalities in Alberta did not have bylaws or policies in place to deal with the regulation of marijuana in their communities because there was a lack of clarity about the breadth and substance of regulations, both at a provincial and federal level. I think 96% of urban municipalities in Alberta is not unique to Alberta. I think we would find a similar pattern right across Canada.

With respect to law enforcement agencies, it is clear they are not ready. They are saying that they are not ready, and they cannot be ready. The government has basically put them in an impossible position with the rush and the arbitrary July 1, 2018, deadline.

Let us look at the facts in this regard. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police indicated that in order to deal with impaired drivers and more Canadians who would be consuming marijuana, and in order to train their officers, there was a need for about 6,000 officers to receive training. That training takes about 100 days. The association is saying that it cannot take 6,000 officers off the streets for 100 days by July 1, 2018, that it is just impossible.

Government Orders

•(1620)

Then there is the issue of drug recognition experts. Right now, there are approximately 600 drug recognition experts in Canada. It has been said that there is a need for as many as 2,000 drug recognition experts to deal with the effects of marijuana legalization. When an official from Public Safety Canada came before the justice committee during its study of Bill C-46, I asked that official where things were with respect to drug recognition experts and where we would be by July 1, 2018. The response I got was that by July 1, 2018, there might be an additional 100 drug recognition experts. In other words, we would go from 600 to 700 drug recognition experts, when there is a need for as many as 2,000 drug recognition experts.

I know that a little earlier the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice alluded to the fact that this House had passed Bill C-46 in conjunction with this legislation, Bill C-45. One aspect of Bill C-46 is per se limits for THC levels for drug-impaired drivers. The only problem with that is that there is absolutely no correlation whatsoever between drug impairment and THC levels. What that is going to mean is that people will get behind the wheel impaired and get away with it. They will get off because of the government's arbitrary and unscientific per se limits.

Municipalities, provinces, and law enforcement are not ready, and frankly, Canadians are not ready either for the July 1, 2018, date.

In the justice committee's study of Bill C-46, and when I read the transcripts from the health committee, there were a number of witnesses who cited various surveys and studies that indicated that a large percentage of Canadians, particularly young Canadians, have misconceptions about the effects of marijuana usage. This was recognized by the government's own marijuana legalization task force as an issue. The task force, in its report, recommended to the government that it have an early and sustained public awareness campaign. What we have seen from the government is not an early and sustained public awareness campaign. We see a campaign that is barely off the ground, with little more than 200 days before the July 1, 2018, date.

Do members know who else is not ready for July 1, 2018? The government is not ready. Its marijuana legalization bill, Bill C-45, is an absolute shambles of a piece of legislation. It is going to create more problems than it solves.

Let us look at the whole picture. Bill C-45 is going to make our kids, our roads, and our communities less safe. We have a government that has absolutely no plan in terms of a coordinated effort with the provinces and municipalities, Law enforcement does not have the tools and resources to be ready for July 1, 2018, and there has not been a sufficient public awareness campaign to get Canadians ready. Taken together, the government needs to put the brakes on July 1, 2018, and go back to the drawing board.

•(1625)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have often heard comments from the other side about the people over here just not being ready, but I want to tell the member opposite what I am not ready for. I am not ready to leave the health and safety of Canadian kids in the hands of criminals. I am not ready to see organized crime make billions of

dollars of additional profit by delaying action that will check that profit. I am not ready to leave in the hands of criminals, those who really do not care about our kids, the health and safety of those who would consume what they are selling. I am not ready to continue to deal with the violence that is visited on so many communities in this country by people involved in illegal drug trafficking.

I ask the member if he is ready to tolerate those circumstances, because in my experience, there seem to be two things the group opposite hates. It hates the way things are and it hates changing the way things are.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, if the government was truly interested in keeping marijuana out of the hands of our kids, it would back off from its policy on homegrown marijuana. How is that going to keep marijuana out of the hands of our kids? I do not know if it occurred to the government, but just about everyone under the age of 18 happens to live in a home, and it is proposing to allow up to four marijuana plants per home. There was evidence before the health committee that a one-metre tall marijuana plant can produce up to 600 grams of marijuana.

There we have it. The government would keep marijuana out of the hands of kids by putting it in their homes, not to mention all the issues around diversion and crime in the state of Colorado associated with homegrown. According to the parliamentary secretary, the government wants to keep it out of the hands of our kids. What a load. What hypocrisy. What nonsense.

•(1630)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, what does my colleague think is the biggest problem related to cannabis at the moment? Is it the pressure on the legal system because of people charged with simple possession and all the repercussions that go along with that, for instance, the delays because of the number of cases before the courts, or is my colleague more concerned about the taxes not being collected? Which of those two problems regarding cannabis is the member more concerned about?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, while the government often talks about reducing the backlog in our courts, what this legislation may actually do is increase the backlog. For example, this legislation provides that Canadians could possess up to 30 grams of marijuana. However, it contains provisions that if they possessed 31 grams of marijuana, they would be criminals, with serious penalties. We have sentences in Bill C-45 of up to 14 years. Arguably, those are not consistent with other similar offences. On that front, I think the government has really not thought this through, and what Bill C-45 would result in is a further backlog in our courts. The bottom line is that no matter how one looks at this, Bill C-45 is a complete and absolute failure.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the problem I have with the speech the member opposite gave is that it fails to reflect the reality of what already exists today, which is that Canada has the highest rate of cannabis use by young people in the world. The use of tobacco, including illicit tobacco that is not sold legally, which a member spoke about earlier, is half that rate among young people. With the total and abject failure of policies to this point, would the member not agree that the status quo is not working for young people and that we need a different approach?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would say that I reject the approach taken by the government, which is to legalize, normalize, and promote the use of marijuana. We can look at the state of Colorado, for example, which went down this road. Prior to legalization, marijuana use among youth in the state of Colorado ranked 14th in the U.S. After legalization, Colorado is now number one. One only need look south of the border and apply some basic common sense to know that legalizing and normalizing marijuana is not the way to reduce marijuana usage among young people.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Salaberry—Suroît, Marijuana; the hon. member for Yellowhead, Forestry Industry; the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, Aerospace Industry.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with great disgust and sadness that I rise today to speak again to this bad bill that will have a major impact on the lives of our children, adolescents, and parents. If by some misfortune this bill is passed and the government's goal of legalizing marijuana on July 1, 2018, is achieved, this will have an adverse and terrifying effect on Canadian families.

Legalizing marijuana normalizes it and that is not the message we want to send to our young people. From now on, under the Liberal government, it will be legal to smoke pot, a gateway drug for all other drugs. No one knows anyone who just one day decides to start using cocaine or other hard drugs. It always starts with a little joint and ends with hard drugs. This Liberal government is practically giving unholy permission to use drugs for the first time. After that, the procession of family tragedies that this will generate, the procession of lives destroyed, and the procession of incredibly destructive problems that Canadians will face, like the people of Colorado and Washington have for far too many years, will be on the Liberal government.

In Canada, the Liberal government's initiative did not meet with the approval of the police, municipalities, or the provinces. Let us first talk about the police. They are telling us in all honesty that in the unfortunate event that this bill goes ahead, there will be a host of problems on our roads, in society, and with the preventative measures that we will need. It is impossible to assemble and appropriately equip every police force from coast to coast to coast in order for them to respond directly to the new challenges that this bad Liberal legislation will give rise to. The head of the RCMP recently said that it would be naive to believe that the new Liberal legislation

will help eliminate organized crime. The head of the RCMP said that.

• (1635)

[*English*]

Those people who know the business, those people who have to deal day after day with the reality of the consumption of marijuana and other drugs, will tell them clearly that if they think criminal people will put that aside and kill their criminal activities, they are being naive. This is totally unacceptable. Those who know the business say do not go there.

[*Translation*]

It is the same for the provinces. Whether we are talking about British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, Quebec, or any other province, not one minister of health, not one minister of justice, not one minister of housing, not one provincial premier cheered for the Liberal government's new approach. On the contrary, our provinces are grappling with the implications for their jurisdictions. The provinces will also be saddled with millions of dollars of spending on health, social services, security, training, and equipment. All of this thanks to the Liberals in Ottawa. The provinces could really have done without this.

This is being rushed through. Municipalities are being affected too. They have to adjust their bylaws to accommodate the Liberal government's ridiculous plan to allow every Canadian household to grow four pot plants up to three feet high. Will that be great for Canada or what? As everyone here knows, a house where pot is being grown is not two times or four times or 10 times more likely to catch fire, but 24 times more likely to catch fire. That is a fact. People are going to have to deal with that situation. How are multi-unit building owners supposed to deal with that? How can they check on things? How can they be sure everything is safe? They cannot retroactively prohibit people from doing it because there is already a lease in place.

How is this going to work in each of the provinces? Every province has its own jurisdiction. Every province will do things its own way. Every municipality will have to pass bylaws, and that opens up a whole can of worms. What is the government doing about that? The federal government says this is all up to the provinces and it will not interfere. The Liberal government is the one causing these problems.

The current Liberal government, which is proposing to normalize marijuana by legalizing it, is creating a whole host of problems and washing its hands of them because they do not fall under its jurisdiction, but that of the police, municipalities, and provinces.

Even worse, the government, because of an obsession unbecoming of any elected representative of any stripe, is pushing for the bill's passage and implementation by July 1.

Government Orders

[English]

I will never understand how the government decided, without laughing at people, that the launch date for legalization would be Canada Day. There are 365 days in a year, and it chose Canada Day to launch its bad policy. It is totally unacceptable, and un-Canadian to do that.

I will be proud to sing *O Canada*, but be assured, I will never sing *O cannabis* on July 1. We are laughing, but it is not a joke because here, in the House of Commons, we have seen so many great Canada Days. On the other hand, we have also seen so many stupid and obvious demonstrations by those who smoke marijuana in front of Parliament. We will see people there, smoking marijuana. That is a real shame. It will not be a great Canada Day in 2018, thanks to the Liberals.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Let us remember the example: unfortunately, two U.S. states, Colorado and Washington, decided to legalize marijuana. What has happened after some years of legalization?

In Colorado, three times as many people have been hospitalized for marijuana related problems since it was legalized. The Liberals tell us that the problem will be solved. On the contrary, it will make it worse. There has been a 108% and 68% increase in overdoses in Colorado and the State of Washington respectively. Will that solve the problems? On the contrary, it will generate twice as many problems and give rise to new ones.

The number of traffic accidents has doubled in the State of Washington and tripled in Colorado. The Liberals are saying, with a straight face, that, on the contrary, it will resolve problems, because we are currently unable to manage them. They are going to legalize marijuana and solve the problems.

It is quite the opposite. There will be twice as many problems in certain situations and we will make things worse. Is it not a fact that, after California, Colorado has the largest illegal production of marijuana?

[English]

Those people say, with that, we will kill, we will attack, we will be aggressive with the criminals. That is not true. The criminals are laughing today. They are saying: "Oh, that's great, the dirty job of introducing people to marijuana for the first time will be done under the Liberals. That's fantastic. The government will do the dirty job, and after that we'll enjoy it because those kids will then be able to use other harder drugs". That is a Liberal reality. That is why we will never accept this kind of bill.

[Translation]

We need to remember that normalizing the legalization of marijuana has an unfortunate effect on children. I will quote Ms. Seychelle Harding, director of communications for the Portage group's addiction rehabilitation centres, who said, "It is clear that just saying it, writing it, talking about it sends a message to young people that it is okay." That is the reality of the Liberal government. It sends a message saying it is okay when, in fact, nothing good will come of this.

Also, beginning July 1, if the bill unfortunately passes, 12-year-old children will be allowed to have five grams of pot in their pockets. I was very surprised to hear that five grams can be 10 to 15 joints. That is the reality.

Come June, young boys and girls, 12-year-old sixth graders, will walk around the school yard with 15 joints in their pockets thinking it is okay. They will come home and say everything is okay because the Prime Minister of Canada told them they could. Is this the type of country we want to build for our children? Not at all.

The same goes for the four pot plants which the Liberal government will authorize in every household. This represents 600 grams of pot per house, and yet, we are told this is meant to protect children. The opposite is true. Children will have direct access to 600 grams of pot. For these reasons and many others, we must reject this bill.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of points I want to raise.

First of all, I assure the member opposite that the date of enactment will not be July 1, Canada Day, a day that is special to all Canadians. I can say with great assurance that it will not be that day. In my opinion, that day is a sacred day for the celebration of the birth of this country, and we will not be doing the enactment of this proposed legislation on that day. We will not be doing it on July 1.

I also want to remind the member and a number of people on the other side who are saying that we cannot fight organized crime, that I respectfully disagree. I would also remind them that in this proposed legislation, the offences of illegal production of cannabis, illegal trafficking of cannabis, and illegal importation and exportation of cannabis would remain serious criminal offences with substantial criminal penalties for those who would break the law. The only cannabis that would be available for purchase and consumption by adult Canadians would be cannabis produced under strict regulation.

I offer that to the member simply to remind him, in response to his concerns about dealing with organized crime, that law enforcement will still have all the tools and authorities it requires to fight the scourge of organized crime in our communities.

• (1645)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, what he said is brand new to me, and I think brand new to Canada. The parliamentary secretary just announced that it will be not July 1. Is that true? Is it written in the bill? Is it not written in the bill that everyone should be ready for July 1, and that every province and municipality should be ready for July 1? If they have changed their minds, that is a first step toward reality, but there are also some other steps for them to take.

The parliamentary secretary talked about people on the criminal side, because the bill would be very strict, and so if they import drugs, they will be very careful. They are doing that now, and will continue to do so. However, the problem is that with the Liberals' bill, the kids will have access to that.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

We are going to downplay the use of marijuana, and that is the problem caused by the Liberal bill. From now on, teenagers will tell their parents it is legal and it is their right. They will use it and go to the neighbour's house because he has pot.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I have to give some time to other members so that they can ask questions.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague for describing the situation with enthusiasm and passion. He says that this is not good for young people, but in fact young people 18 and under have access to marijuana.

In my riding, we held a consultation in September. Dr. Goyer, director of public health in the Laurentian area said that 32% of people 18 and under in Quebec had used cannabis over the past year. In the Laurentian area, it is 50%. That is not good. That is why we have to put this in the hands of the law and engage in education and prevention.

I imagine that the hon. member, whom I have known for many years, has children. Mine are 25, 23, 21, and 18. They all told me that it is easier to buy marijuana than it is to buy alcohol and cigarettes because those are legal and cannot be purchased without showing identification. I come from the retail sector, which is subject to very strict laws with very harsh penalties for those who sell products to people 18 and under.

We need to legalize cannabis and put very strict measures in place. I would like to know what my colleague has to say about that.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I just want to point out that this is the second time a Liberal member has asked me a question, even though people on this side had risen.

The worst thing we could do would be to let children as young as 12 carry 15 joints. The member and the Liberals may well say that educating young people is important, but where is the educational value in letting 12-year-olds, grade 6 students, walk around the schoolyard with 15 joints in their pockets?

I am sorry, but a sign of normalization like this would be the worst thing this government could do.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-45, the cannabis act. I have been here since 2004 and it is probably one of the most badly written pieces of legislation I have ever seen, and there is some frustration on this side in that regard because we have heard the Liberals are going to bring in time allocation. For a bill of such importance and such reach within our provinces and territories, the requirement to have different Houses of Parliament coordinated on this is totally irresponsible.

I want my colleagues, especially on the Liberal side, to understand that there are certain important points to bear in mind in my speech. First of all, everyone agrees that too many kids are smoking marijuana. In my community of Oshawa, no one wants to see a kid

who has a couple of joints get a criminal record or get thrown into jail. Most Canadians would agree with that, and that is why it is really important that Canadians recognize that the Conservatives favour making the possession of small amounts of marijuana a ticketable offence only. This is exactly in line with the position of the chiefs of police. This is a responsible approach, one that Canadians would be very supportive of, but not of the bill that we see in front of us.

The Liberals claim that the status quo is not working, but how does the Liberal government define that? According to a Statistics Canada report dated April 2015, based on data collected from the Canadian community health survey on mental health, the total percentage of teens aged 15-17, which is the target group, reporting having used marijuana had dropped from 40% in 2002 to 25% in 2012. That is a 15 percentage point decrease. This means that something in the status quo is working, but why are the Liberals not telling Canadians about that? What are the Liberals saying? They are saying they want to legalize marijuana because it will get it out of the hands of our kids and keep the profits out of the hands of organized crime. We agree with that. These are good ideas, but does C-45 accomplish that objective? Anyone who has read the bill would say no.

At the health committee we had scientists testify, and the science is clear. Any use of marijuana under the age of 25 can cause permanent psychological damage to our kids, and currently the bill allows kids aged 12 to 17, as young as grade 6, to possess up to five grams of marijuana, equivalent to 10 to 15 joints. That is ridiculous in light of the medical evidence of the harm it can cause our youth. There is no provision to prevent them from selling or distributing cannabis. The amount should be zero.

I am asked if a child in grade 6 could share it with younger kids. That is an important question. It is a great concern of parents and teachers. It would allow drug dealers to target kids and use them for profit.

Bill C-45 allows up to four plants to be grown in the home. Any home can become a grow op. Four plants under the right conditions can yield up to 600 grams or 1,200 to 1,800 joints. This is a concern for homeowners, landlords, law enforcement. Moreover, there is no mandatory testing for the potency or toxicity of the homegrown plants, and no money for inspection. There is no federal requirement to lock up the marijuana. This is going to expose kids and even pets to the drugs. Grow ops lead to a 24-fold increase in incidents involving fire. Landlords are concerned that they will not be able to forbid grow ops or smoking if they are already renting their properties.

Other jurisdictions that have legalized marijuana have said that home grows were hugely penetrated by organized crime. We know it from the science and the evidence out there. For this reason, Washington state does not allow home grows, except for medically fragile people who cannot get to a dispensary. It has been able to reduce organized crime to less than 20% of the market.

Government Orders

The legal opinion is that allowing four plants per dwelling will end up being challenged in court as well. The government has not thought through the bill. There will not only be danger in the homes of Canadians, but on the roads too. Drug-impaired driving is not addressed in Bill C-45. It is encompassed in Bill C-46, but a study recently issued by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction put the cost of impaired driving from cannabis at one billion dollars. The AAA found there has been a large increase in the number of fatal accidents in Washington state involving the use of marijuana after the state legalized the drug. In fact, impaired driving has increased in the American states that have legalized it, and there is no current instrument that can accurately measure one's level of impairment on the roadside. The science is not there yet.

• (1650)

Canada is unable to train our own officers in Canada and needs to send our officers to expensive, lengthy training in the United States, and this training currently has wait lists.

The legalization of marijuana will definitely impact our ability to trade internationally. Have the Liberals noticed that we are negotiating NAFTA? Do the Liberals think that having a drug policy way out of sync with our American neighbours will improve trade or thicken the border? For Oshawa and my community, this is a huge problem, as it is for other communities as well.

Let us look at the treaties. Passing Bill C-45 would violate three UN treaties to which Canada is a signatory. In order to legalize marijuana by July 1 and not be in violation of the UN treaties, Canada would have had to withdraw by July 1 of this year, and the Liberal government did not do that. How can Canada hold other countries to account on their treaty obligations when Canada does not even honour its own?

This leads me to this question. Why the rush? There are only 241 days to go until this arbitrary date that the Liberals selected. Provinces, municipalities, police forces, and our indigenous communities have stated they are not ready to implement this legislation. The government knows this; members have heard it in committee.

So many questions have been left unanswered. Will Canadians who use marijuana be able to cross the border into the United States where marijuana is still illegal? No department has been able to answer this question, and Canadians deserve an answer before the legislation is implemented.

How will enforcement officers test for drug impairment on the roadside? Can these tests be constitutionally challenged? Is the science valid? Canadians deserve an answer.

What education programs are in place now to inform youth about the dangers and consequences of marijuana? If they are not in place now, when will this education process begin? The health minister said today \$43 million, but there is no timeline.

What will happen to the current medical marijuana system and how will recreational sales impact medical marijuana pricing and distribution?

Canadians deserve answers to these questions before the legislation is passed.

The Liberals talk about the black market. One of the stated goals is to eliminate the black market by creating a legal framework for marijuana, but this is a flawed way of thinking. A variety of factors are being left up to the provinces, such as pricing, distribution, which products are included, and packaging.

We need to listen to the real experts on the ground.

Assistant Commissioner Joanne Crampton, of federal policing criminal operations, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, said:

As Kathy mentioned, organized crime is a high priority for federal policing, in particular, for the RCMP. We target the highest echelon within the organized crime world. We're very cognizant...and realize that the chances of organized crime being eliminated in the cannabis market would be.... It's probably naive to think that could happen.

Naive, that is what the experts say about the Liberal approach.

Our Conservative position is the same as the Canadian chiefs of police position, to issue tickets for the simple possession of small amounts of marijuana. This approach is more sensible regarding marijuana possession. Instead of rushing to legalize marijuana, Conservatives are working with law enforcement to protect the health and safety of Canadians. Canadians would be spared a criminal record for simple possession of small amounts.

To summarize, the Liberals promised that they wanted to keep marijuana out of the hands of kids. They also promised that they wanted to keep profit out of the hands of organized crime.

My speech ultimately has proven that the Liberal approach is wrong. This bill would not accomplish what they are promising Canadians. This is like a big bill of sale. The bill would actually place children further in harm's way by permitting possession for kids as young as 12. That is grade 6. Home grow ops will expose children living in a dwelling to dangerous living space and increase the production of marijuana and diversion to organized crime. This approach will increase the rate of impaired driving.

The bill leaves so many questions unanswered, which has blindsided law enforcement and other levels of government.

The question is why the Liberals are force-feeding us this deeply flawed bill. The only answer I can come up with is that the government has no problem being deceitful to Canadians in order to keep the Prime Minister's irresponsible election promise, muddying the water about the implications of full legalization under the bill.

Government Orders

Instead of blindly trying to keep campaign promises at the expense of Canadians' health and safety, perhaps the Liberals should refocus their attention on protecting kids and protecting the public, protecting our trade agreements, and not putting international relationships in jeopardy, particularly the one we have with the United States. They have had no problem breaking other promises, whether it is the balanced budget, electoral reform, or openness and transparency.

It is time the Liberals put the brakes on this legislation until the science supports the ability to ensure the health and safety of Canadians, particularly our kids.

• (1655)

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that many states in the United States have already legalized marijuana within their own jurisdictions. Again, I am going to come back to the point I made earlier, and maybe I will come back to it a little more precisely. Over the preceding 10 years before we came into power, where there was an election fought on this very issue, rates of cannabis use by young people continued to edge up higher every year. The reality for cannabis use is that it exceeds 20%. The idea that suddenly people are going to start driving while high, as if it is not already happening, is to ignore a very serious existing problem. That is why we are introducing legislation to deal with the problem of those who would drive while high.

However, I would ask the member specifically this question. We have the example of tobacco, where prevalence rates for tobacco are now half what they are for cannabis among the youngest cohort, but they used to be incredibly high. Rates used to be over 50%. Through a process of legalizing and making sure we had control, we were able to bring that number down below 10%. Does the member not think that the example of tobacco, how it was regulated and the denormalization campaigns used, is applicable here with cannabis?

• (1700)

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, there were so many fallacies in that statement. First of all, we cannot really compare tobacco to marijuana. This is the bill of sale: the Liberals keep repeating their talking points. It is not me; it is the Canadian community health survey on mental health that said the total percentage of teens aged 15 to 17, the target group, went from 40% to 25% from 2002 to 2012. Let us take a look at it; maybe it was working.

We are not saying we do not have to do something, but we have to be responsible. This entire approach by the Liberals is an experiment. It is hypothetical. They want to take all our kids and put them into a system that no one else in the world has used before. What we are saying is let us take a breath and let us put the brakes on this legislation, instead of using closure so that we cannot even finish debating it properly. I am talking to my municipality, and the police officers in it are not going to be ready. There is going to be horrible case law that is going to develop from this because the proper rules, regulations, and testing are not going to be in place.

My colleague and I agree on a lot of things in this House. Truly, too many Canadian kids are smoking marijuana, but this bill is a

rotten piece of legislation. We are not going to let Canadians be sold a bad bill of sale. It is a very deceitful way of putting this forward.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, we can look to other jurisdictions to see what has happened. Currently, in Canada, there are about 1,000 people a year who die because of an impaired driving incident. When Colorado legalized marijuana, deaths due to impaired driving went up by 40%. In Canada, that would translate to about 400 deaths per year.

Can the member comment on who will be to blame for these deaths after legalization?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, the sad part is that we are all going to be blame. This is an issue about the health and safety of Canadians. If we look at the facts, we see there are no roadside tests, no tools that can actually test if somebody is impaired or not. We are going to be relying on drug recognition experts. Earlier, my colleague said that these experts are well trained. However, we have to send them to the States to be trained, and they are not going to be ready. We may need thousands of these police officers to be trained, and it is going to take resources away from other things on the road. The entire system is not set up for this yet. The science is not there. This is something that is totally irresponsible.

I have to give credit to my NDP colleagues as well. They realize that things have to be done, but not through this bill. This is a horrible bill. Canadians need to know they are being sold a bill here that is not going to do what the Liberal government is claiming, just based on that irresponsible promise the Prime Minister came up with during the last election campaign. This is not the solution.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to enjoy getting involved in this debate, having listened today to many of the remarks that have been provided by my colleagues. I have listened with particular intent to what the Liberal members have been saying and what their underlying argument is for this legislation. The case they have been making in the House is that the legislation would lower usage, make it possible to make it safer, and provide more protection for young people, for people who are abusing, misusing, and getting involved in the marijuana drug scene.

Having listened to that, I specifically tailored my remarks to deal with it, in particular looking at the jurisdictions throughout the world—Uruguay, Washington state, and particularly Colorado—that have legalized this. I find it interesting that they have made arguments about it becoming safer, that it would be safer with the legislation, that there would be less usage, and that we would be able to bring down the usage rates by young people. It is interesting that when I am out in the general public and people talk to who want to see the legislation go through, they never talk about increased safety. They argue for wanting to be able to use their joint recreationally without any hassle. The push from the general public, the people behind the scenes, is somewhat different from the argument that the government is making today.

Government Orders

I will deal with the argument that the government is making today. The argument that, “I want to have my fun and I do not care about the consequences” is not one that I am prepared to deal with today. There is a basic argument for dealing with that on its own. The argument I will deal with today is with the facts, and I will be using a couple of studies in particular.

The first study I would like to refer to was sponsored by France's National Institute of Higher Security and Justice Studies. The institute hired a psychiatry professor at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Erika Forbes, to look into marijuana usage around the world. The argument that the government is making is that, if we legalize marijuana, we will in fact have less usage. We have very few jurisdictions around the world that have gone for complete legalization, but there are three: Uruguay, Washington, and Colorado. It has been noted that in each and every one of those three jurisdictions, usage rates actually went up. In Washington and Colorado, the study says, usage rates did not move up uniformly in all age brackets and all demographics; they tended to move up more among adults than among young people. In Uruguay, the study found complete across-the-board increased usage of marijuana by every age cohort that was measured, the whole spectrum.

This is what we have. With what the Liberals are experimenting with in Canada, the experiment has been done in three jurisdictions and in each of these three times—from my perspective, not surprisingly—we have ended up with higher usage rates of marijuana. That is what I am anticipating as we go forward. If we legalize, as the other jurisdictions have, Canadians should not be surprised if we have higher usage rates.

On the question of whether I believe that will vary across the country, absolutely. The way the situation is now in Canada, if we read police reports and study anything about arrest rates and charge rates, we see that the usage rates in the Canadian public and the rates at which police charge and prosecutors prosecute vary dramatically across the country. Interestingly enough, according to one study I read, the place in the country with the lowest use among major cities was Saskatoon, where the police are also most likely to charge people; there is the most aggressive enforcement. Vancouver and Halifax were at the other end of the spectrum, both for youth who report usage and also for charge rates. There are different things that may be at play, but the government needs to think about this. Where the law is more strictly enforced in Canada, marijuana is less likely to be used. That would fit with the information that we get from the Uruguay-Washington-Colorado studies. Therefore, I would urge the government to look at this, because the very practical reality is that in some places in Canada it is almost legalized now. That is how slack the charge rate is.

Another thing that was noted in particular in the study paid for by the French institute of higher security was that marijuana poisonings have gone up in all of these jurisdictions. That is not something any Canadian politician wants to see happen. That is a problem across the board.

• (1705)

As I was getting ready for this, I found a report produced in October of this year on the situation in Colorado since it legalized marijuana. This is very fresh data. This report was produced literally

a few weeks ago. For any members who are interested, I will try to have this posted on my website or on my Facebook page by Monday or Tuesday of next week.

The study pointed out that in 2006, Colorado was 14th among young people for usage of marijuana in the whole United States of America. In 2015, it was number one. It went from someplace above average to high, to being the place where marijuana was most used. In fact, Colorado currently has 55% higher than the national average marijuana, cannabis usage among young people. It found the same thing among adults. Colorado has about 124% higher usage rate of marijuana in general than the national average across the United States.

People who may be watching this might be thinking that they will use marijuana, that this will not cause them a problem, that this is not a stress for them. They may think their kids will not use it, or they hope they will not use it. However, let look at these statistics again.

Marijuana-related traffic deaths, when a driver was tested positive for marijuana, doubled from 55 deaths 2013 to 125 deaths in 2016. Marijuana-related traffic deaths increased 66% in the four year average, 2013 to 2016, since Colorado legalized it. During the same period, all traffic deaths only increased 16%.

When we take out the marijuana-related traffic deaths, the roadway is as safe or getting safer. However, marijuana is making it more dangerous to drive in the state of Colorado.

Youth usage has gone up in Colorado, and it was a high-usage state already. We are not comparing someplace where there was almost no marijuana. Colorado was in the top quarter, or third, of U. S. usage among youth, and it continued to go up after the legalization.

College age usage increased 16%. College-age students usage, second in the United States usage, was in eighth position in 2005-06.

Emergency department and hospitalization marijuana admissions was up from 6,300 in 2011 to 6,700 in 2012, and to 11,400 in 2014, and was on track to blow past that number in 2015.

In literally every measure we look at it is getting worse. Colorado's health system is getting worse; its driving situation for safety is getting worse; usage by young people is getting worse; usage by adults, the entire population, is getting worse.

The government has also said that it something like what it did with tobacco. Passing this legislation is not that. In fact, we could do the same thing about making marijuana more socially unacceptable, pushing marijuana back in other ways, in the same way governments have on tobacco over the years. We can do that right now. We do not have to legalize to go in that direction. In fact, if the government dropped this bill and went in that direction, I think it would find widespread public support.

Marijuana exposure has gone up. There are still criminal issues and all sorts of problems going on in Colorado.

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I want to point to two final things. The other week I was at a family funeral in Saskatchewan. My uncle had passed away. I was visiting with a relative, who is a member of the Edmonton city police force. I asked him how many Edmonton city police officers wanted to have legalized marijuana. He said, “Us guys on the streets, absolutely none.” That tells us what the people on the front lines are thinking.

• (1710)

Finally, if we are to deal with drug problems in Canada, we have to deal with them in a broad-based culture, not just in Parliament but across the country. We need to do this not just now, but in perpetuity.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about unintended consequences. I am interested to hear his comments on Canadians who go to the U.S. I bring that up because one of my constituents, a good friend of mine, went to Las Vegas. I know he does not have anything to do with drugs or marijuana. He smelled something strange in his hotel room. When he went to the airport, the sniffer dogs found traces of marijuana on him. He was pulled aside and embarrassed, while the dogs went through his bags. He was being accused of something he did not do.

Could my hon. colleague comment on other actions that may happen?

• (1715)

Mr. Brad Trost: This is a perfect question, Madam Speaker. When I talked to my family member on the Edmonton police force, he said that one of the strange things that politicians would not get was that marijuana was a drug that had a strong smell. Once it was legalized, drug dealers would have little pouches of pot on them, hoping the smell would cover up the other drugs they might be dealing. He said that the legalization of marijuana would make it harder for him, as an Edmonton city police officer, to enforce actions against other illegal drugs.

These issues are going to continue to pop up. The government has not thought this legislation through.

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to discuss some of the comments about Colorado. *The Washington Post* recently contained an article by the Drug Policy Alliance. It said a couple of things. One was that the statistics in Colorado of individuals who said that usage had increased were simply not true on a couple of bases: first, those numbers were already way up above the national average before legalization ever occurred; and second, the effect on teenagers was, in fact, unchanged, that it had not come down and it had not gone up. Traffic fatalities were the same, but arrests and police resources were way down.

I hope the member would agree with me. What we did on tobacco with respect to investing in de-normalization, explaining to young people the dangers of the drug, pulling it from the shade into the open, making those types of measures and the success we saw with tobacco, mean we could have the kind of prevalence rates we enjoy with tobacco, which are under 10%. They could be lower, they could be better. However, (a) we cannot misrepresent what happens in

Colorado, and (b) there are some good examples we could follow to make things work.

Mr. Brad Trost: Madam Speaker, we can deal with marijuana the same way as tobacco without legalizing it.

In response to the hon. member, his statistics are wrong. He is citing statistics from only one year after legalization, when there was a very modest dip, but not the last three or four years when rates across the board went up. The other thing the hon. member did not note, and may not be aware of, is that Colorado had large-scale commercialization due to incredible liberalization of the medical marijuana industry. If we look at when Colorado was essentially similar to other states, when it had de facto commercialization to when it had whole legalization, we see almost a straight line going up in usage rates.

The hon. member is actually incorrect. I would urge him to table the article in *The Washington Post* in the House. I will happily table my studies in the next few days. Mine is updated from October 2017, the 127 page report. I will email it to the member next week.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): My question, Madam Speaker, is about an aspect of Colorado policy, which I think is very good and is not present in Bill C-45. In Colorado, individual municipalities and counties can decide whether to allow marijuana sales. Some have allowed it; some have not. There is no availability of this kind of local option in Canada. Could my hon. colleague comment on that distinction?

Mr. Brad Trost: Madam Speaker, something like that would be useful, particularly as this issue was brought up to me by an aboriginal chief from northern Saskatchewan, who said they had enough problems with alcohol and the legalization of marijuana would cause more issues for them. He wishes he had the power to deal with it in his communities. This is a disaster for many remote communities that deal with severe social problems.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to the proposed legislation on marijuana.

This is nothing more than the Liberals raising taxes once again. I have been spending quite a while trying to figure out what drives the Liberals. I have come to the conclusion that it is how to raise taxes on all Canadians.

This legislation makes no sense. There is no coherent message to it whatsoever. The Liberals say that they want to keep marijuana out of the hands of children and, at the same time, they will legalize it. If we look at it through the lens of raising taxes, it starts to make some sense. This bill is all about that.

The Liberals have this figured out that if they legalize marijuana, there is perhaps a tax windfall, although not a great tax windfall. The Liberals do not go after the big fish. They go after people who have small tax credits, and things like that.

I do not think this will raise a whole bunch of money for the national coffers, but it will raise a little cash from legalizing marijuana, and therefore taxing it. The bill is all about that.

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People may wonder why the Liberals need to raise taxes. They need to raise them so they can give it to their friends around the world. They have given nearly half a billion dollars to an infrastructure bank in Asia. In turn, that bank will use some of that money to build pipelines in Asia. We cannot even get pipelines built in this country. However, we are giving money to infrastructure banks across the world and they are building pipelines with that money.

This Liberal government is completely out of touch with the needs of Canadians, and this bill is nothing more than that.

What else are the Liberals doing with this money? They are bailing out Bombardier. I sent out a ten percenter to my riding, asking if anybody was in favour of the Liberals bailing out Bombardier. Believe it or not, nobody sent it back to me saying he or she was totally happy with the Bombardier bailout, that this was amazing work.

Bombardier is being sold to Airbus, a company out of France. Will Bombardier repay the taxpayer? Will it make them whole? No. Do the Liberals have a balanced budget issue? Yes. How will they raise the money? One of the ways they will raise it is through taxing marijuana.

As I said, this bill is nothing more than a way to raise some tax money. The government has been spending it on infrastructure banks in Asia and on Bombardier.

When I questioned the innovation minister on why the taxpayer would not be made whole with the deal between Airbus and Bombardier, he said that I did not stand up our aerospace industry. However, I do stand up for the aerospace industry in Canada and I am very proud of it. In fact, one of the greatest airplanes ever produced in the world would be the Avro Arrow, and that came from Canada. I am very proud of that fact.

What I am not proud of is the way the Liberals have treated the oil industry. The Liberals have never once stood up for the oil industry. They went to Calgary to announce an innovation cluster. We would have expected they had gone there to announce the innovation cluster for the oil industry or the energy sector, which is one of the most innovative sectors in our economy, but no. It was for agriculture. Agriculture in Calgary is completely out of touch.

What else do the Liberals need the money for? Members may have seen a \$5 million skating rink on the front lawn. A hockey rink or a skating rink is quintessential Canadian and I grant that. However, I believe that within spitting distance of this very fancy hockey rink being built on Parliament Hill is the longest skating rink in the whole world. It is called the canal. That is the kind of thing the Liberals need to raise money for with the increase in taxes.

How do we know the Liberal government needs money so badly? I do not think putting a tax on marijuana is going to raise a great deal of money, particularly because I do not think the method the government is using to introduce it will stave off the black mark.

• (1720)

We already have a lot of contraband products when it comes to cigarettes. I do not see the difference here. I am not sure that when we get the government involved in regulating the prices, it will get

the price perfect, and we will see the black market disappear. I am not convinced of that at all. Therefore, I do not see that there would be a great windfall.

The Liberals do not have a particular philosophy on how they raise taxes. They just think they can raise taxes wherever they can get it. We have seen this with the cancellation of the tax credit for folks with diabetes. Eighty per cent of the people who were formerly approved for the type 1 diabetes tax credit have now been taken off that list. It was not a great deal of money, but it was for those particular individuals. We can see the Liberals are not worried about raising taxes on everyday Canadians.

When we look at legalizing marijuana in order to tax it, suddenly it all makes sense. This is not about legalizing marijuana, or keeping it out of the hands of kids. It is not about making our country a safer place. This is about raising some tax dollars. As we look at it, we see the legalizing of marijuana is going to have some very detrimental effects. Granted, we may raise some money. I will give them that, but we will see increased traffic fatalities. We have seen this in other jurisdictions that have brought this on. Colorado, for example, has seen a 40% increase in traffic deaths in its jurisdiction since it legalized marijuana. In Canada, we have about 1,000 impaired driving fatalities in the country every year. A 40% increase is another 400 deaths. I do not know how we can justify legalizing marijuana when we know it is going to cause deaths across the country.

Not only that, we always get the comparisons with alcohol and smoking. They say those things are legal, why can marijuana not be legal. First, there is not really a direct connection with either of those other products. Neither of those other products permanently alter one's mind. Marijuana does permanently alter one's mind. I speak at schools, and the marijuana issue comes up. I always say that that is the number one thing. If someone smokes marijuana, there is a significant likelihood of them not graduating from high school; I am not sure exactly what the number is. I tell them that all the time.

Also folks who smoke marijuana have double the rate of psychosis. It doubles the rate of schizophrenia. Someone who is susceptible to schizophrenia and smokes marijuana is twice as susceptible to schizophrenia.

I do not understand this at all. The Liberals say they want to keep it out of the hands of children. To tell children that we are now legalizing it and then at the same time tell them we do not want them to use it, those two messages cancel each other out or even encourage marijuana use. It has nothing to do with the age limits they put on this stuff. I think that is left to the provinces, but they have definitely not put in an age limit. We hear everyone saying after 25 it may not affect your brain, but before 25, marijuana definitely affects one's brain in very detrimental ways.

I can come to no other conclusion than this particular bill to bring in legalization of marijuana has nothing to do with keeping our country safer, has nothing to do with keeping marijuana out of the hands of children, and has everything to do with raising a tiny amount of taxes.

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• (1725)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was quite interesting to listen to my hon. friend on the other side. On one hand he said this is not going to raise a lot of money, but on the other hand he talked about the Asian infrastructure bank, Bombardier, Airbus, the oil industry, agriculture, and a hockey rink. He did not even mention some of the negative aspects of cannabis consumption. Does he think the option of not doing anything is the only option, like the Conservatives did in their 10 years? Does he not recognize that a judicious use of legislation and education is required to protect our youth from the negative aspects of cannabis consumption? I would like him to speak about that.

• (1730)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, that is it precisely.

If we were going to build legislation to reduce the level of consumption by youth, we could do just that. In fact, over the last 10 years, we had a successful track record of reducing the consumption of marijuana by youth. For the age group of 15 to 25, the rate of use went down from 34% to 24%. We had a system that was working. We were reducing the rate of consumption.

Could we have done more? Definitely, and we could do more. I would be all in favour of having a national strategy for reducing consumption of marijuana. However, I am not in favour of the bill before us whatsoever.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the goals of the bill, the government tells us, is to try and keep marijuana out of the hands of young people. The Liberals also tell us that they want to keep marijuana sales out of the hands of organized crime.

I had the chance to ask the justice minister that question. As someone who is not opposed to the legalization of marijuana, I did say, nevertheless, that the only way we can keep marijuana distribution out of the hands of organized crime is to undercut the price that organized crime is selling it at. If we do that, we would be lowering the price for all those who buy it, including young people. However, if the government tries to make direct sales to young people unlawful, presumably that would open up the space for organized crime.

I have not seen the Liberals square the circle on this particular policy point, and I wonder if my colleague could shed some light on this issue.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the government is doing. Pardon the pun, it is sucking and blowing on this particular bill, because there is no way to square that circle. We cannot undercut the black market and keep it out of the hands of children at the same time. The government has no concept of how economics work. Therefore, with the bill before us, it is “a pie in the sky, just trust us on this”, and that is exactly what the government is asking us to do with the bill. Therefore, I will not be supporting it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member has drawn the conclusion that he will not support this proposed legislation. This is legislation that was campaigned on in the last federal election, and the government got a very strong mandate. I think that Canadians as

a whole want to see cannabis and marijuana dealt with in a very progressive fashion, and we have a bill that would really make a difference.

In terms of the criminal element, and the number of young people, this is good-news legislation. I would suggest to my Conservative colleagues across the way that they might want to reconsider their position on this proposed legislation. I believe society will be in a better place if we have a regime where there is strong regulation and the ability to keep more cannabis and marijuana out of the hands of children. We know that, here in Canada, we have the highest percentage per capita of children using cannabis of any country in the world.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a bill that is nothing like what the Liberals ran on in the federal election. In addition to that, the strong mandate that the member talked about is 39% of Canadians in support. It is not the majority of Canadians who have supported them. If the member is so adamant about the Liberals' position that they ran on in the election, they would have come up with a much more coherent bill.

The bill before us tries to say two opposite things at the same time. I do not know what to say on it anymore. The entire point of my speech was that the bill is nothing more than wanting to raise taxes off the legalization of marijuana. When we look at it through that lens, suddenly the bill might make a little sense.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-45.

Before I start my comments on Bill C-45, let me take a minute to reflect on the upcoming weekend and the remembrance services that many of us in this room will be attending this coming weekend, and to thank our veterans for the freedoms that we enjoy. Last weekend, I had the privilege of attending a number of remembrance services in New Dundee, New Hamburg, Linwood, and Elmira. This coming weekend, I will be in New Hamburg, Waterloo, Kitchener, and Elmira again. Let us just think of the sacrifice that our veterans have made, and thank our legions for the great work that they do in not only supporting our veterans but also in helping us never to forget. I want to highlight that before I get into my remarks on Bill C-45.

There are a number of really important issues that are dealt with in this chamber on a daily basis. Over the last number of weeks, we have discussed a number of them, from rising debt to taxation, supposedly fair taxation, the economy, the deficit that is growing every day, and the amazing excessive interest we will be paying on that over the next four years of \$33 billion per year. All of these things are important. However, in relation to the topic before us today, really they are of minor significance. This topic we are discussing today will have a life-changing impact not only on our youth and our citizens but on the very nation of Canada. I think it is important that we think clearly and soberly about the changes we are making, especially as it relates to three areas.

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I first want to refer to our youth. That has been referred to many times today, the health, safety, and well-being of our children and our grandchildren, the safety of all Canadians on the roads, and the social risks that are involved in our communities with complaints and issues that will arise between neighbours.

However, let me first refer to our youth.

In question period today, my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska, and I just happened to catch it, made this great statement that the decisions we make reveal the values we hold. How much do we, as members of Parliament, in this room value the youth of Canada? That is a question that we need to ask. I believe youth are a sacred trust that every one of us in this room has an obligation to guard seriously. We cannot take this obligation lightly.

The Liberals claim repeatedly that the purpose of this legislation is to protect our young people and to increase public safety. How can we keep this drug out of the hands of our youth when we are actually allowing four plants per household? How can we say we are keeping it out of the hands of our youth when we are allowing 12-year-olds to have up to five grams in their possession? We often hear of people being polled about whether they favour the legalization of marijuana, and the polls are all over the place, but it is somewhere around 50:50 or 60:40. However, I am convinced that if we were to give the details of what this bill entails with respect to the availability of four plants per household and up to five grams for 12-year-olds, we would get a much different answer.

The Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Psychiatric Association have both stated that Canadians who consume marijuana recreationally under the age of 25 have a higher risk of developing mental illness, such as depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. We can all probably tell some anecdotal stories of family members or neighbours who have been derailed by the early use of marijuana.

The Canadian Psychiatric Association says:

Regular cannabis use in youth and young adults can affect aspects of cognition... attention, memory, processing speed, visuospatial functioning and overall intelligence. Worse performance is related to earlier adolescent onset of use.

I do not know how much earlier an onset one could get than offering this availability to a 12-year-old. Therefore, parents and grandparents are very concerned about the direction in which this bill is going.

Dr. Diane Kelsall in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* wrote, “Most of us know a young person whose life was derailed because of marijuana use. Bill C-45 is unlikely to prevent such tragedies from occurring—and, conversely, may make them more frequent.”

There are far too many young people who have already been derailed. These are not just opinions, these are medical and psychiatric experts, and it is important that we listen to them.

● (1735)

I want to use the bulk of my time today to listen to one of the youth of Canada, who is concerned that this legislation and the actions we approve here in this House would, or could, in fact derail young people. She does not want to be one of those derailed, and she

does not want her friends to be derailed. This young person is my granddaughter who wrote this two years ago, in November 2015, when she was 15 years old. She wrote:

Marijuana, the dangerous substance that damages our lungs, brain, educational value and social activity is the substance the government of Canada is trying to legalize. Claims say that legalization will erode the black market but in reality, legalizing marijuana will give people easier access to the drug. Recently I heard the testimony of a man who at age 14 was heading to Toronto for 420 with one hundred dollars worth of Marijuana. The fact that ten years ago a 14 year old boy who had no job and no car was able to get his hands on one hundred dollars worth of weed blows my mind. Can you imagine how easy it would be for someone to get marijuana now, especially if it were to become legal? Easier access to Marijuana will have many negative effects for Canada such as major health damage, ruining our educational system, our workplace and our society. The future of Canada rests in the hands of our generation, there is no way marijuana will be a positive tool in that regard....

With long term and short term effects the list of things that marijuana does to damage your health is endless. Short term effects include impaired memory, impaired body movement, changes in mood, hallucinations, paranoia, difficulty thinking and problem solving. Along with temporary damage Marijuana proves to once again be a dangerous substance having a long lasting effect on your brain and mental health. A study showed that people who started heavily smoking marijuana in their teens lost an average of eight IQ points between ages of 13 and 38. Even after quitting as an adult the lost mental abilities did not fully return. There are many different ways to consume Marijuana but no matter which way, it is harmful. Marijuana smoke contains the same tar and chemicals that are found in tobacco smoke which will lead to the inflammation of bronchitis. The drug harms cells lining and respiratory tract leading to precancerous changes that are associated with lung, head and neck cancer. Marijuana also stimulates your heart rate and blood pressure which can increase the risk of heart attack among individuals. I have named only a few of the health risks that occur when marijuana is consumed however, I hope that this is enough to strongly discourage you from believing the legalization of medical marijuana will in fact be a positive thing in any way shape or form.

She went on:

The damage of marijuana does not end with your health, the drugs negative effect leads into your educational life as well. A review of 48 different relevant studies all found that marijuana use is associated with reduced chances of graduating. A recent analysis of data from studies in Australia and New Zealand found that youth who have used marijuana regularly were significantly less likely to finish highschool and obtain a degree than their non-using peers. Marijuana is encouraging lazy work habits and a 'don't care' attitude, leading students down the path of becoming a high school dropout. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports that while under the influence of marijuana the still developing brain will have difficulty retaining memories, when related back to school this can seriously affect your learning skills as a student. “Falling behind in school is par for the course when marijuana use is a factor. It's not an issue solely based on loss of memory; they also report that psychological skills are reduced among students as well, decreasing their ability to sustain their self-confidence and remain focused on achieving academic and other goals”—NIDA. Even though marijuana is an illegal drug it has not stopped teens and students from buying and using the drug, what is to happen now if marijuana becomes legal? By legalizing this drug we are practically encouraging students to go out and get high, ruining their high school career and affecting whatever may lay beyond that....

Believe me when I say that marijuana not only negatively affects your health, your education but your social and work life as well. Studies show specific links between the use of marijuana and the workplace such as increased risk of injuries and accidents. One study among postal workers found that employees who tested positive for marijuana on a urine drug test had 55 percent more industrial accidents, 85 percent more injuries, and 75 percent greater absence compared with those who tested negative for marijuana. After all of the papers you wrote, tests you studied for and emotional trials you went through over the minimum of 16 years of schooling, is it really worth it to throw that all away for the temporary high of marijuana?

...Before make the decision to legalize this dangerous substance lets first think of all of the health risks caused by this drug, the negative effect that it would have on our educational system and how different and harmful the workplace and our economy would be with marijuana easily accessible and legal.

I have so much more to share.

● (1740)

Let me finish with some comments by Dr. Diane Kelsall, director of the Canadian Medical Association, in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. She says, “If Parliament truly cares about the public health and safety of Canadians, especially our youth, this bill will not pass.”

I hope my colleagues will listen.

● (1745)

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 believe my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga is sincerely concerned and I want to address some of those concerns so I might perhaps ease his mind.

My colleague has said, as did many of his colleagues earlier, that this legislation authorizes 12-year-olds to possess cannabis. That in fact is misleading, and it is really important for every member of the House to understand exactly how this law will be applied.

One of the harms that we are attempting to reduce in this legislation is the criminalization of kids. We do not believe the best way to protect our kids is to put them in jail, so under this legislation possession of over five grams will remain a criminal offence, but for amounts less than that, young persons aged 12 to the age of majority will be subject to an absolute prohibition on the possession, purchase, and consumption of this substance under provincial regulation.

We have worked with all of the provinces, and those who have already announced their regulatory regimes have made it very clear that they will enforce a prohibition. A young person between the ages of 12 and 18 or 19, depending on the provincial decision on what the age would be, would be subject to an absolute prohibition enforceable by a provincial offences ticket. The police could seize the drug. The police can charge the youth, not under the criminal law, but under a provincial statute. That is precisely how we deal with alcohol in each of our provinces and territories. This actually reduces a significant harm.

I hope this information might assist the member by addressing the concerns he has raised.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, the member said anything above five grams would be a criminal offence. The bill does not indicate that anything above five grams for those 18-years-old and beyond would not be a criminal offence. My concern remains.

When we give a message to youth aged 12 to 18 there will be no prohibition for being in possession of up to five grams of marijuana, and in addition give homeowners the ability to grow up to four plants within each household, we have a recipe for easy access for youth, and not one that would keep this drug out of their hands.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for sharing what young people are actually saying

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about this legislation. I have heard the same thing. My youth group also told me that this is a bad idea.

I would like him to address two important things that the Liberals keep repeating over and over again that I find very misleading. They have said the reason they are doing this is to keep it out of the hands of kids and organized crime. Everyone in the House would agree that that is a great thing to do, but this legislation would not do it. The Liberals are trying to push a message out, but I find it is really misleading and, in a way, very deceitful.

Could my colleague please address why the bill would not keep it out of the hands of kids and not keep the profits out of the hands of organized crime? We know it will not do that.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, the deceitful aspect of the bill is very similar to what the Liberals are doing on the taxation front. They say they are going to tax the wealthy and put those dollars into the hands of the middle class, when in fact in the last couple of weeks we have seen exactly the opposite. Those who are wealthy and well-connected have been left totally alone, with not a cent increase in their taxation, while those in the middle class who are working hard, including farmers and small business owners, are being accused by the Liberals as tax cheats.

To imply that this legislation would keep drugs out of the hands of youth is certainly not accurate when we see that kids aged 12 to 18 will be able to have five grams in their possession. This is not the way to go.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member mention the negative aspects of cannabis consumption, but he did not mention any solution. He did not offer anything.

The fact is that five or ten years ago when his party was in government, it did nothing. He would know their solution was often nothing. At least our government is taking steps to legislate and to invest in education. We are investing \$46 million in public education and awareness. We are also investing \$274 million to support law enforcement and border officials.

I request the member to address these issues also.

● (1750)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative position is not to go down this very dangerous road. We have heard many times today about the Colorado experiment and what that state is doing. I do not have the very latest report, but I do have this one dated September 2016 showing some of the negative impacts. Marijuana-related traffic deaths have increased 48% in over three years on average, from 2103 to 2015. Before that period, the increase was only 11%.

I would ask for unanimous consent to table this document or, better yet, the updated one from 2017 to allow my Liberal colleagues to see the negative results in jurisdictions that have authorized the recreational use of marijuana. The statistics are alarming. For my colleagues not even to want to look at this, I find unconscionable. We have an obligation in the House to stand up for the protection of the youth of our country, and I hope we will do that.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: Just to be clear, is the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga requesting unanimous consent to table this report?

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Absolutely.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to speak in the House in regard to Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other acts.

I am trying to think of an appropriate word to use that the people across the aisle would possibly accept and understand. The bill is harmful to young people. It is harmful to our society. It is poorly thought out. It is extremely rushed, and as a result, it is very dangerous legislation for us to be putting forward in Canada.

The Liberals claim that it will protect the health of young persons. That is one of their virtuous goals in putting this forward. Medical professionals have talked about mental health issues, including addiction, and the impact on the developing brain. Data shows that 30% to 40% of young people under the age of 25 who use cannabis will develop psychotic disorders, depression, or anxiety disorders. This is information from professionals, as my colleague was trying to present to the House to enable the Liberal Party to read and possibly discern that there are dangers in what they are suggesting they legalize in Canada.

The Liberals also talk about restricting access by young people. I have never heard a more confusing argument: trying to restrict the use of a dangerous substance by legalizing it and actually making it more available to young people. We know that the bill would allow young people between the ages of 12 and 18 to possess five grams at any one time. This would not say to young people that this is not something they should do. It would say it is okay for them to have this. Maybe it is because they do not want them to have a criminal record. It is irrational to say we do not want them to have a criminal record, so they can take and hold this much. It is not right, because it would encourage them to consider this.

In grade seven, I was part of a debate team. Our class was given this topic: grade seven students are juvenile and immature. Of course, we wanted to debate against that, because we were in grade seven, and we were not juvenile and not immature. My teacher told us to debate the other side, and somehow he convinced us to do that. We won that debate, because grade seven students are juvenile and immature. They are not grown up yet. They are formulating what their values are, and here we are with a government that is saying to them to go ahead and have five grams in their possession at any one time. It does not take long to realize that it would be a risk to them on many levels, besides their trying to process it with their own moral values. They could be coerced to carry it for others, possibly parents, or possibly older teens in the family who want more available. They could carry it for their siblings or their parents or a friend.

These young people also could be very much drawn into the black market to be handlers. I think especially of youth at risk. We like to

think that this is not going to impact them in any way, but it will, because they are already at risk. They are vulnerable, and they are an easy target for people who are immoral and dishonest and will teach them behaviours that are not right and will draw them into a life of crime. There is also the opportunity to simply sell it personally and make money on something the government is saying they can have in their possession. Finally, there is the potential for them to say that they can have this, so why not just try it.

• (1755)

All these reasons totally negate this irrational argument that somehow, by legalizing this and making it available to children aged 12 to 18, it would restrict access. I have never heard a more disjointed, inaccurate, and inconceivable argument put forward. The government also said that it wants to protect young people from the inducement to use. Well, I have already said that just by putting the bill forward in this way, it is actually encouraging young people to consider using.

Another member on the other side of the House came back with the argument, on the question of youth having it in their possession, that it is the parents' responsibility. It is just like any other thing in the house they might have. The parents are responsible. On one level, I totally agree that parents are and should be responsible, above all other influences, for determining what direction their children should be guided. Parental rights, responsibilities, and privileges in raising children, which are our most precious and valuable resource as a nation, need to be protected. They actually need to be encouraged by government. Government should be supporting Canadian families through legislation. However, here it is working in opposition and challenging parents by telling teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18 that it is okay, and legal, to have five grams of marijuana on their person.

I have worked a lot with teenagers, and I actually survived raising three amazing young adults myself. I have to tell members that at that point in life, the right thing for them to be doing is challenging things around them and trying to determine where their values are in relation to their parents and in what direction they are going to go.

When I tell my children that something is not right, and it is something they are thinking about, but their government turns around and tells them that it is okay and that it is legal, that is not supporting parents. The government is pushing this responsibility on them, just like it is pushing the responsibility on provinces and municipalities. The Liberals created the bill because they made an election promise, and they are having trouble finding one they can keep, so this is the one they will pull it off on.

This is entirely wrong. If youth should not use it, then they should not carry it.

Private Members' Business

The government also uses the argument that it is going to reduce illicit activities in relation to cannabis. In other words, it will somehow shut down the black market with the legal use of marijuana. We know how well that is working with contraband cigarettes.

I know from conversations with people I have helped in 10-step programs that there are rehab centres where black market drug dealers go to get healed. While there, they develop relationships with people they then meet on the outside, and they help them to become part of the process. This is not going to shut down the black market. It is money driven, it is greed driven, and it has nothing to do with caring for our society. The government is playing into its hands.

Canadians are very concerned all over this country. They are concerned about the workplace, law enforcement people, and our children, and they do not know what to do. They are throwing up their hands and asking how the government can do this.

Well, I have a few words I want to say to Canadians. I am going to post it, actually.

I will tell them that they have been amazing on so many fronts in dealing with issues this government has brought forward over the last two years, and they have made a difference. Opposition parties have a role to play, but we are here to represent Canadians, and as a result of their work and their telling this government what they will and will not accept, electoral reform is not on the table. They did that with their advocacy.

Punitive and unfair tax increases on the middle class, small and medium businesses, and farmers are not going to take place the way they would have if the Liberals had just been allowed to go ahead with their policies. Canadians made the difference.

They shut down the removal of section 176 and are protecting the right to freedom of religion in this country. They caused the Surgeon General to relegate the dangerous anti-malaria drug mefloquine to a drug of last resort, after decades of causing harm to our servicemen and women.

• (1800)

Canadians can do this. They can make a difference. I know that they see this law as irrational, dangerous, and rushed, everything that is not good. Therefore, I encourage them to do what they have done. I know they are exhausted. They should keep going.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville will have five minutes for questions and comments on her remarks when the House next takes up the motion before the House.

It being 6:02 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, within twelve months of the adoption of this motion: (a) the government should follow the example of other Canadian police services and act to save hundreds of lives each year by equipping all RCMP vehicles with automated external defibrillators (AEDs); and (b) the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security should undertake a study to determine the availability of AEDs in first responder vehicles across Canada and make recommendations to the House in that regard while respecting the jurisdiction of other levels of government.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who are here in the House.

It may not be common practice, but I want to dedicate this speech to a friend of mine, Stéphane Campagna, who is alive today because three of his friends reacted quickly and used a cardiac defibrillator to save his life during a hockey game. It is not every day that we have the opportunity to move a motion in the House of Commons, let alone one that can save lives. It is therefore with heartfelt emotion and pride that I rise to speak today on this fundamental and vital issue.

Our job as parliamentarians and elected officials is vitally important at times like these. If the House votes in favour of this motion, all members will be able to proudly say that their work actually helped to save lives. It is very moving to think that we can have such a major impact on the lives of our constituents. It is inspiring to know that our political involvement can lead to such tangible achievements. With that in mind, I invite all my colleagues to set partisanship aside and vote in favour of this motion.

This is definitely something to think about. Unfortunately, many of us have a friend, colleague, or even family member who has gone into cardiac arrest. There are approximately 40,000 sudden cardiac arrests in Canada each year. That is one every 12 minutes. That means that, during my speech, two Canadians will go into cardiac arrest. It is at times like those that every second counts.

For every minute that goes by, the chances of survival for a person who is in cardiac arrest drop by 7% to 10%. The problem is that this sort of thing almost never happens in a hospital. Most often, it happens at home, far from a cardiac defibrillator.

Unfortunately, that is the case for Michel Picard, a resident of Victoriaville. On December 30, 2016, at his home on Allard Road, the street next to where I live, while celebrating the holidays with his family, he collapsed without warning. Michel Picard suffered a life-threatening arrhythmia and someone called 911 immediately. Before the paramedics arrived, Mr. Picard's son-in-law, Steve Houle, courageously administered first aid by starting CPR.

Six minutes later, two paramedics from the Bois-Francs emergency hospital arrived. Fortunately, they had a defibrillator in their vehicle. It took three shocks for Mr. Picard to regain consciousness. Today, he has no remaining effects from his accident, which is nothing short of miraculous. This story that occurred in my region is a testament to the courage of Mr. Picard's loved ones, who acted quickly and did exactly what needed to be done, but also illustrates how important it is for first responders to have a defibrillator in their vehicle.

Private Members' Business

When the heart stops beating, as the seconds and minutes tick by, the patient has no blood or oxygen circulating. Under such conditions, the brain cannot survive for long. As Alain Vadeboncoeur, chief of the emergency department at the Montreal Heart Institute, explains, the brain's very fragile cells need glucose and oxygen, without which brain death is irreversible. In most cases, within 10 minutes of sudden death by cardiac arrest, it is simply too late.

However, a rapidly administered defibrillator shock can stop the arrhythmia and get the heart pumping normally. That is what saved Mr. Picard and thousands of other Canadians. A defibrillator is the only way to get the heart going again. Unfortunately, chances of survival when someone arrives in the emergency room with no pulse are practically nil.

The survival rate of victims of cardiac arrest outside a hospital is under 5%. Defibrillators improve the patient's chance of survival by 75%. This is where we, as parliamentarians, can make a difference. This is where we have the power to take action, to prevent death, to heal people, and to save lives.

● (1805)

By investing in prevention, we could increase the chances of survival for victims of cardiac arrest who are not in a hospital or in a public place where a defibrillator is available.

With cardiac arrests, time is of the essence. Each minute, each second of unconsciousness impacts the chances of survival. In that context, if all emergency vehicles were equipped with a defibrillator, the response time would clearly be shorter, and lives would be saved.

We know that dozens of police departments in Canada already use defibrillators, but gaps remain in the coverage. If all patrol vehicles were equipped with defibrillators, hundreds of lives would be saved each year. This would represent a meaningful, long term investment, and it would cost a pittance given the lives we could save.

In that regard, there is much hope. Results reported by cities, regional county municipalities and provinces who are at the forefront in this domain are very encouraging. First responders who have access to a defibrillator say they observe remarkable results.

The problem is that if some regions are very much at the forefront, others have not yet passed legislation. The coverage is incomplete and yet, no matter where they decided to live and raise their families, every Canadian should have the comfort of knowing that first responders have access to a defibrillator in case of emergency.

This issue is quite important to me. In a previous life, I was the mayor of Victoriaville. My team and I equipped all the vehicles of first responders with defibrillators. We made sure that municipal buildings, arenas, or sports facilities, for example, were equipped with a defibrillator in order to respond quickly to an emergency.

Businesses and institutions also mobilized to equip their buildings. The Sûreté du Québec decided to launch a pilot project to put defibrillators in all its vehicles. Defibrillators are also found at firehalls and are used by our response system. That is what saved the life of Stéphane Campagna. While playing hockey with his friends in Victoriaville, he suffered cardiac arrest at the arena. The arena had a defibrillator, which was donated by business people who had been

proactive even before the municipality had decided to take action. Thanks to this tool and the level-headedness of Marcel Duquette, Jean-François Gagné, and Francis Garneau, Mr. Campagna was revived. The three men who work at Urgence Bois-Francs quickly helped him and were able to save his life because there was a defibrillator on site.

This cannot be overemphasized. This example once again shows how vitally important this device is. It is simple to use. People do not need training to use it, and like Marcel Duquette said, the more defibrillators there are, the more people can work together to save lives. He was one of the three paramedics who saved Stéphane Campagna's life.

That is the mandate that I gave myself when I was mayor. Now Victoriaville and the Arthabaska RCM are among the most proactive municipalities in this regard. It is therefore only natural for me to continue with this personal commitment and share this initiative that I care about with my colleagues.

As a federal MP, I would like to pursue this mission to help Canadians across the country and create more opportunities to do good and save lives. I hope I can count on the support of MPs in meeting this challenge. I therefore propose that we give the government the mandate to look at what is being done elsewhere in the country. I also propose that we give the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security the responsibility of undertaking a study in order to make recommendations to the House on this issue. In short, I am proposing to my colleagues that we legislate so that millions of Canadians know that they have access to this potentially life-changing technology in case of an emergency, should misfortune strike in a place where such equipment is available.

● (1810)

In fact, I challenge my colleagues to act together to save hundreds of lives and make thousands of miracles. I urge the House to adopt the following important motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, within twelve months of the adoption of this motion: (a) the government should follow the example of other Canadian police services and act to save hundreds of lives each year by equipping all RCMP vehicles with automated external defibrillators (AEDs); and (b) the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security should undertake a study to determine the availability of AEDs in first responder vehicles across Canada and make recommendations to the House in that regard while respecting the jurisdiction of other levels of government [municipal, provincial, or federal].

If we all support this motion together, this would help save lives and give first responders the tools they need. All it takes is political courage.

Private Members' Business

In closing, I want to thank all the stakeholders and instigators who did not wait for legislation or even a budget before taking action. I hope that we can all work together, as members of the House of Commons, to ensure that every emergency vehicle is equipped with a defibrillator. Imagine the number of lives that could be saved if all our ambulances, all our fire trucks, all police cruisers, and all first responders in our municipalities were equipped with defibrillators, in addition to our arenas, athletic centres, schools, and commercial buildings. Businesses could also have them in their office buildings, stores, and retail spaces. Imagine the number of families that would be happier.

I sincerely hope that this motion is adopted. I will work very hard on it, in the hope of winning the support of my colleagues across party lines.

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 124, put forward by the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska. It calls on the government to equip RCMP vehicles with automated external defibrillators, or AEDs. It also calls upon the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to conduct a study to determine the availability of AEDs in first responders' vehicles across Canada and make recommendations to the House in that regard, while respecting the jurisdiction of other levels of government.

I had the opportunity of being the executive director of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and I want to share the member's enthusiasm for the use of AEDs in our communities. There is no doubt that these devices save lives. If we were to witness a cardiac event occur right now and did nothing, the chance of that life being saved is about 5%. If CPR is utilized in the first couple of minutes, that chance goes up to about 25%. When an AED is used within the first three minutes, it is north of 75%. These numbers are staggering when we start applying them on a nationwide basis.

Clearly, we need to be doing a much better job. On average, our ambient save rate is only at about 7%. When we look at King County, a jurisdiction in the United States that includes Seattle, it often gets as high as 16%. If we could just replicate that save rate across Canada, it would mean three jumbo jets filled with people not crashing, burning, and dying every single year.

For me, I particularly want to thank the member because this issue hit home personally. My partner's father had a heart attack, where an AED, quick thinking, and CPR played a major role in his survival. Too sadly, we hear of these cases all over the place. Most sadly, we hear it in the case when an AED is not available and, unfortunately, a life is unnecessarily lost.

There is strong and compelling evidence—

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Is this questions and comments, or is this a speech?

The Deputy Speaker: I was just about to interrupt. I appreciate the intervention on the part of the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

I note we are under questions and comments, hon. parliamentary secretary. We are about two minutes in. We usually give a little bit of latitude, but if he could get to his question, we will carry on.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the long preamble. I included it because, before I got into my more generalized comments, I wanted to express how important this issue is. Given that, how does the member believe we can work with other jurisdictions to be able to get at the challenges of being able to see these devices not only being present but also being used by the general population?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for sharing his experience. My heart goes out to him. As I said, I myself went through a similar experience with a friend, and to make matters worse, the way I found out was by seeing it on the news.

The first thing we could do, following the decision that will be made in this House by all the members, would be to set an example. When I was mayor, I chose not to wait to be asked. I used the power at my disposal to persuade other elected officials to provide the necessary funding.

Since this is a motion, I do not have the financial power to do that in this case. I think that if we move in this direction, we will be sending a positive sign.

If we all wanted to, we could set an example with the RCMP and educate all levels of government, after the committee conducts its study. I do not want to step on the toes of other jurisdictions.

However, by conducting that study and putting in the work, we may learn about suitable programs, as it happened in the past with the installation of AEDs in arenas.

I should mention that many municipalities have first responder training programs. People expect AEDs to come in an ambulance, because they almost all have one. However, sometimes the first unit to arrive at the scene of an accident is a police car, or even a fire truck, if it is closer.

The simple answer to the question is that it is the leadership of this Parliament, by which I mean Parliament as a whole, not just the government, that will make it possible for us to set an example.

• (1820)

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, actually, this is more of a comment.

I wanted to tell my colleague how useful this can be in rural regions. I am an intensive care nurse in the ER. That is my specialty. We often have just two ambulances. When one ambulance is away transferring a patient, we may find ourselves without an available ambulance. Sometimes, because of circumstances beyond our control, police officers have brought patients to me in the ER because we simply did not have an ambulance available to respond.

I just wanted to say how useful this would be for rural Canada.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comment.

She is absolutely right. To estimate the chances of survival for someone having a heart attack, we can take a map of each city, put a dot in the centre, and draw a circle around it. The farther one is from a hospital or an ambulance station, the lower one's chance of survival.

It is therefore obvious that if we have more devices and put them in every emergency vehicle, we will have not only two ambulances able to respond, but also every firefighter and police officer. If municipalities decide to participate, city halls near towns and more rural areas can have the devices too.

Unfortunately, people think these devices are very expensive, but they are not that expensive, especially not compared to the value of a person's life to that person's family.

I hope this bill will make a big difference for people. We have an incredible opportunity here in the House of Commons to take non-partisan action that will do so much to help families across Canada.

[English]

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the opportunity to debate a great number of issues in this House on which there is some division, and occasionally some sparks, but this is an area where, particularly on the overarching principle, there really needs to be a consensus. I say this because the science is very clear that when we put AEDs in communities, when we ensure that people are CPR trained, and ensure that people know how to use AEDs, it saves lives.

Unfortunately, we also know that just calling paramedics alone is not enough. When we pick up the phone and call paramedics, they simply cannot get to the scene of a cardiac event fast enough to save a life, which means that we need this type of initiative that would ensure that all front-line individuals who keep our community safe are CPR trained, know where AEDs are, and perhaps, as the motion indicates, have access to AEDs within their vehicles. We need civilians, people who are not on the front lines, to be engaged in this battle as well, because when a family member goes down, people have to ask themselves if they know what to do. Do they know CPR, which is very simple but essential skill. Do they know where the nearest automated external defibrillator, AED, is? Too often the answer is no.

In workplaces and homes, folks do not know what to do, despite the fact that successive governments, both Conservative federally and the Liberal government in Ontario, have gone to great lengths to place AEDs throughout our communities. It certainly makes a great deal of sense from a public safety perspective to ensure that AEDs are in public places where cardiac arrests are mostly likely occur.

The rest of my comments concern some of the issues that relate specifically to the motion, issues that we can think about as the motion moves forward. Again, I speak from the lens of being generally supportive of it.

We certainly know that the motion calls for the committee to study the availability of AEDs. In this regard, there are certain important

issues that the committee could look at, and that we encourage it to look at, when considering the proposal to equip RCMP vehicles with AEDs. For one thing, as with other medical equipment, provinces and territories are responsible for legislating and regulating public access programs to AEDs, including in public areas and workplaces. For example, some provinces such as British Columbia have guidelines recommending that public AED access programs should be overseen by physicians.

Further, there is no consistent legislative or regulatory framework governing access to or use of AEDs. It is very much viewed as a public or occupational health and safety issue left to local organizations, governments, and employers. It is also important to understand that this proposal would have important provincial, territorial, and municipal implications. As members will know, the RCMP is the police service provider for the territories and every province except Ontario and Quebec, and the vast majority of RCMP vehicles are used for contract policing services.

Under the police services agreements, policing services provided by the RCMP are cost shared with contract jurisdictions. This includes all operating and maintenance costs, such as salaries and equipment purchases. The up-front costs of buying AEDs, as well as the ongoing maintenance required to keep them in good working order, would therefore need to be supported by contract jurisdictions. Therefore, as members can see, there are jurisdictional issues that need to be looked at with respect to this proposal.

We are very supportive of the second part of the motion, which calls on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to examine the availability of AEDs in first-responder vehicles across Canada. Such a study would help us get a complete and up-to-date picture regarding the effectiveness of equipping police vehicles with AEDs. It could examine questions like how often AEDs installed in police cruisers have been used to respond to cardiac arrests. It would also help to ensure that any new policies, standards, or deployments of new equipment to front-line responder vehicles, including those of the RCMP, would be based on evidence about what works best from a health and public safety perspective. It would also be an opportunity to hear from provincial, territorial, and municipal partners to ensure that any new Canada-wide approach takes their needs and views into account.

● (1825)

In conclusion, we support Motion No. 124 in principle. We think the call for study is important, that the results should inform further measures, and that the policies and expenditures put forward do meet the public safety objectives we set forth. That is the point here.

Private Members' Business

We are all in agreement that any measure likely to help more Canadians survive cardiac arrest and save lives is very much worth pursuing. In that vein, I want to thank the hon. member opposite for bringing forward this motion. I think it is incredibly important, not only from my perspective in government but also personally. I look forward to working on it with him.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it really is a pleasure for me to speak to a motion like this one, because this was part of my daily life for many years for one simple reason: I am a nurse who worked primarily in acute and emergency care in a small, rural hospital. Every day, we had to face the reality that someone could suffer a cardiac arrest at any time, and sometimes they were 45 minutes away from the hospital. There are only two ambulances serving the entire RCM, which is about 100 kilometres across. It can sometimes take a very long time even for emergency responders to arrive.

Defibrillation does not really happen the way it looks in the movies, where the patient arrives at the hospital, we put the paddles on him and defibrillation occurs. For defibrillation to work, electrical currents still have to be going through the heart. If the patient flatlines, it is too late; nothing can be done and defibrillation will not work. That is why, if we want defibrillation to be effective, it must happen quickly, before the electrical currents in the heart stop following cardiac arrest.

It is good to have automated external defibrillators that are easy to use, not like those in hospitals that require training. These AEDS will save lives because people do not need much training to be able to use them effectively to reanimate someone. They will also help prevent the brain damage that can occur due to a lack of oxygen, as well as the harmful consequences that go along with that. The more quickly the defibrillator is used, the greater the chances of reanimation and the less severe the after-effects of the cardiac arrest and lack of oxygen.

This will have an impact on the number of lives saved and will reduce the severity of the consequences of a cardiac arrest. That is extremely important.

The motion refers to RCMP vehicles. Given that the indigenous police fall under our jurisdiction, I believe that we should also equip all of their vehicles with automated external defibrillators, particularly when we consider the fact that indigenous communities are often located in areas that are far from hospitals. For example, in my riding, the Long Point First Nation community is about 45 minutes from the hospital, when a person is driving fast. When weather conditions are not ideal, if there is a snowstorm, for example, it can easily take an hour and a half to get there.

I am certain that my colleague will agree with me that this should be extended to all emergency vehicles used by indigenous police and in all indigenous community gathering places, even though they are not mentioned in the motion. We could ensure that arenas, sports facilities, and all indigenous communities are also equipped with these defibrillators. I hope that the message will be passed on to the Minister of Indigenous Services so she can establish a strategy in that regard.

With respect to automated external defibrillators, it is important that they be available, but we must also discuss training for users. We must ensure that people know how to use them and where they are located. That makes a big difference because if the person has to look for the defibrillator, it will take longer. Members cannot answer me because this is not a question and comment period, but I am curious about how many people know exactly where the automated external defibrillator is located in the Parliament buildings. Does anyone here know? I am not so sure.

It is also very important for a communications plan to be put in place when automated external defibrillators are purchased so that everyone in the community can locate them quickly. Sometimes we believe that we have to know CPR and be very knowledgeable to save a life.

● (1830)

Just by knowing where an AED is located, people can help save a life by giving the device to someone who knows how to use it in under a minute. When a heart attack happens, the person who knows how to use the AED is often also the one who administers first aid to the victim. The first aider will start performing CPR and other techniques. If this person also has to go looking for an AED, valuable time will be lost. Making sure everyone knows where these devices are located can be highly beneficial.

A few years ago, there was a private foundation that had a program to help small communities buy AEDs. I passed on the information to small communities in my riding, and two AEDs were obtained through this program. I think private foundations that offer AEDs or help small municipalities buy them are extremely important. However, I also think that we need to play a major role in this issue. It is important to respect the jurisdictions of the provinces and other governments, but we can still play a leadership role, especially when we consider that lives are at stake and that this is a relatively simple thing to do. We can find solutions to make these devices more widely available.

I cannot overstate how much this would change things in rural communities like mine. I live in a rather remote area. When I give people my address they often get it wrong and never find their way. In more urgent situations, it might take longer to find my house. However, the local first responders know the area like the back of their hand and do not need an address. Just name the woman who needs help and they will get there in no time. If they are equipped with this device it might make the difference between hugging a friend and going to a funeral.

I sincerely hope that, in studying my colleague's motion, people will be able to set partisanship aside entirely. The motion deserves to be studied in committee because it can help us improve outcomes for Canadians. I also think that knowing that there can be a quick response will change a lot of things when it comes to people's health.

Private Members' Business

Unfortunately, heart attacks rarely occur in ideal circumstances. Most of the time, things do not go so well. I have seen cases where it happened to people who were hunting in the deep woods. That is not an ideal situation. Over the course of my career, only once have I witnessed someone having a heart attack right in the middle of triage. Lucky thing that happened in the ER. In real life, heart attacks do not happen in the ER. They happen in places where, most of the time, having access to an AED can change things for the better.

The majority of ambulances are now equipped with these devices, but considering the allocation of ambulance services in many rural communities, where few ambulances are available and wait times can be long in some cases, emergency response vehicles absolutely need to be equipped with these devices. We must also ensure that the first responders are properly trained in their use.

We can do a lot for people and I hope that we will move forward because it is a matter of life or death for Canadians. I hope that people will have a heart.

• (1835)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking my colleague for introducing this very important motion. I want to thank the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue who just spoke in favour of the motion. I particularly want to thank the parliamentary secretary, the member for Ajax, who I think is indicating that the government side is likely to support the motion. I think he was speaking in his capacity as the parliamentary secretary and therefore on behalf of the government rather than in his capacity as a private member. In either capacity, his support is very much welcome.

I want to talk about how effective defibrillators can be in saving lives and in particular about a numerical demonstration, a statistical demonstration of just how effective installed automatic external defibrillators, AEDs, can be when placed in the trunks of police cars.

First, let us step back a bit. The purpose of an AED is to reduce fatalities from heart attacks, but specifically to reduce fatalities from the kind of heart attack we refer to as a sudden cardiac arrest, which normally starts as what is known as a pulseless ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation. This is a huge issue in terms of the number of lives that are involved in this kind of cardiac crisis.

Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in Canada and in the United States. Out of hospital, sudden cardiac arrest accounts for 50% of cardiovascular disease deaths, so half of the largest cause of mortality in our country. Ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation are, according to one study I was looking at, the source of 85% of all sudden cardiac arrest deaths. The rest of them are caused by trauma, poisoning, pulmonary embolism, drowning, hypothermia, drug overdose, cerebral haemorrhage, and a grab bag of other causes. However, 85% of that 50% of the biggest killer is caused by events that, in principle, could be stopped if a defibrillator were available and applied quickly, along with some other interventions.

In principle, AEDs can be used to save many lives. Let us be clear. It is all about how fast one gets to the person. I want to cite an academic paper published in 2009, in which the author states:

...every patient with a witnessed ventricular fibrillation cardiac arrest should survive. If the patient does not survive, the goal is to determine why.

The paper said “every patient”. In principle, there should be a 100% save rate. As I say, it is all about the speed with which one is able to intervene, and to make that point, I want to call upon and describe the American Heart Association's chain of survival metaphor. The member for Ajax who was involved in the Canadian heart association would be very familiar with this indeed.

The American Heart Association's chain of survival metaphor lists the key ingredients for success: one, rapid access, calling 911 immediately; two, rapid cardiopulmonary resuscitation or CPR; three, rapid defibrillation. A fourth step follows defibrillation: rapid advanced care. Usually that takes place after an ambulance has arrived and continues on in the hospital.

In principle it is 100%. In practice, the highest survival rate we have seen for witnessed cardiac arrests, where someone actually sees when it happens, is 74%. That is the survival rate that takes place in casinos. In casinos, it is a high-stress environment, often with people who are in bad health who are doing a high-stress activity, but they are also always on camera. Casinos typically have defibrillators and trained staff close at hand. In that ideal environment, a 74% success rate has been achieved.

• (1840)

However, as I said, time is of the essence. To make this point, it is worth noting that after 10 minutes, the rate of success drops to less than 10%. Within three minutes, the success rate can be as high as 74%. If someone gets there and starts applying an AED after 10 minutes, there is about a 2% success rate.

This is why the public policy response both here and in the United States is focused intensely on putting AEDs into emergency response vehicles, such as ambulances and fire trucks, of course, to speed up response times when someone witnesses a cardiac arrest and contacts 911. We would like to see these put into police vehicles, in particular RCMP police vehicles.

Private Members' Business

The difference in survival rates in various American cities is based almost entirely on response times. To make this point, I just want to read the different response rates, from a few years ago, in a series of American cities. Detroit was 0%. It could not be literally 0%, but it must be below a 1% survival rate. Chicago is 3%; New York City, 5%; Los Angeles, 7%; the state of Alabama, 8%; Salt Lake City, 8%; Dallas, 10%; Rochester, New York, 10%; Memphis, Tennessee, 12%; Tucson, Arizona, 12%; San Francisco, 15%; Fresno, California, 15%; Houston, 15%; Minneapolis, 20%; Pittsburgh, 22%; Portland, Oregon, 23%; state of Iowa, 23%; Miami 24%; and Milwaukee, 26%. Seattle, Washington, is 46%, based on a combination of good CPR training and the availability of defibrillators where they are needed. In Seattle, they do not regard this as the final destination. I think they are, quite rightly, after 74%, if not the 100% that is available, in principle. We should be too.

Let me tell the House about how faster response times, due to police cruisers having defibrillators, can save lives. I turn here to another study, which tells us that in one case, in Miami, "Response by police averaged about 1.5 minutes faster than that of [emergency medical services] (6.16 versus 7.56 minutes), and the dual-response system", in which both were notified, "reduced overall first-responder time to 4.9 minutes (compared with 7.6 minutes from historical control). This translated to a statistically significant improvement in the percentage of those who survived...ventricular arrhythmias (17.2 percent survival rate...)"

I will skip the other example I was going to give, except to point out that in the other example, the rate in Pittsburgh went from 6% to 14% after police vehicles installed defibrillators.

Now let us talk about Canada. In Canada there are 40,000 sudden cardiac arrests annually, and there are AEDs in police vehicles in many places. They are in Vancouver, Kingston, Laval, Fredericton, Medicine Hat, and even in Smiths Falls, in my riding. Those are defibrillators that were put into police cars, with my assistance, about 12 years ago.

The city of Ottawa has had them longer than almost anywhere else and has excellent statistics, which I want to quote to make the point about how significant the life-saving can be. Every cruiser in the Ottawa Police Service, 145 in total, has a defibrillator in its trunk. In 2012, this resulted in 22 interventions and nine successful saves of heart attack victims. That means they survived for at least two years. In 2013, there were 23 interventions, and eight lives were saved, which is, on average, one life saved for every 17 AEDs annually. That is a 17% save rate, compared to 5% nationally in Canada. It is not as good as Seattle, but it is three times as good as the national average.

AEDs that are purchased in bulk cost about \$1,000 apiece. Training costs are essentially zero, because the cops are already trained. The cost factor of the time to arrive is not a consideration, as they are already first responders.

•(1845)

This means that at one life saved for every 17 AEDs, the 5,600 RCMP cruisers in which these could be installed could result in 300 lives being saved every year. Since AEDs last 10 years, we could save 3,000 lives over the next decade at a cost of \$2,000 per life.

At one point I wanted to promote this by saying, "Life is cheap so let us start saving now." My staff said that might not be the best slogan, but I believe that. Saving lives really is cheap. It has never been cheaper. At \$2,000 a life, we could literally repopulate the House of Commons with people whose lives are saved every year from next year forward, if the motion is passed and we begin to work to fulfill the goals it seeks to promote.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed the discussion this evening. I will take a bit of a different approach in addressing this very important motion. I commend the member across the way for recognizing an issue about which all Canadians would be very concerned.

Let there be no doubt that there is a role for all of us to play. However, what interested me the most was the amount of information provided. Every speaker talked about the percentages and the strong desire to save lives. It did not matter what side of the House they were on, all members chose to rise in their place and address the issue. They talked about how it could really make a difference.

Over the years, I have seen a lot with respect to the impact of medical technology. Many years ago when I was a member of the Manitoba legislature, I was one of the two health critics for the province. I can recall the amount of money we spent in health care, and most people would be quite surprised. Some of my colleagues have also served in provincial legislatures. I was first elected in 1988 as a parliamentarian, and the health care budget back then was roughly just over \$1 billion. Today, I believe it is over \$6 billion and counting. The single greatest expenditure in Manitoba is in health care and there is no end in sight it seems.

What I have experienced first hand through those years is how technology has advanced to a certain point where we can make fairly profound and positive impacts. We can look at how that technology can be used to save lives.

The impact of AEDs is second to no other equipment or machinery that has been introduced over the last number of years. As Canadians become more familiar with the benefits of AEDs, that broader knowledge will drive the demand to see more AEDs installed in different places. The results are compelling. The most compelling argument is in some of the statistics that have been shared by the members.

Private Members' Business

I thought it was interesting when my colleague across the way referred to casinos. The member is right that casinos have all sorts of elements of stress because of their activities. We can call them security cameras, but a great number of individuals are in the background watching. When someone goes into cardiac arrest, those individuals are very quick. I would be surprised if there were not AEDs in all casinos in Canada. Therefore, I was not surprised when the member made reference to the fact that there was, I believe, a 74% or 71% survival rate. That is a fantastic goal to establish how effective it could be if we had a better educated population. When I say population, we need to look at where most cardiac arrests take place, which is in homes, in public places, and at work. Chances are the person who goes into cardiac arrest is known by the individuals there. More often now, when people witness a cardiac arrest, they wonder if an AED is available.

● (1850)

Another speaker talked about timing being critical. We all know that we cannot be quick enough to get access to an AED, from the moment of the arrest to using it to ultimately save a life.

We have witnessed over the last number of years people becoming more educated about it. They understand its benefits. We are starting to see AEDs in many different places, such as workplaces. In some situations AEDs are brought into people's homes. General knowledge on how to use an AED and making these machines accessible are absolutely critical to saving lives. It would be very beneficial.

We have standing committees in Ottawa. I do not think we take as much advantage as we could of good ideas, such as this motion the member has brought forward today.

I can go through both aspects of the motion, but I want to read the second part of it. It reads:

...the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security should undertake a study to determine the availability of AEDs in first responder vehicles across Canada and make recommendations to the House in that regard while respecting the jurisdiction of other levels of government.

If time permits, I will try to deal with the issue of the RCMP and the issue of jurisdiction.

I do want to pick up on the point of the standing committee and whether this would be the only directive that would be given to the committee, or if we could maybe expand it or widen its scope, because this goes beyond RCMP vehicles.

As the member for Ajax pointed out, we might think it is fairly simple to get a defibrillator put into an RCMP cruiser, but it is not. All sorts of people and groups are involved, such as independent contractors and stakeholders. Negotiations are held at different levels. On my own part, I would like to get a better understanding of it.

I would also like to see how we might be able to use the Standing Committee on Health, or any other standing committee for that matter. I am content, however, with what the member has suggested in regard to the health committee. I would love to have one of our standing committees hear the benefits of taking action on such an important file, as a few of us heard this evening.

I do not think there is a legislator in the House of Commons who would not recognize the importance of trying to advance the file on AEDs. There are organizations in Canada, like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, which have done so much work with different stakeholders. These organizations have heard the stories that clearly indicate the need is there.

A standing committee is in the best position to hear the different stakeholders make their presentations. Let us hear the facts. Let us get some of the statistics. Let us hear how the federal government could play a leadership role in this. Let us enable the standing committee to get a better appreciation and understanding of this issue. Let us establish this as a priority.

That is how I see this particular motion by the member across the way. I consider it a priority. We might differ with some of the words and so forth, but at the end of the day, I see this as a positive suggestion on an important issue that we know our constituents would like us to address.

● (1855)

I would like to expand that. I challenge our standing committees to do just that, to look at ways in which we can deliver on such an important issue that will obviously save tens of thousands of lives.

I am thankful for the opportunity to share a few thoughts on this.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, I must inform her that there are three minutes remaining for her speech. The rest of her speaking time will be granted another time.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

● (1900)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska for his motion. I think it is very timely. I find it very interesting that, despite our differences, there should be such a wonderful display of unanimity this evening on the importance of having defibrillators. They save lives.

My father died a long time ago of a heart attack. At the time, there were no such devices that could have maybe saved his life.

When we give speeches, I think it is important to provide real examples, as my colleague did, of people who have experienced these events first-hand.

We heard from a number of members on both sides of the House about this super-important topic. How interesting that we all agree this motion deserves to be studied. We need to adopt it here, in Parliament. It would be one of the first times people see parliamentarians stand together, united in their desire to save lives.

Adjournment Proceedings

It makes quite a difference to see that there is unanimity here, in Ottawa, on a subject that is so far-reaching and so human. What I like about this motion is that it shows the human side of saving lives. It has been quite a while since this issue has come up in the House with any regularity. We often have our differences, but when we make our discussions about the human experience, it results in motions like my colleague's motion.

I hope that the motion will be studied in committee in a non-partisan fashion and that everyone will contribute to the discussion so that it does not become a government or an opposition motion, but everyone's motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix will have seven minutes remaining for her speech when the House next resumes debate on the question.

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

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

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît not being present in the House to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*English*]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 3, I asked the following question in the House:

I rise in the House once again to ask the Minister of Natural Resources about his plans to stop the pine beetle from attacking our [Canadian] forests.

Last year alone, the beetle increased tenfold. Even though science and research has been done, the beetle has moved from Jasper Park into central Alberta and is heading east. All of Canada's pine forests are at risk. We need financial assistance to cull the trees.

What is the Liberal government doing to stop this infestation?

Again, I am going to ask a similar question. When is the Liberal government going to step up to the plate? Last week we received an answer that it was doing science and research. I rise again to say that science and research are not applicable at this time. Why is that? We know all about the pine beetle. Science and research have been done for many years. I was there when the pine beetle was first spotted in western British Columbia in the late 1970s. If proper action had been taken then, and the trees culled or burned, I probably would not be asking the question again today.

Our boreal forests are at risk. What is needed from the minister is financial aid. Even the former Liberal government, in 2005, recognized the problem and gave \$100 million to fight the pine beetle when it was still in British Columbia. Did science and research stop it? No, they did not. Did we stop the pine beetle? No, we did not.

The Government of Alberta has spent over \$85 million to fight the infestation, and that funding helped slow the pine beetle, until this year. This is a drop in the bucket compared to \$9 billion in damages, fighting costs, and loss of production that the fire in Fort McMurray caused, or the untold millions that it cost to fight the B.C. fires this year. Those fires were fed by dead pine forests, due to the pine beetle.

Our previous Conservative government gave \$10 million in 2009 to fight the pine beetle in northwestern Alberta. The Fort McMurray fire last year helped destroy a large amount of the northern pine beetle, but unfortunately, it destroyed a lot more than that. We all saw that on the news.

I remember going to a pine beetle seminar where scientists told me the pine beetles would never get across the Rocky Mountains. They have gone way across.

During adjournment debate on October 26, I once again called on the federal government to assist Alberta in the fight against the mountain pine beetle. Companies like Weyerhaeuser, Millar Western, and West Fraser have spent millions of dollars of their own money to combat the pine beetle.

I have held meetings and round table discussions with park officials, CFS officials, as well as representatives from forestry and local communities. Parks Canada kept telling us it was going to try to cull the trees. Very little was done.

What do we need? The minister of forestry and agriculture for the Province of Alberta told me 10 days ago that they need financial help. We need need financial assistance now to cull the trees. The beetles killed 40,000 trees last year while we were holding them at bay, between the industry and the province, but it has increased tenfold to more than 500,000 this year. The pine beetle is out of control.

Again, what is the Minister of Natural Resources going to do to stop the pine beetle from attacking our forests? We have moved and must move faster than the pine beetle before it is too late for all of Canada.

● (1905)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Yellowhead for his dedication to this important issue affecting the forest sector in his riding and across the country. As an MP from B.C., I empathize. It is a very serious situation.

I would like to reassure him, as our government has last week and the week before when the question has come up in the House, that we are doing everything we possibly can to stop this infestation from spreading.

Adjournment Proceedings

Unfortunately, climate change has made once inhospitable forests and climates more inviting to the mountain pine beetle and other destructive forest pests. Natural dispersal is allowing them to spread with alarming speed, creating a real threat for forest-dependent communities across Canada.

The member for Yellowhead has seen the impact and the extent of the problem in his own riding. Sadly, the situation is not unique to Alberta's pine forests. That is why our government has invested an additional \$87 million in scientific infrastructure upgrades. That includes federal labs conducting research that informs our responses to destructive forest pests, such as the pine beetle.

This new funding is critical to the Canadian forest service, which employs Canada's largest team of scientists devoted to pest management. The forest service is a recognized centre of excellence on pests, and invests \$20 million annually to develop scientific solutions that help forest managers and communities respond to damaging pests by slowing their spread, mitigating their impact, and reducing the risk of infestation in areas not yet affected.

Over the last two years alone, the forest service has spent \$1.3 million supporting mountain pine beetle research. Through these efforts, we have been able to assess the economic and environmental risks associated with these forest pests, particularly under a changing climate, and develop adaptive options for affected communities and industries. All of this is vitally important as we work toward our ultimate goal, which is to contain the pine beetle spread.

We have also assisted in maximizing value from beetle-killed timber, as well as developing new technologies and products. For example, our research has helped the forest sector adapt its practices to use the affected wood in traditional manufacturing mills, as well as alternative product markets, such as panel board manufacturing and wood biomass recovery.

Nor are we doing any of this alone. Yellowhead is a case in point. The Canadian forest service is working closely with industry, provincial government agencies, and Parks Canada to develop science-based responses under the national forest pest strategy. This means developing and implementing co-operative management strategies, informed by science, to mitigate the infestation and spread of mountain pine beetle at the regional level.

The Canadian forest service, the provinces, industry, and our other partners are fully engaged on this. We are all working together to protect the economic value of provincial forests and preserve the ecological integrity of national and provincial parks.

● (1910)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her reply, but I think it is a lot of bull.

Science and technology has not stopped the beetle. If the government is looking for integrity of our parks, it should just take a drive through Jasper Park and look at all the brown, dead trees from the B.C. border through to the Alberta border. Your science and technology could not even stop it within a confined area of the park, and you are saying you are doing a lot.

The government needs to put up some money to help the Province of Alberta fight the pine beetle situation. Your previous government

gave \$100 million. Alberta needs help right now. It cannot afford to do it on its own. Science has not stopped the pine beetle. Actual culling or burning will stop the pine beetle. We are asking you for financial assistance to stop it before it gets further east.

The Deputy Speaker: I would just remind the hon. member to direct speech towards the Chair. We try to avoid using the "you" word in a direct fashion.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, I understand and empathize with the member opposite's frustration with the mountain pine beetle.

It is chewing into a forest sector that employs more than 200,000 Canadians and contributes more than \$23 billion a year to our GDP. In fact, our forest industry provides more jobs, dollar for dollar, than any other resource sector. This is why our government is seized with protecting Canada's forests, and the men and women, and communities that depend upon them.

Through the Canadian forest service, we have some of our country's brightest minds developing innovative solutions for these infestations, including the one devastating western Canada's pine forests. Together, I believe we will meet this challenge.

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to address a question I asked on October 17. In that question, I ask the government to support Alberta, not Alabama.

Things in Alberta are quite dire. Our economy is growing at one of the lowest rates in the country. Our oil patch is under significant distress. The logging industry has significant challenges from all angles, especially when it comes to accessing wood fibre. Our farmers are increasingly struggling to get their crops off in time due to either a really wet year or a dry year, depending in which part of the province they are. We are looking to the federal government for support for Alberta particularly and support for Canada overall.

My question was about Bombardier and the millions of dollars that had been given to it to prop it up. I understand this was due to the fact the Liberals had promised not to expand the airport in Toronto, which therefore did not allow for the sale of the C Series jet to a particular airplane company, which made that C Series jet unprofitable. Therefore, to allow for that promise to be kept, the Liberals had to pay off Bombardier. In turn, that led to a large tariff being placed on the C Series jet, which was to the detriment of Canada overall.

Adjournment Proceedings

Going forward, we now are looking at a situation where in order for the C Series jet to be sold in the United States, it has to be produced in the United States. Airbus has come along and taken a share in Bombardier, which is now leading to Bombardier planes being built in Alabama. My question was why we were supporting Alabama and not Alberta. That was the main gist of it. We know the tax dollars have been put into Bombardier, but the planes will be built in Alabama.

If these airplanes are to be built in Alabama, will Canadian taxpayers be reimbursed for all the money that was put into Bombardier? That is the essence of the question.

When it comes to support for Alberta, we have seen major pipeline projects get cancelled or are no longer approved after they have been approved. Major pipelines that have been approved do not look like they will be built or still have significant hurdles to get past. There does not seem to be any support from the government in Ottawa to get these projects built.

Will the government support Alberta and work hard to get the taxpayer dollars that were spent on Bombardier back so those dollars can be used to support hard-working Albertans who are under duress at this point, hard-working Albertans who work in the oil patch, forestry sector, and in the farming sector? We support the aerospace industry. We are purely looking for similar support for the industries that make Alberta thrive.

•(1915)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague.

This government absolutely believes in Alberta. There are many opportunities and jobs there. We approved three pipelines in Alberta, and that is a very good thing for Albertans.

I am pleased to respond to the comment made by the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock about the recent announcement of a strategic partnership between Bombardier and Airbus.

Canada is one of the largest aerospace manufacturing countries in the world. This industry contributes over \$28 billion to our GDP and accounts for over 200,000 jobs in every part of the country.

[*English*]

As Canada's aerospace anchor firm, Bombardier is responsible for approximately one-third of Canadian aerospace manufacturing GDP, and has been Canada's top manufacturing R and D spender since 2012.

The proposed partnership by Bombardier with Airbus combines innovation with increased market access for a state-of-the-art Canadian plane that is world class. On the surface, we think it is a very positive step. Airbus and Bombardier's proposed partnership presents an opportunity to increase the ability of the C Series to access markets, meaning more production and more jobs right here in Canada, including in Alberta.

I can say further to the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock that any potential investment requires review by the minister of

ISED under the Investment Canada Act to ensure that it will be of overall economic benefit to Canada, and the approval of competition authorities. Our government has been clear from the beginning that any strategic partnership between Bombardier and Airbus would be expected to bring measurable benefits to Canada, and strengthen ties between the Canadian and European aerospace industries.

In reviewing the proposed strategic partnership under the Investment Canada Act, the minister will consider the following factors, among others: the effect on the level of economic activity in Canada, including the utilization of parts and services produced in Canada; the degree and significance of participation by Canadians in the Canadian business; the effect of the investment on productivity, industrial efficiency, technological development, product innovation, and product variety in Canada; the effect of the investment on competition within any industry in Canada; the compatibility of the investment with national industrial, economic, and cultural policies; and, finally, the contribution of the investment to Canada's ability to compete in world markets.

It is through these specific factors that the government will ensure that the proposed strategic partnership between Airbus and Bombardier brings concrete, measurable benefits to Canada and Canadians.

Bombardier is, and will remain, an anchor firm for the aerospace sector for Canada moving forward, and we will continue to seek to grow and promote Canada's world-class supply chain in the global industry.

•(1920)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his impassioned speech in defence of and protection of the aerospace industry. However, what we are asking for is the same kind of enthusiasm and protection for the proponents of the industries in Alberta.

The main thrust of my question was: Will the taxpayer be repaid their portion that they put into the Bombardier deal?

The C Series jet is now owned by a foreign entity, which is what this deal is all about. When the government gave the money to Bombardier, it was to prop up jobs here in Canada. Why would we now be allowing Bombardier to be sold off to foreign companies so that Canadian taxpayer money can be supporting companies that are not in Canada? We have seen similar things with this infrastructure bank. Will the taxpayer be repaid?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, let me be absolutely clear. Under the C Series program, the obligation for repayment remains unchanged. We can count on Bombardier continuing to be an important contributor to the aerospace sector. This new partnership that it is exploring with Airbus will create jobs here on Canadian soil. This will benefit the community in my hon. colleague's riding. It will benefit all Canadians.

I am proud of all the work that the minister and his entire team is doing on this file.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, November 20, at 11 a.m., pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, November 7.

(The House adjourned at 7:22 p.m.)

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